The Red Mirage

CCC-DWB-TRM-1

Slivara Steeljaw has hired a new quartermaster, but someone has kidnapped him!

A Two Adventure for Tier 1 Characters. Optimized for APL 3

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Adventure Primer

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 1ˢᵗ to 4ᵗʰ level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 3**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

This adventure occurs in the village of **Mantera** approximately twenty miles outside of Phlan.

Background

Since the discovery, capture, and death of her previous quartermaster **Silvara Steeljaw** has been interviewing people to fill the vacancy. It has been a slow and painful process but finally she has found a good candidate: a goblin by the name of **Zax**. Up until recently, he has made Silvara quite a bit of gold. However, Zax sent a message to Silvara that claimed he was being followed and he had only narrowly avoided being captured by an unknown assailant. Silvara seeks a way to protect her newest asset.

Overview

The adventure's story is spread over **three parts** and takes approximately **two hours** to play. The adventure begins with a Call to Action scene. If you're planning to play the entire adventure at once, you only need to introduce the Call to Action once. However, if you plan to play them over several sessions, you'll want to revisit the Call to Action each time you play.

- **Call to Action: Bar Room Suspicions**
  The adventurers are sent to **Mantera** by **Silvara Steeljaw**. Upon arriving, the adventurers meet up with **Zax** and attempt to ascertain who is after him and stop them. However, suspicion runs high.
- **Part 1: Bar Room Blitz .** As the adventurers begin to win Zax's trust and help him, a group of mercenaries attempt to separate Zax from his defenders by both subtle and direct means.

- **Part 2: The Kidnapper's Hideout.**
  Depending on whether or not the mercenaries were successful in retrieving Zax, the adventurers must now rescue Zax or trace the mercenaries to their employer.

Adventure Hooks

Adventure Hook 1. Silvara Steeljaw is a high ranking member in the Lord's Alliance, and aiding her could curry favor with the Lord's Alliance later.

Adventure Hook 2. The adventurers may have worked for Silvara in the past and she has been satisfied with the adventurer's work in the past.

Adventure Flowchart

This section provides a basic understanding of not only the flow of the adventure, but also the outline of the different paths that your players may take in reaching their stated objective.

```
┌─┐
│1│ Bar Room
└─┘ Suspicions
      │
      ▼
┌─┐
│2│ Bar Room
└─┘   Blitz
      │
      ▼
┌─┐
│3│   The
└─┘ Kidnappers
     Hideout
```

Part 1: Bar Room Suspicions

Estimated Duration: 15 minutes

Call to Action

The adventurers have been summoned to the village of Mantera by Silvara Steeljaw to aid her newest associate.

> You arrive at a quiet bar in this small and battered village. There are a few people in the bar but one, a prudish looking goblin in fine robes, scurries up to your group "You must be the group Silvara sent. Thank the gods! I am fearful for my life. Someone is after me.."

Zax (a goblin **Noble**) ushers the adventurers to a table and sits down. He orders drinks and quickly relays the following to the adventurers:

- He has been working for Silvara for about three months after her last quartermaster had hired a crazed kobold to disrupt her trade network.
- Silvara had been curious as to why **Balthor** (now known as **Starthrax)** was interested in disrupting her trade network so she asked Zax to look into it.
- Zax explains that he had no luck until two weeks ago when a group of adventurers had retrieved some research from an ancient library that led him to form a theory.
- When asked about his theory, he refuses saying that he will only tell Silvara.
- He explains that he needs the adventurers to protect him,and he needs them to figure out who is after him and stop them.
- He offers 20 gold pieces as payment up front with an additional 20gp and a small cache of items he has stored away if they can solve his current problem.

As Zax is explaining his problems to the adventurers, **any adventurer with a Passive Perception of 15** or better notices a few things:

- There is a hobgoblin passed out at the bar. A DC 17 insight check reveals that he is faking.
- A pair of humans nervously chatting in the corner of the room occasionally glances in the adventurer's direction. Any use of detect magic or a DC 13 Arcana check reveals the presence of illusion magic around them.
- The bartender and barmaid have disappeared and the bar seems unattended.

If the adventurers act upon any of these or attempt to leave with Zax, proceed to Part 2.

Part 2: Bar Room Blitz

As Zax's tale begins to unfold, the adventurers find themselves in a possible ambush.

Area Information

The area has the following features.

Terrain. The room is 60ft by 40ft with a 6ft ceiling. There are three square tables: one occupied by the adventurers and Zax, one empty and one with the two humans. There is a long bar on the northern end of the room.

Lighting. The lighting in the bar is dim light with the only source being lanterns hanging on the wall.

The Ambushers. The two humans are **Hobgoblin Iron Shadows** under the effects of the spell spell *disguise self*. The hobgoblin pretending to be passed out is a **Hobgoblin Martial Arts Adept**.

If the adventurers attempt to leave, the **Hobgoblin Martial Arts Adept** will stand up and turn to the adventurers.

> The young and suddenly sober looking hobgoblin looks at you with a condescending look. "Look, we only here for that" he says as he points at Zax. "Hand him over nice and quietly and no need get hurt."

If the adventurers do not immediately hand over Zax:

> The hobgoblin sneers as the two humans in the corner rise from their chairs and begin to shimmer; revealing two more lean hobgoblins. "Last chance, hand over goblin or die!"

If the adventurers still refuse the hobgoblins attack.

Combat Tactics

The **Hobgoblin Iron Shadows** focus on attacking the party with hit and run tactics while the **Hobgoblin Martial Arts Adept** attempts to separate Zax from whoever is guarding him and flee. If he is able to grab Zax, he will use him as a human shield as he tries to escape with him.

Adjusting The Scene:

Very Weak: Replace the **Hobgoblin Martial Arts Adept** with a **Hobgoblin Iron Shadow** and reduce the HP of all of the **Hobgoblin Iron Shadows** to 30.

Weak: Replace the **Hobgoblin Martial Arts Adept** with a **Hobgoblin Iron Shadow**

Strong: Add 1 **Hobgoblin Iron Shadow**

Very Strong: Add 1 **Hobgoblin Martial Arts Adept**

The Aftermath

After the adventurers defeat the ambushers, a search of the bodies reveals a hand drawn picture of Zax. A search of the bar reveals the barmaid and bartender unconscious. If Zax is still with the adventurers, he demands that the adventurers stop whoever is responsible for these attempts on his life. If not, the adventurers must follow the kidnapper back to their lair.

In either scenario the party easily finds the bugbear's tracks and can start to follow them to their hideout.

Part 3: The Kidnapper's Hideout.

The trail of the kidnappers is hard to trace and requires a DC 15 Survival check. However if the kidnappers captured Zax in the previous encounter then this check gets a +5 bonus as his struggling makes the trail more apparent. It takes 30 minutes to follow the trail back to their hideout.

Area Information

The area has the following features.

Terrain. The hideout is a 30ft by 15ft two story tower with 8ft ceilings. There is one door and two windows: one on the bottom floor opposite the main door and the other is on the second floor over the main entrance.

Lighting. The only light in the building is a single lantern on a table on the bottom floor.

Carriage. 30ft from the tower, a carriage sits ready to disembark with a robed **Skeleton** in the driver's seat and two **Skeletal Warhorses** to pull it. A DC 9 Stealth check allows anyone to approach them undetected. However, any sounds of combat will cause the **Hobgoblin Iron Shadows** inside to come out and investigate.

Tower Inhabitants: Inside the tower, the lead kidnapper (a **Hobgoblin Martial Arts Adept**) stands with a **Hobgoblin Iron Shadow** as they watch a Red Wizard of Thay (an **Illusionist**) either pacing impatiently or interrogating Zax depending on the outcome of the first fight. **Also if any of the combatants from the first fight survived and escaped, they will guard the exterior of the tower having not regained HP from the previous encounter.**

The adventurers discover that the door into the tower is unlocked and voices can be heard on the other side of the door.

If the adventurers were able to prevent Zax from being taken the following can be heard:

> "You shall have your quarry, wizard" a deep voice growls "My men and I have never failed **Lord Starthrax** yet and that won't be changing today." A rasping voice barks back, " Don't get cocky, unguarded young wizards in Phlan are different from a connected man employed by Silvara."

If the adventurers were not able to prevent Zax from being taken, the following is heard instead:

> "Let me go! I promise no one will know what I have discovered if you just let me go!" Zax screams. "I wish I could believe you but my masters and I cannot take that chance. You shouldn't have gone poking about in matters that didn't concern you goblin! Now you must die!" A rasping voice growls and the cracking of lightning begins to rise.

Creature Information

The red wizard is named **Aurelan** (Aure-lan) and she has been assigned the task of eliminating a security threat.

Objectives & Goals. Aurelan is desperate to finish her assigned task. She knows what will happen if she fails so she is willing to die to accomplish her task.

What Do They Know? Aurelan neither knows nor cares what Zax knows. All she cares about is eliminating Zax as a threat.

Combat Tactics

The hobgoblins will provide cover to allow the Red Wizard to escape. They will also surrender if she dies. Aurelan has no regard for her own safety (let alone the hobgoblins) and will include herself and the hobgoblins in the effect of her harmful spells if it suits her goals. Her sole target is Zax. If she has him, she will attempt to use her first action to kill him. If she doesn't already have him and he is with the party, she will attempt to use the highest level spell she has available to kill him. (Zax does receive death saves if downed).

Otherwise, she will use the cover to attempt to escape and hunt down Zax on her own.

Adjusting The Scene:
Very Weak: The **Illusionist** has access to only first and second level spells and remove one **Hobgoblin Iron Shadow.**
Weak: Remove one **Hobgoblin Iron Shadow**
Strong: Add one **Hobgoblin Iron Shadow**
Very Strong: Add two **Hobgoblin Iron Shadows**

Wrap-Up

Once the Adventurers have defeated **Aurelan**, Zax is eager to get back to Phlan to report in. With his contacts, he is able to scrounge up a pair of horses for Auralen's carriage. The trip is quick and uneventful. Zax is pleased that the wizard is dead and that he is safe for now. He thanks the adventurers and promises to keep them in mind for future assignments.

Treasure

In addition to the promised 20 gold pieces, Zax leaves the characters with a package containing two **Potions of Psychic Resistance** and a **Helm of Comprehend Languages.**

Rewards

At the **end of the session**, the characters receive rewards based upon their accomplishments.

Character Rewards

The characters earn the following rewards:

Advancement

Upon successfully **completing** this adventure, each character gains a level. At their discretion, they may choose to decline advancement. Remind your players that the amount of gold that their characters can earn per level is limited; declining advancement means that they may reach a point where they earn no gold.

Gold

Award each character gold for each hour of the session. Adventures typically features cues for this, but you can add it where you see fit. The maximum gold that you can award a character per hour is determined by their tier, as follows:

Tier	Hourly GP Award	GP Limit per Level
1	20 gp	80 gp
2	30 gp	240 gp
3	200 gp	1,600 gp
4	750 gp	6,000 gp

Magic Item(s)

If found during the adventure, the characters can keep the following magic items; these items are described in **Appendix B**:

● *Helm of Comprehend Languages*
● *Potion of Psychic Resistance x2*

Dungeon Master Rewards

For running this adventure, one of your characters gains a level. That character receives gold based on their tier prior to advancement:

Tier	GP Earned
1	80 gp
2	240 gp
3	1,600 gp
4	6,000 gp

You may also complete DM Quests for running this adventure. See the *Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information.

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Dramatis Personae

The following NPCs and locations feature prominently in this adventure.

Zax. A Paranoid Goblin who is the new Quartermaster for Silvara Steeljaw's Trade groups.

- **Personality:** I must be observant in order to survive.
- **Ideal:** Everyone is out to get me.
- **Bo0nd:** I treat those I trust with great care.
- **Flaw:** I see plots everywhere.

Aurelan *(Aure-lan).* A red wizard of thay who seeks to eliminate those that know forbidden secrets.

- **Personality:** I cannot fail.
- **Ideal:** Puzzling out the secrets of Thay is the greatest form of harm.
- **Bond:** Thayan wizards are the height of power and no one can destroy that.
- **Flaw:** I see those without magic as beneath me.

Creature Statistics

Hobgoblin Iron Shadow

Medium humanoid (goblinoid), lawful evil
Armor Class 15
Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	11 (+0)	5 (-3)

Skills Acrobatics +5, Athletics +4, Stealth +5
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Goblin
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spellcasting. The hobgoblin is a 2nd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following wizard spells prepared*:*
Cantrips (at will): *minor illusion, prestidigitation, true strike*
1st level (3 slots): *charm person, disguise self, expeditious retreat, silent image*

Unarmored Defense. While the hobgoblin is wearing no armor and wielding no shield, its AC includes its Wisdom modifier.

Actions

Multiattack. The hobgoblin makes four attacks, each of which can be an unarmed strike or a dart attack. It can also use Shadow Jaunt once, either before or after one of the attacks.

Unarmed Strike. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Dart. Ranged Weapon Attack. +5 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Shadow Jaunt. The hobgoblin magically teleports, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space it can see. Both the space it is leaving and its destination must be in dim light or darkness.

Illusionist

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil
Armor Class 12. (15 with mage armor}
Hit Points 38 (7d8 + 7)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Int +5, Wis +2
Skills Arcana +5, History +5
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Goblin, Elvish, Infernal
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Spellcasting. The illusionist is a 7th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The illusionist has the following wizard spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will)**:** *dancing lights, mage hand, minor illusion, shocking grasp*
1st level (4 slots): *color spray,* disguise self.* mage armor, magic missile*
2nd level (3 slots)**:** *invisibility,* mirror image,* phantasmal force**
3rd level (3 slots): *major image,* lightning bolt*
4th level (1 slot): *phantasmal killer**
*Illusion spell of 1st level or higher

Displacement (Recharges after the Illusionist Casts an Illusion Spell of 1st Level or Higher}. As a bonus action, the illusionist projects an illusion that makes the illusionist appear to be standing in a place a few inches from its actual location, causing any creature to have disadvantage on attack rolls against the illusionist. The effect ends if the illusionist takes damage, it is incapacitated, or its speed becomes 0.

Actions

Scimitar. Melee Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6+2) Slashing damage

Skeleton

Medium undead, lawful evil
Armor Class 13 (armor scraps)
Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 9
Languages understands all languages it knew in life but can't speak
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Actions

Dagger. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Warhorse Skeleton

Large undead, lawful evil
Armor Class 13 (barding scraps)
Hit Points 22 (3d10 + 6)
Speed 60ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 9
Languages -
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Actions

Hooves. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Hobgoblin Martial Arts Adept

Medium humanoid (hobgoblin), lawful evil
Armor Class 16
Hit Points 60 (11d8 + 11)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)

Skills Acrobatics +5, Insight +5, Stealth +5
Senses Darkvision 60ft., Passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Goblin
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Unarmored Defense. *While the adept is wearing no armor and wielding no shield, its AC includes its Wisdom modifier.*

Actions

Multiattack. The adept makes three unarmed strikes or three dart attacks.

Unarmed Strike. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (ld8 + 3) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, the adept can choose one of the following additional effects:
• The target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or drop one item it is holding (adept's choice).
• The target must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.
• The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of the adept's next turn.

Dart. Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (ld4 + 3) piercing damage.

Reaction

Deflect Missile. In response to being hit by a ranged weapon attack, the adept deflects the missile. The damage it takes from the attack is reduced by 1d10+3. If the damage is reduced to 0, the adept catches the missile if it's small enough to hold in one hand and the adept has a hand free.

Zax, Goblin Noble

Medium humanoid (goblinoid), lawful neutral
Armor Class 15 (breastplate)
Hit Points 9 (2d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Insight +4, Persuasion +5
Senses Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Goblin, Common
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Nimble Escape*. Zax can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of its turns.*

Actions

Rapier. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.
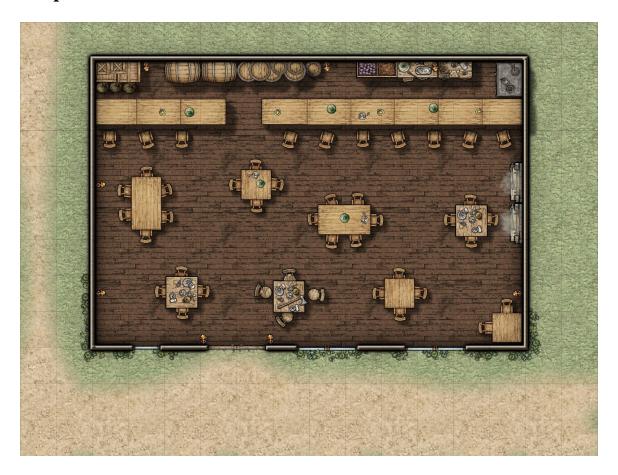
Stat Block Modifications

This creature has the following modifications:

- Zax uses the **Noble** statblock but has *Nimble Escape* due to being a goblin.
- Zax has darkvision with a range of 60ft.

Appendix A: Maps, Player Handouts, Etc.

This appendix includes various handouts and
resources for running the adventure.

Map A: Bar Room Blitz

Map B: The Hideout

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Appendix B: Character Rewards

Helm of Comprehending Languages

Wondrous item, uncommon

While wearing this helm, you can use an action to cast the *comprehend languages* spell from it at will. This wireframe helm vibrates whenever it is used.

This item can be found on Magic Item Table B

Appendix C: Dungeon Master Tips

To DM an adventure, you **must** have 3 to 7 players—each with their own character within the adventure's level range (see Adventure Primer). Characters playing in a **hardcover** adventure may continue to play but if they play a different hardcover adventure, they **can't return** to the first if outside its level range.

New to D&D Adventurers League?
http://dnd.wizards.com/playevents/organized-play

New to the Annual Storyline?
http://dnd.wizards.com/story/waterdeep

http://dndadventurersleague.org/storyline-seasons/waterdeep-adventures/

Preparing the Adventure

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself of while running the adventure, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use in combat. Familiar yourself with the adventure's appendices and handouts.
- Gather any resources you'd like to use to aid you in running this adventure--such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Wisdom (Perception), and anything specified as notable by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, etc.)

Players can play an adventure they previously played as a Player or Dungeon Master but may only play it once with a given character. Ensure each player has their character's adventure logsheet (if not, get one from the organizer) with their starting values for advancement and treasure checkpoints, downtime days, and renown. These are updated at the conclusion of the session. The adventure information and your information is added at the end of the adventure session—whether they completed the adventure or not.

Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet. If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player's character sheet to ensure that nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array.

Point players to the D&D Adventurers League Players Guide for reference. If players wish to spend downtime days and it's the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now, or they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode. Players should select their characters' spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure, unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give players hints about what they might face.

Adjusting This Adventure

To determine whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, add up the total levels of all the characters and divide the result by the number of characters (rounding .5 or greater up; .4 or less down). This is the group's average party level (APL). To approximate the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the table below.
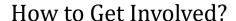
Determining Party Strength

Party Composition	Party Strength
3-4 characters, APL less than	Very weak
3-4 characters, APL equivalent	Weak
3-4 characters, APL greater than	Average
5 characters, APL less than	Weak
5 characters, APL equivalent	Average
5 characters, APL greater than	Strong
6-7 characters, APL less than	Average
6-7 characters, APL equivalent	Strong
6-7 characters, APL greater than	Very strong

Appendix D: DWB D&D

What is DWB D&D?

We are an online community based around a mutual love of D&D and one of the largest online groups for Adventurers League play.

We like to provide access and opportunity for anyone interested in participating in this wonderful hobby of ours so they can connect with others and play regardless of barriers. We are an inclusive and accommodating group and we specialize in helping people learn to play and use the tools available for online play.

How to Get Involved?

The best way to get involved is to join us on discord! We have games everyday, a team of mentors ready to answer your questions and assist you, and a library of prepared games to save you time preparing them yourself.

Join the discord at: https://discord.gg/yJdzGmR

Or you can contact me directly!
Twitter: twitter.com/Daddywarrbuxx
Facebook: facebook.com/Daddywarrbux
Email: daddywarrbuxx@gmail.com

Please reach out to me!
One of the things we are hoping to do is enable more writers an opportunity to share their work. We (try) to host an epic every three months, so if you are looking for an event to submit a CCC on or would like to create an adventure using the premade bundles let me know!