

Spies Like You

4 Hour Dungeons & Dragons 5th Edition Adventure for
2-6 1st Level Characters and 1 1st Level DM



Introduction

Welcome to Spies Like You, a Mission Impossible-esque spy adventure set in a fantasy world designed for first-time Dungeon Masters (DMs) and first-time players. This adventure is designed for two to six 1st level players and is optimized for four 1st-level characters. This adventure has several big scenes and should take three or four hours in total to finish.

Background

Inspired by the Chevy Chase and Dan Aykroyd spy comedy movie “Spies Like Us”, it takes place in a Cold War-like environment with 2 large kingdoms squaring off against each other.

The players are citizens of Wall, a country ruled by King Tarak. Their main rival for influence in the world is their neighbor Macalus, ruled by King Cadmus. There are smaller countries aligned with one of these two countries, and there are unaligned countries. Feel free to make up or fill in these countries as relevant for your story.

The adventure starts with the players completing their spy training to join the Ghosts, the royal spy network for Wall. This adventure is their first mission where they will go to Pamar, a town in Macalus, to retrieve a magical artifact known as the Eagle.

The rub is that the party, a set of newly minted spies, is actually the decoy for the real spies with the real mission. They are setup to be captured, but the actual spies end up getting captured during the adventure too, which leaves it up to the party to finish the mission.

Below are additional details you can add into the lore of the world as it is helpful.

- Wall follows the deity Rory, which values the individual spirit above all else. Macalus

follows the deity Hearth, which values community and unity

- The wizards of Wall have tapped into arcane energy capable of killing entire cities called the “Putrefaction”. It requires a one-hour ritual, but it reduces all life within the city to black goo. The wizards of Macalus are desperately trying to reproduce the same result
- Although these two nations mostly spar with each other, there is always the threat of dragons returning to the land. A long time ago, they were unified in their fight against the dragons, but relations have deteriorated over the years

Good luck!

Characters

For this adventure, the players can select from the pre-generated characters in the back of this adventure. To introduce the characters and warm up your players, pass around the stack of character sheets. Have each player read aloud an introduction, and after all are read, let the players pick who they want to play. Players can (and are encouraged) to tweak the names and backgrounds as they see fit.

If your players are uncertain which characters to play, you can provide additional guidance. The classic D&D party has a Fighter, Rogue, Wizard, and Cleric. The Fighter, Monk, and Rogue are the easiest to play, and the spellcasters (Wizard, Cleric, and Bard) are more challenging. I recommend that parties have either the Cleric or Bard for the healing and support.

Make sure your spellcasters have a spell reference available during the game. The Player’s Handbook or an online resource will work.

D&D Basics

If you and your players have played D&D before, you are set. Go ahead and dive in with the rest of this adventure. However, if they haven't played D&D before, you should go through some basics about how to play the game first.

What Your Players Should Know

Unless they have watched a video or stream online of other roleplaying games, most players don't have a good idea of how D&D works. They will assume that there is more structure and restrictions than there actually are and that there is a specific goal or way to win. Here is one way to explain it.

First, make it clear that the players can try anything and don't need to think about the rules. They just need to tell you what they want to do, and you will figure out how to fit that into the rules. Give them a few wild examples of things they can try.

Second, explain how to read the dice on their character sheet. The $XdY + Z$ tells you to roll X dice with Y sides and then add Z .

Third, explain how skill checks work. They roll the 20-sided dice (d20) and add the modifier. That is compared to either a set dice check (DC) or your opposing roll. That determines if the player succeeds or fails.

Fourth, explain how combat works. Everyone rolls for initiative to determine turn order by rolling a d20 and adding their initiative modifier. On their turn, they can move and do one other thing: attack, cast a spell, or anything else they want to do.

Fifth, go over everyone's character sheets so they know what the numbers roughly mean and what their handful of abilities do. Explain to spellcasters that they can use their cantrips as often as they like, but they have limited slots for level 1 spells.

Finally, emphasize again that they can always try to do anything. After going through the character sheet, they might be back in a rules-based mindset, but encourage them to think of the game more as improvisational theater.

What You Should Know

There are plenty of ways to play D&D. Unlike most board or video games, roleplaying games aren't defined by the rules. D&D is just a framework, and you as the DM are really creating the game. As such, there is plenty of good advice, but beware anyone who tells you that there is a right or wrong way to DM. The right way is what you and your players enjoy.

Along those lines, feel free to extend, ignore, or make up anything around this adventure. Although the adventure may seem very prescriptive, it's *your game*, so think of it more as a safety blanket than a script. This is just a spy versus spy world of double-crossing and betrayal, so change anyone's motives at any time to add more surprises.

This adventure feels more like improvisation rather than dungeon crawl, so play along with your characters. Say "yes" whenever possible. Find ways to surprise them by making their assumptions wrong, but if they deduce something, find a way to make their realizations correct. Play soundtracks from spy movies in the background, and make it a rich and fun experience.

Finally, the hardest part about DMing is organizing a session. It's hard to find players, set a time that everyone likes, stop people from flaking, get everyone in the room on time, and get everyone organized to start. And when you start, it's hard to keep everyone focused and engaged. However, once you get going, your game should take on its own life, so enjoy the fruits of your labor!

Chapter 1. Initiation

The first encounter throws the party right into the action and should take about 45 minutes. They are waiting for their final test to become Ghosts, but when invading goblins kills their trainer, they have to fight to save the Spymaster. Of course, the invasion is the actual test, and they are led straight to the real questgiver. Along the way, your players will introduce themselves and learn the basics of combat.

“So, who are all of you?” the red-haired dwarf asks with his arms folded while leaning back in his chair. You are all waiting around patiently in a small room for your final test to become Ghosts, the royal spy organization. “I figure we ought to know each other if we’re going to trust each other with our lives. I’ll start. I’m Kite, the Dwarven Defender, born and raised in Wall. Who are you?”

Allow the players to go through introductions, and prod them for more details as you see fit. If you are using a map, put the players down in a **25’x25’ (5x5 square) room** with a dwarf.

The dwarf opens his mouth to continue to talk but stops when you hear a knock at the door. Turning to look, you see the door open to the familiar, smiling face of Agent Locke, the human who has been guiding you through your training over the past month. “Good morning, everyone. I bet you’re *very* excited to get the big payoff for your hard work, so up and out of those chairs!” He points to the weapon rack in the back of the room. “Grab your gear and we’ll head over to the are-” His last word is cutoff by a gurgle as an arrow strikes and lodges itself into the side of his neck. His body falls limply to the ground, and you hear the sound of goblins cackling in the hallway.

1 goblin per player plus 1 more for Kite pour into the room, and combat begins. The players can retrieve their weapons or use the chairs as improvised weapons, but otherwise, combat should be straightforward. Kite has 13 hit points, 18 armor class, and swings an axe that he never hits with (fake the rolls).

After combat, Kite explains that Macalus drove back a goblin invasion using intelligence gathered by the Ghosts, so the goblins want revenge. Locke will say, “Protect **Spymaster Emerald...**” before “dying”. Kite knows the way (saying that he was once reprimanded by the Spymaster) and can lead the party.

Should the players choose to look deeper into the situation through Wisdom (Insight) on Kite, Intelligence (Investigation) on the goblins, Wisdom (Medicine) on Locke, or anything else, set the DC to 20. If they succeed, they will note that something seems off but not nefarious.

Kite leads them through a labyrinth of hallways in the Ghosts Keep. The players see signs of battle with dead goblins and Ghosts around but no obvious way to help. Kite may answer questions or converse with the party.

The next encounter is crossing the **Training Arena with 2 goblins for each player**. Kite explains that the exit on the other side will lead to Emerald’s office.

The door into the arena has a window, and the party can see the goblins wandering around trying to get out. The arena is currently in “training mode”, so all of the doors are locked.

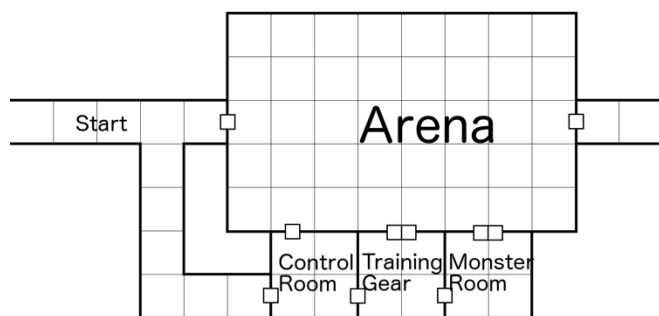
The hallway down leads to the Control Room, which has a panel with a variety of magical controls. The “unlock” rune is obvious, but the rest is more obscure. The party, having trained here before, knows that the panel can create a variety of environmental conditions, such as fog or minor tremors. Let the party be creative with how they want to configure the room and

make an Intelligence (Arcana) check with an appropriate DC to pass.

The next room has a variety of training gear, including combat dummies, caltrops, tables, carts, and more. Again, let the party be creative and volunteer suggestions of what they are looking for. They can make an Intelligence (Investigation) check to see if they find it.

The last room has “empty” cages with runes on them that can summon training (illusionary) beasts to fight if they pass a Wisdom (Animal Handling) check to tame it. For example, they may attempt to summon a Brown Bear to fight the goblins for them.

Make it clear to the players that this fight would be too challenging to just fight through without at least finding a way to even the odds.



Should the party take any training gear, all of it will disappear when they step out of the arena.

Past more hallways, the party sees the spiral stairwell leading up to the Spymaster’s office (think Dumbledore’s office in Hogwarts). Battle sounds come from within, but upon opening the door, the players see the Spymaster having a pleasant chat with 2 other agents and Locke.

Chapter 2: Meeting the Spymaster

This scene is the quest-giving encounter and should take roughly 15 minutes. You can play this straight up or you can start to sow doubt about the mission and goals for additional twists.

Spymaster Emerald's office should feel like M's office from a Roger Moore-era James Bond movie. Emerald himself should be like a Ralph Fiennes M: a polite but slightly icy British fellow who apparently pushes papers now but seems to move about in a smooth fashion. He also has a massive moon-shaped scar on his left cheek.

"Ah, the new recruits have already made it," the Spymaster says. "Kite, I think this is the fastest bunch we have seen yet. Definitely worthy of the mission we have for them." Kite walks over and slaps the Spymaster on the back. "I told you they were a right bunch of recruits. Congratulations," Kite says turning to you. "Welcome to the Ghosts. Sorry about the alarm. Had to test you for real. Don't worry: the goblins were just illusions, and Locke is just fine." The Spymaster looks at Kite and the other 2 human agents, one male and one female, and nods. The agents nod back and make their way to the door. As he walks past, the male agent says, "Very excited to have you onboard. Keep up the good work," and then leaves. Kite waits for them to exit, then quietly says, "Those are 2 of our top agents, Hadley and Boyer. Well, I guess it's your turn now," and leaves.

Should the players ask about who Emerald is or if you feel like elaborating, Emerald is a legend for having united Wall as it is today by uniting 2 tribes against a common foe. Also, Emerald is 2nd only to the Grand Spymaster, who may not even actually exist (you could make Kite the Grand Spymaster in a big reveal later if it fits).

The 2 humans are **Hadley** and **Boyer**, and they are the actual spies tasked with the real mission (though neither Kite nor the group should know this). The way Hadley says it can either be genuine or a bit over the top, like Captain Amazing from *Mystery Men*.

If the party looted any of the goblins, all of that equipment will disappear as well.

The Quest

Emerald notes how impressed he is by their prowess and believes they are ready for a real mission. He will entrust the party with a mission to destroy "**The Eagle**", an artifact in transit through Pamar that "you will know it when you see it." If asked whether the party should steal it instead, he will emphasize that stealing would be great, but the priority is that it not remain in Macalus's control.

If asked, he says that he isn't at will to say but that if his intelligence is correct, it is extremely dangerous. On a DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check, the party can confirm that he is genuine about his concern. The Eagle is **a key component of the Putrefaction ritual** (see the "Background" section), though depending on your narrative, other possibilities include:

- A bomb
- A beacon (like a flare) that attracts dragons
- A powerful energy gun

The party may ask why they were selected for such an important mission as rookies. He explains that this is a difficult time for Wall-Macalus relations, and other battle-capable agents are already on assignments. A DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) check may reveal that although he is being honest and appears to be stressed, he is also hiding something.

Emerald will then provide the party with a few useful things for their mission.

First, he will provide them a **scroll** that says that they're on a diplomatic mission in Pamar. For effect, you can have him actually forge it in front of the group as he has an authentic scroll and effortlessly copies the signature at the bottom of it.

Second, he says that you should meet their contact, **Shank, at the Red Ring Inn**. He's a local who's sympathetic to Wall and has been helpful for a long time. Shank is described as having an eye patch but an eye like a hawk, and that "you will know him when you see him." Emerald gives the party a **gold piece** that has a jester on one side rather than the king. Shank can provide the location of the Eagle as well as a plan for getting out of town.

Third, he will do a hasty induction. He asks someone to hold out their arm and roll back their sleeve, and he grabs their arm and imprints a **magical tattoo of Magic Mouth**. He repeats this for everyone else. It can be used once a day and is an old Ghosts tradition but has been known to be useful as well.

As he inducts each party member, he will make a comment specific to each of them as a hint and reminder of who they are:

- Holg (Half-Orc Fighter): "Well, I have a pretty good sense of how you intend to conduct this mission."
- Alvyn (Gnome Wizard): "Illusions: excellent for both bringing attention and drawing it away."
- Torgga (Dwarf Cleric): "Sorry you have fallen in with our lot, but I'm certain your allies will need your aid."
- Bree (Halfling Rogue): "Now here's the profile of a true Ghost. Out of sight, out of trouble, am I right?"
- Caelynn (Drow Bard): "Hmm, Dark Elf: not good for being inconspicuous. Best you disguise yourself on this mission."
- Ivor (Human Monk): "Quick with your hands I see. Don't let them know what hit them!"

Fourth, he gives them a single use **pouch of dissolving powder**: sprinkle it over something (non-organic), expose it to light, and the powder will destroy it. For example, it can destroy evidence on making an entrance or exit. Note that if the party actually uses it, feel free to make its effect something else instead.

Finally, he gives the party "the knack", which is just a fancy way as a DM of introducing the concept of Inspiration: it can be used to either re-roll a dice or to add some (realistic) convenient object or situation nearby. Give all players an **inspiration point**.

On the way out, Kite will ask the party how it went and offer encouragement about the quest. The party can visit the quartermaster for other equipment that is subject to your discretion: the Ghosts are quite strict about handing out equipment only for very specific purposes.

Let the party take a long rest, recover all spells, hit points, and other abilities, and send them on their way. The Ghosts can provide the party with whatever they need for their cover identities.

Chapter 3: Intelligence Gathering

In this chapter, the party gets basic intelligence and should be on their way to break into the warehouse. They also get hints for how to track down the Eagle later when they realize it is in an ale barrel.

Pamar itself is a small border town of a few hundred people. It is mostly a trading town between Macalus and Wall surrounded by farmland. The city is entirely walled (with guards patrolling the top of the wall) and has a bustling market in town with various merchants trying to unload their goods. Many merchants store their goods in warehouses on the north side of town.

Optional Encounter: The Gate

The first encounter is optional and happens at the gate, where a long line of people is trying to get into the city with a fully armored guard and a bureaucrat inspecting and interrogating everyone. Give the party a chance to prepare before needing to go through, but put them on a timer showing them how many people are ahead of them in line. Use a 6-sided die, and spin it down at regular intervals if it is taking a long time.

The guard himself is a typical human male, and you can emulate the muffling effect of his helmet just by putting your hand over your mouth and talking through it. He will ask them to explain their reason in town, and presumably the party will hand over the scroll at some point. Create some suspense about whether the document is good enough, but let them pass. If you want to cast suspicion about Emerald or their mission, you can add some interactions that make the party doubt the veracity of the document provided. Eventually, however, they should get in.

In Town

Whether you have the gate encounter or not, it should be near the end of the day when they actually get into town with the markets closing. The party tie off their horses and cart at the stables on the south side of town near the gates. Feel free to let them have up to one encounter before they need to go to the Red Ring Inn. For directions, they can ask anyone or watch where people are going: the Red Ring Inn is the local watering hole, and traders and farmers are all headed over to end their day.

Red Ring Inn

When the party arrives at the Red Ring Inn, a friendly innkeeper **Helga** welcomes them at the door and directs them to get a drink. She mentions that they just got **a large shipment of ale** coming in from the latest harvest with barrels being rolled in past the party as they speak. Additionally, the barrels behind the bar are loaded into a contraption to automatically load and tap a new barrel when the previous one empties out (**note**: this is an important detail because the Eagle will be hidden inside one of the barrels later). The party is welcome to get a drink and to chat with the locals, including off-duty guards, merchants, and farmers.

Shank waits at a table in a dark corner and will look roughly as described by Emerald. He has a drink in front of him but sips it very slowly. When the party goes to sit down by him, he talks in a quiet, soothing voice and is constantly breaking eye contact and looking around the room. He opens by asking, "Do we know each other?" Presumably the party will hand him the coin, which he will look at closely then give the party a knowing look. He then will talk vaguely and cryptically.

"I believe we have a mutual friend: a diamond, or ruby, or something like that (*wait for agreement here and after each statement*). I have been told that you're interested in the crows or pigeons, or some of the other birds in town, yes? Well, there's an interesting warehouse in town on the north side. You might find it very interesting. Or perhaps you could talk to the owner of the warehouse about how he secures his goods: he usually comes in later in the evening to play dice with the locals. The locals like him: he loses a lot but keeps coming."

Shank offers a **key** in exchange for the coin that the party may find useful. Shank can answer some other questions for the party. In general, he should be helpful but not give away that he knows that the jester coin means that he should give them the decoy answers. On a DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check, the party will notice that he seems uneasy, but that shouldn't be surprising to them.

If the party asks about an escape plan, Shank is confident that the party can make it out if they get back to their horses.

Frank Rivers

The merchant is named **Frank Rivers**, and he is a fatcat merchant full of himself but with an amusingly grandiose style about him. He has a full beard, which he strokes in a comical manner to appear wise. He has 2 bodyguards behind him while he enjoys playing a game of dice with some of the other, lesser merchants. Rivers deals mainly in antiques and makes money by trading between Macalus and Wall. Should the players ask other merchants about him, Rivers is known to be vicious and tough in business but other than the occasional bribe, he is a lawful businessman.

When the party walks up, Rivers is boasting about an object that he happened to acquire for his long history of paying taxes to the nation of

Macalus. He is coy about what that object is, but he is more than willing to explain how good his warehouse security is should the players ask.

First, he mentions having "**top men**" guarding the facility from the outside (they are not very smart). He says that they are loyal to the tee (they are not well-paid). He says that they would guard his wares with their lives (they will not). You can plant the seeds of skepticism in his confidence either by overblowing his explanation or by having the other gamblers laugh when they say it.

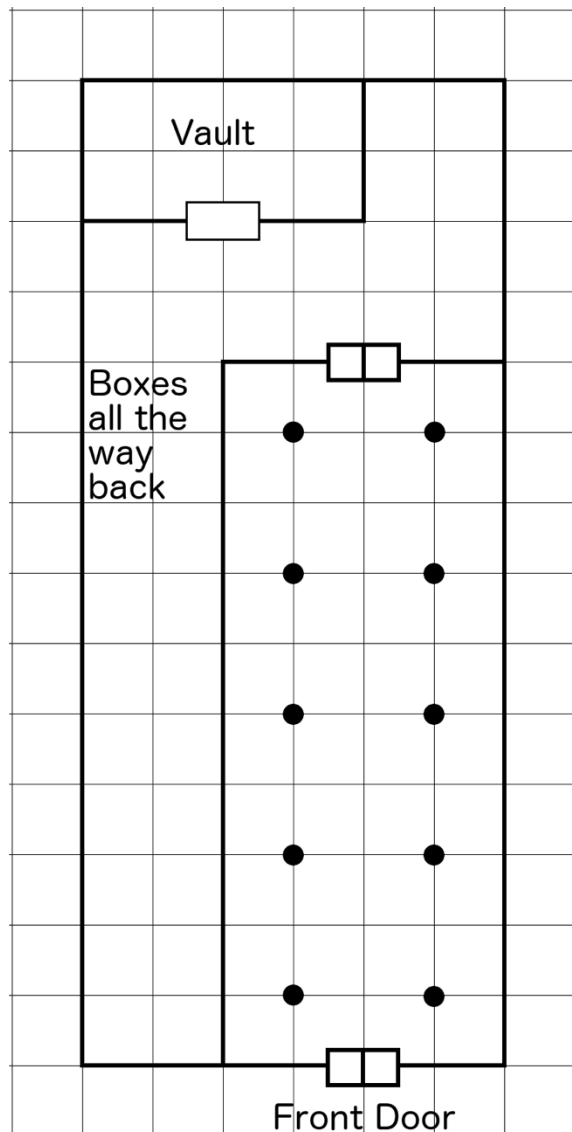
Second, he mentions having **magical wards** on his entry gallery that trigger whenever someone crosses a constantly moving set of magical beams (think of a laser maze like the one in *Ocean's Twelve*). He says that he got the best wizard in town to make it, which is a potential cue to the players to seek the wizard.

Third, the valuables are in a **locked vault** that requires a unique key to open, which he has dangling around his neck. However, they already have the forgery from Shank, which short of a DC 25 Intelligence (Perception) check, appears to be indistinguishable.

If the party decides to gamble with him, you can improvise some dice-based process for them to win and lose money. If they follow Rivers at the end of the evening, he will go (with his bodyguards) to check in with the guard at the front of the warehouse but does not go in before heading over to his house on the other side of town.

Chapter 4: Infiltration

This encounter can go down at just about every step, but the end result should be that the party attempts to infiltrate and take the Eagle, but they should either end up captured or discover that the Eagle is not actually in the vault. It should take 30 minutes to an hour.



The **warehouse** is a 30'x70' (6x14 squares) wooden building with big, unlocked, loading barn doors at the front. The warehouse is against the **city wall** on one side and against another warehouse on the other, so there are access points to the roof about 30' up. There is a skylight into the entry hallway on the roof.

There is a **single guard out front**, and he is not particularly loyal or brave. The party is welcome to persuade, bribe, sneak past, knock out, fight, or do whatever else they want to get in. However, there is also a **second guard patrolling the building** and others in earshot, so the group should plan to hide the body and all go inside. However, if anything goes wrong, they will attempt to run for help. This challenge should be easier than described.

Inside, the second challenge is as difficult as described. Despite being just a warehouse from the outside, the inside has an entry hallway (50 feet long) that is fully enclosed even within the bigger warehouse. It has fancy marble tiles and a variety of busts and other antiques and is clearly where Rivers welcomes most of his guests and does business. The door on the far end is unlocked.

The entry hallway has a laser floor that will trigger blaring alarms and bring the guards. There is a panel on the far side that will turn off the laser floor, but since it is at night, it will only disable it for about 10 seconds before it re-enables (you can cue the group by having the hum of the lasers start up again). This should force the entire party to move forward together.

The most obvious way to traverse it is to have a nimble character just try to run across. Since the room is 50 feet long, then the character can either move quickly with 2 DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks to make it across or move slowly with 3 DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks to make it across.

Another option is just to break through one of the sidewalls into the rest of the warehouse. It's a DC 15 Strength check to break through, but you can note that since the walls appear to be lined with marble, then when you tap on it the first time to aim, it is actually quite loud. If on any attempt, they roll below a 10, then it will alert the guards, and they will have maybe 30

seconds to clear the room before guards storm in.

The players may also attempt social engineering before entering the warehouse to learn about it from the wizard **Will** who created the trap. Let them be clever in the experience, and assuming they roll well enough, they will learn that he built a backdoor for himself by saying “**Dandelions**” to temporarily disable it.

Your players may come up with other creative options, though, so you can just go along with whatever they try to do. Make the rolls tough and fair, and don't be afraid to have them fail and send them to the next encounter.

Finally, they will encounter the vault. If they use the forged key from Shank, it breaks in the lock, and the alarm goes off. If not, they can either try to pick the lock with a DC 10 Dexterity (thieves' tools) check or brute force it with a DC 20 Strength check. If they fail, alarms blare and they are captured by an overwhelming number of guards.

If they succeed in some other way, they find assorted art around the walls. There are seven marble statues (each valued around 200 GP but also quite heavy) and 3 rolled up paintings (each valued around 100 GP). The main focus, however, is **a single crate inside the vault**. When they open it, they discover that it is empty except for a note that says, “Sorry this isn't it Frank, but if you're reading this note, you didn't stick to the deal.”

Tied Up

Should the players manage to escape, skip ahead to the next chapter and have Shank catch up with them and take them to his safehouse to hide for a few hours. Otherwise, the party will be knocked out and tied up in the warehouse. Narrate the following:

You wake up to the voice of Frank Rivers. “So you're saying that I had a bunch of thieves break in and mess up my security system for something I didn't even have? Well that's a load of centaur dung if I ever heard it.” Heavy footsteps stomp off into the distance. “What a wimp,” you hear another voice mumble. “I bet he wouldn't say that if he knew I was the best brawler in town. He would-HEY! They're awake.” The guard walks over to you. “Just hang on tight. When my buddies are done, they will be back to take care of you.”

The party is tied up with a rope around all of them sitting on the floor of the warehouse entry hallway. All of their armor and weapons have been removed and are thrown in a pile in the corner.

Give the party plenty of ways to figure out how to escape, and as usual, say yes with a risk to whatever they propose. Possible options include:

- Someone taking up the guard on the challenge to brawl with a Persuasion or Intimidation check (probably a Fighter or Monk)
- Slipping out of the ropes with a Stealth or Sleight of Hand check (the Rogue)
- Casting an illusion to lure away the guards (Wizard, Bard)
- Persuading or goading the guards (anyone)
- Using brute strength to break the ropes

This encounter should be relatively easy but be a minor speed bump.

Chapter 5: Game Time

This chapter is the real attempt to get the Eagle from an ale barrel at the Red Ring Inn and should take an hour.

As soon as the party is out of danger, they hear a “psst” from an alley. Shank gestures for them to follow: hopefully the party agrees, and Shank leads them through a maze around the city to his house, which the party can use as a hideout. The group may not trust Shank, but Shank explains that the jester on the coin meant that the party was the decoy. Additionally, he will tell them that Boyer is also with him and needs their help. A Wisdom (Inspiration) check will confirm that.

At Shank’s safehouse, the party finds a wounded Boyer. Although she has been mostly paralyzed by poison, she is lucid and stabilized.

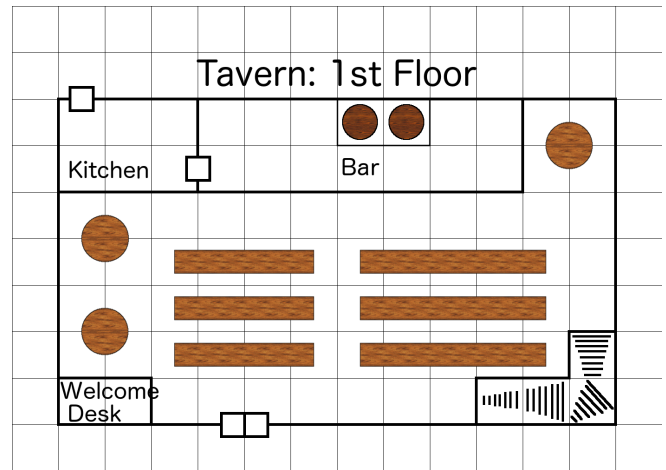
Boyer will explain everything. Specifically, she explains that the party was the distraction for her and Hadley. The party sprung the trap while she and Boyer ambushed **an ale shipment with the actual Eagle**. However, the mission went awry when the shipment had extra guards (possibly because Macalus was tipped off to their presence), and her partner was killed. She barely managed to escape and make it back to Shank.

Since she is incapacitated, she tasks the party with destroying the Eagle. Now that Macalus knows that the shipment and decoy were attacked, they will likely move it again soon, so the party must go as soon as possible. If asked, she describes the Eagle as a gold eagle roughly the size of a soccer ball.

Hopefully the group has figured it out, but through Shank, you can lead them to the realization that the Eagle must be hidden in a **barrel at the Red Ring Inn**.

Now, the scene should change into a heist-planning session. Provide the players with as

much detail as you can about the situation and let them plan it out.



Here are key details you can use:

- The Inn is 60x35 (12x7 squares) has 2 floors: a giant eating area, kitchen, and welcome desk on the first floor and 7 rooms on the second floor
- There is the front door and a loading door through the kitchen
- Boyer expects there to be many plain clothes guards at the bar (equal to twice the number of players) based on the shipment guard
- Several guards in the crowd, but at least 2 are posted in the kitchen
- Depending on how challenging you want the encounter to be, the guards may have poisoned weapons that will cause paralysis on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw
- There’s typically live music, and with the harvest festival, it will be a loud evening
- There were 6 barrels in the contraption that dispenses ale behind the bar
- On the second floor, 3 rooms are vacant, and 4 are occupied (and locked). One of the locked rooms doesn’t respond if they knock because that room is used by the guards as a field office
- Rivers is also quite annoyed that he got a fake Eagle and may be a good ally. Should the party approach him, he can offer distractions but will not provide guards or do anything overtly aggressive

Through Shank, give the party as much information as they need to concoct a cool plan. Make sure they also have an escape plan.

Many players try to burn down the tavern. If that sounds fun to you, let them go for it. If you want something more creative, Shank suggests that it may be interpreted as an act of aggression and break open this cold war.

When you run the heist, add exactly one twist from known information to surprise the party. Otherwise, let the dice dictate the situation, and do what seems cool.

Escape

Depending on how the situation in the inn goes, their escape plan, and how much time you have in your session, you can add another scene to escape the city.

You bust out of the inn and quickly glance about. The road to the south is a direct route towards the gate, but it appears to be lit up ahead, potentially by other guards. The road to the east looks quieter and potentially safer, but it will be a much longer route to the exit. Which way do you want to go?

One possible setup is to have the party do a **skills challenge**: narrate them through a variety of situations and challenges, and ask the players to make choices that require use of their skills. Let them be creative, and you can set the DC depending on how plausible their task is. If they get 3 successes, they will escape. However, if they get 3 failures first, they will be caught. Here are a few suggestions of potential challenges you can present and how the players might try to resolve them:

- Up ahead, you see 2 dogs sleeping on their owners' porch (Animal Handling)
- In the alleyway, you see a fence that you could attempt to hop over (Acrobatics)
- You turn the corner to see 2 city guards in front of you. They haven't yet heard the men

chasing you. One of them asks you, "Now where might you be going in such a hurry tonight?" (Deception)

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This is the end of the adventure and should leave the players feeling accomplished. It should take less than 10 minutes.

Assuming the party is able to make it out of Pamar, cut straight back to Emerald's office in the Ghosts Keep to report the outcome of the mission.

Spymaster Emerald's office looks roughly about the same as when you first saw it. The décor is all the same, and you see Emerald, Kite, and Boyer waiting for you. Boyer sits relaxed in a chair with salves over her injuries, and she sighs when you enter, perhaps in reminiscence of her lost partner. Emerald speaks first. "Boyer caught the quick trip back and debriefed us up to when she last saw you. What happened after that?"

Emerald reacts appreciatively of the party in both success and failure unless they really went off the rails. He doesn't mention having used the party as bait unless they bring it up. In that case, he simply explains, "That's the life of a Ghost. Everything is on a need to know basis. There is no glory, but know that the crown is forever grateful for your work, both in life and death."

Wrap up any loose ends, and that's it for the adventure. To leave your party on a cliffhanger, have Emerald say, "So, are you ready for your next mission?" Then, close the adventure and call it a night.

Congratulation on running a complete one-shot adventure!

If you have any questions, feedback, errata, or stories about running this adventure, feel free to contact me at kkleung89@gmail.com. I would love to hear your take on it, and I hope you and your players enjoyed the experience!

Appendix 1: Monster Stats

GUARD

Medium humanoid, Lawful Neutral

Armor Class 16 (chain shirt, shield)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

ACTIONS

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack* Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage

GOBLIN

Small humanoid (goblinoid), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (leather armor, shield)

Hit Points 7 (2d6)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Stealth +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

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

ACTIONS

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320ft. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage

Half-Orc Fighter (Outlander)

Born to an Orc and a human, Holg was never fully accepted into his Orcish tribe. As much as he tried and strong as he became, he never could overcome his weaker nature and was cast out of his tribe while still young. He learned quickly to survive out in the wilderness and realized he could only depend on himself. While wandering through the forest one day, he encountered a caravan under attack by goblins and quickly came to their aid. The grateful caravan master taught him the basics of speaking Common and human courtesy in exchange for his guard duty and knowledge of navigating the wilderness. When his mentor was killed several years later, Holg found himself without a job and was recruited into the Ghosts to find new purpose in his life.

To play Holg, just charge in, take the hits, and use your greataxe. Your high armor class and hit points make you an ideal tank for the party, but if you get in trouble, use your Second Wind and Relentless Endurance to keep fighting.

Half-Orc Traits

Darkvision. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light.

Relentless Endurance (Recharges after a Long Rest). When you are reduced to 0 hit points but not killed outright, you can drop to 1 hit point instead.

Savage Attacks. When you score a critical hit with a melee weapon attack, you can roll one of the weapon's damage dice one additional time and add it to the extra damage of the critical hit.

Fighter Features

Fighting Style: Defense. +1 bonus to AC when I'm wearing armor.

Second Wind. On your turn, you can use a bonus action to regain 1d10 + 1 hit points. Once you use this feature, you must finish a short or long rest before you can use it again.

Medium humanoid (Half-Orc), Chaotic Good

Armor Class 17 (Chain Mail, Defense Fighting Style)

Hit Points 13 (1d10 + 3)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Proficiencies (+2 proficiency bonus)

Saving Throws Str +5, Con +5

Skills Athletics +5, Animal Handling +3, Perception +3, Survival +3, Intimidation +4

Armor All, shields

Weapons Simple, martial

Tools Flute

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Orc, Goblin

ACTIONS

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit *Hit:* 1d12 + 3 slashing damage

Handaxe. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 20/60ft. *Hit:* 1d6 + 3 slashing damage

BONUS ACTIONS

Second Wind. Regain 1d10 + 1 hit points.

Equipment

Greataxe, handaxe (2), chain mail, explorer's pack, 1 potion of healing, money (10 gp)

Halfling Rogue (Urchin)

Bree is most comfortable living out on the streets where she knows how life works. Abandoned as a child, she depended on the kindness of strangers and a network of other similarly unlucky folk to survive. In the city, she saw the rich and poor live side-by-side, and she took it into her own nimble hands to provide aid to the needy from those who would never notice anything missing. On the streets, she met plenty of unsavory and dishonest people, but she always kept a charitable heart remembering the many honest people out there. One day, she happened to see a particularly valuable item that she knew she must have, and in her excitement, she was less than careful in studying her target, who was waiting for a pickpocket to show up. Caught red-handed, Bree's skills were quickly put to new use in the service of the Ghosts.

To play Bree, use Rogue skills to sneak around and break into places you shouldn't be. Should it come to battle, let someone else take the hits while you weave in and out to maximize damage using your Sneak Attack with your short sword or bow. Should you happen to roll a 1, your Halfling Lucky trait will allow you to roll that over again.

Halfling Traits

Halfling Nimbleness. You can move through the space of any creature that is of a size larger than yours.

Lucky. When you roll a 1 on an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, you can reroll the die and must use the new roll.

Brave. You have advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Naturally Stealthy. You can attempt to hide even when you are obscured by a creature that is at least one size larger than you.

Small humanoid (lightfoot halfling), Neutral Good

Armor Class 14 (Leather)

Hit Points 9 (1d8 + 1)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)

Proficiencies (+2 proficiency bonus)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Int +3

Skills Acrobatics +5, Deception +5, Investigation +3, Persuasion +5, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +7

Tools thieves' tools +7

Armor Light

Weapons Simple, hand crossbows, longswords, rapiers, shortswords

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Halfling, thieves' cant

ACTIONS

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit *Hit:* 1d6 + 3 piercing damage

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 20/60 ft. *Hit:* 1d4 + 3 piercing damage

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 20/60ft. *Hit:* 1d6 + 3 piercing damage

BONUS ACTIONS

Two-Weapon Fighting. You may attack with both your shortsword and dagger during your turn. The damage from the dagger is only 1d4, not 1d4 + 3.

OPTIONS

Halfling Nimbleness. Halfling Trait

Lucky. Halfling Trait

Sneak Attack. Rogue Feature

Rogue Features

Sneak Attack. Once per turn, you can deal an extra 1d6 damage to one creature you hit with an attack if you have advantage on the attack roll. You don't need advantage on the attack roll if another enemy of the target is within 5 feet of it, that enemy isn't incapacitated, and you don't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Equipment

Shortsword, 2 daggers, shortbow, 20 arrows, leather armor, thieves' tools, burglar's pack, 1 potion of healing, money (10 gp)

Gnome Wizard (Charlatan)

Alvyn never could resist a good trick. While his classmates were learning how to tinker with machines or use their magic constructively, Alvyn was making goblin illusions jump out of the outhouse and blowing gusts of wind through stacks of scrolls. When he left his village to go to the big city, he found few people who shared his sense of humor and little place for his childish antics in the harsh reality of the world. On the other hand, he also found that his illusions could tap into the fears of the rich and powerful and bring a bit more joy and levity to the world. Recently, however, Alvyn picked the wrong mark for one of his cons and was quickly caught. Deciding not to spend his life in prison, he took an offer to join the Ghosts instead and use his skills for someone else's, more dangerous, but also more exciting, purposes.

To play Alvyn, use your illusion magic and charm to confuse, bewilder, and disable your enemies. Out of combat, use your spells to charm and distract your opponents. In combat, stand back and use your Firebolt and Magic Missile to do damage from afar. If you're surrounded, use your Sleep spell to render your enemies (but hopefully not your allies) unconscious.

Gnome Traits

Gnome Cunning. You have advantage on all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.

Speak with Small Beasts. Through sounds and gestures, you can communicate simple ideas with Small or smaller beasts. Forest gnomes love animals and often keep squirrels, badgers, rabbits, moles, woodpeckers, and other creatures as beloved pets.

Wizard Features

Spellcasting Ability. You have the ability to cast spells. Intelligence is your spellcasting ability for your wizard spells.

Small humanoid (Forest Gnome), Chaotic Good

Armor Class 11 (Unarmored)

Hit Points 7 (1d6 + 1)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)

Proficiencies (+2 proficiency bonus)

Saving Throws Int +5, Wis +1

Skills Arcana +5, Deception +5, History +5, Sleight of Hand +3

Weapons Dagger, dart, light crossbow, quarterstaff, sling

Tools Disguise kit, forgery kit

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages Common, Gnomish

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 20/60 ft. *Hit:* 1d4 + 1 piercing damage

Firebolt. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, range 120ft. *Hit:* 1d10 fire damage

OPTIONS

Spellcasting. You are a spellcaster (wizard feature) who uses Intelligence as your spellcasting ability (spell save DC 13; +5 to hit with spell attacks). You know the following spells:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt**, *friends**, *minor illusion**, *prestidigitation**

1st Level (2 slots): *charm person*, *color spray*, *disguise self**, *magic missile**, *silent image**, *sleep**

* prepared

You prepare the list of wizard spells that are available for you to cast. To do so, choose 4 spells. The spells must be of a level for which you have spell slots.

To cast a non-cantrip spell, you must expend a spell slot. You regain all expended spell slots when you finish a long rest.

Arcane Recovery. Once per day when you finish a short rest, you can choose expended spell slots to recover. The spell slots can have a combined level equal to or less than 1.

Equipment

Dagger, spellbook, disguise kit, scholar's pack, 1 potion of healing, money (15 gp)

Dwarf Cleric (Criminal)

Torgga grew up in a monastery learning traditional and divine methods of healing. Like many monasteries (and Dwarves ones in particular), they brewed potent beers as a way of sustaining their land and lifestyle. Torgga paid little attention to this business until her closest friend informed her that a secret buyer was willing to pay much more for their beer, leaving a fair share for the monastery and a bit for them as well. She began secretly redirecting shipments and quickly became embroiled in the black market. In a trade gone wrong, an unfaithful, angered buyer killed her friend, and Torgga was in the middle of it. The monastery abandoned her, but she retained her training and was determined never to let another life be taken so crudely and joined the Ghosts to redeem herself.

To play Torgga, use your spells to provide protection and aid for others. Before a battle, cast Bless on your allies. When they get in trouble, use Cure Wounds to heal them and Sanctuary to protect them. And if you ever get tired of spells, go toe-to-toe with your enemies using your warhammer and shield.

Dwarf Traits

Darkvision. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light.

Stonecunning. You have a +4 bonus on Intelligence (History) checks related to the origin of stonework.

Cleric Features

Life Domain. The Life domain focuses on the vibrant positive energy—one of the fundamental forces of the universe—that sustains all life. You gain a number of domain spells, which are always considered to be prepared, as a result of this domain. In addition, you have access to the following features:

Medium humanoid (Hill Dwarf), Life domain, Lawful Good

Armor Class 18 (Chain Mail, Shield)

Hit Points 12 (1d8 + 3)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)

Proficiencies (+2 proficiency bonus)

Saving Throws Wis +5, Cha +3

Skills Deception +3, Medicine +5, Religion +2, Stealth +1

Armor All, shields

Weapons Simple, battleaxe, warhammer

Tools Thieves' tools, brewer's supplies

Damage Resistances poison

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Dwarvish

ACTIONS

Warhammer. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit *Hit:* 1d8 + 1 bludgeoning damage

Sling. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, range 30/120ft. *Hit:* 1d4 - 1 bludgeoning damage

OPTIONS

Spellcasting. You are a spellcaster (cleric feature) who uses Wisdom as your spellcasting ability (spell save DC 13; +5 to hit with spell attacks). You have the following spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*

1st Level (2 slots): *bless*, create or destroy water, cure wounds*, inflict wounds, sanctuary, shield of faith*

* domain spell (Life Domain)

Disciple of Life. When you cast a spell of 1st level or higher to restore hit points to a creature, the creature regains additional hit points equal to 2 + the spell's level.

Spellcasting. Drawing on the divine essence of nature, you can cast spells to shape that essence to your will.

Equipment

Warhammer, sling, bullets (20), chain mail, shield, reliquary holy symbol, priest's pack, potion of healing, money (20 gp)

Human Monk (Noble)

Ivor grew up with every comfort imaginable, every need satisfied. Born into a wealthy merchant family, Ivor didn't encounter poverty until he went with his father to the market on his 13th birthday. Shocked by the desperation he saw in the streets, he ran away to join a monastic order. He shunned all worldly possession and focused inwards on the studies of the martial arts and great philosophers of the past. After a decade of training, he realized that his studies had done little to alleviate the suffering of the poor. Then, he decided to rejoin the world with his newfound talents to right any wrongs he found. The Ghosts, having watched him closely over the years, picked him up as a new recruit.

To play Ivor, just dish out massive damage by attacking with both your shortsword and unarmed strike each turn. You are also somewhat evasive and durable, so you should feel comfortable running in but probably shouldn't be the primary target.

Monk Features

Martial Arts. When you use the Attack action with an unarmed strike or a monk weapon on your turn, you can make one unarmed strike as a bonus action.

Unarmored Defense. While you wear no armor and wield no shield, your AC equals 10 + your Dex modifier + your Wis modifier.

Equipment

Shortsword, darts (10), scroll of pedigree, explorer's pack, potion of healing, money (25 gp)

Medium humanoid (Human), Lawful Good

Armor Class 15 (Unarmored Defense)

Hit Points 10 (1d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	9 (-1)

Proficiencies (+2 proficiency bonus)

Saving Throws Str +5, Dex +5

Skills Acrobatics +5, History +2, Insight +4, Persuasion +1

Weapons Simple, shortswords

Tools Calligrapher's tools, Dice set

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Elvish, Dwarvish

ACTIONS

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit *Hit:* 1d6 + 3 piercing damage

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit *Hit:* 1d4 + 3 bludgeoning damage

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

BONUS ACTIONS

Martial Arts. Monk feature.

Drow Elf Bard (Entertainer)

Caelynn speaks little of her childhood with the Dark Elves in the Underdark and prefers to talk about her life on the surface. She has performed in taverns across the realms over the decades of her long, Elvish life. Although most are wary of her dark skin, her light-hearted nature contrasts strongly with stereotypes of her kin, and an epic performed on her lute can win over the hearts of even the most stoic Dwarves. And even though she is often the center of attention on a rowdy evening, she still leaves others a bit uneasy when the music ends and remains an outsider no matter where she goes. Blamed as the scapegoat for a crime she didn't commit, Caelynn was enlisted by the Ghosts to use her talents now in battles and not taverns.

To play Caelynn, figure out what your team needs and do it. Use your Bardic Inspiration to sing a song and help your allies on their rolls. Use your Healing Word to heal them from far away. Use your offensive spells to mock your opponents to death with a string of insults. Just avoid taking hits yourself if possible.

Elf Traits

Fey Ancestry. You have advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put you to sleep.

Darkvision. You can see in dim light within 120 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light.

Sunlight Sensitivity. You have disadvantage on attack rolls and on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight when you, the target of your attack, or you are trying to perceive is in direct sunlight.

Bard Features

Spellcasting Ability. You have the ability to cast spells. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for your bard spells. You use your Charisma whenever a spell refers to your spellcasting ability.

Medium humanoid (Drow Elf), Lawful Neutral

Armor Class 14 (Leather)

Hit Points 7 (1d8 - 1)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

Proficiencies (+2 proficiency bonus)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Cha +5

Skills Acrobatics +5, Deception +5, Perception +3, Performance +5, Persuasion +5, Stealth +5

Armor Light

Weapons Simple, hand crossbow, longsword, rapier, shortsword

Tools Disguise kit, drum, flute, lute, horn

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Elvish, Undercommon

ACTIONS

Hand crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, range 30/120 ft. Hit: 1d6 + 3 piercing damage

Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, range 20/60 ft. Hit: 1d4 + 1 piercing damage

BONUS ACTIONS

Bardic Inspiration. Add a d6 to a creature's ability check, attack roll, or saving throw.

OPTIONS

Spellcasting. You are a spellcaster (bard feature) who uses Charisma as your spellcasting ability (spell save DC 13; +5 to hit with spell attacks). You know the following spells:

Cantrips (at will): *friends*, *dancing lights* (Drow Magic), *vicious mockery*

1st Level (2 slots): *disguise self*, *dissonant whispers*, *healing word*, *tasha's hideous laughter*

Bardic Inspiration. You may use a bonus action on your turn to choose one creature other than yourself within 60 feet of you who can hear you. That creature gains one Bardic Inspiration die, a d6. Once within the next 10 minutes, the creature can roll the die and add the number rolled to one ability check, attack roll, or saving throw it makes. You can use this feature 3 times before taking a long rest.

Equipment

Hand crossbow, bolts (20), dagger, leather armor, lute, costume, entertainer's pack, potion of healing, money (15 gp)