

[Excerpt from] On the House

A One-Round D&D Living Kingdoms of Kalamar Adventure
for characters 1st-7th level

Written by Alana and Tom Abbott

A quarrel between a member of the Alewives Guild and the Porters Guild leads to a bet--and a job--for adventurers. The result is an adventure of derring-do, daring-don't, and back breaking labor for the Man...

<synopsis cut>

INTRODUCTION

In which our adventurers overhear an argument and are engaged in a bet.

DM NOTE: Be sure to know which meta-orgs or guilds the PCs are members of before the start of the game. Because this module deals heavily with guild politics, their alliances and contacts may be drawn on over the course of the module.

The drizzle that has been continuous for the last several days is coming down a little harder than usual this afternoon. To avoid the rain, you and several other adventurers have decided to make your way to the Laughing Bed for the warmth of drinks and good conversation.

As you reach the inn, you hear loud shouts of an argument coming from the inn's side door. A glance into the alley way next to the inn reveals a large Fhokki woman yelling into the face of a bulky half-hobgoblin, who is returning yells with equal fervor. A smashed crate lies near their feet.

Because both NPCs are yelling in different languages simultaneously, it will take some concentration to figure out what they're saying. PCs who speak Fhokki or Kargi make listen checks DC 15 to decipher each one.

<stat blocks added from appendix>

Sorcía, Female human Exp9: CR 8; Size M (5 ft., 4 in. tall); HD 9d6+9; hp 47; Init +0 (+0 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 10 (+0 Dex); Attack +8/+3 melee(1d6+1/x2 sap), or +6/+1 ranged; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +9; SQ: Metaorg bonuses; AL NG; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 13.

Languages spoken: Fhokki, Low Kalamaran, Merchant's Tongue,

Skills and Feats: Appraise +11, Bluff +10, Diplomacy +18, Gather Information +17, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (Pekal) +12, Knowledge (Bet Rogala) +14, Profession (brewer) +19, Sense Motive +13, Speak Language (Dwarven, Low Elven, Gnomish,

Hobgoblin-Kargi, Dejy, Brandobian), Spot +16; Martial Weapon Proficiency (Sap), Skill Focus (Profession: Brewer), Endurance, Weapon Focus (Sap), Great Fortitude
Special Qualities: Head Alewife: Gains +2 vs alcohol, +2 Fort Saves, +5 Diplomacy, +4 Gather Information, and free drinks at the Laughing Bed.
Possessions: Sap, pouch with 50 gp

Kyshk Yakkik, male half-hobgoblin Exp4: CR 3; Size M (6 ft., 0 in. tall); HD 4d6+12; hp 30; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 armor); Attack +6 melee(1d6+3/x2 club), or +4 ranged(club); SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +5; SQ: Metaorg bonuses; AL LN; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Languages spoken: Merchant's Tongue, Kargi

Skills and Feats: Balance +8, Bluff +7, Diplomacy +7, Handle Animal +7, Intimidate +10, Profession (porter) +8, Skill Focus (Intimidate), Endurance,

Special Qualities: Porter Supervisor: 20% discount on healing at the Temple of Silver Linings, +2 on Intimidate when with another guild member, can summon 2d3 guild members when calling for help

Possessions: Club, leather armor

Yakkik, in Kargi: "This never would have happened under the Old Innkeeper. Man knew how to keep his place--which is something you and your people ought to learn if you don't want the guild coming down on you..."

Sorcia, in Fhokki: "You stupid, useless oaf! You and the guild have overcharged me for the last time. You abuse my people and how dare you tell me to mind my place!"

If the PCs step in at this point, the two continue to argue. Each may, in fact, glare at the PCs for interrupting, or react to them in some other fashion based on the discretion of the Judge. The argument continues in Merchant's Tongue and can be understood by anyone who speaks that language.

The Fhokki woman looks at the half-hob coldly. "Are you threatening me?"

The half-hob shrugs, less than intimidated by her icy tone. "Not a threat so much as a statement. We don't so much like folk who don't give us our due and stay clear of our work."

This sets the Fhokki woman's fury off anew. "If you would do the job well, there wouldn't be an issue. As it is, any half-brained band of adventurers would do the job better than you!"

Though this isn't exactly an invitation for the adventurers to step in, it is possible they'll volunteer at this point. They may also attempt to quell the argument at this point (diplomacy, DC 20+ATL). If they succeed, proceed to the facts behind the argument. If not, the argument continues.

Though a half-hobgoblin's face is difficult to read, the porter's expression appears almost smug. "Any half-brained band of adventurers, you say?"

The Fhokki woman violently crosses her arms, and her jaw juts out with stubbornness. "I'd bet on it."

"Well then," says the porter, gesturing broadly to your group, "why don't we put it to the test?" He bows, somewhat mockingly, in your direction. "Assuming, of course, that you adventurers are half-brained and willing?"

Adventurers accept? Sorcia invites them and Yakkik inside to discuss the terms of the bet.

Adventurers decline? The module is over.

NOTE: If one of the adventurers is a member of the Porters Guild, Yakkik recognizes them and pulls them aside on the way in to the Laughing Bed, requesting that the PC keep their membership a secret--a sure way for the Porters to win the bet!

As the Fhokki woman, who introduces herself as Sorcia--the owner of the Laughing Bed, leads you all to one of the few empty tables in the Laughing Bed, the half-hobgoblin whistles. A nervous-looking human male of mixed heritage and a dwarf soon join you.

"I'm Kyshk Yakkik, and these are my boys Bloran" he gestures to the dwarf "and Twitch." The nervous-looking man waves. Yakkik nods to Sorcia. "Well then, tell them your gripes..."

- Sorcia claims that the Porters Guild is charging her more than other inns for their services. She indicates that she believes it is because she is a human woman running the establishment.
- Yakkik assures the adventurers that Sorcia's rates are the same rates they would charge any new owner of an inn who hasn't yet proven to be a reliable employer.
- Sorcia says that her staff is poorly treated by members of the Porters Guild and cites inappropriate use of language (calling female members of her wait-staff wenches and etc.), attempted intimidation, and three counts of brawling by members of the guild in the past two months.
- Yakkik claims that Sorcia's staff members continuously get in the way of the Porters, who are just trying to do their jobs and receive their payment. He also states that she has been late with payment twice in the past four months, and that once didn't pay the full value of the contract.
- Sorcia counters that she shorted the value of the contract because the goods were delivered late and damaged--something she is tempted to do again tonight due to the broken crate in her alley (which she sent her staff to bring in to the kitchen).
- Sorcia claims that the Porters Guild has been increasing their prices over the past three weeks. (The PCs have likely heard this rumor around town. They may have

noticed price fluctuations in the market as well.) If this continues, she and others will have a hard time staying in business.

- Yakkik says that rates do increase from time to time, but this is a reflection

A Sense Motive check DC 10 reveals that both Sorcia and Yakkik are completely honest in what they say, in that they both believe what they are saying and they both believe the other is in the wrong. Both also feel that a bet is a good way to settle the argument; if Sorcia wins, the Porters will reduce their rates by 10% for a year, but if the Porters win, they will increase their rates by 10% for a year. Twitch, the nervous-looking human, seems a bit dubious about the proceedings, but that could just be his nature.

The job covered by the bet involves:

- Pick-up of a shipment: 18 casks of *celaar* (Reanaarian Ale) from Baneta.
- Payment is a flat rate of 80 Victories, which will cover all of their expenses as well as their individual payment. Sorcia expects the *celaar* to cost 65 Victories.
- The ship carrying the *Celaar* is the *Akalaaser*, the captain of which is Alemar Seetoov. The PCs must contact the captain when they reach Baneta and purchase the *celaar* from him.
- The PCs are expected to hire a wagon. Yakkik interjects that this wagon must be hired without the aid of any member of the Porters Guild or the bet is defunct.
- The PCs must meet with the Captain in one week; as travel to Baneta on foot takes nearly seven days (possibly a full seven days for anyone traveling at a speed of 20), they should arrive in Baneta on the day they are to meet with the Captain.
- The cargo must be back in Bet Rogala by nineteen days from the day they are meeting. This allows ten days for the return travel, as a cart or wagon travels more slowly and takes ten days to return from Baneta.
- Sorcia volunteers to allow the PCs to stay the night at the Laughing Bed before they begin, as typically traveling porters use the Porters Guild house for housing--a resource unavailable to the PCs--and because she has rooms available.

The adventurers may choose at this point not to take this job, in which case the module is over. If they accept the job, Sorcia presents them with all of the appropriate paperwork they will need to pick up the cargo, as well as the 80 victories up front, and a contract which she requires them to sign. She has the adventurers sign a second copy of the contract, which she keeps for herself.

Yakkik, Bloran, and Twitch leave the table after the negotiations are complete, but PCs may notice that Twitch seems to want to speak with them. If they appear to intend to leave the inn, he will catch them as they leave to speak with them. If they look as though they will stay the night, Twitch comes back to talk to them. If one of the members of the Porters Guild is among them, he will address them first. (Twitch speaks low Kalamaran and Merchant's Tongue.)

"Pardon," says Twitch. "Don't mean to be interruptin' high-brow adventurers and what not, but, well, y'see..." He sighs, turning a small cloth hat around and around

in his hands. 'It's like this. 'S true, what she says--Guild has been raisin' prices her in Bet Rogala. No denyin' it. No one does. Thing is, haven't seen any sort o' increase in my own health and well bein' as part of it, y'know?'

Note: If one of the adventurers is also a porter, Twitch will entreat them to support him on this.

"So, Kyshk, he's lookin' to move on up the ranks. Swank half-hob like him shouldn't have problems. Only he believes whatever his boss tells him, not thinkin' straight as he's lookin' to move up. Y'see? I been thinkin' that maybe the extra costs is goin' to line someone else's coffer, y'know? No good sense in raising prices all over town 'less someone's benefittin'. Anyhow. To my thinkin', the Guild House in Baneta might have choice words about that sort of thing happenin' up here. Since you're headed down... you think you might pop in for a lark? Just see if they've heard of the increase? If it's guild wide? I'd be much obliged. So would the boys. Us on the low rungs don't hear much about what's goin' up--just pay our dues and do what work as comes, y'know?'"

If the PCs agree to do this, Twitch gives them the Guild House address in Baneta. He warns them that Yakkik has most likely already sent a runner to Baneta to alert them that scabs are coming down--so it may take creative work on their part to start any conversation with the guild bosses. He also gives them the name of a guild member who just transferred to Baneta--Lamorga Nanazi, a Svimovish woman. He asks that his name be left out of any discussions they have though--he doesn't want to be dismissed from the guild for causing trouble. If any of the adventurers are members of the Porters Guild, he wishes them the best of luck, and wishes them the blessings of the Traveler and the Fate Scribe on their journey.

DM Note: *Celaar* sells for 1 Seefarth per mug. It is very potent; if players choose to indulge in it at any point in the game, they should roll a fortitude check DC 13 or lose 1d3 wis/1d3 dex for the course of the evening.

The PCs may spend the evening as they choose, gathering information, making contacts with the various guilds they belong to in order to arrange for transportation or other possible advantages. They may also leave early, getting a head start on their progress to Baneta.

Shrewd players will find ways to cut expenses on their travel to and from Baneta to maximize the amount they are paid. However, the Judge should make them aware of every expense as they come to it, and any group allied with the Porters Guild will make it difficult or expensive for the adventurers to proceed. This should be played at the Judge's discretion; feel free to make the players roll dice for diplomacy, intimidation, or various other techniques as seems appropriate.

Yakkik loses no time in alerting the rest of the Porters Guild to their situation. Any PC who decides to keep an eye on the porter sees him immediately approach other Local

Lifters working in the area and sees them all go in separate directions, spreading the word as quickly as possible.

<encounter 1, cut>

Encounter 2

In which our adventurers discover it's not what you know, it's who you know

Arrival in Baneta is not everything the PCs could hope for. Though it is easy enough to find the docks district, finding people who will talk to them is difficult. The sailors and dock hands seem to have been alerted to the quarrel between the adventurers and the Porters Guild, and the PCs are summarily ignored by all the workers they encounter.

The day is warm, and the sun shines brilliantly on the water at the docks of Baneta. Many sailors and dock hands are unloading and loading cargo into large sailing ships with banks of oars. From down the river a short distance you can hear the whistles, shouts, and pounding of men working on boats that have been damaged in the war.

Though the docks are filled with workers, it seems impossible to get any of them to notice you. What you first took to be preoccupation with work seems more likely to be purposeful ignorance of your existence, as a few sailors on board one of the ships seem to share a laugh in your general direction. A Svimohzish woman works diligently on one of the unloading crews, but she never looks in your direction and seems intent on not noticing you.

In fact, the only person whose obliviousness seems honest is a young Kalamaran girl wearing a bright blue hat that flops down one side of her face due to the weight of a rather large feather. Her bright red hair is tied back in a braid, and she sits on a piling just out of the way of the stream of workers, scratching notes with a quill on a paper on her lap.

This Kalamaran girl is Nali KuKira, a young student at the Bardic College. She is scratching down notes on the songs being sung by the sailors as they work, and she has begun work translating the various whistles the sailors use to communicate to each other. Nali, though a bard, is very shy unless she is performing, and tends to hide behind her hand while she talks.

<stat block inserted from appendix>

Nali KuKira: Female, Kalamaran, Brd 5: CR 5; Size M (5 ft., 5 in. tall); HD 5d6+5; hp 27; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+2 Dex, +2 armor); Attack +6 melee(1d6+2/18-20/x2 masterwork rapier), or +5 ranged(1d10/19-20/x2 heavy crossbow); SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +4; SQ: bardic knowledge, bardic music 5/day, countersong, fascinate, inspire courage +1, inspire competence; AL CG; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 17.

Languages spoken: Merchant's Tongue, Low Kalamaran, Low Elven, Reanarrian

Skills and Feats: Balance +2, Bluff +8, Concentration +9, Decipher Script +3, Diplomacy +6, Disguise +6, Gather Information +11, Hide +4, Listen +8, Move Silently +5, Perform (lyre) +14, Perform (sing) +11, Perform (whistle) +8, Spellcraft +8, Tumble +5 Skill Focus (Perform: Lyre), Weapon Finesse (rapier), Combat Casting

Special Qualities: Countersong (Su): Nali can counter magical effects that depend on sound by making a Perform check for each round of countersong. Any creature within 30 feet of Nali who is affected by a sonic or language-dependent magical attack may use the bard's Perform check result in place of his or her saving throw if desired. Countersong lasts for 10 rounds

Fascinate(Sp): Nali can cause up to 2 creatures within 90 feet that can see and hear her to become fascinated with her (sit quietly, -4 penalty on skill checks made as reactions, such as Listen and Spot checks). The bard's Perform check result is the DC for the opponent's Will save. Any obvious threat breaks the effect. Fascination lasts 15 rounds.

Inspire Competence(Su): An ally within 30 feet who can see and hear Nali gets a +2 competence bonus on skill checks with a particular skill for as long as he can hear the music. Inspire confidence lasts for up to 20 rounds.

Inspire Courage (Su): Allies (including Nali) who can hear her receive a +1 morale bonus on saves against charm and fear effects and a +1 morale bonus on saves on attack and weapon damage rolls. The effects last for 5 rounds after the ally can no longer hear Nali.

Bard Spells Known (3/4/2; save DC 13+ spell level); 0--Detect Magic, Ghost Sound, Know Direction, Light, Lullaby, Read Magic; 1-- Charm Person, Comprehend Languages, Sleep, Ventriloquism; 2-- Cure Moderate Wounds, Eagle's Splendor, Suggestion.

Possessions: masterwork rapier, Leather armor, masterwork lyre, buckler, journal, ink, pouch with 100 gp.

Talking to Nali

*About her work--*Nali is very humble when talking about her work, freely giving credit to her professors. One of these is Moradun J'Tali, a professor of folk music and stories at the Bardic College. He is the expert in Baneta about dock-side politics and knows practically every sailor that comes through port. Nali herself hopes to be a writer of ballads eventually, and she has enjoyed some limited popularity in her first ballad, which told the tale of the Crying Cleric and the Knight of the Branded Hand. Her debut performance was at the Crying Angel in Bet Rogala.

*About the docks--*Nali has been spending a lot of time recently around the docks and has met many of the regular workers, all of whom are very loyal to the Local Lifters of Pekal. The person who seems to be in the know about everything that transpires in this district is Kelpraz Sternog, a member of the City Guard of Baneta.

*About Captain Seetoov--*Nali doesn't know of anyone called Captain Seetoov, but she does know a girl who knows all the business of all the Reanaarians who come to port.

Her name is Taaree the Rose, and she's one of the alewives at the Kaerzee Public House, the favorite haunt of all the Reanaarian sailors at Baneta's port.

*About why people are hostile--*The behavior is certainly not usual. She's heard a rumor that the Local Lifters are boycotting a bunch of scabs trying to infringe on their territory.

*About where to rent/buy a wagon and horse--*There are stables in town that sell horses near the Honorable district. She recommends going either there or to the Couriers offices and seeing if there are any available there to rent. If the PCs seem to her to be an agreeable, friendly group likely to treat animals well, she passes along a rumor: a gnomish tailor named Shem Two-Patch is looking to sell his horse and wagon to a good home, as he recently inherited better quality of both.

(Go to Encounter 6 for interacting with Shem Two-Patch.)

More about the contacts she mentions:

- Moradun J'Tali is happy to share his work with others, as long as they're willing to share something with him. He's an older Kalamaran professor and has a long beard. She gives them directions to his office at the Bardic College.
- Kelpraz Sternog, a half-hobgoblin, is a stickler for paperwork and keeping things in order. She's very hard on smugglers, and with the corsairs hired to work for the navy often docking in port, she's had to keep an extra close watch to make sure that illegal goods don't make their way into the city.
- Taaree the Rose is a Reanaarian beauty and heartbreaker, which Nali expresses with genuine admiration and perhaps a little bit of jealousy. Her talents don't stop there: her Reanaarian take on brewing has been a hit with locals, and several taverns in Baneta have purchased her brew from the Kaerzee Public House. She's best known for an apple cider she brews just one season out of the year, and she's delighted to be complimented on it.

After giving them directions to the various locations, Nali bids them a cheerful farewell.

If the PCs decide to approach the Svimohzish woman, she is reluctant to speak with them. On a diplomacy roll of DC 10+ATL or bluff of DC 15+ATL she will stop and hear them out. She remains incredibly suspicious of them.

Talking to Lamorga

*About the bet--*Yes, she's familiar with the bet. She's not fond of scabs. She doesn't see why adventurers--who make a much better living stealing treasures from abandoned castles and rescuing the daughters of members of the Honorable have any business taking wages from those who would rightfully be earning it.

*About the Local Lifters--*The Baneta Branch has over 2,000 members. They're largely happy with their local bosses, and they have good relationships with the merchants who

dock here. If pressed, she admits that the merchants have to have good relations with them if they want any of their stock moved.

*About the increase in rates--*Increase in rates? There hasn't been an increase in rates in Baneta. If there had been, it would certainly have been reflected by an increase in the porters wages!

*About the guild house--*Take scabs to the guild house? Well, it might give the Baneta guild bosses a good laugh. She'll certainly lead the way, once she's done unloading the ship she's currently on the job for. She'll be at the docks all day, and they can come back and find her when they're ready.

*About Captain Seetoov or the Akalaaser--*She has nothing to say about any work they are doing in relation to the bet. If they have questions, they can wander up and down the docks until they're blue in the face.