

WATERDEEP: DRAGON HEIST

# TYRANT'S TURNCOAT



A Zhentarim faction mission for Waterdeep: Dragon Heist



# TYRANT'S TURNCOAT

In the Zhentarim's fourth and final mission, the party are asked to investigate and ultimately eliminate the turncoat Skeemo Weirdbottle.

## THE MISSION

The fourth mission works well if it lines up with the return of Davil Starsong after his arrest during the events of Chapter 3.

Fuming at his untimely – and, frankly, humiliating – arrest, the Zhentarim leader returns convinced that there's a traitor in his inner circle. The Watch knew details about him that only his closest relations – the Doom Raiders – could possibly know. He's convinced that one of his former adventuring companions have fed The Watch information about him and convinced them that he's the mastermind behind the violence in the streets and the bloodbath at Gralhund Villa.

If Davil is also aware of Skeemo Weirdbottle's attempt to poison a paying customer during the first faction mission (see '[Hatred Surfacing](#)'), he has particularly good reason to suspect that the gnome wizard is the traitor behind his arrest. Even without this information, Skeemo is still at the top of Davil's suspect list. Tashlyn Yafeera worked hard behind the scenes to have the City Watch release him, Istrid Horn seemed genuinely afraid she'd wind up arrested as well, and Ziraj the Hunter isn't the type to play politics. Skeemo, on the other hand, has been hard to reach and slow to pitch in with shares of his profits (claiming that he's having trouble with his suppliers because of the recent unrest in the city).

Before he's ready to make a move against Skeemo, Davil needs to be certain that Skeemo is indeed a traitor. Thus he sends a winged snake to fetch the party, explains his suspicions and offers them their mission.

"I'm beginning to think that Skeemo Weirdbottle has betrayed us. For a while now, he hasn't been coughing up our share of shop's profits, claiming both suppliers and customers are hard to come by because of all the trouble. And now I'm half-convinced the little worm has been feeding information to our enemies – both the Watch and the other faction of Zhentarim. But I need to know for certain before I end him. I want you to look around his shop and his flat above it, see if you can find proof of his betrayal. But be discrete – if I'm wrong about Skeemo, I don't want him to know I ever suspected him!"

Davil isn't wrong, however. Skeemo has indeed been withholding profits, lying about his business, which is going as splendidly as ever. Worse still, the gnome wizard has allied himself with Manshoon and his band of Zhentarim (including Urstul Floxin, if the rogue is still alive). He's been furthering their goals, while supplying information about the Doom Raider Zhentarim's operations. At Urstul's request, he's also made a report to The Watch, implicating Davil in the recent turbulence in Waterdeep, directly leading to the elf's arrest.

To uncover evidence of his treachery, the party must enter Skeemo's shop and home, Weirdbottle's Concoctions, and search it for evidence. If your players have a plan of their own, let them run with that. If not, you can have Davil suggest that they either enter the shop during the night, or have Davil offer to call Skeemo in for a meeting, leaving Weirdbottle's Concoctions unattended for at least an hour.

## INVESTIGATION

While investigating Weirdbottle's Concoctions, the characters must either be mindful of the noise they make (if Skeemo is home) or how much time they spend (if Skeemo is away). In the description of Weirdbottle's Concoctions, most actions have both a time expenditure and Stealth DC listed next to them, like this (5 min/Stealth DC 13). This tells you how long the action takes to perform and the DC of the Stealth check it requires. See 'Confronting Skeemo' on page 5 for advice on how to handle it if Skeemo catches the party in the act.

## TRACKING TIME

When a character performs an action that takes time, note the minutes and add them to that character's tally. Since different characters can act simultaneously, the time that has actually passed always matches the time spent by the character who's spent the most. The time listed next to actions are set a bit, since it is meant to also include 'idle' time spent looking and walking around Skemoo's home.

If Skeemo is away meeting with Davil, he'll come back after precisely 60 minutes. If the characters have made their own distraction, you decide how long he's away, but be aware that tracking time becomes superfluous if Skeemo is away for more than two hours.

**Repeating and Rushing.** Most actions can be repeated on a failure by making a new skill check and spending the time required. A character can also choose to rush an action, performing the skill check with disadvantage in order to halve the minutes spent (round down) on it. On a failure, the character botches the check in some way that makes it very clear to Skeemo that someone has been in his stuff.

## ROLLING STEALTH

If Skeemo is inside Weirdbottle's Concoctions, the characters have to roll Stealth checks when they perform certain actions to avoid alerting him. On the first failure, Skeemo becomes suspicious, but does nothing. On the second failure, he mentally commands his familiar, Worthless, to investigate. On the third failure, Skeemo investigates the noise himself. When Skeemo or his familiar investigates, allow your players to describe how their characters hide (if they do so), giving them an opportunity to roll a Dexterity (Stealth) contested by the investigator to see if they can avoid discovery.

**Advantage/Disadvantage.** Characters have advantage on all Stealth checks while Skeemo is asleep, but he wakes up after the first failure. Stealth checks performed in the same room as Skeemo, or on a door, window or wall adjacent to the room Skeemo is in, are made with disadvantage.

## WEIRDBOTTLE'S CONCOCTIONS

Weirdbottle's Concoctions sits in a two-story building on Ilzantil Street in the Trades Ward. The shop is on the ground floor, with a set of stairs leading up to Skeemo's small apartment above. The building has several windows on both floors, but only a single door leading in and out of the shop.

Weirdbottle's Concoctions has the following features.

**Light.** At night, Skeemo uses the *light* spell to to illuminate only the room he's in, leaving the rest of the rooms dark.

**Roof.** The red-tiled roof sits 20 feet above ground. There's no chimney (Skeemo uses *prestidigitation* to keep warm).

**Walls.** A character can climb the brick walls with a DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check (5 min/Stealth DC 13).

**Windows.** The large shop windows on the ground floor are easily accessible, but can't be opened. Smaller windows 15 feet above the ground require a DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) check to unlock (5 minutes/Stealth DC 13).



## W1. SHOP

This small, square room is lined with shelves carrying vials in various sizes, as well as individual ingredients for sale, such as crow's feet, bat guano and other odorous oddities. A wooden counter lines the back wall of the shop, behind which is a small laboratory, a few barrels and crates, and a set of stairs leading up to Skeemo's apartment.

**Front Door.** Weirdbottle's Concoctions is open from early morning to early evening. While Skeemo is in the shop, the door is unlocked. When he goes upstairs or leaves the shop, Skeemo locks the door and places an *alarm* spell on it. Unlocking the door is a DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check (5 min/Stealth DC 10). A *detect magic* spell notices the *alarm* spell's abjuration aura emanating from the door. If the door is opened and the *alarm* spell hasn't been dispelled, Skeemo receives a mental alarm if he is less than 1 mile away.

**Counter.** Skeemo keeps a ledger filled with details about all the business transactions he's made in the last months on a small shelf underneath the counter. A character who searches the counter easily finds the ledger. Looking through the ledger, a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check (10 min) makes it readily apparent that Skeemo has been lying about his profits – sales are actually up this quarter. On a result of 15 or higher, a character also notices that someone with the initials U. F. has made several purchases of a 'headache remedy', but the numbers don't add up. Looking at other entries, headache remedies usually go for a few silver pieces, but U. F.'s purchases range from 50 gp to several hundred gold pieces. (In reality, these entries are Urstul Floxin buying expensive poisons and magical potions).

**Laboratory.** Searching through the laboratory, a character succeeding on a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check (5 min/Stealth DC 13) feels certain that no clues can be found here. A character proficient in Arcana or Nature realizes that a nearly finished dose of *essence of ether* poison sits in one of the flasks. A character can finish the poison by adding some salt and a pinch of springwater root found in the supplies beside the table, and succeeding on a DC 15 Dexterity (Arcana or Nature) check (5 min/Stealth DC 13). On a failure, the vial shatters, unleashing the poison upon the character (see the effects on page 258 of the Dungeon Master's Guide).

**Shelves.** Six shelves with ingredients, potions and poultices are in the shop. Most of the mixtures are mundane, but a few are magical. A knowledgeable character can search a shelf with a DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana or Nature) check (5 min/Stealth DC 13) and find your choice of a *potion of healing*, *potion of climbing*, or *potion of animal friendship*.

**Supplies.** A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check (5 min/Stealth DC 13) tells a character that the barrels and crates behind the counter contain only filtrated water, various common roots and herbs, large quantities of salt, and empty vials and flasks in various sizes.

### Watching the Shop

A character that spends at least three days staking out Weirdbottle's Concoctions learns Skeemo's daily routine: from early morning to early evening, he's in the shop, with the front door unlocked. In the evening he locks up the front door, opens up a window in his bedroom to air out, and spends the evening in his laboratory, eating and working on alchemy projects. Around midnight he retires to his bedroom, closing and locking every door and window before dispelling his magical light and going to sleep.

## W2. HALL

This small hallway connects the three rooms of Skeemo's apartment. On the wall is a painting showing a young Skeemo Weirdbottle sitting between two old, smiling gnome adults.

**Creaky Floor.** The floorboards in this hall are old and worn, making it hard to walk across them without making noise (Stealth DC 13).



## W3. BATHROOM

The smell in this small bathroom is a mixture of urine, soap and sulfur. Laundry hangs from a thin rope across the room, partially obscuring vision. Between shirts and linen, one can spot an empty chamber pot in one corner and a large, wash-basin in another. Directly across from the door sits a large bucket of soapy water, half-filled with dirty clothes. A small, winged creature with a long tail is hovering above the bucket, wringing a soaked shirt and muttering curses in infernal.

**Receipt.** A character that searches the dirty clothes in the bucket and succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check (5 min/Stealth 10) finds a receipt of reimbursement for 2 silver pieces from the City Watch office in the Trades Ward, dated to the day before Davil's arrest (Skeemo demanded the Watch reimburse him for transportation cost when he came in to snatch on Davil Starsong).

**Worthless.** The imp is Skeemo's familiar, who's given it the name **Worthless**. Skeemo has it working day and night, doing laundry, emptying chamberpots, and other menial or unpleasant tasks – including acting as a guinea pig for his alchemical experiments. As a result, Worthless hates the gnome, and while magically compelled to obey him, Worthless is always trying to cause trouble for its master.

Focused on the laundry, Worthless only notices intruders when they're already in the room. Worthless doesn't immediately use its mental connection with Skeemo to alert him, although Skeemo has ordered it to warn him about intruders. As devils are wont to, Worthless believes in the 'letter of the law', and since Skeemo wasn't specific about who is to be considered an intruder or how fast he wants to be warned, it delays warning him as long as it can. Instead it asks with a raspy voice: "Who are you? Why are you here?"

Clever characters who make promises of vengeance against Skeemo, or who can convince Worthless they aren't intruders with a Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) DC 13 skill check, can ferret useful information out of the spiteful imp, such as the password for the *glyph of warding* on Skeemo's door. Worthless also knows that "a fat man with a black, winged snake has made many visits to the benevolent master" and that "the omniscient master often corresponds with someone he calls Manshoon". During conversation, Worthless' voice drips with sarcasm as it mentions the "many meaningful tasks" Skeemo puts it to, and its "undying loyalty for my infallible master, whom I'd never betray".

If Worthless feels threatened or attempts to deceive or persuade it fail, it immediately sends a mental warning to Skeemo, if he's within 100 feet. Even if negotiations go well, the imp still tells Skeemo about any intruders (as it is magically compelled to do), but only after they've left.





#### W4. LIVING ROOM

This room is where Skeemo eats meals, entertain guests and brew large batches of potions. Within are a dinner table and two chairs, several crates and barrels, a bookshelf, a kitchenware cabinet, an alchemy table, and a kitchen table.

**Alchemy Table.** A DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check (5 min/Stealth DC 13) tells a character that nothing of importance or value is here.

**Bookshelf.** This bookshelf contains several books on alchemy, obscure arcane lore and even a few spell scrolls. Searching through the bookcase and succeeding on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check (10 min/Stealth DC 13) finds a *scroll of flying* and a *scroll of arcane lock*. On a result of 20 or higher, a character also discovers that a small book titled 'An Inexhaustive Guide to the Infinite Layers of the Abyss' has an inscription on the first page: "For my esteemed colleague, in the hopes of a fruitful relationship – Manshoon, Founder and Rightful Leader of the Black Network". Manshoon gifted this book to Skeemo when he initially began trying to convince Skeemo to betray the other Doom Raiders.

**Dinner Table and Chairs.** A DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check (2 min/Stealth DC 10) reveals that nothing of value or importance is here.

**Kitchenware Cabinet.** A DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check (2 min/Stealth DC 13) reveals that a gold engraved tea set looks to be very valuable (50 gp).

**Supplies.** The crates and barrels in the northeastern corner of the room are filled with alchemy ingredients. While likely not valuable enough to haul off (the 200 lbs. of goods are worth 50 gp), the dried plants, insect husks, powders and odd liquids suggest to any character who makes a DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana or Nature) check (5 min/Stealth DC 13), that Skeemo is lying about having problems with suppliers.

#### W5. BEDROOM

This bedroom contains a desk cluttered with papers, a bookshelf, a wardrobe, a large bed and a chamberpot.

**Door.** A DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check (5 min/Stealth DC 10) unlocks this door, but a *glyph of warding* placed on the inside of the door triggers if anyone enters without saying the password 'Athraxex' (the lich who Skeemo shares his headspace with). A creature that triggers the glyph is affected by the *phantasmal killer* spell (DC 14), as ghostly visages of a cackling Skeemo surround it. From inside the room, the glyph can be found with a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check (5 min) and removed with a DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check (10 min/Stealth DC 10).

**Bed.** Searching the bed, a character succeeding on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check (5 min/Stealth DC 13) finds eight 5-pound silver trade bars (50 gp each) and four 5-pound gold trade bars (250 gp each) under the mattress.

**Desk.** Personal notes, contract orders, receipts, recipes, and letters clutter Skeemo's desk. Searching through the desk and its drawers, a character succeeding on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check (10 min/Stealth DC 13) finds seven unused *paper birds* and a hastily written letter signed that carries the Zhentarim symbol of a winged snake. The letter reads: "Stuff's about to get hectic. Go to the Watch. Point them toward Davil. Get the heat off us. Double your usual fee. U.F.". This note was sent by Urstul Floxin shortly after the fireball went off in Trollskull Alley.

**Wardrobe.** Searching through the wardrobe, a character succeeding on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check (5 min/Stealth DC 13) finds a total of 8 gp and 7 sp in various pockets and a gnome-sized noble's attire (25 gp).

#### Skeemo Weirdbottle

Skeemo is as arrogant and unpleasant as they come. He has no patience for uninformed buffoons and underlings – which is nearly everyone but himself. His betrayal of the Doom Raiders was a simple matter of greed and a desire to learn from the great wizard Manshoon.

In combat Skeemo behaves with a mix of cautious intelligence, extreme arrogance and ruthless self-preservation. He prepares himself with spells like *mage armor* and *greater invisibility*, but believing in his own superiority, initially tries to go toe-to-toe with foes using spells like *cone of cold* and *ice storm*. If things go sour, he'll ruthlessly abandon everything and anyone, while using spells like *greater invisibility*, *misty step* and *fly* to evade pursuers. If nearby, he'll also order his familiar Worthless to die defending him against aggressors.

Skeemo carries a satchel containing his spellbook (which has the spells he knows plus *alarm*, *glyph of warding* and *phantasmal killer*), a *potion of mind reading*, 150 gp in a silk coin purse, and the keys for all doors in his home.



## CONFRONTATION

The search of Weirdbottle's Concoctions has several possible outcomes, the most likely of which are described below.

### CAUGHT IN THE ACT

If Skeemo becomes aware that the characters are in his home – either because they make noise that disturbs him, or he arrives home before they're done – he wastes no words on lies or excuses. Instead, he tries to get the drop on them, using spells like *greater invisibility* and *misty step* to get in range (or ordering an invisible Worthless to fly close) before casting *cone of cold* to blast the characters without causing too much damage to his property.

If it becomes obvious he can't win, Skeemo focuses on escape instead, using *fly* or *greater invisibility* to make a hasty retreat. If desperate enough, he might even burn his home down to escape (see 'Explosive Home Makeover').

### ASSASSINATION

If the characters manage to snoop around unnoticed, not much evidence is required to convince Davil of Skeemo's treachery. Bringing or describing Urstul Floxin's letter, Manshoon's book, the City Watch's reimbursement, Skeemo's business ledger or even Worthless' admissions will do the trick. Certain of the gnome's guilt, Davil asks the party to "eliminate the scum. Make it look like an accident if you can, that little bastard has caused me enough trouble already!"

Killing Skeemo and making it look like an accident will require some creativity, but is certainly doable. It's impossible to prepare for all ideas your players might come up with, but allow them to be creative and keep an open mind when they come up with ideas. If they need some help, Davil suggests simply making Skeemo disappear without a trace (with magic or at least a good clean-up) or blowing up his shop (see 'Explosive Home Makeover') to make it look like a work accident killed the diminutive alchemist.

### SKEEMO'S ESCAPE

If the characters aren't careful, Skeemo might become aware that intruders has been inside his home. If the characters forget to lock windows or doors behind them, remove, misplace or break objects in Weirdbottle's Concoctions, or leave Worthless to warn the gnome wizard when he awakes or returns, Skeemo soon realizes that someone has been inside his shop.

When Skeemo discovers that someone has been snooping around his home, he packs up his most valuable belongings (any magical items and objects worth more than 10 gp, as well as all evidence of his betrayal) in crates and barrels, before heading out to find transportation to Kolat Towers.

If the characters are only away to present the evidence to Davil and return immediately after, they can arrive back just in time to see Skeemo jump on a hired dray outside his home. The five other passengers and the driver are all innocent **commoners**. Characters that trail the dray discreetly can follow it to Kolat Towers in the Southern Ward with a DC 13 group Dexterity (Stealth) check.

If combat breaks out or he becomes aware of the party, Skeemo employs drastic means in his escape. He orders Worthless, who's been hovering invisible beside him, to attack the party, while he uses *fly* to ascend to a height where they can't reach him with attacks before making his way to Kolat Towers. Knowing what his fate will be if he's caught, Skeemo fights to the death against pursuers.

Use the '**Izantil Street Map**' for combat encounters in the streets near Skeemo's home. Weirdbottle Concoctions is the building in the middle of the map.

## Explosive Home Makeover

If a fight inside Weirdbottle's Concoctions turns sour for Skeemo, the desperate gnome might feel forced to cast a *fireball* spell in area W1 or W4, hoping to end the fight fast. If Skeemo (or a character) uses incendiary magic near the caches alchemical supplies, the blast could cause an enormous explosion as described below.

**Concussive Blast.** In addition to the effects of the spell, each creature within the room must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw. On a failure, the creature takes 2d8 bludgeoning damage and becomes prone as the concussive blast created by the exploding alchemy reagents throws it 20 feet away from the center of the room. On a success, a creature takes only half damage, is thrown only 10 feet, and doesn't become prone. The blast throws creatures through wooden walls and windows, potentially causing them to land on the street outside.

**Burning Building.** The blast also sets the building ablaze, filling all rooms with thick, black smoke, heavily obscuring vision. Creatures inside the building must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw at the start of their turn, or lose their action in a coughing fit. A creature that ends its turn inside the building must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 1d8 fire damage and 1d8 bludgeoning damage as it stumbles into or is hit by flaming debris.

**Complete Collapse.** After burning for three rounds the building collapses, dealing 5d8 bludgeoning damage to all creatures within (a successful DC 15 Dexterity saving throw halves this damage).

## CONCLUSION

Should the party manage to investigate and eliminate Skeemo Weirdbottle, a pleased Davil Starsong rewards Zhentarim characters with 2 renown. More importantly, however, they've earned themselves a spot as some of his most trusted lieutenants, effectively filling in the void in the organization left behind by Skeemo. As far as monetary rewards go, Davil is strapped for cash at the moment, but the characters should have had ample opportunity to relieve Skeemo of his personal belongings.

If the party eliminates Skeemo, but fail to make it look like an accident, Davil might soon find himself behind bars again, as Skeemo's recent report to the City Watch makes the Zhentarim leader the prime suspect in Skeemo's murder. Whether Davil weathers the interrogation or ends up ratting out the party to save his own hide is up to you.

If Skeemo escapes after a confrontation with the party, he moves into Kolat Towers and begins plotting the characters' demise. How he enacts his vengeance is up to you, but an arrogant bastard like Skeemo will go to great lengths to pay the characters back for any trouble they've caused.

If the characters can't find damning evidence (or refuse to assassinate Skeemo) and thus fail to complete the mission, Skeemo soon becomes spooked regardless. A few days later, he evacuates to Kolat Towers, making his change of allegiance painfully obvious to Davil and the other Doom Raiders. Whether Davil lets the traitor escape or asks the party to brave the dangers of Kolat Towers to kill Skeemo, is up to you – and beyond the scope of this document.



# DM's CHEATSHEET

## THE MISSION

- Davil suspects that Skeemo is a traitor. The gnome claims problems with suppliers and customers when not giving profits. Davil also thinks he has given the Watch and Manshoon's Zhentarim information.
- Davil asks the party to search his home for evidence.
- Davil suggests going at night or offers to arrange a meeting with Skeemo leaving the home empty for 1 hour.

## INVESTIGATION

- The party must either be quick or quiet, when they investigate.
- **Tracking Time.** Add together time next to each action. Failed actions can be repeated, characters can halve time spend if they make check with disadvantage.
- **Rolling Stealth.** Stealth checks next to each action. First failure = nothing happens. Second failure = Skeemo sends invisible Worthless to investigate. Third failure = Skeemo comes to investigate himself. Characters have advantage when Skeemo is asleep (he wakes after first failure) and disadvantage in the same room as Skeemo.

## WEIRDBOTTLE'S CONCOCTIONS

- Small shop, two stories tall, Izantil Street in the Trades Ward. Only light in the room Skeemo is in during the night. Roof 20 feet above ground, no chimney. Walls can be climbed with DC 13 Strength (5 min/Stealth 13). Windows 15 feet up DC 15 Thieves' Tools to unlock (5 min/Stealth 13).
- **W1.** Shop with shelves, counter, small laboratory, supplies and stairs leading up. **Front door.** Locked and *alarmed* when Skeemo is not in W1. DC 15 Thieves' Tools to unlock (5 min/Stealth 10). *Alarm* spell sends silent alarm to Skeemo. **Counter.** Business ledger easily found. DC 10 Investigation (10 min) finds that Skeemo is lying about business being bad. If 15 or higher, also finds that Skeemo has been selling overpriced headache remedies to U.F. **Laboratory.** DC 10 Investigation (5 min/Stealth 13) finds no clues, but if proficient with arcana/nature finds nearly finished *essence of ether*. DC 15 Arcana or Nature (5 min/Stealth 13) to finish. Failure = poisoned. **Shelves.** Six shelves, DC 13 Arcana/Nature each (5 min/Stealth 13) finds *potion of healing, climbing or animal friendship*. **Supplies.** DC 10 Investigation (5 min/Stealth 13) finds nothing but mundane ingredients.
- **W2.** Creaky floorboards and picture of Skeemo with family. Stealth 13 to move across.
- **W3.** Bathroom with laundry, empty chamber pot, wash basin, water bucket, imp Worthless. **Worthless.** Skeemo's imp familiar does useless tasks and hates him. Doesn't immediately warn Skeemo, but speaks with intruders. Can be persuaded with DC 13 Charisma or Persuasion to give information. Warns Skeemo if threatened, always tell Skeemo about intruders after they leave. **Receipt.** A receipt of reimbursement from the City Watch is in the pile of unwashed clothes, DC 13 Investigation to find (5 min/Stealth 10).

- **W4.** Living room with dinner table, supplies, bookshelf, cabinet, alchemy table and kitchen table. **Alchemy Table.** DC 10 Investigation (5 min/Stealth 13) finds nothing of interest or value. **Bookshelf.** Books on arcane lore and alchemy. DC 13 Investigation (10 min/Stealth 13) finds *scroll of flying* and *scroll of arcane lock*. 20 or higher also finds 'An Inexhaustive Guide to the Infinite Layers of the Abyss' with foreword from Manshoon. **Dinner Table.** DC 10 Investigation finds nothing (2 min/Stealth 10). **Cabinet.** DC 10 Investigation (2 min/Stealth 13) finds valuable tea set (50gp). **Supplies.** 200 lbs. of goods worth 50 gp. DC 10 Arcana/Natura (5 min/Stealth 13) realizes Skeemo has no problems with suppliers.
- **R5.** Bedroom with desk, wardrobe and bed. **Door.** Always locked, DC 15 Thieves' Tools opens (5 min/Stealth 10). *Glyph of warding* casts *phantasmal killer* on anyone who doesn't say 'Athraxex' before entering. Glyph can be found on the inside with DC 15 Investigation (5 min) and removed with DC 15 Thieves' Tools (10 min). **Bed.** DC 13 Investigation (5 min/Stealth DC 15) finds 8 silver trade bars (50 gp each) and 4 gold trade bars (250 gp each). **Desk.** DC 15 Investigation (10 min/Stealth 13) finds seven *paper birds* and a letter from U.F. instructing Skeemo to go to the watch. **Wardrobe** DC 15 Investigation (5 min/Stealth 13) finds 8 gp and 7sp in spare change and valuable noble's outfit (25gp).
- **Skeemo Weirdbottle.** Has satchel containing his spellbook (which has the spells he knows plus *alarm, glyph of warding* and *phantasmal killer*), a *potion of mind reading*, 150 gp and keys for all doors.

## CONFRONTATION

- Skeemo attacks if he catches party in the act. Flees if in trouble, might use *fireball* to blow up his home (see 'Explosive Home Makeover').
- If presented with evidence, Davil asks party to kill Skeemo and make it look like an accident.
- If Skeemo discovers investigation, he flees a dray with 5 commoners (DC 13 Stealth to trail) and uses *fly* or *greater invisibility* to escape if confronted.

## CONCLUSION

- If successful in discovering the treachery and eliminating Skeemo, each Zhent gains 2 renown and becomes trusted members of the Zhentarim.
- If Skeemo is confronted but escapes, he plans vengeance against the party.
- If the investigation fails, Skeemo flees to Kolat Towers a few days later. Davil might ask the party to infiltrate Kolat Towers to kill him.

### Explosive Home Makeover

Each creature within the room must make a DC 15 Strength save. Failure = 2d8 bludgeoning damage, prone, thrown 20 feet away from center of room. Success = half damage, prone, thrown 10 feet. Afterward, building is on fire. DC 15 Constitution save at the start of turn or lose action coughing. At end of turn, DC 15 Dexterity save or take 1d8 fire and 1d8 bludgeoning damage. 3 rounds later, building collapses, dealing 5d8 bludgeoning damage to all creatures within, DC 15 Dexterity save halves.



## SKEEMO WEIRDBOTTLE

*Small humanoid (gnome), neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

**Hit Points** 72 (16d6 + 16)

**Speed** 25 ft.

| STR    | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 9 (-1) | 14 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 17 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 15 (+2) |

**Saving Throws** Int +6, Wis +4

**Skills** Arcana +6, History +6, Perception +4, Performance +5

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Gnomish, Undercommon

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Gnome Cunning.** Skeemo has advantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.

**Spellcasting.** Skeemo is a 9th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *misty step*, *suggestion*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fireball*, *fly*

4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility*, *ice storm*

5th level (1 slot): *cone of cold*

## Actions

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

## WORTHLESS

*Tiny fiend (devil), lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 13

**Hit Points** 10 (3d4 + 3)

**Speed** 20 ft., fly 40 ft.

| STR    | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 6 (-2) | 17 (+3) | 13 (+1) | 11 (+0) | 12 (+1) | 14 (+2) |

**Skills** Deception +4, Insight +3, Persuasion +4, Stealth +5

**Damage Resistances** cold, bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical/nonsilver weapons

**Damage Immunities** fire, poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** Infernal, Common

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Shapechanger.** The imp can use its action to polymorph into a beast form that resembles a rat (speed 20 ft.), a raven (20 ft., fly 60 ft.), or a spider (20 ft., climb 20 ft.), or back into its true form. Its statistics are the same in each form, except for the speed changes noted. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

**Devil's Sight.** Magical darkness doesn't impede the imp's darkvision.

**Magic Resistance.** The imp has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Familiar.** The imp can serve another creature as a familiar, forming a telepathic bond with its willing master. While the two are bonded, the master can sense what the imp senses as long as they are within 1 mile of each other. While the imp is within 10 feet of its master, the master shares the imp's Magic Resistance trait.

## Actions

**Sting (Bite in Beast Form).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Invisibility.** The imp magically turns invisible until it attacks, or until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment the imp wears or carries is invisible with it.

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