

King of the Cats



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INTRODUCTION

King of the Cats is a Dungeons & Dragons adventure designed to be completed in about 4-6 hours play. The combat encounters have been calculated to present a tough challenge to four 1st level characters. They will present a less difficult, though still enjoyable, challenge to 2nd level characters or larger parties.

Not every loose end is tied up in the following text, nor every possible reaction accounted for. Be ready to improvise, and do so with confidence! Unless stated otherwise, assume all NPCs have the stats of a **commoner**.

FOLLOW ME

Read the following -

You are enjoying an ale and a meal at *The Fallen Tower*, the most popular tavern in Neverwinter. It is getting dark outside but no one feels like sleep, and so you discuss your options for the evening.

You've heard that a company of players are performing "Bellagar the Black Dragon". Someone mentions that the renowned bard, Cain Lethellon, is performing down near Bluelake. And, of course, the famous *Clockwork Carnival* is open until late.

As you debate the merits of each event, a well-groomed tabby cat leaps up onto the table and begins prowling back and forth, swishing his fine tail. As someone leans forward to scratch behind his ears, you see a note tied to his tail - it says "Follow Me".

The tabby leaps down to the floor and slowly makes his way to the door, occasionally turning back to look at your party.

What do you do?

If the PCs do not follow the cat, he will leap up on the table and repeat the performance again. If they still do not follow he will leave, and the adventure is over.

If the PCs follow the cat, he will lead them to the *Beggar's Nest*, the most destitute district in Neverwinter. Once there, they find themselves led through a maze of narrow streets and dirty alleyways.

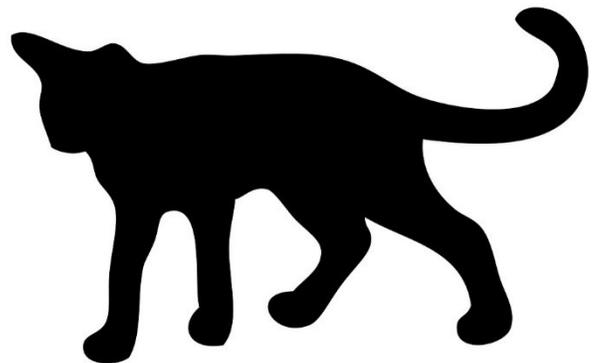
Growth's Alley

The cat leads them down an especially filthy lane, with garbage piled waist high on either side. A deep, stupid voice says, "Ya' should know better than ta' bring ya' friends down *my* alley, Gus!"

A large, dirty **half-ogre** then emerges from a pile of refuse, grinning wickedly. His name is **Growth** and he is a mugger by trade. He is not afraid of the party as they are clearly inexperienced.

"Now, lil' people," he says, "we can do dis tha' easy way or tha' hard way." If the party do not hand over their valuables, he will roar with anger and attack. If the PCs look for the cat while they are fighting, they will notice that he has disappeared.

Treasure. If the party search through the garbage where Growth emerged from, they will find **140cp** and **50sp**. On a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** check, they will also find his prize possession - an ornate, electrum-trimmed dagger scabbard, worth **40gp**.



Asparagus Speaks

The cat will reappear after the fighting is done. He will listen to the PCs for a few moments then say, in a rather cultured voice -

I do apologise for that little mishap, but I took a foolish shortcut - there is very little time left, you see. My name is **Asparagus**, but you may call me **Gus** if you wish. Please come with me now, for we are nearly there.

He then runs to the end of the alley, crosses a narrow street, and enters a small, abandoned warehouse. The building is about 40' wide and is made of brick. It has boarded up windows, a broken door, and is in a generally dilapidated state.

CONGRESS OF CATS

The front room is a small abandoned office, and is full of dust and clutter. There is a single door in the back wall with light spilling out from under it. When the party open the door they come into a large room with tiered benches lining each wall. Sitting on the benches are hundreds upon hundreds of cats of all colors and sizes. Asparagus sits on a small platform in the middle of the room.

The cats are all hissing, growling and mewling but silence falls when the PCs enter. Asparagus then says -

Greetings friends, and welcome to the Congress of Cats. I am Asparagus Whitesocks, and I am the First Speaker of this House. I ask the House now - do you welcome these outsiders?

There is mewling and hissing. Asparagus then continues -

Thank you very much. You all know why you were summoned this evening, but I must explain the situation to our guests. Friends, the Congress of Cats faces a grave crisis, perhaps our gravest ever. You see our beloved King, Morpholomew the Great, has gone missing and we have been unable to find him.

There is general mewling at this.

According to our immutable laws, if the King of the Cats fails to attend the Congress for three nights running, he is stripped of his title and exiled forever. This would be a disaster.

I must tell you that tonight is the third night that the King has been absent.

Even more mewling.

We have searched fruitlessly for our beloved King, and so the Congress authorized me to secure the services of a marvelous and talented adventuring party to assist us.

We know that you big people like gold very much. I have a purse here with **20gp** which you may have now, and another hidden away with a **100gp** if you locate our King before sunrise.

Will you help us?

Assuming the PCs agree to help, Gus will say, "Thank you! I shall accompany you and help as I may. Now, where should we start?"

The PCs will no doubt have some questions. Asparagus will answer the questions, but a young and excitable blue-black cat named **Bombalina** will occasionally interrupt and talk over the top of him. Asparagus will frown when this happens.

Following are some obvious questions and the appropriate answers -

- **Where does King Morpholomew normally live?** He usually sleeps in the House where they are now standing.
- **What does he do during the day?** Adjudicates on disputes between cats. Talks to friends of the cats. Eats. Plays. Sleeps a lot.
- **Does the King have any enemies?** The Rat Boss has been his mortal enemy for many years. The Worg Lord used to be an enemy, but the King recently concluded a treaty with him.
- **Does the King have any particular friends?** The Wayside Oracle, who is an old gnome with a prophetic gift.
- **Where is the Rat Boss?** They just learned that her current hideout is an abandoned house at the corner of Rock Edge Road and Abbey Way.
- **Where is the Worg Lord?** He has no fixed residence – he usually sleeps in an alley with his henchmen.
- **Where is the Wayside Oracle?** She is usually begging on Coopers Road, down near the river.
- **Can all cats speak?** Asparagus will look at them with a superior expression and say, “Some secrets cannot be shared.”

If the party ask a question that you don't know the answer to, feel free to make something up.

If the PCs are struggling to ask helpful questions, Asparagus will tell them about the **Rat Boss** and suggest they start there. At this point, Bombalina will immediately speak and suggest that they should see the **Wayside Oracle** first.

Other Sources

It is possible the party will have other means of gathering information (such as underworld contacts in Neverwinter). If so, you will need to improvise the encounter. Note that only a very few people in the city are aware of the

secret cat society. At best, other information sources will be able to point them to the Wayside Oracle.

Other Cats

The PCs may wish to speak to some of the other cats. If so, you can use names such as Griddlebone, Pouncival, Minerva, Jinx, Courvoisier and Bigglesworth.

Other Encounters

If you want a longer game, you might consider adding in several random encounters as they wander around Neverwinter. Here are some possibilities –

- An out-of-control horse and carriage come careening down the street with a helpless youth inside.
- The PCs bump into an old mentor, who is clearly destitute and a little drunk. She asks their business, then insists on being allowed to join the quest. If they agree, she quickly begins to take over.
- A few members of the City Watch apprehend one of the PCs, saying that he or she resembles a wanted murderer.

The Wayside Oracle

If the PCs ask Asparagus to take them to the **Wayside Oracle**, he will lead them to Coopers Road, which is near the river. If it is still early evening the street will be busy, full of sailors, artisans, tradesmen and paupers all looking for a cheap night. If the PCs ask Asparagus for his opinion of the Wayside Oracle, he will politely say that the King put great store in her wisdom.

The Wayside Oracle is begging on the side of the road. She is an older female gnome dressed in a mis-matching outfit. She has one eye, wild hair and wears an old hat. Around her are several bags full of junk.

Read or paraphrase the following -

“Gus, Gus!” she cries, as they approach. “You are very late – have you only now found a band of adventurers to help us? We have only a few hours left!”

“It was not as easy as you seem to think,” replies the cat, a little primly.

“Let me look at them,” she says, taking out a pair of cracked spectacles. “Hmmm... was this really the best you could do? Well, ‘needs must’, as they say.”

If the PCs question her, she will share the following information –

- The Cat King came to see her three nights ago. That was the last time she saw him.
- He wanted her advice on his recent treaty with the Worg Lord, which had caused some disquiet amongst the cats. She advised him to persevere with the treaty.
- She also told him that she had foreseen he would be in great danger over the coming days, and that he should take precautions.
- Since learning of his disappearance, she has been trying to locate him using her arts, but without success.
- If the Cat King does not return, she fears the treaty with the worgs will break down, resulting in much bloodshed.
- She believes the Rat Boss must certainly be involved in the abduction.
- She has also heard that a gnome called **Balink Sparkneedle** may be involved. He is a friend of the Rat Boss, and runs *Sideshow Alley* over at the *Clockwork Carnival*.



- She does not know where the Worg Lord is at present.

The Worg Lord

This encounter could take place at any time, but is probably most effective either just before or just after the PCs go to see the Rat Boss.

As the PCs are passing a narrow alleyway, they will hear a deep, gruff voice say, “You! Hey you – I want to talk to you!”

If the PCs hurry on past they will hear the scurry of clawed feet going back down the alley. Soon after, they will hear the same voice coming from another alley, saying, “Stop! I want to talk to you!”

If the PCs stop, **5 worgs** will slowly walk into the dim street light, though they won’t venture far beyond the mouth of the alley. They are large and fierce looking. Asparagus will give a frightened little hiss. “Tell them nothing!” he says, as he scampers away and hides.

“I am **Ungrulf**, Lord of the Worgs,” says the largest beast in its gruff voice. “My spies tell me that you are looking for the Cat King. I don’t approve of your kind meddling in the affairs of the beasts, so I’m warning you to stay away!”

At this the other four worgs bare their teeth and begin to growl. If the PCs wish to ask questions, Ungrulf will talk with them for a short period of time, but he has nothing further to tell them. He will keep repeating that they shouldn’t meddle in beast business. If pressed, he will state that his people are also looking for the King.

After that, Ungrulf and his henchmen will retreat back into the dark alley. If the PCs attack, the worgs will flee.

As they leave the encounter, Asparagus will rejoin them. “I thought you handled that very well,” he will say. “I don’t trust the Worg Lord – not one little bit!”

THE RAT BOSS

If the PCs ask Asparagus to take them to the Rat Boss, he will lead them to the corner of Rock Edge Road and Abbey Way. It is a destitute part of the city, and many of the surrounding houses look abandoned. The streets are largely empty, except for the occasional tradesman or merchant hurrying about their business.

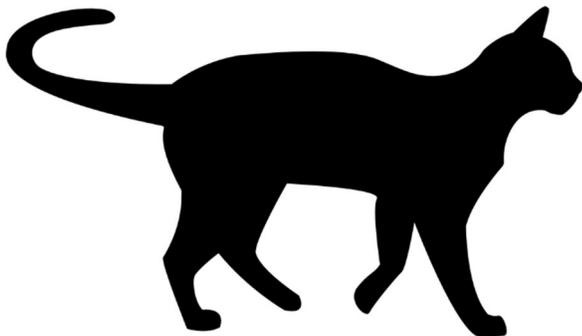
The house in question is a narrow two story terrace with a single entrance in the front. It looks abandoned from the outside, though still in reasonable condition.

Layout. No map has been provided of this house as the layout is simple. It is 12' wide by 30' long. The ground floor consists of a single large room with a set of stairs leading up. The first floor has a small landing for the stairs and two doors, one leading to the front room, and one to the back room.

Ground floor

The ground floor is full of dust and rubbish. There are large, dark droppings everywhere, and the smell is very bad.

There is a set of stairs leading up to the first floor, made of wood and only wide enough for the party to travel in single file. If they start to climb the stairs, when they get half-way they will hear a loud scurrying noise. A moment later **4 giant rats** will rush down the stairs and attack.



First floor – front room

The front room is full of wrecked furniture, torn blankets and dusty rugs which have been pulled together into a giant rat nest. The rodent smell is nearly overwhelming. If the party search the nest, they won't find any treasure, but will soon find 12 baby giant rats, which do not fight.

First floor – back room

There is a 4-poster bed, a divan and a large wardrobe in this room. Everything is covered in dust and the whole place feels very dingy.

The Rat Boss is there, standing near the single window in the room. Her name is **Miestro**, and she is a **wererat**. When the party enter the room she will say, "What are *you* doing here, Asparagus?"

"You know why we are here," Asparagus will snarl. "We are looking for the King!"

She will stare at the party for a long moment, then say, "I do not have your King, but I know where he is. A gang of half-orcs called the **Stinkrot Crew** kidnapped him – I don't know why. They are hiding out in the old Bakers Warehouse down near the docks.

"You owe me a favour Asparagus – a big one!"

With that she will leap from the window, turning into rat form in mid-air and scampering away.

Treasure. On a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** check, the party will find a silver necklace in the bed, worth **30gp**.

The Old Bakers Warehouse

If the party investigate the old Bakers Warehouse, they will discover that it is empty and has not been occupied for a long time. Enquiries after the Stinkrot Crew will discover the gang disbanded years ago.

What Now?

If the party are stuck, the young blue-black cat named *Bombalina* will come bouncing up, and urge them to visit (or revisit) the Wayside Oracle. If this is the second time they have visited her, the Wayside Oracle will strongly suggest that they should go to the Clockwork Carnival and seek out Balink Sparkneedle.

CLOCKWORK CARNIVAL

The Clockwork Carnival was established a few years back to help showcase and promote Neverwinter's revitalized clockwork industry. The carnival opens at sundown every evening, and is situated near the river, between the Bluelake and Tower Districts. Although only a recent innovation, it has deservedly become famous throughout the North.

The main attractions are a dozen clockwork rides, including a "big wheel", two carousels, several clockwork trains and trolleys, and a clockwork gondola. There is also a clockwork puppet show, and a clockwork re-enactment of the famous sea battle between Captain Deudermont and the pirate Pinochet. Most of the amusements cost either 1 or 2 coppers to enjoy.

The carnival also offers more traditional fare such as clowns, acrobats, trained animals, jugglers, illusionists, bards and actors. Stalls selling a variety of foods are dotted all over the carnival grounds.

Four large **half-ogres** are employed to rewind the mainsprings of the various clockwork attractions. Up to a dozen members of the Watch are usually present on the carnival grounds in the evening, keeping a careful eye on things.

SIDESHOW ALLEY

If the PCs ask around for **Balink Sparkneedle**, they will quickly learn that he runs a series of

attractions known collectively as *Sideshow Alley*, which are situated in a row on the northern end of the Carnival grounds.

Each attraction has its own 10' square striped tent with a crudely painted sign outside. Each tent has its own gnome "barker", trying to convince the passing crowds to go inside. Each attraction costs 2 coppers per person.

If the PCs ask any of the barkers where Balink is, they will each claim that he was in their tent "just a few moments ago". The PCs will have to pay up in order to enter the tent. Balink has actually warned the gnomes not to reveal his location to anyone.

If the PCs try to enter without paying, or if they threaten the gnome barkers, the gnomes will cry out for the Watch and a dozen **guards** will quickly converge on the party. They will give the PCs exactly one warning – any more trouble after that and they will be hauled off to the lockup.

Following are the attractions –

- The Giant Gorilla
- The World's Ugliest Boy
- The Mermaid
- The Will-o'-Wisp
- The Chain Devil

The descriptions of each attraction can be found below. The PCs can learn the location of Balink from either the World's Ugliest Boy or the Mermaid.



The Giant Gorilla

Once the PCs have paid their money, the barker will say -

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm going to show you the greatest thing your eyes have ever beheld. He was a king and a god in the world he knew, but now he comes to civilization merely a captive - a show to gratify your curiosity. Ladies and gentlemen, behold the Great Shabani, the Eighth Wonder of the World!

He will then open the tent flap and usher them inside quickly. The floor is covered by a large canvas sheet with a hole in it. Emerging from the hole (like a collar) is an enormous gorilla head, about 8' across. The eyes are shut, but the muscles on the face twitch every now again. The nostrils also flare in and out, and the PCs will feel the breath coming from the nose. Occasionally the head rocks back and forth gently, or the mouth opens slightly. The PCs will also sporadically hear a loud metallic *clunk*.

The barker will say -

Ladies and gentlemen, an enormous hole has been dug beneath this tent. Shabani is sitting in this hole and so, as you can see, only his head is visible to us.

Please do not be noisy or make a bright light, so you do not disturb his sleep!

Although he is secured with the strongest chains ever created, were he to wake up angry it would not be possible to restrain him, and the results would be catastrophic!

Now, do you have any questions about this wondrous creature?

The barker will give fabulous and outlandish answers to any questions they have. After a

few moments he will usher them out, saying that "Shabani grows restless".

The whole thing is a fake, of course. There is no hole. Shabani's head is actually constructed from leather, plaster and horse hair. An ingenious clockwork mechanism controls the facial movements, and a bellows supplies the breath. An anvil and a large chunk of metal simulate the sound of the chains. All of this is worked by a gnome puppeteer sitting inside the head.

A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** check will spot signs of the fakery.

The Worlds Ugliest Boy

The barker will send the party into this tent without following them. Inside is a small wooden stool with a very hideous looking young boy seated upon it, dressed neatly in school clothes. His face is very blemished, his eyes are uneven, his nose is long and hooked, his ears are malformed and his complexion seems a little greenish. He says -

Good evening, kind sirs. My name is **Shath Goodfellow** and I, as you have no doubt already guessed, am the ugliest boy in the world!

My life has not been an easy one, I must admit. At my birth, my father took one look at me and fled in terror, never to be heard from again. When my mother saw me she instantly died of fright. And so I was raised an orphan.

The cruel and avaricious matron who ran the orphanage soon found a way to use my misfortune to line her purse - she hired me to a local dairy, who used my hideous countenance to speed up the curdling of milk, and hence increase their production of butter...

He will continue on with his tale for some time, telling more and more tall stories about the troubles and scrapes his ugliness has gotten him into.

As it happens, he is not really a boy at all – he is actually a grown-up goblin named **Grindle** who happened to be born with somewhat human-like features. He is highly intelligent and was able to master the common tongue.

Grindle thinks it is hilarious that he can make a comfortable living by telling stories to strangers, and he is very content with his lot in life. He does not care at all if people think he is ugly.

If the PCs ask him if he knows where Balink is, for a gold piece he will cheerfully tell them that he lives in **Mulberry Cottage** in the **Bluelake District**. He knows this because he has dined there several times.

The Mermaid

There is a glass pool in this room, about 8' across and 4' deep. It is full of dirty, greenish water, and holds a very miserable looking **mermaid**. The gnome barker will follow the party in and say, "It's a full silver if you want to touch her – don't give away no freebies, love!" and will then walk out.

Once the gnome is gone, the mermaid will begin desperately whispering to the party. Her name is **Sereia**, and she would rather die than spend another moment in that wretched pool. She begs the party to rescue her.

As it happens, she knows that Balink lives in **Mulberry Cottage** in the **Bluelake District** (she heard him mention it once). She will trade this information in return for her freedom.

Getting her down to the river could be a challenge. It is only a few hundred yards away but they will need to carry her. If any of the gnomes in Sideshow Alley see them, they will summon the Watch. It's also possible that a random member of the Watch will see them, or

that a member of the public will draw attention to them. If they do rescue Sereia, she will gladly tell them Balink's address before swimming away.

The Will-o'-Wisp

This tent is very dark inside. A velvet rope indicates that patrons are not to approach the simple wooden stage, which has a black curtain hanging behind it. The gnome barker says -

Friends, you are about to encounter the mysterious and unnerving will-o'-wisp. This creature haunts battlefields and other places of great tragedy, whispering words of despair and hopelessness in an ancient and forgotten tongue. In a few moments the will-o'-wisp will appear.

Be warned, friends! The will-o'-wisps words have been known to cause people to be overcome with desolation, and some have even killed themselves after meeting this creature. If you begin to feel strange – even a little bit – please leave the tent at once.

Look – it is coming!

Three strange lights will slowly fade into view on the stage, bobbing up and down gently. The light seems slightly blurred in a disturbing way, and it is hard to focus on.

A few moments later, the PCs will hear a strange, echoing whisper. It says –

An cuala sibh mun mhaighdeann chèitich

Air an tug Niall Bàn an èiginn

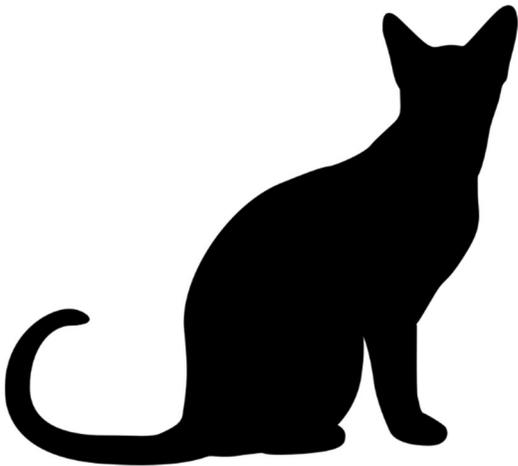
Air taobh beinne ri latha grèineadh

'S truagh a rìgh nach b'e mi fhèin

The PCs must each make a **DC 10 Wisdom** check or be *frightened* for 1 minute. After a few moments the voice will repeat the words, and this time a **DC 5 Wisdom** check is required.

After that, the lights will fade and the barker take them out, asking if they felt the will-o'-wisp's despair.

There is nothing magical about the fear effect – it is accomplished through the power of suggestion. The lights are actually small lanterns tied to a string with a crystal casing that distorts the light in strange patterns. The voice comes from a gnome behind the curtain speaking into a special mouth trumpet.



The Chain Devil

This tent has a large chalk circle on the floor with a pentagram drawn within it. White candles stand at each of the points, burning with narrow green flames that occasionally flare and spark.

Standing in the midst of the pentagram is a tall, muscular figure wrapped all about with chains. The face is hidden by a veil of delicate chains, but large inhuman eyes are occasionally visible. A number of loose chains terminating in wicked hooks are attached to the creature's hands.

The gnome barker says -

Behold the chain devil, one of the most dangerous and awe-inspiring creatures in the multiverse! Known as the *kytor* in their native tongue, they are loathed and feared by all in the Nine Hells!

This particular specimen is ancient beyond the reckoning of mortals. It was present at the infamous *Blood War*, that fearsome conflict which is only mentioned in whispers in the natural world.

In its own universe, this creature is a powerful lord with numberless infernal servants. But a wizard has summoned and bound it here this evening for your viewing pleasure!

I must warn you – do not cross the chalk circle or rub any of it out. Doing so will free the devil, who will then wreak terrible havoc on our fair city!

Behold the devil perform its battle dance!

The creature will then begin performing an intricate dance, spinning the hooked chains about impressively. As it dances, the candles flare up and sparkle in a disturbing manner.

The dance will finish in a few minutes and the barker will urge them out of the tent.

Anyone making a **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana)** check will be pretty sure that the creature is simply a human being dressed up in chains. A paladin will receive no *infernal* emanations from it.

If someone touches the chalk circle, the gnome will scream “No!” and flee. The creature will fling out its arms dramatically and there will be an explosion of smoke and green flame. When the smoke clears, the creature is nowhere to be seen.

As it happens, it was all well-rehearsed trickery. The explosion was achieved via a special alchemical powder, and the actor

portraying the devil simply snuck out the back of the tent and returned to his rooms.

MULBERRY COTTAGE

The party will have been directed to Mulberry Cottage either by the Mermaid or the World's Ugliest Boy. It is a neat, single story house on the outer edge of the affluent Bluelake District. They will easily be able to find the exact address by asking strangers or the Watch.

Layout. No map has been supplied as the layout is simple. The house is 15' wide and 40' long. The front room is 15' x 20', and the back rooms include two bedrooms and a combined kitchen and dining area. There are doors at the front and rear, as well as windows in each room.

An Unexpected Greeting

If the PCs approach Mulberry Cottage from the main road, they will see a thin, neatly dressed woman standing at the door. Her name is **Wendri**, and she is a servant. She will smile when she sees the party, bow slightly, and say, "My master, **Balink Sparkneedle**, requests the pleasure of your company. He is hoping that this current misunderstanding can be cleared up without further inconvenience. Please, enter." She holds the door open.

The Front Room

This room is 15' x 20' and is richly furnished. Several landscapes and portraits hang over the paneled walls, and there is a large and expensive rug on the floor. A number of ornate divans and small tables are scattered around the room. There is a massive wooden desk and chair near the rear wall.

Behind the desk is an old and worried looking gnome with silver rimmed spectacles – this is **Balink Sparkneedle**. Sitting on the table, and bound by a leather collar and leash, is a large and rather magnificent looking black cat – this is **Morpholomew**, King of the Cats. His leash

is tied to one of the desk legs. Standing next to him is the **Rat Boss**.

Sneak Attack

The party may elect to sneak into the cottage via the back door or through a window. If so, Asparagus will stay with them until the last moment, when he will leap into the front room and cry, "Beware! They are here!" You should then skip down to the section called "Battle of the Beasts".

If the party enter peacefully via the front door, you can read or paraphrase the following set-piece. Throughout the conversation, the party will hear the sound of many scurrying little feet coming from the ceiling, walls and floor.

The large black cat arches it back and narrows its eyes. "Asparagus - you traitor!" it hisses.

"Mind your tongue, Morpholomew, or I'll have it removed," responds Asparagus coldly.

The old gnome removes and polishes his glasses nervously. "This is very bad, Asparagus. Why have you brought *them* here?"

"Shut up Balink, you old fool. I had no choice," says Asparagus sharply. "I *had* to find a party – the Congress were growing suspicious at my delays, especially that nosey young minx, Bombalina."

"You were *supposed* to hire some incompetents," snarls the Rat Boss.

"I found the most inexperienced party I could," says Asparagus. "But they have proven more durable and resourceful than I anticipated."

"But what do you proposed to do with them *now*?" says Balink.

Continued next page...

"It's very simple," says Asparagus, turning to you. "You are mercenaries, and I am your employer. I now proposed to *double* your fee, to 200gp – all you need to do is turn and leave now. If you refuse to leave, the consequences will be... most unfortunate."

"Don't listen to him, his greed has made him evil and corrupt!" cries Morpholomew. "Free me!"

"Silence, you sanctimonious old tom!" hisses Asparagus. "Now, mercenaries, make your choice."

If they leave...

If the party choose to leave, Balink will give them **100gp** immediately from his drawer, and Asparagus will tell them to go to the Congress building the next day for the remainder. If the party do so, they will find the building is deserted. And so the adventure will end.

Battle of the Beasts

Assuming the party choose to stay, Asparagus will say, "most unfortunate". The Rat Boss will throw her head back and let out a mighty screech, and then **8 swarms of rats** will pour into the room, coming through every available window, door and crevice, as well as chewing new holes through the walls and ceiling. The room will soon be filled with rats, though they will avoid the area around the Rat Boss and her allies.

Just before the rats can engage the party, the front door bursts from its hinges and **Ungrulf** the Worg Lord charges in, flanked by **four worgs**. He was shown the house by **Bombalina**, who has been quietly following the party the entire time. Ungrulf intends to honor his treaty with the Cat King.

The Battle of the Beasts commences. The Rat Boss, Balink and Asparagus do not take part. Morpholomew strains to join the battle, but cannot free himself from his leash. If the party do not attack, neither side will trouble them.

Asparagus and Morpholomew will be calling out during the battle, each urging the party to support their side. Asparagus will cry out, "Help me and you will have gold!" Morpholomew will cry, "Help me and you will have my gratitude!"

Rather than play out the battle rolling dice, follow these rules. Every round, **one swarm of rats** will be destroyed. Every second round, **one worg** will be killed. If the party join in, have either **two rat swarms** or **one worg** (depending on what side they join) peel off and face them, and treat that as regular combat.

It is a noisy, chaotic, swirling battle in a confined space – furniture is upturned, paintings are torn from the walls, and the rug is ripped to shreds. Try and conjure a sense of the bedlam in your descriptions.

CONCLUSION

There are a few possible outcomes -

The party does nothing

If the party does not interfere, the battle sees all of the rat swarms destroyed, and one heavily wounded worg left alive – **Ungrulf**. The **Rat Boss** will then transform into rat form and easily kill him. Asparagus will give the party the agreed sum of **100gp**, and suggest they leave and never seek him out again.

The party helps Asparagus

If the party side with Asparagus and the Rat Boss, all of the worgs will most likely be destroyed. Asparagus will pay the party **200gp** for their assistance, and then ask them to leave. He will offer no further explanation of what has happened. From that day onward,

whenever the party encounters a cat in Neverwinter, it will hiss at them.

The party helps Morpholomew

If they party side with Morpholomew and the worgs, they should easily defeat the rat swarms. Once the Rat Boss realizes she is losing, she will escape through the back door or a window. Asparagus will also attempt to escape once he sees the Rat Boss leave. Balink will attempt to hide beneath the bed in a back room.

Morpholomew will thank the party profusely for their assistance once he is freed. He will explain that Asparagus has coveted the throne for some time, and allied himself to the Rat Boss and Balink in order to force Morpholomew into exile.

He will promise to assist the party however he can from that day onward. If they need his help they need simply say so to the nearest cat in Neverwinter, and he will endeavour to come to them as soon as he can.

He has no gold to offer the party, but they will find **150gp** in Balink's drawer. There is nothing else of value in the house.

Morpholomew will then return to the Congress of Cats to reaffirm his sovereignty. The Worg Lord and his remaining henchmen will also leave, with a nod of grudging respect to the party. The PCs will return to their regular lives, with a tale that *no-one* will believe.

CREDITS & LEGALS

Design: M.T. Black

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