

DRINKING AT THE DANCING BEAR

The growing trade town of Dulwich looms over the Great Salt Mire in the Duchy of Ashlar. A veritable torrent of lumber from the nearby forest enriches its citizens' coffers and emboldens the growing merchant class. Dulwich's lord, Wido Gall, resists the merchants' efforts to topple his rule while coveting the nearby village of Longbridge. Both sides seek support from the followers of Conn, hoping to sway the newly appointed and young high priestess. Meanwhile, adventurers flock to the town's inns and taverns, preparing their own expeditions into the ruins hidden in the nearby Forest of Grey Spires.

Designed specifically for you, the busy GM, this supplement enables you to effortlessly bring your characters' next urban adventure to life. Designed for use with the town of Dulwich, this mini-venture can easily be used with almost any town or city.

CREDITS

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USING THIS MINI-ADVENTURE?

A mini-venture is akin to a normal adventure, but does not (normally) feature violence or physical challenges. Instead, a mini-venture focuses on the use of social skills and role-play to resolve the challenges, or events, therein. Most mini-ventures take place in an urban locale. Mini-ventures are an excellent change of pace and can be used as filler between adventures or as situations in which characters who have invested in social skills can shine. They are also perfect for players who enjoy role-playing.

Use the lists herein to add depth and flavour to the characters' exploration of Dunstone. Use the entries as nothing more than local colour or as springboards to encounters, side quests or even full adventures. You can use this mini-venture repeatedly, as long as you keep track of which entries you have previously used. Of course, some of the listed NPCs and locales could become staples of your campaign. Be sure to note the location of locales on your GM's city map and develop any your characters seem particularly interested in visiting again.

You can either plan events ahead of time or just "wing" the whole mini-venture using the tables herein to facilitate play.



DRINKING AT THE DANCING BEAR

The Dancing Bear is location 4 on the Dulwich map.

The ridiculous image of a dancing frocked bear adorns the outside of this rambling three-storey inn and tavern. Stuffed heads, showing their age, of wild beasts and even a few monsters, adorn the cavernous common room's walls. These are the mementoes of the inn's proprietor, the retired adventurer, Nurlon Rekunen.

- **Food & Drink:** Meal (omelette with nuts and vegetables or leek and chestnut stew; 3 sp), mug of ale (1 sp), pitcher of good wine (10 sp).
- **Accommodation:** A standard room costs 2 sp a night. The room is large and well—if plainly—furnished.
- **Lifestyle:** Characters staying at the Dancing Bear can enjoy a poor (7 sp/day) or average (12 sp/day) lifestyle.

THE DANCING BEAR BY DAY

By day, the Dancing Bear is quiet. A few customers—typically those staying in the inn—linger in the common room nursing their hangovers. The inn's staff quietly go about their day, cleaning, tidying and restocking the common room's bar.

THE DANCING BEAR BY NIGHT

By night, the Dancing Bear comes alive. It has a reputation for wild nights and those seeking to let off steam often end up at the Dancing Bear. Entertainment is a common occurrence at the Dancing Bear—bards, storytellers, travelling troupes of actors, and the like know it is a good place to put on a show. The tavern stays open until the early hours but is noticeably quieter after midnight.

NOTABLE FOLK

Some folk are often encountered at the Dancing Bear.

- **Nurlon Rekunen** (LG middle-aged male half-elf fighter 3) bought the inn well over a hundred years ago and is something of a local legend. The bearded Nurlon and his twin sister Nalthra Rekunen (location 5) were raised by their human mother and her family. Generations of his brothers' and sisters' descendants have since lived and died, and Nurlon is a bit morose when in his cups.
- **Sanni Rekunen** (CG young female human) works at her uncle's inn and thoroughly enjoys herself. Entertainment is in her blood, and she loves meeting people. Barely 16, she already sees herself as an excellent host and practically in charge of the tavern. Nurlon indulges her.
- **Liekko Unaja** (N middle-aged female human) started work at the Dancing Bear two decades ago and is a fixture of the place. Now she runs many of the day-to-day operations for Nurlon. He trusts her, and she, in turn, is loyal to him. Liekko also has an excellent singing voice

and sometimes joins other performers on stage. If she had enjoyed a better start in life, she could have been a renowned singer. She knows this, and it saddens her. She is a tall but dumpy woman.

FOLK IN THE TAPROOM

While the characters are at the Dancing Bear, they may encounter one or more folk of interest.

1. **Albin Joutsi** (N male human fighter 2) stays at the Dancing Bear while plotting his next move. He's had some minor success adventuring but has recently been shown how dangerous such a life can be. He won't talk about his experiences and spends his evenings drinking. He loves the entertainment at the Dancing Bear—it helps him forget his worries.
2. **Stiina Toiva** (LN female human) wants to sell Nurlon a consignment of wine on behalf of her master—a wealthy merchant in Languard. Her problem is that the shipment is in Languard, banditry is on the rise and trouble in the village of Longbridge further complicates matters. She needs a group of trustworthy guards.
3. **Sirja Hopea** (CN female human thief 2) lingers in the common room, watching for easy marks. She isn't insane enough to pick the pocket of an obvious adventurer or mug someone, no matter how worse for wear they are. Rather she pilfers a few coins from drunk customers who will likely never notice the theft. She flirts with her marks but is careful never to take things too far.
4. **Daim Azcral** (LG male dwarf fighter 3) enjoys a mug (or four) of ale. New to Dulwich he has come here to fight goblins—and whatever other foul beasts lurk in the southern forest. He is loyal and dependable but inflexible. He is also convinced of dwarven superiority in almost all matters. His conversation can be pretty boring.
5. **Kaarlo Ano** (NE male human fighter 1) works as a spy for a bandit gang lurking in the southern woods. He is here to get information about wealthy merchants and their movements. He pretends to be a mercenary guard. If the characters try to hire him, he comes up with increasingly spurious reasons why he cannot serve them. Kaarlo has a certain level of base cunning, but he is no genius. He is a handsome man and believes himself to be virtually irresistible to women.
6. **Rister Vilja** (CE male half-elf assassin 8) lingers in the taproom. He has recently come to Dulwich to complete a job—the slaying of Tuula Tenhunen (the leader of the town guard)—and has taken a room here to get a feel for the town. Rister is cautious, and he is content to stalk his prey for weeks. Rister also always likes to have a backup plan and might see the characters as useful dupes or diversions. Utterly without morals, he has no qualms about destroying other people's lives or reputations.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

While the characters are at the Dancing Bear, one or more things from the list below may occur.

1. **Sing Song:** When the characters arrive, the clientele in the common room is in the midst of a raucous sing song. It is noisy and busy. Liekko Unaja see "Notable Folk") is leading the singing and enjoying herself immensely.
2. **Dancing Bear:** A visiting bard has brought his trained dancing bear to the tavern (for obvious reasons). The bear capers about the common room while the customers—some nervously—watch. The bear has a taste for ale and sometimes steals customers' drinks. Wisely, no one objects.
3. **Pocket Picked:** A perceptive character notices Sirja Hopea (#3 "Folk in the Taproom") pick the pocket of a drunk and inattentive merchant deep in an animated conversation with a friend. She flees if confronted.
4. **Celebrating Brave Sir Ozloc:** A group of friends sit at a table laughing and joking. They celebrate brave Sir Ozloc's most recent triumph—catching himself with his own *sleep* spell while fleeing a disastrous encounter with a dragon. The group is in good spirits, and the ale is flowing freely. (Sir Ozloc is an adventurer active in the Dunstone area who has gained a reputation for daring escapes and swift retreats).
5. **Quiet Night:** The Dancing Bear is quiet. Perhaps the weather is terrible or the entertainment is awful, and the patrons have voted with their feet. The patrons present sit in small groups drinking and chatting quietly. The inn's staff are enjoying the unusually easy night, and most are in a talkative mood; characters chatting with them gain two rumours from "Whispers & Rumours".
6. **Peddler Peddling:** Piri Repo (CN middle-aged male human) sells poor-quality jewellery. He moves about the common room peddling his wares until chased out by the staff.

OPPORTUNITIES & COMPLICATIONS

Lucky adventurers find opportunities almost anywhere. Unlucky adventurers find complications almost anywhere.

1. **Nurlon's Old Adventures:** If Nurlon takes a shine to someone, he tells stories of his adventures in the southern forests. In this way, the characters could learn of the Shunned Valley of the Three Tombs, Elle's Mere or the Valley of Bones.
2. **Gems to Sell:** If the party has gemstones for sale, Nurlon sends them to his sister, Nalthra (location 5 on the Dulwich map; N middle-aged female half-elf). Sometimes, she visits the Dancing Bear, and Nurlon gladly introduces her to likely customers.
3. **Magic Ring for Sale:** Hille Ilakka (NG female human fighter 6) has a *ring of protection +1* for sale. She wants

10,000 gp for the ring as she needs the money to pay for a friend's desperately needed magical healing.

4. **Guards, Guards:** Stiina Toiva (# 2 "Folk in the Taproom") needs guards for a shipment of wine. She either approaches the characters or Nurlon introduces them. If the characters accept the job, they could come into (violent) contact with the bandits lurking in the so-called Shadowed Keep on the Borderlands or become embroiled in Longbridge's political problems.
5. **Digging for Information:** Kaarlo Ano (#4 "Folk in the Taproom") approaches the party under the pretence of sharing news about the road. His goal is to discover the party's plans so his comrades can avoid them. He has had too much to drink and is not his subtle self.
6. **Drunken Mercenary:** Pietari Urho (N male human fighter 2) has drunk way too much and is annoying Sanni Rekunen (see "Notable Folk") with his lecherous advances. Pietari is a large, burly fellow and several of the worried regulars watch over her. If the characters intervene, they could make several friends among the inn's staff and clientele.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

The characters may overhear or learn some of the rumours (which may or may not be true) below.

1. **Nurlon's Glory Days:** In his youth, Nurlon was an adventurer who explored the southern forests. He knows much of what lurks beneath its boughs. He bought the Dancing Bear with the proceeds of his adventures over 100 years ago.
2. **The Shadowed Keep:** An old keep lies in the woodlands to the south of Dulwich. Once home to Valentin Ironwolf, the place is now a ruin. Who knows what foul things lurk within?
3. **Political Problems:** The village of Longbridge, which lies between Dulwich and Languard, is strategically important for trade in the duchy. It also does not currently have a lord—a situation Wide Gall, ruler of Dulwich—is keen to remedy.
4. **Magic Items for Sale:** If you want to buy or sell magic items in Dulwich, the best place to go is Badger's. Bernhard "Badger" Ilmatoivia has contacts throughout the town and duchy and can generally find a buyer for any enchanted item. Those seeking a specific item can also engage the retired warrior to find it on their behalf.
5. **Plague:** The plague still savages the doomed village of Ashford. How anyone is still alive there, Darlen only knows. Something should be done about it. Militant folk call for the village to be burnt to the ground to contain the contagion.
6. **The Forest of Grey Spires:** The southern forests have long been a place of mystery and ruin. Ancient ruins lie scattered throughout the forest, ensuring a steady stream of adventurers and explorers pass through Dulwich on their way south.

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