



Adventure 1: A Gullet Cove Hello

Your animal adventurers arrive in Gullet Cove and are immediately confronted by a mystery. Because of course they are. They didn't come to this town for a quiet time, did they? There's no chance of that. No sooner do they step off the boat, or walk through the gate, then they are dragged into a Thieves' Guild turf-war! And things are only going to get more frantic from here!

This adventure is designed for characters of levels 1; at least one of the party should be an awakened animal adventurer, though the more the merrier!

This adventure requires the use of the Alleyway map and the Garden map.

Adventure Overview

New arrivals in Gullet Cove are always watched carefully, and that's definitely the case with the player characters. New adventurers and heroes are a valuable resource, and the Thieves' Guild make a quick move, asking the player characters to help them trace some burglars carrying out unsanctioned larceny!

Offering a Thieves Guild mark and a fistful of gold to any player character prepared to help them, this represents a pretty lucrative hello to Gullet Cove. And all they have to do to earn it is investigate the scene of the latest burglary, locate the culprits, and bring them to justice. Or to the Thieves Guild, which is close enough.

The problem is that the burglars are unlikely to come quietly. They are in fact three very bored heroes from the Guild of Adventurers...tired of having nothing to occupy them, a spot of robbery seemed an ideal way to keep themselves entertained. This won't sit well with the Thieves Guild, who are notoriously protective of their profession...and are not the type to look generously on amateurs treading on their toes. But the Guild of Adventurers isn't exactly going to let three of its members be pushed around by a bunch of scoundrels... yes, their members might be scoundrels but that's not the point. It's the principle!

The player characters can try and defuse the possibility of a good old dust-up between two of the most powerful Guilds in the town. Or, alternatively, let them fight it out. Whatever they choose!

Arriving in Gullet Cove

Begin by reading or paraphrasing the following text:

The wind is strong and the scent of the sea which has filled your nostrils for weeks is slowly replaced by a much less pleasant odour. The town of Gullet Cove stands before you, and before you even set foot on the shore you can hear the shouts of street-traders, the roar of drunken sailors celebrating arriving home, and the haggling of merchants already negotiating the price of newly arrived produce. You're finally here. Time to start exploring!

The player characters begin the adventure onboard the ship, staring out over the side into the ocean. They can leave the ship, and explore the dock. Docks are exciting places, and Gullet Cove's is no exception; there is always something going on and something to experience. To determine precisely what they see, roll 1d6 on the following table:

D6 Result	Dock Events
1	Want to buy something, my fine friends? A street-hawker approaches, offering decidedly dodgy looking merchandise. He sells rope, holy amulets, and a variety of ink, paper, chalk, and other similar implements. Everything costs 2cp but breaks as soon as it's used. This includes the rope!
2	Street Fight! A gang of toughs are fighting each other. Fists fly and curses are hurled. You might try and stop it or simply stand and watch! Getting involved in the street fight requires a DC 14 Strength save. If you succeed, gain 50XP. If you fail, suffer 1d3 damage.
3	Try this! A dog passes you with a tray of delicacies on his back. He stops and offers you one, as a sample, and tells you that he works for the Gullet Coved Smoked Kraken Company. Trying a bit of Kraken restores 1d3 hit points.
4	What is THAT?! Something enormous and extremely strange is being lifted from a ship nearby. It could be a huge, terrifying monster trapped in ice, a vast statue of a multi-headed god, or the biggest vat of liquid chocolate you can imagine.
5	Isn't that...? A legendary pirate swaggers by, swinging their cutlass around lazily and hailing friends with cheerful bellows. Everyone acts as though this was the most normal thing in the world...even the officers of the Watch!
6	Someone is watching you! A slight, feline figure is observing you from above the streets. Watching. Waiting. But for what?

Let the player characters mingle amongst the busy, day-to-day life of the Cove. Perhaps they get into a heated negotiation with a trader, or perhaps they are accosted by one of the Watch who warn them to 'not make trouble'. Gullet Cove is constantly busy, constantly alive and letting the player characters spend a few minutes being immersed in all this vibrant oddness is a good move. And should help make what happens next even more surprising!

Stop! Thief!

One of the player characters is suddenly robbed! Have each player character make an initiative test. The player character with the highest total suddenly notices a small, indisputably feline paw at their collar or belt. They're being robbed! The player character being deprived of their treasured items can stop the thief with a successful DC 16 Dexterity save. If they fail to apprehend the thief, then they can give chase—he isn't trying to get far, really. This is all a plan to draw the player characters to a nearby back alley, where the thief's masters can relay their message.

- 🐾 If the player characters do catch the burglar before he can get away, he immediately gives up and returns the purloined item. The thief is a cat called Josef, a small unusual looking feline with milky white fur and red-tinged eyes. He's an albino cat and quite proud of the fact. He's also extremely friendly and more than willing to talk; he quickly relays the message that the player characters are expected around the corner, in the alleyway behind two warehouses, and he'll happily lead them there. He does everything he can to allay any fears they might have about being ambushed. 'They're excited to meet you!' he says. A DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) test allows a player character to realise that Josef is being totally honest. He may be a thief but he's a good natured one. If the player characters use any spells to try and determine Josef's true motives, or his alignment, all indicate the same thing...he's a good little cat.
- 🐾 If the player characters let Josef scamper away into the crowds, they'll have to give chase. Fortunately, Josef isn't trying to get away. He just wants to be followed. If the player characters don't immediately chase him, he'll drop the stolen object he's carrying in his mouth, stick his tongue out and dare them to follow. If the player characters attempt to persuade passers-by to apprehend Josef, they receive a derisory laugh...chasing Josef is, however, easy. He keeps just ahead of the player characters, waits for them, watches to see they don't fall too far behind. Josef gradually leads them towards a deserted alleyway, tucked behind two large warehouses.

The Alleyway

GM Tip!



What if the players don't want to investigate?

Once off the main street — whether directed by Young Josef or lured there — the sounds of Gullet Cove ebb away. The alleyway is narrow, hemmed in on both sides by the backs of large warehouse buildings. There is a staircase attached to the warehouse back wall, and, perched on each step is a masked and hooded cat. They watch the player characters intently. If Josef was caught by the player characters, they immediately request that he be let go. If, however, the party has been lured here by Josef, then the little cat runs to the masked cats on the stairs and looks extremely pleased with himself.

The cats on the steps greet the player characters warmly:

🐾 ‘Welcome! We had heard you were to visit our little town and sent young Josef here to bring you to us. We hope he wasn’t too much of a nuisance.’

Whatever the player characters respond to this, Josef looks slightly guilty but entirely unrepentant. One of the masked cats shakes their head at him, wryly. The largest of the masked cats leaps into the midst of the player characters, preens itself, and then announces:

🐾 ‘We brought you here to ask your assistance in a small task! You’re new in town and so you’ll be able to investigate without anyone tying you to us. Yes, of course we could investigate without being discovered...but we have more profitable things to be doing, I’m afraid. You, however, could earn yourself a valuable ally...and some gold too, I suppose. Which wouldn’t be a bad start in Gullet Cove, would it?’

The masked cat saunters between the player characters, inspecting them with the air of a sergeant-major surveying new recruits. He makes a few comments about the relative smartness (or lack of it) that the player characters display, criticising slovenly costumes and anything which ‘couldn’t be used to confuse a witness after stealing something’. If any of the player characters point out that Josef isn’t in disguise, the masked cat simply laughs and says: ‘What? You think that’s what he really looks like, do you? Don’t be so silly. We teach even our initiates in the Cradle to keep their identities hidden; especially those who work for the Paw.’ It’s possible that one or more of the player characters are members of the Cradle, in which case, he nods appreciatively and singles them out for words of praise, saying that he hopes ‘they’ll prove worthy of their pledge’.

Upon hearing of ‘the Cradle’ and ‘the Paw’, a player character can make a DC 12 Intelligence (History) check. A success tells them that the Cradle is the infamous feline Thieves Guild, deeply entrenched in Gullet Cove, so much so that it functions as a part of the true Thieves Guild, whose head sits on the town council. The Paw is the shadowy cabal running the Cradle, made up of five Claws. No one knows the identity of the Claws, or of those who work for them. They are selected from the membership of the Cradle at a young age and taught the shadowy ways of deception and disguise. The player characters are in extremely powerful company...and the Claw want something from them!

Well, then they are likely to make themselves a powerful enemy. The Claw won’t attack or do anything so uncouth. But they’ll make life difficult. All prices the player characters pay for goods and services goes up by 50%, money and items mysteriously vanish just when they are needed most...basically, the Cradle goes out of its way to make life that little bit more awkward for the player characters. This can carry on indefinitely or, if the player characters change their mind, it ceases immediately. Guilds are extremely powerful in Gullet Cove and irritating one of them in their first moments in the town isn’t a good idea.



GM Tip!

Playing Young Josef

Having a cheeky little cat accompany your player characters is a great opportunity to bring some extra humour into the games! Young Josef should be naughty, prone to playing tricks on the player characters, but also brave and resourceful. He helps the player characters whenever he can, keen to prove his worth. Basically, the GM should feel free to use Young Josef to assist the player characters when they need it!

The masked cat in the player character's midst announces the following:

- ‘We require your assistance with a very minor matter. A trifling thing. Barely worth worrying about, really. Some thefts have been perpetrated. Some rather...embarrassing thefts for us. Thefts that have left us looking bad in our esteemed comrades' eyes. So, we need some clever newcomers to look into it for us.’
- ‘Master Pettifer's Emporium was robbed two nights ago. Several items of considerable value were taken and some ostentatious cat's paws were found amidst the wreckage. Along with the Cradle's mark, etched into the wall. Fortunately, Master Pettifer is a good sort and knows this isn't our kind of caper — if we were going to rob him, we'd have done it a good deal more carefully — but we need to find out who is attempting to muddy our spotless name. And why.’
- There's 200gp each in it for you, and a Guild Mark. That's a pretty good deal for people just off the boat. And Young Josef here will stay and show you around. You might want to start at Pettifer's. It's not far from here. Josef'll show you.

With a flourish, the masked cat leaps to the stairs and he, and the rest of the watching felines, scamper up the wall and are gone. Only Josef remains and he gives a cheery smile and says: ‘Shall we go then?’



Master Pettifer's Emporium

A strange and crowded shop, Master Pettifer's place is always something of a mess, but right now it's a disaster. Stock is scattered across the floor and several windows are broken. An Intelligence (Investigation) check of DC 14 reveals:

- Two sets of heavy bootprints outside the shop. These seem to hang around the shop though they don't go inside.
- Frayed threads of string hanging from some of the jagged glass.

Inside the shop, a dog is dutifully sweeping up, while a slightly dishevelled, though still elegant cat, is sat on the counter turning over the pages of a vast book with his paws, occasionally shaking his head and tutting.

This is Master Pettifer and the dog, obligingly cleaning up, is Rufus. They are both a little shocked by the burglary and neither is immediately trusting, especially of strangers asking questions. A successful DC 14 Charisma check wins over Rufus (by far the most obliging of the two) and, once he's onside, Master Pettifer gradually begins to talk. Any character offering to help clean up or console Rufus or Master Pettifer over their situation gains advantage on any Charisma checks, when talking to them.

Master Pettifer is happy enough to point out the broken window (which is obvious even upon entry), muddy cat pawprints, and then, carved into the wall, the geometric symbol of the Cradle, seven lines forming a series of diamonds. Neither Pettifer nor Rufus examined these clues closely. If any of the player characters ask questions about them — whether the footprints appear distinctive, for example — Pettifer is extremely sharp: 'Gods above no. Why would I? Do you think I have time for detective work when I'm trying to work out which of my wonderful things have been taken from me?'

Rufus is apologetic for his employer's tone but gives essentially the same answer. The player characters can ask the pair anything they like. Some potential answers to their questions are given below:

- What was taken? 'Well, that's just it. It makes very little sense. Lots of the most valuable things were completely ignored. The things which were stolen seem utterly random. I can't see any reason or logic or pattern to it whatsoever! It's like the theft was what mattered, not the items being taken. Very strange. They've taken a few magical bits and bobs, a pouch of money...but there's considerably more in the till and they've not touched that! Thoroughly amateurish.

- Were there any suspicious characters in the shop recently? Hmmm...define suspicious? My emporium is a veritable haven for the unusual, the unscrupulous, and the improper. They bring in the best stuff to sell, typically. So yes, there were a large number of disreputable sorts in. And out. The only people I recall in particular were Swindell and Buller, who own that inn down the way. The Master's Retreat. Both fairly unpleasant sorts as a rule and they don't tend to come up this way very often.

- Have the Watch investigated? Oh, yes. Of course. Or done the thing that passes for investigation at least. They poked at stuff, apologised, and left. They claimed they had several suspects in mind but that's what they always say. Poor fools. Who knows? They might have found something. Even a drunk sailor makes sense twice a day, as the saying goes around here.

- Why are you so sure that the Cradle didn't commit the crime? Oh, come now. Does this look like the work of master thieves? The Cradle and I have had our disagreements, yes. They've stolen from me, and I've had reason to use my influence amongst the Guilds to reprimand them, but we also help one another at certain times. And allow me to assure you, when the Cradle have purloined items from my stock — little rascals — they did not leave broken glass and muddy pawprints everywhere. Let alone a big carved symbol!

The player characters can explore Master Pettifer's shop as much as they like. It is a virtually infinite mass of shelving stretching back into the musty darkness. Pettifer is more than happy to show you around, lugging his heavy ledger with him and stopping at certain points to identify something of particular worth. He won't, however, sell anything at the moment. 'Oh no', he says when asked, 'I must first carry out a full inventory before I can sell anything else! Find out who stole from me and I'll give you a discount, though. Few get discounts from Master Pettifer, that I can promise!'

Rufus nods his head vigorously in agreement at this. This is all the player characters find out at Pettifer's but it's more than enough to go on and leaves them with two potential routes. Visit the Watch or try and find out more about Swindell & Buller — involving a wander around town and a visit to the market, perhaps?



The Watch

The Watch House is somewhat run-down, but still a large solid building. The player characters are able to wander in without being stopped and are confronted by a large, open room with a number of desks arrayed before them. The desks are all exquisitely untidy, with mugs of tea and coffee in various stages of evaporation and mould piled up on every surface in precarious towers. Mounds of unsorted paper collect on chairs and on the tops of cabinets. It's a mess.

A small terrier immediately comes to greet the player characters, wearing the green uniform of the Watch. He bristles with self-importance, watching them closely and growling a little under his breath. He speaks quickly and aggressively and demands to know what they want.

'We're very busy! The captain is very busy! Investigating crimes!'

This officious little dog is McKenzie, the captain's companion and self-appointed bodyguard and he's fiercely protective of her. He also speaks entirely in short, clipped sentences, yapping them with considerable force, despite his small stature. Persuading him to talk about 'Watch matters' isn't easy. McKenzie takes his job exceedingly seriously, even if no one around him does and is not going to just hand over information about arrests or lines of investigation. A successful DC 12 Charisma check results in him getting his boss, however.

The Captain of the Watch stumps down the stairs grumpily, sipping from a huge mug of black coffee. Filamena Gruth is a dwarf losing her enthusiasm for the job. The Guilds keep everyone in line in Gullet Cove, leaving her with precious little to do. She's bored, weary, and increasingly indifferent to the various investigations she's meant to be running. Upon reaching the player characters, she gestures for them to find a place to sit comfortably — pretty difficult amidst the mounds of rubbish. During the conversation with Filamena, a number of other Watch officers enter and leave the room. They all glance at the player characters and then hurry off to perform other duties — mainly preparing themselves another mug of tea or coffee and then leaving again.

Filamena is more forthcoming than McKenzie and the player characters can ask whatever they need to, without much in the way of resistance. McKenzie isn't happy with her openness, sitting at her side throughout the interview looking askance each time she answers a question. Examples of the kind of answers Filamena gives can be found below:

🐾 *Who do you think robbed Pettifer's?* I'm not sure. Whoever it was went out of their way to make it look like a Guild job. Wanted us to arrest a few Cradle members, I think. As if anyone in their right mind could believe a job that badly done could have been sanctioned by a Guild!

🐾 *What clues did she find?* What we were expected to find, more or less. Large quantities of broken glass, a crudely etched Cradle symbol...there were some bootprints outside. All in all, it was pretty amateurish really.

🐾 *What does she think really happened?* Seems to me someone wants to frame the Cradle for something. Yes, some think it might be to do with winding up the other Guilds. Me...I think it's to do with animals.

🐾 *Animals?* Yeah. Awakened animals. Gullet Cove is a haven for awakened animals, clever and kind souls like McKenzie here. But some people don't like it. Don't think they should be here. Not many, but a few. I think this was them. Make the Cradle look bad. Make the Thieves Guild disassociate themselves.

🐾 *Where do these animal haters hang out?* There's a tavern...Master's Retreat, it's called. We'd investigate but we've been told this is Guild business now. So we're out. That's Gullet Cove for you. The Guilds are the power. We're just watch dogs...no offence, McKenzie.

This is all Filamena has to tell. The Watch have relatively little power in the town, and the player characters are now doing their job for them. Filamena apologises for not having more to say and then excuses herself, returning to her office. McKenzie follows her, scowling at the player characters as he does so.

When Filamena has gone, the Watch House is apparently empty. Apart, that is, from the player characters. Or so it appears. As the place falls silent, a voice whispers:

'Help us out, maties and I'll show you where you can find the rascals what broke into that there Master Pettifer's place!'

The voice is coming from one of the jail cells, just off the main room. It's quite difficult to see, being concealed by vast mounds of coffee cups and forgotten paperwork. Peering out from between the bars of the jail cell is a small doggie face. It's a corgi with an appealing, if somewhat goofy, smile on its face. This is Queenie, one of the most widely known and widely liked merchants in Gullet Cove. The problem with Queenie is that she often forgets to pay her Guild taxes. Or, more accurately, refuses to. Queenie isn't big on taxes. So, the Watch has to lock her up every now and then, but she's more of a frequent visitor than a prisoner. Josef can tell the player characters all of this. He has met Queenie several times, and, while the Cradle can never openly admit it, they quite respect her stance on not paying Guild tithes — it's a type of thieving, in a way, even if it's one they can't endorse.

If the player characters converse with Queenie, she lets them know the following:

- 🐾 I knows the Master's Retreat pretty well, and I knows they be up to something rotten. You let me out, and I'll take you right to 'em!
- 🐾 Filamena be right! They used to hate animals likes us, but suddenly theys all sweetness and light! Something's going on, something strange and Queenie can help you get there...
- 🐾 Oh no! You got to let me out first. Queenie wasn't born yesterday, I'll tell you that for free and for nothing. And believe me, that's all you get that's free from Queenie!

There's a choice to make! The player characters can attempt to pick the lock on the door — requiring a DC 12 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) test. Once opened, Queenie grins at the player characters and then whispers: 'Come on then! Follow me!' and leads them out. Each player character must make a DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth) test to sneak out of the watch house silently. If more than half of the player characters fail the check, then McKenzie appears at the top of the stairs and begins barking excitedly.

The only choice now is to run for it! Filamena and McKenzie give chase, with 1d3 other Watch officers joining them. Each player character must make a DC 10 Dexterity save to evade capture. Should any of the player characters fail, they are apprehended by the Watch. A Watch officer can be distracted with a quick display of magic or something equally unusual — allowing the captured player character a chance to escape on a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) test. If a player character can't escape the clutches of a guard, or of Filamena and McKenzie then, well...they can always be broken out like Queenie.

Once properly escaped, the player characters can regroup. Queenie is happy to keep her word and take them to the Master's Retreat. 'Be wary,' she says, 'They is most certainly up to nothing good in that pub.'



The Market

The Gullet Cove market is held four times a week in the central peninsula. It draws people from all over, with several nearby villages and communities flocking in to sell their goods, especially to the traders arrived from overseas. It's a vibrant, busy place with colourful stalls set up, most of the merchants and traders clad in equally multi-hued clothing...a celebration of the variety and strangeness of Gullet Cove.

The player characters can browse the market, buying the various goods, haggling with the traders, immersing themselves in the bartering and bantering which Gullet Cove market inevitably produces. The following information can be obtained from various stall owners in different locations in the market:

Market Stall & Owner	Information
A large and extremely opulent fish stall, with magical cooling units keeping the fish fresh. Brume Copperwelt, a halfling with a huge belly and a pipe never out of his lips.	Oh, as if the Cradle would be that sloppy! No, no. That was never any Guild robbery. Someone's trying to be too clever. And I'm not sure they're doing a good job.
A small, mobile cart selling jewellery, particularly pearls pressed into seashells. Felicity Flop, a tiny cat who tinkles when she moves, her ginger fur braided with dozens of gems.	Who do I think might have done it? Well, someone who doesn't like awakened animals, I'd reckon. Trying to pin something on the cats of the Cradle, make them look bad in front of the thieves.
A small flower stand, with artfully arranged bouquets of roses, delicately laced with dried seaweed. McIvor Glistenhame, a half-elf with a constant frown of concentration, whether arranging his stand or collecting money from a customer.	Two most vocal animal haters... they'd probably be the two reprobates who own the Master's Retreat pub.
Stand composed of shelves, each containing jars of unusual ingredients utilised in magic spells, incantations, and rituals. Gladysia the Wise; a gnome with enormous spectacles who speaks extremely...slowly	The owners of the Master's Retreat are Buller & Swindell. Nasty blighters and they've been up to something lately. Not sure what though...
A bric-a-brac stand, with dozens of different items all in differing states of disrepair. Oakie Thompson and Mokie Thompson; a pair of twin spaniels who finish each other's sentences.	The Master's Retreat...not much of a pub. Big place. Funny clientele. Beer's cheap. And bad. But people still go there. Odd people, too.
A stall selling artfully crafted hats and cloaks for dogs and cats, each woven or knitted from the finest of fabrics. Oshe, a large brown labrador with only one ear.	I've heard they've changed their minds about awakened animals these days. All for them, apparently. Keep inviting them along. Suppose it's nice, but I wouldn't trust those two as far as I could chuck 'em.

The Master's Retreat

If the player characters follow the clues, they should realise that all signs point to the involvement of Swindell and Buller — the patrons of the insalubrious Master's Retreat. Swindell and Buller are indeed behind the crime as part of their not-terribly-smart plan to drive out all of the awakened animals in the city. This was their first step and, given that it seems not to have worked, they are already planning a new step. Indeed, they are hosting a meeting to discuss this plan with a new ally when the player characters show up.

The Master's Retreat is a large, square building with a large walled garden out the back. When the players arrive, the inn is quiet. A few patrons are sipping beer and cast dark glances at any player character who enters the inn — the place is almost utterly silent, save for the drip of beer from keg taps, the buzzing of several inebriated flies and the sibilant creak of wooden chairs and tables. There is no sign of either Swindell or Buller in the place. The bar is being tended by a regular, a hard-faced man called Stoop Jenkins and he refuses to answer any questions levelled at him. The player characters can attempt to ask questions but Stoop pretends to be deaf, insists he doesn't know the answer, or simply asks the player characters what they want to drink.

The player characters can, however, investigate the pub cautiously. All of the regulars are sat in the main tap room, but there is a second, deserted room at the back of the inn. A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check enables the player characters to identify a carefully concealed trap door. A table is stationed over it, along with four chairs. Clearly, these have been situated with meticulous care...this wasn't something Swindell & Buller wanted found. A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check enables the player characters to detect faint voices coming from somewhere beneath the trap door.

If the player characters start to move the furniture carefully, have them make a DC 14 Dexterity (Stealth) test, as a group. A success means that they are able to move the items quietly enough that the drinkers in the tap room ignore them. A failure brings half a dozen half-drunk, belligerent animal haters into the room. And they aren't in any mood for negotiation! The GM should use the Gullet Cove Ruffian stats, found on page **XX** of this book.





The Cellar

There is a short stone staircase leading into the inn's cellar. The player characters are immediately greeted by a strange odour. A DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) test, enables the player characters to identify it as peppermint. An exceedingly strong blast of peppermint.

The voices, barely perceptible with the door closed, are now clearly audible. A deep, resonant voice is talking to a faint, rasping human voice, discussing 'how many we can hope to acquire for sale' and the price of 'different specimens'. Above and alongside these two voices, there are several other nasal, grating voices gibbering and laughing insistently.

A successful DC 14 Dexterity (Stealth) test enables the player characters to insinuate themselves into the main cellar room. Amidst a pile of beer barrels, a meeting is being conducted. Two humans, one very large and the other scrawny, are conversing with a dwarf, clad in a thick brown coat with a chirruping bird sat on his shoulder. Behind the dwarf, three goblins armed with strange sticks jabber to one another, laughing cruelly.

The two humans are Swindell and Buller, the animal-hating proprietors of the Master's Retreat. The mysterious dwarf is the Cunning Man, a crime-lord recently arrived in Gullet Cove. The three are talking business. Any character with a passive Perception of 14 or higher can listen in to the conversation, while a player character can make a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check to listen in:

"We're turning people against the animals!" says the small, weedy figure you're sure is Swindell. "Soon, we'll be able to round them all up and sell them to you!"

The dwarf shrugs, reaches into his pocket and hands a seed to the small bird on his shoulder.

"That's all very well. But I need animals now. My clients need entertainment. They need new pets. Your plans to frame the Cradle are all very well, but they need to move much faster."

Swindell cracks his knuckles nervously and looks at the goblins behind the dwarf. Buller, huge and lumbering, suddenly points at you.

"Hey!" he shouts, "What are you doing here?!"

"Run!" yells the dwarf!

Swindell, Buller, the dwarf, and the goblins bundle themselves up a small ladder, pouring into the beer garden.

The player characters can follow. In fact, they have no choice. Above, the trapdoor has been shut and tables and chairs piled back on top. There's only one route out...into the garden!

The Garden



Swindell and Buller are waiting when the player characters emerge into the open air. They have armed themselves with bits of junk from the garden, wielding crude wooden clubs with menace. The goblins are still here too, snapping their strange sticks in the air and cackling. The dwarf stands behind the small group, shrugs apologetically at the player characters and says:

“Try not to hurt them too badly. The animals would be perfect for my clients!”

As the dwarf vanishes into an alleyway, Swindell and Buller, along with their goblin allies, close with the player characters. It’s time to fight!

The battle is extremely tense, with Swindell and Buller fighting together as a cautious and highly practiced team. Buller takes most of the hits, soaking them up with his vast bulk while Swindell appears from behind him to stab and gouge at anyone within range. The goblins attempt to split individual party members off, grasping and grabbing at them, attempting to disrupt the player characters’ battle plans.

Whenever the goblins are badly injured — reaching 1/8th of their starting hit points, or lower — they flee, following their leader into the shadowy alleyway. Swindell and Buller surrender when their hit points drop below 1/8th of their starting total, throwing their weapons to the ground and asking for clemency.

As soon as the battle is over, and Swindell and Buller captured, little Josef gives a high-pitched whine. The masked cats, met by the player characters earlier, appear on top of a nearby wall and the feline in the centre gives the player characters a flourishing salute, before all five disappear again. Later that night, with no explanation or sign of disturbance, the player characters find a Guild Mark tucked inside their coin pouches, along with 100gp each. The Cradle are extremely generous to those who help them out!

Wrapping Things Up

What the player characters choose to do with Swindell and Buller is up to them. They can deliver them to the Watch and hope that having apprehended two thieves, and prevented a spate of kidnappings, is enough to convince Filamena not to toss them in prison for breaking Queenie out. Or they can take them to the Thieves Guild and leave them to the tender ministrations of that organisation. It’s up to them!

Things aren’t over, however. There’s the question of the mysterious Cunning Man, the goblins, and the mention of selling awakened animals for profit. Fortunately, the player characters are here and they might be getting some extra help in the next adventure!

Experience

The player characters should gain enough experience points to take them to level 2.

