

FOLLOW THE GOLD

By Joe Pruitt



Introduction

Something has been stolen from a powerful (but shady) merchant, and he has hired you to recover it. He will not say what it is, only that it is kept in a chest inscribed with his sigil. You have tracked the thieves who stole it to the Gilded Parrot, a seedy tavern and inn on the waterfront. You fear they are meeting with a buyer who plans to escape with the item by ship as soon as they have it; time is of the essence. Your informant slipped you a note with only the cryptic message: "To find the thieves, follow the gold".

1. Entrance: Inside, the bar is through a wide opening immediately to the right, while a hallway leads further back to the sleeping accommodations. There is nothing in the bar, though several red herrings are present: a parrot with yellow feathers (the inn's mascot), a long decorative trench around the perimeter of the room filled with water where a miniature pirate ship with gold sails floats for the amusement of patrons, a yellow-haired dancer who periodically leaves out a side entrance (merely taking a break). Asking too many questions about stolen goods will result in the bouncers tossing the PCs out.

In the hallway is a red carpet with gold trim along the edges-the real "gold" they are supposed to follow. It comes to a dead end at a wall at the back end of the hall, where a gold candle is mounted on the wall. Turning it reveals a secret door.

For every 15 minutes the PCs spend here, or for each red herring they follow, roll 1D6. Each result occurs only once; if any result is rolled more than once, nothing happens.

1. Accidentally bump into a drunken patron who tries to pick fight.
2. Discover a pickpocket has stolen a random item from one PC.
3. Stage magician tries to get one of the PCs to assist with a trick.
4. Tavern brawl breaks out, authorities come swiftly (and do not discriminate in who they apprehend).
5. A very pushy woman (or man) has romantic designs on one of the PCs.
6. Shady character offers to sell PCs a "magic" golden dagger (the dagger is of poor quality, not magic, and is only painted gold).

2. Storeroom: This room contains several rows of crates, stolen and smuggled goods. At the far end is a large door with a hefty lock (leads to 3). Another, less prominent door (leading to 4) with a gold sword painted on it is on the right hand wall

A pair of guard dogs patrol this room (make them venomous for extra challenge if desired), and will attack if the PCs are here for more than a few minutes. The dogs will also attack immediately if they return to this room after leaving by either of the doors.

Searching the crates reveals nothing particularly valuable, at least nothing that can be easily moved at this time.

3. Locked Room: First, taking time to pick the lock to this room will result in the guard dogs attacking (if they have not already been dealt with). A failed attempt results in the activation of a poison needle trap in the lock, targeting the one making the attempt.

The room appears to be someone's sleeping quarters, with a bed against one side, a dresser on the other, and a locked chest in the corner. It is not the chest they are looking for (hopefully they remember to look for their employer's sigil). This chest is trapped with a fireball trap (opening the lid without disarming it causes a spark that ignites an explosive substance within). It is otherwise empty. The dresser may contain a modest amount of treasure or a moderately valuable item.

4. Office: Here the three thieves are meeting with a pirate captain and 1D6 pirates. A chest can be seen on a table next to them. There is no way to proceed except to fight. If the PCs win, the chest is theirs. This is the correct chest, with the sigil of the PCs employer.

5. The Chest: Having defeated the enemies and recovered the chest, the PCs see that during the fight, the lock has been broken and the chest opened. Inside, they find not treasure or an item of value, but a young woman. Roll 1D6:

- 1-2 She is their employer's daughter; her father did not approve of the man she wanted to marry, so she and her suitor arranged to have her "stolen" and smuggled to her suitor; the PCs have foiled that plan, but she still wants to elope.
- 3-4 She is a servant who witnessed their employer's misdeeds; she was being smuggled to authorities to testify against him.
- 5-6 She is an empath; the PCs employer kept her enslaved to use her power to gain unfair advantage in negotiations; the buyer had her stolen to use the power for himself.

In any of these cases, she does not wish to return to the PCs employer. They have a decision to make, help her escape (or simply let her go) and face their employer's wrath, or return her against her will and collect the reward.