

The Rabid Rat Tavern

An Adventure Locale in TESTORIA by LoreWeaver

Located in the roughest area of the docks, this dilapidated tavern is a den of thieves, cutthroats, and other dregdes of Kuv City.

Frequented by the lowest of the low or sailors down to their last coppers, it has only one draw: it offers the cheapest fare in town. Down on your luck or out of work? It doesn't matter - you can still afford this place.

The tavern is run by Demetrius "Fingers" Brodkins and his wife, Sylvia. A single-story dwelling, it is falling apart from age and lack of repair. The common room is filled with cheap, imitation antique furniture and the wooden floor is beginning to buckle from years of liquids spilled on it. A small fireplace supplies heat, but it clogs and begins to fill the tavern with smoke after it has been burning for two or three hours - it is used only when requested, which is not often. The walls are covered with gaudy mosaics that are chipped and falling apart in places, and most of the tables have carvings in them with witty epigrams from previous patrons. The waitresses are homely, unkempt, and as likely to tell customers where to go as to take their orders.

The tavern offers food which is so awful that it is avoided by all who have eaten it before. For the uninitiated, though, a pastelike stew is offered for 1 cp. It is a bland but usually edible concoction, made of rats and other animals that are captured in the inn and in the alley behind it (the ingredients are not publicized).

Even so, the food is not what makes the tavern infamous. The Rabid Rat derives its reputation from the dreadful brew it serves. Four selections are available, all of which are cheaper than comparable drinks in other taverns. One may buy 4 cp ale, 2 cp ale, and 1 cp ale (the 1 cp ale is an all-you-can drink offer). None of the choices are remarkably flavorful, and the 1 cp special is particularly vile - so nasty, in fact, that anyone with

a Constitution of 12 or less must roll less than that score on 1d20 or be unable to keep the ale down.

Some wonder how Demetrius is able to furnish his alcohol for such low prices, but most are afraid to ask. The 4 cp drinks are simply low quality spirits, bought wholesale in mass quantity. The 2 cp drinks are the same ale, watered down. The 1 cp drinks are actually spirits rejected by other taverns, or are from half-filled casks sold cheaply to Demetrius. He also retrieves all the unfinished drinks from his tables and pours them into the 1 cp barrel, to be resold later. Because his fare is so bad, there are usually plenty of half-full glasses, so Demetrius always has enough of this alcohol mixture for the all-you-can-drink clientele. Of course, Demetrius and Sylvia decline to describe the contents of the drinks, saying only that they are "special recipes."

All drinks are served room-temperature except in the winter, when they also can be purchased chilled. Drinks must be paid for as-you-go, and all forms of barter are accepted in lieu of money. This inn has included having the patrons work during busy times. Anyone caught cheating, stealing, or found unable to pay or barter is chained in the kitchen and forced to work or is turned over to the city guard.

Demetrius maintains contact with the thieves' guild and lets it use his establishment as a common meeting place for the members. Thieves commonly refer to the Rabid Rat as "the sewer." The inn even has a secret entrance for the thieves, located in the kitchen under an empty barrel. There is a removable grate in the floor under the keg that leads down to the sewers. The cask can be shifted easily if a trigger is pulled (turning the second of six hooks near the sink). It is unlikely that Demetrius's employees or any patrons working off their drinks could discover the entrance because the hook holds utensils and the thieves do not come up into the kitchen if they hear people above.

Demetrius "Fingers" Brodkins

5th-Level Male Human Thief

STR: 10

INT: 13

WIS: 9

DEX: 18

CON: 18

CHR: 12

AC Normal: 0

AC Rear: 4

Hit Points: 34

Alignment: Chaotic Neutral

Languages: Common, Wharf Slang

Age: "30-something"

Height: 5'9"

Weight: 167 lbs

Hair/Eyes: Black/Brown

Weapon Proficiencies: Short sword, dagger, blackjack

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Appraising (13), gambling (12), rope use (18), tightrope walking (18), forgery (17), disguise (11)

Magic Items: Elven chain +1, dagger +2 (detects gems), ring of free action, and boots of elvenkind

Thief Skills:

PP OL FT MS HS DN CW RL

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Appearance: Demetrius, by no means fat, appears pudgy because of years of relative inactivity. He keeps himself neat and clean with his hair trimmed short - quite a contrast to the Rabid Rat's surroundings. He wears dark- and neutral-colored tunics with his chain mail underneath, and knee-high black leather boots. Demetrius has well-defined, aristocratic features and would easily be considered handsome were it not for the perpetual grimace he displays.

Background: Demetrius does not know exactly when he was born (or to whom) because he was abandoned shortly after his birth. Found by a member of Kuv City's nightwatch, he was taken to several homes in the area, but was accepted by none. Feeling sorry for the child, a regular of the city guard, Vance Brodkins, volunteered to take him in and raise him until more suitable foster parents could be located. Months passed without locating anyone and Vance found himself growing attached to the child. Subsequently,

Vance married his childhood sweetheart and settled down to become a father and husband.

Being a strict disciplinarian due to his military training, Vance attempted to impose harsh standards upon the boy. As Demetrius grew older, he became resentful of what he considered unjust treatment and overwhelming, expectations. At the age of 16, after a particularly nasty spat in which he struck and injured his mother, Demetrius ran away, never to return. Vance did not seek him out.

Finding work difficult, and being lazy by nature, Demetrius soon found that he could make an easier living by stealing. He took to thieving rapidly and, by the time he was age 21, he had made a name for himself in the thief's guild as a master burglar called "Fingers."

Unfortunately, on one escapade he gained a new meaning to his nickname. Shortly after he had relieved a wealthy merchant of some unusual items, Demetrius developed a form of chronic arthritis that made his hands shrivel and wither into claw-like appendages.

The merchant was an arch-mage named Mendall, who had placed a curse on his prized amulet. What Demetrius thought was just a fancy, valuable trinket was actually Mendall's talisman of Zagy. Mendall oathed that, so long as the item was missing, the thief who took it would never know peace. Mendall fashioned the curse to have the following effect: any person other than the rightful owner who holds the talisman will be stricken with a withering disease "so that his greedy little fingers may never again be able to perform such a feat."

Demetrius sold the item long ago for cash, passing on the curse, which allowed his hands to return to a near-normal appearance. The curse was so powerful, though, that he remains affected by it. Now, if he tries to steal, his hands lock up and begin to throb, causing him excruciating pain. During the coldest winter months, his hands hurt so much that he stays drunk for weeks at a time. The curse prevents him from picking pockets, opening locks, removing traps, and climbing walls. He cannot even (directly) steal from his own customers! Because of the curse, he opened the inn, with Sylvia's help, so he could support himself.

Sylvia Brodkins

3rd-Level Female Half-Elf Fighter

STR: 15

INT: 10

WIS: 12

DEX: 16

CON: 12

CHR: 14

AC Normal: 1

AC Rear: 2

Hit Points: 20

Alignment: Lawful Neutral

Languages: Common, Elvish, Orcish

Age: 32

Height: 5'3"

Weight: 102 lbs

Hair/Eyes: Red/Green

Weapon Proficiencies: Long sword, dagger, long bow, scimitar

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Disguise(13), astrology (10), animal handling (11), tightrope walking (16)

Magic Items: Scale mail +3, long sword +1, eight arrows +1, and a potion of healing

Appearance: Sylvia is modestly attractive, with fiery red hair that is frequently styled and adorned with green baubles that match her eyes. She usually wears bright-colored tunics, low cut to reveal a crescent moonshaped birthmark on her chest. She is an extrovert and will immediately start a conversation with strangers. She is quick to anger, though, and will avenge any slight swiftly.

Background: Sylvia is the result of a brief union between a human ranger and an elven woman. Her father left before she was born and her mother attempted to raise her as an elf. This became impossible because of her pronounced human characteristics, so she and her mother left the elf community.

Sylvia inherited her father's strength and became a tomboy, partially to defend herself from the human children. She left her mother at an early age and headed for the nearest large city, Kuv City, hoping to fit in there. She tried to find work, but met with much of the same scorn that she received from her mother's people.

Unable to find a respectable job, she began cleaning the barracks for the local city guard and

earned extra money by performing assorted jobs for the soldiers.

Some of the guards took her under their wing, protecting her from less tolerant members of society. Because she was unusually strong, they began using her as a sparring partner, inadvertently training her as a fighter. Amazed at her aptitude, they eventually convinced the captain to sign her with the guard. She spent the next five years in that profession. After finishing her tour of duty and becoming bored with the routine life of the guard, she decided to strike out on her own again, beginning a career as a mercenary. She eventually settled in the port area, where the carefree lifestyle suited her, and began shopping for a well-to-do young man. Finally, she met Demetrius, married him, pooled her money with his, and they bought the inn.



The Rabid Rat Tavern was adapted for **TESTORIA** by **LoreWeaver** from material that originally appeared in **Port of Raven's Bluff**; ©1991, TSR, Inc.

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