

The Longhorn Tavern

by

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FADE IN:

INT.LONGHORN TAVERN - DAY

The single-story building is cozy but has seen better days. The few customers within are either elderly or drunkards, as the village's able-bodied citizens would be busy working at this time of day. A BARD (Male, early 30's) is playing a lute half-heartedly in the corner. The BARKEEP (Female, 50's) is cleaning half-heartedly behind the bar.

The ADVENTURER enters the tavern. They approach the bar and address the Barkeep.

ADVENTURER

Afternoon.

BARD

(sung)

A stranger enters our paltry pub,
Lay-di-day-di-o.

BARKEEP

What can I do you for?

ADVENTURER

I'll take a flagon of ale and
whatever food is hot.

BARD

(sung)

They order drink and ask for grub,
Lay-di-day-di-o.

BARKEEP

Coming right up.

The Barkeep disappears into the back room.

BARD

(sung)

Old Sue heads off, she won't be
long,
Lay-di-day-di-dee.

The Adventurer turns a wry look on the Bard.

BARD

(sung)

The stranger doth not enjoy mine
song,
Lay-di-day-di-dee.

The Adventurer turns back to the bar, ignoring the Bard. The tavern door opens and a CLOAKED FIGURE enters. They walk across the room with a shambling gait, coming to rest at the bar beside the Adventurer.

BARD

(sung)

But hark, what's this?
A new stranger arrives.
Cloaked in shadow,
Naught to recognize.

The Cloaked Figure puts their hand on the bar. It's green and ends in yellowed, talon-like claws. The Adventurer puts a cautious hand on the hilt of their SWORD. The Bard begins to slowly approach as he sings and plays his lute.

BARD

(sung)

Is he here for business,
Is he here for leisure?
We cannot know this,
Enigmatic is his pleasure.

What is he up to?
He's up to no good.
But we'll never know,
'Til we peek under his--
(shouted)

HOOD!

The Bard yanks the figure's cloak clean off, revealing THREE STARTLED GOBLINS stacked on each other's shoulders. The Barkeep, just then returning with food and drink, screams, dropping the plates to the floor with a CLATTER.

BARD

Well, that's new.

The other patrons (those sober enough) get to their feet as if to fight. The Adventurer draws their sword in an instant, holding it in front of the goblins more to protect the creatures from the patrons than to hurt them. The goblins scramble down until they are all ground-level.

The goblins are no taller than 2-feet, green, with yellowed claws and teeth. They wear leather scraps for clothes and are mostly identical, save for the THIRD goblin, who has one wonky eye and an ear bent back the wrong way.

ADVENTURER

Let's all stay calm. There's no
need for rash action.

The mobile patrons hesitate.

GOBLIN #1

No hurting us! Good goblinses! No
hurting!

ADVENTURER

If you tell me what you're doing
here, there shouldn't be any need.

GOBLIN #1
Goblin caveses attacked.

GOBLIN #2
Goblinses in danger! Look for help!

GOBLIN #3
Humans tasty!

The first two goblins push the third behind them. The other patrons have lost interest and returned to their respective drinks.

BARD
Attacked, you say? Attacked by what?

ADVENTURER
Please, Bard. Don't involve yourself. I'll handle this.
(to goblins)
Attacked by what?

GOBLIN #1
Dark. Blackness.

GOBLIN #2
Black swallow goblinses. Goblinses go in. Goblinses no come out.

GOBLIN #3
MEAT!

ADVENTURER
(thoughtful)
Darkness, you say...

The Adventurer sheathes their sword.

BARD
You've heard of this sort of attack before.

ADVENTURER
Possibly. And you, Bard, how did you know they were goblins before you revealed them?

BARD
Oh, I didn't. I was just bored senseless and wanted to take a peek at what they were hiding.

GOBLIN #1
No hide! Look for help.

GOBLIN #2

Need help. All goblins run from
caves, hunted by humans. Need
caves fixed. Goblins go home. No
get hunted.

The Adventurer looks down to find the third goblin gnawing
on their boot with its yellowed teeth. They kick the goblin
off nonchalantly.

ADVENTURER

I'll take a look, but I need you
three -- and however many of your
tribe you can get ahold of -- to
hide out in the woods. As far from
the village as you can get. If the
villagers find you, I can't be held
responsible for what they'll do.
Understood? Good. Get out of here
and don't let me see you again.

The goblins nod and scamper off, collecting the third goblin
and throwing it over their shoulders as they exit the tavern
through an OPEN WINDOW. The Adventurer leaves TWO GOLD COINS
on the bar and heads for the exit. The Bard follows.

BARD

Excellent. Where do we start? I've
heard the goblin caves are to the
North of the village--

EXT. LONGHORN TAVERN - DAY

The Longhorn Tavern is situated on the outskirts of the
nearby village. It abuts the nearby woods and faces the dirt
road that leads into the village. The building exterior is
just as rustic as the interior. The Adventurer stops just
outside the tavern entrance and the Bard stops too.

ADVENTURER

Then North is where I will begin my
search. Thank you for your help,
Bard, but goblin caves are no place
for a musician.

BARD

Oh, come on! I've been stuck at
this damned tavern for a week and
this is the most interesting thing
that's happened since I got here.
Bards need adventures to fuel their
creative juices. My creative juices
have started to ferment into
creative... vinegar.
Please? I promise I won't be a
nuisance. This isn't my first time
spelunking in goblin caves, you
know.

ADVENTURER

All right. Fine.

BARD

Yes!

ADVENTURER

But at the first sign of danger,
you're out of there. I won't be
responsible for you getting hurt.

BARD

Aye aye! I, Endymane the
Incorrigible, give my word that, at
the first sign of trouble, I will
run away screaming like a coward.

ADVENTURER

Perfect.

The Adventurer begins walking North along the dirt road.
ENDYMANE, the Bard, struggles to match the speed of their
long strides as he straps his lute to his back.

ADVENTURER

"The Incorporrigible"?

ENDYMANE

I had a few wild years in my
youth... And maybe a few wild days
last week. Meed is one hell of a
drink.

Shaking their head with a smile, the Adventurer continues to
walk, followed closely by Endymane.

FADE TO BLACK