

# BANDIT OF NO CHOICE

## Introduction

The group is ambushed by a former assassin cursed to a lowly life of banditry.

## Rating

| COMBAT | EXPLORATION | SOCIAL |
|--------|-------------|--------|
| ★★★    | ★☆☆         | ★★★    |

## Average Player Level

The encounter is designed for an APL of 5 with four characters.

| NUMBER         | APL 4     | APL 5   | APL 6       |
|----------------|-----------|---------|-------------|
| 2-3 Characters | Very Weak | Weak    | Average     |
| 4 Characters   | Weak      | Average | Strong      |
| 5-6 Characters | Average   | Strong  | Very Strong |

## Adjusting the Encounter

Following ways to adjust the average difficulty:

- **APL 3:** Use weaker variant of dead jester assassin
- **APL 7:** Use stronger variant of dead jester assassin

## Plot Hooks

Following motivations might interest your players:

- **Appeal to Reward.** Get the assassin's possessions or claim the bounty.
- **Appeal to Heroism.** Lift the curse and enable the assassin to turn a new page in his life.
- **Appeal to Discovery.** Get information or stories from the old assassin.

## NPCs & Creatures

Goramar (LG **dead jester assassin**): half-orc in mid-fifties, acrobatic physique, scars all over body.

- **Agenda.** End curse and start a new life.
- **Instinct.** Avoid injury and save his life.
- **Moves.** Hint at the curse. Steal valuables quickly. Retreat once the curse allows it.
- **Secrets.** Lived as hired killer with a long-forgotten bounty under the alias of "Spinepiercer". Gets aggressively more irritated when spoken to in rhymes.

## Location

A point that allows for an easy ambush, either at a well-traveled road between cities or a shady alleyway inside a town.

## Encounter Details

Goramar lived his life as a hired assassin. Several years ago, after killing the family of a powerful cleric he was cursed and has been a slave to this circumstance. He carries two obviously dull daggers and wears tattered studded leather which stands in stark contrast to his exceptional combat skill. **DC 10 Wisdom (Insight):** clear unwillingness to fight.

He is sick of this and fears losing his life by being forced to run into fights ill-equipped with no regard for the chances to win. All Goramar wants is to lay down his weapons and retire into a life of peace and atonement.

As this has not happened yet, Goramar will attack the characters, trying to surprise them, increasing his chances to get into a favorable position. While attacking he will talk to them and drop hints about his curse.

### Goramar's Curse.

- Unable to kill (a creature reduced to 0 HP is stable), can't speak directly about the curse, urged into open banditry
- Curse ends when someone attacked by him shows him mercy and gifts him something valuable out of free will.
- Spell "*calm emotion*": suppresses the urge to attack and rob people while affected.
- Spell "*remove curse*": can't lift the curse but suppresses all effects for 1 hour, allowing Goramar to speak freely.

## Outcomes

There are three likely outcomes to this situation:

- Goramar overpowers the characters stealing the coins they carry with them.
- Goramar is killed.
- Characters manage to de-escalate the fight and lift the curse.

## Rewards

Goramar carries:

- Pouch with 50 gp
- **DC 15 Intelligence (History):** 300 gp bounty as "Spinepiercer"

Goramar's hideout (an hour away, led to if curse is lifted) contains:

- Traceless longgloves
- Special dagger (see dead jester weapons)
- Black +1 studded leather
- Disguise kit, forgery kit
- Two vials of drow poison



# Appendix

Because of his curse, Groranmar uses the dead jester assassin stats with the following changes:

- Alignment is Lawful Good
- No Dead Jester Weapon trait

## DEAD JESTER ASSASSIN

*Medium Humanoid, Non-Good*

**Armor Class** 18

**Initiative** +5 (15)

**Hit Points** 135 (18d8 + 54)

**Speed** 40 ft.

| STR    | DEX    | CON    | INT    | WIS    | CHA    |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 12(+1) | 21(+5) | 16(+3) | 14(+2) | 16(+3) | 17(+3) |

**Saving Throws** Dex +9, Wis +7, Cha +7

**Skills** Acrobatics +13, Deception +7, Perception +7, Performance +11, Sleight of Hands +9, Stealth +9

**Senses** passive Perception 17

**Languages** Thieves' cant plus any two languages

**Challenge** 11 (7,200 XP; PB +4)

**Dead Jester Weapons.** The assassin carries one special-designed dagger engraved with necromantic runes which is designed in a way that its blade breaks off inside the wound. While in contact with such a weapon's metal, a creature can't regain any hit points and instead takes an equal amount of necrotic damage. Additionally, if a creature in contact with it dies, it can be resurrected only by a *true resurrection* or *wish* spell.

A creature can use an action to make an DC 20 Wisdom (Medicine) check to safely remove the blade. On a failure, the wounded creature takes 10 (4d4) piercing damage and the blade is removed. If the check fails by 5 or more, the wounded creature takes 5 (2d4) piercing damage and the blade couldn't be removed.

- No extra piercing damage from his Dagger attack.
- Challenge Rating adjusts to roughly CR 7 this way.

**Evasion.** If the assassin is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the assassin instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

**Jesterly Jumps.** Opportunity attacks against the assassin have disadvantage.

**Suave Defense.** The assassin's AC includes its Charisma modifier.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The assassin makes three weapon attacks.

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft. *Hit:* 7 (1d4 + 5) piercing damage. The attack deals an extra 17 (5d6) piercing damage if the assassin has advantage on the attack roll, if the target is within 5 feet of one of the assassin's allies, or if the target is affected by an assassin's Vicious Mockery.

## BONUS ACTIONS

**Vicious Mockery (Cantrip; At Will).** The assassin casts the *vicious mockery* spell (DC 15, 3d4 damage).

## REACTIONS

**Uncanny Dodge.** *Trigger:* Takes damage from an attack from an attacker it can see. *Response:* The assassin halves the damage.

**Trip.** *Trigger:* A creature within 5 feet of the assassin misses it with a melee attack. *Response:* The target must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.

## TRACELESS LONGGLOVES

*Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)*

A faint barrier shields these gloves. When you touch something with these gloves, it can't stick to them and you leave no traces or fingerprints.

When you strike or harm a creature, the act magically doesn't create any external wounds. For example, when you cut a creature with a sword, its skin is not scarred by the attack but it takes the damage as normal and bleed internally from it.

While wearing the gloves, you gain advantage on checks using the Sleight of Hands skill and while using the Thieves' tools.





## DEAD JESTER ASSASSIN (WEAKER)

Medium Humanoid, Non-Good

**Armor Class** 16 **Initiative** +4 (14)  
**Hit Points** 117 (18d8 + 36)  
**Speed** 40 ft.

| STR    | DEX    | CON    | INT    | WIS    | CHA    |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 12(+1) | 19(+4) | 15(+2) | 13(+1) | 14(+2) | 15(+2) |

**Saving Throws** Dex +7, Wis +5, Cha +5  
**Skills** Acrobatics +10, Deception +5, Perception +5, Performance +8, Sleight of Hands +7, Stealth +7  
**Senses** passive Perception 15  
**Languages** Thieves' cant plus any two languages  
**Challenge** 8 (3,900 XP; PB +3)

**Dead Jester Weapons.** The assassin carries one special-designed dagger engraved with necromantic runes which is designed in a way that its blade breaks off inside the wound. While in contact with such a weapon's metal, a creature can't regain any hit points and instead takes an equal amount of necrotic damage. Additionally, if a creature in contact with it dies, it can be resurrected only by a *true resurrection* or *wish* spell.

A creature can use an action to make an DC 17 Wisdom (Medicine) check to safely remove the blade. On a failure, the wounded creature takes 10 (4d4) piercing damage and the blade is removed. If the check fails by 5 or more, the wounded creature takes 5 (2d4) piercing damage and the blade couldn't be removed.

**Evasion.** If the assassin is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the assassin instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

**Jesterly Jumps.** Opportunity attacks against the assassin have disadvantage.

**Suave Defense.** The assassin's AC includes its Charisma modifier.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The assassin makes three weapon attacks.

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage. The attack deals an extra 10 (3d6) piercing damage if the assassin has advantage on the attack roll, if the target is within 5 feet of one of the assassin's allies, or if the target is affected by an assassin's Vicious Mockery.

## BONUS ACTIONS

**Vicious Mockery (Cantrip; At Will).** The assassin casts the *vicious mockery* spell (DC 13, 3d4 damage).

## REACTIONS

**Uncanny Dodge.** *Trigger:* Takes damage from an attack from an attacker it can see. *Response:* The assassin halves the damage.

**Trip.** *Trigger:* A creature within 5 feet of the assassin misses it with a melee attack. *Response:* The target must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.

## DEAD JESTER ASSASSIN (STRONGER)

Medium Humanoid, Non-Good

**Armor Class** 20 **Initiative** +6 (16)  
**Hit Points** 153 (18d8 + 72)  
**Speed** 40 ft.

| STR    | DEX    | CON    | INT    | WIS    | CHA    |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 14(+2) | 23(+6) | 18(+4) | 14(+2) | 18(+4) | 19(+4) |

**Saving Throws** Dex +11, Wis +9, Cha +9  
**Skills** Acrobatics +16, Deception +9, Perception +9, Performance +16, Sleight of Hands +11, Stealth +11  
**Senses** passive Perception 19  
**Languages** Thieves' cant plus any two languages  
**Challenge** 14 (11,500 XP; PB +5)

**Dead Jester Weapons.** The assassin carries one special-designed dagger engraved with necromantic runes which is designed in a way that its blade breaks off inside the wound. While in contact with such a weapon's metal, a creature can't regain any hit points and instead takes an equal amount of necrotic damage. Additionally, if a creature in contact with it dies, it can be resurrected only by a *true resurrection* or *wish* spell.

A creature can use an action to make an DC 23 Wisdom (Medicine) check to safely remove the blade. On a failure, the wounded creature takes 10 (4d4) piercing damage and the blade is removed. If the check fails by 5 or more, the wounded creature takes 5 (2d4) piercing damage and the blade couldn't be removed.

**Evasion.** If the assassin is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the assassin instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

**Jesterly Jumps.** Opportunity attacks against the assassin have disadvantage.

**Suave Defense.** The assassin's AC includes its Charisma modifier.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The assassin makes three weapon attacks.

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +11, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft. *Hit:* 8 (1d4 + 6) piercing damage. The attack deals an extra 24 (7d6) piercing damage if the assassin has advantage on the attack roll, if the target is within 5 feet of one of the assassin's allies, or if the target is affected by an assassin's Vicious Mockery.

## BONUS ACTIONS

**Vicious Mockery (Cantrip; At Will).** The assassin casts the *vicious mockery* spell (DC 17, 4d4 damage).

## REACTIONS

**Uncanny Dodge.** *Trigger:* Takes damage from an attack from an attacker it can see. *Response:* The assassin halves the damage.

**Trip.** *Trigger:* A creature within 5 feet of the assassin misses it with a melee attack. *Response:* The target must succeed on a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.

