

# The Arcane Vessel - 521SuArVe

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When the party were first approached and questioned about an object they had found amongst their bags they were puzzled. But when blades, sorcery and more were drawn against them they had to choose between proving their accusers right by fighting violence with violence or seeking the higher path and finding out why and how they ended up in this situation.

More sinister plots surround the party this week as they fight and flee for survival and innocence as those that hunt them are innocent themselves.

**DM:** (The party were unlucky enough to be selected by a thief that has been working for quite some time to get into the Kings Vault. Luckily he saw the opportunity to give them a cursed coin, an Arcane Vessel, that marked them as thieves of the kings vaults.)



The party had settled in at the bar, ready to enjoy a well-earned meal after days of adventure. Coins spilled onto the counter as they paid, but one stood out - an old, green-and-copper piece of unusual shape that shimmered under the lantern light. Its presence seemed almost unnatural, drawing the

focus of one party member who found themselves momentarily lost in its gleam. A voice interrupted the trance, casual yet calculated. A rough-looking man with a charming smile questioned the coin's origin, his tone friendly but his eyes sharp. A trained glance revealed his accomplices scattered throughout the room, all subtly observing the exchange. When the party admitted they did not know where the coin had come from, the man's grin widened. He claimed the coin matched one the king had discovered in his conquest to the north - one meant to be locked in his vaults. His words carried weight, revealing that the royal vault had been found emptied earlier that day, with only one missing artifact unaccounted for. That artifact was in their possession, whether they realized it or not, and now, there was a bounty on their heads.

The atmosphere shifted as murmurs spread through the inn, patrons hurriedly excusing themselves, unwilling to be caught in the crossfire. The bounty hunters remained steadfast, their stance making it clear that words would not sway them. They had no personal quarrel with the party - only a job to do and a reward to collect. The innkeeper wasted no time in demanding everyone vacate, leaving the party with little choice. Fighting the bounty hunters meant breaking the law, and if they did, their bounty would only grow. But leaving quietly meant walking into an uncertain fate. As they gathered their belongings and stepped onto the darkened streets, they knew that a confrontation was inevitable. The only question was whether they wanted to win - or simply survive.

**DM:** (There are several members of a bounty hunting group in the Bar. The Party would know to kill a bounty hunter, who is in supposed Lawful pursuit of a criminal, is a crime. They should try and defeat them non-lethally or stabilise them if they go too far otherwise they would have committed a crime. Refer to **521MoScGo**)

The party stepped into the night air, the city's uneasy murmurs pressing in around them. Yet, the relentless bounty hunter, had eluded their grasp, but his pursuit was far from over. With rumours spreading like wildfire, the party found themselves trapped in a web of false

accusations. They weren't fugitives- yet- but suspicion clung to them, twisting the gazes of passersby into silent judgments. As they navigated



the uneasy streets, searching for answers, their instincts flared when a lone figure lurking near an alley fixated on them. Without hesitation, they pursued, weaving through the labyrinthine paths until the stranger led them into a desolate courtyard.

Their quarry stood before them - a wiry young man, wealthy yet familiar with the city's darker dealings. His words confirmed the party's fears: they had been framed, not because they had stolen from the vault, but because someone wanted what they unknowingly carried. A powerful force had orchestrated their downfall to retrieve it. The stranger, though an opportunist, had no interest in hunting the wrong prey. Instead, he offered an uneasy alliance - if the party could help him expose the true perpetrator, they might stand a chance at clearing their names. But with forces moving against them, the window for action was narrowing fast.

**DM:** (The Party are standing before the perpetrator/Antagonist of the adventure but they are so deceitful - magically so - that should be believed. They inform the party that there is a noble who needs them, something they were seen with supposedly to get into the vaults. It's not a lie as they simply need the party to distract the authorities while they break in. Refer to **521TuUnAI** and **521WeStMa**)



The party listened, realization sinking in. They were not thieves but pawns in a scheme designed to wear them down. Someone within the king's court had orchestrated the deception, not for wealth but for something they possessed - a relic, a weapon, a key or something. The bounty

hunters had been sent to weaken them, making the theft effortless. Their lives had never mattered, only what they carried.

The man offered choices. Flee and live, stay and be hunted, or work with him to uncover the truth. The party shared uncertain looks. They had been chosen not for their guilt but their recklessness. Now, survival was not enough. To clear their names, they had to expose the real mastermind. Trust was scarce, but refusing this alliance might mean losing everything.

The party witnesses a young boy appear in the courtyard and approach the man. He walks up and hands a note to them before dashing off, looking back concerned towards the party. 'Never mind Pete, he is simple and will keep his mouth closed. What I am concerned about is it looks like we may be too late. The noble has made their move - it turns out they didn't need you nor me after all. But if we wish to clear your names, and I mine as well for other faked transgressions, we must get word to the king - or catch them red handed. I know a way there and can get word to the king but we must act quickly.

As the alarm bell rang, the party moved through the halls of the castle just as their new ally, Skall, had said it would work. He had created a small fire in the stables - after the animals and people had been moved of course but the discussion was enough that they could slip through the castle to stop the person who set them up from getting what they were after. Thanks to the bounty on their head no one would take them seriously and even if they tried they would find out quickly enough that people would value the gold that's on their head more than a hunch.

But an anonymous letter had been sent to the king by their ally warning of the attack and they hoped that it would not be too late. They passed by the barracks - which was empty as the guards had been called to deal with the fire and had made their way to the vault hall - according to a map they had acquired. Pushing through the last door two guards lay unconscious on the floor and the great vault door lay open on its hinges.

**DM:**(It's a trap. Their ally and some hired goons attack the party as they get to the open Vault trying to knock them out and frame them for attacking the guards. There is a hole blasted through the wall into a cleared out room of the vault, which was done to give the Lord Deceiver more credibility when framing the party. This should be a **challenging to very challenging encounter** (refer to **512FrLoDe**) as the man uses his spells and poison to get the upper hand on the party. Refer to the map on the next page as well as on **512ThStCaVa**)



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