

# Side Treks



BY JOHNATHAN RICHARDS

Artwork by David Day

"Invisible Stalker" is an AD&D® SideTrek adventure suitable for a small group of 1st–2nd level PCs (about six levels total). It takes place in a large city and can be inserted into nearly any campaign. The adventure begins with the PCs walking down a city street. The reasons why they are in the city (seeking work, a rendezvous with a friend, looking for a good inn, etc.) can be worked out by the DM as best fits his individual campaign. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

Evening is falling on the city. As you walk down the street, you see signs of the approaching darkness: shopkeepers close their doors for the night; those that pass you on the streets speed up their pace and keep a wary eye out for scoundrels; the occasional rogue slinks from an alley, searching for easy targets. As the sun sinks down into the horizon, the atmosphere of the city changes, matching the gloom of the near-night sky. Suddenly, you hear the crash of a door being thrown open, and a white form explodes into your midst. Several of your party are thrown to the ground amidst a wild tangling of thrashing limbs.

The white form is a young lady by the name of Rebecca, who fled her small dress-making shop and living quarters in terror, certain that a vengeful ghost is after her. Looking over her shoulder in fear, she didn't see the PCs and ran right into them. Now, seeing before her a group of adventurers, she recognizes in them a source of hope for her predicament. If the party contains a paladin or good-aligned priest, she directs her pleas to him; if neither is present, the toughest-looking warrior or party leader will do.

## Rebecca's Story

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

"Please, I beg of you: help me! I am being stalked by a ghost — a man I myself killed! I fear now he seeks his vengeance and wants my life in return! It began several weeks ago. A man approached me in the street and started making

advances. I told him I wasn't interested, but he wouldn't leave me alone. I ran back to my shop and locked the door. I thought that would be the end of it, but he began following me. I would look out the window of my shop, and he would be there, watching me. I would go to the market, and he would follow me — always at a discreet distance, but close enough that I was aware of his presence.

Last week, I don't know whether he got tired of waiting or felt that the time was right at last, but he grabbed me as I was returning from the market, put his hand over my mouth, and dragged me into a back alley at knife-point. I struggled and tried to pull away but he grappled with me, trying to pull me to the ground. I managed to wriggle away, and when I looked back — the knife was sticking out of his neck! He was dead! I ... I ran. I didn't know what else to do! I locked myself in my room and stayed there until the next morning. Later that day, I informed the city guard what had happened, but by then the body had been taken from the alley. Several times since then, I could swear I've felt him nearby, watching me, or I heard his voice, whispering to me. I put it down to my imagination and tried to go on with my life.

Tonight, after I closed up shop, I went upstairs and got ready for bed. I was brushing my hair, when I looked up in the mirror and saw him appear — *in my room!* He whispered "I have come for you, Rebecca," and he held out his arms as if to grab me! I ran — right into you! Please, you must save me from him! You must!"

Rebecca is an attractive young woman with long, flowing brown hair and eyes the color of emeralds. She is currently wearing a long, white nightgown that reaches to her ankles.

**Rebecca:** AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 8, D 12, C 9, I 10, W 10, Ch 15; ML 11.

# INVISIBLE STALKER

## For the Dungeon Master

Rebecca's story is true, as far as she knows it. The young man who began stalking her is Ialgo, a 3rd-level thief who became infatuated with her. He is, however, still alive — the struggle in the back alley left him wounded, nothing more. There was quite a bit of blood, but Ialgo stumbled off, tended to his wounds, and is now as good as new — except for some slight damage to his vocal chords, which prevents him from speaking above a whisper.

In no way deterred by the setback, Ialgo continued to spy upon his prey. Realizing that Rebecca thought him dead, Ialgo made sure that he wasn't seen. Then, good fortune struck him: he happened across a drunken adventurer teetering out of a tavern late at night. One snatch into an alley and a quick throat-slitting later, Ialgo found himself the owner of a *ring of invisibility*. Using its power, Ialgo has been able to pass himself off as his own ghost. He snuck invisibly into Rebecca's room as she was brushing her hair and deactivated the ring's power, making himself appear as if from thin air. His eerie, whispery voice convinced the young dressmaker that she was seeing an undead apparition. As she bolted from the room, he followed, activating his ring as he went. Ialgo is present as Rebecca explains her story to the PCs. He remains invisible and motionless, eager to see what the PCs will do and just as eager to avoid battle with a group of well-armed adventurers. He has not given up his quest for Rebecca, however, and will do whatever is necessary to possess her. If it looks like the PCs will be making preparations to protect her, he calls out in his most ghostly whisper, "I will have you before the night is out, Rebecca. Any that get in my way will die!" Then he runs off (still invisible) to make some preparations of his own.

**Ialgo:** AL LE; AC 10; MV 12; T3; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 9, D 14, C 12, I 11, W 6, Ch 8; ML 14; PP20%, OL 70%, F/RT 5%, MS 65%, HIS 25%, DN 15%, CW 70%, RL 0%; *dagger +1, ring of invisibility*. Ialgo

wears black clothing but no armor. He is proficient in the use of the dagger, short sword, and blowgun.

## The Shop

Rebecca lives on the upper level of a small two-story building, above her dressmaker's shop, which she runs herself. It is here that she wants to make her stand against the "ghost," for this is where she feels safest. Ialgo will be some time gathering his own supplies to take care of the PCs, so give the players plenty of time to make plans. The shop can be an existing building in the DMs on-going campaign (use any available floor plan that best matches). Some items of interest about the shop:

❖ Any PC Rogue investigating the lock on either door to Rebecca's shop notices new scratches in the metal, indicating that it has been recently picked. If asked, Rebecca verifies that the shop has never been burgled, nor has anything been missing recently. This could provide a clue that the "ghost" haunting Rebecca is not of supernatural origin.

❖ One of Rebecca's current projects is a jester costume for an upcoming masquerade ball. As a result, she has several jingle-bells on hand to be sewn into the tips of the hat. These, along with some thread, could be used to set traps to alert the presence of any physical intruder.

❖ There is a fireplace on both levels of the building, with a connecting chimney. Each contains sufficient ashes, if spread along the floor near each doorway, to show the footprints of an intruder. This allows any attacks made against the invisible creature to be at -2 instead of -4 (see *DMG/120* for further information on detecting invisible creatures).

❖ Although not particularly religious, Rebecca has her mother's holy symbol hanging on the wall over her bed. Unless convinced by the PCs that they're up against a physical foe, Rebecca wants to use the holy symbol in an effort to ward off the "ghost." Of course, it is completely ineffective against Ialgo.

❖ Besides the doors, there are five lower-level windows, two windows on the upper floor, and the chimney as possible entrances to the shop. The doors both lock, and the windows can be closed off with shutters (the windows are open-air with no glass panes). The chimney is big enough to enable a grown man to squeeze down it, but it would be a rather tight fit.

❖ If the PCs wish to set an ambush for the "ghost," there are several hiding places available. These include: the changing room under the stairs; under either of the tables (shop); under the bed (upstairs); in the clothes wardrobe; in the privy. In addition, small characters such as halflings and gnomes could fit in the chest, under the desk, or possibly in the fireplace.

## Ialgo's Plan

While the PCs are making their preparations, Ialgo returns to his own room and gathers his equipment: a blowgun and 6 darts coated with a weak sleep potion (victims must save vs. poison or be knocked unconscious for 2d8 minutes), and a smoke grenade (see *The Complete Ninja's Handbook*, p. 78).

Ialgo's plan is simple; he returns to Rebecca's shop, invisibly. If any PCs are on guard outside the shop, he uses his poisoned darts to dispatch them (realizing that any attack on his part returns him to visibility, he positions himself to best advantage, gets off an easy shot, and reactivates the *ring* immediately afterward. Remember that, when invisible, Ialgo automatically gains initiative. He picks off the PCs one by one in this fashion if he can. Entry into the shop can be through either of the doors (having picked them before, he automatically can do so again), or he can break open any of the shuttered windows and gain access that way. Once inside, he remains invisible as much as possible, trying to pick off the PCs one at a time, until only Rebecca is left. As a last resort, Ialgo uses his smoke grenade to cover his retreat, if the party is "on to him" and it doesn't look like he'll be able to overcome them. The grenade



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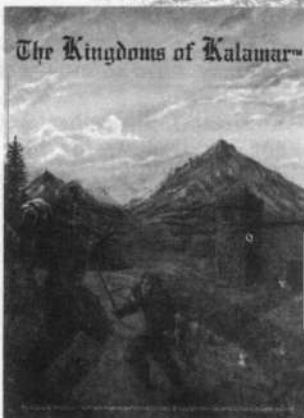
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## INVISIBLE STALKER

creates a 5'-radius cloud of black smoke when hurled to the floor.

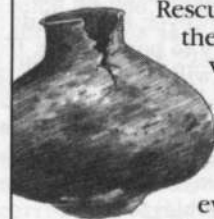
### Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs capture or kill Ialگو, the threat to Rebecca is over. A story award of 1,000 XP should be split between the characters. Rebecca is very grateful, but she is by no means well off and cannot afford to pay them much for their services — only up to 50 gp. Characters who refuse payment should be rewarded with an additional 50 XP. She does volunteer to do any mending the PCs may need at no charge, however. In addition, the PCs may keep the *ring of invisibility* and the *dagger +1*. If Ialگو is merely driven off, he tries to assault Rebecca again at a later time. The PCs receive half the story award for saving Rebecca, but they earn the full amount only if they manage to stop Ialگو for good when he tries again. Ω

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