

*** Haggling the Haggler*[from Escape Velocity Gaming's City Slices I: Marketplace Fun]**

Goal: To get an item in the marketplace at a reduced price.

Taliq An'bihm is a dark-skinned, hook-nosed man with a perpetually bemused look on his face. He has exactly the item (sword, spice, whatever) the party needs. An'bihm invites the party to haggle over the price. His background practically demands the practice and he has elevated haggling to an art form. If the party thinks they can beat An'bihm at his own game, the skill challenge begins...

Complexity 1 (4 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills

Diplomacy (vs. Moderate DC) "Good sir, we are here to buy your wares, not to argue. I can see that as a businessman you want only what is fair, as do we."

Insight (vs. Moderate DC) "Ah, I can see by your expression that we are nearly at agreement! Let's wrap this negotiation up."

Bluff (vs. Hard DC) "Why this same item can be found in dozens of stalls nearby! We can certainly give our coin to a more accommodating merchant. "

Secondary Skills

History (vs. Moderate DC) "This item has been thrice cursed according to the sages, lowering its value considerably."

Intimidate (vs. Hard DC) "We are the sort of people who you *need* to be doing business with, do *not* get on our bad side!"

Running the Challenge: Each primary skill can be used unlimited times during the challenge, each counting as one success. Intimidate can only be used once during the encounter (counting as *two* successes if successful and counting as *two* failures if unsuccessful). History provides no successes but a successful History skill check adds a +2 bonus to the next use of any primary skill (a History check failure does not cause a penalty).

The Results: If the party accumulates 4 successes and 0 failures, An'bihm sells them the item for 50% off of expected price and smiles graciously. If the party accumulates 4 successes and only 1 failure during the challenge, An'bihm recognizes their superior haggling skill and reduces the item price by 25%. If the party accumulates 4 successes and 2 failures, An'bihm is unimpressed and remains firm on his price- asking for the normal cost of the item.

And if the party reached 3 failures? An'bihm is insulted and breaks off negotiations. At the gamemaster's option, he may be persuaded to sell the item after all, but he requires 200% of the item's original price.

Re-using this challenge: This challenge can obviously be re-used time and again when negotiations for an item are involved. Perhaps another merchant is more easily cowed and Intimidate becomes a primary skill? Perhaps the item in question is a live animal (a pet, a companion, or a guardian) and Nature becomes a primary skill? If the item in question is magical, Arcana certainly makes a good secondary skill. If the party faces an uphill battle because of the seller's predisposition (a dwarven smith doesn't want to sell armor to a bunch of 'silly elves'), then perhaps all checks are made versus a Hard DC.