



The Ransom

The beady-eyed rogue grins at you, "If you ever want to see the Duchess again, bring 14,000 crowns to the Ruined Keep of Baernhaven by week's end. My master has generously offered to send you a piece of the Duchess for every day his demands go unmet."

In this skill challenge one of the PCs or an ally has been taken captive and is being held for ransom. The ransom price is equal to a treasure parcel's total gold piece value one higher than the PCs' level. The PCs may try various tactics, ranging from tracking down the villains to gathering the ransom payment. Even paying the ransom outright only achieves a partial victory as the captors leverage the situation to their maximum advantage.

Captive PC: A captive PC can contribute successes to the skill challenge, though they are limited to using social skills and all the DCs are hard. The DM may allow Stealth and Thievery checks to escape.

Primary Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Insight, Intimidate, Perception, Streetwise

Bluff: Convince an NPC the captive has sensitive information about them and it's in their interest to see the captive freed as quickly as possible. Alternately, fool the captors that there's not enough money to meet the full payment, use fake gold, or trick them into giving away condemning information.

Diplomacy: Convince an ally of the captive to contribute to the ransom. They will give 100 gold for every margin of five the Diplomacy check succeeds. With a loved one this may be an automatic success and could provide the entire amount needed. Alternately, negotiate with one of the captors for more time or a reduced ransom price.

Insight: Understand the captors' motives, gaining +2 to the next Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check.

Intimidate: Scare an ally with the possibility of captive's death. Alternately, scare the captors into making a mistake with threats or implications of vengeance.

Perception: Notice a clue at the scene of the abduction or an old trail left by the kidnappers.

Streetwise: Gain leverage on the captors, for example a massive gambling debt. Doesn't count as a success, but provides a +2 bonus to the next social skill check.

Development: When the PCs achieve V/2 failures (round down), the captors send them a bloody token from the captive (the captive is wounded). At V-1 failure, the captives change their location and double the ransom price. When the PCs achieve V/2 successes (round down), one of the captors makes a grave mistake which opens up the use of a Knowledge or Streetwise skill to gain information on the captors or the status of the captive (for example "alive", "wounded", or "escaped").

Victory: The PCs make the ransom payment, securing their ally's release. The PCs locate where the villains are holding their ally. A captured PC manages to escape and return to safety.

Partial Victory: The captive is returned wounded or emotionally scarred (25% no benefit from extended rests due to nightmares). The captors get away. The ransom price is doubled.

Defeat: The captive is killed, sold into slavery, brainwashed/charmed, or some other horrible fate.