Chasing A Golden Buck

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The Review:

Reviewed By Gordon Feiner

The Upside:

Chasing A Golden Buck is a short adventure set in the Valdorian Age setting, and uses the Detailed Favor Point System where which Favor Points are tracked by Entity instead of in a general pool.

Act One - I Would Like To Hire Your Services. This is the set-up, strait forward and by all appearances simple. The PCs are hired by a merchant to break into a temple to one of the New Gods and steal it's main artifact, a Golden Buck. The merchant wants to bring the temple low, for he hates all the Gods, Old and New, and make a little money on the side selling the gold plating on the statue.

Act Two - A Temple To A New Goddess. This is the grab part of the scenario. The PCs have to break into the temple complex located in the foreign quarter of the city, steal the statue and escape. Instead of going through a series of scenarios of how the PCs might get in and out this section instead details the compound. It provides information on who is there, at what times, the layout of the place and its immediate surroundings, and what certain members will do upon encountering the PCs. This set-up allows for the most freedom, as the GM has the information to account for any number of insane plans that the PCs will concoct, and PCs are notorious for coming up with bizarre plans.

Act Three - The Payoff. The PCs nominally deliver the Golden Buck to the merchant, or they could keep it and a fight breaks out between the merchant's bodyguards and the PCs. Or they don't return it at all and the merchant will hunt them down. No matter how the cookie crumbles here the Golden Buck will impart some Negative Favor Points to someone, preferably a PC, and that's where the twist in this particular story comes.

Act Four - I Want It Back! And Wrap-Up. Eventually the temple and priests come calling to take back the Golden Buck. . .

Five PCs are provided with the adventure, making it easy for convention use. Or if you're just starting a campaign out they can serve either as PCs or useful guidelines for building Valdorian Age PCs. Otherwise the GM has five more NPCs at his disposal to pit against the PCs.

I like the setup in Act Two, instead of going through assuming one of a few approaches the writers don't even anticipate the PCs actions, instead populating the Temple Grounds and providing information on how many people are doing what and all times of the day. This kind of versatility should be built into all adventures, it allows for the widest range of gaming goodness.

The Downside:

I think that Cynthia was a bad choice for the owner of the Token, the Valdorian Age Setting explicitly states that the Cynthian Riders don't leave the plains because Cynthia's influence is tied directly to that area and she can't leave it. Switching to a Divine Servant or even Inferal Being could lead to more interesting situations later on and make more sense in the setting. This matters less if this is being used as a one-off, or convention, adventure though.

The Otherside:

This is a fairly strait forward steak the maguffin type adventure for most fantasy games. The trick here comes in the form of the Favors inherent to the Valdorian Age Setting, just handling the Golden Buck incurs them, and of course the Other Worldly Agents that the negative favors are owed to will eventually come calling. This allows the GM use this as a gateway adventure into something larger, possibly more sinister. But it makes it a little harder port it to a setting outside the Valdorian Age, unless the GM wants to attach some other kind of value to the Buck.

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