

Tainted Remedies

A SUPPLEMENTAL ADVENTURE FOR 4-5 PCs OF 3RD-5TH LEVEL

AS YOU DEPART ON YOUR latest adventure, you cross paths with a kindly elven healer offering strangely powerful healing potions for a pittance—and after your endeavors there she was, practically giving her brews away while you were battered and broken. Did she follow you the whole way? If so, why?



BACKGROUND

Sanador Virdan is the owner and practitioner of the Ready Remedy, an apothecary and potionary that struggled until a wounded and desperate couatl named Itzcali crashed into her shop following a battle with a demon. As Sanador nursed the celestial back to health she unintentionally discovered that the serpent's feathers and her healing potions had an odd reaction, concocting a far more powerful effect—and an extremely addicting quality. Itzcali is now Sanador's prisoner, kept alive to produce the feathers for her brews. Sanador goes out posing as an 'emergency medic', hunting down

adventuring types to hook onto her addictive and (after an imbibor has become hooked) highly profitable potions.

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SUPPLEMENTAL ADVENTURE

This adventure is best played throughout a campaign with Sanador showing up immediately before or after dangerous events. Starting as early as 3rd level, Sanador can essentially take the place of a friendly shopkeeping NPC (albeit a suspicious one) until the PCs get suspicious enough to investigate her. The issue starts subtly, becoming a blatant problem before the party reaches 6th level.

THE FIRST ONE'S FREE

This adventure starts when the players first encounter Sanador Virdan. GMs can choose to place this encounter anywhere, but it's recommended to have it take place right before or right after a dangerous dungeon crawl or expedition. Sanador targets adventurers for their predilections towards healing potions, and will pull her scheme near adventuring guilds or any known area of dangers in the campaign setting.

Sanador owns a medical tent from which she conducts her scams. The tent is reasonably portable, and she can be introduced within a city or in any distant or harsh area in which the PCs are adventuring. When the GM decides to introduce the PCs to Sanador, she's working out of her tent. When the party first see her tent, read or paraphrase the following:

Seemingly out of place with its surroundings, you spot a canvas tent bearing the twin snakes of the caduceus, the universal symbol for healing. A wood elf stands out front, dressed in plain garb, and when she spots you she waves, shouting, "ready remedies for whatever ails you!"

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Sanador is an apothecary turned drug pusher and though she's not the greatest deceiver in the world, she is actually an accomplished healer and her deceit is a subtle one. Sanador presents herself as a somewhat naive healer, trying to do some good where it's needed most.

If the PCs meet her while battered and bruised, Sanador acts as if she genuinely cares as she frantically dresses wounds and cures maladies without charge. The GM should emphasize how little concern she has about being compensated for her services—Sanador actually regards the PCs as potential marks but tries to hide her lack of zeal behind her medical expertise.

If the PCs meet her as they set out on an adventure, Sanador tries to emphasize how dangerous their encounters may be and that a bit of preparation could save their lives.

In either case, Sanador attempts to provide the PCs with one *Sanador's Healing Elixir* for free. She claims that it's an experimental healing potion of her own design that she plans on mass-producing soon. If Sanador meets the PCs while they're in dire need of aid, she administers the potion without asking for permission. If the party requests more, she happily sells one of the potions to each of the adventurers for a mere 5 gp each.

When pressed regarding the potion's cheap price or any other suspicion, Sanador plays the role of the bleeding heart, claiming that life is more important than money. She can also easily answer most relevant inquiries including medical knowledge, her place of business and her purpose wherever the GM has placed her in the campaign. If PCs attempt Wisdom (Insight) checks on Sanador, a check of 15 or higher discerns a tinge of exhausted cynicism in her demeanor. A check of 25 or higher discerns that while she's concealing it incredibly well, she doesn't actually seem to care about the adventurers' wellbeing.

LOYAL CUSTOMERS

The delayed addicting effects of *Sanador's Healing Elixir* make it potentially difficult to link the malady to Sanador. As long as the PCs don't seem overly suspicious of her, she continues appearing before or after dangerous encounters to provide some 'ready remedies' to the party. The cost of her elixirs should exponentially rise every time the adventurers encounter her, from cheap and reasonable (5 to 100 gp) in the first few encounters to exorbitantly expensive (1,000 to 3,000 gp) in the later encounters. She'll justify the price increases as 'production costs' and 'shifts in the market'.

The GM can repeat these encounters with Sanador as often as is reasonable, adjusting to meet the needs of the adventurers. Generally however, its recommended to have between 2 and 4 of these encounters immediately before or after any dangerous missions.

If the PCs ask her about their strange illness (the addiction caused by her potions) Sanador maintains ignorance and claims to puzzle over this medical mystery, but she also insists that her elixirs seem to be staving off this 'disease' and the party should continue taking them until she can come up with a permanent cure. Adventurers that

SANADOR'S HEALING ELIXIR

Potion, uncommon

This small fluted bottle contains a cloudy opalescent liquid that seems to slowly shift in color. When you drink this potion, you regain 6d4 + 6 hitpoints.

The potion also secretly has a delayed and potent addictive quality. After drinking this potion, you must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw at the end of your next long rest. On a failed save you become addicted to the elixir and gain one level of exhaustion. This level of exhaustion can only be removed by drinking another *Sanador's Healing Elixir*, a casting of *greater restoration* or similar magic, or by enduring at least 1 week without drinking another elixir.

The addictive aspects of this potion are subtle, and castings of *identify* or similar abilities only reveal its healing properties.

SANADOR VIRDAN

MEDIUM HUMANOID (ELF), NEUTRAL EVIL

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)

Hit Points 52 (8d8+16)

Speed 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Cha +6

Skills Arcana +6, Deception +9, Medicine +10, Nature +9, Perception +7, Persuasion +6; alchemist's supplies +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Elvish

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Fey Ancestry. Sanador has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put her to sleep.

Spellcasting. Sanador is a 7th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft*, *mending*,
produce flame, *resistance*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person*, *cure wounds*,
detect poison and disease, *thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *lesser restoration*, *moonbeam*,
protection from poison

3rd level (3 slots): *call lightning*, *dispel magic*

4th level (1 slot): *confusion*

Triage. Sanador is an accomplished healer, she has a healer's kit and is proficient with it. If she is allowed 10 minutes to perform medical procedures on an adjacent willing creature, she can end the poisoned condition, cure one non-magical disease, or grant 5 temporary hit points to that creature.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Sanador attacks twice.

Poisoned Scimitar. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Noxious Concoctions. Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, range 20/40 ft., one target. Hit: The target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom (Medicine) check can discover that this ailment is some form of addiction to an unknown substance.

Once at least three of the PCs are addicted to Sanador's elixirs, she returns to her apothecary, confident that their addiction will bring them back for more. If the adventurers get suspicious, she denies any wrongdoing and retreats to her more defensible base of operations. In either case Sanador returns to Ready Remedies, but not before canvassing whatever area the party is in with advertisements to her store (complete with directions).

READY REMEDIES

Once Sanador returns to her store the PCs should be highly incentivised to track her down. Ready Remedies can reside in any town, or even isolated in the country if the GM so chooses—whatever location best fits into the campaign's narrative. The party should be between 4th and 5th level before embarking on the end of this supplemental adventure. If the adventurers are still clueless to Sanador's true intents, she happily continues providing her elixirs to the PCs at exorbitant prices.

When the PCs accuse Sanador, she feigns innocence for as long as possible before admitting the truth about her elixirs, though she still maintains that they're in the party's best interest. They do work wonders after all, what's the problem so long as they keep buying?

If the PCs attack or otherwise threaten Sanador she retaliates while retreating, trying to put as many of her drug-addled guards (**Veterans** with one level of exhaustion) as possible in between herself and danger. She fights until brought down to 10 hit points or less, at which point she grovels for her life (see Resolving the Adventure).

#1: Entryway

Two former-adventurers-turned-addicts guard the front of the store at all times (they use the statistics of **veterans** except they are currently suffering from elixir addiction and have one level of exhaustion). The entrance is otherwise plastered with advertisements for 'Sanador's Miracle Elixir'. The front door

faces the south, a locked door to the north (Strength DC 17, Dexterity [thieves' tools] DC 15; AC 14, 25 hit points) leads into a storeroom (#2). A beaded curtain to the east leads into the store's main area (#4). The addicts are loyal to Sanador and fight until killed.

#2: Storeroom

This small room contains some of Sanador's useless merchandise and 3 Sanador's Healing Elixirs. A locked trapdoor (Strength DC 17, Dexterity [thieves' tools] DC 15; AC 14, 25 hit points) leads into a hidden basement (#3).

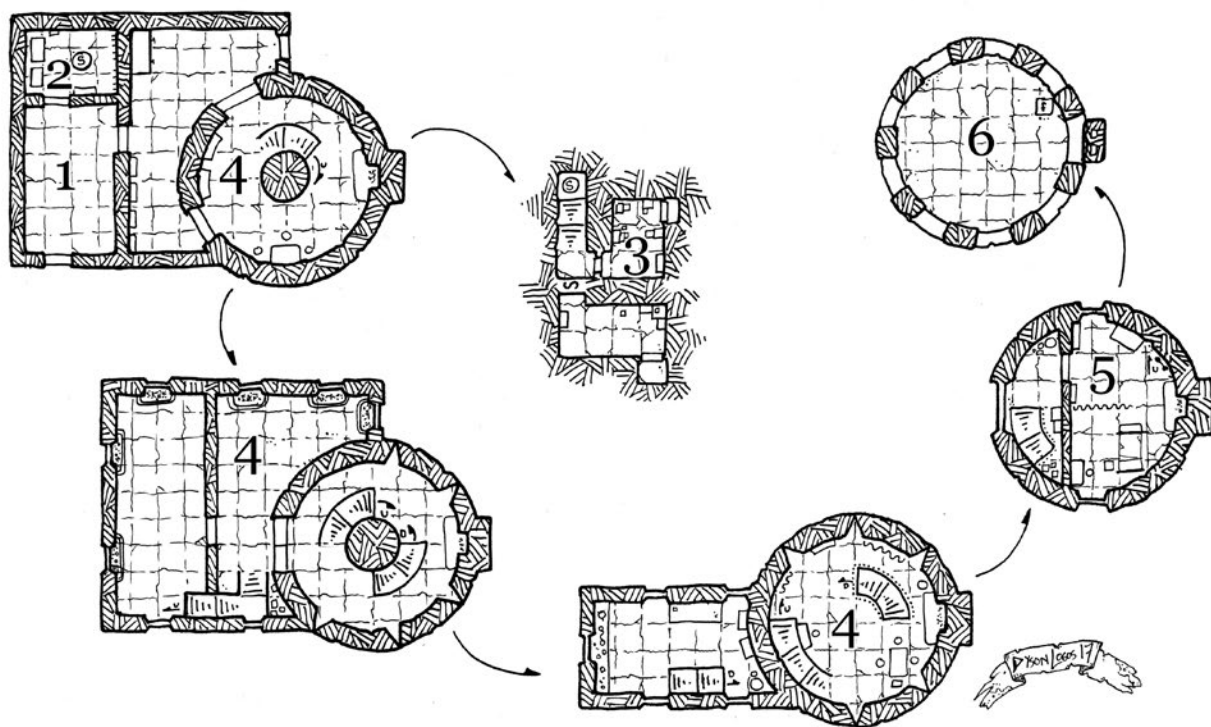
#3: Hidden Basement

This small room contains 6 unlabeled Sanador's Healing Elixirs next to her promotional materials. A passive Perception of 14 or higher or a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check notices the rattling of chains and a secret door to the south (Strength DC 19, Dexterity [thieves' tools] DC 17; AC 16, 30 hit points). Behind the secret door lies the beleaguered Itzcali, gagged and chained to the wall. Her bonds can be easily released and once her gag is removed she immediately casts greater restoration on herself to alleviate her own exhaustion. Once freed the **couatl** demands justice for her barbaric incarceration, fighting alongside the PCs to bring Sanador down (if the corrupt healer is still alive).

#4: Endless Snake Oil

The store proper—which consists of the 3rd, 2nd, and most of the 1st floor—is wall to wall shelves of 'cures' and 'remedies' of Sanador's design. These cure-alls are all complete shams and serve no medical purpose beyond acting as placebos or providing relief for a few minor genuine digestion problems.

Six former adventurers-turned-addicts patrol these floors (**veterans** with one level of exhaustion). A stairwell on the 3rd floor of the tower leads to the top floor, and a locked door (Strength DC 17, Dexterity [thieves' tools] DC 15; AC 14, 25 hit points) to Sanador's room (#5). The addicts are loyal to Sanador and fight until killed.



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#5: Sanador's Room

Sanador lives on the 4th floor of her tower, surrounded by alchemical notes and marketing schemes for how to make the most gold off her elixir. As an elf she doesn't sleep and is usually working late into the night. Sanador keeps a stash of finished elixirs close, and 8 elixirs shimmer on a table by the southern window. Under her bed lies a chest containing 8,500 gp (she's spent quite a bit of her profits already on marketing campaigns).

A successful DC 14 Wisdom (Medicine) check using Sanador's alchemical notes reveals that the secret and addictive ingredient to her elixirs is couatl feathers and that she must have a fresh supply somewhere. A successful DC 18 Wisdom (Medicine) check provides the insights needed to recreate the addictive healing potions (if provided with the ingredients).

A locked trapdoor (Strength DC 17, Dexterity [thieves' tools] DC 15; AC 14, 25 hit points) on the northern side of the room leads to the roof.

#6: Roof

Ready Remedies is a 4 story tall stone tower and while it has many windows, they're permanently closed and narrow. Scaling the tower to the roof provides access to a locked trapdoor (as above) that leads into the top floor (#5).

Lightened Encounter

If the GM has a party with fewer or low-powered characters, the give each adventurer-turned-addict 3 levels of exhaustion instead of 1.

Hardened Encounter

If the GM has a party with more or high-powered characters, add 2 adventurer-turned-addicts guarding the roof access and 2 more guarding the front door.

RESOLVING THE ADVENTURE

There are numerous potential outcomes to this adventure, most of which revolve around whether the PCs find and free Itzcali and whether Sanador Survives.

- The elixirs represent a constant supply of powerful healing potions and the PCs may be incentivised to keep them flowing regardless of the negative effects. Particularly evil adventurers may choose to use Sanador's notes and keep Itzcali enslaved to replicate the elixir for themselves.
- If Sanador's life is spared, she agrees to continue making the elixirs and provide an unlimited supply of them to the PCs at-cost (50 gp). If the party failed to find Itzcali and agree to this arrangement, the GM should encourage them to become more and more suspicious of the elixir's formula until they return to investigate and find Itzcali.
- If Itzcali is freed and Sanador is defeated, Itzcali thanks the PCs and give them a *celestial serpent feather* before departing. 🐍

CELESTIAL SERPENT FEATHER

Wondrous item, rare

This wide, almost scaly feather shimmers with opalescent color. A gift from a specific celestial serpent, you can whisper the serpent's name into the feather as an action. In response, the named **couatl** appears within 60 feet of you and will do its best to fulfill any of your requests so long as they aren't overtly evil. It returns to its celestial plane after 1 hour or when it is reduced to 0 hit points. Once you use the feather, it can't be used again until 1 month has passed.

