

#12

1E&5E
COMPATIBLE

THE FOLIO

Part 2 of the
Adventures from
The Emerald
Serpent Campaign

AT2 The King
and the Serpent

New Monster:
Feathered Basilisk
Serpent

Gazetteer NR 8

The Festival of a
Thousand Blossoms

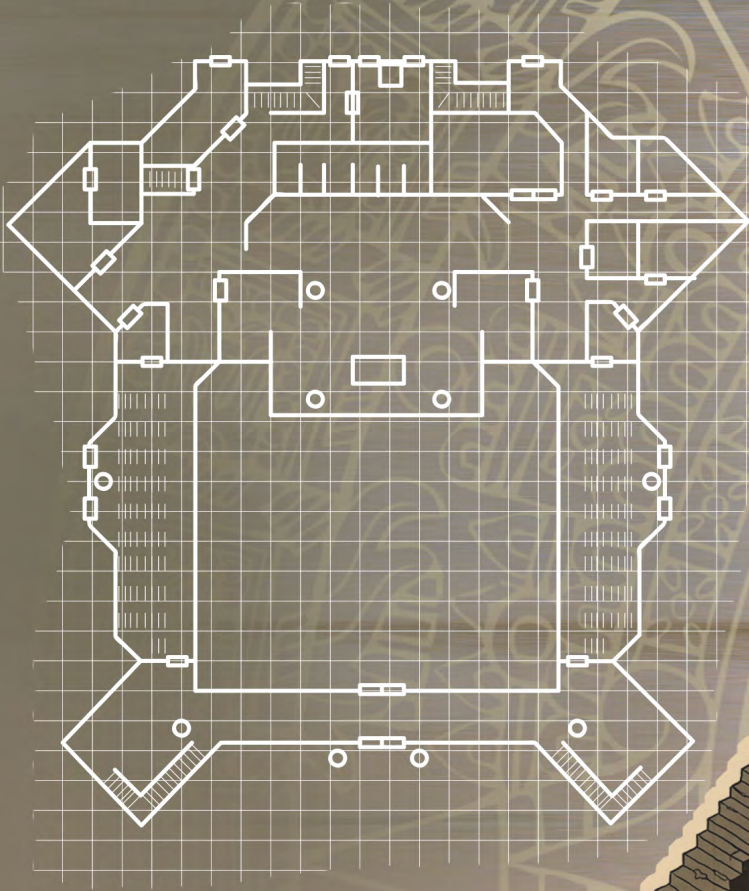
An Adventure for
Levels 5-7 in both
1E & 5E Format

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THE
NAMELESS
REALMS®

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ART
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genre

THE NAMELESS REALMS





Introduction

So, you've managed to begin your journey into the 'wilds' of Taux and hopefully both yourself and your players will have gotten the essence of what we are trying to put forth in the feel of the city. Assuming that is the case, like in *A Knight in the Silk Purse*, we are going to expand the tapestry by playing on the events of a huge civic event, the Festival of a Thousand Blossoms.

Taux is rich in its traditions, even if they are a mix of European and Native American, which is where the city draws its nature from in this amalgamation of a fantasy setting. The Festival of a Thousand Blossoms is no different, and inside these pages you will discover its origins, its secrets, and how it can be used as a great backdrop for the adventure to come.

I hope you'll enjoy being a part of it as much as those who created it were fans of writing of its events. So let the adventure continue and the role-playing commence!

Scott Taylor

STYLE OF PLAY

As always in this series, the events of Taux are meant to be played out in a story arc. DMs should keep this in mind as they read through the text and try to bring the pulp fiction sense of the adventure through to the players. Utilize depth, role-play, and resource material found both from Art of the Genre publications and your own research into Aztec culture. And remember, there are many stories to be told in Taux, so the more threads you spin to the overall arc, the more directions you can go afterward if you choose. Taux is a huge and diverse city, and such a backdrop can be used to create more than a dungeon crawl. Everything you need will be at your fingertips.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

It is my determination that this trilogy won't be experience point heavy, meaning the 'reward' for play is the adventure itself and the feel of being included in something bigger within the anthology world of Taux. Therefore, I've listed the adventure for characters levels 5–7, and I will keep all volumes of the trilogy within those boundaries, as purely encounter experience shouldn't total enough to move levels a great deal beyond 7th. However, if you as the DM wish to award larger sums of experience for great role-play, I fully support that, although keep in mind it might require you to adjust some encounters later in the trilogy.

RELIC Part Two

This adventure actually revolves around the recovery of an ancient relic created by the lord-priests of the old Tolimic city. In Taux, such relics are highly prized, but are also considered incredibly dangerous as they tend to have latent abilities that manifest over time. For the purposes of this adventure, only the positive parts of the relic will come into play, but as the trilogy presses forward, more power and curses will likely come forward to play for and against the players.

Festival of a Thousand Blossoms

During the late spring of every year, the city of Taux participates in a weeklong celebration revolving around rebirth and renewal. This is known as the Festival of a Thousand Blossoms and each one of its seven days is dedicated to a certain common practice by the population. The festival culminates with the crowning of the city's overall Queen of Flowers, each district having elected their own Queen of Blossoms to represent them before the final choice is made for the city as a whole.

The names of the days are as follows:

Day One – LOVER'S DAY:

Flowers are put out en masse throughout the city and deliveries are prevalent as lovers show their affection for mates both known and unknown.

Day Two – DANCE OF SERPENTS:

This day culminates with each district having a large public dance in a common square or prevalent street where local neighborhood blocks create a feathered serpent (think Chinese dragon dancers) and go about the throngs of revelers giving out feathers and flowers to those with the finest blossoms and masks.

Day Three – NIGHT OF SECRETS:

The most entertaining night of the festival, it is the ‘free night’ when men and women alike slip away from their obligations and release their life-toil in all manner of illicit activity. Often, old grudges are settled on this night and many unsanctioned duels take place. This is the night most citizens go masked. It culminates with a citywide party that runs till 2 AM, at the full height of the Blood Moon,



when a mass of fireworks is released in the Raised Market of the Black Gate.

Day Four – DAY OF REFLECTION:

After the titanic social events of the previous day, the bulk of the city returns to its normal life and spends time with family and friends. This is the day of reflection, and one known to heal many old wounds.

Day Five – SAINT’S DAY:

Huge celebrations take place around the city at the temples of the various saints, and most marriages for the year take place on this day.

Day Six – ELEMENTAL DAY:

This is a big day for the populace as it pits the elemental talents of each district’s races in feats of power. This covers a wide range of abilities, from Eldaryn throwing fireballs into the harbor, to kin wrestling, and even air-born Aspara minstrels becoming a one person band.

Day Seven – THE EIGHT QUEENS:

On the final day of the festival, the Red Pillar Council will choose the Queen of Flowers for the city from amongst the candidates: one young woman elected Queen of Blossoms from each district. The newly crowned queen will ride the flower barge of her district down the canals and into the harbor. There she will release the flowers representing the wishes of all her people for the year to come into the bay.

Interacting with the Festival and the Carnival Crews

1. What is a carnival crew?

During the four great festivals of Taux (and the dozen smaller celebrations over the course of a year) each district has a number of ‘crews’ that help promote the celebration. Any district will have between three and five crews operating at any particular time, and although the purpose of each crew is merriment, the secondary purpose is to become the most famous and decorated crew in the city. Crews are typically made up of several social levels of people, the bulk being commoners, with a few artisans above them, an entertainer or two, and finally a financial backer. For the purposes of this adventure, crews are vying for the title of Queen of Flowers and promoting their Queen of Blossoms, her entourage, and her carnival barge through lavish block parties, advertising, and social networking.

2. Masks and their meanings

In Taux, masks are a mainstay of society. Nearly every citizen has a mask of some sort, and all are buried with a mask at the end of their days. These masks serve many purposes and come in many shapes, styles, and some are even rumored to have magical properties. The Festival of a Thousand Blossoms brings out some of the most colorful masks—the fancier the mask, the more social status is felt by its

owner. Masks also serve to promote ambiguity, especially during the sexually heightened nature of some days of the festival. You should encourage players to purchase masks, as they can be of valuable use during the adventure, both for subterfuge and deception.

3. The feel of the city during the festival

This is the largest event of the spring in Taux, and perhaps the most celebrated holiday of the whole year, so make it seem that the city has come alive, and the players cannot move without seeing some sign of the festivities (printed pamphlets promoting a crew, flowers everywhere, lovers hand in hand, etc.). This type of in your face celebration will allow the players to become a part of the adventure, especially if they partake in the events of each day.

Adventure Synopsis

The heroes have survived the betrayal of House Vash and return to their contact Dethocrates only to find that House Vash is steadfast in their desire to see the Fist of the Onyx God in their possession and the heroes disposed of. However, Dethocrates and Lareo have a plan that will pit the heroes against who they believe is a pawn in Vash’s plan to usurp all the power of rulership in Taux.

After being sent to the Silk Purse, the players will meet with Mama Serene, who will attempt to convince them that one of the Red Pillars

has been compromised by the Vash syndicate and needs to be removed from power. In so doing, she is convinced that the other Red Pillars will use their leverage to protect the heroes from the Vash family's threat, at least covertly. It is her plan that the heroes use the Festival of a Thousand Blossoms as cover to infiltrate the Grand Playhouse, discover what secret Henrish Myalka is hiding there (known hereafter as The Conspiracy), and bring it to

the attention of the Sturgeons, who will then deal with the problem publically.

THE CONSPIRACY:

It is no secret that House Vash is vying for control of the entire Red Pillar Council, and its goals typically start with the weakest members of an organization and move up from there. The two Red Pillars with the least clout in Taux financially and militarily are Mama Serene of the Silk Purse and Henrish Myalka of the Grand Playhouse. Mama Serene has been problematic for many reasons, and to this point unassailable, but two seasons ago House Vash installed a doppelganger into The Grand who eventually worked its way to Henrish and assassinated him, assuming his place. Unbeknownst at the time to House Vash, Henrish was a beast tamer and Shay worshiper, having created a secret chamber in the basement of The Grand to worship his saint and nurture a prize brought out of the Black Swamp by a lowl master hunter. This prize was a basilisk feathered serpent, and Henrish loved it more than life itself as he considered it a representation of his patron saint. The beast fed only once a season, stealing the life force from a victim it turned to stone, and so Henrish struck on a plan. He hired an actress from Zimbolay, with skills in tome-magic taught by the witches there, to impersonate a great sculptor from the other side of the world in Aflyr. Utilizing her



skills with potions, especially charm potions, he would choose a victim, charm them, and then sacrifice them to the serpent, creating a beautiful piece of artwork that he could display in his theater, as the serpent's victims

were turned to polished onyx when struck with its gaze. Once this diabolical secret was discovered by the doppelganger, and then House Vash, it was decided that they would use the knowledge to strike at another Red Pillar,



Count Bram Rummel, through his daughter Ylissa. As she had recently demanded to join the Thunderstone Crew as a lead actress, the Vash decided they would first humiliate the Rummel family by having Ylissa partake in another of Henrish's dark secrets, the Five Star Theater, then reportedly have her flee the city in disgrace only to be actually turned to onyx by the serpent and put on display in The Grand's entry hall. To this point they have been grooming their prize for the slaughter, heightening her fame by giving her the lead in *The King and the Serpent* and swaying Haunted Temple District votes to gain her the position of Queen of Blossoms, with plans to offer her up to the highest bidder among Taux's wealthy and lecherous merchants for the final performance of the Five Star Theater on Day 7 of the Festival of a Thousand Blossoms. With Ylissa's only brother dead (killed by a Vash assassin in a duel) and Ylissa 'fled' in social disgrace, Count Bram will be ripe for the plucking. Either through remarrying Count Bram to a young Vash lady (Ylissa's mother died in childbirth bearing her), or if pressed, bringing Ylissa back (utilizing their doppelganger agent) and having her marry a Vash lord before perishing as well in some terrible accident, another Red Pillar shall fall to the Vash family. It will be the heroes' priority to solve this mystery before the Vash plan comes to fruition.

House Vash and the Red Pillar Council

To truly understand one's enemy, you must first be introduced fully to House Vash. Although House Vash is indeed a family, it is also a mercantile syndicate. The head of the family, Lord Vash, is known to have many wives and lovers, and proliferation has been the trademark of the family for generations (which is why the family symbol is that of a hydra, kill one head, two more grow back). This provides the family with a heavy resource of marriageable children, both male and female, whom the family uses in political, magical, military, and even racial marriages that will bring fresh power and resources into the family. In Taux, you don't need to be born a Vash to be a Vash, or so the saying goes. In this fashion the family has overwhelmed and consumed many a rival, ingesting their assets and making them their own.

This is the enemy the heroes currently face, a multi-headed 'serpent', so to speak, and one that cannot be overcome with a single blow.

Adding to the Vash power, the family also sits at the head of the Red Pillars, a shadow council of the power players in Taux. The thirteen members of this council run the city's political and mercantile interests and are seen



as almost demi-gods by the populace. When in public, they wear elaborate masks and outfits, but in truth are little more than those who have found a way to gain enough wealth, power, and connections to be invited into the cabal (or cast out, as happens on occasion to those who make a misstep large enough to cost them their position).

The Grand Playhouse

Although events in this adventure will revolve around the seven days of the Festival of a Thousand Blossoms, the central cog in the story arc is the Grand Playhouse of the Turquoise Tortoise District.

This three-story structure has become an iconic source of pride for the citizenry of Taux. It lies within the heart of the Haunted Temple District and was built on the ruins of one of the many fallen temples there. This makes the place both a remote yet assessable destination spot for the masses, and a prime meeting place for those with enough money to brave the district at night.

‘The Grand’, as it is called by the people of Taux, is known to promote a single play per season with performances typically taking place for one to two weeks in and around the city’s festivals. The current owner and operator of The Grand is Henrish Myalka, a notoriously flamboyant Korys who made a name for himself in the city of Tiefon amid

the New Kingdoms. He is a great showman and his parties, both for commoner and elite alike, have become things of gossip and legend among the people over the past two decades.

Going to the jai-ruk bridges, the characters will recover the relic, then bring it to a meeting place in the Ghost Towers. Once there, they will unwittingly summon a shadow creature from the city’s stone and be forced to defeat it. It is only after this action that agents from House Vash will arrive looking to clean up loose ends by eliminating the party and acquiring the artifact.

Dungeon Master Notes & Suggestions

1. NPC interactions:

This adventure deals with the iconics Savino and Tohil from Tales of the Emerald Serpent and A Knight in the Silk Purse. Although well-defined in those two volumes, the basics of the two characters are as follows: Savino is a Korys con artist, womanizer, and charlatan. However, his skill-set indicates some previous training in both subterfuge, combat, and even espionage. Tohil is a human with ties to Far Zimbolay. He is the Sturgeon in charge of the Black Gate District, and although bound by the law, he has a soft spot for those less fortunate or in need. The other main NPC will be Mama Serene, the Archon Lady of the Silk Purse (who happens to be a Red Pillar). She is a lovely woman in

her early 40s who is kind to the downtrodden but harsh in her principles and adherence to a code only she knows. She should be played with calm sophistication, and more can be found on her in both anthologies.

2. Role-play versus Combat Play:

This adventure is going to take characters through scenarios on each of the seven days of the Festival of a Thousand Blossoms. Unlike a standard dungeon crawl, this adventure has far more to do with talking things out among the players (role-playing situations instead of utilizing dice), and combat is something only suggested on a couple of occasions, so keep this in mind as you read through the adventure.

3. Keeping the Elemental Sparks ‘Alive’:

Remember, the population of Taux is based around the power and influence of each race’s elemental spark (as found in the Nameless Realms Races Gazetteer). As the DM, it is your responsibility to keep players’ sparks in their minds as they go through the action, assuming you are utilizing the setting material. If not, be sure to incorporate your own setting aspects of races into the adventures where a Korys becomes a half-elf, an Aspara an elf, an Eldaryn a gnome, etc.

4. What is House Vash doing at this time:

Luckily for the players, House Vash is a large and sometimes disorganized machine. It has dozens of insidious plots going at any particular moment, and one such plot is blowing up in their faces during this particular Festival of a Thousands Blossoms (see A Knight in the Silk Purse). This means the players will be allowed to fly under the radar for the bulk of the adventure, so keep that in mind.

5. Creating your own timeline:

I highly suggest reading the adventure, seeking out the clues you believe the characters will need to advance the timeline, and then listing them with a corresponding day. This will make sure you don’t miss some key along the way.

Overall Story Arcs and Threads

1. Making contacts and how to use them:

Mama Serene will provide the players with their two most valuable contacts, but others can and should be made throughout the adventure. The utilization of these contacts will become very important during the later stages of the adventure, so be sure to encourage players to be social.

2. Continue to push the trilogy arc:

As this is Part 2 of the trilogy, the confrontation with House Vash that drives the story arc will take the forefront of the action, but don't forget the relic recovered in Folio #11 as it too will add a wrinkle to the overall story.

3. Understanding the nature of Saint Shay:

Saint Shay is something of a dark mystery to most of the citizens of the Nameless Realms. Her origins can be found in the novel The Burning City, but from those humble beginnings she has become something of a titillating threat to the more mundane nature of the world. Her domain revolves around beauty, love (if not obsession), and suffering. She is known to be celebrated by many practitioners of the arts, including those of the bardic traditions and the theater. Those that utilize their bodies for pay (dancers, prostitutes, and even laborers) venerate her, but she is known to be a fickle goddess who will take as much as she will give. That said, of all the Nameless Realms Saints, Shay seems most worshipped in Taux during the Festival of a Thousand Blossoms, so be sure to show this to the players as the week moves forward.



New Monster

Feathered Basilisk Serpent

Lawful Evil

Frequency: Very Rare

No. Appearing: 1

Armor Class: 4

HD: 10+7

Move: 12"

No. of Attacks: 3

Damage/Attack: 1–10+5 (Bite)

2–20+10(Constrict), 2–12+5 (Wings)

Special Attacks: Poison (save or die),

Gaze turns to stone

Special Defense: +2 or better weapon to hit, Shed Feathers

Magic Resistance: 35%

Intelligence: Very

Size: L (20' long)

Psionic Ability: NIL

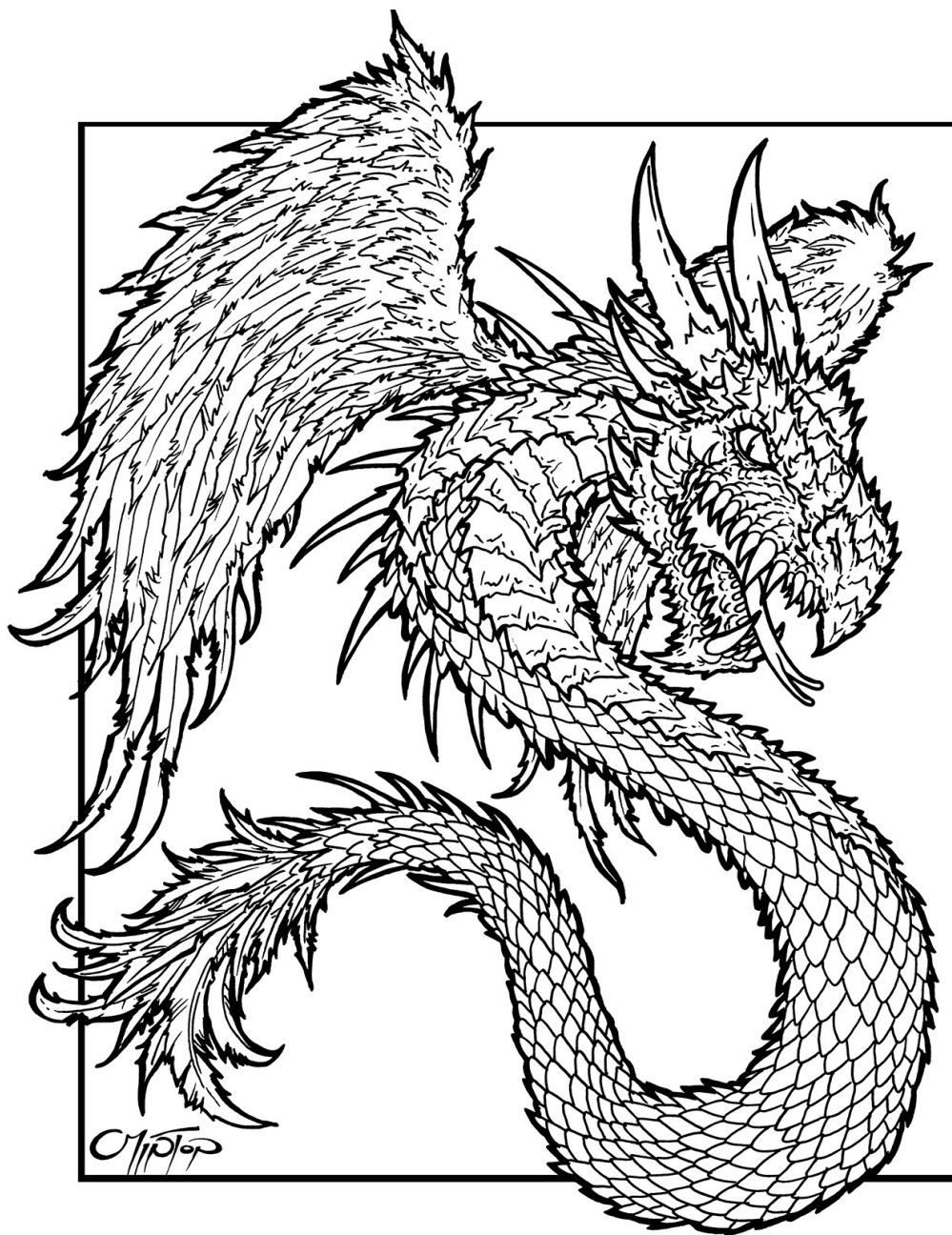
% in lair: 50%

Treasure Type: D, E

Winged Basilisk Serpent [AC 16, HD 10d12+30, HP 90, Initiative +4, #AT 3, Hit +9, Dam Bite 16 (3d8+4), Constrict 20 (3d10+5), Wing 10 (2–8+2), Damage Immunity (non-magical weapons), Magic Resistance, Poison (DC 16 Constitution 20 (2d20) + Acid 15 (3d8+1)), Shed Feathers (1st physical attack from all enemies does ½ damage)]

Poison:

The feathered basilisk serpent can spit an acidic poison at a target from up to 20', and even those making a saving throw will take 2–12 points of acid damage from the venom touching their skin. Missing



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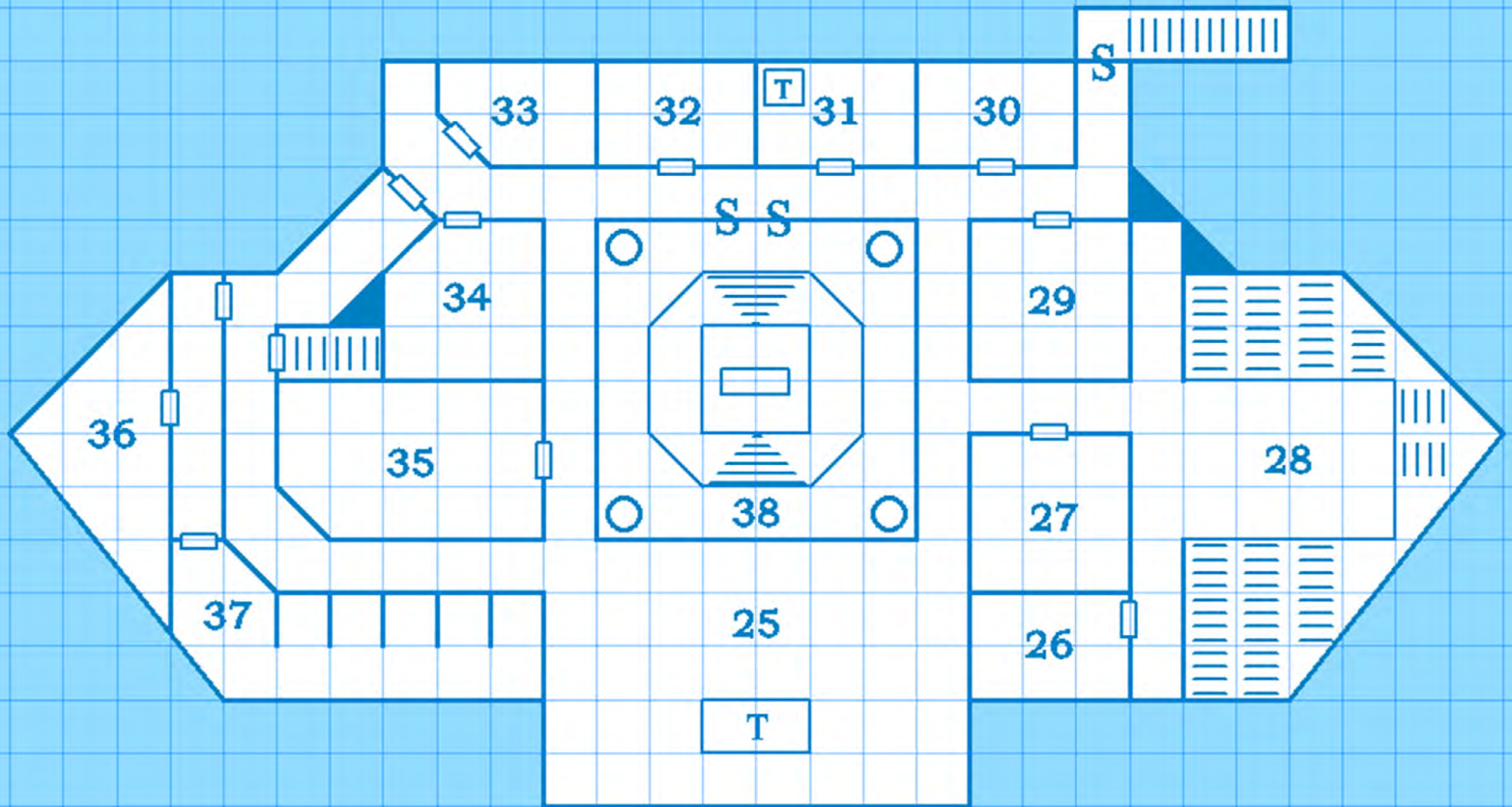
a save means death in 1–4 agonizing (-8 to all actions and no spell-casting permitted) rounds.

Shed Feathers:

This creature has the ability to absorb strikes from weapons and 'shed' the damage by sluffing off scales and feathers. This means that the 1st attack by any creature does ½ damage no matter the weapon type. Spells, however, have full effect (assuming they penetrate its magic resistance).

Winged serpents have been worshiped by those in

the Tolimic Empire for a thousand years, but once in a generation one of these creatures is born with the special ability to turn living things to stone with its gaze. Known as feathered basilisk serpents, these creatures can grow to enormous size and have dark black feathers and scales with eyes that shine a pale green. It is said that those who are turned to stone by the creature provide it with life force to sustain it, as it cannot eat because its prey is petrified. There are also those that say kin are unaffected by the creature's terrible gaze, although this is unconfirmed.



- Pillar
- Door
- ▤ Door, double
- ⌘ Door, secret
- ▦ Stairwell

THE FOLIO



The King and the Serpent

Paleo Module AT2

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A Three Part Scenario for Characters Levels 5-7
by Scott Taylor



The King and the Serpent

A Three Part Scenario for
Characters Levels 5–7

This adventure is going to be unlike most you've encountered to date with The Folio series as it is more about role-play and attribute tests than about combat. The responsibility of the DM here is going to be much greater than simply sitting behind a screen and resolving dice rolls. You will be required to give personality to a great number of NPCs while building an appropriate mystery and managing a half-dozen independent scenarios on the tabletop at one time.

It is important to bring a sense of cooperation to the players before play begins. Table-talk is encouraged even if the exchange of information between players potentially leads to meta-gaming. For all intents and purposes, The King and the Serpent is a mystery adventure, where swinging blades and casting combat spells will likely be delayed until the final encounters in Part Three.

Above all, know that this adventure will put both you and your players' skills in the role-playing genre to the test, so try to be fair, take your time, read the material fully before playing, and above all, have fun!

All 'grey blocks' are for 5E conversions in this section.

Uncovering Clues

In this scenario there will be two ways to uncover certain clues that will help reveal the mystery to the players. One way is by searching a particular room or place and another is by questioning NPCs. In the encounters below, I will list possible discoveries using target numbers established as Easy, Moderate, Hard, and Sherlock. These target numbers will be attached to either an S for Search or a Q for Questioning, thus a full target number for questioning an NPC might have 'Q-Easy' before the information acquired.

To achieve an Easy success, a character must roll the appropriate attribute score or below on a d20, either the average of their Intelligence and Wisdom for a Search roll, or a straight Charisma check for a Questioning roll. A Moderate target would be the attribute -3, a Hard result would be the attribute -6, and a Sherlock result would be the attribute -10.

[Easy target DC 12, Moderate target DC 15, Hard target DC 17, Sherlock DC 20 in either Search skill or Persuasion]

Also, questioning NPCs will get easier the longer the character spends time with them, so each day you can subtract 1 from the target number on all questioning results. A failure simply means the player gets no viable information. A critical failure means the character has somehow exposed themselves as a spy and the crew will quickly be informed.

Using Charm spells is also something that can be employed, and the use of such spells will decrease the target number for gaining information by 5 but does not automatically give the players exactly what they need as no one NPC knows everything that is happening behind the scenes.

Also, each day there is a section called Savino's Report. In these, Savino will provide information to the party on behalf of the actors' clues, and he can also be asked to confirm other rumors or secrets, reporting back to the heroes the next day at some point. What he reveals could be missed clues by the heroes, or new information, but this is up to the DM as to keep the adventure moving forward while not giving everything away on Day One.

When information is found through a clue, I've provided only the basic hint. Further investigation into the clue is up to the DM, as you know the full extent of the story and can reveal things as you desire. What you tell the players after the initial die roll is up to you, as further conversation into the topic is certainly allowed. However, one thing you must remember is people tend to exaggerate what they know, so you might also provide false information after the initial clue is had. Just a thought.

PART ONE

A Meeting with Mama Serene

'Dethocrates was a jai-ruk of his word, your path unbarred as you walk through the misty streets of

Black Gate in the deep of night. The stones whisper beneath the Blood Moon, and figures lurk in shadows along the main avenue to the mighty structure of the Silk Purse. Beyond the portal to that house of delights, the madam, Mama Serene, awaits a word with you. Deth has promised some respite, but only time will tell if Mama Serene can truly provide it.'

Setting the Stage

The entire focus of the adventure is set by this encounter with Mama Serene, the madam of the Silk Purse. Serene, being a Red Pillar in the city, is very wary of the growing influence and back-dealings of House Vash. She currently suspects, through information gathered during pillow talk from her ladies, that Henrish Myalka, Master of the Grand Playhouse and Captain of the Thunderstone Crew, has been compromised in some way by House Vash. Considering that he too is a Red Pillar (one of the ruling body of 13 who control the city), it is of dire importance that these rumors be confirmed. It is her plan that the heroes can use the events of the Festival of a Thousand Blossoms as cover from continued Vash harassment to infiltrate the Thunderstone Crew and discover the secret of Myalka's defection to all the causes beneficial to House Vash. If the heroes can ascertain the origin of this mysterious change, they can have leverage over House Vash to remove the sword of Damocles that currently hangs over their heads.

Day One: Lover's Day

'Like a high mountain field turned from green shoots of grass to a kaleidoscope of flowering color, so too has the muted stone of Taux become resplendent. Lover's Day, the first day of the week-long Festival of a Thousand Blossoms, decorates the city with budding florets in seemingly every window, door, shop, and central square.'

Encounter Point One

Mama Serene will invite the heroes into her private parlor, playing a teasing game, if she can, on any character who might have a lover in the city, or especially between members of the party. She will also be sure to offer each a raspberry colored flower to be pinned to collar or lapel of cloak indicating that the characters are favored by the Silk Purse on this day of celebration. After pleasantries, she will ask to hear the heroes' version of the events of their run-in with House Vash that took place in Folio #11, and then offer her own plan to help both herself (she freely admits to needing this information) and the friends of Dethocrates and Lareo, both of whom she considers close associates.

She can offer the heroes the following information to help them in their pursuit of knowledge:

A.

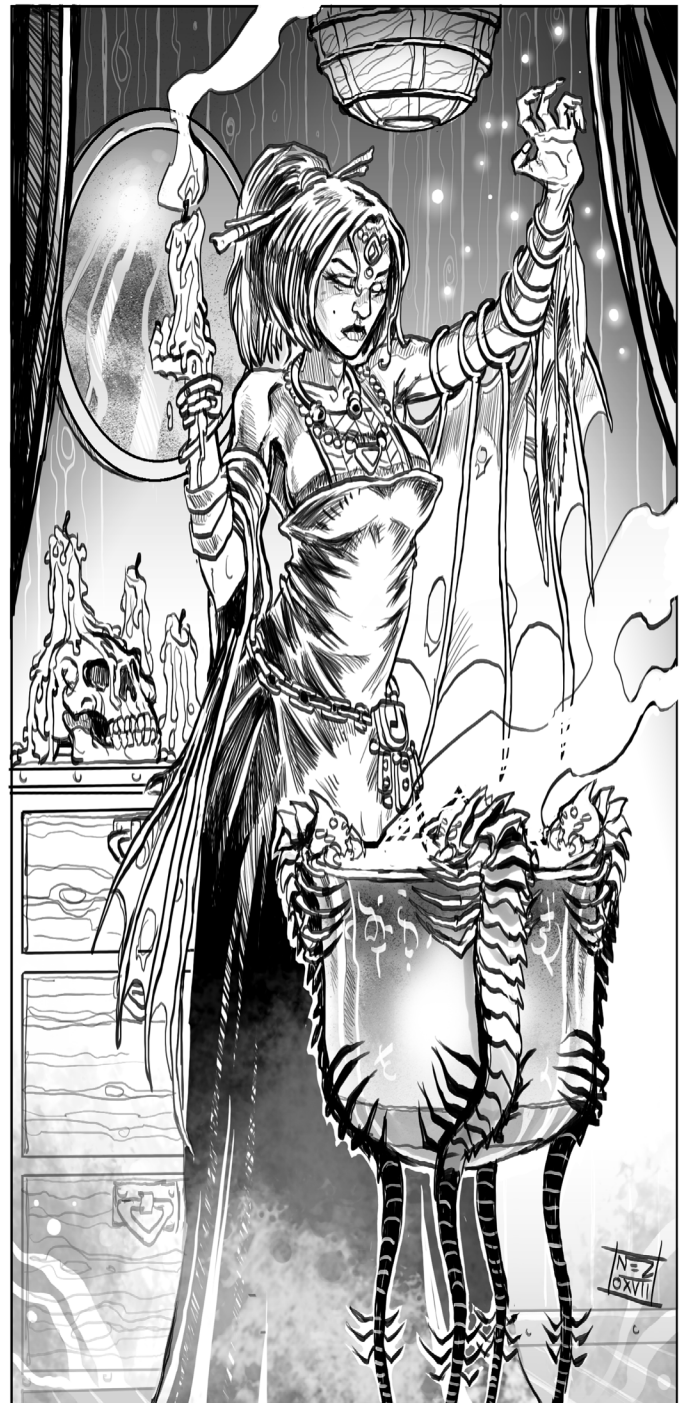
The Thunderstone Crew has been ramping up its membership for the past two weeks in preparation for the Festival of a Thousand Blossoms, but their recruiting efforts have met resistance from the population of the Haunted Temple District which has put them in a bind.

B.

The premier of the Grand Playhouse's new production, *The King and the Serpent*, is to take place in two days, putting even more pressure on the already stressed members of the crew.

C.

Ylissa Rummel, the beautiful and headstrong youngest daughter of Count Bram Rummel, a very



powerful merchant lord of the Turquoise Turtle, is the Thunderstone Crew's contestant for Queen of Flowers. She also has a starring role in the The King and the Serpent.

D.

Another associate of Mama Serene, with motivations of his own, is also involved in this mission and will do what he can to ensure that your entry into the Thunderstone Crew happens quickly.

After the information is delivered, Mama Serene will encourage the players to enjoy Lover's Day as they can because she has arranged a meeting in the Milky Cup, a champurrado café, before daybreak tomorrow morning with a man named Savino. He is the agent who will help them into employment with the Thunderstone Crew.

Day Two: Day of Serpents

'Taux sleeps restlessly on most nights, like a man who has had too much to eat late the night before, and the passions of Lover's Day have left it even more disturbed as pale orange light paints the horizon to the east. A ballet of scurrying dogs, cats, and rats dance about the dark street as whispers of last night's events hiss from the old stone wall that dominates one side of the street. Farther down, a single metal cage holds a large guttering flame set by Eldaryn lamplighters the night before. Below it, a thin man in an apron sets stools around tables outside a shop that perfumes the street with scents of masa harina, anise, and bitter chocolate.'

Encounter Point Two: Savino and Tohil

Two men are seated to the side of the entry, their backs to the shop's wall. One is a tattoo-faced brute with bald pate and blue livery. The other is a handsome rake, with stylish overcoat, luxuriant hair, and a perfectly quaffed goatee. Both men are armed, blades resting lightly against the wall to their sides for easy access.

The man in blue livery is Tohil, guard captain of the Sturgeon Watch on the Black Gate. He will have little to add to the conversation, leaving most of the talking to his companion this morning, Savino. Savino will greet the heroes warmly (especially any female character with a high charisma, offering her a stool next to him), introducing himself as Savino Emantra. He will also introduce Tohil, who will nod at the party, but not engage in conversation. Savino is polite, charming, and seemingly happy to be alive and up before dawn, his smile ever-present as he relays information to the heroes. He will indicate that he has arranged interviews throughout the morning with various members of the Thunderstone Crew, as it is advisable for the heroes to come into employment separately. He will then go about assigning what he believes (at the discretion of the DM) to be the best jobs to each character. Strong characters will get assigned to labor positions like stagehand, attractive characters will be assigned to understudy and acting roles, and characters that have specific skill-sets (sewing, carpentry, smithing, etc.) will be funneled into appropriate jobs. If there is a bard in the party, he will be asked to accompany Savino so that he can

introduce him to the casting director as his skills might be utilized on stage. Once the entire party understands what part they are to play in this charade, he will provide them with a name and a time for their interview. As a Korys, an air spark, his conversation is light and flits from one topic to another, his mind never seeming to come to rest.

Otherwise, he will provide them all with the following information:

A.

The Grand Playhouse is known for several things, the most obvious is its seasonal theatrical performances, but less recognized is its patronage of Olympia, the sanguine sculptor of Aflyr. Her works in onyx often draw crowds when a new masterpiece is revealed to decorate the galleries of the playhouse. Last, and certainly not least, is that the more risqué performances are said to be created for the wealthy and put on in an underground theater.

B.

Henrish Myalka is a kin, he is said to have ‘perfect pitch’, with ears so finely tuned that he can hear the beating of a hummingbird’s heart from fifteen paces. In the theater, he is known as a slave-driver, a person that demands perfection from his performers, but to the outside world he is a fine patron of the arts and a charming entertainer.

C.

Tohil is here because the Sturgeons believe that some type (undisclosed to this point) of foul play is involved in The Grand, and if any such can be proven, your actions of infiltration will be justified by the law.

D.

Your jobs will allow you access to many different social levels inside the crew, so once inside it will be your job to find out what you can about the inner workings of the crew, Henrish Myalka, and any possible wrongdoing. These findings can be relayed to the party leader or Savino, or both, as the occasion arises, but it is paramount that you don’t reveal your true nature to those of the crew, as such an action would likely bring quick death by a late-night ‘swim’ in one of the city’s canals.

Once the meeting is complete and the assignments given, Savino and Tohil will part ways as the sun finally greets the new morning. It is now up to the players to get to The Grand by their assigned times, match the part they’ve been given, and get a job with the crew.

PART TWO

Making Inroads into the Grand Playhouse

‘Deep in the heart of the Ghost Towers, and rising from the bones of an ancient Tolimic complex, this massive three-story playhouse could well be a fortress in any other city in the world. Two square turrets rise upwards of sixty feet and frame the ten-foot doors of the grand entry. Massive stained glass plates, laid out in the craftsman halls of the New Kingdoms, provide both opulence and light to the interior halls, and Aflyrian patina-bronze shingles add regality to the dark stone of the building’s former masters.’

Setting the Stage

The Grand is a sight to behold, even amid the ancient temples and step pyramids of the Haunted Temple District. Entry by the players will be through a back entrance stair that goes below street level into the basement of the complex. Here, each hero will be greeted by a solitary guard in red livery. He will call for a runner to take the hero to the appropriate interviewing member of the crew. The interview process should be brief, with a few questions as to appropriate skill level, reason for coming to Taux, and discourse on the low pay each will receive. A Charisma roll **[DC 15]** is only required if the character is looking (foolishly) to increase their pay grade, otherwise, they get the job. Once hired, they will be assigned a particular task for the day and then can start interacting with other NPCs involved in the day to day operations of The Grand.

Primary NPCs of the Thunderstone Crew

The Sculptor, Olympia:

Beautiful, elegant, and tall, this Farian woman keeps to herself on most days, spending vast amounts of time working the onyx of her famed statues.

Possible Jobs:

Maid

The Lead, Gram Grey:

The elder statesman of the group, Grey is a human with a penchant for fine liquor and young men.

Possible Jobs:

Understudy, Valet

The Lady, Ylissa Rummel:

This raven-haired and olive-skinned young woman shares a mixed human (Tolimic) and loam (through her father) heritage, with her father's earth spark being dominate. She is tall, strong-willed, and a brilliant actress who seems intent on dominating the Taux theatrical society (and likely being this year's Haunted Temple District Queen of Blossoms) before moving on to other cities of the world even stronger in the arts. She is also the only remaining child of Count Bram Rummel. (Her eldest brother was killed in a duel with a Vash this past year, and her eldest sister died from Swamp Cough, a wasting disease brought on by the proximity to the Black Swamp, when she was eight years of age.)

Possible Jobs:

Dressing lady, Personal Seamstress

The Stage Manager, Drak Malish:

A heavysset jai-ruk, Drak runs the inner workings of The Grand with a toothy smile and a strong hand. He enjoys his work, and has a keen eye for detail. There is no slacking off on Drak's watch, but after hours, he's known to be a good person to find a happening party.

Possible Jobs:

Stagehand, Fabricator, Grip

The Women's Director, Olga:

Hailing from the New Kingdoms city of Tiefon, which houses some of the best playhouses in the world, Olga was trained from a young age in how to run the women of a theatre troupe.

The last thing a troupe needs is a pregnant lead actress, and Olga keeps a watch on all her young ladies, from seamstress to lead, making sure men don't skulk about them too long.

Possible Jobs:

Snitch, Handmaiden, Seamstress, Cook's Assistant

The Director, Henrish Myalka:

A kin known for his extravagant clothing and exceptional ears, Henrish has become a sensation in social circles of Taux over the past decade. He is a perfectionist when it comes to his plays (most of which he writes), and is notorious for calling out performers who forget lines, don't give 110%, and heaven forbid, sing off key.

Possible Jobs:

Playwright, Personal Assistant

The Festival Warden, Evander Sage:

A brass mustached Eldaryn male, Evander loves creating things, from sets, to masks, to festival floats. He takes the job of chief entertainer of the Thunderstone Crew very seriously, and his parties have become legend, not only in the Haunted Temple District, but in Taux as a whole.

Possible Jobs:

Fabricator, Street Runner, Performer

The Servant Headman, Rolic Mesh:

A human of advanced age, Rolic is in charge of keeping The Grand's population of actors and laborers fed, clothed, paid, and working. He carries all the keys to The Grand and if there is something you need done, Rolic is the man to talk to.

Possible Jobs:

All standard serving jobs

Encounter Point One

Once the heroes have won places in their perspective jobs, they will begin doing work in earnest. Now is the time to have some fun with them, introduce them to the greater NPCs of the Thunderstone Crew, and also create a few NPCs in the heroes' particular job set for them to talk to. There won't be a great deal of time to talk during the day as the crew is rushing to finish preparations for the play (which begins tomorrow afternoon) and the block parties tonight featuring the crew's two 'serpents', the Black Shadow Serpent and the White Ghost Serpent. These two enormous paper and silk constructions will be out in full force at the crew's party, moving through the streets and entertaining the citizens of the Ghost Towers. It is possible for heroes to be recruited to be part of the eight man team inside each serpent, which might also be a way to get some clout with members of the crew (anyone participating in being a part of a serpent will get a -1 to their target numbers for all questioning rolls the remainder of the adventure).

Parties that evening will also allow for more relaxed interaction, but most people aren't looking to talk about work, so any questioning done will be at a +1 to target numbers.

Anyone staying at The Grand during the evening will note on a successful Search roll **[DC 14 Perception]**, that guards have been placed at both sets of stairs to the lower level. Anyone watching the street stair (where the characters were brought in for interviews), will note a good number (perhaps 40) cloaked and masked couples moving down the stair around 8 o'clock and leaving again around 11 o'clock, roughly an hour before the night's parties begin to let out and the streets clear.

Although this event is better left to another night, some players may take great pains to bypass the guards and get into the basement. Realistically, using a trapdoor, either in Henrish's room or on the main stage floor, would be the best option, but nonetheless, if a character does manage to get below and make it undetected to the underground theater, they will be witness to a scandalous play where 'romantic' encounters are played out for the secluded crowd, some of those patrons using heavy cloaks to conceal their own carnal desires as they watch events unfold. The star of this particular performance is Ylissa Rummel's understudy, Vivica of the Daerns, who after tantalizing the crowd with several close calls at a ravishing, is finally seduced by Jarish, the lowl foreman of the crew's fabrication team. Once the performance completes, the lights are dimmed even further as the patrons finish their own business before slipping back out into the streets.

A Search check **[DC 15 Perception]** will reveal that among the patrons sits Olympia,

the woman unmasked and alone. Once the performance is complete, she retires with the two lead actors into the hall before collecting sweat from each into two small vials (these are later used in her charm making exercises). To observe this, the character must make a successful Hide in Shadows **[DC 16 Stealth]** as well as a successful Search check **[DC 15 Perception]**.

This performance is known as 'The Five Star Theater', and will take place on Day 2, Day 5, and Day 7 of the festival.

Day Three: Night of Secrets

Being the first full day the heroes are working within the crew, this will give them opportunities to see, question, and search. The crew busies itself in the morning for final preparations for the first performance of The King and the Serpent, which happens at noon, and then has a 2nd performance at 4 in the afternoon. Once those two shows are completed, a great deal of pressure will be lifted from the crew as everyone gets the night off to enjoy the fruits of their labors with lovers, family, and clandestine meetings.

Information gathering during the day is broken down between various sections of the crew, and are as follows:

Labor:

Q-Easy: Construction of the Queen of Blossoms barge has been slowed because of a dispute between Drak Malish and Henrish, the former wanting Olympia to be the queen

and Henrish insisting Ylissa take the throne.

Q-Moderate: Drak Malish used to be a hunter of rare animals in the Black Swamp before he joined the crew.

Q-Hard: Speaking of moving heavy things, remember the time they were moving the statue of the Summer Maiden and it dropped, only to shatter to dust when it hit the floor?

Q-Sherlock: There are two secret ways from the main floor to the basement, one through a trapdoor in the main stage and the other a trapdoor in Henrish's office.

Actor:

Q-Easy: The King and the Serpent has been doubly difficult to perform because Henrish has seemed distracted throughout rehearsals.

Q-Moderate: The door to Vivica of the Daerns' room, Ylissa's understudy, is 'always open', if you know what I mean.

Q-Hard: Uvara Hern, the head of the crew musicians, quit suddenly two weeks ago, but a newly commissioned statue of him was just put in the main entry two days ago. Henrish has Olympia working double time to finish sculpting by the start of the festival.

Q-Sherlock: As promiscuous as the theater is, Ylissa is a virgin, otherwise she couldn't wear a 'Locket of Saint Amanda's Promise'.

Servant:

Q-Easy: Olympia is incredibly private, taking her meals in her room and rarely being seen in public.

Q-Moderate: Henrish's diet has changed over the past month or so, the former vegetarian now consuming meat at every meal.

Q-Hard: The worst job in the crew is cleaning up after the Five Star Theater...

Q-Sherlock: Olympia produces an incredible masterpiece of sculpture once a month, but no one ever hears her hammer and chisel at work.

Savino's Report

After getting the lay of the land, he has arranged for the lead, Gram Grey, to have an accident during the Night of Secrets that will compromise his ability to perform the rest of the week. Thus, he's going to position himself as the lead.

Search and Observation

There is a single list below of random search results for the week on the whole, and there are other specific room search results listed in The Grand rooms section.

S-Easy: The symbol for the Thunderstone Crew incorporates a five pointed star, the holy symbol for Saint Shay.

S-Moderate: Henrich carries a set of four keys on his belt. (These open the chest in his office, the door to his office, the secret door to the Shrine of Shay, and a master key to all lesser room locks in The Grand.)

S-Hard: In the dust on the floor of the basement, there can

occasionally be found strange black scales.

S-Sherlock: The faint outline of an incredibly intricate set of secret doors can be found on the basement level. These are kin made, and cannot be opened without a spell, key, or bypassed by a kin using his ability to pass through stone.

Day Four: Day of Reflection

After the events of the night before, the city awakens to wash itself of its sins and spend time with family and friends in more gentle labors. There is no work on the Day of Reflection, save for the entertainment industry, and The Grand sees its largest revenue of the season on this day. Two day performances and a special evening performance under Eldaryn light enchantments will be sold out, and the crew will be working nonstop to see that everything goes off without a hitch.

Labor:

Q-Easy: None

Q-Moderate: None

Q-Hard: It's said that the black scale and feather masks the leadership of the crew wears were made from feathered serpents Drak once hunted in the Black Swamp.

Q-Sherlock: The basement is of a strange design, with a great central portion of it a massive support that would seem unnecessary.

Actor:

Q-Easy: None

Q-Moderate: Ylissa is a fine actress, but her singing is a bit off pitch at times, something that doesn't raise the ire of Henrish.

Q-Hard: Drak, the stage manager, was being outfitted for a costume in the morning hours while most of the crew were breaking their fast.

Q-Sherlock: None

Servant:

Q-Easy: None

Q-Moderate: None

Q-Hard: Imgin, one of the younger servants in the crew, has been sent out to the Black Gate to collect strange ingredients for Olympia twice a month. (Further investigation through Imgin may reveal ingredients used in potions, particularly those of the charm variety if any hero is magically adept to know such things.)

Q-Sherlock: Polo the Lesser said that he saw a man walk into a storeroom in the basement and Henrish walk out, but the man never left the room and it was empty when he checked. Polo disappeared the day after the sighting, and we don't speak of such things!

Savino's Report

Ylissa is the only remaining child of Count Rummel, and her father insists that once The King and the Serpent completes its run, she return to his estate in the Turquoise Turtle District and prepare for a marriage to a merchant house in Tiefon.

Encounter Point Two

Day Five: Saint's Day

The veneration of the Nameless Realms Saints takes precedence over troupe performances, and thus only a single presentation of The King and the Serpent will be had today at the 3 o'clock hour. This leaves time in the morning to clean up from the events of yesterday, and the evening to venerate the saint of your choice amid the throngs of people going to temple or simply making offerings and prayers in their households. The bulk of the crew who have family in the city will leave The Grand tonight, and those without will celebrate with an early feast, just after the single performance, and then worship as they please. At 9 that evening, another 'Five Star Performance' will take place, this time with Vivica dressed as a priestess of Shay and Drak Malish taking on the guise of her husband, Saint Colin of the Flaming Blade. Afterward, the same sweat collection by Olympia takes place.

Labor:

Q-Easy: *Drak Malish is not in The Grand during the bulk of the day, instead he has gone to venerate Vitcoska, the owl demon goddess.*

Q-Moderate: *A chosen few will be made to hang concealing curtains in the lower theater that create more private viewing locales for a performance.*

Q-Hard: *None*

Q-Sherlock: *None*

Actor:

Q-Easy: *None*

Q-Moderate: *Vivica of the Daerns is not at The Grand during any performance during the day, but she was not seen leaving the building either. (She has gone into the secret temple in the basement to give herself to Shay before her performance in the Five Star Theater later that evening.)*

Q-Hard: *During a performance two seasons ago, a stage hand was hurt badly in a fall from the rafters back stage, but Vivica was said to heal the man after whispering prayers to Shay.*

Q-Sherlock: *None*

Servant:

Q-Easy: *Olympia invited Savino into her private sanctum in the morning, and he did not leave for more than an hour.*

Q-Moderate: *None*

Q-Hard: *Henrish has placed a guard, in the guise of a servant, outside Ylissa's door.*

Q-Sherlock: *None*

Savino's Report

Olympia is a sorceress, or at least an enchantress, with hands as smooth as silk. She is brewing powerful charm potions behind her stores of onyx blocks.

Savino was indeed invited to Olympia's chambers, and seduced into drinking one of her charm potions. Unbeknownst to her, his bardic talents had been utilized to have a foil to her magical philter, and yet

he played the part she desires, that being a request to stay away from Ylissa through the rest of the festival.

Encounter Point Three:

Night Secrets

PART THREE

The Final Performance

Day Six: Elemental Day

Elemental Day sets up a special ‘carnival’ performance by the most gifted elementalists in the Thunderstone Crew. Two standard performances of The King and the Serpent will play out at noon and 4 o’clock, and an evening elemental show (think Cirque du Soleil) will be put on at 8 in the evening.

If any of the player characters have special talents, they might be incorporated into the show. You can be creative here, utilizing thieving skills might be a choice (tightrope walk, tumbling, etc.). Someone with a high dexterity might be a juggler, or a knife thrower (assuming you can find someone to throw around). Also, if you are utilizing the elemental aspects of the city and characters, encourage a player to create her own type of elemental performance (and give her extra experience points and a +2 to targets if questioning anyone later that night).

Things should be moving quickly now as well concerning The Conspiracy. All players should be aware of these common facts:

A.

Ylissa is in danger, likely because of her family, and is currently under secret guard by Henrish.

B.

Henrish isn’t what he seems, and is likely a doppelganger.

C.

Olympia isn’t a sculptor, but an enchantress with powerful charming magic.

D.

There is a secret chamber somewhere in the basement, but what it holds is unknown.

What the players don’t fully know is what the final action will be, or when it will take place, although with the festival drawing to a close, it will likely be soon.

They shouldn’t act until Henrish puts his cards on the table, but Savino will assure them that he’s made contact with Tohil and the entire Grand will be raided when he gives the signal.

Savino’s Report

Another Five Star Theater is scheduled for Day Seven, and he believes that will be the culmination of the events of the week, although he’s not yet sure why, although the crew will be released after the final performance of The King and the Serpent tomorrow afternoon, leaving The Grand seemingly empty.

Encounter Point One

Day Seven: The Eight Queens

Ylissa Rummel has been elected to the status of the Haunted Temple District Queen of Blossoms, her possible crowning as Queen of Flowers waiting until the Red Pillars make the announcement at the height of the Ghost Moon tonight. A single afternoon performance of The King and the Serpent will take place at 3 o'clock, and then the mass of the crew will be released to enjoy the remaining day until the entire city gathers around the canals to see their queens on their flowered barges.

Encounter Point Two

How events will unfold for the final act:

The day should progress as normal, even if everyone's (including NPCs) nerves are on edge. Savino, who is supposed to be charmed, will have to bow out of the defense of Ylissa, so it will be the players' responsibility to keep an eye on her. She was slipped a potion with dinner last night and is now charmed, her one true desire to sacrifice herself to the carnal desires of her mysterious patron during the Five Star Theater later that night, before offering herself to Saint Shay at the hidden shrine afterward. She's also been warned that someone might be trying to stop these events, and so she is to resist them, thwart them, etc.

As the DM, you might want to keep this charming a secret until the end so that she can slip away as necessary to try to get to the shrine for the final battle.

Whatever the case, the 3 o'clock performance of The King and the Serpent completes, the bulk of the crew departs into the city for the culmination of the festival which starts at 10 o'clock, and the players will be left to deal with stopping the third performance of the Five Star Theater which begins at 7 o'clock.

Once they have stopped the performance, Savino will call for Tohil and his Sturgeons, but it should be during this time that the party must deal with Henrish and the charmed Ylissa. The doppelganger will flee to the secret shrine and use his charm whistle to call the serpent from the tunnels below the shrine. He will be accompanied by three guards loyal to House Vash, and Ylissa will take a lovely pose on the altar as she was instructed so that her statue will be a lovely likeness.

Also during this time, Olympia will attempt to flee The Grand, and it is up to the DM if she manages to do so or if Tohil and his men catch her. If she is captured, Savino can later tear off her necklace marked with the runes of Shay and smash it, thus freeing Ylissa from the charm spell effects.

If as DM you wish to up the action, you can have other members of the crew come to the aid of Henrish, such as Vivica or Drak, keeping the heroes from getting to the theater, etc. There needs to be urgency created as the scenario plays out, so keep that in mind.

3 Mercenaries [AC 4, HD 6, HP 36, #AT 2/1, D 1-8+2 (Longswords)]



TREASURE

72 COPPER COINS, 32 SILVER COATLS

3 Mercenaries [AC 16, HD 6d8+6, HP 30, Initiative +3, #AT 2, Hit +4, Dam Longsword (1d8+2), Pack Tactics (Mercenaries are at advantage if attacking with allies within 5 feet.)]

Doppelganger [AC 5, HD 10, HP 60, #AT 1, D 1-12 (Slam), Surprise on 1-4, ESP]

TREASURE

NONE

Doppelganger [AC 14, HD 10d8+20, HP 60, Initiative +4, #AT 2, Hit +6, Dam Slam 7 (1d6+4), Multiattack, Read Thoughts, Surprise Attack, Ambusher]

Winged Basilisk Serpent [AC 4, HD 10+7, HP 67, #AT 3, 1-10+5 (Bite)/2-20+10 (Constrict), 2-12+5 (Wings), Poison (save or die), Gaze turns to stone, +2 or better weapon to hit, Shed Feathers]

TREASURE

NONE

Winged Basilisk Serpent [AC 16, HD 10d12+30, HP 90, Initiative +4, #AT 3, Hit +9, Dam Bite 16 (3d8+4), Constrict 20 (3d10+5), Wing 10 (2-8+2), Damage Immunity (non-magical weapons), Magic Resistance, Poison (DC 16 Constitution 20 (2d20) + Acid 15 (3d8+1)), Shed Feathers (1st physical attack from all enemies does ½ damage)]

Once the action ends, the party will have to exit The Grand quickly, and Dethocrates will be waiting as the Sturgeons sweep through the building. He will direct them to lay low as the information on these events run their course. In a couple of days, he will send a message that they have been invited to see Mama Serene, the madam of the Silk Purse. It is with her that the final part of this trilogy will begin.

First Level of the

Grand Playhouse of Taux

1. Main Entry

Twin ancient carved doors, set with Tolimic hieroglyphs, greet all comers to The Grand. Beyond, a large twenty foot wide hall runs east and west to two reception rooms as another pair of similar doors stand at the center of the north wall. Several incredibly detailed onyx statues of former company players and beautifully inspired citizens of Taux decorate the length of the hall.

1A. Standing room only viewing area for low paying patrons

Beyond the second set of hieroglyph doors is a massive lower class standing room. It is roughly 140 feet x 140 feet, with a raised stage at the northern end and raised bleachers to the east and west. Behind the entry, the first gallery rises fifteen feet above ground level and wraps around to the east and west. The second gallery lies ten feet atop the first. Open sky is overhead.

2. & 3. Patron Mingling Areas and stairs to 2nd level

Twin reception rooms dominate the east and west corners of the building with grand stairs leading to the galleries above. Several more onyx statues can be found here, and smaller doors to the north allow access to the first level east and west bleachers.

4. & 5. Left and Right Bleacher

Seating (1st Level)

Several rows of bleachers allow for fine and comfortable seating for the wealthier populace. At the north end of each bleacher section, a small access door allows patrons to mingle in pre-stage to meet the actors.

6. Main Stage

Rising roughly five feet from the Standing Room floor, the main stage of The Grand is set with four great pillars and two 'wing houses' that can be redecorated as needed.

S-Easy

A larger trapdoor, 10'x20' in full size, with a smaller 5'x5' door located inside the larger, is located in the middle-front of the stage. It is locked from below.

7. & 8. Stage Wings

The stage wings are shielded from the view of the Standing Room by large walls built to look like buildings. A single door to the backstage area is located in the east and west walls of these rooms respectively.

9. & 10. Security and Waiting

Area for fans

Fans wishing to meet the actors are held in these small twenty by twenty rooms that connect to the bleachers on level one.

11. Backstage/Curtain Area

Curtains, pulleys, and staging areas are located in this large room beyond the main stage.

12. 1st Billing Star Receiving Room

A small receiving room has been readied for the primary lead of the play.

S-Moderate

A secret door is located in the eastern wall and provides access to the primary lead's dressing room.

13. 1st Billing Star Dressing Room

More opulent than any other room in The Grand, this large dressing room even contains a day bed and a large stained glass window.

S-Moderate

A secret door is located in the western wall of this room to provide access to the receiving room.

14. Guest Star Dressing Room

On occasion, The Grand will host a guest star for a performance who is not a member of the Thunderstone Crew. In this case, they are housed in this fine dressing room which also functions as a sleeping area.

15. 2nd Billing Star Dressing Room

Typically reserved for the female lead in the play, this well accompanied room has all the amenities one could ask for, yet only shares an odd half-window with the hall outside.

16. Large Prop Room

The main prop room, fabrication room, and office of the stage manager all lie within this large 50'x30' chamber.

17. Main Stage Performer Ready Room

For all primary speaking role actors, this is their dressing and ready room.

S-Moderate

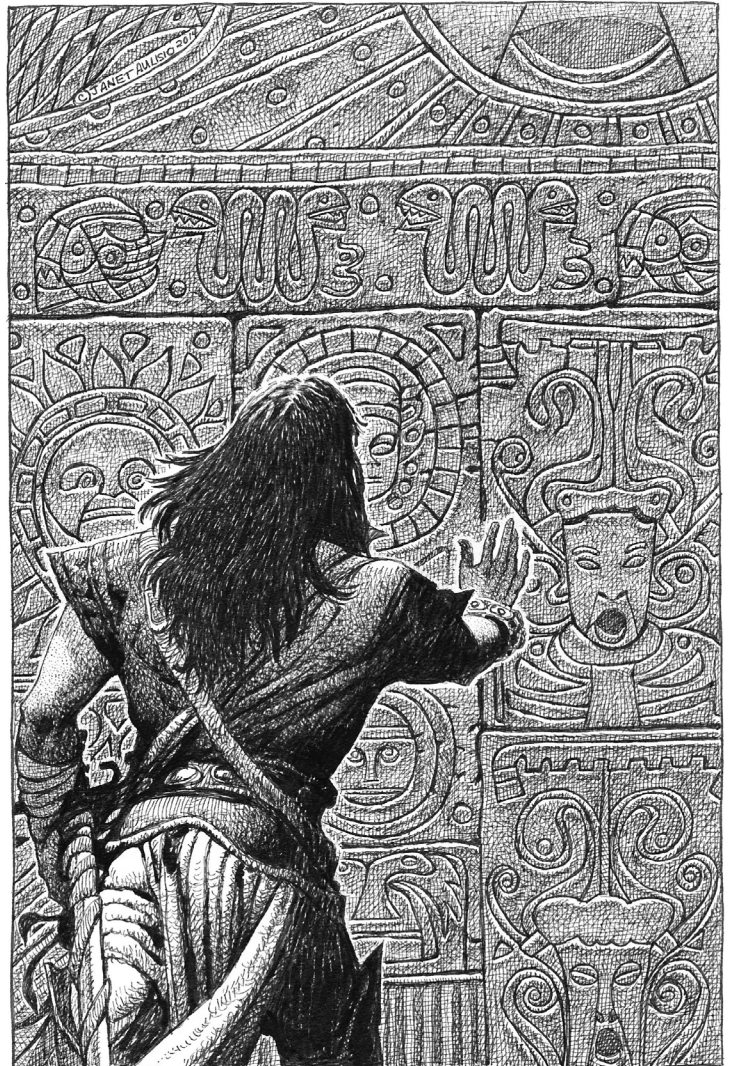
A secret door, as well as a peephole, is located in the northern wall of this room, providing access to the company director's room.

18. Company Director Room

This large 30'x30' room is both office and home to Henrich Myalka and the walls are decorated with old play billings.

S-Moderate

A secret door and peephole is located in the southern wall of the room.



S-Hard

A trapdoor is located under a rug in the room along the northern wall. It is locked [DC 17] and Henrish holds the only key.

S-Hard

After the 4th day, Henrish will have a signed copy of a contract locked in his desk [DC 15] that indicates 'First mounting rights for the Five Star Lead, Ylissa Rummel, during the 7th Day performance of the Five Star Theater' and signed and sealed by Lord Rorin Ken, a powerful Aspara noble who has recently relocated from Zimbolay.

S-Hard

Another secret door is located on the eastern wall of the room and leads to a secret stair to the 2nd level of The Grand.

19. Seamstress Room

Loaded with all manner of costume construction, this room is typically filled with half a dozen older women working on costumes for the crew's various functions in the city.

20. VIP Back Room Lounge

VIPs wishing for a more intimate meeting with the actors can reserve this room which features various curtains and a fine day bed.

21. VIP Receiving Suite

VIPs who pay the price may mingle and share drinks with the actors in the fine room.

22. Stair Down

The only stair leading down inside the building, it is typically guarded by a single member of crew security.

23. & 24. Stair Up

The only common stairs from the stage area to the upper levels. They too, are each guarded by a single member of crew security.

Sub-Level

25. Main Stage Sub-Level Access

Mainly used for storage of larger broken down props, this area is a kind of labyrinth that only a few stagehands know completely. A single larger path has been left open, leading to the trapdoor access above, and a rolling set of stairs lies just beneath it.

26. Costume Supply

All older costumes currently not in service are located in this packed chamber.

27. Small Prop Supply

Any small props that are not currently in use, like costume jewelry, shoes, boots, and smaller stage decorations are kept and catalogued here.

28. Sub-Level Private VIP

'Five Star Theater'

A 40'x30' wooden-floor stage is flanked on three sides by padded benches set in such a fashion that if moved correctly behind each other, they can make almost a reclining lounge. Beams in the ceiling have metal rings attached that can be strung with curtains.

29. Musicians Dressing Room

Musicians and their instruments, who perform in roped areas to the east and west of the main stage, are housed here.

30. Stage Director Room

This room is normally used by the stage director, but that post has been empty the past

two months, so it now sits empty. Drak Malish has been using it recently, but he has not taken up permanent residence.

31. Scripts and Playwright Room

Although Henrish gets full billing as a playwright, a handful of scribes tirelessly work on reproductions of the script for the actors as well as producing proper advertising, billing, and even doing a bit of accounting in this room.

32. Stage Weaponry Prop Room

With a key held only by Drak Malish (and of course Henrish's master key), this room holds the prop weapons (and some real ones) of the crew.

33. Gaffer & Stagehands Rec Room

A room dedicated to blowing off steam and napping by the various laborers who work under Drak Malish.

34. Kitchen

Three large ovens power the cooking potential of this room that must provide food for the entire crew.

35. Playhouse Mess Hall

The common eating area for the crew, who are scheduled to eat in shifts throughout the day.

36. Olympia's Sculpting Chamber

Olympia uses this large and oddly shaped room as both bedroom and studio as it provides a certain measure of seclusion from the day to day happenings of The Grand.

37. Lower Level Actor/Understudy/Dancer Dressing Room

For any extras or dancers who might be brought in during performances, this extra dressing room is rarely used.

S-Easy

Signs of secret illicit rendezvous can be had amid the dressing stalls of this far removed chamber.

38. Secret Shrine for Saint Shay

(Maiden of Dancing, Beauty, Sex, and Pain):

This 60'x60' chamber is set in the corners with 4 large pillars and dominated in the center by a recessed pit and altar. The altar is made of black stone, and images carved into it depict five pointed stars and the sanguine form of a naked female dancer. Chains and manacles are attached to the pillar on the southeastern wall and enchanted sconces provide a pale green light to the room. The only entry into the chamber is through a set of kin made doors that cannot be opened without a spell, key, or bypassed by a kin using his ability to pass through stone.

S-Easy

There are two 5'x5' holes in the floor near the southern pillars, each has several discarded black scales around it.

Credits:

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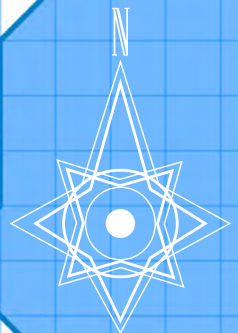
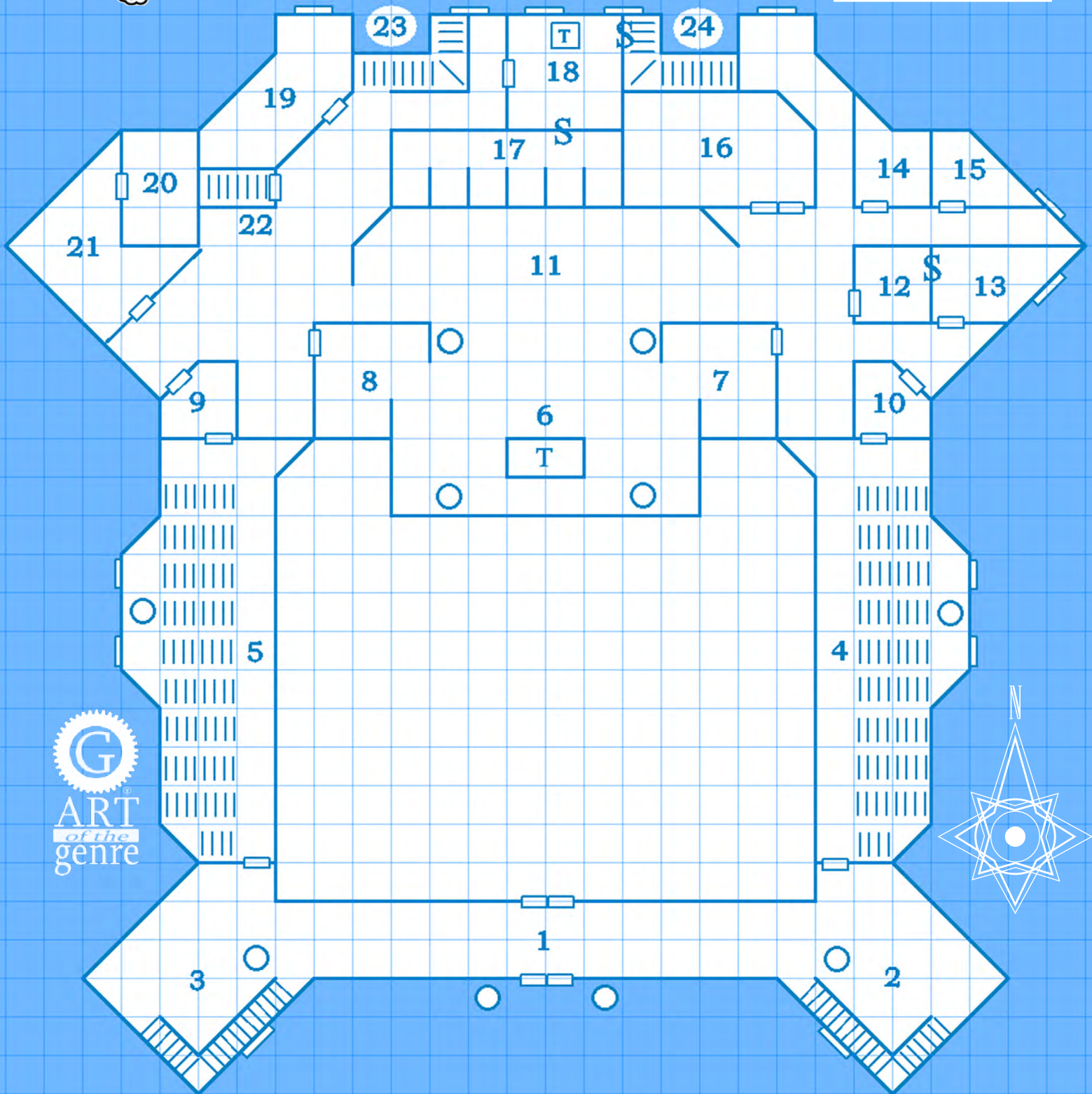
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THE FOLIO

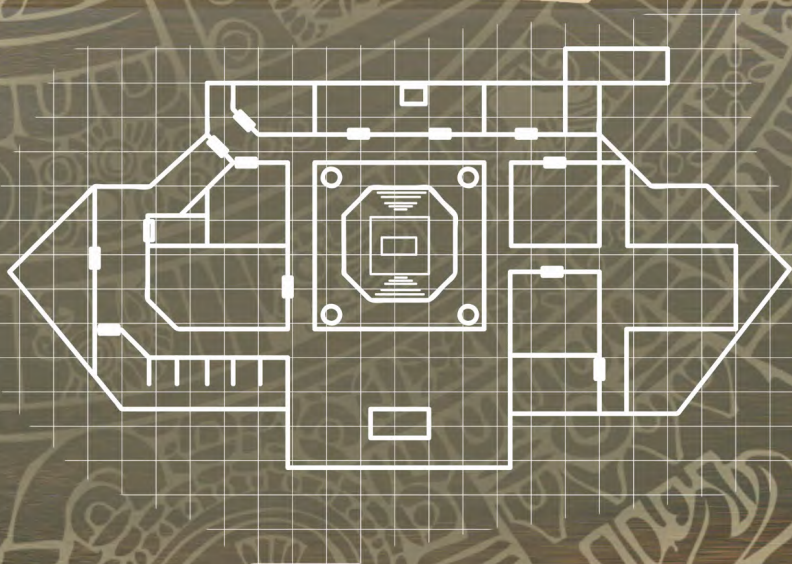
| | |
|---|--------------|
| ○ | Pillar |
| □ | Door |
| ▢ | Door, double |
| ⊕ | Door, secret |
| ▨ | Stairwell |



The King and the Serpent



- S SECRET DOOR
- C HIDDEN DOOR
- T TRAP



Part 2 of the
Adventures from
The Emerald
Serpent Campaign
An Adventure for
Levels 5-7 in both
1E & 5E Format



With the most powerful ruling house of Taux now an enemy, heroes of the Emerald Serpent must take shelter inside the revelry of the Festival of a Thousand Blossoms. This massive carnival sweeps over the city in the spring of each year for seven full days, and with it as a shield to their activities, a secret mission into the heart of The Grand Playhouse awaits. Can the heroes infiltrate the Thunderstone Crew? Will iconic characters from the Taux fiction come to their aid? What sinister plots still take form in the city by the insidious House Vash? Become part of the Tales of the Emerald Serpent in this 2nd part of the Taux Trilogy. This is an adventure module for characters levels 5-7 in both 1E & 5E gaming mechanics.