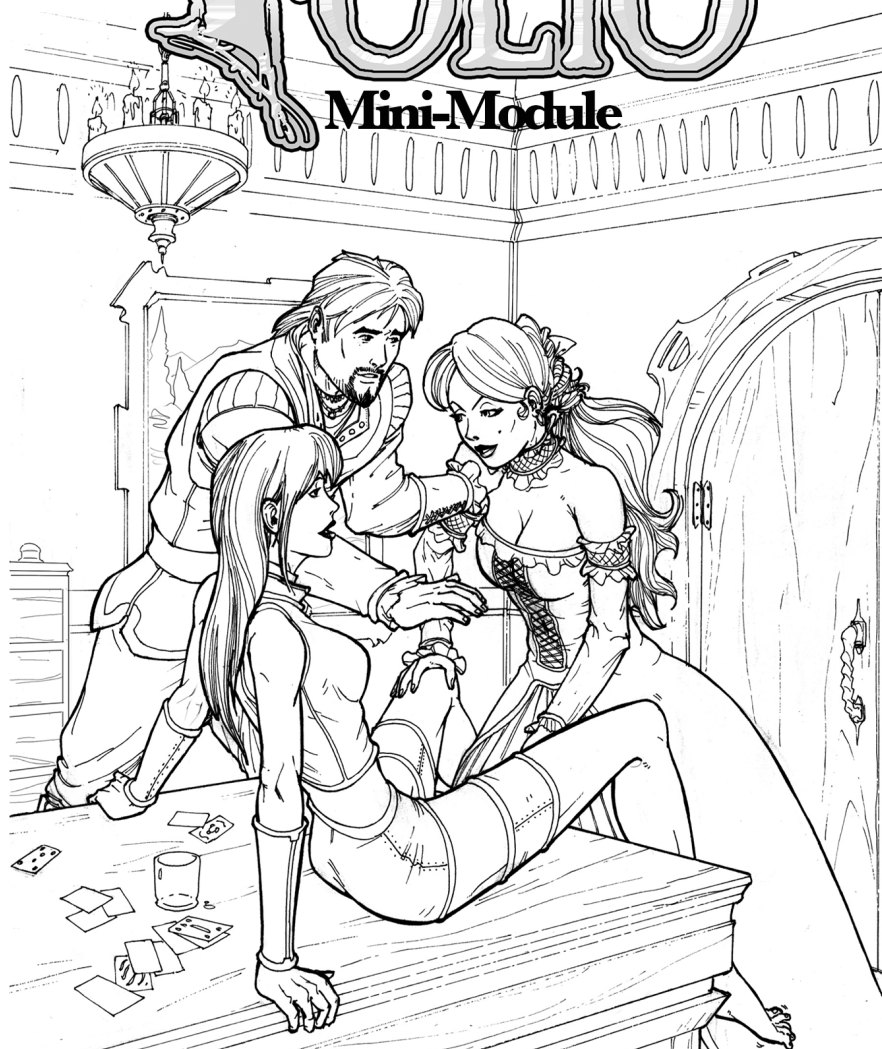


**AT2.5**

**Bonus Module**

# THE FOLIO

**Mini-Module**



## **ADVENTURES FROM THE EMERALD SERPENT CAMPAIGN**

### **The Part We Must Play**

Mini-Adventure AT2.5

by Scott Taylor

The Part We Must Play is a companion adventure made to go along with the events unfolding in the Folio #12. It is designed for 1E & 5E mechanics and is for characters level 5-7. It contains the information needed to run a side adventure that will help characters in their fight against House Vash.

It is the eve of the Festival of a Thousand Blossoms, the grand playhouse has a secret performance that only a chosen few have been invited to. Can the heroes gain an invitation and find the contact they need to help them in their blood feud with House Vash?



# The Part We Must Plan

## Dungeon Master Notes

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Having won their way into the Thunderstone Crew, the heroes are now hard pressed to solve the mystery of The Grand, however, there is more than one intrigue currently going on within the playhouse. The secret performance is one of the key ingredients for the success of The Grand, and without it, all the various players might find themselves unemployed, or worse, sold into slavery as concubines, eunuchs, or indentured minstrels. If another mole has indeed entered The Grand with the purpose of bringing the events of the Five Star Theater secret performance to the light of the Paladins of Amanda, then she must be stopped, and only the heroes have the resources to see it done.

**1. Primary Purpose:** This mini-adventure is designed to give the players a much more in-depth view of the production of both The King and the Serpent as well as the Five Star Theater secret performance. Adventuring within the setting of The Grand is something that each player should walk away with a feeling of ownership of what happens there and a true friendship with some of the NPCs. Fleshing out the actual performances will help instill this in your players, or that is the hope!

**2. Time for running:** This mini-adventure is meant to be run DURING the events that take place in Folio #12. There are three Five Star Theater performances during the heroes' time within The Grand; this scenario should play out during the 2nd of these performances, on the 5th night of the Festival of a Thousand Blossoms.

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

### **The Secret Five Star Theater Performances & The King and the Serpent**

The King and the Serpent is a tragic musical dedicated to the mad king Aranos of the Nublar. The human king was said to fall in love with a wizard and when he won her to his side, it became evident that her water spark would not accept his fire spark seed, and thus they couldn't have children. Seeking a solution to this, he sought the council of the black wyrm Balagrathol in the Ebon Hills and struck a deal with the creature that would ensure his seed had the strength to take purchase in his wife's womb. However, the wyrm betrayed Aranos and assumed his form, laying with his wife, and thus producing an abomination of a child. The tragic end of the tale saw the wife die in childbirth, Aranos slaying the wyrm only to die from its venomous strikes, and the child stolen away by unknown agents on the night of its birth.

**Lead (Aranos): Gram Grey.** The elder statesman of the group, Grey is a human with a penchant for fine liquor and young men.

**2nd Lead (Balagrathol): Savino Emantra.** The charming agent on the inside who is working with the heroes throughout the events of Folio #12.

**Female Lead (Queen): 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.

**Other Parts:** There are up to ten other speaking roles including councilors, the grand vizier, the king's best friend Lorgo of Ulandm, handmaidens, etc.

On the 5th Day, the Five Star Theater performance is entitled The Seduction and features Ylissa's understudy, Vivica, dressed as a priestess of Saint Shay and getting ravaged by her 'husband' Saint Colin who is played by Drak Malish. The show begins with two female dancers erotically moving about a seated Saint Colin, then going into the crowd to entice the patrons. Once the tension is raised, Saint Shay will appear, and the long process of a sex act will take place between the two lasting close to thirty minutes as a single minstrel plays a slow rhythm on a drum and intoxicating smoke is filtered into the hall.

**Lead: Drak Malish.** A heavy-set jai-ruk, Drak runs the inner workings of The Grand with a toothy smile and a strong hand.

**Female Lead: Vivica of Roslof Keep.** The dark-haired understudy to Ylissa, she keeps to herself and is said to have magical abilities of her own.

**Dancer #1: Bella Aluvia.** A faux red-headed, this vivacious young woman loves strong wine and the company of more than one man in her bed at a time.

**Dancer #2: Ilan of Ketton.** The yang to her partner Bella's yin, Ilan has deep brown hair that falls in long lazy curls and often has been seen in the company of female dancers in the wee hours of the morning.

**Drummer: Brama Lush.** An elderly kin bard, his best days are far behind him, but his love of rhythm still remains as strong as his connection to the earth.

**Smoke Charmer: Kovo of Zimbolay.** Dark and brooding, this smoke magician is also an apothecary for a small range of fired and smoked drugs in The Grand.

## Running Combat

Combat within this mini-adventure is very limited. The purpose is to act as agents, infiltrate the production, find the mole, and somehow make it impossible for her to report back to the Paladins of Amanda with any hard evidence. Stealth, persuasion, and certainly charming magic will be of the most use.

## Telling the Story

As with all the Taux Trilogy adventures, the primary ingredient to the adventure is in the telling of the tale. You will need to develop the NPCs, bring a sense of reality to the performance, and place the characters inside the scene in a way that involves them all taking on specific tasks. Also, this is a very sexy mini-adventure, and if you play that up, there will no doubt be good laughs around the table during the session.

## DM Notes ‘The Mystery’

The characters must attempt to somehow infiltrate the Five Star performance on the 5th day of the festival while also questioning and investigating the NPCs involved. Two things should be noted. First, the Five Star performance must go on during the evening of the 5th night, so even if the players get very lucky and discover Vivica is the church’s agent, they will have to let her perform before dealing with her and her bodyguard. Second, it should be made clear to them that if the Five Star performance doesn’t happen, The Grand is in jeopardy nonetheless because of the high level Taux politicians who will be turned away on a night they are expecting great things. Otherwise, the adventure should take place during the night of the performance with the heroes watching things as they can, and eventually seeing Vivica slip away with Balmaric for the final meeting with the Paladins of Amanda.

## Setup from Folio #12

To involve the characters in the events unfolding within this mini-adventure you’ll have to once again lean on the intelligence gathered by Savino. He will come to a character on the 4th day and reveal the existence of the Five Star Theater (which likely will already be known by the characters, but nonetheless he will relate it again). He will drop the new ‘bomb’, however, that an agent of the Church of Amanda has been sent to The Grand for the purpose of finding out the details of these illicit productions so that the paladins can shut

the entire enterprise down. Although this is not in the current contract of the characters, a raid and closure will surely derail their own plans, and thus the new agent must be stopped before delivering information back to the church.

*‘We have a problem, my friends. It seems that the damnable ‘bitch knights’ of Amanda have gotten wind of an illicit production that goes on behind the scenes here at The Grand. They are supposedly sending an agent, or already have compromised a crew member, who will infiltrate the performance tomorrow night. If that agent reports what occurs, they will raid The Grand and shut it down, spoiling our own operation here. Currently, I’ve got far too much on my plate with my role in The King and Serpent, as well as other events outside The Grand I can’t speak on, so that falls to you to see this agent stopped before they can report.’*

## Day Five

*‘The slumber of The Grand awakens to the call of another festival day in Taux. Work begins anew, each member of the Thunderstone Crew taking up the cause of making The Grand the talk of the town.’*

### 1.

#### The Dancers

**Bella and Ilan are sitting in their shared dressing area, Ilan penning something on a piece of parchment as Bella deftly runs a razor over her left leg, a pan of water and scented soap at her feet.**

These two ladies are paid a gold jaguar per Five Star performance, so they will not readily give up the gig to an outsider. They also aren’t



particularly reasonable or charitable, so the ‘taking one for the team’ type approach isn’t going to motivate them either. When together, they are particularly intractable, gaining a +2 to all saving throws versus charms, as well as Wisdom saving throws. Over the course of the day, they do go their separate ways on a number of occasions: to rehearsals and performances of The King and the Serpent, for example.

## 2.

### **The Smoke Charmer**

**Slim and dark as a basalt pillar, Kovo has made a home for himself and his aromatic craft in the lower dressing area of The Grand. He sits atop a crate of incense sticks amid various collections of dried leaves and other organic fare, a massive hookah on the floor to his feet.**

Kovo takes his craft very seriously and will not allow others to become involved in what he calls ‘shaping the denizens of the Realm of Ash’. His thick Zimbolay accent also makes it very difficult to communicate with him (Intelligence check after each question to understand his answer).

## 3.

### **The Drummer**

**Brama Lush is a heavyset kin with tattered ears and close set eyes that have lost their luster. He sways constantly with some inner beat, his knob-knuckled fingers playing out a rhythm on his**

**thighs as he sits in the darkness of a small dressing cubical.**

Brama is a very old kin, his best days long behind him. He has spent the bulk of his life with humanity, his return to his people one of the unfortunate tales of defeat at the hands of a stronger kin-sire and thus the fate of never procreating weighing heavily on his shoulders. Nearly blind, he keeps to himself, living a kind of fantasy life within the music he creates. His echolocation senses have become attuned to the drumming, and with it he can shape things only he can ‘see’, which has become a kind of magic to him. Performing at the Five Star Theater gives him the ability to freely create this magical imagery and is one of the only things left that brings him any solace. Giving up such a performance will not be easy for him, but he loves The Grand and can be persuaded if there is a proper drummer among the heroes who can take his place. If not, he will become iron-hard in his ability to be moved.

## 4.

### **The Guest List**

**Masked and cloaked, the patrons of the Five Star performances always attend in duos or trios. They are said to be the who’s who of Taux’s elite, paying for a private viewing seat in the Five Star with gold.**



Using this angle would be an interesting tactic by the players if they try to impersonate someone who actually takes in the performance. There isn't really a guest list, but a password (tonight's password is Ghosts of Taux) is required by security to gain entrance, and the guests must provide a bag with twenty-five gold jaguars per attendee (so typically 50 jaguars per couple). The latter part would likely be the hardest for the players to overcome, and certainly they wouldn't get their money back. Still, it might be possible to waylay a couple coming to the event, but anyone attending a Five Star performance will have at least two guards that provide escort to The Grand and then wait somewhere in the shadows outside.

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

### **TREASURE**

12 COPPER COINS, 7 SILVER COATLS

2 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.)]

## **5.**

### **The Wild Card**

Balmaric the Greater has the look of the lost. His position as underchief to The Grand's head of security is worn

**like a badge of honor on his dour face, especially tonight as he watches over Vivica before she takes the stage.**

If the heroes decide for some reason they could replace Vivica in the performance, they'd have to deal with her protector, Balmaric the Greater. He is a man without a past, skilled with a spear he uses both as a staff and a piercing weapon (depending on his mood), and takes his job very, very seriously. As long as he is around, no one will be allowed near Vivica.

1 Mercenary (Balmaric) [AC 5, HD 10+10, HP 70, #AT 2/1 (+4 to hit), D 1-6+5]

### **TREASURE**

SPEAR +2

1 Mercenary (Balmaric) [AC 15, HD 10d8+20, HP 65, Initiative +5, #AT 2, Hit +7, Dam Spear 8 (1d6+4), Multiattack, Parry (+2 AC against one attack)]

## **6.**

### **The Security**

Two large mercenaries, one human and one jai-ruk, stand guard at the rear door accepting only those with payment and password. Another mercenary is stationed in the hall behind the north entry to the open theater just in case something goes awry during the performance.

When dealing with security in The Grand, one must be careful. They are a tight-knit group and only accept orders from the director. Compromising one of them will likely take a magical charm, and if that is used, beware if the effect ever wears off!

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

## TREASURE

NONE

3 Mercenaries [AC 16, HD 6d8+6, HP 30, Initiative +3, #AT 2, Hit +4, Dam shortsword (1d6+2), Pack Tactics (Mercenaries are at advantage if attacking with allies within 5 feet.)]

### 7.

#### The Curtain Goes Up

Dancing is nothing new to Taux, no matter how exotic and explicit it may be; the same goes for acts of prostitution. What happens behind the closed doors of the Silk Purse, however, and what plays out on a stage for all to see, especially if it concerns blasphemy against an ordained Saint, are two distinctly different things in the eyes of Taux's Council of Law.

Though certainly the act of impersonating a Saint during a sex act is something that would cause the Paladins of Amanda to stir, the real reason for their presence here is at the bequest

of the Merchant's Guild (manipulating their desire to right all wrongs). Licensing for such events, especially those that are heavily taxed like prostitution, is something closely watched by the Merchant's Guild. These Five Star performances are highly profitable under-the-table dealings, and for the Guild, that can no longer be tolerated. When the performance begins, all patrons will be in place, and it will be up to the heroes to discern the identity of the church's agent before it ends and everyone goes their separate ways.

### 8.

#### The Church's Agent

Raven-haired and beautiful, Vivica of Roslof Keep tends to keep to herself. Most members of the Thunderstone Crew see her for what she is, a poor actress but a fantastic purveyor of sex.

What all in the Thunderstone Crew don't know, however, is just how badly Vivica wanted to be The Grand's female lead. She came to Taux, joined the Thunderstone Crew, and did her time in unspeakable ways, but when it was her turn for promotion, she was passed up for the highborn Ylissa. This was the straw that broke the camel's back, so to speak, and she devised a plan to report the under-the-table profits of The Grand to the Merchant's Guild. Once the performance is over, she intends to slip away to report, under magical oath using lie detecting magic, that she was cast into a role of Saint Shay and savaged



by members of the Thunderstone Crew as they secretly profiteered on the exchange. Once done, she is to receive a large payment from the Merchant's Guild and then flee the city by ship. She has seduced Balmaric the Greater during the past weeks, and he has become her accomplice in this plot, and will defend her with his life.

Remembering the clues laid out in Folio #12 for the 5th Day, the following can be added to the content at the Sherlock level.

## Actor

### **Q-Easy:**

**Q-Moderate:** Vivica of the Daerns is not at The Grand during any day performance, 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 stagehand 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:** After exiting the secret temple, she leaves under disguise for a final meeting with an agent of the Merchant's Guild and a Paladin of Saint Amanda. Note: This meeting, and its participants, can only be discovered if she is tailed by someone.

Once confronted, likely outside The Grand and with her lover/bodyguard in tow, she will not go down easily. However, if Balmaric is defeated and she

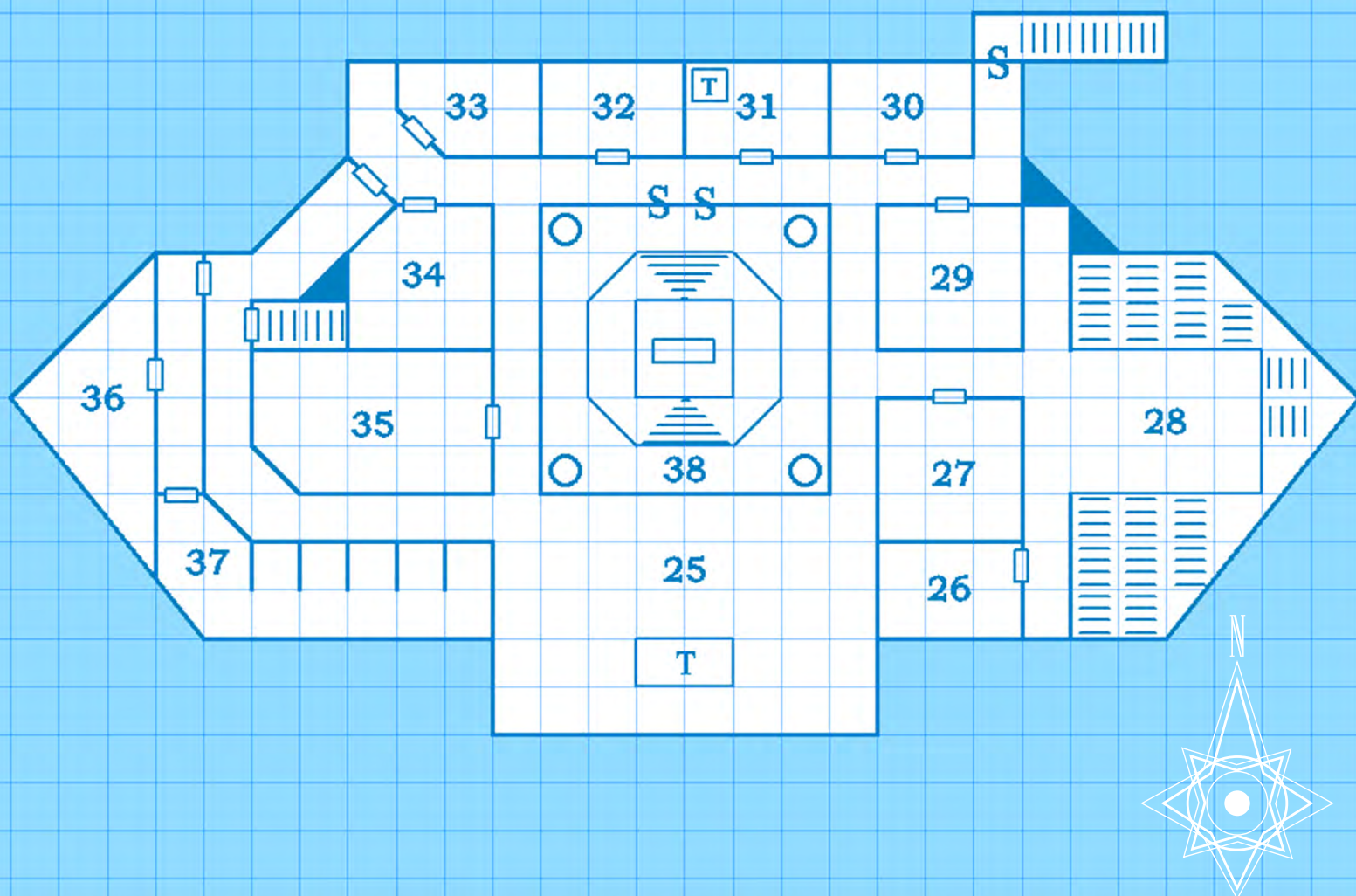
is wounded, she will throw herself on the mercy of the heroes, telling a story of abuse and woe, hoping they will let her go so she might flee the city with her life. She will make a vow to Saint Shay to tell no one of the events at The Grand and leave Taux that very night, and as her deity is Lawful, she is to be trusted in at least that much, but her eventual release is completely up to the heroes.

Vivica of Roslof Keep [AC 8, HD 5, HP 30, #AT 1, D 1-6+3, Spells: 1st (5) Cure Light Wounds, Cause Light Wounds, Protection from Good (which she will raise at the first sign of trouble), Bless, Curse; 2nd (4) Hold Person, Silence 15' Radius, Spiritual Hammer (it will form as a cat of nine tails), Chant]

## TREASURE

**+3 LADY'S WAND** (A SLIM WAND OF WOOD THAT STRIKES AS A CUDGEL), **HOLY SYMBOL**, **RING OF PROTECTION +1**, **20 COPPER COINS**, **54 SILVER COATLS**, **8 GOLD JAGUARS**

**Vivica of Roslof Keep** [AC 13, HD 5d8, HP 40, Initiative +3, #AT 1, Hit +8, Dam Cudgel 8 (1d6+5), Spellcasting (DC 14 saves and +6 to hit), Channel Divinity (1/rest), War Domain (Divine Favor), **Spells: Cantrips (at will) Sacred Flame, Dark, Resistance, Spare the Dying; 1st (4 Sots) Cure Wounds, Inflict Wounds, Shield of Faith, Bless; 2nd (3 Slots) Aid, Hold Person, Silence; 3rd (2 Slots) Dispel Magic, Bestow Curse**]



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