

THE FOLIO

Scott Taylor

The Cities of Sorcery

This fully compiled double trilogy is compatible with 1E and 5E mechanics and will take characters through compelling scenarios in two incredible fantasy cities.



For beginners and experts, players and DMs, this book provides all a gaming group needs to run the complete Valoria Trilogy and Taux Trilogy, including new monsters, dungeons, side-adventures, and more. Come join the action in these two mysterious and deadly city campaigns.

THE FOLIO

The Cities of Sorcery

by Scott Taylor

INTRODUCTION: What are The Cities of Sorcery? Well, to me, they are the amalgamation of a century of pulp writing from the likes of Fritz Leiber, Edgar Rice Burroughs, and of course Robert E. Howard. This means they are also part of a shared world, because the genre of Swords & Sorcery is if nothing else built on stealing setting pieces from great minds, or in the case of Thieves' World and Sanctuary, letting authors play in each other's creative vision first hand.

When I sat down to detail what I wanted to accomplish with The Folio in 2016, I decided instead of running a full six part mega-campaign, I'd break the year into two trilogies. However, I still wanted a coherent theme to the year, and so I settled on moving out of the standardized dungeon crawl into the aspects of city campaigning. When I was approached by Stefan Pokorny of Dwarven Forge and given the ability to work within his city setting of Valoria, I knew that serendipity was playing her hand. Coupling the Gygaxian RPG cityscape of Valoria with my own shared world anthology setting of Taux created the perfect gateway into what I was looking to do over the course of the year.

So today, after a year of hard work, I'm incredibly proud to be able to bring you both of these trilogies, complete with all the extra goodies from various stretch goals and campaigns, into a single volume. Both are diverse representations of the city RPG experience, from ground up adventuring in a hard-scrabble neighborhood to more refined storytelling adventures in the politics that move the world. It's my hope that you enjoy these as much as I have, and that your players find countless hours of adventure within the settings.

Scott Taylor



Part 2 of the
Hidden Valoria
Campaign
DE2 The Lost
Apprentice
New Monster:
Black Eyes
Gazetteer:
The Gangs of the Patina
Adventure for Levels 3-5
in both
1E & 5E formats!



#11

Part 1 of the
Adventures from
The Emerald
Serpent Campaign

AT1 The
Subtle Revolt
New Monster:
Bender Surrogate

Gazetteer NR7
The City of Taux
An Adventure for Levels
5-7 in both
1E & 5E Format



#13

1E & 5E
COMPATIBLE

Part 3 of the
Adventures from the
Emerald Serpent
Campaign

AT3 Playing Down the
Dawns
New Monster:
Dire Lowl

Gazetteer NR9
The Useless of the
Three Great Schools
An Adventure for Levels
6-8 in both
1E & 5E Format



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NAMELESS
REALMS

THE
NAMELESS
REALMS

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The Cities of Sorcery

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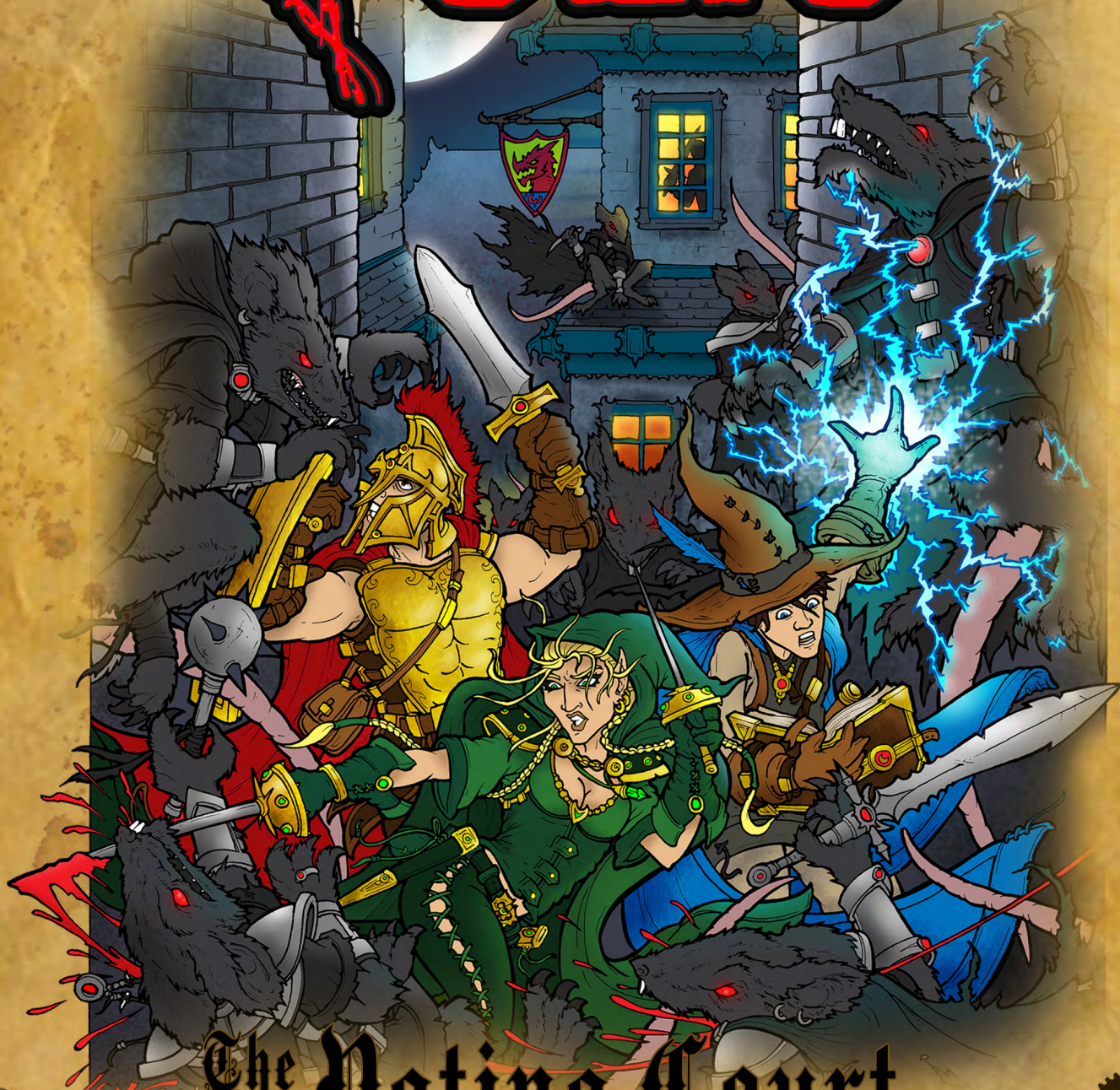
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Dedication

I'd like to dedicate this volume to all the years of gaming that went into it. That may sound odd, but it's really about all the players, rule books, fiction, movies, and games that laid the groundwork for me to be able to work in this genre. Without the countless others working in fantasy, none of this would be possible.

I'd also like to give a special shout out to Stefan Pokorny, who allowed me into his fabled city to mess up his maps and make things that his terrain designers got headaches over. You sir, are an inspiration and a good sport!

THE FOLIO



The Patina Court

FOLIO MODULE OF 1

An Adventure for Characters Levels 1–3

by Scott Taylor





Part One

The Hidden Valoria Campaign An Adventure for Characters Levels 1-3

The Patina Court, fallen neighborhood within the greater metropolis of Valoria. Once the home to many proud practitioners of the arcane, the copper roofs have now turned green and the magic has fled. Weathered signs still proclaim wares to be had, and downtrodden folk nonetheless walk the shadowed streets.

The Troubled Crypt



The Rancid Cellar



Brawl Club



The Alienist



Odin's Way



- A. The Fallen Warlock Hostel
- B. The Rancid Cauldron
- C. Murtel's Mortuary
- D. Abrella of the Third Eye
- E. House of Sigils
- F. The Helicrium Bathhouse
- G. House of Flying Daggers
- H. Isildred of Golden Sylph
- I. Prometheus Soup Kitchen
- J. Boat Maker
- K. Shoe Cobbler
- L. The Alienist Tower

The Patina Court

Main Street

Folio Module DF1

The Patina Court

An Adventure for Characters

Levels 1–3

Vol. 1

Mythras City of Valoria
Gazetteer

Introduction

Mythras Sandbox:

How can I not be excited today to get my first opportunity to present a joint venture between Dwarven Forge and Art of the Genre? Well, honestly it would be impossible, especially since I get to play in their sandbox for a bit! This union of adventure and terrain came about in the spring of 2015 after Stefan at Dwarven Forge saw what we were doing with The Folio series and approached us about the possibility of exploring his world of Mythras. I'll tell you—I jumped at the chance because I know full well that Stefan is an avid gamer, and getting a chance to dive into his homebrew world and add my own wrinkles was just too good to pass up. So, after more than half a year of development, I present to you The Patina Court, the first in a trilogy of adventures that will flesh out a little corner of the epic Mythras city of Valoria. Taking pieces from Fritz Lieber, Robert E. Howard, Michael Moorcock, and even a touch of H. P. Lovecraft, I've melded Stefan's vision of his fabulous city with what I think best represents the flavor all of you are after. Together, we've blended aspects of Dwarven Forge terrain with fast swords & sorcery adventuring, as well as unmatched classic fantasy art, to give you this unique look into Valoria. I hope you all enjoy what we've created, and remember, this is just a guidebook, not gospel, so feel free to change, adapt, and reuse in your own campaigns anything you enjoy in these pages.

So is the story of the Patina Court. Once a proud neighborhood tucked north of Main Street and west of Odin's Way, it has become a forgotten footnote in the annals of Valoria's lore.

Two centuries ago, when the nobility were building estates along Basilisk Lane in the North Ward, a collection of magically adept and independent minded citizens moved from the Wizard's Knoll to form their own elite neighborhood in direct competition with the moneyed markets of Basilisk.

Using gold gained from their varied arcane services, they built large homes and decorated their eaves with bronze imported from the gnomes of Urn. With passing years, the regal bronze flashing took on a deep green patina, and so the name of the neighborhood was born, the Patina Court.

Magic, like life itself, is cyclical, and so attrition slowly wore away on those of the Patina. Unlike mundane noble families bent on political marriage and heredity, the magic practitioners of the Patina were loners, eccentrics, and in many social graces backwards. They cared more for intellectual study than raising children, and so within several generations the grand experiment of the Patina lost its luster just as the gnomish bronze.

As the magic faded from the Patina, the grand houses were closed, and foot traffic from Valoria's citizens, once heavy seeking potions, elixirs, spells, and enchantments, died away as well. The Patina darkened and was all but forgotten.

Decades passed and the homes still stood as stark reminders of pride, wealth, and even the magic of its creators as the structures rarely decayed as though standing vigil for their long lost masters.

Today, the Patina is little more than a squatter's paradise, a place where many without hope can find some shelter or those wishing to get lost can disappear. There is no reason to come here, save for those passed from this world, as Murtel's Mortuary services corpses for entombment into crypts within the base of the Wizard's Knoll on the Patina's northern border.

Petty gangs hide amid the old estates, and the Beggar's Guild holds one such structure as its Guild House, although no registry exists for the union. The Fallen Warlock Hostel can also be found here, its patrons an eclectic mix of personalities, races, and ages without purses worthy of an inn like the Gracious Arms along the Main.



Campaign Background

The Patina Court:

Valoria is a vast and dynamic city of more than 50,000 inhabitants. Its districts are unique, varied, and play integral roles in its vibrant ecology. However, that isn't to say that every block inside its walls is worthy of record. Each street is like a wave in a vast ocean caught in a single moment in time. Some are at a high point, curling in the break, and raise the city's esteem. Others have spent their energy on a sandy shore, now bleeding away into depths until they will perhaps rise again or fade into antiquity.

Certainly other folks still call the Patina Court home, from the decrepit Relgar's Bath House to Alasia the Golden Astronomer, last of the magically adept in residence, but even then, only the locals have knowledge or care concerning them, and they draw almost no interest south of Main.

Truly, this isn't a place you would choose to visit unless you have no other options, are deceased, or are a believer in child's tales of magical treasures hidden beneath the foundations of the ancient homes.



Places of Interest

The Fallen Warlock Hostel:

Situated two streets back from the Main, and farther east than the famed Gracious Arms Inn, this building has become home to an eclectic mix of downtrodden and aspiring pilgrims. Most have recently moved to Valoria, but there are others who have called their small room in the hostel home for several years. Run by an old city guardsman named Alshock the Thrifty, this gruff man acquired the hostel under mysterious means, and many locals speak of his secret deals with gangs and a lost illicit goods bust that lined his purse before his retirement. Whatever the case, Alshock runs a tight ship, is never without a well-worn cudgel, and accepts payments for rooms on the first of each month, otherwise you and your things will land roughly on the cobbles by the 2nd.

Residents of Note:

Brimbold Elderman the Lark

Brimbold is a young minstrel from parts unknown who fancies himself a bard. He does play the lute, has a fair voice, and knows three epic poems, but otherwise his greatest passion is charming local ladies for free meals and trinkets he can fence for coin to pay for his room.

Estaban Moncrief of the White Palm

As dark as polished slate and tattooed with half a hundred odd sigils, Estaban is a healer who deals in mundane methodology rather than the magical piety of godly blessings. He will often be found at the Rancid Cauldron trading remedies and small treatments of minor ailments for drink. Once imbued with spirits, he has been known to spin tales of deep deserts, wild fire demons, and knights who fly about the cloudless skies on winged horses.

Lanka the Shade

Lanka is a half-orc, but the heritage of what she claims as her elven father (again, hard to believe) has tempered her orcish side to the point some folks consider her attractive, if in an odd way. She is well-versed in both the elven tongue and orc speech, and has contacts with the orcish clans that dwell outside the walls of Valoria. She makes coin as a scout, often straying from the hostel for weeks at a time, but has a room paid three months in advance so she never loses it. Some locals say she not only knows the land around the city, but more importantly the sewers and catacombs beneath.

Proprias the Learned

A broken-shouldered and thin-bearded dwarf, Proprias is on the last of his days, or so folks have been saying for a full generation, and yet he lives on. Local lore speaks of Proprias as one of the dwarves that helped dig tombs into the Wizard's Knoll on the northern border of the Patina, and he is often seen making the commute to Murtel's Mortuary where he writes eulogies for even the most lowly of the dead. Whatever the case, there is no doubt that Proprias has lived through a great deal of the city's history.

Cano, Rogue of the Scarf

Cano keeps to himself, a wiry human with broad shoulders and fingers long enough to palm a full-ripe melon. No one can say they have ever seen his face, the man always wearing a black scarf, and if he has a job, none can speak of that either. In truth, Cano lost his family to gang violence three seasons ago and now takes to the Patina at night seeking to do justice for those who cannot. What he takes from his victims pays for his room and board, and what he doesn't use is donated to the Prometheus Soup Kitchen.

The Rancid Cauldron:

Where the Gracious Arms serves those with standing along the Main, the Rancid Cauldron is home to the less fortunate of the Patina. Well off the map, this local dive serves up cast-off food



from the Gracious Arms (purchased expired and spoiled goods in a backdoor type deal), mostly by boiling it into thick stews. Many a guest has found themselves attached to a privy after a night of stew and spoiled beer, but nonetheless, the fare is cheap and hot, giving those who don't wish to make their own meals a place to gather and talk about daily events.

Murtel's Mortuary:

Certainly the most profitable business run in the Patina, and probably the city (death just never goes out of style), Murtel's has been serving the dead of Valoria for over three hundred years. The Mortuary most often uses its crematorium for customers, but those with more wealth have been known to be interred into Murtel's catacombs, a place marketed as sanctified by both Osiris and Hades. There are also several aboveground crypts located on the slopes of Wizard's Knoll where wealthy aristocrats have purchased family tombs, all maintained by the Murtel holdings. Currently run by Brigit Murtel, a young woman of no more than thirty winters, she inherited the business from her older brother who was lost at sea while investigating exotic woods and metals in Urn.

Abrella of the Third Eye:

There is a fortune teller of some renown in the Patina, and her shop 'Of the Third Eye' is often the destination for those seeking portents about their future. Most times these are troubled souls looking to discover cheating spouses or unlawful business partners, but lovers, dreamers, entrepreneurs, and even gang members sometimes come looking for answers. Whether Abrella actually has any true divination skills is highly debated, but she does have a well-established network of snitches, spies, and eavesdroppers that she maintains with copper coins, and most patrons would agree Abrella's second reading is always much more interesting and specific than her first.

House of Sigils:

Babar Ikala, a former sailor of the Golden Lake, runs a small tattoo parlor in the Patina just off the Main. It is a favorite hangout for gangs, so much so that each specific gang has its own devoted day of the week to see Babar; otherwise, bloodshed is sure to ensue. The man has real talent, and no design is too large or small, folks of the Patina swearing that Babar's skill comes from a sea witch he bedded long ago. Either that or he's seen most of the bizarre creatures on his journeys that patrons ask him to place on their skin.

The Helicrium Bathhouse:

Located on the north side of the Patina, this old bathhouse once served as a congregating point for the magically adept of the neighborhood. Some whisper that the magic of the former patrons still keeps the waters fresh and warm, as no hot spring rises in the Patina. Whatever the case, the place has long since run down, even if the water is still good, and now it is little more than a front for the Teller Gang to run an underground brothel. The Flesh Guild requires costly permits for such activities in the city, but here, away from the public eye, young women can be found to provide 'private baths' for patrons if the coin is right.

House of Flying Daggers:

Ling Tuo, a man of foreign ancestry and a way with working metal, runs what many claim is the finest dagger shop in Valoria from a small shop deep in the Patina. As open-carry swords are frowned upon by the city watch, most citizens concerned about personal protection carry a sling-blade or dirk, and Tuo has no shortage of short blades for those looking to conceal a deadly weapon. His prices are high, especially for the Patina, but his wares often find resale in stalls and shops throughout the city, and more than one violent crime has been traced back to his doorstep.

Isildred of Golden Sylph:

Elves are always looked upon as otherworldly, and those of the Northern Forests of Mythras can sometimes be seen as akin to legend, but nonetheless, some do find their way into Valoria. Isildred is one of these, a female of the race. She has been in the Patina since its founding and is the last of the original builders to maintain a household. Her home, known to the locals as the White Spires, is meticulously maintained and provides a glimpse into the wealth the Patina once held. She is a known mage, and yet her devotion is not to fireballs and lightning bolts, but instead her time is bent studying the constellations as if seeking answers to some question no citizen of the human world has yet to ask. Known for her ageless beauty, Isildred typically takes a lover every half-century, producing a single child, and then raising it alone. Her children, some say there are over a dozen half-elves that call her mother, still come to visit her on occasion, but none have taken up permanent residence in the Patina.

Prometheus Soup Kitchen:

Seeing as the denizens of the Patina are the last rung of social class before tagged with a homeless moniker, most are in need of assistance, especially concerning food. Large families are prevalent here as contraception is unknown to most. To help combat hunger, the Temple of Prometheus, known by the locals as the Prometheus Soup Kitchen, opens its doors four days a week to the locals for free food. During these petty feasts, gang hatreds are put aside, family feuds left at home, and business squabbles forgotten. At no other time is the Patina more a community than on feast nights, and certainly Prometheus is the most venerated god among the people.



Dungeon Master Notes & Suggestions

1. Running the Patina

First off, all city campaigns must establish a 'feel'. Some might be more swords & sorcery, others regal high adventure, some dark fantasy, etc. In the case of Valoria, we get a standard Euro feeling mixed with the vestiges of Rome and Egypt, but the real need of the DM here is to set the tone for the Patina. What happens in the other neighborhoods or wards of the city isn't your concern, only the roughly eight blocks that encompass a world inside a world. When I wrote the Patina, I was leaning heavily on the downtrodden, the ruined magic, and the eccentric folk who still call these buildings home. Like the Roslof Keep campaign before it, Patina Court is meant to actually mean something to these players, and it falls on the DM to create relationships within the network of pre-built NPCs, and those of your own creation, that will galvanize the players into true members of 'the court'. This is the challenge I give to you.

2. Running the Mystery

The overarching arc for Folio #8 will be the mystery of the black eyes, a race of magically created raccoon people who have been living in the shadows for more than a hundred years. They were created (like Smurfs!) by a magic-user of the Patina for companionship, but now have established their own micro-society that revolves around the work of their long-dead creator. Whenever something odd happens in the Patina, folks often are heard murmuring, 'It was them that did it,' meaning the black eyes. Still, folk don't like to talk about the creatures, and many insist they are completely fabricated by gangs to deflect guilt for petty crimes. Whatever the case, the players will have moments when 'them' are going to be mentioned, and the pursuit of the final truth will help propel the party into the events of Folio #9.

3. The Hostel & the NPCs

It is my suggestion that players begin play as independent entities, who after various runs of bad luck, have all come to call the Fallen Warlock Hostel home, at least temporarily. There are great and helpful NPCs already in house, and it makes a great meeting point (stay away from the dreaded and overplayed, 'okay, you are all at a tavern' campaign opening!) for early scenarios. Each player should be in need of coin, as the city isn't cheap, so use that as your leverage point.

4. Hints of the Black Eyes

The black eyes are the cause of limited chaos inside the Patina, but more recently their thefts have become more brazen (namely since the Teller Gang has taken something the black eyes need to maintain control of their master's other creation, the hopping brains. This puts the black eyes directly in conflict with the Tellers, and Rexa, leader of the Tellers, believes that the black eyes are the gatekeepers to riches beyond the norm, now hidden secretly beneath the streets of the Patina.

In the end, the players will likely side with the black eyes, thus putting them firmly in the crosshairs of the Tellers as each races for the ultimate prize found in Folio #10.

5. Interactions with the Teller Gang

This is another key to this adventure. The DM should be using the Teller Gang as a foil to place the players firmly in one camp and the Tellers in the other. Assuming you manage to get the players vested in the health and safety of the Patina, then utilizing low level Teller 'thugs' to rough up friends of the players, thus prompting reprisals, should ensure not only that the players become 'benefactors' of the Patina, but also that they will have to watch their backs whenever



they travel. This will lead to a greater sense of dread or tension, something that can be utilized by you as the DM to add depth to the trilogy. Also, the lower ranking Tellers are uneducated and slow, quick to act and rarely with concepts of consequence. It is never an issue to sacrifice Tellers to the altar of 'making the players feel tough' as there are other dangers in the Patina that should be the true challenge, at least in Folio #8.

Overall Story Arcs & Threads

Adventure Seed: Players will be in full introduction mode during this adventure. First they must establish a base of operations in the Patina (probably the Hostel), then they will need to find some type of gainful employment which should lead to the scenarios 'The Rancid Cellar' and 'The Troubled Crypt'. Once they've gotten a name for themselves, they will catch wind of several disappearances within the Patina, and that some blame a mysterious creature, or creatures, known as 'black eyes'. Following leads, and also running afoul of the Teller Gang, who is also seeking these creatures, the players will embark on the final scenario 'The Alienist'.

Character Money

Valoria has the standard fantasy type coins, although there are some setting distinct names in the mix. That said, one thing I'd like to make clear to DMs is that characters (like the Conan RPG) should start the game broke. Any money not spent on equipment is removed from play, and all characters are allotted two gold pieces each. This will limit their ability to flee the Patina Court, and most likely stick them in the hostel, which is a great place to begin things. Costs of goods within the Patina are as follows, just so folks can keep track and know what it takes to 'move up' in the world.

Rooms:

Gracious Arms – 2 GP per night for Private Room,
1 GP for Common Room.

Broken Warlock Hostel – 1 GP per week for Private Room,
5 SP per week for Commons.

Meals:

Gracious Arms

– Upwards of 2 GP per meal.

Rancid Cauldron – 1 EP for stew, 1 SP for stew and bread,
2 SP for stew/bread/stale beer

Also, there isn't a massive amount of monetary treasure in this adventure. That is by design to keep the characters 'lean and mean' as they must really work to gain wealth and position inside the Patina.

The Teller Gang:

Operating as the most powerful gang in the Patina, the Tellers are run by a young fallen noble from the North Ward named Notorus Rexa. He has used his charisma and education to win over the former gang of Bryce Teller (killed by Rexa in a duel with poisoned blade), and now fancies himself 'The Lord of the Patina Court'.

The Tellers now have their hands in many pies, from prostitution at the Helicrium Bathhouse to extortion, petty theft, and gambling, all out of the sight of the city's various guilds. Rexa is smart enough to keep his business interests profitable but not overt, and he's also got a good network of informants working in the Patina that can apprise him of anyone who is a serious threat to his power, i.e., the players, or so he fears.

All told, the Tellers have more than thirty members, most below 3rd level, the bulk being of thief or fighter classes. Rexa is a 5th level fighter with a pendant for poisoned blades.

New Monster:

Hopping Brain

Lawful Evil

Frequency: Very Rare

No. Appearing: 2–20

Armor Class: 5

HD: 3

Move: 12"

No. of Attacks: 1

Damage/Attack: 1–6

Special Attacks: Leap Attack

Special Defense: NIL

Magic Resistance: Standard

Intelligence: Very

Size: M

Psionic Ability: NIL

% in lair: 15%

Treasure Type: D



Spring Attack: These creatures have the ability to leap at a target, bite, and then leap away, precluding reprisal from melee attacks against them. To accomplish this, the hopping brains must win the initiative. If successful, they can only be attacked by ranged attacks for that round as they leap around the area hissing and biting, but never staying in one place long enough to approach.

Each 'pod' of hopping brains will have a central 'Leader Brain' who has increased HD (to 8), and also have a 'Frenzy' attack which adds +2 hit and damage if the Leader Brain is on the property of its master at the time of attack.

Hopping Brains [AC 15, Speed 30', HD 3d8+6, HP 16, Init: +2, #AT 1, Hit +5, Dam Bite 4 (1d6+1), Spring Attack (can attack and jump away if they hold the initiative, disallowing melee reprisals by their victim)]

Like the black eyes, these creatures are creations of the famed enchanter Kalium Rosa. Where the black eyes were created as companions, the hopping brains were more the guard dogs of the mage's various treasures. However, once Rosa passed from this plane, the black eyes were forced to take over stewardship of the hopping brains. Thankfully, Rosa created an enchanted whistle that can subdue the creatures, putting them into a docile state. After the Teller Gang murdered the black eye who held the whistle and took the artifact, the hopping brains have awoken and begun to systematically hunt within the Patina at night.

Little more than a large 'brain-like' globe attached to two skinny legs and armed with a slaving maw, the hopping brains are excellent hunters. They can leap great distances, communicate via limited telepathy, and use a form of echo-location to draw a picture of their environment. This talent means that hopping brains are preceded by disturbing and regular 'clicks', so think of their attacks kind of like the foreboding music in Jaws...

DF1: The Patina Court

The adventure, *The Patina Court*, is broken down into three scenarios to introduce low level characters into the trilogy. Each scenario features a small series of encounters built around a Dwarven Forge dungeon, created for this particular campaign, using various sets offered by the company. Although dedicated to Dwarven Forge terrain, non-miniature using players will have access to both OSR 'Blue' maps and fully rendered 3D maps, so that ease of play is not impacted. The bulk of this adventure lies in the introduction of the players to the Patina Court as detailed in the Gazetteer. DMs running the adventure should familiarize themselves with the colorful tapestry of personalities and locations the players will encounter, and define the players' backstories of how they came to the Patina and what motivations they have for the future.

Adventure Seed

Players will be in full introduction mode during this adventure. First they must establish a base of operations in the Patina (probably the hostel), then they will need to find some type of gainful employment which should lead to the scenarios 'The Rancid Cellar' and 'The Troubled Crypt'. Once they've gotten a name for themselves, they will catch wind of several disappearances within the Patina, and that some blame a mysterious creature, or creatures, known as 'black eyes'. Following leads and also running afoul of the Teller Gang, who is also seeking these creatures, the players will embark on the final scenario 'The Alienist'.

Scenario One: The Rancid Cellar

The Hook:

This micro adventure revolves around stolen foodstuffs in the cellar of the Rancid Cauldron. As Noxis Pike, the owner of the Cauldron, is a miser, he's not about to hire a real professional to handle the thefts (especially since he sent one of his servers, Nile Wash, down to investigate the issue, and he never returned). Noxis will happily provide the characters with a week's worth of meals at the Cauldron if they can take care of the problem for him.

The Chase:

Noxis can relate the following story — He bought the Rancid Caldron from a man nearly fifteen years before, and the fellow left it in a despicable condition (he will gesture around the tavern at this like he's showing off the Taj Mahal), not like you see her now. But more so than the main room, the upstairs, and even the kitchen, the cellar was the worst. It was so bad, in fact, that he decided just to leave it be, lock the door, and forget about it. Still, the area right at the bottom of the stairs was eventually cleared enough for his own 'overflow' storage. One of his servers went to retrieve some spices for the stew two days ago, but never returned. He's not sure if the guy just quit and he didn't see him leave or if he's still down there someplace. Whatever the case, he wants the mystery solved.

The Truth:

Noxis packed the cellar with his own junk and castoffs, so much so that over fifteen years he forgot everything he had down there until something reminded him of a couple of bottles of wine he'd acquired when he bought the place. He was convinced they were still down there, so he sent poor Nile Wash down to retrieve them. When he didn't return, the coward panicked and locked the door without a search. In reality, the trove of old foodstuffs and such has attracted the foraging elements of a colony of giant ants. They'd only acquired a couple of crates before encountering Nile and

killing him, but not before he managed to kill two drones. Now the colony is alerted, and have sent warrior ants to assist in the further retrieval of foods within the cellar.

The Dungeon

I've broken the cellar into three parts for the purposes of encounters. You'll see the zones on the map, and the encounters are below.

1.

Your light source bounces oddly off heaps and stacks of refuse, mostly rotting boxes and crates that fill what looks to be a good-sized chamber. From somewhere to your right, the sound of movement sounds among the trash.

A single bullet ant worker is within the trash making a search for viable food sources. Anyone approaching the pile will draw its attention and it will start 'hissing' (just watch the movie 'Them' if you want a good reference).

1 Giant Ant [AC 3, HD 2, HP 12, #AT 1, D 1-6, Bite]

TREASURE

None

1 Giant Ant [AC 17, HD 2d8+4, HP 12, #AT 1, Hit +2, Dam Bite 4 (1d4+2)]

2.

Almost inch by inch, you plow, pull, tumble, and climb farther back into the monstrosity that is the Rancid Cellar. At the first central stone pillar, a break appears in the trash, opening into a small cleared area where two more ants, as well as an even larger version, move from concealment to cast back your incursion into their territory.

1 Giant Ant [AC 3, HD 2, HP 12, #AT 1, D 1-6 (Bite)]

1 Giant Ant Warrior [AC 2, HD 4, HP 24, #AT 1, D 1-6 (Bite), Poison Sting (save versus poison or take an additional 1-10 damage)]

TREASURE

None

1 Giant Ant [AC 17, HD 2d8+4, HP 12, #AT 1, Hit +2, Dam Bite 4 (1d4+2)]

1 Giant Ant Warrior [AC 18, HD 4d8+6, HP 19, #AT 2, Hit +4, Dam Bite 5 (1d6+2), Target must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 9 (2d8) poison damage]

3.

Like an archeologist sifting through layers, you are taking a trip back through time with each step farther toward the back of the cellar. An old tower clock, a set of three extinct beehives, and an ornate bedboard all provide evidence to a better time for the Rancid Caldron. As you marvel at your finds, you note a spot of blood still tacky on the stone floor. It is only then that the now familiar hissing begins anew...

Three warrior ants (as big as a medium-sized dog) are moving from a large hole in the rear wall of the cellar. They will continue to hiss as they move to attack, and within 1d4 rounds, another two will appear (repeat this forever if need be). The only way to stop them is to collapse the hole or burn them out. Luckily, a successful Find Traps roll [**DC 13 Perception**] will show that a keg of high grade liquor (moonshine) is housed close to the hole. If ignited and rolled down, it will stop the invasion long enough for the party to fill the hole with viable, heavy debris that will put an end to the menace.

3 Giant Ant Warriors [AC 2, HD 4, HP 24, #AT 1, D 1-6 (Bite), Poison String (save versus poison or take an additional 1-10 damage)]

TREASURE

None



3 Giant Ant Warrior [AC 18, HD 4d8+6, HP 19, #AT 2, Hit +4, Dam Bite 5 (1d6+2), Target must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 9 (2d8) poison damage]

Scenario Two: The Troubled Crypt

The Hook:

Word will come trickling through the Patina that two grave diggers (actually 'internment specialists') have gone missing up at Murtel's Mortuary. Brigit Murtel, the hard-nosed operator of the mortuary is looking for some stalwart individuals that are willing to enter one of her many catacombs to see what is amiss, and discover what has befallen her employees. They crypts are not to be looted, but she will pay each party member a 5 gold piece 'bounty' for evidence of the fate of each grave digger (thus 10 GP per party member).

The Chase:

Brigit will tell the party all she can, that two of her internment specialists were sent to lay a client's bones to rest in Crypt 48 only to never return (are you getting a trend here?). She has decided that stronger measures are needed rather than closing Crypt 48 for good (too much space still left and the money loss would be worrisome). Not wanting to take any bad press by contacting the authorities, she has instead decided on the discreet route of hiring some locals to investigate the matter.

The Truth:

The Murtel family has had a side business for years, that being exporting magical goods and treasures interred with the dead. Although Brigit is unaware of these practices since she was forced into leadership before anyone let her in on the secret, she does suspect there have been illicit dealings in the past that have swollen the family's coffers. Very recently a crypt thing has come into possession of Crypt 48 and is utilizing it to create undead for some unforeseen reason.

The Dungeon

1. Entry

A metal vault door stands before you flanked by two pillars decorated with skulls. Ancient writing denotes something over the arch at the threshold, and a palpable sense of cold slithers out of the place.

Brigit will have provided a massive skeleton key to the crypt. The words atop the arch, if anyone has the ability via magic to read them, state, 'Resting place of the dead of Valoria, Crypt 48 of House Murtel, and Vault of the Ruloff family'.

2. God's Mouth

The door opens, hinges grinding slightly as a fine layer of ash drifts around your feet. Within, a large chamber is empty save for wall sconces, one that is empty, and one that holds an unlit torch. A single hall stretches into darkness before you.

There is nothing within the entry chamber, although the secret doors to Rooms 3 & 4 are just as you enter the hall to the rear of the crypt. Each secret door can be discovered on a 1 in 6 chance [DC 14 Perception].

3. Guard Chamber One

Within this small room are desecrated rags and the stench of necrotic gases.

An animated skeleton, now acting as a guard, lurks here and will come forth once the party is well passed the door. If the characters find the secret door upon passing, add the following line to the description above: A lone humanoid figure dressed in old rags stands at attention in the middle of the chamber, a rusted short blade in one hand.

A search, 1–2 in 6 [DC 12 Perception], will reveal a gold and pearl earring, fallen from a corpse at some point, that is worth 25 GP on the open market.

1 'Enhanced' Skeleton [AC 7, HD 3, HP 18, #AT 2, D 1–6/1–6, Two Claw Attacks!, ½ damage versus slashing/piercing weapons]

TREASURE

Gold & Pearl Earring

1 'Enhanced' Skeleton [AC 13, HD 4d8+6, HP 19, #AT 2, Hit +4, Dam Claws 5 (1d6+2), Multiattack, (Exp. 200)]

4. Guard Chamber Two

This small chamber stretches back from the main hall and is filled with slowly drifting cobweb strands that sway in the now disturbed air.

Now is the perfect time for a zombie apocalypse ‘jump scare’. I suggest jumping at and hissing toward the closest player to you! Two freshly animated zombies lie within the secret room, both are ‘fresh’, so they have a bit more anima than regular zombies.

2 ‘Fresh’ Zombie [AC 8, HD 2, HP 12, #AT 1, D 1–8, does get an initiative roll!]

TREASURE None

2 ‘Fresh’ Zombies [AC 10, HD 3d8+9, HP 22, #AT 1, Hit +3, Dam Fists 1 (1d6+1), Undead Fortitude (when reduced to 0 HP, it must make a Constitution saving throw of DC 5 + damage Taken. If made, the zombie is simply reduced to 1 HP.)]

5. Urn Resting Hall

Shelf upon shelf line the walls of this crooked chamber. Skulls and urns, many smashed and leaking the still swirling ashes of dead Valorians, lie atop the shelves while a carved stone pedestal has fallen to ruin west of the entry area. At the north, another metal door, this one also decorated with skulls, is set into the wall.

No enemies can be found here, but a search will reveal three dozen [6d12] or so silver coins amid the ash. These were meant to pay for passage in the afterlife, and one was placed in each urn.

The skeleton key provided by Brigit will also work with this door.

6. Skull Chamber

The open arch to this chamber reveals twin piles of bones on the floor, each lying to the side of a single skull pillar similar to the ones at the front entry. A prayer dais, set with a slowly guttering blue flame, casts oddly eerie light around the room.

Huddled as though beneath covers, five fully animated skeletons are beneath the bone piles. As long as the light on the dais (now taken over by the power of the crypt thing) is burning, the skeletons cannot be turned via clerical magic.

5 Skeletons [AC 7, HD 1, HP 6, #AT 1, D 1–6, ½ damage versus piercing and slashing weapons]

TREASURE Silver Coins

5 Skeletons [AC 13, HD 2d8+4, HP 13, #AT 1, Hit +4, Dam Claws 5 (1d6+2), Damage Vulnerability: bludgeoning]

7. Hall of Ashes

An open arch allows your light to drift into this crypt chamber that is empty save for full skeletons set into the walls, seven of them, and an oddly guttering blue flame upon a dais in the north wall of the room. One skeleton, closest to the dais, has a hand that rests on the pommel of an ancient blade. An inscription below his feet has been marked in the same language found at the archway to the tomb entry.

Once the party enters, the skeletons will fully animate and attack. The skeleton with the sword is no different than the others, save he attacks with the blade (1d8) instead of claws. The sword is a fake replaced years ago by Brigit’s ancestors, but the inscription reads ‘Magnus Ire Drake, Keeper of the Sunset Ulfberht’.

5 Skeletons [AC 7, HD 1, HP 6, #AT 1, D 1–6, ½ damage versus piercing and slashing weapons]

TREASURE None

5 Skeletons [AC 13, HD 2d8+4, HP 13, #AT 1, Hit +4, Dam Claws 5 (1d6+2), Damage Vulnerability: bludgeoning]



8. Crypt of the Keeper

The key clicks through a series of levers before the catch releases and the heavy door swings open. A pall of dread, like an icy wave, washes out and over you all as more of the blue glowing flame reveals an angled wall of skulls that precludes full vision of the chamber beyond.

Once past the wall, read the following: Two dais, both with blue flame, burn to the north and northeast of the chamber. Upon the western wall is a seated figure in heavy robes and a skull face. Beside the figure is a fully scarf-clad and bandaged warrior with a longsword still in its sheath, fine etchings are still visible along the leather scabbard.

The ‘warrior’ is actually a type of martial undead called a Son of Valus. It will serve the crypt thing that created it, attempting to destroy anyone who makes it past the crypt thing’s teleportation magic. Its blade is a +2 Longsword (+4 versus Lycanthropes) called WyrGrief and was summoned by the crypt thing from some other crypt within Murtel’s holdings.

The crypt thing has arrived here only to instill unrest and chaos upon the Murtel House and has collected no treasure, other than a bag of 47 silver pieces that lies on the ground near its feet.

As the only way to hurt the crypt thing is with magic, either spells or the blade the Son of Valus carries, it could be quite a feat for the party to take the thing down. Scenarios might mean multiple trips into the lair, or being teleported outside, and then rushing back in repeatedly until the thing can be destroyed. In all, it could be very comical if you wanted to take it that way as the DM. Crypt things never leave their crypt, and if a full twenty-four hours passes between attempts to destroy the crypt thing, it will create another 2d6 skeletons to help defend it, these being kept in Room 8 after the first encounter.

1 Crypt Thing [AC 3, HD 6, HP 36, #AT 1, D 1-8 (Double Claw swing), Teleport (all party members must make a saving throw versus spell or be teleported outside Crypt 48), requires a +1 or better weapon to hit]

TREASURE
47 silver pieces

1 Crypt Thing [AC 17, HD 6d8+18, HP 42, #AT 1, Hit +6, Dam Claws 7 (1d8+3), Teleportation Purge (DC 13 Wisdom saving throw targets in a twenty-foot radius or be teleported to the entrance of Crypt 48), Damage Immunity: non-magical weapons]

Again, all doors are locked, and must be picked or opened with the key from Secret Room One (3)!

1 Son of Valus [AC 4, HD 5, HP 30, #AT 1, D (1-8)+2, +2 Longsword, ½ damage versus slashing/piercing weapons]

TREASURE

Longsword +2/+4 versus were-creatures

1 Son of Valus [AC 16, HD 5d8+10, HP 30, #AT 2, Hit +7, Dam Longsword 6 (1d8+2), Multiattack]

Scenario Three: The Alienist

The Hook:

Continuing petty thefts around the Patina are growing troublesome, and when one of the characters (choose the wealthiest or a person who leaves some equipment behind, especially after a night out eating or drinking) comes back to the hostel room to find it pilfered, even the players will be up in arms. Although no local constabulary has stepped in, word around the local drinking holes is there must be a damn fine petty hoard stashed somewhere in the Patina with as much that has been stolen.

The Chase:

This will be the first real 'test' of what and who the characters have come to know in the Patina. I'd suggest Charisma checks for information acquisition [DC 13 Charisma] once players come up with who they want to talk to about these disappearances. Any successes will push the players closer to a location, the old block tower of Kalium Rosa. Although the wizard didn't build a fine house like so many others in the Patina, his tower is impressive and well-known, and no one dares enter it. Once the players have tabulated a total of four successes on their checks, they will get a confirmation from a source (DM's choice), that creatures known as black eyes are said to sneak in and out of the tower at night.

The Truth:

Burglaries are indeed 'up' in the Patina, but not because of the black eyes who typically just steal food. The Teller Gang has stepped up its operations now that its new leader is looking to increase his war chest. Certainly he has used the black eyes as scapegoats in his plans, but unbeknownst to him, one of his gang members actually stole something of extreme value from the black eyes recently. It was a whistle that helps control and soothe Kalium Rosa's other creation, the hopping brains. Since the black eyes have lost control of the hopping brains, they have fled Rosa's tower, even leaving the door open in hopes that the brains will leave the place (they won't as they see it as the home of their master) or someone with more fighting skills will come in and clear it so they can return. They anxiously await this event.

The Dungeon

This is pretty standard affair, and should be run with a little bit of 'horror' factor in it as the hopping brains inside love to hide and then pounce.

1. Entry Level

A number of low chairs, a wall cupboard, and three large rugs decorate this roughly 25'x25' chamber. A single door, set into a rectangular stone support at the tower's center, is the only exit from this chamber.

Three hopping brains lurk under the low chairs, just waiting for the right moment to spring!

3 Hopping Brains [AC 5, HD 3, HP 12, #AT 1, D 1-6, Spring Attack (can attack and jump away if they hold initiative, disallowing melee reprisals by their victims)]

TREASURE
None

3 Hopping Brains [AC 15, HD 3d8+6, HP 16, #AT 1, Hit +5, Dam Bite 4 (1d6+1), Spring Attack (can attack and jump away if they hold the initiative, disallowing melee reprisals by their victim)]

The central stair is not locked, and within, the stairs lead up and down. The downward stair comes to a door that is Wizard Locked, only the key found around the brain of a 'hopper' that is leading a particular scout group on Tower Level Four will open it short of a Knock spell, and even then the lock will not release and requires an Open Locks check at -15% [DC 20].

2. Guest Quarters

Although no stone walls appear other than around the perimeter of the tower, large teak screens have been moved into place to form 'rooms' on this level. Each screen is painted with a delicate mural of nature, and within the cordoned areas are low beds, a dresser, and pitcher & water basin.

These were the guest chambers of the tower, and could easily house four guests. Currently they only house six hopping brains, all lurking behind half-folded screens or under beds.

6 Hopping Brains [AC 5, HD 3, HP 12, #AT 1, D 1-6, Spring Attack (can attack and jump away if they hold initiative, disallowing melee reprisals by their victims)]



TREASURE
None

6 Hopping Brains [AC 15, HD 3d8+6, HP 16, #AT 1, Hit +5, Dam Bite 4 (1d6+1), Spring Attack (can attack and jump away if they hold the initiative, disallowing melee reprisals by their victim)]

3. Kitchen and Dining

A long table with eight chairs dominates the eastern side of this chamber, while more of the decorated screens obscure the western side.

If the players check the table, of course, hopping brains! 3 of the little buggers lurk beneath.

3 Hopping Brains [AC 5, HD 3, HP 12, #AT 1, D 1–6, Spring Attack (can attack and jump away if they hold initiative, disallowing melee reprisals by their victims)]

TREASURE
None

3 Hopping Brains [AC 15, HD 3d8+6, HP 16, #AT 1, Hit +5, Dam Bite 4 (1d6+1), Spring Attack (can attack and jump away if they hold the initiative, disallowing melee reprisals by their victim)]

Once they make it past the screen to the west, they will spot a large wooden cupboard with a metal latch, some shelves with foodstuffs (incredibly still fresh), a butcher's block, and a smaller stone table with four rune glyphs carved into the top. This is the kitchen, and if anyone with magical power of any kind investigates the runes, they will ignite with slowly burning flame and burn until the player is more than 10 feet away. The latched cupboard is an ice chest, and has arctic enchantments placed on it to keep food cold.

No other hopping brains are on this side of the screen.

4. Bedchamber

A large four-post bed dominates the northern portion of this room behind the stairs. A dressing screen, a wardrobe, a full-length silvered mirror, and several arcane tapestries hang about the chamber. There is also a small writing desk to the chamber's east.

The players should be prepared by now for the hoppers. They've congregated under the bed, and will hop out in force once the players get within 10' of it. The 'key' brain is also here, and it has a 'collar' strapped around its 'head' that has the key to the laboratory in the basement.

5 Hopping Brains [AC 5, HD 3, HP 12, #AT 1, D 1–6, Spring Attack (can attack and jump away if they hold initiative, disallowing melee reprisals by their victims)]

TREASURE
None

5 Hopping Brains [AC 15, HD 3d8+6, HP 16, #AT 1, Hit +5, Dam Bite 4 (1d6+1), Spring Attack (can attack and jump away if they hold the initiative, disallowing melee reprisals by their victim)]

5. Summoning Hall

Larger than the chambers above, this room gains definition as your light illuminates its corners. A summoning circle has been etched into the floor of the room's southeastern side, and beyond that a thin hall breaks away from a massive metal door. The door has arcane symbols placed upon it but no keyhole. The hall seems to be some kind of shielding area, perhaps from the summoning circle's power. A single wooden door stands across from the stair entry on the southern wall, and a larger hallway moves away from the chamber to the east.

There are no encounters in this room, but investigation of the wooden door shows it to be unlocked. The metal door is another Wizard Locked portal and leads to the cavern tomb of Rosa himself. (This dungeon can be found in Folio #9.)

6. Component Room

The door opens to reveal a small chamber lined with stocked shelves and hanging oddities. From the smell, preservatives have been in play, and the room is so full it is hard to move about.

This is a spell component room, and two hopping brains are within, hidden among the components. If they remain unseen, 1 in 6 [DC 13 Perception], they will wait for the party to leave, then jump on the person trying to shut the door and pull the unfortunate back in.

2 Hopping Brains [AC 5, HD 3, HP 12, #AT 1, D 1–6, Spring Attack (can attack and jump away if they hold initiative, disallowing melee reprisals by their victims)]

TREASURE
None

2 Hopping Brains [AC 15, HD 3d8+6, HP 16, #AT 1, Hit +5, Dam Bite 4 (1d6+1), Spring Attack (can attack and jump away if they hold the initiative, disallowing melee reprisals by their victim)]

7. Safety Hall

This narrow passage flanks the summoning room and runs from the runed metal door to the western hall.

8. Study

This door opens to reveal a small study. Dominated by a heavy wooden desk half-covered in beakers and alchemical instruments, the room's walls seem overly stacked with parchment, scrolls, and books.

The door to this chamber is locked, but can be easily opened with the key found on the bedchamber hopper.

Beneath the desk is the Leader Brain, and it will leap forth and go into a frenzy whenever anyone tries to look over the contents of the desk.

1 Leader Brain [AC 2, HD 8, HP 48, #AT 2, D 1–8, Frenzy (if defending the home of its master, add an additional +2 to hit and damage rolls), Spring Attack (can attack and jump away if they hold initiative, disallowing melee reprisals by their victims)]

TREASURE
None

1 Leader Brain [AC 17, HD 8d8+16, HP 40, #AT 2, Hit +8, Dam Bite 7 (1d8+3), Frenzy (if defending the home of its master, add an additional +2 on attack and damage rolls), Spring Attack (can attack and jump away if they hold the initiative, disallowing melee reprisals by their victim)]

A successful search, 1–2 [DC 13 Perception], will reveal 5 magical scrolls amongst all the notes, writings, and the like as well as three viable potions. Inside one of the drawers, a Wand of Magic Missiles (27 Charges) is also kept as well as a bag with 10 GP.

9. Caverns Entrance

The smell of old rot and salty brine drifts past you on air disturbed by the opening of the door. Beyond, a chamber of natural design twinkles in the light from your party, and the sound of dripping water tickles your ears...

This is one of the scenarios you'll find in Folio #9, the cavern dungeon and Tomb of Rosa.

Scenario Four: Brawl Club

The Hook:

The first rule of Brawl Club, don't talk about Brawl Club! Secretly, the gangs of the Patina like to get together and see who is tougher, no holds barred, in the abandoned warehouse behind what was once Windham's Exotic Leathers. They take great pride in bloodying each other up here, and it is a great way for fighter types in your party to garner some extra experience points.

The Chase:

Since no one is talking about Brawl Club, it is hard to find out about, but the real person that can get the characters the skinny, especially to fighter types that are looking for a chance to test their mettle, would be Cano at the hostel. He has been tracking gang members to Windham's for months and knows what goes on there. He'll share the information with those looking to do damage to the gangs, especially the Tellers, whom he blames for the death of his family.

The Truth:

Brawl Club is actually a recruiting site for the Tellers, the gang using it to see who the best of the best are so they can recruit them. Entry into any fight is free, but once the Tellers recognize the characters, they will likely pull back and wait to see the outcome, measuring player strength. However, they will not stop any fights, this is too important to them, so characters can come as often as they

like to have a fight. Typically, a character can get in up to 4 fights a night. Of course, they will have to deal with cumulative damage from those fights, but still 4 is about the max. Thus, a player could pick up nearly 1,000 experience points per week if successfully 'running' a character in Brawl Club. Although once he gets 'known' in the fight game, fewer fighters will accept his challenges and this number should drop off.

The Dungeon

Windham's warehouse was once used to store a hippogryph, but now is a perfect large pen to have up to thirty fans watch two combatants beat the crap out of each other. Blades are welcome here, but there is no surgeon on staff, so if you get stuck, that's on you. Death blows, once a target is in the negative hit points, are not allowed, but if a single blow kills a fighter, that is just the gods calling him home.

1. Windham's Exotic Leathers (shop where fights take place)

Gang Member (Bandit Template) [AC 8, HD 1, HP 6, #AT 1, D 1-3 (Fist)]

Experienced Gang Member [AC 7, HD 3, HP 13, #AT 1, D (1-3)+2 (Fist)]

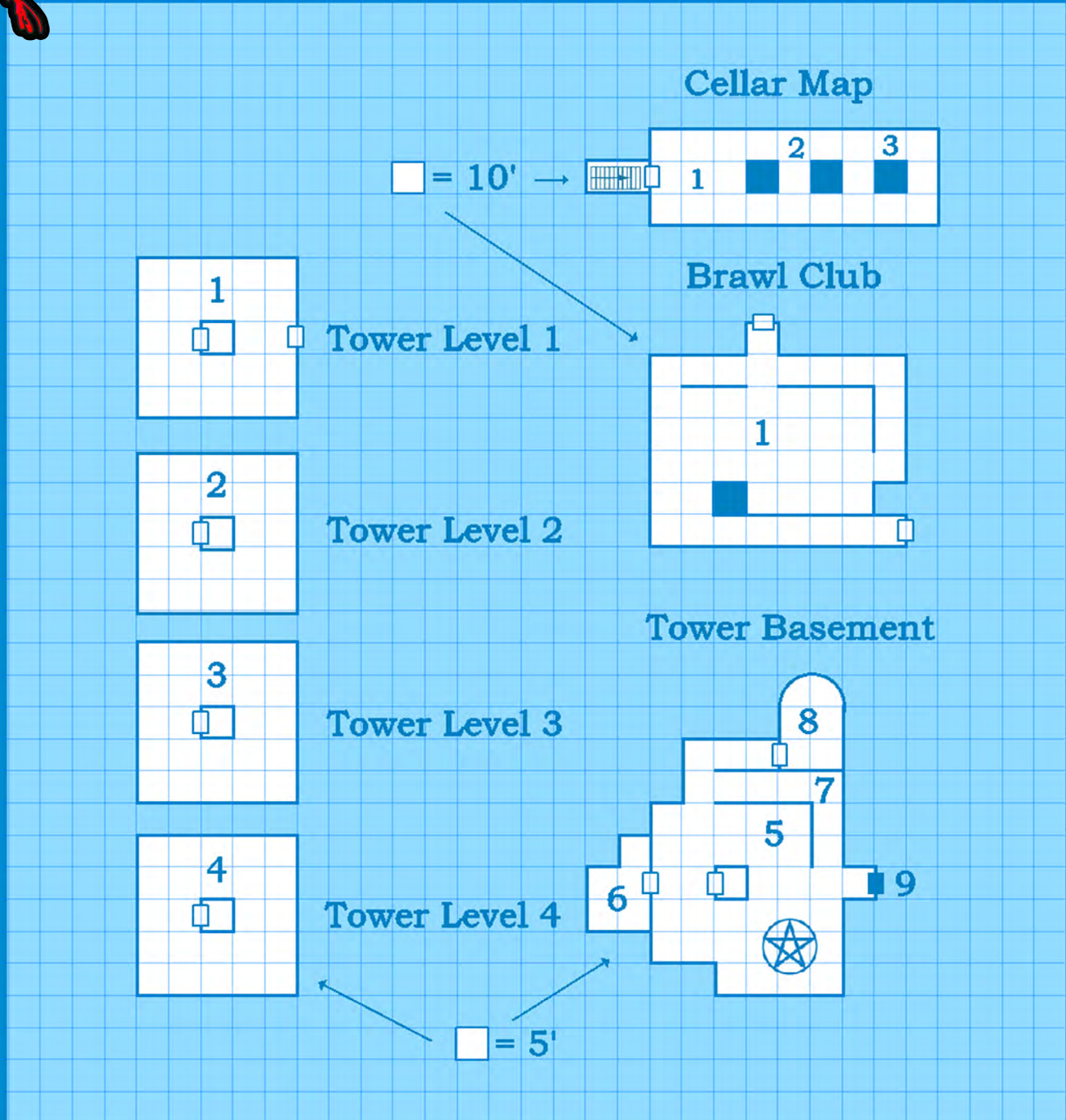
TREASURE

None

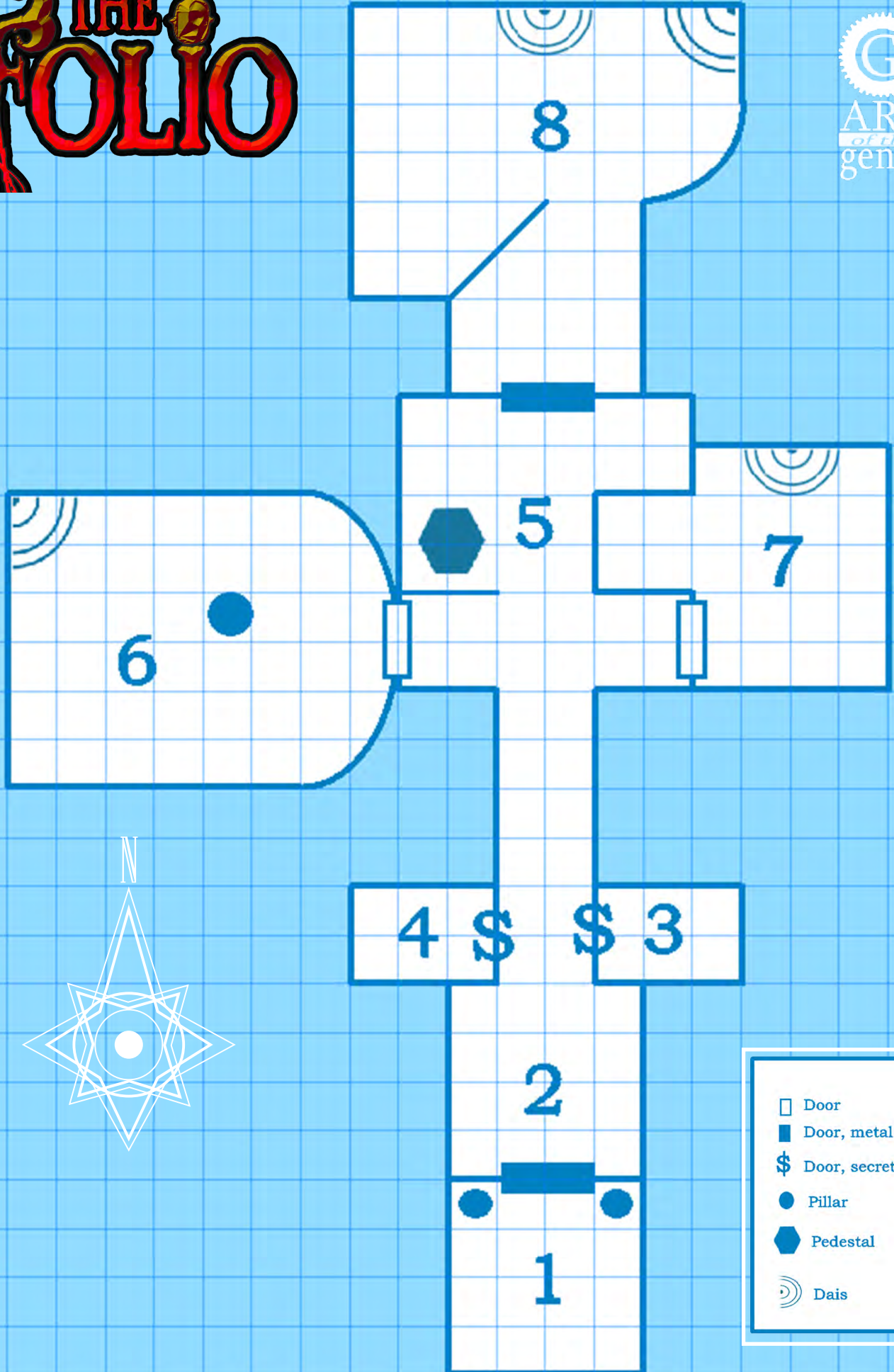
Gang Member (Bandit Template) [AC 12, HD 2d8+2, HP 11, #AT 1, Hit +4, Dam Fist 3 (1d3+1)]

Experienced Gang Member [AC 14, HD 5d8+5, HP 25, #AT 1, Hit +5, Dam Fist 5 (1d3+3)]





THE FOLIO



DF1.5

Bonus Module

THE FOLIO

Mini-Module



THE HIDDEN VALORIA CAMPAIGN

Ratmen of Dead Oak

Mini-Adventure DF1.5

by Scott Taylor

Ratmen of the Dead Oak is a fully 1E & 5E compatible adventure for characters levels 1–3 and contains all information needed to run an excursion against the famed Dwarven Forge race.

You haven't truly been inducted into the culture of Valoria unless you've had dealings with the mysterious ratmen. Now, a problem has emerged from an infamous tree in the Patina and only the characters have the unique skills required to deal with it both diplomatically and martially.



Mini-Module DF1.5

Ratmen of the Dead Oak

Synopsis

The Dead Oak is a well-known landmark in the Patina, and there are hundreds of stories concerning it told by the locals. However, the most consistent of these urban legends revolves around the infamous ratmen of Valoria, and folks insist that a secret entrance into their warrens lies within the tree, although no such entrance is obvious to anyone searching the trunk, which few take the time to do. Last night, though, a young determined boy name Lucious was dared by his friends to go to the tree and find the entry, only to disappear. Now, a worried neighborhood is looking to solve the mystery of the tree once and for all.

Dungeon Master Notes

This adventure revolves around the characters entering the Dead Oak and will likely require the services of a good thief and possibly a magic-user. Diplomacy can also be useful, especially if the party would prefer to have a clan of ratmen that are seen as allies instead of enemies. Remember that this is a delicate mission where a boy's life hangs in the balance, so keep playing on the party's growing loyalty to the people of the Patina Court. If successful in saving Lucious, the party's prestige will grow, helping in future investigations in the Patina. Also, in Part One, there is no exact order to 'the hunt', and as the DM you should bend to the will of the party as they decide how to handle the situation and begin the search. Also, concerning maps, this is a basic small dungeon and I thought I'd allow for my Dwarven Forge players to create rooms in the shapes and sizes that suit their sandbox, so have fun!

The Dead Oak

The Dead Oak is much more than a large skeletal tree. Enchanted by one of the long forgotten spell casters of the Patina in its height, the tree once served as a secret meeting area for the spell caster and his illicit lovers. The tree has a secret entrance that can only be breached by a Knock spell, or by a series of pressure points that have to be pushed in quick succession (that the ratmen know, and the boy unluckily stumbled upon). Once inside, there is a small collection of rooms once meant for entertaining, but now used by the ratmen as a place of refuge.

Ratmen of the Severed Paw

This small clan of ratmen was a reclusive sect until recently when a change in leadership brought about a greater willingness to explore the surface. Led by Rava Shaar, the ratmen of the Severed Paw began utilizing the Dead Oak's entrance to scout the Patina on dark nights and thieve the easiest targets. They were planning to launch an assault against Bret Bozeman the Boatmaker since he is rumored to have a large cache of coins in his shop, but then the boy, Lucious, found his way into their lair and has put their plans on hold. Rava certainly understands that releasing Lucious will reveal the entranceway into the tree and cannot decide whether to kill him or continue to hold him prisoner. Thus, he's being kept in the lower hall of the lair, and with each passing day the ratmen grow more anxious and want to be rid of him.

Retrieving the Boy

This mini-adventure begins with the disappearance of Lucious into the Dead Oak. The party is asked to investigate by either a friend or parent of the boy (someone the party has previously encountered), or possibly by Bret Bozeman, who fears a greater threat is manifesting against him. Whatever the case, the party will have to deal with entering the tree, then move against the ratmen, and finally come to either a deadly or diplomatic conclusion.

Part One: The Hunt

1. The two boys, Petra and Avaran, sit before you, both pensively looking at the ground, their hands tucked between their knees as is often requested by the city guard when talking to civilians.

Questioning the kids requires a Charisma check [**Charisma DC 12**], and for each successful check, the following pieces of information will be retrieved.

1. Lucious often said that he was going to be an apprentice to Bret Bozeman at the boat shop.

2. Of all the street boys in the Patina, Lucious had the best 'fingers', and could lift a purse (just playing around) off any other kid.

3. The day that Lucious disappeared, they had found a half-drunk bottle of spirits and consumed it before the dare.

2. Bret Bozeman wipes a fine layer of sawdust from his hands as he turns away from the hull of a slim rowboat. Bret is more willing to talk than the boys, and characters receive a +3 to all Charisma checks [**Charisma DC 9**]. Each success will gain an additional piece of information.

1. He had offered Lucious an apprenticeship on more than three occasions, but something seemed to be holding the boy away from his service, and he suspected it was a gang affiliation.

2. A week ago, he caught Lucious looking over his cash box while doing odd jobs for him around the shop. He didn't call the boy on it, but since then, he'd not offered him another job.

3. Lucious wasn't a 'nameless' boy of the Patina, his father was rumored to have been Bryce Teller (the dead founder of the Teller Gang).

4. He's heard recent rumors that his shop might be the target of a thieving attack, but no one seems to know who is truly the threat.

3. The Dead Oak stands before you, a fifty-foot-tall skeletal remnant of lost natural glory. Its bark is now dark, its limbs reaching high into the sky, yet not a single leaf remains. The trunk, which is some eight feet round, is gnarled and scarred, knots the size of a grown man's hand standing out in several locations.

Investigation of the Dead Oak (with a Detect Magic) will reveal it has magical properties. A thief can attempt a find and remove traps [**DC 15**] to discover that some of the knots can be depressed. Another check using pick locks/open doors [**DC 15**] is needed to properly press the knots in sequence for a door to open, revealing a stair. Also, a Knock spell cast on the trunk will open the secret door.

Part Two: The Descent

1.

A twisting stair leads down into darkness, walls changing from polished wood to carved stone. At the base of the stair, which has descended more than twenty feet, a single wooden door awaits.

The door is not trapped, but it is locked [**DC 13**]. Beyond the door is a single twenty by twenty room.

The door opens to reveal a dimly lit chamber with a single lantern placed on a round table in the northwest corner. An old rug decorates the floor, and a single flat sofa rests against the west wall. Two ratmen face the door, short blades drawn and yellow teeth bared.

These are two of the three guards that normally are stationed in the room. The third was dispatched as soon as noise of the picking of the door was heard and is rousing a greater defense. The guards will not talk, and will attack immediately.

Ratmen: [AC 5, HD 3, HP 18, #AT 1, D 1–6 (shortsword)]

TREASURE
None

2 Ratmen [AC 15, HD 4d8+8, HP 32, #AT 2, Hit +5, Dam Shortsword 5 (1d6+2), Multiattack]

2.

Your footfalls echo through the arched entry into another large square chamber that has been doused of all light. (If the party has a light source, read the following.) The couches and chairs of a casual sitting room have been hastily rearranged to provide cover for five ratmen, each armed with a crossbow.

Once the party enters, the ratmen will fire, three then reloading their crossbows and two drawing out shortswords to take on any charging party fighters.

5 Ratmen: [AC 5, HD 3, HP 18, #AT 1, D 1–8 (Longsword) or 1–6 (Light Crossbow)]

TREASURE
None

5 Ratmen: [AC 15, HD 4d8+8, HP 32, #AT 2, Hit +5, Dam Longsword 6 (1d8+2), or Light Crossbow 6 (1d8+2), Multiattack]

3.

Beyond the makeshift barricade, another archway opens into a salon chamber filled with peg hooks on the walls and a wooden plank floor. Four more ratmen in heavy armor are here standing guard at the entrance to a stair in the eastern wall.

These are the heavy fighters of the Severed Paw, and will defend the hall to the lower level til death.

4 Heavy Ratmen: [AC 2, HD 5, HP 30, #AT 3/2, D 1–8 (Longsword)]

TREASURE
None

4 Heavy Ratmen [AC 18, HD 6d8+12, HP 44, #AT 2, Hit +6, Dam Longsword 5 (1d8+3), Multiattack]

Part Three: The Resolution

1.

The stairs move downward again, these made of dark wood with a copper railing placed close to the fall of your right hand. Below, a soft yellow glow of a crystal sphere allows for easy visuals into a landing, another fine wooden door blocking any further progress.

The door is not trapped, but is again locked [DC 14]. Inside, what once served as a bedchamber has been converted into a pen for a terrible dire rat, the creature having recently been roused with spear and then loosed to defend the room.

1 Dire Rat: [AC 3, HD 5, HP 26, #AT 1, D 1–8 (bite)]

TREASURE
None

1 Dire Rat [AC 17, HD 5d8+12, HP 44, #AT 2, Hit +5, Dam Bite 6 (1d8+2), Multiattack]

2.

Another door, this one marked with the scars of claws, stands on the west wall.

The door is both locked and trapped [DC 15 on both], and the trap is a flame burst that causes 3d6 [9 (3d6)] to anyone within five feet of the door if triggered.

Beyond, a large chamber houses what was once a five-foot-deep and twenty-by-twenty pool that has been converted into a sleeping pit for the bulk of the Severed Paws. Behind a wooden pallet made to resemble a floor bed, a secret tunnel can be found that leads into the lower sewers of the Patina. The females and young of the clan have already fled through this, hoping to reunite with those who remain after the conflict. There are no defenders here, and the door at the far end of the chamber is open. The sad drawing of a fiddle drifts out into the pool chamber.

3.

You enter what appears to be a grand bedchamber and study, a large ratman sitting with a human youth before him, a wicked dagger at the boy's exposed throat. Beside the duo, another ratman, this one with fully white eyes, plays a gold embossed fiddle.

Rava Shaar, current leader of the Severed Paw, is ready to negotiate for the boy's release. He desires a promise to keep the location of his home and its entrance in the Dead Oak secret, but if denied, he will relent and ask only to walk free. If the party is determined to fight, he will kill the boy on round one while the blind bard throws fire from his Golden Hespawn Fiddle (think your bard in the old Bard's Tale game with his Fire Horn). A successful negotiation via Charisma check [Charisma DC 14] will free the boy, and if the check is successful by 5 points or more, the Severed Paw Clan will move out of the Dead Oak (although they will return in a fortnight in greater numbers).

Rava Shaar: [AC 2, HD 8, HP 52, #AT 2/1, +3 Attack, D (1–4)+5 (dagger), Weapon Specialization (Dagger)]

TREASURE

Ring of Protection +2, Dagger of Wounding +2, 40 GP, 2 small opals (15 GP each)

Rava Shaar [AC 18, HD 8d10+16, HP 66, #AT 2, Hit +7, Dam Dagger 10 (1d4+8), Multiattack]

Blind Bard: [AC 5, HD 3, HP 18, #AT 1, D 1–6 (shortsword) or 5d6 Fire (Golden Hespawn Fiddle)]

TREASURE

Golden Hespawn Fiddle (causes 5d6 [15 (5d6)] fire damage in a 10' area)

Blind Bard [AC 15, HD 4d8+8, HP 32, #AT 2, Hit +5, Dam Shortsword 5 (1d6+2) or Golden Hespawn Fiddle 15 (5d6), Multiattack]

Resolution

Once Lucious is returned to the surface, he will thank the party and run off, but he will be a great contact and informant in the future, increasing any of the player's investigation checks with a +2 bonus.



THE FOLIO



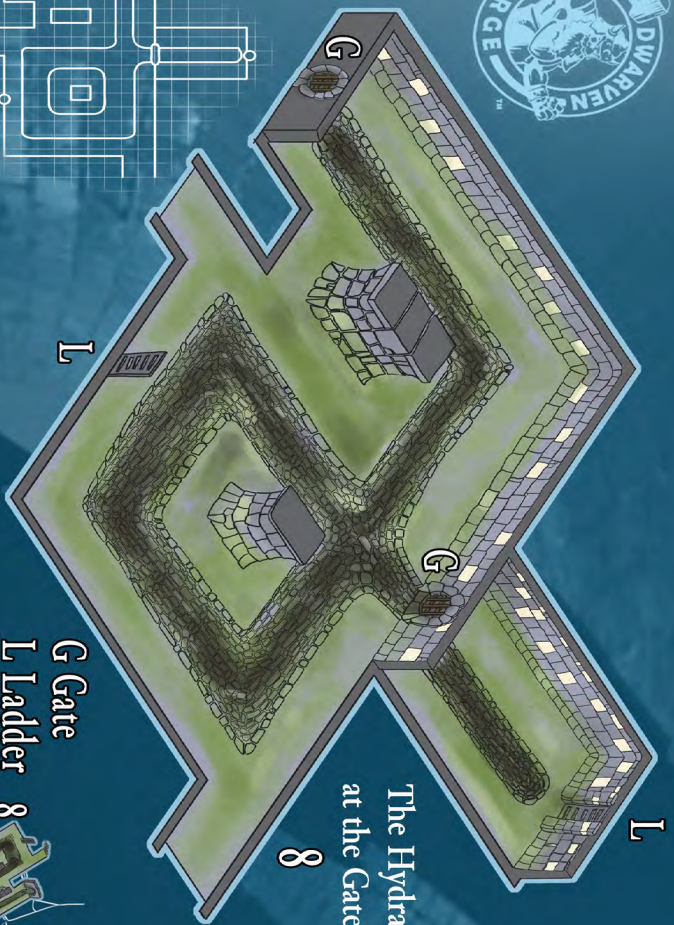
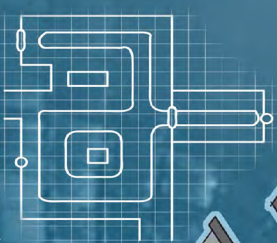
The Lost Apprentice

FOLIO MODULE OF2

An Adventure for Characters Levels 3–5

by Scott Taylor





Part Two of

The Hidden Valoria Campaign
An Adventure for
Characters Levels 3-5

Tomb of Rosa



Beneath the feet of those living in the Patina is a second world, one fraught with danger and mystery. Do you dare enter the feid sewers of Valoria to try to find the hidden secrets lost ages ago when gods played a dangerous game among the mortals of Myrthas? Within these labyrinthine tunnels are both the doom and the salvation of any Patina soul willing to challenge them.

The Sewers of the Undercity

Folio Module DF2

The Lost Apprentice

An Adventure for Characters

Levels 3–5

Vol. 2 – Mythras City of Valoria Gazetteer

Campaign Background, Continuing the Theme

When we last left our characters, they should have been nicely entrenched into the workings of the Patina Court. Friendships among NPCs should have been formed, and the mystery of the ‘black eyes’ taking shape but never fully revealing itself. That will change quickly in Folio #9.

Once the ‘The Alienist’ adventure in Folio #8 is complete, the characters will be approached by Procyon Lotor, the leader of the black eyes. He will request their help in recovering the enchanted whistle that will allow the black eyes to return to their home in Kalium Rosa’s tower. Lotor will tell the heroes he will provide them the key to the locked door located in the basement of the tower upon return of the whistle.

If and when the players accept the deal with Lotor, they will have to go on a hunt for the whistle that will lead them into conflict with several gangs in the Patina. Once it is established that the Teller Gang actually has the whistle, a showdown will likely take place.

Once the whistle has been recovered, the characters can enter the ‘Cavern Tomb of Rosa’, discovering not only the dead there, but also a more interesting secret of the Patina—the existence of a forgotten and buried temple complex of Tefnut, long ago corrupted by minions of Set before the flooding of the city. This news leads the party into the sewers to follow the bits and pieces of information recovered from Rosa’s Tomb.

The building of the campaign storyline will play out mainly in the interactions between the party and the various Patina gangs. This conflict, supported by the various NPCs within the Patina, and exacerbated by the Teller Gang’s attempts to throw the scent off them, will require the Dungeon Master to utilize all of the relationships the characters have developed over the course of Folio #8. City politics, money, greed, and social climbing can all come into play as the characters seek out the enchanted whistle.

Once the characters are below the streets, the adventure changes gears to a creative dungeon crawl, so be sure the bulk of your roleplaying is accomplished before anyone goes down the rabbit hole, so to speak.

Gangs of the Patina

Below you will find a sociological piece on each gang, but no stats are included. For those, you will need to see encounter points in the adventure section of this module.

1. The Killerz

Opus Duskbeard, a disgraced dwarf, runs this small but feared gang near the House of Sigils on Odin’s Way. Opus started his life of crime when, as a youth, he embezzled money from his employers. When discovered, he fled to the Patina looking for work as a barrow digger at the Wizard’s Knoll. Soon, his reputation caught up with him (as dwarves like to gossip almost as much as gnomes!) and he was forced into the streets. There he persuaded vagabonds and urchins to join him through threats or outright beatings until he had sufficient followers to take over a squatters nest. Though successful, they were too weak to compete with the more established gangs that fed off the locals, so Opus turned his sights on his former employers and dwarven kin. For the last two years, the Killerz have grown adept at murder, extortion, and smuggling, earning themselves a measure of respect from the criminal element of the Patina. To thwart the city guard, they disguise themselves as traders plying their wares between dwarven neighborhoods as they must frequently cross the well-patrolled Odin’s Way into the North Quarter for their operations. Duskbeard and his gang are feared on both sides of Odin’s Way, for they take no prisoners and seem to have a love for murder.

2. Knocked Men

The Knocked Men formed when a group of beggars became disenfranchised with handouts and decided to start taking what they want. Disorganized, schizophrenic, and without much more than numbers and a penchant for preying on the weak, the Knocked Men are some of the most despised members of the Patina Court gang pantheon. They tend to dwell close to the Prometheus Soup Kitchen, but get scattered by the city guard when their numbers swell in the area, or by Galdor of the Eastern Woods if he sees them. Ezera, the razor-thin leader, is notoriously scared of sunlight, and tends to prowl at night with several members of his gang seeking lone citizens to accost. The gang has no proper hideout; each member typically finds a dark place to sleep during the day, and then comes out to scavenge at night. Their most ardent adversary in the Patina is the Beggar’s Guild who believes that the presence of the Knocked Men detracts from the handouts they receive.

3. Ladies of Prophet

A collection of former prostitutes, abused by their pimp, have risen up and broken their chains. After killing their pimp, and reportedly feeding his body to lizards in the sewers, this nine member gang of all women has begun recruiting other downtrodden women (serving wenches, abused mothers and daughters, etc.) to their cause.





What cause? Well, most men in the Patina believe it is to kill men (especially those who are cruel to the opposite sex), but in reality the Ladies of Prophet are seeking to create a temple in the Patina. Their leader, Ista Ma, is a devout disciple of Artemis, but her subleader, Lumina, favors the deity Loviatar. Both want to see their patrons venerated, but until they can settle on which one, the gang simply spends its days hunting abusive men and gaining combat experience by participating in Brawl Club. Their current base of operations is just behind Murtel's Mortuary, where the lady of that establishment, Brigit Murtel, seems to favor the women by not booting them from the squatter's home that her family has owned for many years.

4. Moon Dogs

Perhaps the second most dangerous gang in the Patina, next to the Tellers, is the Moon Dogs who have been on the upswing of late. However, they are currently in a running feud with the city guard for crossing Main Street to the south and looting the wealthy Princess Maria neighborhoods. Run by a man known only as Hestus, this gang of rough and tumble men pride themselves on their bestial nature, and some even whisper that Hestus himself is a were-creature with Lycan-wolf's blood. With a home base just west of the Main Street shoe cobbler, this gang doesn't run exclusively through the Patina, especially because of Teller influence, but they do harass citizens when given the opportunity, especially when the moon is full.

Dungeon Master Notes & Suggestions

1. Running the Patina

When running the Patina in Folio #8, the emphasis was on making friendships and sharing in the hardship of being dirt poor. Hopefully, after playing it, you will have made enough good NPC

relationships that the chase around the Patina in Folio #9 should be easier. Still, if you played things out correctly, money will still be an issue for the characters and I will continue to push that forward in Folio #9. When running this adventure, players should be more comfortable with the setting, and they should be free to move around the Patina, but it will be up to the Dungeon Master to continue to foster whatever true campaign feel you've spun.

2. Running the Mystery

The main mystery of this adventure will be to find the location of the enchanted whistle so that the black eyes can return home. This will take the players all through the Patina, and if played correctly, a DM can have them interact with all manner of gangs (and if you are playing all these adventures together, be sure to incorporate some of these gangs into the Brawl Club scenario of Folio #8). The continuing mystery will be the location of a forgotten temple beneath the surface, but as stated before, that will be more of a dungeon crawl than a search for a specific item among various NPCs.

3. When and how to introduce gangs

I've created the scenarios in this adventure to provide my personal preference for how the gangs should be encountered, but that isn't a hard and fast rule. The Dungeon Master might even skip some gang encounters if you are looking to trim down the module in length. However, each gang is unique, as are the leaders, so be sure to brush up on them to determine how you want them to interact through personality and modus operandi. In this fashion, each encounter will be more fun for the players.

4. Running Lotor

Lotor is a wildcard here. You can play him as a 6th level wizard if you so choose and have him accompany the players through the adventure, or you can have him show up at opportune times if players

New Patina Court NPCs:

As the characters explore the Patina they will have the opportunity to meet new NPCs along the way that may help them in their cause. These new personalities can be included in the adventure at the Dungeon Master's discretion, especially if the players need some help at certain roadblocks.

She-Irainne

Forced from the subterranean realms beneath the Erinthor Mountains, She-Irainne hides his true nature as a dark elf. He has been known as a savior to some of the downtrodden in the Patina, acting as a protector, but to those with power he is a cynic and a danger. Although reclusive (especially during daylight hours), he has a great deal of knowledge on the comings and goings of the night cycles of the Patina.

Race: Dark Elf

Class: Magic User/Thief (Level Unknown)

Deity: Unknown

Alignment: TN (Good tendency)

Galdor of the Eastern Woods of the Golden Sylth

Typically cloaked and hooded in bright azure with a silver crescent upon his back, this longsword wielding loner is known for living plainly and his willingness to assist those in need. For the people of the Patina, he is the daylight version of She-Irainne, the yin to his yang, so to speak. Easily identified for his long silver hair with the last vestiges of copper still running in streaks beneath, this venerable elf travels to the Patina twice a week to offer assistance to the Prometheus Soup Kitchen and to dole out healing for those citizens who are in need.

Race: Wood Elf

Class: Cleric (Level Unknown)

Deity: The Great Crescent, Elven Moon God, (Corellon Larethian)

Alignment: NG

Brett Bozeman the Boat Maker

Boats, created so far from the docks, seem like an odd business, but the Bozeman clan (the name probably an amalgamation of 'boatman') has nonetheless been building small craft here for more than three generations. Brett is the current proprietor of a shop known among the folks of the Patina as 'The Boat Maker', and his smaller craft include canoes, skin kayaks, and rowboats. Perhaps his best seller is the funeral boat, many of which go to Murtel's to be entombed or burned, so the people of the Patina often refer to The Boat Maker as the last port of call for the dead. This trade means Brett knows most everyone, and he is the perfect go-between from the Patina to Valoria proper as his shop faces Main Street, but his true business lies within the Patina as he crafts while watching the Beggar's Fountain on most days.

Race: Human

Class: Fighter (Level 3)

Deity: Poseidon

Alignment: LN

Burks 'The High Kid'

Burks is an orphan youth of the Patina, but instead of falling in with a gang, or begging on the street, he has created a persona as vermin catcher and chimney sweep who works almost exclusively on the rooftops of the neighborhood. Unbeknownst to most citizens, in the evenings Burks slips across the Main and does 'second story work' in the Princess Maria District, honing his skills as a thief. Charming, with subtle brown eyes that seem to always offer a smile,



need help. Lastly, you could have Lotor merely provide the key and not deal with him. Personally, I love using the black eyes, and Lotor can be a very fun, curious, and powerful ally.

5. The design of the sewers and your influence on them

I've provided the main boss battle encounter designs within this Folio, as well as the grid for the sewers, but other encounter zones (listed on the map) are going to be up to you as the Dungeon Master to design and build, thus helping to create your own sandbox for the Patina. This allows for greater creativity among the Dwarven Forge players, and for those of you who don't use minis or terrain, I suggest a good descriptor of each encounter zone and then just have at it.

6. Important NPC Contacts

As much of this is a mystery adventure, there are certain old contacts that will be more helpful to the players. These include Lanka the Shade for the purposes of better understanding the sewer maps recovered from the Tomb of Rosa, Abrella of the Third Eye for locating specific gang members within the Patina, and Cano (Rogue of the Scarf) for insider information on gang operations and whereabouts. I've also listed a few new NPCs that can be encountered in the Patina who could potentially provide help along the way.

Burks is considered a great treasure by most of the Patina—a ‘youth turned right’ who knows much of the comings and goings of the neighborhood.

Race: Human
Class: Thief (Level 4)
Deity: Nike
Alignment: CG

Aria the Bard

Growing up on the streets of Valoria as a half-blood outcast, Aria is both storyteller and heroine of her tales. Over her years as a pick pocket, juggler, knife thrower, master of strings, and hedge mage she has taken on all the skills of a bard of some renown. With her lute strapped to her back, she now plies her trade as a minstrel, often visiting the Patina to gain stories and hang with her compatriot Galdor of the Eastern Woods.

Race: Half-Elf (Female)
Class: Magic-User/Thief (Level 3/3)
Deity: Pan
Alignment: NG

Overall Story Arcs & Threads Adventure Seed

As you will see in the module portion of this supplement, the adventures are broken down into several mini-scenarios that allow the players to easily move through the overall story arc of this adventure. Part One will be the search for the enchanted whistle, Part Two will be the search for the entrance to the lower dungeons and the forgotten temple. If you can seamlessly blend the two together and provide a running narrative, you'll have achieved the goal of Folio #9, which is to transition from starting characters in Folio #8 to boss killing heroes in Folio #10.



Expanding the Adventure

I'm writing this piece because after creating various low level scenarios for the Patina Court Places Volume 1 expansion for Folio #8, I wanted to be sure that all those utilizing Folio #9 would have additional experience gathering and NPC interacting scenarios that could go along with the base adventure. Expanded scenarios for Folio #9 will be included in the updated Patina Court Places expansion, and I highly suggest you take a look at those if you want to add flavor and bonus adventuring within the Patina. They should also really help your players make stronger connections and allies within the neighborhood.

New Monster:

Black Eyes

Chaotic Good
Armor Class: 8
HD: 1
Hit Points: 6
Move: 12"
No. of Attacks: 2 (or 1 with weapon)
Damage/Attack: Claw 1–4, Bite 1–4, (or by weapon)
Special Attacks: None
Special Defenses: None
Magic Resistance: Standard
Intelligence: Standard
Size: S
Psionic Ability: NIL
% in lair: 20%
Treasure Type: L, M

1E Racial Statistics:

Ability Score Increase: Intelligence and Dexterity both increase by 1.
Age: Black eyes mature in 6-8 years and have an average lifespan of 40–50 years.
Alignment: Most black eyes are chaotic in nature, but males (50%) will sometimes have a lawful alignment, especially if they are magic-users.
Size: Black eyes average 3 feet tall and weigh about 40 pounds. They are considered size small.
Speed: Base speed is 30 feet.
Natural Thieves: Black eyes receive the same thieving bonuses as halflings.
Sense of Smell: Black eyes are surprised only on a 1.
Languages: Black eyes can typically speak, read, and write Common.

5E Racial Statistics:

Ability Score Increase: Intelligence and Dexterity both increase by 1.
Age: Black eyes mature in 6-8 years and have an average lifespan of 40–50 years.
Alignment: Most black eyes are chaotic in nature, but males (50%) will sometimes have a lawful alignment, especially if they are magic-users.
Size: Black eyes average 3 feet tall and weigh about 40 pounds. They are considered size small.
Speed: Base speed is 30 feet.
Locksmith: When attempting to open any lock, black eyes are considered to be at advantage.
Sense of Smell: Black eyes are considered proficient in Perception.
Languages: Black eyes can typically speak, read, and write Common.

Black Eyes: [AC 12, Speed 30 ft., HD 2d8+2, HP 10, Init +2, #AT 2, Hit +4, Dam Claws 3 (1d4+1) Bite 3 (1d4+1), Multiattack]

Like the hopping brains from Folio #8, these creatures are creations of the famed enchanter Kalium Rosa. Where the hopping brains were created as guard dogs for the wizard's abode, the black eyes were his trusted companions.

Highly intelligent, these small raccoon-like (crafted using raccoons captured around the Patina) humanoids have a keen sense of intuition, are adept at using magic, and are expert thieves. Using family or clan tactics, they train adept males as petty wizards and cunning females as rogues. Those that don't show promise in one of these traits begin serving within the family as foster parents for the young and caretakers of the property. A few have become skilled at working with the hopping brains (like rangers) and help direct them, although this is limited and often requires using the enchanted whistle that has now been stolen.

DF2: The Lost Apprentice

The adventure, The Lost Apprentice, is broken down into three main scenarios that will provide players with the key required to finally enter the Forgotten Temple of Tefnut. Scenario One is a non-terrain adventure that details the pursuit of an enchanted whistle around the Patina Court. Scenario Two features a small dungeon built around Dwarven Forge terrain, created for this particular campaign, as are the encounter zones of Scenario Three. Although dedicated to Dwarven Forge terrain, non-miniature using players will have access to both OSR 'Blue' maps and fully rendered 3D maps, so that ease of play is not impacted. The bulk of this adventure is built around players' familiarity with the Patina Court. (I highly recommend both Folio #8 and the Patina Court Places Volume 1 expansion.) Dungeon Masters should acquaint themselves with the colorful tapestry of personalities and locations the players will encounter, provide motivations for future adventures, and fluidly define player backstories including how they have integrated into the Patina.

Scenario One

The Enchanted Whistle:

The Hook:

The hook on this one should be easy because it is provided directly by Lotor after the completion of 'The Alienist' in Folio #8. Now, you could have the players contacted by Lotor while still inside the tower, most likely in the basement while investigating the sealed door to the caverns. However, if you didn't want to, you could have them leave and then have Lotor meet them at their base of operations inside the Patina. Whatever the case, Lotor will make a proposition—find the enchanted whistle stolen by one of the Patina gangs for his people, and he will provide the players with the key to the cavern crypt.

The Chase:

This is where things get a bit more difficult. There are a number of gangs in the Patina (as detailed in the Gazetteer), and the party will have to start going through them to find the whistle. Remember, the whistle is held by the Tellers, but they have been putting on a disinformation campaign to throw the black eyes off their scent, thus this will also affect the characters. As the Dungeon Master, you can choose any number of gangs that the heroes will need to go through, but I've detailed encounters with four below, before they will finally get into a direct conflict with the Tellers. Also remember, if the heroes know Abrella of the Third Eye, they might get a leg up on their investigation and thus skip some of the gangs.

The Truth:

Rexa Teller has the whistle, but once the 'heat' begins to grow, he'll send it with a lieutenant to a sub-hideout, fearing the black eyes (or perhaps the characters) are more than he wants to risk his operations on. However, this is also a bit of a ruse. Teller has no real interest in the whistle (it does him no good), but he has been tempted by rumors of the undercity and the riches there. It is his hope that if the characters make friends with the black eyes, they might find out secrets concerning the undercity that only those creatures know. If this happens, he intends to follow the characters below the surface and steal their treasure once they are weakened by the monsters that (he believes) dwell there.

The Dungeon

Well, there is no true dungeon in this scenario, just the streets of the Patina. If you are utilizing DF terrain, encounter zones can be built around alleys or mainly in ruined buildings.

1. Killerz Moonlit Walk

Word on the street is that a contingent of Killerz is moving across Odin's Way into the North Quarter at dusk today. One of their members, a dwarf named Pudge Shortwhiskers, recruited to the cause by Duskbeard, is said to carry the whistle on a chain around his neck. This information can be uncovered from contacts within the Patina with three successful Charisma checks [DC 13 Cha], or from a named NPC that the heroes have a relationship with on a single success.

In reality, the whistle Pudge carries is for a mastiff that he has trained to flank his party on his forays into the North Quarter. When attacked, he will blow the noiseless dog whistle and call the mastiff to help attack the characters.

6 Killerz Gang Members (Includes Pudge) [AC 8, HD 4, HP 24, #AT 1, D 1–8 (Mace)]

TREASURE

45 silver and 6 gold spread between them in pouches.

Pudge carries a +1 Dagger.

6 Killerz Thugs [AC 11, HD 5d8+10, HP 32, #AT 2, Hit +4, Dam Mace 5 (1d6+2), Multiattack, Pack Tactics (Thugs gain advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the thug's allies is within 5 feet.)]

1 Mastiff Hound [AC 8, HD 1, HP 6, #AT 1, D 1–6, Bite]

TREASURE

None

1 Mastiff Hound [AC 12, HD 1d8+1, HP 5, #AT 1, Hit +3, Dam Bite 4 (1d6+1)]

2. Knocked Men Shell Game

Indications are that a group of beggars-turned-thieves have come into possession of the whistle during a mugging earlier this week. The whistle has fallen into the possession of one 'Scabber', a particularly nasty human male who never sleeps in the same location twice. However, three successful Charisma checks [DC 14 Cha] will reveal his current location in a flop house near The Boat Maker's shop along the street behind Main. (Bret Bozeman also knows this information directly.) If one of these checks is failed, the characters will instead find another beggar who isn't Scabber and have to start all over again. This information can also be had on a single Charisma check [DC 14 Cha] from a named NPC the characters are close to.

Scabber has no whistle, only a bird bone that hangs from a bracelet at his wrist. When found, he is among a small collection of fellow Knocked Men, and they will not give up any possession to the characters and will consider their questioning an affront worth fighting over.

5 Knocked Men Gang Members (Includes Scabber) [AC 8, HD 3, HP 18, #AT 1, D 1-6 (Short Sword), Scabber uses short sword and dagger, so he gets an extra attack roll.]

TREASURE

23 copper and 7 silver spread between them in pouches.

5 Knocked Men Thugs [AC 11, HD 5d8+10, HP 32, #AT 2, Hit +4, Dam Short Sword 5 (1d6+2), Multiattack, Pack Tactics (Thugs gain advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the thug's allies is within 5 feet.)]

3. Ladies Bait and Switch

Indications are that the whistle has fallen into the possession of the Ladies of Prophet who are seeking to use it in some secret ceremony to steal the virility of the men of the Patina. Finding the Ladies isn't a problem; it is common knowledge that they have a base of operations behind Murtel's Mortuary, and will gladly take a meeting with the characters. They also "have the whistle" and are willing to give it up if the party will do them a favor. Since



their girls are well known and barred from the Gracious Arms Inn (two members have been recruited from there much to the owner's lament), they need the characters to retrieve something that a new member left there before joining the Ladies. This item was stashed in the cellar just inside the bar on the first floor. If the characters can retrieve this item, they will exchange the whistle for it.

Retrieving the item (a small bronze statue of the goddess Artemis) will not be particularly easy unless the heroes already have a contact in the Gracious Arms. As that is unlikely, they will have to go to the Arms, discover the door to the cellar in the main kitchen with a Find/Remove Traps roll [DC 14 Perception], then find a way past the comings and goings of the staff (sneaking, invisibility, etc.) to get to the door and down into the cellar. Once there, a successful search (1-4 since they've been told where to look) [DC 12 Perception] will uncover the item.

Of course the Ladies don't actually have the whistle, and are simply using the party to get the item they seek. Once they do get the item (and will take it under threat when it is returned to their base), the leader, Istas Ma, will admit she doesn't have the whistle but does know who actually has it—Hestus, leader of the Moon Dogs.

However, Istas isn't a truly evil individual and does appreciate what the characters have done for her. To this end, she will tell you that Hestus has been looking for a fight in Brawl Club for a few weeks, but has had no takers. She will gift the largest fighter in the party (or perhaps a female character if she looks like she can fight) a small silver studded leather belt as a finder's fee for the statue. This belt, if properly wrapped around a fist, can actually damage Hestus in a fight.

4. Moon Dog Title Fight

Hestus has indeed been looking for a fight in the Brawl Club for a couple of weeks, but as he seems impervious to pain, there have been no takers. He is currently offering a small bounty for a fight, but again, no one has been stupid enough to take him up on it. If the players make contact with any of the 'Dogs' and request the whistle in exchange for a fight, Hestus will gladly agree.

Again, this is a dead end. Hestus has many whistles (he collects them, go figure), and will show the party a nice one before the fight that he indicates is the whistle in question. (If Lotor is there at the time, this won't work, so Hestus will fall back to 'I'm not stupid enough to carry the real whistle with me' approach.)

If beaten in a brawl, Hestus will give up the information that he recently heard the Tellers had the whistle in a drug den close to the House of Flying Daggers. He will even send one of his 'Dogs' to show you the place.

1 Werewolf Brawler (Hestus) [AC 5, HD 4+3, HP 27, #AT 1, D 2-8 (Bite), Bitten individuals who fall below 50% of their hit point total are infected with Lycanthropy.]

TREASURE

Information

1 Werewolf [AC 12, HD 9d8+8, HP 58, #AT 2, Hit +4, Dam Bite 4 (1d8+2), Claw 7 (2d4+2), Multiattack, Lycanthropy (if target is bitten, DC12 Constitution saving throw must be made or contract the disease), Damage Immunities: bludgeoning, piercing, slashing damage from non-magical weapons that aren't silvered]

5. Teller's Drug Den

The final piece of this scenario rests with the Tellers in their current drug den just south of The House of Flying Daggers. Here, Malis the Simp, currently one of Rexa's least favored lieutenants, has brought the whistle thinking he was given a gift for good service. Instead, he is being used as bait for the party. He and his men will use lethal

force to defend themselves, the enchanted whistle, and their drugs (not knowing this is a setup), so the party had best come prepared.

6 Teller Gang Members (Includes Malis the Simp) [AC 8, HD 4, HP 24, #AT 1, D 1–6 (Short Sword)]

TREASURE

71 copper, 47 silver, and 10 gold spread between them in pouches. Malis carries the enchanted whistle and a +1 short sword that he uses in battle.

6 Teller Thugs [AC 11, HD 5d8+10, HP 32, #AT 2, Hit +4, Dam Short Sword 5 (1d6+2), Multiattack, Pack Tactics (Thugs gain advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the thug's allies is within 5 feet.)]

Scenario Two

Tomb of Rosa

Long ago, the city of Valoria was flooded and destroyed and the city that now exists rests on the bones of the more ancient ruin. There are many components to the flood, but one thing many can agree on is that salty brine caverns still exist in pockets below the streets. The Tomb of Rosa is one of these. The natural cavern leads from the basement of Rosa's tower to deep beneath the Wizard's Knoll. It has been protected by great abjuration magic as well as the black eyes since the wizard's death more than thirty years ago.

The Hook:

Knowing of the existence of a wizard's tomb will certainly be something that is too good to pass up by the poor characters in the Patina. However, getting Lotor to offer up the key is another matter, so until that is accomplished the players will not be able to enter the tomb.

The Chase:

As above, to get inside the tomb the players will have to successfully complete Scenario One 'The Enchanted Whistle'.

The Truth:

Well, this is where things get a bit dicey, especially for Lotor. He knows that Rosa didn't die in Valoria, but instead on an extended tour of the planes. 'Rosa's Tomb', therefore, has very little to do with Rosa himself. Instead, it is the final resting place for an old companion of Rosa's when he was a young adventurer. For this reason, the black eyes do not see the tomb as a sacred place and the adventurers disturbing Eperious Regalt, the warrior buried within, is not an issue to them. Also, Eperious spent every gold he had trying to uncover the temple, thus he died a pauper and would have been left to rot on the streets had Rosa not recovered his old friend's body and placed it in a tomb meant for himself.

The Dungeon

When running this small dungeon, be sure to include elements in your description of signs of flooding and just how old Valoria is. If you can play up the intrigue of a 'city beneath a city', then you'll have your players in the right direction to go into the final scenario of this adventure.

1. Piercers:

A vaulted cavern stretches out before you, your light source glittering off the mineral deposits in the walls. The sound of dripping water echoes throughout, and your boots crunch against hardened deposits of salt on the floor.

Inside this chamber are a half-dozen piercers, each hoping to find a quick meal as the vermin that come into the cave have begun to dry up, and they are slowly starving.

6 Piercers [AC 3, HD 3, HP 18, #AT 1, D 3–18 (Pierce/Bite), 95% chance of surprise]

TREASURE

None

6 Piercers [AC 15, HD 3d8+9, HP 22, #AT 1, Hit +3, Dam Pierce 9 (3d6+2), Patient Hunter (will drop in clusters to kill a single target)]

2. Black Pudding

This tunnel has an oddly organic nature that expands and contracts as though pockets of air once bowed parts of it out. More water pools among small basins in the stone, and the dark liquid shimmers in your light.

A black pudding has taken up residence in this tunnel and will wait for the party to fully enter before cutting off the escape by sliding in behind them.

1 Black Pudding [AC 6, HD 10, HP 60, #AT 1, D 3–24 (Pseudopod), Dissolves wood or metal, consuming weapons in a single round, and armor in 2. If the metal is magical, add the + value to the number of rounds until consumed, thus +2 plate would take 4 rounds to consume.]

TREASURE

A successful search [Perception DC 15] of the pool at the rear of the tunnel reveals a skeletal hand still clutching a warhammer. The warhammer is a +2 weapon.

1 Black Pudding [AC 7, HD 10d10+30, HP 85, #AT 1, Hit +5, Dam Pseudopod 6 (1d6+3), Corrosive Form (Any creature striking the pudding takes 4 (1d8) 'splash' damage and a non-magical weapon corrodes permanently subtracting 1 from its damage dice per hit. Once -5 is reached, the weapon is destroyed. If struck by a pseudopod, the target's non-magical armor is reduced by 1 point, and if the armor's bonus is fully cancelled, it is considered destroyed), Damage Immunities: acid, cold, lightning, slashing. Condition Immunities: blinded, charm, deaf, prone, frightened. Split (if struck by lightning, the pudding will split into two new puddings, each with half the hit points of the original.)]

3. Gargoyles

Around this chamber a half-dozen statues, each with leering faces, tattered wings, and long claws, are trapped within the salty residue of old submersion. A single exit twists away into darkness under the unseeing eyes of the macabre statues.

These are gargoyles placed by Rosa to protect the tunnel entrance to his friend's tomb. They will wait for the party to move toward the tunnel, then screech and attack. Their calls will carry down the hall activating the clay golem who waits there.

6 Gargoyles [AC 5, HD 4+4, HP 28, #AT 4, D 1–3/1–3/1–6/1–4 (Wing buff x2, Claw, Bite), +1 or better weapon to hit]

TREASURE

None

6 Gargoyles [AC 15, HD 7d8+21, HP 52, #AT 2, Hit +4, Dam Bite 5 (1d6+2), Claw 5 (1d6+2), Multiattack, Damage Resistance: bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-magical weapons]

4. Clay Golem

Lumbering from the darkness of the tunnel, a large humanoid figure moves into the light...

Lurking in the access tunnel to the final tomb is a clay golem. Designed by Rosa, it waits to be alerted by the gargoyles that intruders are present. If the gargoyles are somehow silenced, the golem will take a full round to activate once the party approaches within 10' of it. Note: This is a nasty boss monster that was put here to keep intruders out. The Dungeon Master should keep that in mind, and the golem will not pursue fleeing characters past Room 3, as it is unlikely they can beat it on the first attempt.

1 Clay Golem [AC 7, HD 11, HP 50, #AT 1, D 3-30 (Slam), Can be struck only by magical blunt weapons and immune to spells other than move earth, disintegrate, and earthquake.]

TREASURE

None

1 Clay Golem [AC 14, HD 14d10+56, HP 133, #AT 2, Hit +8, Dam Slam 16 (2d10+5), Haste (recharge 5-6), Acid Absorption, Berserk, Immutable Form, Magic Resistance, Magic Weapons. Damage Immunities: acid, poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-magical weapons.]

5. Greater Undead

Another grand vault opens before you, this one devoid of any strata. At the center, an iron sarcophagus has been placed, a dull light emanating from it.

As you enter the vault, the sounds of clattering bones and creaking armor emanate from the back recesses. A lone figure moving from the far shadows bounds onto the sarcophagus and screeches, 'You will not violate the temple!' in a ghostly and unreal voice.

This is the revenant body of Eperious Regalt. He is a 'special' undead, and is to be treated as such for the purposes of turning. His soul cannot rest as he believes he must protect the work he did in life, that being the discovery of the Lost Temple of Tefnut buried somewhere deep under the Patina. His powers include the ability to 'Blink', as per the spell, and his blade has evolved into a magical device that becomes more powerful the closer you get to the lost temple.

1 Greater Undead (Eperious Regalt) [AC 0 (plate + shield), HD 12, HP 72, #AT 2, D (1-8)+4 (Longsword)]

TREASURE

Regalt's Blade (+1 Longsword which will become +2 if within a mile of the Lost Temple of Tefnut, and +3 when actually within the temple proper), maps, journals, and mad ramblings about the Lost Temple of Tefnut. Platemail +1, Shield +1, both inset with the symbols of the Valoria City Militia.

1 Greater Undead (Eperious Regalt) [AC 20, HD 12d10+36, HP 96, #AT 2, Hit +8, Dam Sword 10 (1d8+6), Multiattack, Damage Resistance: slashing and piercing]

Scenario Three

The Sewers of the Undercity

This third and final scenario will put the players into a more classic dungeon crawl. (Although in this case it's a sewer crawl.) I've constructed it with only a single pre-designed chamber, that being for the last boss battle. So I encourage Dungeon Masters using terrain to build encounter zones at different nexus points within the sewer frame you will find on the inside of the module cover. By all indications from Regalt's recovered notes, he insists that access to the temple had to be at the main Patina Nexus at Point 1 on the map. If you wish, you can show bits and pieces of the map to the players, but I suggest hand scrawling the design so that they must explore west to east until finally getting to Point 8.



The Hook:

Once the party has cleared the Tomb of Rosa, they will have uncovered documents indicating a forgotten temple exists below the streets of the Patina. The person creating these notes, Eperious Regalt, believed that great riches could be had within the lost temple, so it falls to the heroes to continue his life's work and find the treasures hidden there.

The Chase:

The heroes will have to work their way through a network of sewer tunnels in search of a special nexus room that allows access to the dungeons below the sewers and the temple attached to them. One thing to keep in mind, there are a number of 'encounter zones' within the sewers, and it is advised that the party moves through these before getting to the final boss.

The Truth:

Eperious Regalt was correct that an entrance to the Underhalls beneath the sewers does exist in the Patina, but what he didn't realize was that a creature lurks at the door. His maps are also a bit fractured and inaccurate, each possible location of the entrance leading to dead ends.

The Dungeon

Remember, you are in the sewers here, so this shouldn't be a pleasant crawl. It will be up to the Dungeon Master to keep the 'ick' factor to a maximum as the party moves through these refuse-laden tunnels. I'd suggest characters having to make Dexterity checks [12 Dex saving throw] during any battle or fall into rivers of filth. If anyone does fall, a successful saving throw versus poison [DC 14 Constitution] must be made to avoid contracting a parasite (1-3) or disease (4-6). These will be up to the Dungeon Master's discretion to foster and create.

1. Water Elemental (Sewer Type)

The fetid smell surrounds you as a nexus chamber opens up within the tunnel. Here, around a central pool of dark water, more tunnels branch off into the system as a whole.

Within the water a corrupted water elemental lurks, the 'abuse' of so much human waste has turned it into a murderous creature bent on destroying those who helped create it.

1 Corrupted Water Elemental [AC 2, HD 12, HP 72, #AT 1, D 5-30 (Slam) + 2-8 (Acid), +2 or better weapon to hit]

TREASURE

In the murky depths of the pools some 32 silver and 413 copper can be found, as well as a diamond wedding Ring of Protection +1. To find the bulk of this treasure (especially the ring), the party must get into the pool (see rules above on disease and parasites) and make a successful Search check [DC 16 Perception].

1 Corrupted Water Elemental [AC 14, HD 12d10+48, HP 114, #AT 2, Hit +7, Dam Slam 13 (2d8+4) + Acid Corruption 6 (2d4+2), Multiattack, Whelm (recharge 5-6). Damage Resistance: bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-magical weapons. Damage Immunities: acid, poison]

2. Doppelganger

Another chamber, this one filled with a half-dozen pillar-like supports, houses another nexus point within the greater sewer. What purpose such a chamber served during construction is beyond you, but further exits move off in various directions amid a subtle vaporous mist that swirls about the slime-covered columns.

A doppelganger lurks here waiting to insert itself into any party it can find. If an opportunity presents itself (like during a party search of the chamber), it will attack. If no such action is taken by the players, it will follow them, waiting for another creature to attack and distract them before attempting a replacement.

1 Doppelganger [AC 5, HD 4, HP 24, #AT 1, D 1-12 (Strangle), Surprise on a 1-4]

TREASURE

None

1 Doppelganger [AC 14, HD 8d8+16, HP 52, #AT 2, Hit +6, Dam Slam 7 (1d6+4), Multiattack, Read Thoughts, Ambusher (advantage on surprise attacks), Surprise Attack (first round attacks add 10 (3d6) damage per attack)]

3. Carrion Crawlers

From the horrid smell of rot, something has died within this larger nexus chamber, but you can't tell from the various bits of putrefying meat you see strewn about. Several large wormlike creatures with pale skin, segmented bodies, and head tentacles are feasting on the spoils, but quickly turn and approach the party upon entry.

These creatures are carrion crawlers that use the chamber as a feeding ground because of the traffic it sees from things moving about in the sewers.

3 Carrion Crawlers [AC 3/7, HD 3+1, HP 20, #AT 8, D Paralysis (Tentacles)]

TREASURE

They were currently feeding on the remains of a ratman patrol, and amid the remaining flesh a +1 Dagger and 78 silver and 13 gold can be found.

3 Carrion Crawlers [AC 13, HD 6d10+18, HP 51, #AT 2, Hit +8, Dam Tentacles 4 (1d4+2 of poison damage) + DC 13 Constitution or be paralyzed for 1 minute, Bite 7 (2d4+2)]

4. Otyugh

Above, light streams into this chamber from a grated square, and below large piles of semi-fresh trash are heaped. Rats scurry and squeak around the piles.

A surprise roll is required here [passive Perception 14] to notice two rats suddenly disappear as tentacle pods pull them into a larger refuse pile, followed by the commotion of a feeding frenzy within. If the party tries to cross the chamber to another exit, the trash pile will explode and an otyugh will attack.

1 Giant Otyugh [AC 3, HD 8, HP 64, #AT 3, D 1-8/1-8/2-5 (Tentacle x2, Bite), if bitten, there is a 90% chance of contracting a disease (Dungeon Master's choice, have fun!)]

TREASURE

Amid the massive pile, there is a grey Cloak of Protection +1, a Mace +2, 57 gold pieces, 412 silver pieces, and 780 copper pieces, as well as a 200 GP moonstone. If the party is searching the pile, they can find one item per successful Search check [DC 15 Perception], unless they are using Detect Magic, which will reveal the cloak and the mace.

1 Giant Otyugh [AC 14, HD 12d10+48, HP 168, #AT 3, Hit +6, Dam Bite 12 (2d8+3) + DC 15 Constitution save or contract a disease, 2 Tentacles 7 (1d8+3) bludgeoning + 1 (1d8) piercing + DC 13 escape or be grappled. Tentacle Slam: DC 14 Strength by a grappled character or take an additional 10 (2d6+3) bludgeoning damage]



5. Lizardman Hunting Party

The chamber opens to reveal a small group of spear-wielding humanoids hissing away in a heavy debate. Upon entry, the hissing subsides and your light shines across the deep green scales of the reptilian ‘men’ who turn to face you.

These are a group of lost lizardmen, a patrol that strayed out of the Underhalls looking for easy prey and now cannot find their way back. They are desperate, see any encounter as a deadly foe, and will attack on sight.

8 Lizardmen [AC 4 (scaly hide and shield), HD 2+1, HP 16, #AT 2, D 1–6 (Club) and D 1–8 (Bite)]

TREASURE

9 small jade chips in a sack (20 GP value)

8 Lizardmen [AC 16, HD 3d8+4, HP 16, #AT 2, Hit +4, Dam Bite 7 (2d4+3) Spear 7 (1d8+3)]

6. Ratmen Patrol

Within this chamber, directly across from the party, a dozen small hairy humanoids appear. Their rat-like faces reveal yellow teeth and their black eyes glitter in your light as they draw forth metal blades.

This is a small ratman patrol, one sent to patrol an area of ‘turf’ from one of the clans who claim the sewers of Valoria as their home. Considering the party as interlopers, they will attack, but once more than half their number are slain, they will retreat to warn their clan of this incursion and hopefully mount a greater resistance during a later encounter.

10 Ratmen [AC 5 (ring mail + shield), HD 3, HP 18, #AT 1, D 1–8 (Longsword)]

TREASURE

4 gold, 23 silver, 89 copper. The leader (HD 5, HP 30) has a Longsword +1 and a jeweled ring worth 75 GP.

10 Ratmen [AC 15, HD 4d8+8, HP 32, #AT 2, Hit +5, Dam Longsword 6 (1d8+2), Multiattack]

7. Tunnel Trolls

Another water nexus, the central pool filled with floating piles of trash, dominates this large chamber. Around the exterior, other exits in the sewers stretch away into darkness.

Hiding within the water, and using the trash to conceal themselves, are a mated pair of trolls. The party will be surprised on a 1–2 [passive Perception 15]. If undetected, a long-clawed hand will reach out and pull a party member into the pool. If seen, both trolls will rise from the water and attack the party in earnest.

2 Trolls [AC 4, HD 6+6, HP 42, #AT 3, D 5–8/5–8/2–12 (Claws x2, Bite), Regeneration 3 HP per round, must be killed with fire. Note: If fire is used, they will submerge to extinguish it.]

TREASURE

Within the pool (again see rules for parasites and disease) are a +2 Chain Shirt (halfling-sized), +2 Short Sword, Bag of Holding, 45 gold, 210 silver, and 890 copper. Diving to retrieve these items requires a successful Search check [DC 15 Perception], unless a Detect Magic is cast.

2 Trolls [AC 15, HD 8d10+40, HP 84, #AT 3, Hit +7, Dam Bite 7 (1d6+4), Claw 11 (2d6+4), Multiattack (2 Claws + Bite), Regeneration (10 HP at start of each turn)]

8. The Hydra at the Gate

This ‘double chamber’ nexus contains four entry points and two large column supports. The sound of sloshing water echoes through the chamber and the stonework here looks to be older, as though the crafters cobbled it together with another chamber far older than the current sewer. Once again, the fetid mist swirls on air currents drifting from access halls, and light plays against the greenish vapor.

This is actually the entry chamber to the Underhalls through which the characters will have access to the Forgotten Temple in Folio #10. Guarding the entrance (which is in the southern hall of map) is a pyro-hydra. The creature was placed here ages ago and has become very adept at defending the hall. It will attack physically as it tests the party’s strength, but if it seems to be losing (falling to ½ hit points), it will utilize its breath weapon to set what the players perceived as vapor (actually gas) in the entire chamber alight. This attack will cause 6d6 damage to everyone in the chamber [24 (6d8)]. Because the gas surrounds everyone, there is no chance of a saving throw. The pyro-hydra is immune to this damage.

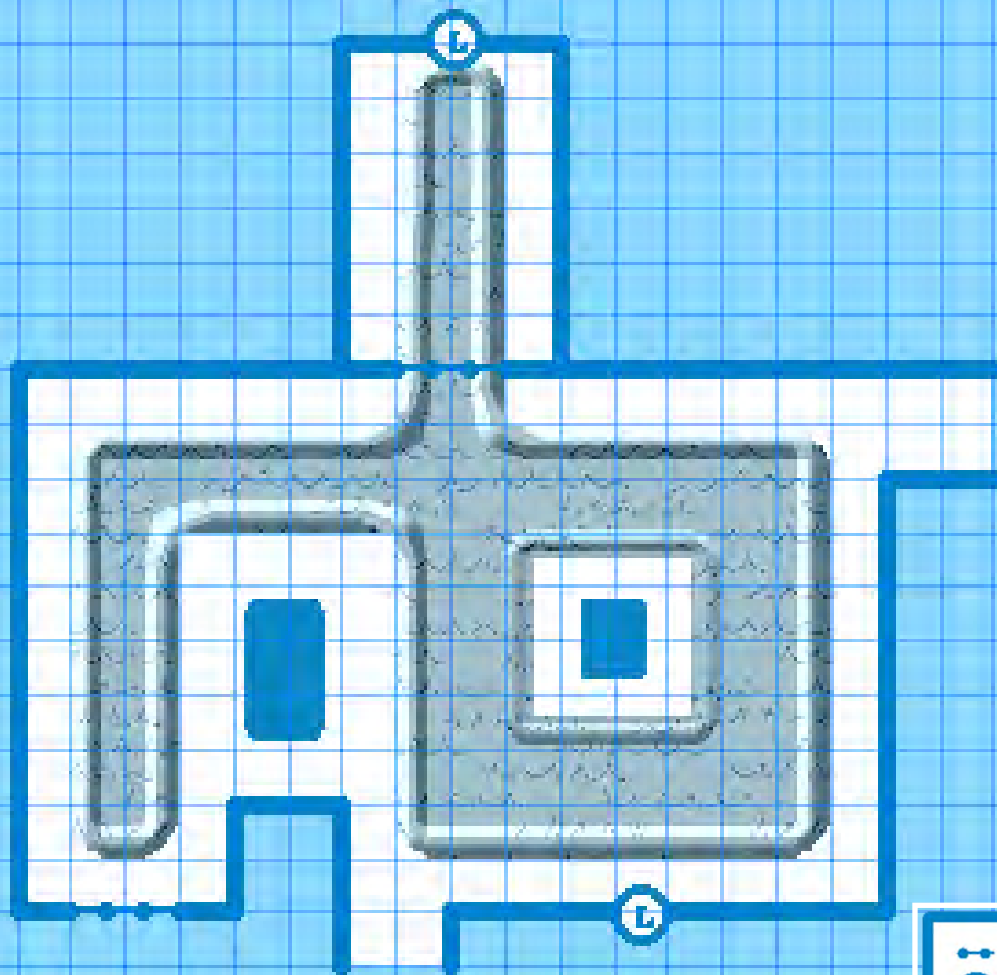
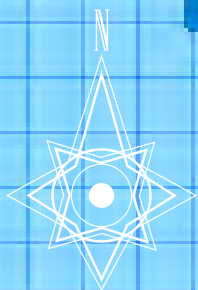
1 Pyro-Hydra [AC 0, HD 12, HP 92, #AT 7, D 1–10 (Bite), Breath: 3–18 per head (twice a day per head)]

TREASURE

Access to the Temple Dungeon

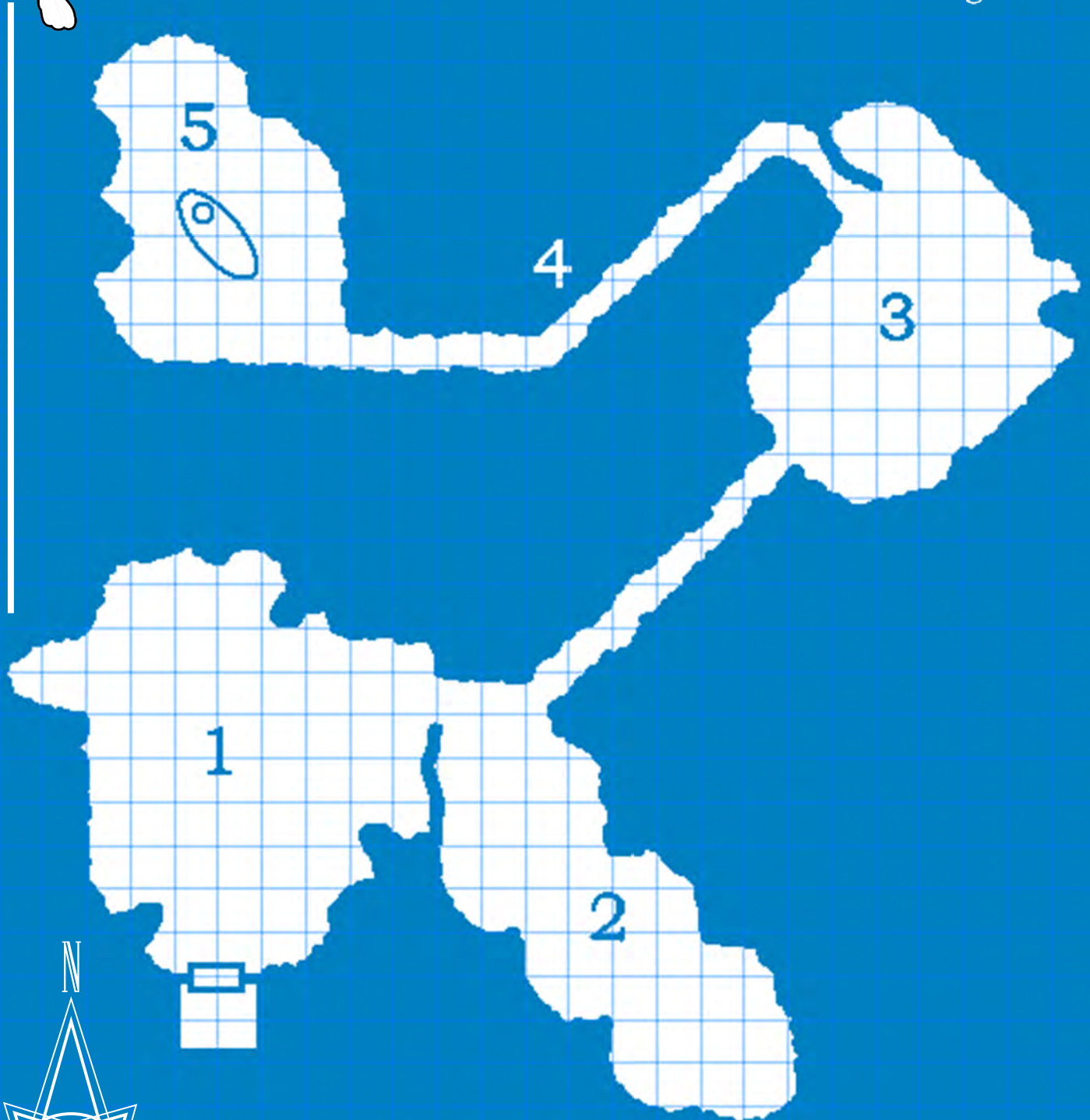
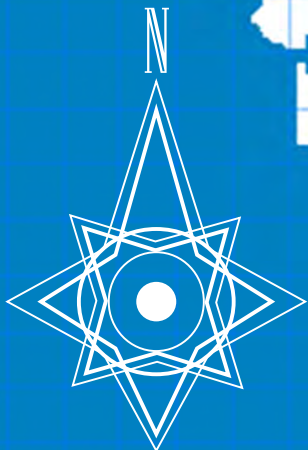
1 Pyro-Hydra [AC 20, HD 15d12+75, HP 172, #AT 7, Hit +8, Dam Bite 10 (1d10+5), Multiattack (7 Heads), Fire Breath 9 (3d6) from each head, twice a day, instead of using a bite attack]





- Grate
- L Ladder
- Pillar
- Sewer Water

THE FOLIO



DF2.5

Bonus Module

THE FOLIO

Mini-Module



THE HIDDEN VALORIA CAMPAIGN

Gang War!

Mini-Adventure DF2.5

by Scott Taylor

Gang War! is a fully 1E & 5E compatible adventure for characters levels 2–5 and contains all information needed to run an excursion against the infamous gangs of the Patina Court.

Yep, you've stepped in it now! Cross blades with several of the gangs of the Patina to help avoid an all-out war that is likely to set the neighborhood ablaze! Once again the players are pressed into service to help keep the peace in the Patina when a rumor of murder and deceit pits one gang against another, and tenuous alliances threaten to pull all other gangs into the mess as well.



Mini-Module DF2.5

Gang War!

Synopsis

Much is made inside the Patina of the various gangs—their mutual hatred of one another and always vying for supremacy—but one thing is clear, everyone bands together when outside gangs try to interfere in Patina underworld politics. A week ago, news surfaced of a new gang ‘crossing the Main’, but unlike previous incursions, this gang wore strange masks and preyed on women in particular. Can the characters align with a Patina gang long enough to put an end to this mysterious new menace?

Dungeon Master Notes

The new ‘gang’ is really a cult of Hades called the Smiling Skulls, and has moved out of spoiled hunting grounds south of the Main into the Patina looking for fresh victims to sacrifice to their dark god.

The Smiling Skulls

Led by a mad priest named Septus the Knife Lama, this small cult has been growing for years inside Valoria, but only recently began taking its service to Hades more lethally serious. Now, instead of venerating natural death, Septus has moved on to a more pragmatic murder approach, and his followers have gotten a taste for blood. They enjoy the hunt and will stalk prey through streets, causing fear and anguish before finally moving in to make the kill. Most of the gang are thieves and assassins, but Septus is a true cleric, and his adherence to murder has allowed him to wield a deadly dagger blessed by his deity.

To Cross or not to Cross

The adventure will revolve around stopping the Smiling Skulls, but the players will have to decide exactly how they wish this to occur. Some of the conflict will come inside the Patina, and once this is completed the Smiling Skulls will retreat back ‘over the Main’ and not return. However, they will still be active, and it will be up to the players to decide if they cross the Main and pursue the cult to its final destruction.

Setting the Trap

The players will find themselves faced with three challenges over the course of this mini-adventure. First, they must identify the cult and then establish what its purpose is, presumably with the help of the Ladies of Prophet. Once this is accomplished, they should enter the makeshift lair of the Smiling Skulls within the Patina and destroy the agents there. However, Septus will not be there for this battle so if the players want to end this for good, they will have to go over the Main and destroy Septus in the true headquarters.

Part One: Meeting of the Minds

1.

A party member (a female preferred, but a cleric if not) will be approached by an agent of Istas Ma, gang boss of the Ladies of Prophet. She indicates that Ma wishes a meeting concerning crimes that seem to be focused on women inside the Patina.

If the players accept the offer, they will be shown to the Rancid Cauldron where Ma waits at a back table.

Greetings, I've not much time so I'll make this quick. Word on the street is that a new gang has crossed over the Main and is targeting women for some dark purpose. I'm putting ears to the street to find out more, but as you seem keen on protecting the interests of the people of the Patina, I wanted to provide you with this...

She then slides over a scroll, looks fervently around the bar, and then bids you a good evening. Attempts to engage her further are rebuffed.

The scroll contains several accounts from beggars of men in skull masks lurking in the shadows of various streets during the late hours. They usually watch and wait, but on two occasions they have been seen chasing a woman, out late on business and not seen from again, down an alley. The last such occurrence happened on Orchard Way, a thin snake of an alley close to the Helicrium Bathhouse. The source indicated that the victim was Desdomona, a server at the Cauldron and perhaps someone the players are familiar with.

2.

Orchard Way has no connection at all to its namesake, the alley little more than a refuse-strewn byway little used by anything having less than four legs. The smell is not of a fruity nature, and as you pick through the debris, flies buzz around you in small clouds.

Oddly enough, and just as much a pain in the ass, a rust monster has tunneled up from the sewers and taken up residence in the debris, seeking out choice bits of outcast metal. Once disturbed, it will come out, hungry for the party's valuables.

1 Rust Monster: [AC 2, HD 5, HP 26, #AT 2, D Nil (tentacles), corrodes and destroys all metal touched by a tentacle, magically enchanted metals gain a saving throw equal to 10% per plus]

TREASURE

None

1 Rust Monster [AC 14, HD 5d8+5, HP 27, #AT 1, Hit +3, Dam Bite 5 (1d8+1) or Antennae, Iron Scent, Rust Metal]

Further investigation (including the use of any ranger tracking skills) will show signs of a struggle here. Someone, probably a woman, entered the alley but did not exit it, although other feet, mostly covered in a rusty residue, did leave the alley heading north.

3.

The streets of the Patina drift past as the rusty prints lead you down the secondary and tertiary byways. Finally, after several false trails and the failing light of the day, one of the dozens of abandoned outbuildings of a greater Patina mansion along the Wizard's Knoll brings an end to the trial.

Again, ranger scouting skills or thieving abilities can be employed here to get a ‘lay of the land’. Successful rolls will provide any and all of the following details concerning the dwelling.

1.

The building is made of stone, unlike many lesser structures in the area, and has a single studded wooden door and two shuttered windows. A small trail of smoke, probably from interior candles, drifts from a lone chimney.

2.

Markings on the door, softly carved around the edges, seem to be dedicated to a god. A successful Wis check [Wisdom DC 10] by a cleric can identify them as blessings to Hades.

3.

The second floor balcony of the Patina mansion has a shadowy form tucked within the recesses. This is a scout for the cult, and he will signal those inside by ringing a gong next to him. To detect him, the ranger must make a successful Wisdom check [**Wisdom DC 13**], or a thief must make a Find/Remove Traps [**DC 14**].

4.

Across from the house, and going directly into the Wizard's Knoll, is a small cavern in which the bones of several people have been stashed.

1 Cultist Scout: [AC 7, HD 4, HP 16, #AT 1, D 1-4 (dagger)]

TREASURE

None

1 Cultist Scout [AC 13, HD 6d8+6, HP 33, #AT 2, Hit +4, Dam Knife 4 (1d4+2), Multiattack]

Part Two: Sacrifice of Desdomona

1.

Searching the studded door, you quickly realize it has been bolted from the inside and cannot be opened without a ram or a spell.

A successful Open Doors Strength check will also break the bolt [**Strength DC 19**], and any thief can use Hear Noise [**Perception DC 16**] to hear the quiet murmur of chanting coming from inside.

If the door isn't broken on the first attempt, those inside will prepare for an assault, the bulk of the force holding their ground in the front room while the leader falls back into the small back room.

2.

This room is decorated with a single table stained with russet crimson splashes and leather ties. Around the walls are painted symbols of Hades, and standing at the ready are seven men in heavy cloaks and skull masks, each brandishing a blade.

7 Cultists: [AC 7, HD 4, HP 16, #AT 1, D 1-4 (dagger), 2 cultists can cast Cause Light Wounds]

TREASURE

43 SP between them all

7 Cultists (2 with spell-casting ability) [AC 13, HD 6d8+6, HP 33, #AT 2, Hit +4, Dam Knife 4 (1d4+2), Multiattack, Spellcasting (Wisdom base spell save DC 11, and +3 to attack with spells), Cantrip: Light, Sacred Flame, Thaumaturgy; 1st (4 slots): Command, Inflict Wounds, Shield of Faith]

3.

A flimsy hanging is eased aside, the room beyond a mess of cots, discarded food, and soured beer. Amid the clutter, a lone man stands with a blade at the ready, a bound woman behind him wildly struggling against her bonds.

This is Kraven, a former gladiator and newly minted sub-boss of the cult. Always one for a good fight, he will take every opportunity to engage multiple opponents at once. He's also an expert with knives, especially as thrown weapons, and will spend one attack each round hurling a knife at any spell-caster in the party.

Kraven: [AC 4, HD 8, HP 64, #AT 2/1, +4 Attack, D (1-6)+6 (short sword) or (1-4)+5 (throwing dagger), Weapon Specialization Short Sword and Dagger, Multi-Target Fighting (for every opponent fighting against Kraven, he gains a +1 to his AC due to intense training versus gang tactics)]



TREASURE

Short Sword +1, 21 GP

Kraven [AC 16, HD 15d8+45, HP 112, #AT 3, Hit +7, Dam Short Sword 7 (1d6+4) or Throwing Knives 6 (1d4+4), Multiattack, Parry (adds 3 to his AC against one melee attack that would normally hit)]

Part Three: Across the Main

1.

Notes and messages lie haphazardly amid the clutter of the back room, Desdomona weeping into the chest of anyone willing to allow it.

Here is where the party must make a choice—continue the investigation, or simply return Desdomona to her home and move on to other things. If they search the room, they will discover short communiques (a 1E campaign might employ Thieves' Cant) that instruct Kraven to continue preparations for the coming of Septus, who awaits word of six more sacrifices before coming over the Main. If the party chooses, they might confer with their contacts, including Istas, and find that informants from various gangs have located Septus's true lair south of the Main.

2.

The Main, a street that represents the very lifeblood of Valoria. Running east to west, it bisects the city and allows trade to flow. Now, for the protection of the Patina, you move across this great thoroughfare and into the markets, housing, and businesses of the Princess Market.

This should be an experience for the players, like leaving home for the first time (if the campaign to this point has been completely set inside the small but complex world of the Patina). I would suggest creating your own flair here, but the mission to put an end to Septus should be under the cover of darkness as it is likely that any armed party leaving the Patina would be stopped by wary city guards.

A Wisdom check [Wisdom DC 14] by a ranger or a Charisma check [Charisma DC 14] by a thief or bard will set you on the straight path to Septus's lair, otherwise, the new district will confuse the party and they will have to return on another night. For every failure, add an additional cultist to Septus's hall in Encounter 3.

3.

Once a fine textile shop, this now seemingly abandoned structure isn't much more than a solid square building with two levels. The front door has been subtly marked with a symbol of Hades, and the windows of the building are all shuttered.

The door isn't locked, as Septus has little fear of repercussions from his incursion into the Patina at this point. However, within the downstairs main room, seven armed cultists converse over a simple dinner, their silhouettes marked by low candlelight.

Up to 7 Cultists*: [AC 7, HD 4, HP 16, #AT 1, D 1-4 (dagger), 2 cultists can cast Cause Light Wounds]

*Varies with failures at the door, starting with 5.

TREASURE

103 SP and 7 GP between them all

Up to 7 Cultists* (2 with spell-casting ability) [AC 13, HD 6d8+6, HP 33, #AT 2, Hit +4, Dam Knife 4 (1d4+2), Multiattack, Spellcasting (Wisdom base spell save DC 11, and +3 to attack with spells), Cantrip: Light, Sacred Flame, Thaumaturgy; 1st (4 slots): Command, Inflict Wounds, Shield of Faith]

*Varies with failures at the door starting with 5.

A lone stair leads to the upper level and bastion of Septus himself. The man is currently contemplating over a tome of Hades' portents, and any commotion below will allow him to prepare himself with enchantments and spells by the time any characters arrive.

He has no wish for parley, and he knows that death has always been a possibility and perhaps even a blessing. His lone tactic—to take a player with him at all costs. He will focus all his efforts on a single target, screaming about the 'Boatman of the Styx' as he does so. However, with the preparation time, he will have cast his Silence 15' Radius spell on the top of the stairs as well as scattering a sheaf of sticks on the floor there (for a Sticks to Snakes spell). With his Bless and Protection from Good in play, he will be quite ready for combat.

Septus: [AC 0, HD 10, HP 70, #AT 1, D (1-4)+3 (dagger), Poison (saving throw vs. poison or take an additional 6-36 damage), Spells 1st (6 slots): Bless, Cause Light Wounds, Command, Protection from Good; 2nd (6 slots): Hold Person, Spiritual Hammer, Silence 15' Radius; 3rd (4 Slots): Dispel Magic, Cause Blindness, Prayer; 4th (3 slots): Cause Serious Wounds, Sticks to Snakes; 5th (2 slots): Cause Critical Wounds, Slay Living]

TREASURE:

Ring of Protection +2, Buckler Shield +1, 'Nightsinger' Dagger of Venom +3, 32 GP and 3 PP between them all

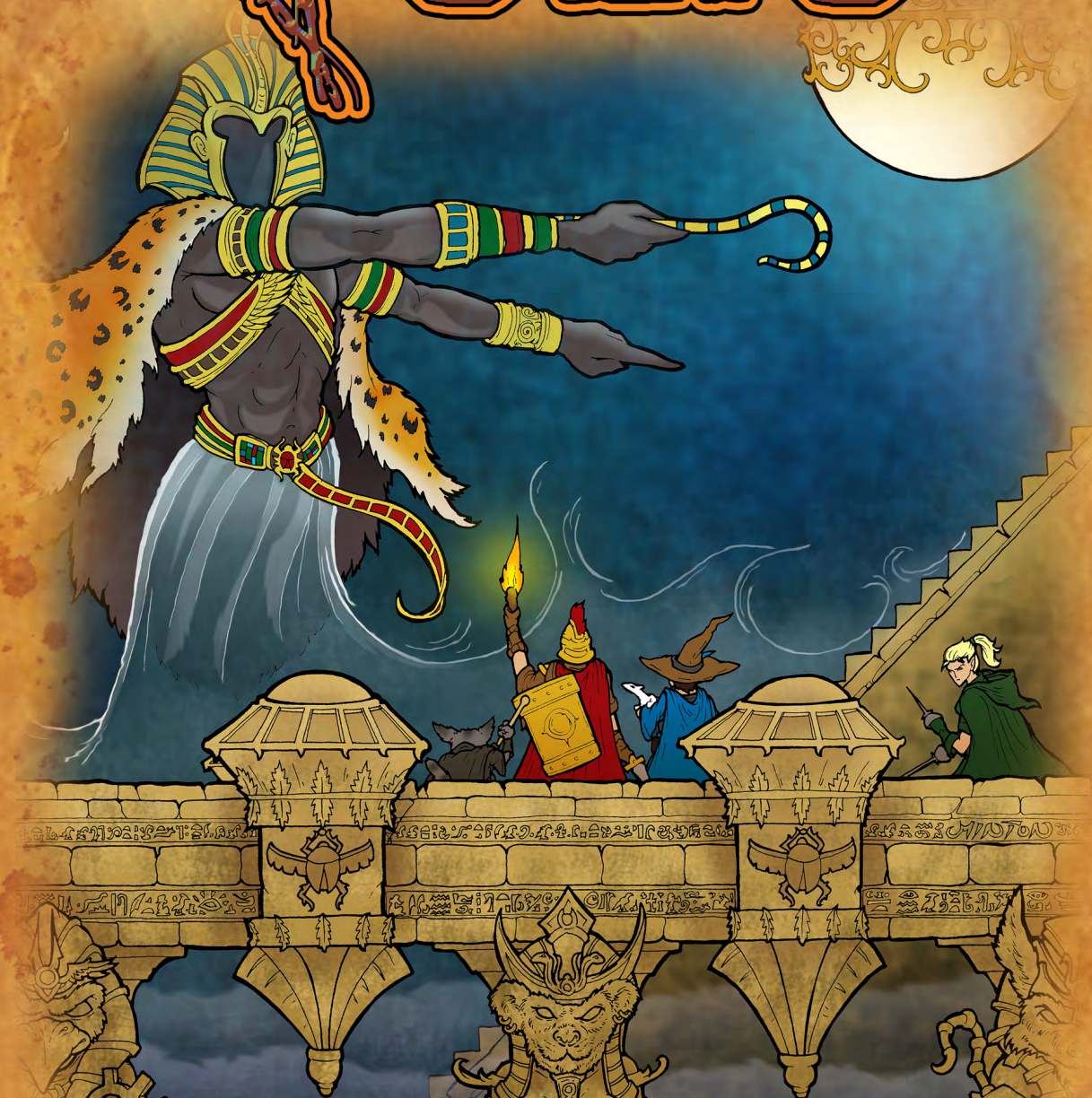
Septus [AC 13, HD 10d8+20, HP 70, #AT 2, Hit +9, Dam Knife 7 (1d4+5), Multiattack, Spellcasting (Wisdom base spell save DC 14, and +5 to attack with spells), Cantrip: Light, Sacred Flame, Thaumaturgy; Spells 1st (4 slots): Bless, Inflict Wounds, Command, Protection from Evil and Good; 2nd (3 slots): Hold Person, Spiritual Weapon, Silence; 3rd (3 Slots): Dispel Magic, Mass Harming Word, Prayer; 4th (3 slots): Guardian of Faith; 5th (2 slots): Mass Cause Wounds, Slay Living. Poison 18 (6D6) (Constitution DC 16)]

Conclusion

Once Septus has been killed, and the cult shattered, the characters can return to the Patina as unsung heroes, save for the stories told by Desdomona at the Rancid Cauldron. There is also a small bond forged between the characters and Istas, although she would deny it to her deathbed.



THE FOLIO



Forgotten Temple of Gefnut

FOLIO MODULE DF3

An Adventure for Characters Levels 5–7

by Scott Taylor



Part Three

of

The Hidden Valoria Campaign

An Adventure for

Characters Levels 5-7

The Company of the Patina Court is now far below the streets of Valoria in search of fabled treasures inside the Forgotten Temple of Tefnut. Can they survive the ruin, destroy an ancient curse, and avoid the pitfalls from enemies above the surface? Only time and great dice rolling will tell!



Temple of Tefnut



Forgotten Temple of Tefnut

An Adventure for Characters

Levels 5–7

**Vol 3. – Mythras City of Valoria
Gazetteer**

Campaign Background on The Lost Temple

Deep within the lost years of early Valoria, temples of many great gods and goddesses dotted the landscape. Some were massive constructions built for all to see, and others were more subtle venues well-known only by the parishioners who visited them regularly. It is said in the histories of Valoria that when Theud (who on other worlds is known as Zeus) brought destruction on the city in a great flood, the waters wiped out all the buildings both great and small, but that is not the case.

You see, if Valoria is known for anything, it is for the mysteries that lurk below its streets. A flood might destroy the surface world, but things below are not so easily wiped away, especially a temple dedicated to Tefnut, goddess of rivers.

Hidden far beneath the surface of the Wizard's Knoll, this temple revolved around a wellspring that bubbled to the surface and helped wash the filth of humanity from the sewers on its journey to the sea. Priestesses were known to bring unspoiled water to poor communities on the surface, and wealthy members of arcane guilds venerated the goddess with gifts of gold and enchanted relics for her abode.

Although Theud's flood drove the population from the city, thus ending the patronage and veneration of the temple, the priestesses remained for years undisturbed below the knoll. Over the passing of time they were all but forgotten, those passing to the next life mummified by the priestesses that remained.

It was during these lean and sallow years, as Tefnut's power waned, that a treasure hunting priest named Aman-Utep, servant of the jackal god Set, learned of the existence of the temple and made his way through the destruction to its doors. Charismatic and mysterious, he ingratiated his way into the remaining priestess hierarchy until finally making a play for the temple itself. His attempt failed and he was killed, but his mummified body was still entombed within the temple and the unending hate of his malice toward the priestesses festered in his afterlife. So great was his anger that a sickness spread from it among the remaining priestesses, each in turn falling to the power until the temple became a crypt and the darkness of Aman-Utep collected evil creatures around his incarcerated body.

Eventually, the creatures of darkness freed the man, now mummy, who called them and he stalked the temple, desecrating the artifacts and destroying what he could. Madness was his companion, and although his hate remained, his mind had been taken long ago in his burial preparations by the priestesses, so he was forever broken.

Today, the temple is a place of darkness lorded over by the insane mummy of Aman-Utep and replete with all manner of monsters that have collected around his evil summoning. Much of the wealth of the former temple has been bled away by thievery of those living in the ruin, but there are still a few artifacts left that Aman-Utep has not allowed from his presence.

Overall Story Arcs and Threads

There are two main storylines in this adventure. The first revolves around the characters' quest to uncover the mystery of the lost temple, and by proxy their unavoidable fate to put an end to Aman-



Utep. The second arc is one of old debts and revenge against the Teller Gang and its leader Notorus Rexa. The Tellers, who have been keeping tabs on the characters for weeks, will have a secondary party following the characters as they enter the temple and will be waiting to take what they believe is theirs once the players defeat Aman-Utep.

Adventure Synopsis

At the end of Folio #9 the players should have found a way to defeat the guardian at the gate (hydra) and opened a way into the secret passages that lead into the old temple of Tefnut. Once inside, the characters will have to defeat the various monsters that have taken up residence and defeat the mummy Aman-Utep. After doing so, they will finally put an end to the Teller Gang once and for all when the gang attempts to murder them before they can exit the temple. If completed correctly, the characters will have achieved some wealth, folk hero status among the Patina Court, and eliminated a direct threat to the population of the neighborhood—the Teller Gang.

Dungeon Master Notes & Suggestions

1. The Temple Feel

Obviously for those playing with Dwarven Forge terrain, the Realm of the Ancients set has a specific Greco-Roman feel and not something specifically bound to an Egyptian water goddess such as Tefnut. Still, the primary religion of Valoria has always been Greco-Roman, so I think it can be easily explained that the worshiping of Tefnut was somewhat 'in country' where architectural style is concerned. This does not, however, address the 'fallen' essence of the temple versus the standard painting of the Dwarven Forge terrain. If you are going to paint your own version, I'd suggest leaning more toward the dark side—with blood painted hieroglyphs and all other manner of graffiti, refuse, and debris strewn about the temple. My descriptions in the adventure will give you a good view of what I'm thinking, but the overall module map has been left to Dwarven Forge standard for easier setup in a quick-run campaign.

2. Running the Mad Aman-Utep

Aman-Utep is an interesting 'boss' in that he is inherently insane (he did have his brain ripped out of his nose after all) and should be played as such. My suggestions for him would be mad cackling that drifts through the temple on occasion, followed by shrieks and wails, then crashes, and finally laughter (wash, rinse, repeat). If you do this enough, especially the random shrieks, it will certainly set your players on edge. The temple will have plenty of holes in it that the sounds can drift through so that the players will never really know where the mummy is. Once encountered, Aman-Utep will be all about rage and destruction, two things his persona still adheres to.

3. Generating Experience and Treasure

This is one of the toughest things I've dealt with during this trilogy, and if you have run things to this point as laid out in Folio #8 & #9, the characters will still be dirt poor. Now the question of whether to

keep them that way or end the campaign on a financial uptick is up to you as the DM. I'd suggest limiting treasure if you intend to keep the campaign going beyond the events that unfold in the trilogy, but if you want the characters to retire in style, then provide the wealth I've described in the adventure and perhaps they can buy one of the Patina mansions and become benevolent NPCs in another campaign with lower level characters. Again, it is up to you, but remember that power (i.e., treasure and magic) corrupts, and ultimate power corrupts ultimately.

4. How to Deal with the Teller Ambush

By this point in the campaign, the Tellers should be the thorn in the characters' side that just keeps on giving. If they don't hate the Tellers, you've done something wrong as a DM. However, the nexus point of this campaign will be set in this ambush, and you must make certain you've planned accordingly. The characters will have just completed a massive grind to kill Aman-Utep (no easy task), and a fully prepared and healed Teller party will be in wait to finish the job the mummy failed to do. Thus, you must be able to rightly gauge the characters' remaining strength and adjust the Tellers accordingly (by making it clear they've had nasty encounters too if necessary). This should be a battle that is set on the razor's edge, and the hope is the players come out on top, but just barely, in an epic conclusion that sets the stage to 'right' for the ending of the campaign.

Resolution of the campaign should be in the details of the characters' relationships with the Patina and how that plays out in what I see as a perfect opportunity for retirement (even if not permanent). I'll go into a more stratified set of endgame notes below, but as the DM, you are the one that knows your players, their characters, and the final motivations of each, so be sure to play heavily into that.

The Ritual of Tefnut

A kind of 'aside' within the adventure is the abduction of a female character by the fallen priestess mummies of Tefnut. In this scenario the character is drugged and made into the reincarnated aspect of the former high priestess of Tefnut of the temple. Artist Chet Minton has done a fantastic rendering of the ceremony on the front cover of this gazetteer, and for those playing there are a couple of very cool things that can happen upon completion of the ceremony. The primary of these is that the player character will gain the following special abilities, Cure Serious Wounds **[Cure]**, Bless, and Create Water (each once per day). The other aspect is more intrusive, that being the switching of the character's alignment to that of Tefnut, which is Lawful Good.

The ceremony itself takes nearly an hour, and certainly the players will have a chance to 'save' the character before completion. Still, if they have an understanding of religion (either by being a cleric or by skills in 5E), they will understand that nothing truly nefarious is occurring. However, in the endgame of the Hidden Valoria, that character so transformed by this ceremony might wish to take on the cleric class and reclaim the temple in the name of Tefnut—a very cool way to retire a character. Or, the transformed character could be required to spend the next one to two years reestablishing the temple prior to the next adventure.

Completing the Campaign

Well, assuming the characters are victorious over Aman-Utep and the Tellers, there should be a good deal of celebration at hand. However, there are a lot of loose ends that probably need to be played out, so I'm going to list some situations below that I think are important resolution points for the end of The Hidden Valoria.

1.

Where to live? To this point, it can be assumed that the players have been living in the Fallen Warlock Hostel, but if they escape the temple with gold, they may finally be able to move up the social ladder



in the Patina. What better way to do this than finding a new home, and considering the amount of abandoned homes in the Patina, the real estate market is bullish. A personal goal of many of my players was to acquire one of the Patina mansions, but I will leave that up to the DM to decide if they can afford one or if there is a particular one that has always drawn their interest. Also, if you are reading all these together and have yet to run them, I would suggest describing a particularly cool abandoned mansion that the players pass often as it might be a great carrot that could be delivered upon completion of the campaign.

2.

What becomes of the Teller power vacuum? Here is the place for the party rogue, assuming there is an interest, to take over the Helicrium Bathhouse and make a bid to become an honest businessman or the head of a particular gang/thieves guild. After all the contacts made in the Patina, and even excursions outside the neighborhood as detailed in Patina Court Places and the mini-adventures, a rogue could make a good name for himself in all types of various criminal markets.

3.

What relationships can now move forward? When I game, I do it for one reason and one reason only, the character relationships outside the dungeon. If players have become integral to the Patina, and have taken on adventures described in supplementary publications to the Folios themselves, then they most certainly have formed strong attachments to various NPCs along the way. Some of these may move toward coupling and marriage, some might look into adoption, some might be in business ventures, but whatever the case, all players should have some cool character trait that you can exploit at the end of the campaign to give them a sense of purpose higher than collecting wealth inside a dungeon.

4.

Familiarity, Family, and Moving On... As The Hidden Valoria ends, we find the characters in what I would consider a 'sweet spot' for gaming, the levels between 5 and 10. It is a very tough point to retire a character, but perhaps after an extended campaign that is exactly what you wish to do. If you don't though, you must make

decisions as to the next stage in the characters' careers. This might mean leaving the Patina and finding new adventures and dungeons outside the city of Valoria. Lord knows Stefan and company have gone to great lengths to make Mythras a dynamic and viable place to game, especially for characters with some experience under their belts. Perhaps business interests require a trip to Urn, or maybe an elf in the party needs to return to Golden Sylph. Whatever the case, you'll need to develop the final chapters of the characters' lives while also making sure to plan for the future if players wish to continue with the stories you've created here.

New Monster:

Hate Crawler

Lawful Evil

Frequency: Very Rare

No. Appearing: 1–6

Armor Class: 4

HD: 4+3

Move: 12"

No. of Attacks: 8

Damage/Attack: --

Special Attacks: Paralysis, Sadistic Cruelty

Special Defense: NIL

Magic Resistance: Standard

Intelligence: Very

Size: L (9' long)

Psionic Ability: NIL

% in lair: 50%

Treasure Type: B

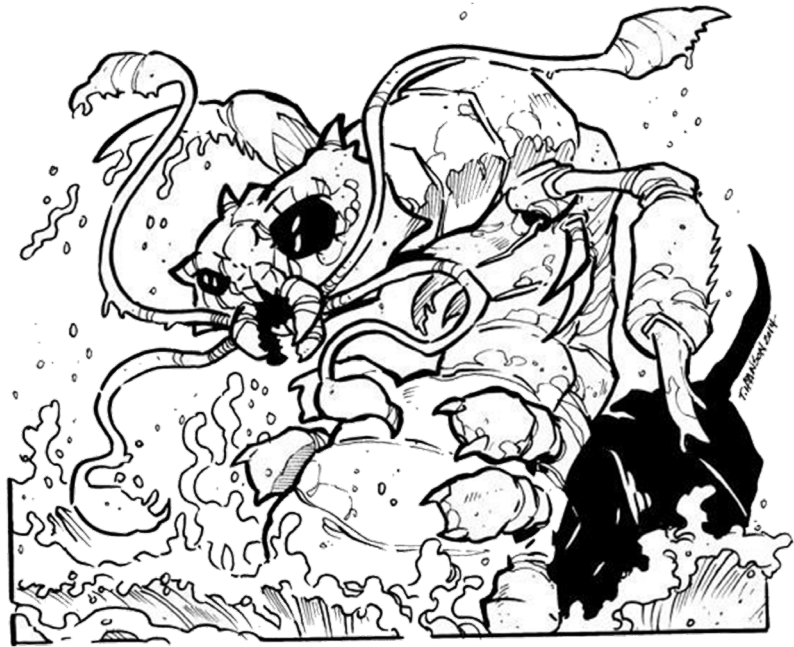
Paralysis: The eight striking tentacles of the hate crawler can paralyze a foe, requiring a successful saving throw versus paralysis to resist. Paralysis lasts one minute (cumulative with multiple strikes up to three minutes), and feeding damage from a hate crawler is 1d6 per round once they have begun.

Sadistic Cruelty: Bound by the tenants of its creator, the hate crawler cannot stop itself from trying to increase the level of suffering of its victims. It is so obsessed with suffering that it will actually take several rounds (1d4) to position the victims so that they may watch themselves be eaten and will not begin feeding if other targets are available, instead leaving the paralyzed victims for later.

Hate Crawler [AC 14, HD 7d10+21, HP 59, Init +3, #AT 2, Hit +8, Dam Tentacle 4 (1d4+2) **poison damage and the target must make a successful DC 15 Constitution save or be paralyzed for 1 minute, Bite 7 (2d4+2)]**

In essence, the hate crawler is a form of evilly maligned carrion crawler. Corrupted by the powers of a greater evil entity while in the pupa state, the hate crawler is no longer a creature that is animalistic in its nature but instead bound to the suffering of others. These creatures actually enjoy the process of paralyzing their victims and slowly consuming them. They will eat slowly, picking parts of a victim that will not kill it immediately and will often go to great pains to see that the victims of its hunger witness their own consumption.

Hate crawlers also enjoy hunting in small packs, so that once they have victims, they can showcase the suffering to each other. If these things had Instagram, you really wouldn't want to follow them!



DF3: Forgotten Temple of Tefnut

Introduction

First and foremost, remember this is both a 1E & 5E adventure, and as those systems do sometimes vary greatly where creature strength is concerned, be sure to set the correct tone for each encounter by modifying hit dice and number of enemies where you feel necessary. I've currently set this adventure to be of epic caliber scale for characters of the levels involved, so keep that in mind.

Also, I've broken the adventure down into three sections, each one built using a full Realms of the Ancients V1 and V2 set. If you are running these with terrain, you can run each section without interfering with the others, assuming you complete each before moving on.

Echoing Sounds: Remember, it is primary to the adventure that Aman-Utep is encountered last, so provide him as a free-floating 'boss'. Also, in the gazetteer you will have read about his maniacal laughter and noises. These can be used to randomly throw players off, making them go the direction you want, only to find things other than Aman-Utep when they arrive.

Secret Room

The second set of free-floating monsters are the mummy priestesses of Tefnut who will try to abduct a female member of the party (assuming one is available). If there is no such party member, they will be found in Room 13.

Entry Halls

1. Entry Stair (Down)

Light flickers off the walls of ancient frescos, and the dense smell of mildew hangs in the air. A set of heavily worn marble steps drop away to a large vaulted chamber with standing puddles of dark water dribbling away into a carved pit at the far end.

This is the main entry to the temple and is home to a yellow mold that sends its spores into the air when the chamber is disturbed by any traffic.

1 Giant Yellow Mold [AC 9, HD --, HP --, #AT 1 (Spores), D Poison, Spores release in a 10' area and a saving throw versus poison is necessary or the victim's lungs will fill with spores that will asphyxiate it within 24 hours unless a Cure Disease or Resurrection is cast. It can be easily destroyed using fire-based attacks.]

TREASURE
None

1 Giant Yellow Mold [AC 8, HD --, HP --, #AT 1, Hit --, Dam (Spores) 4 (1d4+2), Asphyxiating Spores (DC 17 Constitution saving throw or victim will suffocate from spores in their lungs over the next 24 hours. A successful Cure Disease spell will stop the spores from growing inside the victim.)]

2. Dead End

A passage, mirroring the entry stair, moves away southeast only to end in a solid wall. Another carved pit, slick with slimy water runoff, is the only feature of this small chamber.

The passage was created long ago with the thought to make a grand stair up to the Wizard's Knoll, but construction was halted after the flood. Now, the small chamber is home to an ochre jelly which lurks in the slimy reservoir of the pit.

1 Ochre Jelly [AC 8, HD 6, HP 36, #AT 1, D 3–12, Pseudopod, Split (if struck by lightning or slashing weapons, the jelly will split into two jellies with half the hit points of the original.)]

TREASURE
None

1 Ochre Jelly [AC 8, HD 6d10+12, HP 45, #AT 1, Hit +4, Dam Pseudopod 9 (2d6+2) bludgeoning plus 3 (1d6) acid damage, Split (when struck by lightning or slashing attacks, the jelly will split into two jellies with half the hits of the original.)]

3. The Great Door

At the north end of this wide hall, a large door rests between two towering pillars of carven marble.

The door is locked [DC 17] and will need to be opened in some fashion before entry. It is also trapped [DC 19] with a gong that sounds if the key is not used, thus alerting creatures within the temple that someone has entered their tortured domain.

4. Worshiper Gathering Vault

A massive diamond-shaped chamber opens up beyond the door, marble pillars supporting the faded cobalt blue ceiling as your light fades into shades of grey to the north. Two doors, one on each side of the chamber, remain closed, and well-worn floor tiles give testament to the thousands of temple devotees who once took prayer in this chamber.

Lurking behind the second pillar, attached to the ceiling, is a decapus (see illustration). The tentacled appendage and massive maw creature will attempt to snag victims from the floor and draw them up to its mouth if possible.

1 Decapus [AC 5 (2), HD 10, HP 60, #AT 9, D 1–6, Tentacles, Bite (Any creature struck by a tentacle at 4 more than is required will be pulled up to the gaping maw and delivered a bite attack causing 3–30 points of damage.)]

TREASURE

32 gold and 70 silver are scattered among the bones and refuse below the creature's hanging point.

1 Decapus [AC 15 (18), HD 10d10+40, HP 90, #AT 6, Hit +5, Dam Tentacle 7 (1d6+4) plus Grapple 4 (1d4+2) DC 12 Escape, Multiattack (6 tentacles), Grappler (any grappled character attacked with a bite is considered at advantage for the decapus), Bite 20 (3d10+5) any grappled character will be bitten on the following round (up to three characters per round)]

5. Priest Vestibule One

The door creaks open as a large plume of dust explodes into your eyes obscuring all vision.



This is one of two chambers that house a small collection of kobolds known as the Screammers. They are well-versed in traps, and although the door of this chamber may be checked for traps, none can be found because it is actually the kobolds who release the dust cloud upon entry (having been alerted to the characters' presence either by the gong or spies in Room 6. However, a successful Hear Noise [passive Perception 17] will give the party some indication that there are creatures in the chamber before the door is opened.

Remember, there is a drainage grate half-concealed at the back of the chamber that a small (halfling-sized or smaller) person can use to crawl between Room 5 and 6, thus, if the battle is going badly, the kobolds can retreat.

The dust will provide partial cover to the kobolds within the room, dropping their AC by 4 points [Partial Cover], and they will use the distraction to pepper the players with sling bullets as their counterparts from Room 6 slip out and try to backstab the party from behind (assuming this chamber was opened first).

6 Kobolds [AC 7 (3), HD 1/2, HP 3, #AT 1, D 1–6]

TREASURE

40 copper pieces in pouches among them

6 Kobolds [AC 12 (+ Partial Cover), HD 2d6-2, HP 5, #AT 1, Hit +4, Dam Javelin 4 (1d4+2), Pack Tactics (Kobolds are at advantage if attacking with allies within 5 feet.)]

6. Priest Vestibule Two

The small chamber is filled with debris and what look to be makeshift beds or nests on the floor. A single stool stands close to the door, positioned near a crack in the wall that looks out into the main worship chamber.

If this is the first room searched by the party, the kobolds normally in residence will have slipped through the drainage grate in the back to cluster in Room 5. The grate can be discovered by a successful Search roll [**Perception 15**].

If this is not the first room checked, the kobolds will move silently out of the chamber once the dust cloud is released and attempt to backstab the party. They are considered to be 3rd level thieves for the purposes of skills.

6 Kobolds [AC 7, HD 1/2, HP 3, #AT 1, D 1-6, Move Silently 40% (as a group), Backstab x2]

TREASURE

20 silver and 30 copper pieces in pouches among them
6 Kobolds [AC 12, HD 2d6-2, HP 5, #AT 1, Hit +4, Dam Javelin 4 (1d4+2), Pack Tactics (Kobolds are at advantage if attacking with allies within 5 feet.), Sneak Attack 3 (1d6), Stealth +5]

Grand Salon

7. Entry

The great doors swing open to reveal a large square chamber decorated with eight cylindrical pillars. Debris litters the floor, and your light source provides a glimpse of a larger chamber that opens up to the north.

A successful Search check [**Perception 15**] reveals a sack with seven small gems (20 GP each) and 12 gold pieces behind one of the pillars.

8. Chamber of Random Darkness

Your light dimly fills a large room with double-door exits to the north, east, and west, all of which stand closed. In the center of the chamber, a dragon mosaic has been laid into the floor with half a dozen glowing stones dimly illuminating the ancient surface.

Investigation of the room will trigger the Darkness spell, all light being extinguished as mummy priestesses from Room 13 slip among the party, cast up to six Hold Person spells against a female target, and then slip away back to Room 13 for the Tefnut Ritual.

The darkness will only last five rounds, but until that time no light, even magical, will work in the chamber. If there is no female member of the party, the darkness will still occur, but the mummy priestesses will not come, and the characters will simply be 'spooked' by the mysterious event.

If the party somehow thwarts the abduction, that is fine, and the DM can use the stats for the mummy priestesses if a fight ensues, but they are loath to actually participate in combat and will always try to flee if possible.

9. Priest's Vestibule One

Situated in an alcove to the south of the main room, this chamber is filled with a large pile of refuse. Crumbling wooden benches still sit against the chamber walls as if this was a waiting area of some kind.

Inside the pile of debris, surprise 3 in 6 [**Perception 16**], are two large hate crawlers, the corrupted insects ready to capture and later devour any party member they can get their tentacles on.

2 Hate Crawlers [AC 4, HD 4+3, HP 27, #AT 8, D ---, Paralysis]

TREASURE

None

2 Hate Crawlers [AC 14, HD 7d10+21, HP 59, #AT 2, Hit +8, Dam Tentacle 4 (1d4+2) poison damage and the target must make a successful DC 15 Constitution save or be paralyzed for 1 minute, Bite 7 (2d4+2)]

10. Priest's Vestibule Two

This small chamber is covered in a hard amber resin that molds itself around old benches. The resin creates several globes, each with a single opening, and a palpable feeling of heat hangs in the small chamber.

This is a kobold hatchery, and the globes each hold half a dozen eggs. However, the kobold nurses have fled into drainage tunnels with two eggs each, so there is no resistance by the clan.

11. 2nd Hall of Pillars

Another good-sized square hall rises around you supported again by eight pillars. Hieroglyphs stand out on the pillars, and a single opening amid them leads north. However, upon your entry, a winged and bird-headed creature rises from a sitting position near the entrance.

This is the lair of a Hieraco Sphinx, the creature protecting the mummy priestesses who dwell in the secret room at the north of the main hall.

1 Hieraco Sphinx [AC 1, HD 9, HP 54, #AT 3, D 2-8/2-8/1-10, Claw/Claw/Bite]

TREASURE

None

1 Hieraco Sphinx [AC 17, HD 9d10+36, HP 81, #AT 3, Hit +12, Dam Claw 17 (2d10+6), Bite 20 (3d10+5), Multiattack (2 claws and 1 bite)]

12. Cloister Chamber of the Higher Classes

A massive chamber, replete with huge basalt and marble square pillars, stretches before you.

Lurking behind the pillars is a giant two-headed troll, the beast ready to crush heads and add to his treasure which he holds within a bag in the rear left of the chamber.

Beyond the troll, the chamber has another large secret, that being a revolving panel in the north wall. A Detect Secret Doors check can find the activator [**Perception 16**].

1 Two-Headed Troll [AC 4, HD 10, HP 60, #AT 4, D 1-6/1-6/1-10/1-10, Claw x2, Bite x2 (at a single opponent), Regeneration at 1 HP per melee round]

TREASURE

210 gold pieces, +2 Scimitar, +2 Chain Shirt,
4 gems (35 GP each)

1 Two-Headed Troll [AC 15, HD 10d10+50, HP 104, #AT 3, Hit +7, Dam Bite 14 (2d6+8) Claw 11 (2d6+4), Multiattack (2 claws and a double bite from its two heads), Regeneration (10 HP per round)]

13. Water Ritual Chamber

As the wall shifts and revolves, a chamber filled with the sounds of running water appears. Two fountains, one on the east wall and one on the west, still pour fresh water into tunnels that must flow beneath the floor. A half-dozen slender mummies stand at attention before a painting of a blue-skinned goddess on the back wall.

If one of the party members has been abducted, read the following: Your companion, now dressed in the fashion of a priestess, stands as though in a daze; a large mummy with a bronze cat mask stands behind her.



The priestesses, although benevolent in their nature, have either completed a ritual of indoctrination of another living priestess, or have finally given up entirely. Either way, they want release from this cursed waking death and will attack the party, hoping to find peace in the afterlife once their bodies are destroyed. Considering they want to die, they will only attack with their fists, their fear powers being held back, and only one priestess at a time will walk forward to do combat, the others staying back until their sister is destroyed.

6 Mummy Priestesses [AC 3, HD 6+3, HP 35, #AT 1, D 1-12, Rotting Fist will cause mummy rot unless a successful save versus magic is made. Can only be hit by +1 or better weapons and all damage from those is divided by 2.]

TREASURE

6 ornate bronze masks (100 GP each)

6 Mummy Priestesses [AC 11, HD 9d8+18, HP 58, #AT 2, Hit +5, Dam Rotting Fist 10 (2d6+3) plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage (plus a DC 12 Constitution check or be cursed with mummy rot), Dreadful Glare (DC 11 Wisdom or frightened and cannot attack until next turn), Damage Resistance: non-magical weapons]

West Wing

14. Entry Hall and Stair

A long hall, broken in the middle by a small stair, creeps farther into the western sections of the temple.

15. Acolyte's Chamber and Dragon's Lair

The entry hall gives way to the musky odor of a massive beast mixed with acidic air that burns against the surface of your tongue.

Within the hall is a young black dragon, the beast summoned as a juvenile by Aman-Utep upon his arrival at the temple and still in

residence as he has no direct way out. He isn't particularly cruel as most of his kindred, and takes some pleasure in making petty deals with the kobolds who live within the temple proper. However, his favorite pastime is using his burgeoning magic to invest energy into one of the mummy priestesses he captured some years ago. She is currently chained between two pillars in his lair, and although dead when he captured her, she is once again 'alive', although not exactly like a normal human. Her desecrated flesh has been restored, and her internal organs rejuvenated (the dragon has been having the kobolds steal her canopic jars for several years), but her brain was destroyed in the mummification process so she is quite mindless, only driven by a desire to return to her 'sisters' and complete the works of Tefnut. Only powerful magic, such as a Wish or Heal spell, will restore her mind to full capacity.

Also, the dragon has yet to fully understand the street value of currency, so he has spent years collecting copper coins instead of hoarding gold. The Screamers would actually trade copper to the dragon for gold, then exchange it for goods with ratmen closer to the surface.

1 Juvenile Black Dragon [AC 3, HD 6+12, HP 60, #AT 3 (Plus Breath Weapon), D (1-4)+8/(1-4)+8/(3-18)+4, Claw/Claw/Bite (bite also does 2-12 acid damage), Breath Weapon (60 points in a 60' stream)]

TREASURE

19,800 copper pieces, 270 silver pieces, 45 gold pieces, 17 gems (50 GP each), 200 precious stones (10 GP each), +3 Longsword in a silvered sheath, +2 Shield, Wand of Fireballs (8 charges left), Bracers of Defense AC 4 [Bracers of Defense], Dwarven Plate Mail +2.

1 Young Black Dragon [AC 18, HD 15d10+45, HP 127, #AT 3, Hit +7, Dam Bite 15 (2d10+4) piercing plus 4 (1d8) acid, Claw 11 (2d6+4) slashing, Acid Breath (recharge 5-6) Dex 14 saving throw or take 49 (11d8) acid damage (half that with a successful saving throw)]

16. Secondary Priest Room

Within this chamber, which looks to have been the sleeping room of a priest of some account, a magnificent fresco of an ancient tower still exhibits beauty on the southern wall. A chest, looking to have been drug from the treasure hoard of the dragon, rests close to the eastern wall.

The chest is actually a mimic, the thing hoping to draw targets to it for quick devouring.

1 Mimic [AC 7, HD 7, HP 36, #AT 1, D 3-12, Bite]

TREASURE

None

1 Mimic [AC 12, HD 9d8+18, HP 58, #AT 1, Hit +5, Dam Pseudopod 7 (1d8+3) plus DC 13 escape versus its adhesive grip trait or be grappled and subject to Bite 7 (1d8+3) piercing plus 4 (1d8) acid, Grappler (all attacks on a grappled opponent are at advantage)]

17. Tertiary Priest Room

A single bed, now moldered and rotting, rests next to a broken desk, and bits of scrolls make up a pile of refuse in the chamber.

This was another priest's chamber, long since abandoned.

Clerical Wing



18. Summoning Chamber One

No door stands at the verge of this chamber, the room long with half-faded hieroglyphs upon the walls. At the far end is an empty fountain, and beside it, glowing in ghostly light, are three figures—one large, one robed in black, and the final woman-like with armor and blade.

These are the undead trio, an unfortunate wizard, his bodyguard, and his flesh golem that fell victim to his own failed summoning long ago. The spell turned them into undead and deposited them in this ancient chamber where they stay as though convinced that one day they will be sent back. However, invaders to their room are not allowed, and they will defend it with great purpose. They are now simply considered 'greater undead', and use mundane attacks against all victims.

3 Greater Undead [AC 3, HD 8, HP 48, #AT 1, D 1–10, Fist or Weapon]

TREASURE None

3 Greater Undead [AC 17, HD 8d10+8, HP 48, #AT 1, Hit +7, Dam Fist or Weapon 10 (1d8+6), Undead Traits]

19. Mummification Chamber

Hieroglyphs on the walls of this long open chamber depict all aspects of preparing a body for the afterlife. Several broken tables, now little more than piles of wood, litter the middle of the room, and around them half a dozen black skinned dogs lurk.

These are the hell hound pets of the dragon, kept here in a kind of kennel by the dark will and fear factor of the dragon. Once it is dead, they will begin to explore, the party being the first thing they choose to kill along their way.

6 Hell Hounds [AC 4, HD 4, HP 24, #AT 1, D 1–10, Bite, Fire Breath 4 HPs to all in 5' area]

TREASURE None

6 Hell Hounds [AC 15, HD 7d8+14, HP 45, #AT 1, Hit +5, Dam Bite 7 (1d8+3) piercing plus 7 (2d6) fire. Fire Breath (recharge 5–6) 21 (6d6) DC 12 Dexterity saving throw for ½ damage, Pack Tactics (are considered at advantage on attacks if any other hounds are within 5')]

20. Entry Stair

A small rise connects the Clerical Wing of the temple to the Central Annex, a much larger room opening up at the end of the hall.

21. Scorpion's Nest and Sacrificial Dais

This grand salon, once decorated in full opulence to the goddess Tefnut, has fallen into darkness as the walls are blackened with mold, the floor stained with refuse and blood, and the artwork and pillars defaced with insane graffiti. A large vestibule lies to the east, and a massive set of double doors rise between heavy square pillars to the north. Along the south wall, a stone stair and stage rises, the bulk of it covered in shiny coppery-red boulders.

The boulders are actually a hive of giant scorpions, the nest rising to 'greet' anyone who looks to investigate the area.

6 Giant Scorpions [AC 3, HD 5+5, HP 35, #AT 3, D 1–10/1–10/1–4, Claw/Claw/Sting, Poison stinger (save versus poison or die instantly)]

TREASURE

A +2 Sabre of Sharpness lies amid the stones, clasped within a skeletal hand that wears a +2 Ring of Protection.

6 Giant Scorpions [AC 15, HD 7d10+14, HP 52, #AT 3, Hit +4, Dam Claw 6 (1d8+2) plus grapple (DC 12 escape), Sting 7 (1d10+2) piercing and DC 12 Constitution saving throw or take 22 (4d10) poison or half that on a success]

22. High Priest's Entry Salon

A heaping pile of debris, some lashed together with ropes and cloth ties, bars entry into the chamber beyond, and a row of spears can be seen peeking out from holes in the makeshift wall.

This is the Kobold Defensive Works, a wall that can resist 50 points of area effect damage or 100 points of direct damage (like chopping or hacking with an axe). If attacked in any way, a gang of six kobolds will begin hurling spears (more like javelins), arrows, and even poison darts (laced with dragon sputum acid).

6 Kobolds [AC 7, HD 1½, HP 3, #AT 1, D 1–6, plus possible acid 1d4]

TREASURE

60 silver pieces in pouches among them

6 Kobolds [AC 12, HD 2d6-2, HP 5, #AT 1, Hit +4, Dam Javelin 4 (1d4+2), Pack Tactics (Kobolds are at advantage if attacking with allies within 5 feet), Dragon Acid 6 (2d6) applied to some attacks]

23. High Priest's Chamber

The double doors open to an odd sight as a small chair sits upon a dais of rat skulls surrounded by a thin layer of murky water that fills the room. Atop it is a large grey-scaled kobold with an ankh around her neck, and beside it holding a carven stick is a yellowish kobold with black teeth.

This is the Kobold Clutch Mother and her High Sorcerer. They will not wait to attack the party, the sorcerer casting a Fireball, and the Kobold Clutch Mother casting Silence 15' Radius on a specially positioned stone on the floor. The sorcerer has already placed a Protection from Normal Missiles [As Protection from Energy, providing targets with resistance to all piercing damage] on the both of them (cast from a now used scroll). Unbeknownst to the party, once the outer room is breached, the sorcerer will have also summoned a water elemental that is currently pooled thinly on the floor and will rise up to attack any fighter trying to rush the dais.

1 Kobold Sorcerer [AC 7, HD 5, HP 30, #AT 1, D 1–4, Spells: each 3/day, Magic Missile, Shield, Fireball]

TREASURE

3 Potions of Extra-Healing [Greater Healing],
Ring of Spell Turning

1 Kobold Sorcerer [AC 13, HD 5d6+5, HP 23, #AT 1, Hit +4, Dam Dagger 4 (1d4+2), Pack Tactics (Kobolds are at advantage if attacking with allies within 5 feet.), Spells: each 3/day, Magic Missile, Shield, Fireball]

1 Kobold Clutch Mother [AC 5, HD 4, HP 24, #AT 1, D 1–8 (Mace), Spells: each 3/day, Cure Light Wounds, Bless, Spiritual Hammer (manifests as a javelin)]

TREASURE

Censer of Controlling Water Elementals, Ring of Protection +2, 320 GP in a pouch beneath her seat

1 Kobold Clutch Mother [AC 15, HD 4d8+8, HP 32, #AT 1, Hit +4, Dam Mace 6 (1d8+2), Pack Tactics (Kobolds are at advantage if attacking with allies within 5 feet.), Spells: each 3/day, Cure, Bless, Spiritual Weapon]

1 Water Elemental [AC 2, HD 8, HP 48, #AT 1, D 5–30, +2 or better weapon to hit]

TREASURE

None

1 Water Elemental [AC 14, HD 12d10+48, HP 114, #AT 2, Hit +7, Dam Slam 13 (2d8+4), Whelm (recharge 4–6) DC 15 Strength saving throw, on failure take 13 (2d8+4) bludgeoning and grappled (DC 14 escape), Damage Resistance: non-magical weapons]

24. Hall of Doors

A large square chamber filled with eight slender pillars mimics many others found in the temple, this one containing a set of double doors to the east and west, while allowing entry into a larger hall to the north. In the middle of the chamber a slithering swarm of tentacle-faced centipede creatures writhe.

Five hate crawlers, drawn by the malignant nature of Aman-Utep, have gathered here and will attack the party upon entry into the room.

5 Hate Crawlers [AC 4, HD 4+3, HP 27, #AT 8, D ---, Paralysis]

TREASURE

None

5 Hate Crawlers [AC 14, HD 7d10+21, HP 59, #AT 2, Hit +8, Dam Tentacle 4 (1d4+2) poison damage and the target must make a successful DC 15 Constitution save or be paralyzed for 1 minute, Bite 7 (2d4+2)]

25. Canopic Storage Chamber

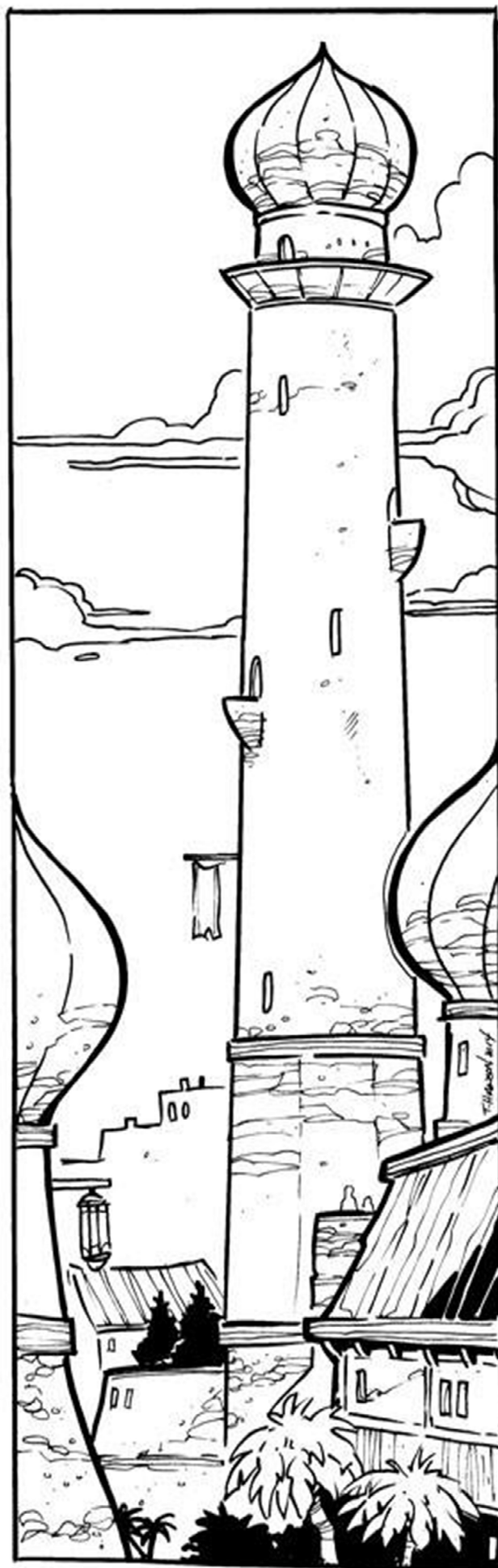
The door gives way into a chamber filled with shelving and highly stylized jars made of fired clay and ivory. Most are covered in painted runes and topped with visages of animals. On the floor, the desecrated husks of half a dozen kobolds lay in tortured repose.

This is the chamber of the various canopic jars for mummies that were prepared during the time of the fully operating temple. The jars of all the mummy priestesses can also be found here, but those of Aman-Utep are kept with him in Room 27. A ghost of a former high priestess protects the chamber from looters and will attack anyone trying to take a jar.

1 Ghost [AC 0, HD 10, HP 60, #AT 1, D Age 10–40 years, Magic Jar, Aging Touch (saving throw versus magic), +1 or better weapon to hit]

TREASURE

None



1 Ghost [AC 11, HD 10d8, HP 45, #AT 1, Hit +5, Dam Touch 17 (4d6+3) necrotic, Ethereality, Horrifying Visage (DC 13 Wisdom or be frightened for 1 minute), Possession (recharge 6) DC 13 Wisdom or possessed by the ghost, Damage Resistance: non-magic weapons]

26. Relic Vault

Although a mighty lock must have once hung upon the heavy doors to this chamber, it was long ago removed. Now, the chamber beyond is little more than an empty room with torn sacks, shattered chests, and broken pottery.

The room is empty, having long ago been raided by dwellers in the temple.

27. Lair of Aman-Utep

A long dry fountain dominates the center of this large chamber, twin square pillars at the back wall and various mounds of rubble throughout. The faded paintings on the walls speak of opulence lost and a river goddess with light blue skin, but untold graffiti blots out most of them. Resting against the fountain is a tall and lean man wrapped in rags and clutching a black scythe. He mumbles to himself, gibbering occasionally.

This is the once mighty Aman-Utep, now little more than a mindless, mad monster. Still, he has various protections upon him, and his status in the pantheon of undeath is great. When the players arrive, he will gibber and laugh before rising and screaming a terrible throat wrenching curse, his attack coming without pause.

1 Mummy Lord [AC 3, HD 13, HP 104, #AT 2, D (1-10)+8/(1-8)+8, Fist and Scythe, +2 or better weapon to hit, Mummy Rot, Power Word: Stun 2/day]

TREASURE

Dark Scythe +3, Golden Crown (750 GP), various jewelry (2000 GP in total)

1 Mummy Lord [AC 17, HD 13d8+39, HP 97, #AT 2, Hit +9, Dam Rotting Fist 14 (3d6+4) Scythe 22 (3d10+7), Blasphemous Word (DC 16 Constitution or be stunned until the mummy lord's next turn) or Extra Attack, Vulnerability: Fire, Damage Immunities: non-magical weapons]

The Entry Part II

28. Teller Ambush

The great threat below has been defeated and the lost temple cleared. Although pressed, you've managed to collect your goods and head toward the light of the surface. At the entry to the temple, however, light appears from flickering torches, as a group of men have assembled there.

This is the Teller ambush, and Noturus Rexa is here to finally put an end to the characters, claim their hard-won treasure, and establish himself as the one and only power of the Patina. He is not here to mince words, and will attack quickly and violently. If he has any particular grudges (brought about through roleplay during the campaign), he will seek out the players involved and attack them first. Remember, this is to press the characters to their breaking point, so I've left the final total of thugs up to the DM.

? Thugs [AC 8, HD 5, HP 20, #AT 1, D (1-6)+2, Blade or Club, Gang Tactics: +2 to hit & damage while fighting with allies]

TREASURE

Up to 4 silver per thug

? Thugs [AC 11, HD 5d8+10, HP 32, #AT 2, Hit +4, Dam Blade or Mace 5 (1d6+2), Pack Tactics (any thug has advantage on attacks if within 5' of another thug)]

Noturus Rexa [AC 3, HD 10, HP 65, #AT 2, D (1-8)+8/(1-8)+8, Longsword, Gang Tactics: +2 to hit & damage while fighting with allies]

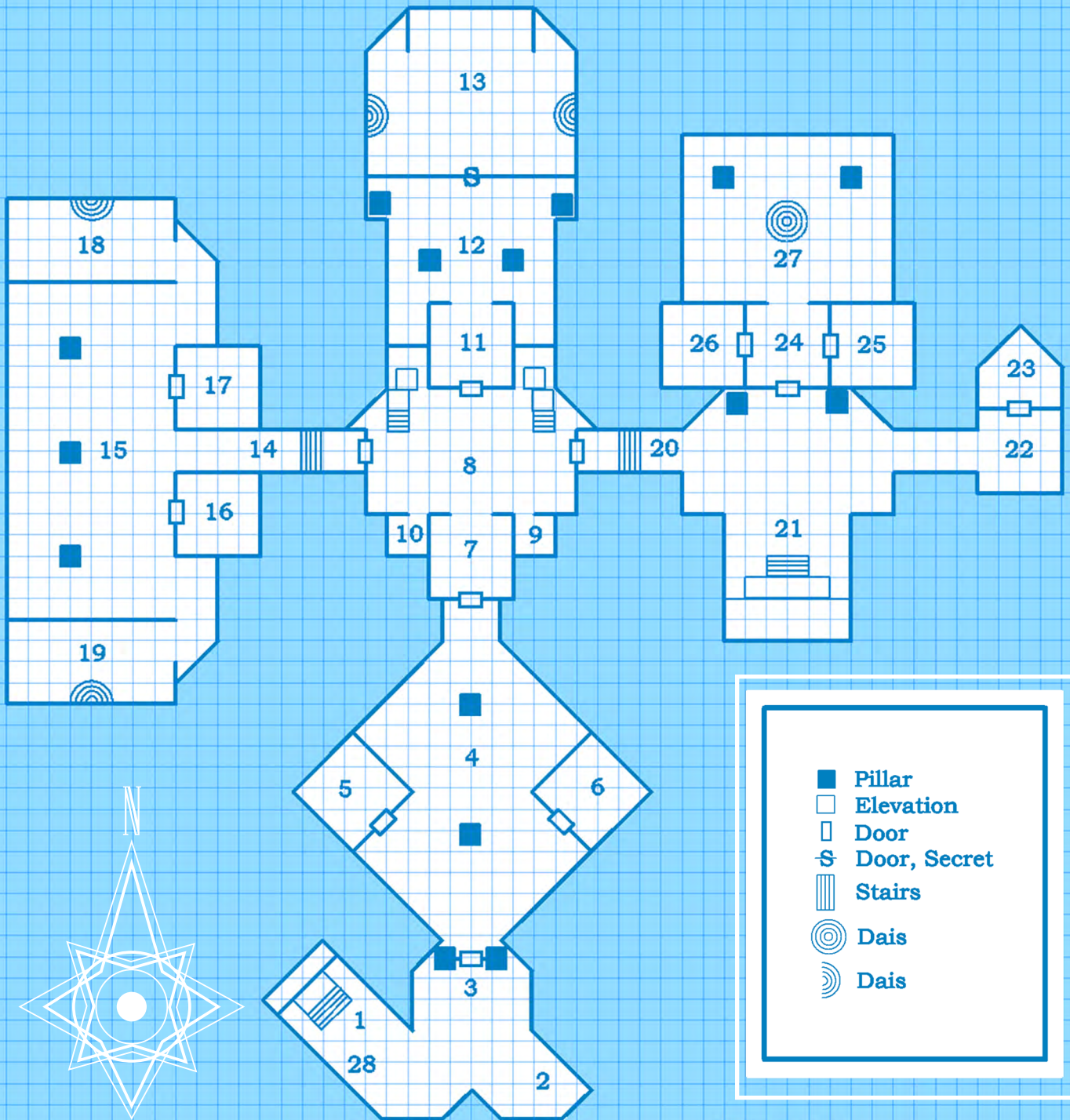
TREASURE

Longsword +2, diamond ring (1,000 GP)

Noturus Rexa [AC 17 (Splint), HD 10d8+18, HP 79, #AT 2, Hit +6, Dam Longsword 9 (1d8+5), Pack Tactics (advantage on attacks if within 5' of another Teller), Magic Longsword (+2)]

Thus ends The Hidden Valoria, and be sure to invest time in the Gazetteer section for your final conclusions to this epic low level campaign.





DF3.5

Bonus Module

THE FOLIO

Mini-Module



THE HIDDEN VALORIA CAMPAIGN

The Crèche of Set

Mini-Adventure DF3.5

by Scott Taylor

After finding the secret under-passages used by the kobolds in Room 5 & 6 of the Lost Temple of Tefnut, the party can descend through a stair located between the two rooms. Down this stair they will encounter a fallen tribe of lizardmen who are now influenced by the mummy Aman-Utep in the halls above. Destroying this tribe, and recovering an artifact they possess, could prove highly valuable to the completion of the Lost Temple adventure.



The Crèche of Set

Synopsis

After finding the secret under-passages used by the kobolds in Room 5 & 6 of the Lost Temple of Tefnut, the party can descend through a stair located between the two rooms. Down this stair they will encounter a fallen tribe of lizardmen who are now influenced by the mummy Aman-Utep in the halls above. Destroying this tribe, and recovering an artifact they possess, could prove highly valuable to the completion of the Lost Temple adventure.

Dungeon Master Notes

The Lost Temple of Tefnut is a very difficult adventure, so this mini-adventure is designed to help the players achieve their goal of destroying Aman-Utep while keeping their fighting strength intact. Although there is combat in this mini-adventure, it has been kept to a low challenge level so that strength of arms and magic isn't expended too greatly. Remember, this should be a helping adventure, not a hindering one.

1.

The primary purpose of this mini-adventure is to allow the party access to the 'Heart of Aman-Utep', which is to say the canopic jar that holds his heart. With it, they can seriously disrupt his ability to fight them in the final combat, thus saving some of their power for the Teller ambush that concludes DF3.

2.

You will find a lot of healing magic within this mini-adventure, these items and potions put in place to keep the party up and running for the duration of the adventure above.

3.

For anyone relying on magic (particularly those in 1st Edition), there is also a nice way to recoup spells, so keep that in mind. Finding magic assisting items, and even taking a sleep break, is something that can be done in relative safety here.

Running Combat

Combat, although limited in power, does occur inside the various rooms of this forgotten lair. I would suggest giving the players a full round of missile and spell action before most encounters to help mitigate damage to the party, and if anyone wants to find ingenious ways around combats, that is certainly encouraged.

Random Encounters

I've not built in random encounters for this particular dungeon because I believe it would continue to trim down on the party's resources. Combats within the module, particularly the Black Scale followers and the Lizardman Lord will be challenging enough.

1. Entry into the Crèche

The stair descends into a damp environment, mist gathering along the flagstones on the floor and your boots slipping in a fine layer of condensation.

2. Scouting Party

The hall opens into a small grotto—a menagerie of strange plants, most of them emitting a dull violet glow, resemble a tropical forest. On the ceiling, a yellowish incandescent lichen helps provide dim light to the whole chamber.



A collection of three gate-keepers are here, lurking in the undergrowth with spears at the ready. However, any external light source (torch, spell, etc.) will cause them to rustle in their hiding places and provide the party with a location of a possible ambush.

3 Lizardmen [AC 5, HD 4+1, HP 25, #AT 1, D 1-8, Spear (Two Handed)]

TREASURE

1 Potion of Healing, 15 GP among them in total

3 Lizardmen [AC 15, HD 4d8+4, HP 22, #AT 2, Hit +4, Dam Bite 5 (1d6+2), Spear 5 (1d6+2), Multiattack]

3. Underground Pool

The jungle grotto fades behind you, giving way to an ancient pool of clear water. The surface trembles as though fed by an underground stream. Around the pool, smooth stones show years of use by passing feet, and another glowing chamber is visible through an opening in the north wall.

This is one of the underground springs used by the priestesses of Tefnut for blessing rituals. The lizardmen now use it as a water source for their various needs.

4. Swamp Chamber

The glowing lichen from the jungle chamber runs in scattered patches across the roof of this chamber. Runoff from the adjacent pool chamber has covered the ground with a thick murk of dark water, seeming a foot or less deep, teeming with all manner of low-growing plants and strange fungi.

A giant snake lives within the area, and will attack lone (especially small) members of the party searching the chamber, but will not attack the party full on, preferring to hide and let them pass.

1 Giant (Constrictor) Snake [AC 5, HD 6+1, HP 37, #AT 2, D 1-4 (Bite)/2-8 (Constriction)]

TREASURE

None

1 Giant (Constrictor) Snake [AC 12, HD 8d12+8, HP 60, #AT 2, Hit +6, Dam Bite 11 (2d6+4), Constriction 13 (2d8+4) bludgeoning and the target is grappled (Escape DC 16)]

5. Hate Crawler Hatchery

This side chamber dips into a shallow grotto filled with a collection of slimy eggs amid rotting corpses of what look to be ratmen and kobolds. A single hate crawler rests amid the clutch, its tentacles waving rhythmically as though in meditation or providing some kind of imperceptible song.

This is the greater nest of the hate crawlers found in DF3. For more information on them, see the Gazetteer in that module.

1 Hate Crawler [AC 4, HD 4+3, HP 27, #AT 8, D ---, Paralysis]

TREASURE

None

1 Hate Crawler [AC 14, HD 7d10+21, HP 59, #AT 2, Hit +8, Dam Tentacle 4 (1d4+2) poison damage and the target must make a successful DC 15 Constitution save or be paralyzed for 1 minute, Bite 7 (2d4+2)]

6. Obsidian Statue

Patches of lichen slither down the walls of this chamber, appearing like yellow waterfalls emitting from the cracks. At the center of the chamber, carved from dark stone, a crude statue of a jackal-headed man has been erected. Lichen has been placed over the statue's shoulders like a cape, and the eyes glow with phosphorescent paint.

The statue isn't dangerous, but investigation will show that in a hollow below its feet are several offerings, including 2 Potions of Healing, and 20 gold pieces in a leather bag.

7. Set's Black Scale Followers

Before you can make entry into this chamber, a set of five dark-scaled lizardmen appear with spears in their clawed hands. Their odd glowing eyes speak of evil and enchantment.

These are the lizardmen of the Black Scale, followers of Set and now the only remaining male members of the once great tribe (these having killed the rest or chased off the females). They will attack on sight, hoping to defeat the invaders and bring great honor to their god.

5 Lizardmen [AC 4, HD 6+1, HP 30, #AT 2, D 1-8, Spear (Two Handed)]

TREASURE

2 Potions of Healing, 33 GP among them in total

5 Lizardmen [AC 16, HD 6d8+6, HP 32, #AT 2, Hit +6, Dam Bite 5 (1d6+2), Spear 5 (1d6+2), Multiattack]

8. Fallen Shrine of Tefnut

Lost to the years, this old shrine must have at one time been lovely to behold. Since then abuse has desecrated the murals; the altar has been smashed to debris.

The lizardmen shy away from this area, and other than debris, it is empty. However, a hard search, 1 in 6 [Perception DC 16], will allow the party to find a hidden compartment in the wall that still holds 4 bottles of Extra-Healing [Greater Healing] and a Ring of Wizardry [Ring of Spell Storing].

9. Egg Hatchery and Pool

This hot chamber, lit by smoldering braziers, houses a number of eggs tucked away in leafy nests. A single black-scaled lizardman stands beside the nests, a spear at the ready.

This is the final clutch of eggs the tribe had before the females fled. Now they are the future, and the lizardman, although surely hearing the combat in the adjacent room, has stayed by his post as a last line of defense for the eggs.

1 Lizardman [AC 4, HD 6+1, HP 30, #AT 2, D 1-8, Spear (Two Handed)]

TREASURE

1 Potion of Healing, 7 GP in a belt sack

1 Lizardman [AC 16, HD 6d8+6, HP 32, #AT 2, Hit +6, Dam Bite 5 (1d6+2), Spear 5 (1d6+2), Multiattack]

10. Lizardman Lord's Lair

A large door, the first you've seen in these forgotten halls, stands before you.

The door is locked [DC 16]. Once open, you can read the following: *Beyond the now open portal, you see a tired-looking black-scaled lizardman. He sits upon a log, ferns growing around him, and in one hand he holds a spear and the other a necklace.*

This is the Lizardman Lord, although he has seen better days. He carries a Necklace of Fireballs and will use them as he can, hoping to destroy the party before they can get to him. However, he is weakened from lack of sleep (afraid his guards will kill him) and will not be much of a problem once the players close the distance.

The most important find in his possession, however, is not the necklace, but instead the canopic jar holding Aman-Utep's heart. The heart has been 'speaking' to the Lord, trying to get him to bring it back to the mummy. Anyone carrying the heart will have a vision of its removal and its desire to return to its rightful place. Little does Aman-Utep realize his sendings are now going to a party bent on his destruction!

1 Lizardman Lord [AC 3, HD 8, HP 48, #AT 1, D (5-20)+2, Spear (Two Handed), Skewering (if hit die is 5 more than needed to hit, attack causes double damage)]

TREASURE

4 Potions of Healing, Spear +2, Necklace of Fireballs (7 beads), 107 GP, 3 (50 GP gems).

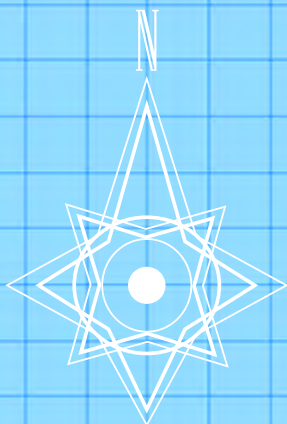
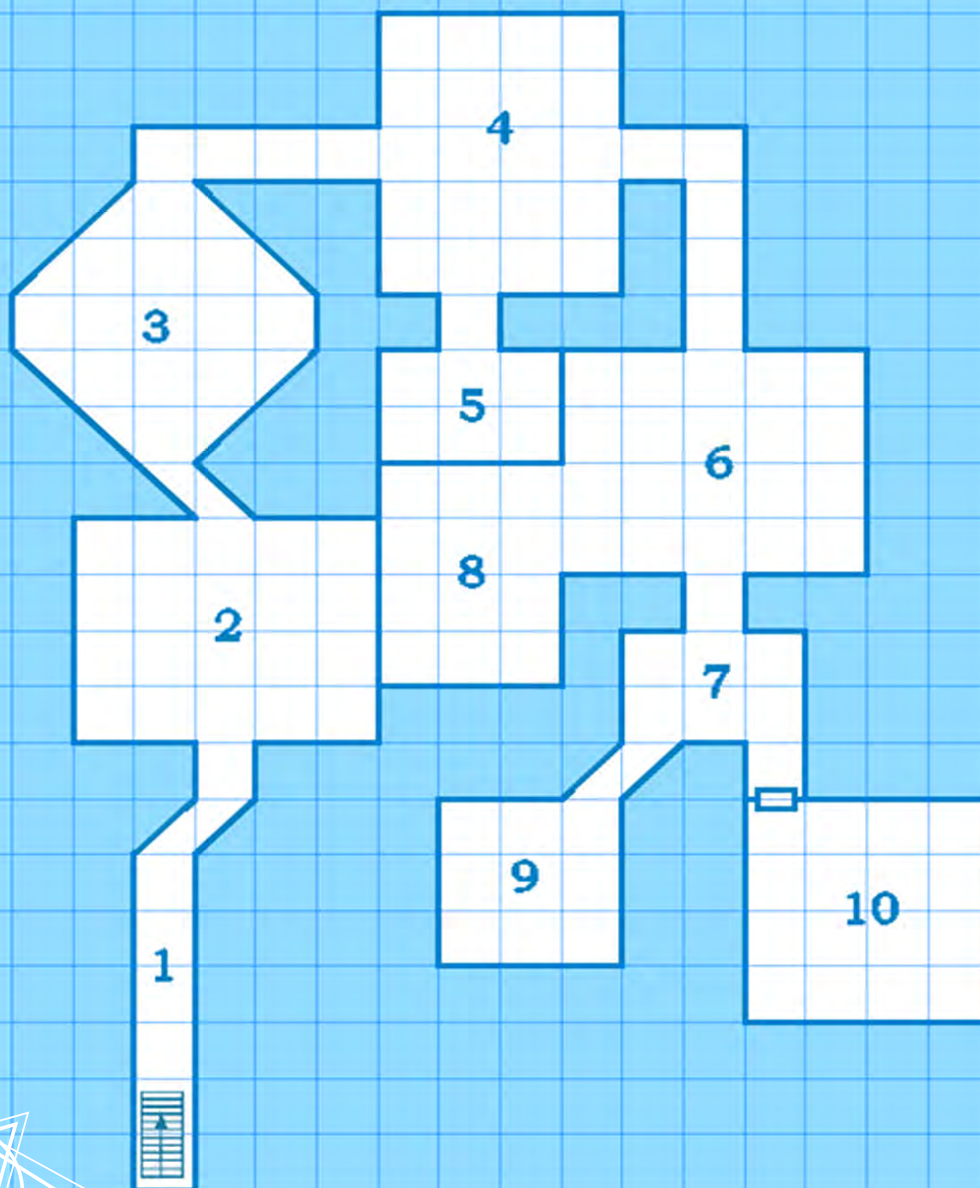
Special

Canopic Jar of Aman-Utep (If shattered or destroyed, it will stun Aman-Utep for 2 rounds as well as dropping his invulnerability to non-magical weapons.)

1 Lizardman Lord [AC 15, HD 12d8+24, HP 78, #AT 2, Hit +6, Dam Bite 6 (1d6+3), Spear 8 (1d6+5), Multiattack, Skewer (Once per turn, can add 10 (3d6) extra damage to a spear attack), Necklace of Fireballs (Can throw a 3rd level Fireball each round)]



THE FOLIO



THE FOLIO



The Subtle Revenger

Paleo Module A71

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



THE CITY OF TAUX

TAUX



1. SERPENT WALL DISTRICT, 2. THE BLACK GATE DISTRICT,
3. GOLD JAGUAR DISTRICT, 4. SMOKE DRAGON DISTRICT,
5. TURQUOISE TURTLE DISTRICT, 6. HARBOR DISTRICT,
7. HAUNTED TEMPLE DISTRICT, 8. STAR TOWER

THE REVENANT



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

THE NAMELESS
REALMS



Folio Module AT1

The Subtle Revenant

A Three Part Scenario for

Characters Levels 5–7

Introduction

As I've often said when I provide the opening for these Folio modules, this is your sandbox. However, in this case, there were a lot of other kids in this sandbox before you, so you might have to watch your step! Taux is a diverse and dark city, named by Alan Dean Foster and brought into being as short fiction by Julie Czerneda, Todd Lockwood, Juliet McKenna, Dave Gross, Martha Wells, Harry Connolly, Rob Mancebo, Lynn Flywelling, Howard Tayler, many others, and of course myself.

We spent months developing distinct races, city culture, legends, magic, and all other manner of things that created a city rich with intrigue and depth. Todd Lockwood, Jeff Laubenstein, and Janet Aulisio spent countless hours sketching and blending real-world cultures to find the right look for the city and its people. And I, as the creative director and editor, had to find a way to bring everything together so as to make sense to the reader.

Taux was never an easy endeavor for those working to create it, but it was a labor of love that every person could be very proud of. It is my desire to now translate what was written in hundreds of correspondences over the two anthology projects into an easily playable RPG format. I think I've managed to do enough to make that happen, while still maintaining the elements that make Taux so special.

I hope you enjoy what follows, and I encourage you to read *Tales from the Emerald Serpent* and *A Knight in the Silk Purse*, the foundation works this module series is based on. With those under your belt, I think Taux will come alive as a place for you and your players to have many great adventures, above and beyond what you find here.

Style of Play

I want to get to this first off, because I know some have criticized my Folio works for being 'on rails', meaning there isn't a great deal of choice for players other than to play things as written. Well, my response to that is 'What is a module for if not to provide a linear adventure?' Folio #11 is certainly no different than what you might find in *Roslof Keep*, although I've worked this trilogy around an ongoing story instead of a deep delve. What I've really tried to get away from is the concept of 'murder hobos' (the semi-affectionate name given to most adventuring parties bound on delving and killing monsters for treasure). Instead, I've put Folio #11 into a narrative format that I hope you can utilize to tell a story for the characters that they can eventually feel a part of (and one I hope will appear in the third volume of the Taux anthologies). So, keep in mind, this isn't about the fights as much as it will be about the city, the players, the alliances and enemies, and the effect all will have on Taux as a whole.

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 as a roleplay award, you as the DM wish to award larger sums for great play, I fully support that, although keep in mind it might require you to adjust some encounters later in the trilogy.

Duels

Taux is a city built on an ancient tradition of dueling. In fact, one of the three great dueling schools in the Nameless Realms is located in Taux. The practitioners of this school, or guild, are known as Razors because their style employs a single edge rapier and no weapon in their off-hand. Razors attempt to win duels by wounding opponents, having them bleed until death or capitulation. As dueling is so well-practiced among the nobility of Taux, much honor is placed on the practice, and many disputes are still settled in this traditional style.

However, the governing city guard, or Sturgeons as they are called for the fish symbol on the breasts of their blue and silver livery, do not agree with open combat on the streets. Thus, dueling is often settled in private, otherwise those involved might spend nights in jail or face a murder tribunal.

Rules in duels can vary greatly, from first blood to death, but one thing is always clear, cheating is an act that will bring the bulk of the guilds and even free-blades against you.

For the purposes of gameplay, there are two other great dueling schools that sometimes show up on the streets of Taux to test their mettle—the Ebontra School, specializing in dual wielding rapier and dagger offensively, and the Findalynn School whose followers fight with a rapier and defend with an off-hand dagger.

Relic

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.

Campaign Background: City of Taux

Remember, this is just the first part of a trilogy, so as you are playing here, keep that concept in mind as there is more story that follows in Folio #12 & Folio #13. However, for setting the stage, I'll refer you to a few pieces needed to understand the history of Taux and the situation it currently finds itself in.



Formerly the Tolimic City of Taux, this stand-alone metropolis rests at the tip of the Free Coast and once served as a way station between a dozen large nations all over the northern Halo Ocean. More than half a century before the current date, during the final days of the Five Year War that banished all the old gods from the world, the population of the city was destroyed by a necromantic surge of energy. The tale of that destruction is as follows:

Near a century ago in the Nameless Realms timeline a council of moon priests and a coven of tome-mages theorized that, like the Afterglow Sea that resides beyond the Elemental Plane of Water, there should be another plane of existence behind each of the known Elemental Planes—Fire, Water, Earth, Air, Positive Radiance, and Negative Shadow. Because Taux sat so close to the 'Ebon Swamp' which is known to bubble up with Negative Elemental energy, they decided to dedicate a portion of their resources to discovering this 'other plane' from the secret subterranean conduits in Taux. Years passed, and the two Orders built a series of tunnels beneath the surface of Taux that could be used to amplify elemental transmissions. Then, on a night corresponding with the closest proximity of the Negative Elemental Plane to the planetary sphere, they performed a monumental magical ceremony that would project elemental energy beyond the Negative Elemental Plane, hoping to find another source of raw magical power there. The theory was that some reverb would come back that proved its existence and they could use that for further contact. Nine hours after the elemental burst, just as the city woke in the predawn gloom for work, a nightmare scream struck the city in an apocalyptic wave. Every living thing within a hundred miles was obliterated; all souls flash-burned into the stone of the landscape around them. Since that day the city and surrounding lands have been quiet, but the souls still remember, now trapped forever in the walls of their cursed city...

Today, Taux is once again a thriving port city, although instead of Tolimic humans, it is populated from many cultures all over the Halo and beyond, each trying to make a profit on the mass of cargo that moves through the free city without taxation. Although still haunted by the spirits of the past, the current inhabitants try to quiet

the stones, and they live with strange whispers at night or the sounds of cries from vacant rooms.

City Size: Population: 60,000+ (15% are non-human)

Districts:

Black Gate District: The Ullamalitzli Stadium that once housed 75,000 fans and is now home to perhaps 7,000 squatters who have built tenements in the stadium proper.

Gold Jaguar District: The high class district cut by the prestigious Ruby Lane. Here is where the very wealthy of Taux live and play in the former homes of the greatest nobility the Tolimic ever possessed.

Turquoise Tortoise District: A middle to upper class merchant district of the city and home to the Grand Bazaar of Taux.

Harbor District: The port, docks, and wharfs of Taux. Here is the lifeblood of the city, the place where all cultures meet as ships from the entire Halo Ocean trade cargo for shipment all over the world.

The Haunted Temple District (Ghost Towers): This scarcely populated district is the home to the poor of Taux. With no place else to go, the destitute gather among the screaming stones of the former Tolimic Temple District.

Serpent Wall District: Situated against the outer wall of the city, and thus wrapping it in a large crescent, this outer district is home to the mass of the middle to lower working class of Taux.

Ebon Fields District: Located outside the main wall of the city, this tangled group of farmland is the only true source of local food Taux possesses. Farmers and cattle-folk work to stave off incursion from the Ebon Swamp as they cling to a meager existence among the lowland marshes that now serve as livestock fields and in some areas rice patties.

The Smoke Dragon District: This district is the home of the base production elements of Taux with some industry having sprung up to use cheap raw materials taken from incoming trade ships and turning them into more expensive trade goods to be shipped out. It is also the home of Sturgeon Keep, where the mercenary army of the city is housed.

Adventure Synopsis

As many of the stories in the anthologies prove, living in Taux is no easy thing. It doesn't take much for a sturdy soul to run afoul of intrigues and plots that are always in motion around them. To this point, one of the characters will find himself in an unexpected duel with a local, a duel that will end poorly for the unfortunate sod who tangled with the player. Once the duel is over, only then will the players discover the true identity of the victim. He is Brace Vash, of House Vash, and there is little doubt that repercussions will now be in play.

Seeing that laying low is the best option, a local fixer named Lareo will attempt to get the characters to a safe house until this all blows over. At the safe house, however, they will be attacked and forced to flee across the city rooftops around the Black Gate. Afterward, one of Lareo's agents will find the players and tell them there may be a way out. House Vash has lost a relic in the city and wants it back. Trading said item might make the Vash forget the players' actions.

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

There are two NPCs in this adventure who appear in the anthologies, Lareo the Eldaryn fixer, and Dethocrates the jai-ruk rogue. If you have access to the anthologies, you can find ready descriptions of these two there, however, the adventures also give a brief description about each interaction to help maintain the feel of the NPCs.

2. Levels

As this is an adventure for characters levels 5–7, it can be assumed that you have either created a specific set of adventurers for the players (perhaps using *The Nameless Realms Races* supplement) or that players are bringing experienced characters to Taux for the first time. Whatever the case, it is very important that a bond has been established between members of the party before the introduction duel takes place. Without that, characters might balk at helping the duelist who got himself in a bad situation on his own merit. A well designed backstory for the party, and the reason for being in Taux, should be created by the DM before play has begun.

3. Running the Elemental Sparks

In the world of the *Nameless Realms*, there are various distinct races (as detailed in the *Nameless Realms Races* supplement). Each is dedicated to a specific element (fire, air, water, earth) and has a varying level of connection to that element. This connection is

measured in something called the elemental spark. Humans, who are low fire, are still hot blooded, quick to anger, love, and are always working at something. Eldaryns, who are high fire, are palpably hot, age quickly, and can become pyromancers. Jai-ruks, who are medium earth, are strong, resilient, and are stalwart in their devotion to a cause. If you are running this adventure using the *Nameless Realms* setting and races, I highly recommend the *Nameless Realms Races* supplement, and again, reading the fiction resource material.

4. Running the Interests of House Vash

House Vash is the greatest of the mercantile houses of Taux, and it holds a very wide series of interests in the city. For all intents and purpose, think of them as an evil corporation that is constantly working to consume, control, and destroy in an attempt for ultimate power and wealth. They are not well-loved, but are certainly feared among the citizens of the city, and their family is a large one, which helps insure they aren't dying out anytime soon.

Interacting with the City

Many of those dwelling in Taux insist that the city itself is alive, or if not alive, then perhaps at the very least undead. That way of thinking is correct on many levels, as although the city itself has no true soul, there are nearly two-hundred thousand trapped souls in its stone walls and structures. As each soul is tortured in its captivity, most are mad, and if given the opportunity through magic or other means, will attempt to kill those who now prosper in what they see as their tomb. Still, magic isn't readily available to allow for these spirits to interact with the living population in a dangerous fashion, although one living in Taux is always aware of the presence of spirits around them.

1. How the Whispering Walls Work

Many of the stone walls of Taux will whisper, especially at night, when people walk too near them. Some magically adept people, especially priests or those favored by their gods, will often report seeing movement in the corners of their vision from the walls. Sometimes, spirits will taunt attuned folk, or give them portents of future happenings (usually dark things), and it is even said that for those who come close to death, the spirits will come to them and attempt to manipulate them to assist in whatever troubles still press on their tortured minds.

2. Ghosts

Ghosts do dwell in Taux, although most are confined to the stones and are not a threat. For those that escape, they can become both a bane and a blessing, depending on the nature of their minds when they become free.

3. The Feel of the Environment

Taux is a rich tapestry of a city, and should feel both foreign and familiar, with many races and cultures mixing in the ruins of this ancient Tolimic city. Although this adventure takes place during the evening, be sure to keep the players aware that Taux never sleeps, and the streets are still alive with 'night folk', those who work a much different trade than the day laborers of the city.

Overall Story Arcs & Threads

1. Building on the Chase

The DM has to be responsible for building suspense as the characters run from persecution by House Vash. As this entire adventure is set to take place over a single evening in Taux, it is important to keep the feeling of being 'on the run' alive in the players' imaginations.

2. A Higher Purpose

As this is only Part 1 of the trilogy, there must be little bits of information that leak out to a greater plot and purpose as the characters get pulled through this larger storyline (see adventure).

3. Dueling

As mentioned above, dueling is an extremely important factor in the political and social structure of Taux (as well as its two sister cities Ebontra and Findalynn). If at any time during the adventure you wish to challenge a player to a duel to settle a dispute (perhaps in the final encounter), you may do so.

New Monster:

Bender Surrogate

Lawful Evil

Frequency: Very Rare

No. Appearing: 1

Armor Class: 0

HD: 15+7

Move: 12"

No. of Attacks: 3

Damage/Attack: (1-10)+10 (2 Claws)/(2-20)+5 (Bite)

Special Attacks: None

Special Defense: +2 or better weapon to hit

Magic Resistance: 35%

Intelligence: Very

Size: L (20' long)

Psionic Ability: NIL

% in lair: 50%

Treasure Type: D, E

Bender Surrogate [AC 20, HD 15d12+45, HP 135, Initiative +4, #AT 3, Hit +9, Dam Claw 16 (3d8+4), Bite 20 (3d10+5), Damage Immunity: non-magical weapons, Magic Resistance]

Beyond the Elemental Plane of Shadow is a dimensional wall that was meant never to be breached. However, the priests of Taux delved too deeply into powerful magic that pierced the veil and destroyed their city. The tiny pinprick they managed has allowed something to enter their world that must stay tethered to its own dimension as though through an umbilical cord. This creature is a bender, a creature beyond the laws of the world and bent on devouring all that it sees. However, as it cannot leave the chamber of its 'birth' into this world, it has developed a means of tempting treasure seekers with a glowing light that illuminates treasure it has collected from its other victims.

AT1: The Subtle Revenant

So, how exactly do you play in a world that was based on a fictional anthology? Well, my suggestion would be to read the fiction first, but if you can't do that, then make an attempt at a very narrative driven adventure. This particular adventure, The Subtle Revenant, is based around a moving story arc in three parts. The initial part, The Duel, will be the crux that gets the adventurers embroiled in the overall plot. Part Two, The Old Crypt, will have the characters working on a way to solve the mess, and Part Three, The Bender Surrogate, will culminate in a battle that sets the stage for Folio #12 and the adventures there.



One thing to keep in mind as you play, characters here should have some decent experience, so they should be given some leeway when it comes to sticky situations, although they most likely will have to get used to the particular rules of Taux before becoming too full of themselves.

In the end, I hope that you are able to spin your own tale of Taux, the Black Gate, and the Emerald Serpent, as that is what this trilogy is truly about, which is to say adding to the legends of the great city of cursed stone.

Part One: The Duel

'The patrons of the Emerald Serpent crawl like a living thing, tides of humanity and other elemental-spark races mingling in a great pool around the huge bar. Multi-level decks hold dozens of conversations, games of chance, and illicit dealings far from the prying eyes of the city's Sturgeons. If there is one place more famous in Taux, a citizen would be hard pressed to name it, and yet only the very brave, or perhaps foolish, ever pass beneath the Black Gate and tread the twisting streets around the old Ullamalitzli courts to drink pulque and other spirits in this old house of priests and nobles.'

Setting the Stage

This entry scenario revolves around the characters running afoul of House Vash. To accomplish this, and the story beyond, the DM must be able to run a number of encounters through roleplay and limited combat. Each encounter point is listed below, with a series of options and goals for both the players and the DM, but how you get to the end result is up to those involved.

Encounter Point One: Duel

If you read the intro to Part One, I think the players will get an idea of what the Emerald Serpent is, even if they've never read the fiction. Still, there are questions that you will need to either ask or already have an answer for when this encounter point begins.

1.

Who is the party's best duelist? You could also ask, who is the party's biggest hot head? Either way, one player is going to get challenged to a duel, something locals in Taux see a great deal of (See Taux & Dueling in the Gazetteer). The duel is the key, because it sets the stage for the entire adventure. Bait the players as you wish, with lewd comments against party members or other brash talk, perhaps even targeting a priest's god. When the conflict is at hand, the following may set the stage.

'The bravado and sexual talk has risen to a crescendo at the table behind you after a good half-hour of heavy drinking. The loudest of these young bucks, a thin rake with a gilded rapier and a topknot of blond hair pushes back his chair until it strikes the back of yours, his disgust at your offense apparent in his first curse thrown in your direction.'

1 Razor Duelist (Brace Vash) [AC 5, HD 7+7, HP 70, #AT 2/1 (+4 to hit), D (1-6)+5, Wounding (Each time Brace strikes, the victim must make a save versus petrification or begin bleeding at 1 hit point per round. This attack can be cumulative.)]

TREASURE
Sabre +2

1 Razor Duelist (Brace Vash) [AC 15, HD 10d8+20, HP 65, Initiative +5, #AT 2, Hit +7, Dam Sabre 7 (1d6+4), Multiattack, Parry (+2 AC against one attack), Wounding (Each time Brace strikes, the victim must make a DC 14 Constitution save or begin bleeding at 1 point per round. This attack can be cumulative.)]

2.

The outcome of the duel is pre-determined—Brace Vash dies. Whether the player runs him through or not, he will die from a Poison spell cast by someone amongst the throng of patrons watching the duel. As it will look like nefarious means were used in a legal duel, the player will be on the run from this point forward until his name can be cleared.

'Your blow, whether wittingly or no, slides through Brace's defense, and he crumples to the floor, blue veins pulsing along his temples and a dribble of blood sliding out of the edge of his mouth.'

3.

The entire mood of the Emerald Serpent will change the moment Brace dies, and the players should be shown this in no uncertain terms. Feeling a bloom of heat at their side, one player will be given the opportunity to get the party moving toward a far back table as they follow the Eldaryn pyromancer and information broker, Lareo, to his working space. Once there, you'll need to drop information about what has occurred and provide the players an address and a contact name where they can lay low until Lareo can discover exactly what plot the players have been roped into.

'The chants, howls, and exclamations dwindle to an eerie silence as a closeness fills the Serpent. Eyes once alit are now dark as the patrons stare at you, whispers of 'murderer' and 'assassin' hiss around from the throng, and here and there knuckles grow white in balled fists and fingers slide slowly to the well-worn handles of dirks and other small blades.'



Encounter Point Two: Lareo

Nothing in Taux is free, but for some reason Lareo is looking to help the players. This may be because he is looking to settle a score of his own, has a client who is interested in a certain outcome of events, or even that he's had some past interaction with a member of the party (up to the DM of course). Whatever the case, he's about to offer the players a big leg up in getting them out of this mess. Play him as a friend, because to this point, that is what he is, and his reputation as someone who 'backs the little guy' is well known inside the Black Gate and beyond.

'The diminutive Eldaryn pulls himself up into his booth, an ashen cushion propping him up to look over the table at you. Waving to the smooth curve of the bench across from him, he then adjusts his spectacles as the brassy hairs of his curved mustache twitch as though of a mind of their own.'

Lareo quickly relays the following information to the players:

A. Brace is a known womanizer and gambler, both of which have put him on the wrong side of various powers, including his own family.

B. The death of Brace in the fashion which he died is a threefold strike against the perpetrator— you've broken the dueling laws of the city and the Sturgeons will soon have your name and be looking for you; you've broken the dueling honor code of the Taux Razors Guild and their trained duelists will be after you; and you've killed a member of the Vash household, acquiring a price on your head paid for by the family.

C. Two days ago Lareo heard an unnamed agent was asking about winged serpent venom sometimes drawn from the deadly beasts in the Ebon Swamp.

D. Brace was bragging earlier in the morning that he'd come into possession of a relic that had been washed up on the beach from the great storm that passed over Taux earlier in the week. Knowing what such artifacts can mean to various powers within the city, speaking of such a thing is a quick way to get your name on a list you'd rather not be on.

E. He will provide you with an address on the upper tier of the north wall of the stadium amid the 'Tangle' as the locals call the overpopulated ramshackle housing. A landlord named Moxa owes him a favor and will shelter you until he can find out more details that might clear your name.

Encounter Point Three: The Safe House

The 'Tangle' more than deserves its moniker as the north upper deck of the Taux stadium is a chaotic mess of haphazard buildings laying if not always atop, at least against one another. If the Black Gate is said to be a place where people go to get lost, then the Tangle is the hole in which they disappear. Urchins are prevalent, and will often guide folk to certain locations for a coin, otherwise, players can try to discern addresses from ill-carved and painted signs, landmarks, and the movement of stars, but whatever the case, stout rolls will be required to discover Moxa's abode within the labyrinthine sprawl. A successful Intelligence check at -7 will be required to find the location, otherwise an urchin guide will be needed **[DC 20 Perception]**.

A breeze blows over the outer rim of the great stadium, its caress bringing with it a taste of civilization's musk, waste, and sickness. This is the Tangle, a mass of tumbledown buildings stacked precariously atop one another like a mythical labyrinth of filth and darkness. If stones whisper here, they are drowned out by the sporadic wailing of infants, buzzing of insects, and coughs of wheezing lungs.'

Moxa is of old Tolimic blood. His ancestors once inhabiting the city, and his people are now moving back to Taux from distant mountain villages beyond the Ebon Swamp as other nations have been encroaching. He is human, his spark strong with elemental fire, and he understands the stone beneath his feet. Covered in tattoos and talismans, he brokers little conversation with the party, but shows them up a winding stair from his own dwelling to an apartment high atop the canopy of structures that make up the Tangle. Here, in a single room with woven mat beds, a cistern of rainwater, and a chamber pot of brass, the party can rest until they hear from Lareo, or at least that is the plan.

Encounter Point Four: The Roof Chase

As evening falls, the players may hear a commotion far below in Moxa's home [2 in 6] **[passive Perception 15]**. This is an assassin crew from House Vash looking to end the players' lives before the entire affair spins out of their control. Unbeknownst to the party, House Vash had placed Sturgeons around the Emerald Serpent ready to arrest the party after the duel, but instead the lead Sturgeon, Tohil, had recalled his men at the urging of Lareo. Now, House Vash has procured other means of dealing with things in the form of a Zimbolay tome-mage and a crew of cutthroats from an anchored pirate vessel posing as a trade ship.

'Screaming, arguing, and even rumbling have been constant companions during your day in the eaves of the Tangle, but heavy shouting and the building's shuddering, as if from an impact, brings you to your feet. The door, little more than a rough canvas hanging, flutters like a ship's sail in the hot bay breeze. The sounds of bones shambling and heavy footfalls race upstairs toward your apartment. Outside, the sound of a city crier marks the passing of the day, twilight settling in over the rooftops just inches away from the room's single window.'

This encounter point revolves around a chase across the rooftops of the Tangle. To achieve extra action, I'd suggest all players must make Dexterity checks **[DC 13 Dexterity]** between each encounter as they jump between roofs. You can mitigate these checks with spells, assistance from other players, ropes, or other creative means the players come up with. If a check is failed, you could have the individual or individuals fall down a single story, take 1d6 damage,

and then continue the chase as they try to get back to the party via other routes. To accomplish this, I would suggest another Dexterity check **[DC 12 Dexterity]** as well as an Intelligence check **[DC 12 Intelligence]** to work out the correct path.

Otherwise, various combats are as follows, but remember that escape is a key component, so keep these short and engaging, not long slogs. Also, if you want to get really creative, you could use grappling rules in attempts to dislodge enemies from the roof without a full fight.

1. Roof One

The wind from the bay strikes along makeshift roofs, lifting billowing canvas and fluttering tin as you leap from building to building. Ahead, rising from some unseen fissure, three men with short blades and tanned skin move to block your escape.

3 Pirates [AC 7, HD 5, HP 30, #AT 3/2, D 1-6 (Short Sword)]

TREASURE

2 dozen copper coins and 5 silver coats

3 Pirates [AC 12, HD 5d8+5, HP 25, Initiative +3, #AT 2, Hit +4, Dam Short Sword (1d6+2), Pack Tactics (Pirates are at advantage if attacking with allies within 5 feet.)]

2. Roof Two

Cats, all too common in the Black Gate, scurry for cover as you pass, a bank of thin fruit trees dominate an open roof to your left, more weathered men sliding from them in hot pursuit. Ranging before them is a low-slung beast of naked sun-bleached bone woven wood. Its eyes glow with a baleful light as its long head sways as though sniffing the breeze.

3 Pirates [AC 7, HD 5, HP 30, #AT 3/2, D 1-6 (Short Sword)]

TREASURE

3 dozen copper coins and 1 silver coat

3 Pirates [AC 12, HD 5d8+5, HP 25, Initiative +3, #AT 2, Hit +4, Dam Short Sword (1d6+2), Pack Tactics (Pirates are at advantage if attacking with allies within 5 feet.)]

1 Dweller [AC 2, HD 8+8, HP 56, #AT 3, D 1-6 (Claw x2)/1-8 (Bite), +1 or better weapon to hit]

TREASURE

None

1 Dweller [AC 18, HD 10d10+10, HP 60, Initiative +5, #AT 3, Hit +8, Dam Claw 9 (2d6+3), Bite 12 (2d10+2), Magic Resistance, Multiattack (2 Claws/1 Bite), Aversion to Flame (at disadvantage on rolls if hit by fire), Damage Immunity: non-magical weapons]

3. Roof Three

Another leap and you come upon an annex of buildings growing together to create a solid canopy over the snaking streets below. Three more men move from the shadows there, thickly accented voices calling to the darkening roofs around you.

3 Pirates [AC 7, HD 5, HP 30, #AT 3/2, D 1-6 (Short Sword)]

TREASURE

32 copper coins

3 Pirates [AC 12, HD 5d8+5, HP 25, Initiative +3, #AT 2, Hit +4, Dam Short Sword (1d6+2), Pack Tactics (Pirates are at advantage if attacking with allies within 5 feet.)]

4. Roof Four

The edge of the Tangle draws near, the massive carved stone walls of the stadium rising up like a dam against the oppressive tide of dwellings. Ahead, five men wait near the downslide to the great stair, one of them armed with a twinkling cutlass.

4 Pirates [AC 7, HD 5, HP 30, #AT 3/2, D 1–6 (Short Sword)]

TREASURE

20 copper coins

4 Pirates [AC 12, HD 5d8+5, HP 25, Initiative +3, #AT 2, Hit +4, Dam Short Sword (1d6+2), Pack Tactics (Pirates are at advantage if attacking with allies within 5 feet.)]

1 Pirate Captain [AC 5, HD 10+10, HP 70, #AT 3 (+4 to hit), D (1–6)+5/(1–4)+2 (2 Scimitar/1 Dagger)]

TREASURE

Scimitar +2, Dagger +2, 14 silver coats

1 Pirate Captain [AC 15, HD 10d8+20, HP 65, Initiative +5, #AT 3, Hit +7, Dam Scimitar 8 (1d6+4), Dagger 7 (1d4+5), Multiattack (2 scimitars/1 dagger), Parry (+2 AC against one attack)]

5. Roof Five

The final roof drops down twelve feet to a stone platform on which a man with ebony skin and stark white hair stands. In his hands talismans twine while his eyes glow with a dusky shade of emerald. Two large armored men flank him, and another of the bone and twig beasts stalks back and forth before the verge of the stairs.

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

TREASURE

52 copper coins, 17 silver coats

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.)]

1 Dweller [AC 2, HD 8+8, HP 56, #AT 3, D 1–6 (Claw x2)/1–8 (Bite), +1 or better weapon to hit]

TREASURE

None

1 Dweller [AC 18, HD 10d10+10, HP 60, Initiative +5, #AT 3, Hit +8, Dam Claw 9 (2d6+3), Bite 12 (2d10+2), Magic Resistance, Multiattack (2 Claws/1 Bite), Aversion to Flame (at disadvantage on rolls if hit by fire), Damage Immunity: non-magical weapons]

1 Tome-Mage [AC 7, HD 9, HP 18, #AT 1, D (1–4)+3, Spells: 1st (4) Shield, Shocking Grasp, Magic Missile, Charm Person; 2nd (3) Strength, Web, Detect Invisibility; 3rd (3) Fireball, Hold Person, Suggestion; 4th (2) Fire Shield, Ice Storm; 5th (1) Cone of Cold]

TREASURE

+3 Dagger, Spell Scrolls (includes all known spells), Ring of Protection +1, 20 copper coins, 54 silver coats, 8 gold jaguars

1 Tome-Mage [AC 13, HD 9d8, HP 40, Initiative +3, #AT 1, Hit +8, Dam Dagger 7 (1d4+5), Spellcasting (DC 14 saves and +6 to hit), Spells: Cantrips (at will) Fire Bolt, Mage Hand; 1st (4 Slots) Mage Armor, Magic Missile, Shield; 2nd (3 Slots) Misty Step, Suggestion; 3rd (3 Slots) Counterspell, Fireball, Fly; 4th (3 Slots) Greater Invisibility, Ice Storm; 5th (1 Slot) Cone of Cold]

Encounter Point Five: Dethocrates' Offer

Dethocrates, a local jai-ruk rogue and hustler, has been sent by Lareo to warn the players and followed the mercenary force to the Tangle. He comes with information, and if the previous battle is going poorly, can assist with shots from his short bow as needed.

'Stepping from the shadows of the stair, a large russet-skinned jai-ruk stands half a hand under seven feet in height. A small hip quiver of arrows and a short bow can be seen beneath the folds of a tattered cloak, and the scent of his earth spark is heavy as his boots rest on the dark stones of the stadium.'



He offers to guide the players from the Tangle and the Black Gate, which is now crawling with duelists from the Razor Guild as well as bounty hunters inspired by a price set by House Vash. Like the Lareo conversation in Encounter Point One, Dethocrates will have a series of topics that might assist the players and set them on a new task, which is to be found in Part Two.

Dethocrates provides the following information to the players while in transit:

- A.** Someone or something is moving behind the scenes in an attempt to gain access to the relic Brace recovered on the beach.
- B.** Brace may have been many things, most of them bad, but he wasn't stupid. He hid the relic where he believed no one would discover it, but one of his friends who owed Lareo a favor believes there is only one place Brace could have stashed the item, an old crypt the two discovered earlier in the year along the tidewater.
- C.** Lareo believes if the party can recover the relic, it will have some leverage when it comes to dealing with House Vash.
- D.** He will lead you through the Black Gate and toward the Smoke Dragon District, if you are willing to make an attempt at the relic and its resting place. A contact there, a mercenary named Increase Coin, has the location and will provide it with Lareo's seal.

Part Two: The Old Crypt

Setting the Stage

This part of the adventure is much more ‘standard’ RPG stuff, with a small delve into a crypt that should provide the players with the leverage they need against House Vash. Dethocrates will walk the players from the Black Gate to the Smoke Dragon District, skirting the main streets until he finds a small bazaar where he will meet with his contact, the mercenary Increase Coin. Coin isn’t someone the players need to interact with here, but as in all things in Taux, that doesn’t mean he might not play a more important role later in the story.

Encounter Point One

The meeting with Increase Coin, a tattooed and scarred man of Zimbolay with a dour expression and long limbs, will be quick. Whispered words exchanged between Dethocrates and Coin are hard to discern, but sooner rather than later a small roughly drawn map is provided by Coin. Dethocrates will offer the map to the players and then instruct them to find the relic within a small crypt secreted on the banks of a canal in this district. Once they’ve done that they are to bring the relic to a house in the Turquoise Turtle District where a negotiation will already be taking place between Deth and an agent of House Vash.

‘Another bridge, more common than ghosts some citizens would whisper, stretches out over a causeway as you make your way down the levy to the water. Beneath the span, amid the moonlight playing against the water, several low fires burn as squatters take shelter in the long night. Earthy magic presses against you, the taste of it heavy on your tongue as the jai-ruks that make up the bulk of these vagabonds overpower the air with their elemental sparks.’

1. Entry

Tumbledown and sea washed stones provide a deceiving image of a completely collapsed tunnel, and yet hard investigation exposes a small arch just big enough for a person to slip through. Inside, a long dark hall stretching out twenty feet is framed by lichen-covered stone walls.

2. Moss Room

A thirty by twenty rectangular chamber is set with a passage in the western wall and a heavy wood door in the north wall. A deep green moss, burnished at the edges with yellow, grows all throughout the chamber.

Investigation of the chamber will show signs of wear on the floor moss leading to the passage. The door is waterlogged and has swollen shut; it cannot be opened without a successful Open Doors check [DC 15 Strength].

3. Shattered Prayer Room

Two large cracked urns and a crumbled table lie in this chamber. Debris including two tarnished candle sticks and some crumbled incense lie around the table, but otherwise the room is without decoration.

4. Crypt Annex

This small ten by ten chamber is set with four doors, one at each point of the compass. Each door is made of wood planks set with rusted metal braces. Heavy iron locks attach to each ring-handle of the door, fastening them tightly to the stone wall.

Each lock is -10% to remove because of heavy rust [DC 19]. Investigation [2 in 6] of the door on the south wall will indicate that it has seen some use [DC 15 Perception].

The northern door holds a trap [DC 15] and unless disarmed it will fire a sheaf of rusted darts at all those in Room 4. Damage from the darts is 8–24 [20 (10d4)].

5. Tomb One

A large room with three alcoves in the southern wall stretches out before you. Each alcove holds a standing sarcophagus. As you watch, a dim light from several runes in the ceiling begins to glow, and the sound of hushed whispering begins to bounce around the cold stone walls of the chamber.

Brace knew the lay of the land of this chamber (and something Increase Coin knew as well but didn’t reveal), and that is that unless you have a charm or talisman dedicated to the Tolimic God Ueuecoyotl, the chamber ‘will rise up against’ any looters. In this case, the resistance takes the form of two greater undead that are completely resistant to all attempts to turn them while in their tomb.

2 Greater Skeletons [AC 8, HD 9, HP 36, #AT 1, D (1–12)+1]

TREASURE

2 +1 Obsidian Axes

2 Greater Skeletons [AC 12, HD 9d10+18, HP 67, Initiative +3, #AT 1, Hit +7, Dam Obsidian Axe 17 (2d12+5)]

Behind the only sarcophagus that doesn’t open is a secret door [1 in 6] [DC 18 Perception].

Also, the chamber has a secret door that opens into the main hall of Room 8. Finding this door requires a successful search [1 in 6] [DC 18 Perception].

6. St. Shay’s Chamber

The false door opens, smooth stone sliding against oiled metal. Beyond, a small room is decorated with a small wooden bed, a series of chains attached to the ceiling, and a shelf filled with blood-red candles, whips, and other metal and leather apparatus.

This was the place where Brace would have his fun with downtrodden women of Taux, proving his loyalty to the dark Saint Shay. Within a secret hole in the stone wall [1 in 6] [DC 18 Perception], a bag holds 75 gold jaguars and a polished wood bracelet set with seven circles of onyx. This is the artifact that House Vash seeks.

7. Fresco Chamber

This heavily painted chamber is covered floor to ceiling in moldering depictions of life in Taux before the city was silenced. Two halls, one running south and one running north, branch off around a monolith that bears the distinctive carvings seen in so many of the upper class dwellings of the old city.

The monolith is actually a sealed cache that holds part of the wealth of this fallen family. Detection of anything amiss with the monolith requires a direct check and a Find/Remove Traps at -20% [DC 20 Perception]. Once found, opening the monolith requires the party to destroy it, presumably with a hammer as it takes 40 points of blunt damage [or 100 points of edged damage] to break it enough to look inside.

TREASURE

A golden jaguar head statue (1000 GP value), 150 silver coats, Scroll of Cure Light Wounds [Cure], +2 obsidian and wood Longsword of Wounding

8. Tomb Two

Another large chamber with three southern alcoves lies beyond the door. Light flickers here from runes set in the ceiling, and a haunting wail sets the hairs on the back of your neck on end.

This chamber is identical to Room 5, although there is no secret door in any alcove. If the party has entered using the secret door from Room 5, the outcome of the above description is the same.

Secret Door [1 in 6] **[DC 18 Perception]**

Three ghosts haunt this chamber.

3 Ghosts [AC 0 (8), HD 10, HP 55, #AT 1, Age 10–40 years (saving throw to negate), Magic Jar, +1 or better weapon to hit]

TREASURE

None

3 Ghosts [AC 11, HD 10d8, HP 45, Initiative +3, #AT 1, Hit +5, Dam Withering Touch 17 (4d6+3), Etherealness, Possession (Recharge 6), Damage Resistance: non-magical weapons, Immunity: cold, necrotic, poison]

9. Sarcophagus One

This door, ravaged by time and wet air, crumbles as you attempt to open it. Behind the newly created pile of desiccated wood is a single chamber with a stone sarcophagus.



The chamber was prepared for a high ranking member of the family, but the disaster that destroyed Taux insured it was never used.

10. Treasure/Heirloom Chamber

A secret chamber accessed through Room 7.

11. Sarcophagus Two

This door was broken years ago, only two small pieces of wood still cling to the rusted hinges. Beyond, a shattered sarcophagus and smashed coffin are in residence, but both look to have been destroyed long ago.

A search [1 in 6] **[DC 17 Perception]** will reveal a small gold ring in the debris of the coffin (still attached to a finger bone). The ring is actually a Ring of Feather Falling.

Encounter Point Two

After finding the relic, the party should travel to the address Dethocrates provided. Once there, they will see a small shop, a single lamp burning in the window. The stones around them whisper and gibber, many seeming to move and crawl at the edges of their vision, although they do not move when stared at.

Dethocrates will already be outside, his eyes illuminated from the red glow of a pipe he is smoking beneath an awning. He will greet the party and ask after the relic, but he does not wish to see it, saying such things of ancient Taux are better left undercover.

Once he has confirmed the party has the relic, he will relate the negotiation, saying that House Vash will forgive any crimes against them if the relic is delivered to its rightful location deep within an old temple (which is actually an underground pyramid) in the Ghost Towers. Once in the ritual room below the surface, they are to place the item on the altar and leave it there. Although this request is odd, the chance that it represents is something Dethocrates sees as advantageous, even if it might only give Lareo more time to find out the true plot.

Part Three: The Bender Surrogate

Setting the Stage

If the players accept this job, Dethocrates will provide them with a map to the temple within the Ghost Towers and say they have four hours to deliver the relic. Once done, he will meet them at the mouth of the Black Gate and hopefully have better news concerning the Razor Guild and the Sturgeons, both of whom are still after the players.

Passage to the Temple of the Crescent Moon, especially in the early hours of the pre-dawn, shouldn't be a hard thing, but the city seems anxious as the characters pass walls, the whispers growing more fevered. Anyone holding the relic will see shapes slithering within the stone, but no outward attacks will be made along the journey.

Encounter Point One

The temple itself is a large stone building with a single ramp leading to a set of double doors. The doors are ajar, likely from brave squatters, but no light comes from within.

1. Citizen Entry

Black stone, decorated with thousands of ancient glyphs, presses in against you even in a hall some twenty feet wide. Above, a dark ceiling adds to the weighty essence, and the dulcet whispers of spirits echo in the shadows your light doesn't penetrate. Three sets of double doors, all made of green-washed wood, are within the length of the hall, one east, one west, and one to the north.

2. Offering Chamber

This large room is empty, save for some bits of scattered debris. The stone on the floor is well-worn in repetitive areas as though thousands of devotional kneeling ceremonies have taken place.

3. Chamber of Virgins

Carvings on the walls of this large chamber show a myriad of sexually writhing bodies. The likenesses of young women lounge naked around priests in great feline headdresses, and heavy mats still sit and molder on the floor.

The room is populated by the souls of sacrificed young women, and they will attack any living thing entering the chamber, first the male members of the party, and once they are dead, the females.

3 Tortured Virgin Ghosts [AC 0 (8), HD 10, HP 55, #AT 1, Age 10–40 years (saving throw to negate), Magic Jar, +1 or better weapon to hit]

TREASURE None

3 Tortured Virgin Ghosts [AC 11, HD 10d8, HP 45, Initiative +3, #AT 1, Hit +5, Dam Withering Touch 17 (4d6+3), Etherealness, Possession (Recharge 6), Damage Resistance: non-magical weapons, Immunity: cold, necrotic, poison]

4. Upper Annex

A central chamber, like a capital 'T', is laid out around you with yellow-washed walls. Two wooden doors are set into the east and west corners of the T.

Located beneath the 'T' of this room are two other rooms: Room 5, as well as a trapped chamber. The trap is an acid spraying apparatus that will eject acid at anyone in a ten-foot area outside the door. Damage for this attack is 4–16 [16 (4d8)] plus an addition 2–8 [8 (2d8)] for the next 4 turns.

5. Cloak Room

This ten by ten chamber has a dozen stone pegs set into the walls and an old wooden shelf along the floor where rotten sandals still rest.

6. Priest Chamber

A stone tablet, probably a bed, dominates one corner of this room. Only a single carving, this one of a great serpent, is set into the north wall, and a shattered ceramic vase and crushed table and stool lie against the western wall.

7. Sub-Priest Chamber

This room stands empty, a carving of a giant toad set into the northern wall.

8. Noble's Devotion Chamber

Carvings of kings and nobility standing amid priests dominate the carvings of this large chamber. In the center of the room a small stone dais rests, the marble top stained with crimson.

9. Bathing Room

The floor of this room is set with sloped grooves that lead to holes cut into the western wall. Scenes of fish and waterfowl have been carved into the walls.

10. Storage

An empty chamber set with stone shelves and no carvings lies beyond the thin wooden door.

11. Storage

As you open the door, the crunching of bones can be heard. Amid the darkness of this smooth-walled room, a single figure is hunched over what might have been an animal of some kind, blood pooling around its feet.

1 Ghost [AC 4, HD 4, HP 20, #AT 3, D 1–4/1–4/1–6, save vs. poison or be nauseated, causing -2 to all attacks]

TREASURE None

1 Ghost [AC 13, HD 8d8, HP 36, Initiative +1, #AT 2, Hit +5, Dam Claws 10 (2d6+3) Bite 12 (2d8+3), Turning Defiance (advantage on savings), Stench (DC 10 Constitution or poisoned)]

12. Stair Chamber

A great wheel within larger concentric wheels, all set with hieroglyphs, is set into the floor of this room. Your light source twinkles from hundreds of small crystals set into the ceiling, the patterns discernable as constellations in the night sky. At the rear of the chamber a single stair leads downward into darkness.





13. Stair Chamber Underfloor

The stairs give way to a massive triangular chamber set with two single doors, one northwest and one northeast, and a pair of double doors to the south. The walls are carved with massive bestial hybrids that stand amid thousands of hieroglyphs. The double doors in the south are made of metal and each is set with a single hieroglyph, the right door corresponding with a glyph on the northwest door, and the left door with a glyph on the northeast door.

To pass through the doors, a priest would have to give a devotion to the under-gods of each of the other two chambers. This really only means entering the room for more than a minute. Once this has been done, the doors may be opened with a simple push, otherwise they are considered to be Wizard Locked and have no other mundane lock. Breaking them with damage would require over 150 points of damage, and each strike with a non-bludgeoning weapon would require the weapon to make a successful saving throw or be shattered.

14. Summoning Chamber One

Two massive pillars support the vaulted ceiling of this chamber. In the northeast corner of the room a third pillar has fallen along with a huge section of the corner wall, a massive carved stone wall section, probably depicting some god, has fallen away and a huge opening into utter darkness lurks beyond. As you approach, a single light begins to glow in the darkness, the light swaying slowly back and forth in the gloom. Just below the warm glow are twinkling coins, gems, and softly glowing items.

Within the darkness, and summoned through a small crease in the fabric of existence between the uncharted realms beyond the Plane of Shadow and our world, is a bender surrogate. Only allowed into existence by the great spell that destroyed the city, this entity lies in wait for victims to come to it. It cannot leave its dark hole (and can only travel 50 feet into the chamber) as it must maintain the connection to its distant plane of existence, otherwise all of Taux might be in grave danger.

1 Bender Surrogate 'The Angler' [AC 0, HD 15+7, HP 127, #AT 3, D (1-10)+10 (Claws), (2-20)+5 (Bite), +2 or better weapon to hit, 35% magic resistance]

TREASURE

Strewn around the mouth of the bender's 'home' are various bones and coins (200 silver coats in total), and 17 gems worth 25 GP each, as well as a +3 Knife, +2 Shield, Staff of Striking, 13 Arrows +2, and a +2 Sabre (Rapier) of Sharpness.

1 Bender Surrogate 'The Angler' [AC 20, HD 15d12+45, HP 135, Initiative +4, #AT 3, Hit +9, Dam Claw 16 (3d8+4), Bite 20 (3D10+5), Damage Immunity: non-magical weapons, Magic Resistance]

15. Summoning Chamber Two

Beyond the three massive pillars that hold the roof of this chamber, there is little but hieroglyph covered walls and a thirty-foot-tall carving of a winged serpent god that rises from a banyan tree.

16. Ritual Chamber

The double doors open to reveal a ten-foot-high raised platform with a single stair leading onto its surface. Around the platform six pillars support the ceiling, and another two rise from around the central altar. The walls of black stone are free of all adornment, but a polish, like smooth onyx, has been applied that reflects your light in a strange dance and casts shadows all over the chamber.

8 Shadows [AC 7, HD 3+3, HP 21, #AT 1, D 2-5 (plus Strength drain), +1 or better weapon to hit]

TREASURE

None

8 Shadows [AC 12, HD 3d8+3, HP 16, Initiative +1, #AT 1, Hit +4, Dam Strength Drain 9 (2d6+2) + 2 (1d4) points of Strength, Damage Resistance: non-magical weapons, Vulnerability: radiant]

This is the grand ritual chamber of the temple and the relic is supposed to be placed on the altar. It is there that the mercenaries of House Vash have been told to recover it once they have dealt with the players. If only the single relic is placed on the altar, nothing happens and the players must decide whether to leave it as instructed, or take it and return to the surface.

However, if both relics (the other possibly recovered in the mini-adventure AT1.5 Storm Season) are placed on the altar at the same time, they will glow with a dark light and become an item known to the war priests of Taux as The Fists of the Onyx God. They possess the power of Gauntlets of Ogre Power and Bracers of Defense AC 4 [Bracers of Defense]. Whispered voices of ancient priests say the item's title, and anyone picking the pair up will instantly be aware of their purpose and powers.

Encounter Point Two

Once the party attempts to leave the temple, it will come across a shadowed group of men that now dwell around the exit of the temple. These are mercenary agents of House Vash, and first will ask where the relic resides. Whatever the answer, the leader of this company will nod to his men and blades (already at the ready) will be brought into play.

'Men, the heat of their fire spark filling the long dark chamber, rise from sitting positions as their eyes flare beneath the hoods of their cloaks. One of them, armor creaking as he takes a position at their head, fingers the bejeweled hilt of a longsword as a thin smile cuts a swath of dark mirth through his stubble-crusted face.'

The betrayal by House Vash will occur in Room 1 of the temple.

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

TREASURE

20 silver coats each

6 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.)]

1 Mercenary Captain [AC 5, HD 10+10, HP 70, #AT 3 (+4 to hit), D (1-8)+5 (Longsword)]

TREASURE

Longsword +2, belt pouch with 20 gold jaguars, Potion of Extra-Healing [Greater Healing]

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

Encounter Point Three

The end of this particular adventure will find the characters having gained little in the way of relief from House Vash, although hopefully they will still be in possession of the relic once the final battle takes place. From this point, they have only one known option, meeting with Dethocrates outside the Black Gate. As the sun slowly begins to paint the sky pink in the east, they've managed to survive one dark night in Taux, but who knows how much longer their luck will last...

○

Pillar

□

Door

▢

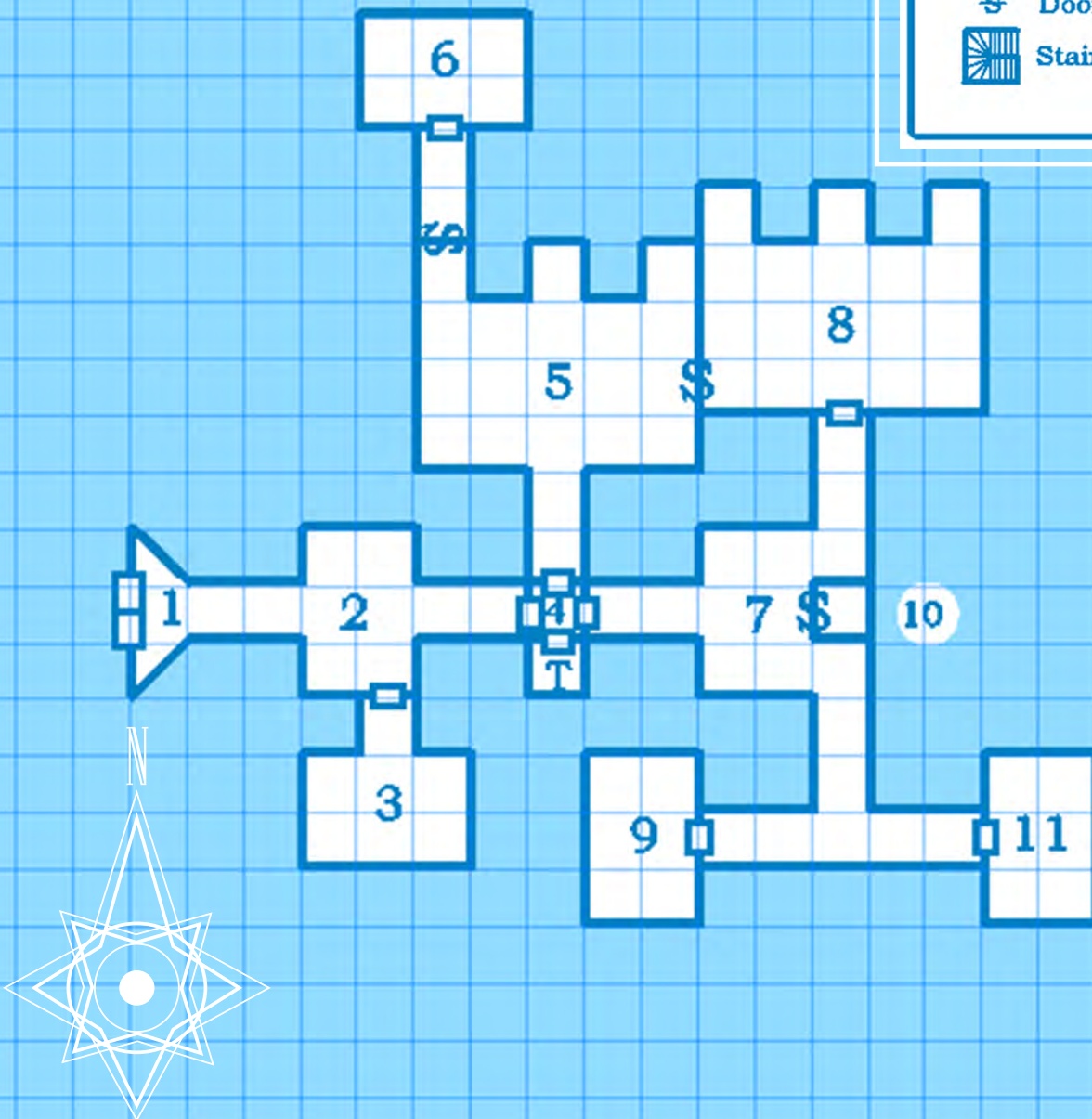
Door, double


⌘


Door, secret


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Stairwell




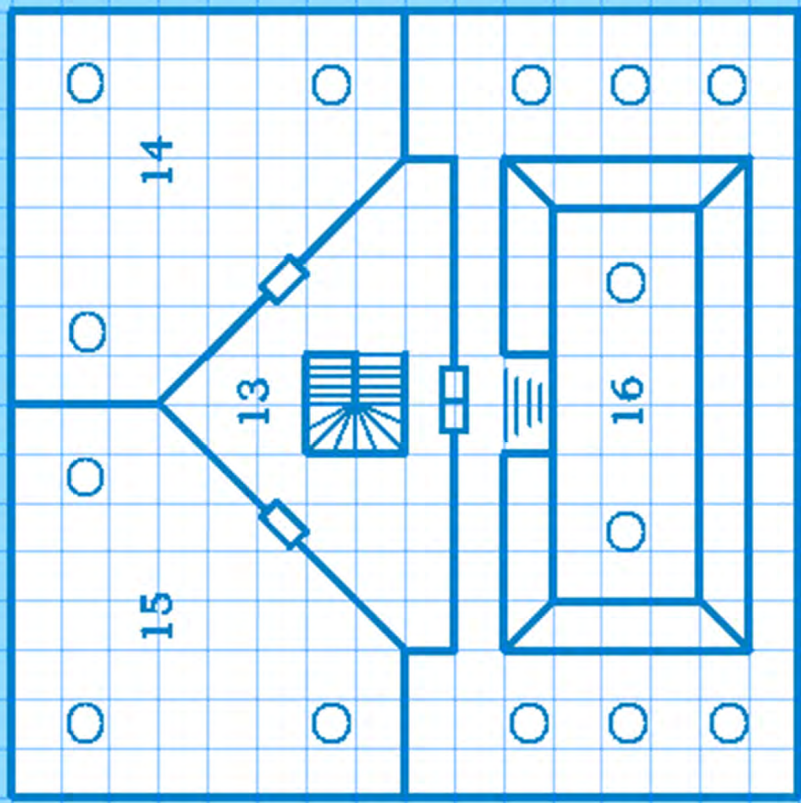
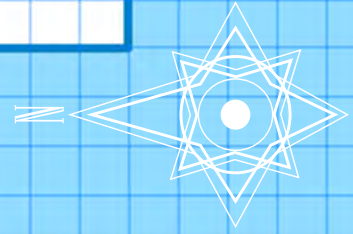
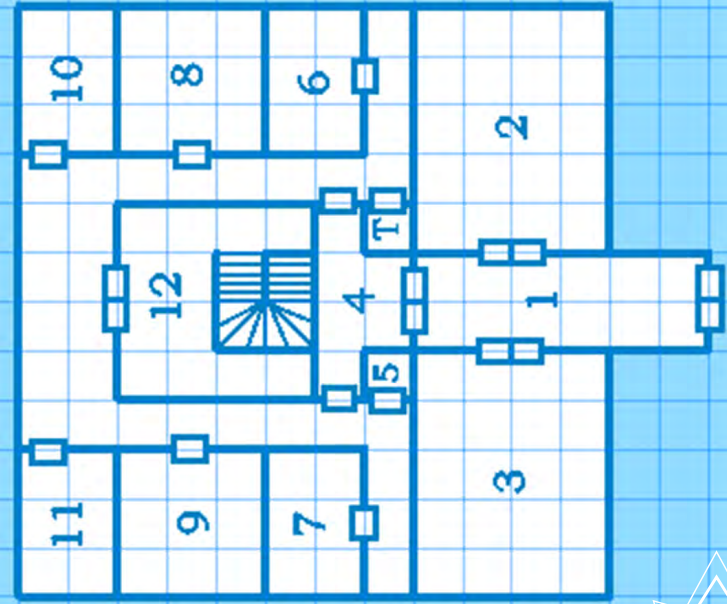
 Pillar

 Door

 Door, double

 Door, secret

 Stairwell



AT1.5

Bonus Module

THE FOLIO

Mini-Module



ADVENTURES FROM THE EMERALD SERPENT CAMPAIGN

Storm Seasons

Mini-Adventure AT1.5

by Scott Taylor

Everyone comes to Taux for a reason, and yet they come. A few will brave the Ebon Swamp, but most will come via ship, which is the method the party now employs. Unbeknownst to them, however, a storm is brewing, one with untold magical energy that can bend the very fabric of space and time. If they are lucky, they will have a story to be told beyond imagination. If they aren't, they will become the fodder of seafaring legend, just another lost ship that never made it into the sheltered bay of Taux.



Mini-Adventure AT1.5

Storm Seasons

Dungeon Master Notes & Suggestions

This mini-adventure is based around my love of the movie *The Final Countdown*. In it, the U.S.S. Nimitz sails through a time hole back to pre-WWII and has a chance to stop the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. In this adventure, players are traveling as a group aboard the trade ship *Teller's Bay*. As they get close to Taux a storm blows in, and they race for the shelter of the bay only to be overrun by a strange glowing distortion. This magical vortex throws them back to the night Taux was overcome by a magical apocalypse, and they have just enough time to escape back to the present. In doing so, they recover an item that will later come into play with events in the full Taux trilogy.

1. Primary Purpose

This adventure's primary goal is to give the players a chance to recover ½ of a legendary relic used by the war priests of old Taux, *The Fists of the Onyx God*. During the storm, the party will be attacked by a 'spirit priest', one recently possessed by the power beyond the Plane of Shadow that is washing over Taux during the time jump. Once defeated, he will dissolve, but the relic will remain, one half on the deck, the other half washed out to sea (and later found by Brace Vash along the beaches).

2. Secondary Purpose

This adventure also serves as an introduction to the ghosts of Taux, both in the present and the past. It will also offer a chance for the party to form as a unit—getting some familiarity and comradery with each other—all before the events of Folio #11 take place.

3. Time for running

This mini-adventure is meant to be run BEFORE the events that take place in Folio #11. If you run it after, there will be too many problems within the timeline setting, so I do not recommend doing so.

The Teller's Bay

The ship is the primary point of this adventure. However, no real detail concerning it has been laid out here, but you are free to use any ship map you have access to. If you are a miniatures gamer, and have a ship handy, by all means use it, but the real onus is on the stages of combat. That said, I'm going to list a few names and levels if you would like to incorporate members of the crew into the fight.

Captain: Nye Tram, a human 8th level fighter [Bandit Captain]

First Mate: Sasha Imapov, a Korys 6th level thief [Thug]

Ship's Quartermaster: Rovo Krass, a jai-ruk 4th level fighter [Mercenary]

Crew: 1st level fighters [Bandits]

Running Combat

Keep things fast in combat and slow in the buildup. Utilize the essence of the unknown, the dark, the sea, and the fog to keep players on edge. For this reason I wouldn't suggest bogging the fights down by adding excess crew to each attack. Let the players have a certain position on the ship, assigned by Captain Tram, and they can hold that spot until it is obviously time to abandon ship.

Telling the Story

Remember, this trilogy is highly focused on the narrative. As the DM, you'll see what I've put into each encounter and should try to branch off of that, continuing the feel and keeping players invested in the action as though they are part of a story and not just a fight.

Set up for Folio #11

This mini-adventure is based around the story that takes place in Folio #11, and thus if you run it before that adventure, you'll have a great base for how things should begin to play out once everyone is safely in Taux. It is my suggestion that before the initial storm, Captain Tram will have the party to his quarters for a meal, and there will regale them with tales of the infamous *Emerald Serpent* and the wiles of the *Silk Purse*, both located directly in the center of the *Black Gate*.

'If you travel to Taux,' Tram says as he leans back in his chair and draws a long pull on a pipe, 'you must find your way beyond the Black Gate. There, below the Raised Market you will find the finest drinking house in all the Halo—the Emerald Serpent. Once you've had your fill of spirits you might even cross the gangway to the Silk Purse and partake of the sweetest flesh, both male and female, of any of the races of the spark.'

The Storm

The outer break islands of Taux rise up in the distance as great waves strike against the breakwater, throwing huge walls of white into the darkening sky. Above, ashen clouds churn like a cauldron, occasional flashes of lightning mimicking skeletal fingers grasping at the sheeting rain.

1. The Ship

Waves break along the rails as Tram calls to his sailors, each springing from task to task as the spray lashes hair to their faces in wet sheets.

Although no outward attack happens as the ship begins its slow crawl toward the shelter of the bay, the players should be called to action by Captain Tram. He will utilize their abilities as he can, having those with high dexterity securing rope lines and sails, those with strength lashing cargo, and those with spells staying clear unless they have magic that can assist. Appropriate ability checks can be utilized here as needed, perhaps even a man going overboard that the characters are called on to help if they can, otherwise he is lost in the waves.

2. The Storm

Each moment in the churning maelstrom seems an hour as the *Teller* draws closer to the shelter of the bay. The captain rails against the blow, his voice hurling insults into the gale-force winds as he steers his vessel past the first breakwater. It is there that a glow spreads across the water, wind taking on form like a thousand ghosts driving past you in a vortex that envelopes the ship in a cold embrace.

This is the time slip, the *Teller* having passed through a rip in time and space that takes it back to the fateful night of the Taux apocalypse. All characters need to make saving throws versus magic [DC 15 Wisdom] or be stunned for 1d4 rounds as the ship slides back into the past (consider half the crew to succumb to this effect, some sliding from lines and masts into the dark sea).

3. The Calm

The sea beneath the *Teller* turns to a black sheet of glass, the ship's tortured flight from the storm suddenly ended as a hundred thousand twinkling lights from Taux rise up around you. Those lights, however, are nothing compared to the swirling green funnel towering over it. At the center of the bay the impossibly tall *Star Tower* stands beneath the swirling cloud, its shimmering light suddenly dimmed as a great torrent of dark shadows begins to descend on the city, the bay, and the world beyond.

The crew has arrived at the very moment the doom has been released on Taux, a wave of killing energy coming from beyond the Plane of Shadow to blast souls and flesh alike directly into the stone of Taux. However, since the *Teller* has come out so close to the *Star Tower*, some of its abjuration magic thwarts the energy, turning it corporeal and giving the ship a chance to fight.



4. The Fog

A fog, cold like the kiss of the northern wastes, slides across the surface of the ebon waters. Aboard the ship, men exhale wisps of icy breath, and hellfrost forms on the masts and lines, each second drawing the shimmering cloud closer and closer.

The frost has no true effect on the players, however, movement on the ship's icy deck will cause a -1 penalty to attacks.

Captain Tram begins calling for his men to form 'gangs'. The players will also be called upon and it is here they should be given a 'zone' for defense on the ship, preferably next to a launch which they will be required to use to escape the certain doom of the Teller.

5. The Shades

The green witch-fire light that penetrates the gloom from the Star Tower gives form to clawed behemoths and humanoid shapes, some with groping tentacles, others masses of teeth and eyes. The abominations roll out of the fog bank onto the deck as men scream and tear at their own flesh in horror.

These creatures are a type of bender-spawn known as tether-abominations, spirit creatures from the realms beyond the Elemental Plane of Shadow, given form by the Star Tower. Each has a 'tether' of magical energy that still connects it to its home plane of existence (think a character's astral thread). These tethers can actually be seen by players with a successful Wisdom check [**DC 12 Perception**] and can be destroyed using magical spells or weapons. It takes 10 points of damage to destroy one, and they are considered to have Magic Resistance 35% [**Magic Resistance**].

8 Tether Abominations [AC 4, HD 7+7, HP 49, #AT 3, D 2-12 (Necrotic/Slash), +1 or better weapon to hit]

TREASURE

None

8 Tether Abominations [AC 16, HD 7d12+14, HP 56, Initiative +3, #AT 3, Hit +6, Dam Slashing Appendage 9 (2d6+2) + 6 (1d8+2) Necrotic, Multiattack, Damage Resistance: non-magical weapons, Vulnerability: radiant]

The characters should be hard pressed by these creatures. At a minimum, they should be forced to fight five of these creatures before moving on to Part 6. Obviously, cutting the tethers is the fastest way through this battle.

6. The Priest Specter

Amid the carnage and screams another form appears, this one wearing a great feline headdress and wielding an obsidian hammer. His flesh is like polished obsidian, eyes burning with embers of crimson flame, and forearms adorned with softly glowing wood and onyx bracers. With a scream, he approaches, hammer raised for battle.

This is the body of the Taux war-priest that brought about the cataclysmic spell. His body has been fully infested with a powerful bender-spawn, this one strong enough to enter the world without a tether! Once defeated, his body will crumble and explode, the hammer going over the side of the ship along with his left arm (and bracer), but his right bracer will be cast across the deck and bounce off the ship's single launch (as a sign perhaps it is time to go!).

1 Greater Bender Infested Spawn [AC 0, HD 12, HP 72, #AT 2, +5 Hit, D (1-12)+8, +1 or better weapon to hit]

TREASURE

+2 Obsidian Hammer, The Fists of the Onyx God (Relic)

1 Greater Bender Infested Spawn [AC 20, HD 12d12+24, HP 96, Initiative +4, #AT 2, Hit +9, Dam Obsidian Hammer 17 (2d12+5), Multiattack, Damage Resistance: non-magical weapons, Vulnerability: radiant]

7. The Launch

The sound of screaming is dying along with the crew of the Teller. Above the din Captain Tram calls to abandon ship, his outstretched arm pointing at a disc of light swirling off the ship's portside.

The magical shimmer is reminiscent of the glow that brought the ship into the storm in the first place. It is at this point the players will need to quickly devise a way to get the launch into the water as the ship starts to break apart, more bender-spawn appearing, and the captain nodding slowly to the party as he is overwhelmed. To launch the ship without magic, the players must have a combined Strength total of 40 and need 1d4 rounds to get it in the water. They will also have to contend with more bender-spawn interfering with the launch, which might decrease the overall Strength score, and each round without a combined 40 adds another round they will have to be on the ship. If they are still aboard after 10 rounds, the adventure is over and they will die, just another victim of the demise of Taux.

8 Tether Abominations [AC 4, HD 7+7, HP 49, #AT 3, D 2-12 (Necrotic/Slash), +1 or better weapon to hit]

TREASURE

None

8 Tether Abominations [AC 16, HD 7d12+14, HP 56, Initiative +3, #AT 3, Hit +6, Dam Slashing Appendage 9 (2d6+2) + 6 (1d8+2) Necrotic, Multiattack, Damage Resistance: non-magical weapons, Vulnerability: radiant]

8. The Beach

The launch breaks apart around you as the glowing magic abates. Warm water, welcomed after the cold of the battle, washes against your body in a gentle rhythm, the lights of a city alive and prospering rising up out of the darkness. Sounds of lapping water can be heard nearby, and the light of the Ghost Moon reflects against the pearlescent sands of a crescent beach.

Once in the water, the launch will be drawn to the glow as though an unseen hand or tide is pulling it in. You may describe the dire cold of it, the cracking of the boards around them, and the terrible screams echoing from the Teller, but otherwise they will make it through without any rolls needed.

Here ends the mini-adventure, and it should be the hope that they have survived with the bracer in their possession.

THE FOLIO



The King and the Serpent

Pole Module AT2

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



The King and the Goblin



- 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

Folio Module AT2

The King and the Serpent

A Three Part Scenario for
Characters Levels 5–7

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, roleplay, 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 roleplay, I fully support that, although keep in mind it might require you to adjust some encounters later in the trilogy.

The Relic, Part Two

To anyone who possesses the relic from Folio #11, the Fist of the Onyx God, the DM should remember that magic items of this level of power typically come with a cost. In this case, the possessor of the artifact will begin to see illusions (unknown to the character as such) of a lovely young woman leading children into dark alleys. If pursued, there will be no sign of her or the children, save for whispering voices from the stone and what looks to be old blood on the stones that speak of terrible murder. These visions will be reinforced by stories told of missing children (a common occurrence in Taux), and will persist throughout the week of the festival before the culmination of the arc in which the Queen of Flowers, Ylissa Rummel, is to be crowned. The queen is none other than the seemingly murderous young woman in the visions, which is likely to conflict heavily with saving her from the Vash conspiracy.

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 its own Queen of Blossoms to represent it 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 until 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.

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 demigods 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.

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 its desire to see the Fist of the Onyx God in its 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 overtly. 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 publicly.

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, charm, and then sacrifice a victim 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.

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 skillset 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. Roleplay 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 (roleplaying 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.

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 by 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 and 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.

Overall Story Arcs & 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



AT2: The King and the Serpent

This adventure is going to be unlike most you've encountered to date with The Folio series as it is more about roleplay 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 roleplaying genre to the test, so try to be fair, take your time, read the material fully before playing, and above all, have fun!

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.

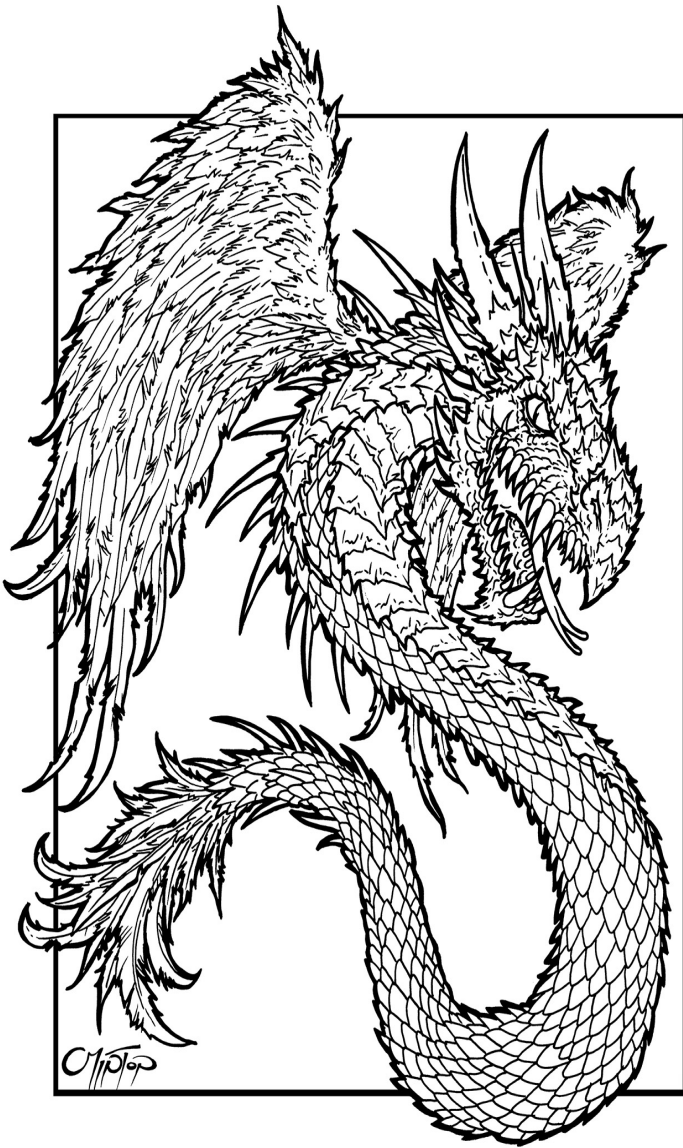
[Easy target DC 12, Moderate target DC 15, Hard target DC 17, Sherlock DC 20 in either Search skill or Persuasion]

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 been exposed 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.



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 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 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 (2d4+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)]

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.



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 Henrich 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 for 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 are 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 heavyset 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. 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 Henrich.

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 Henrich 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 lowl 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 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: 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: Henrich 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.

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 Henrich.

B. Henrich 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 Henrich 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. Also, 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 Henrich 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 Henrich, 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 coats

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 (2d4+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)]

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.

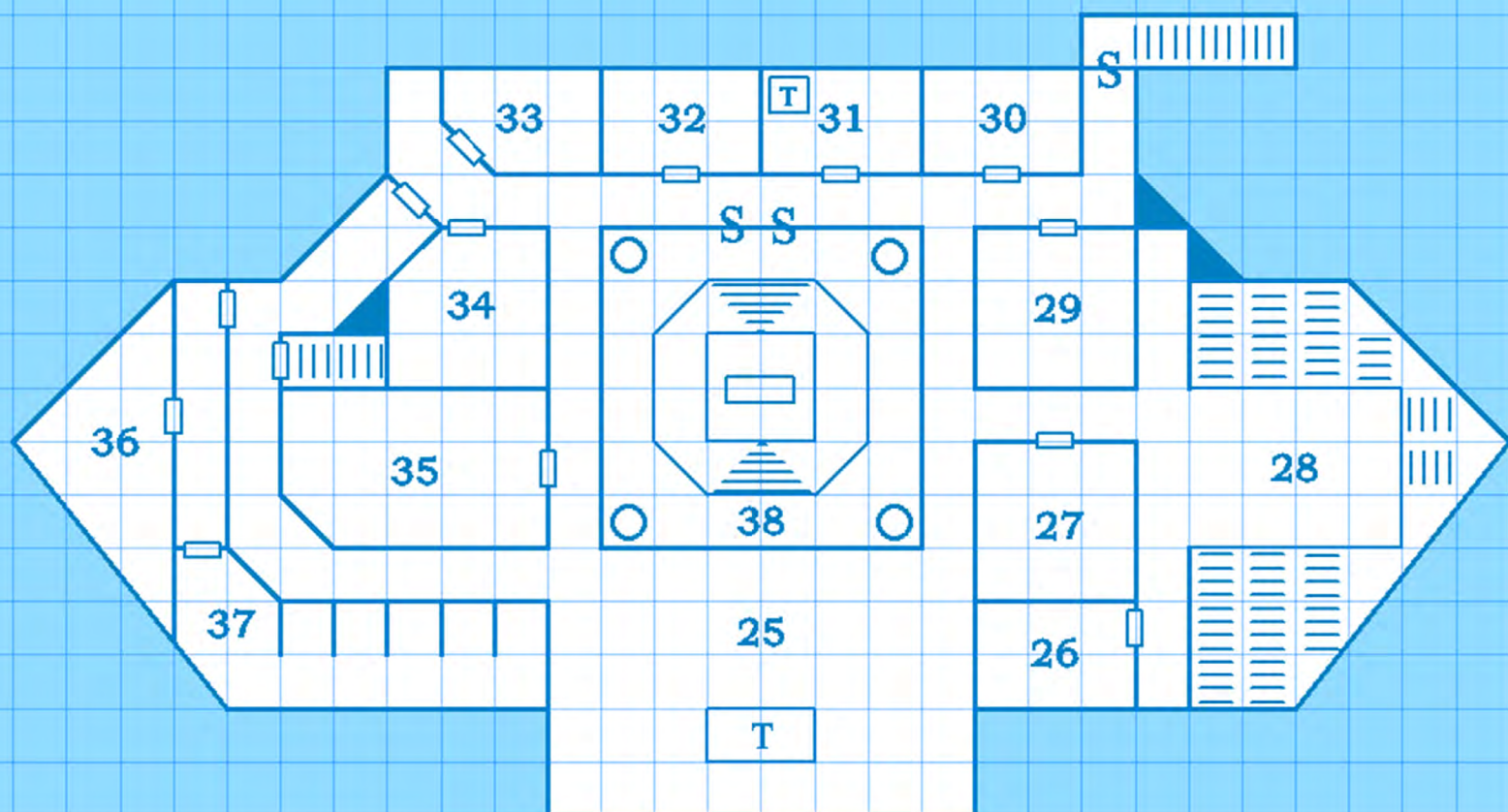
38. Secret Shrine for Saint Shay

(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

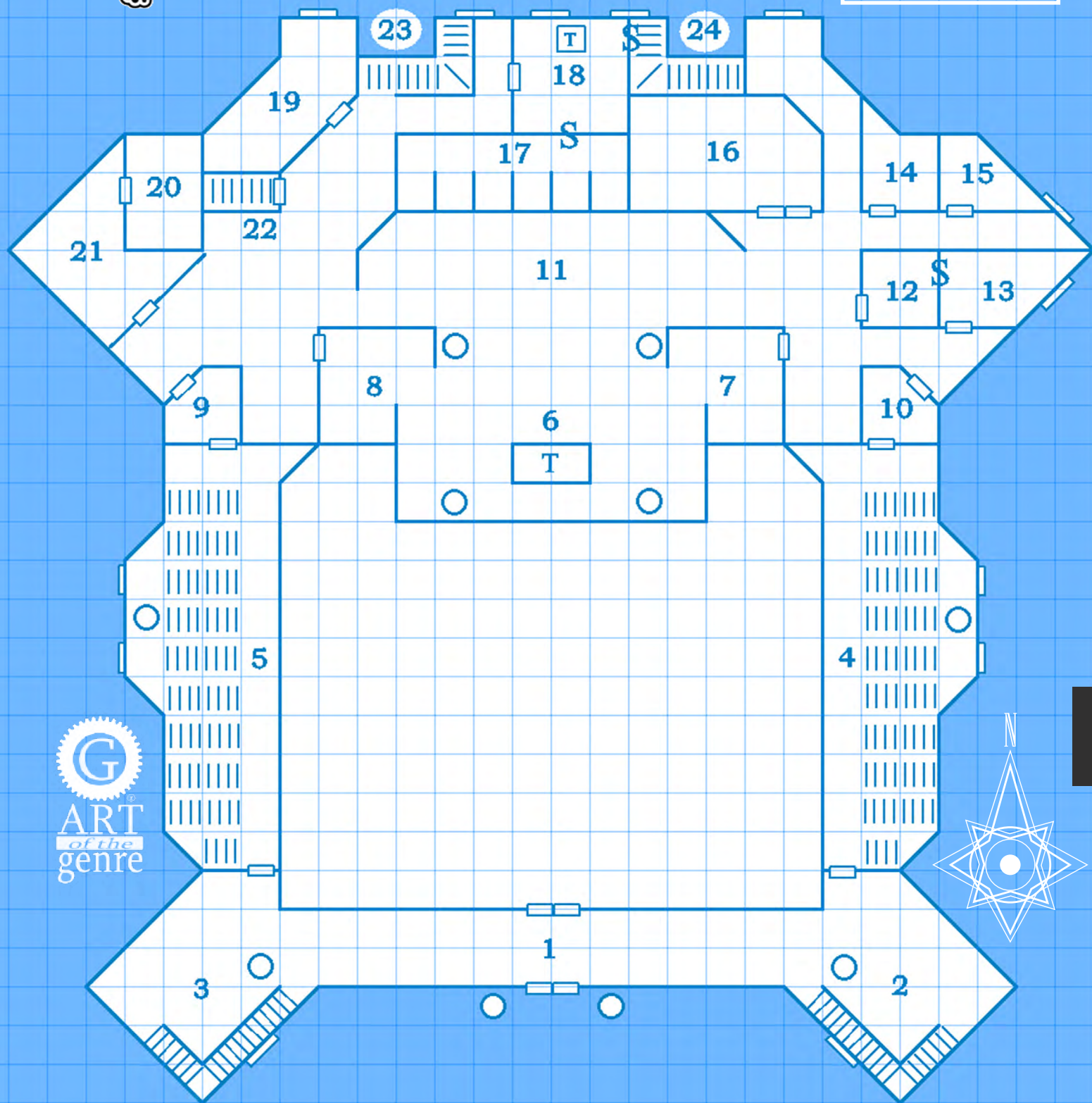
There are two 5'x5' holes in the floor near the southern pillars, each has several discarded black scales around it.



- O Pillar
- Door
- ▤ Door, double
- ⊕ Door, secret
-  Stairwell

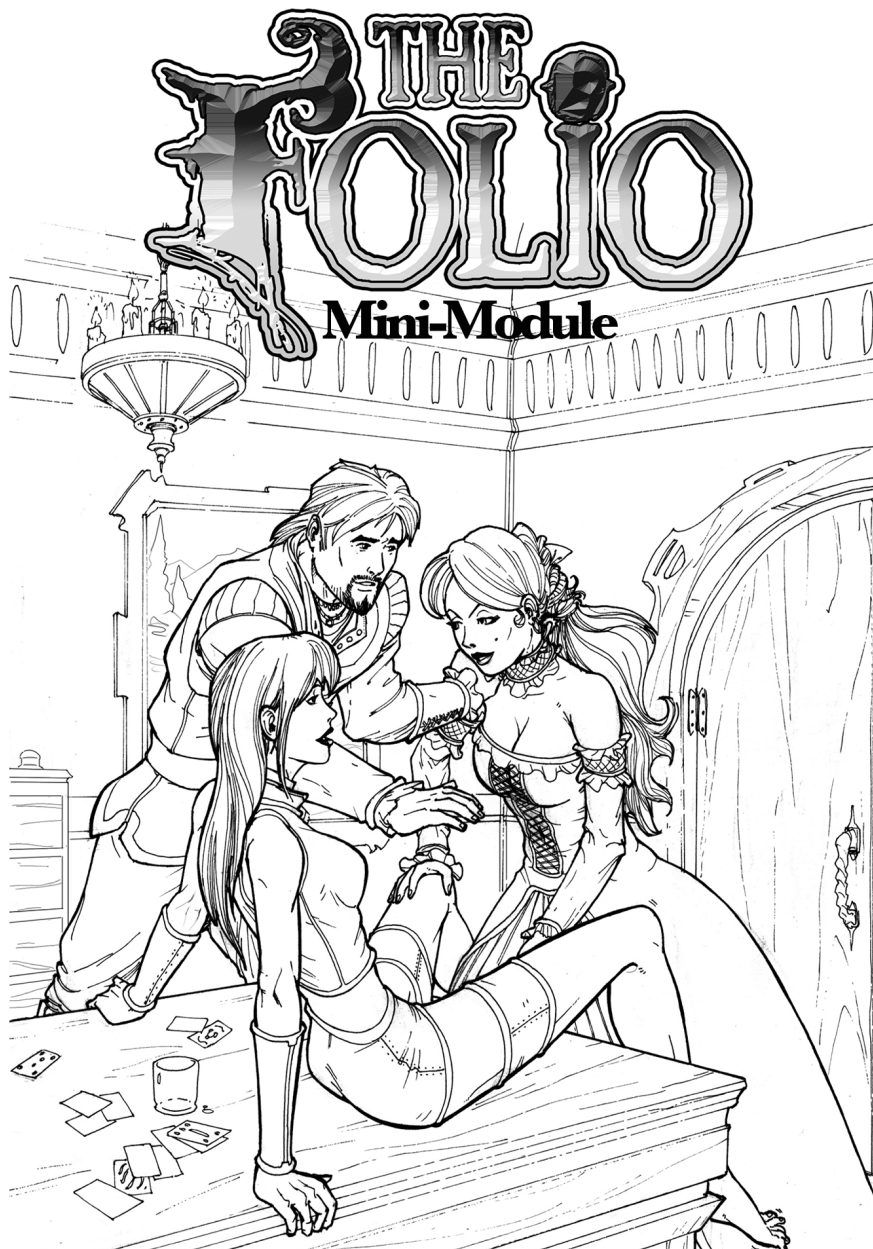
THE FOLIO

- Pillar
- Door
- ▢ Door, double
- ⊞ Door, secret
- ▤ Stairwell



AT2.5

Bonus 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?



Mini-Adventure AT2.5

The Part We Must Play

Dungeon Master Notes & Suggestions

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.

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-head, 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.

Maps

There are no maps included in this mini-adventure because the map of the underground level and Five Star Theater included in Folio #12 should be all you need to play.

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 coats

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 tightknit 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 profited 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: None

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 coats, 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]



-  Pillar
-  Door
-  Door, double
-  Door, secret
-  Stairwell

THE FOLIO



Playing Down the Down

Blackwood

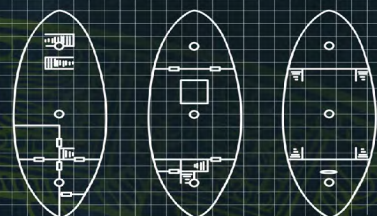
Pale Module AT3

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



ART
of the
genre

Plugging the Dagon



- S SECRET DOOR
- C HIDDEN DOOR
- T TRAP



Part 3 of the
Adventures from
the Emerald
Serpent Campaign
An Adventure for
Levels 5-7 in both
1E & 5E Format

Folio Module AT3

Playing Down the Down

A Three Part Scenario for
Characters Levels 5–7

Style of Play

For this adventure, we are going to combine some of the techniques featured in the previous two modules. The adventure will revolve around helping to wreak a bit of revenge on House Vash in the form of participation in the city's secret dueling festival known as the Chikin K'ik Tun.

Your players will be running again, but this time from event to event, trying to solve another mystery concerning various transformations that threaten the civility of the population. By this point the players should be well-versed in the city's culture, so continue to foster the whisps, the hauntings, and the people to keep up the rich flavor.

Experience Points

As noted in the first two adventures, experience points are kept to a minimum as I've expressly written these adventures for the 'sweet spot' levels of 5–7. That said, the culmination of this adventure should be awarded a large pot of bonus experience for the completion of the trilogy. I always want players to feel they have received strong awards for their hours invested in my adventures, so be sure to be kind. (But remember, there may be further Taux adventures, so you might not want the players gaining too much experience!)

Duels

I'm going to reinvest a moment to once again talk about duels in Taux. This topic was first breached in Folio #11, but it should be noted that at this point the players are seeking out specific duels for the purpose of bloodshed, and rules of no quarter are in play. You can imagine the impact this should have on your players, especially your resident duelist (assuming you have one). Having spent a great deal of time playing Legend of the Five Rings and Deadlands, I've come to appreciate the harrowing effect duels have on players. Be sure you press the envelope here, but also keep in mind that player death isn't your endgame, so when in doubt, favor the players accordingly.

Relic

Assuming the relic, The Fists of the Onyx God, that has been both a boon and a curse for the players is still in their possession, it might be prudent to utilize some of its yet unknown powers during a duel (this is again if your duelist happens to wear the item). Its powers might also be used on behalf of a duelist, if needed, gaining the character some advantage.

Still, the curse of the item is now in full effect, and blood sacrifice is something sought after (and could be a great motivator for the duelist to wear the item while fighting in these matches). At the end of the day, the relic wishes to be used in the name of its dark god and cleave a bloody path through the city with sacrifice and death. Each time the player utilizing the relic kills an enemy, a saving throw versus magic **[DC 18 Wisdom save]** must be made or the wearer will fall to the power of the item. If this saving throw is failed, consider the character an NPC for the purpose of DM control AS HE/SHE WISHES, i.e., you may take control of the character at will, and may deliver control back to the player as you like, but the character is technically your pawn until the curse can be broken.



Mithelvarn's Shard

At the culmination of the adventure the characters will come in contact with a magical being known as Mithelvarn's Shard. During the events that unfolded in Folios 1–6, a piece of the Infernal Machine in the labyrinth below Roslof Keep 'escaped'. Its purpose is to establish chaos and adventure wherever it manifests. Although it can't be killed, it can take mortal form and use its extensive magical abilities to create scenarios in which it seeks out 'players' for its game of 'monster versus hero'. Although Mithelvarn's Shard can be disrupted, its essence will slip away and reform elsewhere in a matter of days or months. If the players have played the complete Roslof Keep campaign, or the accompanying mini-adventure NR1.5 The Giant Has Only One Mission, then they should get a bit of a thrill at meeting the shard. If they have not, she can be seen as an enigma that will perhaps rise up again at some point.

Adventure Synopsis

This adventure revolves around the Chikin K'ik Tun and the heroes' interactions in it. After the affair at the Grand Playhouse, the characters have managed to thwart yet another Vash plot, but that house is still lethal, even if licking its wounds. Although now somewhat shielded by two Red Pillars (Mama Serene & Count Rummel), the heroes know that it is only a matter of time before the Vash try again for them and their relic.

Meeting with Balthazar, local mercenary duelist and friend of Mama Serene, the heroes are provided with perhaps a final chance to put an end to their feud with House Vash. To accomplish this, one hero will have to assume the identity of an Ebontra Cross (a practitioner of the Ebontra twin blade school which utilizes both blades for offense), then deal a blow to two other duelists in the city. Balthazar has it on good authority that the character possessing the relic is to be murdered by Esmerelda Serata, an infamous noble of fallen station who is now a Razor in the city. By defeating her, you will have defeated the Vash's most talented assassin and taken a major player off their board of retribution before they can strike against you. To do this you must fight her on your terms (or at least those of the Chikin K'ik Tun).

However, Serata is only a decoy of the Vash, and the heroes and Serata will be betrayed and ambushed by dire lowl corrupted by dark magic. Realizing Serata was just bait, Balthazar will run off to find Cold Shay, leaving the heroes without further guidance. The heroes will be left with a choice: slip back into the woodwork and await the next Vash plot, or find the true reason for the corruption of the lowl, provide it to the Sturgeon Tohil, and then leverage it to gain respite.

Campaign Background

The Chikin K'ik Tun

The Circle of Bloody Stones

Each year, a secret dueling tournament takes place inside one of the three great trade cities of the Halo Ocean: Taux, Ebontra, and Findalynn. The dates of these tournaments are set around various astronomical calculations, and therefore happen on a random day that can't be tracked by law enforcement. This year, this particular day takes place only a week after the Festival of a Thousand Blossoms in the city of Taux.

What this means to citizens of Taux is that the ranks of duelists inside its walls will swell; lesser duels, blood feuds, and theatrical swashbuckling are commonplace during the event. Some people hide secrets and pay debts both old and new, some settle scores, and for the greatest of the duelists, those of the three great guilds, the hierarchy of membership is established. It is typically the latter duels that are most enjoyed by people willing to risk punishment by the city's Sturgeons, as fans of all three guilds will rabble-rouse and cheer on the bloody sport wherever it takes place.

Still, even these combats typically don't end in death unless those participating take part in a secondary ritual, that of laying out stones in a circle with the final laid by both combatants being decorated in blood (not necessarily their own). For these death duels, only one fighter will exit the circle alive, and for the Sturgeons of Taux, these are the contests they most ruthlessly pursue in a kind of 'not under my watch' mentality.

Typically, only one such contest per district is put into play by the guilds in the city, otherwise the death toll would be too great on those participating. It wouldn't be overly prudent to lose all your best fighters each year, but for those that win such contests, glory, rank, and privilege are certainly theirs to be had. Winning a Bloody Stone Circle duel is considered 'gallant' among the guilds, and only someone who has won such a contest is ever considered for upper leadership of the guild orders (roughly a high ranking lieutenant with privilege). As this event is highly illegal, only a single day is dedicated to it, and then it and the duelists involved will turn to smoke and scatter to the winds.

The Three Dueling 'Kits'

For game purposes, I've broken down the sub-class dueling powers of each type of guild duelist you will face in Taux. To acquire these 'kits', a character must invest three proficiency slots that will grant the special powers each school employs. Each is based around the NPC class duelist found in *Dragon Magazine* #73, but a standard fighter class (as well as others below) can be utilized to make a Guild Duelist of one of the three great schools. And remember, if you are using the duelist NPC class, they get that pesky save vs. killing blow ability which makes them problematic. If such an ability is put into play, you might use it to save NPCs and have them 'tap out' so to speak, knowing they are beaten.

Taux Razor Duelist:

Required Class: Duelist, Fighter

Proficiency Slots: 3

Special Ability: Wounding (Each time a Razor scores a hit, the victim must make a saving throw versus petrification [DC 14 Constitution] or begin bleeding at 1 HP per round. These hits are cumulative.)

Secondary Special Ability: At 5th level a Razor can modify a critical hit roll to a specific location, thus tripling the damage instead of doubling it.

Ebontra Cross Duelist:

Required Class: Duelist, Fighter, Ranger

Proficiency Slots: 3

Special Ability: The Cross suffers no negative penalties for fighting with an off-hand weapon.

Secondary Special Ability: At 5th level a Cross may make an extra attack with an off-hand weapon.

Findalynn Bravo Duelist:

Required Class: Duelist, Fighter, Thief [Rogue]

Proficiency Slots: 3

Special Ability: The Bravo is adept at using his off-hand weapon in defense, doubling the Dexterity modifier for AC.

Secondary Special Ability: At 5th level, a Bravo may make a saving throw versus petrification [DC 14 Constitution] to half the damage inflicted from a blow once per combat round.

Dungeon Master Notes & Suggestions

1.

The Primary NPC in this adventure will be Balthazar, an outcast Taux Razor with training in both the Razor and Ebontra styles. He is a good-looking young man in his early twenties with a well-trimmed goatee and wavy dark hair. His purpose is to see to the fall of Esmerelda Serata, who he believes has become an agent of the Vash and is preparing to ambush and kill his friend Cold Shay the Beautiful Death.

2. The Dire Lowl

One thing that will continue to be gossiped about throughout the adventure will be that some lowl in the city are turning savage. This is true, and has been accomplished by a new female tome-mage recently signed on as a retainer to House Vash. Receipts for payment are within the tome-mage's lair and bear the Vash seal. Unbeknownst to either the Vash or the heroes, this tome-mage is actually a shard of the Infernal Machine from Roslof Keep, and has saved the payment receipts from House Vash, as well as detailed information concerning the transformative corruption (harkening back to the Violet Corruption) she undertook for them, to ensure chaos if she is ever threatened.

3. Running the Endgame with House Vash

As stated many times, House Vash can't ever truly be defeated, there are too many of them in different cells throughout Taux with enough clout to insist one cell was working independently and therefore not all the Vash were involved. However, in the case of the players, they can use information gained from both Folio #12 and Folio #13 to destroy a single cell, led by Timmer Vash, the 1st cousin of Tlacolotl Vash and someone Tlacolotl was already thinking of getting rid of. If they manage this, then all past debts or plots with the Vash family are at an end, at least until some other event comes to rest on the heroes' doorsteps.

4.

Esmerelda Serata is an interesting NPC that can become a great ally of the characters if they play their cards right. Although obsessed with killing her half-brother, Cold Shay, she is a strong duelist with a keen mind and has many connections in Taux as her family was once a great power in the city before Shay brought about the downfall of their father.

Overall Story Arcs and Threads

1. The Running of the Clock

It is very important to note that the actions of this adventure all take place in a single day (just as those of Folio #11 took place in a single night). Therefore, the players must be made to understand the import of speed, moving from one encounter point to the next

as quickly as possible. Only in this way do they have a chance of fulfilling plans laid out by Balthazar to free them of another threat.

2.

As this is the culmination of the trilogy, it should be no secret just how sick of House Vash the players should be. Keep the carrot of sticking it to the Vash and getting them off their backs right in front of them to help propel them along.

3.

Remember, this isn't a dungeon crawl, so keep the city involved: get something to eat, talk things over if time allows, and move through the streets, over mighty canals, through markets teeming with activity, etc.

4.

The Sturgeons will be on full alert during this day, so keep the players watchful for those blue and silver tabards. Also remember that Tohil owes them a favor after the events at the Grand Playhouse, so be sure to keep that in mind and remind the players as needed. Perhaps it can get them out of trouble in a pinch.

New Monster:

Dire Lowl

Chaotic Evil

Frequency: Uncommon

No. Appearing: 1–4

AC: 5

Move: 12"

HD: 2

No. of Attacks: 3

Damage/Attack: (2–8)+4/(1–4)+2

(2 Claws/1 Bite)

Special Attacks: Flamefist

Special Defence: --

Magic Resistance: Standard

Intelligence: Standard

Size: M (6–7')

Psionic Ability: NIL

% in lair: 20%

Like the standard lowl's Flametongue ability, the dire lowl can place the flames directly on its clawed hands, causing an additional 1–6 points of damage.

Dire Lowl [AC 15, Speed 30 ft., HD 5, Attack: 3, Init: +3, Hit +8, Claw 8 (2d4+4), Bite 4 (1d4+2), Multiattack, Flamefist (additional 5 (1d6+2) flame damage on claw attacks)]



These corrupted souls are mad with a battle-rage that makes them almost unrecognizable as lowl, with facial distortion and shoulder expansion that give them a truly dire appearance. They have been changed by horrific magic born from their demon goddess and brought forth by the power of corruptive magic. Only the power of the magic that corrupted them has any control over their actions, and if left unattended, they go into a bloody rage, seeking to rend the living limb from limb.

AT3: Playing Down the Dawn

Part One

The Coral Stranger

As you walk the dark pavers of the Black Gate, a stray petal, crushed and muddled, still provides a last memory of color from the quickly fading delights of the Festival of a Thousand Blossoms. Beyond the Ullamalitzli courts, the Emerald Serpent towers like a bastion in the pre-dawn mists as you make your way to a meeting that sly-tongued Savino promised would be worth your while. If he can be trusted, perhaps the Vash might be checked off your list of problems, but in this cursed place, where the stones mock you as you pass, such hopeful thoughts have as much life in them as the petal at your feet.

Setting the Stage

Within the Emerald Serpent, an hour before the sun rises and the heat of the late-spring day backs the mist from the streets, a rogue duelist named Balthazar awaits the heroes. He is friends of Shay Gatewell, or Cold Shay, one of the most notorious killers in all of Taux. This friendship has its benefits and its burdens, with today being heavily weighted to the latter.

Balthazar, his human elemental spark alight with agitation, quickly greets the players before flowing into a story concerning the Vash plot to murder them in a series of surgical strikes by the duelist/assassin Esmerelda Serata. Serata is a veritable ghost in the city most days, but word on the street is that the Vash have won her to their cause with ample gold, and she's now destined to do the heroes in. However, she has one weakness, that being that she's a Razor in the dueling guild of Taux. Balthazar has it on good authority that Serata will be dueling this very day, and if the players can find her, they can eliminate her before she has a chance to fulfill her contract.

To accomplish this, the heroes will have to obtain the dueling badge of another city duelist, and Balthazar already has a mark in mind. The man's name is Dane Rallis, and he's a known pirate who operates out of Ebontra on a Letter of Marque that protects him in the port of Taux. His ship, the Coral Stranger, was seen entering the harbor on the late tide this very night, and if the heroes can make it aboard, they have a chance to do what the Sturgeons and the Taux Navy cannot, kill Rallis the Black Heart and put an end to his reign of murder on the seas between here and the Kraken's Maw.

However, it will not be easy as the Coral Stranger has a strong and seasoned crew of cutthroats, even if most may have already come ashore to partake of the delights of Taux's brothels and taverns. If the heroes can find and kill Rallis, they can take his Ebontra Cross badge and the scroll containing whatever duelist he is to face this afternoon, thus taking a step closer to Serata in the process.

Balthazar will await the heroes at the Saltwater Swine, a local dive tavern close to the docks, hoping they have done the deed and have more information on the Vash at the time.

The Ship

The Coral Stranger is currently moored on the low docks amid a gaggle of unseaworthy coastal sloops and Tung trade ships. Nefarious characters are found aplenty here, and if the DM wants to press the heroes with a random encounter, certainly a heavy muscled press

gang is prepared to lock blades. However, the path to the Coral Stranger isn't a difficult one. Security is lax around the ship; the dockmaster loathes the crew and hasn't taken precautions to keep it safe, hoping that perhaps someone with a score to settle might do him a favor. A single gangplank leads to the main deck, and a guttering lantern lights the course.

1. The Poop Deck

Situated high on the back of the ship, this raised deck houses the ship's wheel and the aft sail. Two men share a drink as a single lantern burns between them. Blades lay loose against their hips.

The two men are the ship's sentries, and they have a 2 in 6 chance [passive Perception 14] of spotting anyone approaching the gangplank. If they spot anyone approaching, they will alert the sailors who are currently playing a game of dice on the main deck below.

2 Pirates [AC 7, HD 5, HP 30, #AT 3/2, D 1-6 (Short Sword)]

TREASURE

2 dozen copper coins and 5 silver coats

2 Pirates [AC 12, HD 5d8+5, HP 25, Initiative +3, #AT 2, Hit +4, Dam Short Sword (1d6+2), Pack Tactics (Pirates are at advantage if attacking with allies within 5 feet.)]

2. The Foredeck

Currently empty, the foredeck rises above the main deck and can be accessed by two sets of stairs (like the poop deck).

3. Main Deck

The large main deck, split with the massive main mast at the center, provides access to both the forecastle and the aftcastle of the ship as well as the hold through a heavy wooden grate. Five men are currently engaged in a highly contested game of dice farther toward the aftcastle.

5 Pirates [AC 7, HD 5, HP 30, #AT 3/2, D 1-6 (Short Sword)]

TREASURE

2 dozen copper coins, 5 silver coats, and 12 silver coats currently in the gambling pot

5 Pirates [AC 12, HD 5d8+5, HP 25, Initiative +3, #AT 2, Hit +4, Dam Short Sword (1d6+2), Pack Tactics (Pirates are at advantage if attacking with allies within 5 feet.)]

4. Captain's Cabin

A heavy, locked wooden door [DC 15] bars the way into the aftcastle.

Inside, Captain Rallis is taking pleasure with his newest Zimbolay slave. However, he is always on heavy alert and will notice a picking attempt without a successful Move Silently check [passive Perception 16 vs. Stealth]. He will quickly rise and arm himself if he hears anyone working the lock on his door.

He also has a stair into the hold and will send his slave girl to fetch help from the quartermaster below (and anyone else the quartermaster has at his disposal). Help will arrive in round 3 if he detects anything. Also, if there is any heavy combat on the main deck, he will certainly be warned and fully prepared for combat before the door is opened (and will likely have his quartermaster with him if 3 rounds have passed).

1 Cross Duelist (Dane Rallis) [AC 5, HD 8+8, HP 75, #AT 4/1 (+4 to hit), D (1-6)+5 (x2), (1-4)+6 (x2), Extra Off-hand Attack]

TREASURE

Rapier +2, Dagger +3, Letter of Marque from the city of Ebontra, an Ebontra Cross badge for a cloak, a scroll containing a map to a building called the Holland Granary, and a broken sealed scroll with the name Marquis O'Lindon Hathoway

1 Cross Duelist (Dane Rallis) [AC 15, HD 11d8+22, HP 72, Initiative +5, #AT 4, Hit +7, Dam Rapier 7 (1d6+4) and Dagger 7 (1d4+5), Multiattack, Parry (+2 AC against one attack), Extra Off-hand Attack]

5. Captain's Slave Quarters

This small room contains a tiny bed, chamber pot, water basin, and several silken strips of cloth, presumably to be used as clothing.

6. Officers' Quarters (Includes the Armory)

Three beds, a table, three chests, and a dartboard decorate this large room. At the center, a single stair leads down.

This is the officers' quarters for the ship, but at this point all officers are in Taux drinking away the night with the bulk of the crew.





7. Middle Hold

Three straggler sailors wile away the night by sharing a bottle of wine atop a large stack of rugs within this large space.

These sailors are currently being disciplined and were not allowed to go ashore. If they hear fighting above, 2 in 6 chance **[DC 13 Perception]**, they will grab their weapons and head to investigate through the officers' quarters. If the captain is alerted and sends for help, the quartermaster will collect these sailors before rushing up the stairs to the captain's cabin.

3 Pirates [AC 7, HD 5, HP 30, #AT 3/2, D 1-6 (Short Sword)]

TREASURE

None

3 Pirates [AC 12, HD 5d8+5, HP 25, Initiative +3, #AT 2, Hit +4, Dam Short Sword (1d6+2), Pack Tactics (Pirates are at advantage if attacking with allies within 5 feet.)]

8. Quartermaster and Cook's Cabin

This room houses two beds and various treasures collected from years of sea travel. Two chests are here as well as some bottles of rum and other spirits. An orange and white cat sleeps on one of the beds, and a large man with facial tattoos and brands sleeps on the other.

The quartermaster is catching some sleep, but over the years tends to sleep with one eye open. He will detect any commotion on the ship on a 3 in 6 chance **[passive Perception 15]**.

1 Quartermaster [AC 5, HD 10+10, HP 70, #AT 3 (+4 to hit), D (1-6)+5/(1-4)+2 (2 scimitar/1 dagger)]

TREASURE

Scimitar +2, Dagger +2, 14 silver coats. Chest One, locked **[DC 15]**: A silk robe (20 silver), a bag with 76 silver coats, and 10 gold coins minted in Zimbolay. Chest Two, locked **[DC 13]**: A fine knife (10 silver), a ruby the size of a thumbnail (100 silver), 2 bottles of Arcanian wine (10 silver each).

1 Quartermaster [AC 15, HD 10d8+20, HP 65, Initiative +5, #AT 3, Hit +7, Dam Scimitar 8 (1d6+4), Dagger 7 (1d4+5), Multiattack (2 scimitars/1 dagger), Parry (+2 AC against one attack)]

9. Galley

Two stout long-tables, benches, and an iron oven area set with slate stones around it mark the chamber as the ship's galley.

10: Storage

A small storage closet holds the bulk of the ship's food stores.

Closing the Stage

Once the characters have successfully cleared the ship and discovered both the Cross Badge and the parchment containing the Bravo that Rallis was to duel (one Marquis O'Lindon Hathoway of Findalynn), they can move back into the city toward their new target.

Balthazar awaits them at a predesignated tavern close to the docks. Once they show him what they have discovered, he will lead them to the Holland Granary before giving them another place to meet in two hours when the sun is at its zenith, the Tallow Wastrel Tavern near the mouth of the Black Gate. A friend of his (Shay) is currently in the wind and he's working to find him before the meeting; he has a bad feeling about today.

Part Two

The Holland Granary

Balthazar leads a weaving path through the markets of the Turquoise Turtle, his brown cloak mingling easily with those of a hundred other citizens shopping for the early wares of the day. Whatever relief night provided has burned off to allow an oppressive heat to blanket the city. Sweat trickles down your brow and the cries of a water seller make your tongue strike against dry lips.

Setting the Stage

Balthazar finally pulls up outside the Holland Granary, an old merchant building with deep ties to the Findalynn grain markets. It is here that he will provide you with a blood-covered stone, something you will need to complete the circle and begin the deadly combat of the tournament. Without such a duel and victory, you will not get the next set of papers that will bring you to the Taux champion of the Turtle District, Esmerelda Serata.

Within, two guards in girded chain coats and metal studded helms ask for your papers.

When provided, one will escort the heroes to the rear of the building, Room 5, where nearly thirty people are standing at the ready and whispering amongst themselves. Bets (if you like that sort of thing) can be placed with several odds makers in the crowd.

Coming forward into the circle is a lean man with a white mustache and an inkvine scar along the right side of his head. He wears no armor, only a deep umber shirt, brown gloves, breeches, and low soft boots.

He provides a greeting, offering his name as Marquis O'Lindon Hathoway, and then waits for the Cross to enter before pulling forth a bloody stone from a pouch at his waist and placing it on his side of the circle.

From this point, the dueling hero should replicate the action, and then the combat will begin.

The Granary

1. The Merchant Entry

This large room has walls covered with tapestries and a desk at its center. Two men, both girded with mail and steel helmed, stand at the door.

These two mercenaries will check your papers. If all is in order, one will escort you back to Room 5.

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

TREASURE

52 copper coins, 17 silver coats

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.)]

2. Storage Room One

A large storeroom is filled around the walls with heavy sacks and boxes. There are three men here playing a game of dice, and will invite anyone entering to join.

3. Overflow Room

This large room is currently empty, but debris on the floor indicates that it has housed grain and other goods in the past.

4. Sorting and Packing Room

Several long tables and a set of scales are in this room. Otherwise it is currently empty.

Two secret doors are in this room, one to a contraband storage room located on the north wall [DC 15 Perception], and the other to a concealed exit route on the south wall [DC 15 Perception].

5. Lead Merchant Chamber

This large room houses some dozen men and women in cloaks and a long lean man with white hair who stretches in the center of a circle of blood-red stones.

This is the main gallery for the tournament, and the man, O'Lindon Hathoway, is preparing for a duel that is sure to help him secure a fine position within the guild of Findalynn.

Around him, a collection of patrons looking to see the match (and likely bet on it) have gathered. They will remain quiet, their access to the match dependent on their ability to stay out of the way.

1 Bravo Duelist (O'Lindon Hathoway) [AC -1, HD 9+18, HP 90, #AT 2/1 (+4 to hit), D (1-6)+3, Special Ability: The Bravo is adept at using his off-hand weapon in defense and may add double his Dexterity modifier to his AC. Secondary Special Ability: At 5th level, a Bravo may make a saving throw versus petrification to half the damage inflicted from a blow once per combat round.]

TREASURE

Rapier +3, Ring of Protection +2 (with Bravo Guild symbol set in the stone), broken sealed scroll with the name Esmeralda Serata on it, and a map with the location of the Jade Tower, as well as a time during the afternoon

1 Bravo Duelist (O'Lindon Hathoway) [AC 21, HD 9d10+18, HP 80, Initiative +5, #AT 2, Hit +8, Dam Rapier 7 (1d6+5), Multiattack, Parry (+2 AC against one attack), Special Ability: The Bravo is adept at using his off-hand weapon in defense and may add double his Dexterity modifier to his AC. Secondary Special Ability: At 5th level, a Bravo may make a saving throw (DC 14 Constitution) to half the damage inflicted from a blow once per combat round.]

6. Storage Room Two

This room is filled with crates, a snaking path between them leading into shadows away from the door.

Closing the Stage

Once the duel is complete, an alarm will be raised from the front of the structure. The Sturgeons have come and will be arresting those involved in the illegal fight. Chaos should reign as people bolt in every direction.

The players will have to decide how they deal with the situation. Certainly killing a Sturgeon would be a bad idea, and they might be able to use their clout with Tohil to get off with a lesser charge if they decide to let themselves be captured, but more likely, a quick run to one of the various secret doors will likely be the way to go. Still, I'd try to block any exit with at least a small fight, prompting the players to use their skills to subdue any Sturgeons in their way.

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

TREASURE

None

Sturgeon [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.)]

When the raid has ended, the players will need to get the information they secured from winning the duel (another writ and a map) and proceed to the next location, either meeting Balthazar or going directly to the Jade Tower.

If they meet Balthazar, he is greatly agitated, and looks to have been in a fight himself, with blood about his cloak and his gloved hands. He will relay, 'Things aren't what they seem, but Serata is still the only lead we have, and she must be put down.' After taking a look at the documents and the location, he will say he will meet you at the Jade Tower (although he will be late and show up right after the battle, unless of course you need him to help the players survive! For stats on Balthazar, use those of Dane Rallis, as Balthazar has been trained in the Ebontra Cross style).

Part Three The Jade Tower

Rain pounds the pavers in blowing sheets as city stragglers dash from building to building in search of dry environs. Your boots splash in puddles as the octagonal stone walls and dour green roof of the Jade Tower rise above the buildings around it. A single lantern decorates its heavy double door entry, the light golden amid the gloom of the flash storm that now blankets Taux.

Setting the Stage

Between the time that the players defeat the Marquis and their next meeting at 3 o'clock with the Razor, a storm blows into Taux from the east, bringing with it a fetid heat and palpable stink from the Black Swamp.

They may seek healing as needed in the city's temples before going to the Jade Tower, as they have several hours, but keep in mind they might also be wanted by the Sturgeons at this point, depending on how the last encounter during the raid played out.

Once they make it to the tower, they will have a similar experience to the one before, with two mercenary guards allowing them entry, checking their papers, and then finally leading them to the third floor of the tower where the duel is to take place.

The only difference here is that House Vash has become aware of the circumstances of the mission during the intervening hours and will unleash a group of dire lowl on the heroes even before the duel has properly come to an end in an attempt to kill two birds with one stone.

It will be up to the players to counter the attempted assassination, and it would be highly recommended they recruit Serata to their cause. She will certainly help them, knowing full well she has been betrayed.

The Tower

1. Main Entry

Twin double doors give way to a long fifty-by-twenty-foot room decorated with several tapestries and a small sitting area directly to your left. Two doors, one each on the left and right walls, and a lone set of stairs provide exits to the chamber. There are two men in mail with stout short blades near the stairs.

The men are mercenaries hired by the tournament to make sure all is in order between combatants. They will look over your records obtained from the previous duel, and then one will escort only the duelist upstairs, the others required to stay in the lower level and wait.

There is also a secret door in the room **[DC 16 Perception]**.

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

TREASURE

12 copper coins, 3 silver coats

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

2. Study

A large desk and padded velvet chair rest against the western wall of this spacious room. A series of bookshelves line the walls, and a chandelier hangs from the ceiling.

The books tend to be on subjects pertaining to trade law, the southern nation of the Tung, and the bulk being actual ledgers of years of trade cargos coming into the city.

3. Lower Salon

Five large velvet chairs and a long bench decorate this room. A single slender table rests against the eastern wall and holds a bowl of fruit and several glasses as well as a pitcher of water.

It is here the players can wait, if they choose, while the duel takes place above.

4. Guard Room

A sliding panel door opens into a guard post with several spears and a single long sword and shield as well as a set of chairs and a table.

5. Grand Salon

This large chamber is nearly sixty feet by sixty feet with stairs on the north and south wall. Around the room a four post bed with luxuriant curtains, several stuffed chairs, a drinking station with all manner of bottled liquors, and a copper tub decorate the area.

6. Master's Chamber

Furniture has been slid back against the walls of this large room, and a single chandelier is lit in the vaulted ceiling above. Around the inner perimeter of the room a circle of stones has been placed, and a lone figure, lean and beautiful, stands with a blood red stone in her hand.

This is Esmeralda Serata, the deadly assassin and outcast noble. She will take no quarter, and has little to say, as she is ready to get this contest over with as quickly as possible. However, after three rounds of combat, the lower level of the tower will be besieged by a gang of dire lowl, and she will withdraw from the circle of stones, first asking what kind of trickery or betrayal is this, and then asking to call a halt to the duel until the source of the noise below can be discerned.

1 Razor Duelist (Esmeralda Serata) [AC 5, HD 10+10, HP 90, #AT 2/1 (+4 to hit), D (1-6)+2, Wounding (Each time a Razor scores a hit, the victim must make a saving throw versus petrification or begin bleeding at 1 HP per round. These hits are cumulative.) Secondary Special Ability: At 5th level a Razor can modify a critical hit roll to a specific location, thus tripling the damage instead of doubling it.]

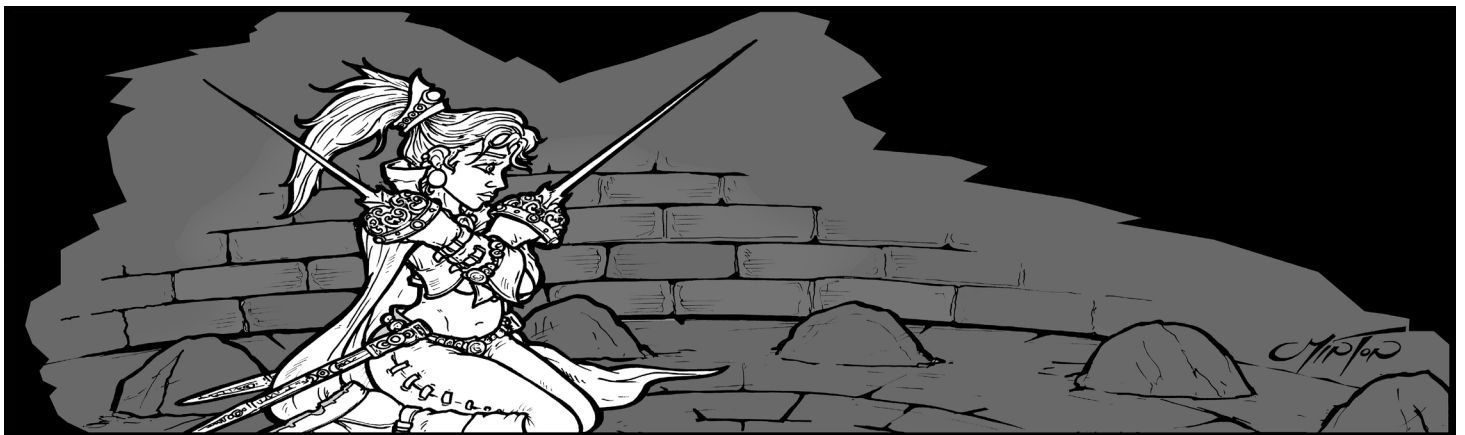
TREASURE

Rapier of Sharpness +2

1 Razor Duelist (Esmeralda Serata) [AC 15, HD 10d8+20, HP 65, Initiative +5, #AT 2, Hit +7, Dam Sabre 7 (1d6+4), Multiattack, Parry (+2 AC against one attack), Wounding (Each time a Razor scores a hit, the victim must make a saving throw (DC 14 Constitution) or begin bleeding at 1 HP per round. These hits are cumulative.) Secondary Special Ability: At 5th level a Razor can modify a critical hit roll to a specific location, thus tripling the damage instead of doubling it.]

Round Three Dire Lowl Attack

The front door of the tower will burst open as a gang of recently corrupted lowl rush in looking for blood. The two mercenaries will first attempt to attack the lowl, but once their strength is shown to be so great, they will try to get through the secret door and lock themselves in Room 4.



The bulk of the lowl will attack anyone on the ground floor, but if they break through any line of defense, at least two will make for the stairs and try to get to the top floor, searching for other victims.

12 Dire Lowl [AC 5, HD 5, HP 30, #AT 3/1, Damage/Attack: (2-8)+4/(1-4)+2 (2 Claws/1 Bite), Special Attacks: Flamefist (already calculated into the damage)]

12 Dire Lowl [AC 15, Speed 30 ft., HD 5, Attack: 3, Init: +3, Hit +8, Claw 8 (2d4+4), Bite 4 (1d4+2), Multiattack, Flamefist (additional 5 (1d6+2) flame damage on claw attacks)]

Closing the Stage

Once the dire lowl have been defeated, Esmeralda will have a very dark contenance. She'll share if the party is looking for a reason to attack the Vash, they should investigate the former residence of Emil Locasta in the Black Gate as it is rumored a foreign Vash tome-mage now resides there who has something to do with the madness of the lowl in the city. They might find what they are looking for there. After this, she will slip away, looking toward the duelist she fought and saying, 'Another time, another place.'

Balthazar can show up at any time the DM desires, and if Esmeralda is still around, the two will glare daggers at one another, but have nothing to say directly to the other. He will see the carnage, and that Esmeralda lives, and go ashen, hissing, 'This was just a play!' only to run off into the driving rain. From this point forward, the characters will not see Balthazar, so they are on their own to the conclusion with Mithelvar's Shard.

Part Four The Lovely Shard

The residence of the famed 'Love Maker', Emil Locasta, is more a walled compound, with heavy ivy growing up its iron gate and signs of disuse evident in the crumbling bricks and rusted hinges. Inside, a single tree grows in an inner garden, the small estate house backing up against the old bleacher rise and marking this structure as one of the first built inside the stadium during the reclamation.

Setting the Stage

Rain still falls as dusk descends on the Black Gate when the players make their way to the former home of Emil Locasta. Rumors indicate that the man returned to Zimbolay, although that is unconfirmed, and some insist the apothecary will return, thus his house remains empty for fear of his ire upon such a day.

Whatever the case, anyone going to the home will discover the gate is unlocked, and the building beyond warmed by a single lamp within the main entry.

The Apothecary of Emil Locasta

1. The Garden Entry

A heavily neglected garden overgrows its bounds within the gate as a single tree dominates the area with wide boughs that shadow the snaking path to the main house.

Two dire lowl stalk the garden, and will attack the party from concealment once they have made half the distance to the house.

2 Dire Lowl [AC 5, HD 5, HP 30, #AT 3/1, Damage/Attack: (2-8)+4/(1-4)+2 (2 Claws/1 Bite), Special Attacks: Flamefist (already calculated into the damage)]

2 Dire Lowl [AC 15, Speed 30 ft., HD 5, Attack: 3, Init: +3, Hit +8, Claw 8 (2d4+4), Bite 4 (1d4+2), Multiattack, Flamefist (additional 5 (1d6+2) flame damage on claw attacks)]



2. The Solicitation Salon

The grand entry into the square stone home holds a massive wooden table and four oak chairs. A single lantern lies atop the table, casting shadows in the well-worn wood. Beyond the table is a lovely woman, her skin a creamy chocolate, with high cheekbones and upturned ears. A strange shimmering aura dances around her in the gloom.

Smiling, she offers a bow before her crisp voice states the following: *"It is my life to find foes such as these, to call them, to nurture them, and to see the will of the master done in each place I choose to manifest. So let us dance once more, heroes, and if you are worthy, then the Machine is sated until the next time I find form to do its bidding..."*

At this she will attack, hurling spells at distance and trying to keep the party from her as long as possible, while utilizing Greater Invisibility. The 'shimmering aura' is a Cold Shield (reverse of Fire Shield) as well as the Shield spell [Mage Armor in 5E]. She is likely to drop Fireballs directly on her position, or Ice Storms, since she has protections up against such elements.

Once she is defeated, her form will dissipate and the items she carried will clatter to the floor along with all the communications she's had with the Vash family since she entered the city a month ago.

Mithelvar's Shard [AC 7, HD 9+18, HP 72, #AT 1, D (1-4)+3, Spells: 1st (4) Shield, Shocking Grasp, Magic Missile, Charm Person; 2nd (3) Strength, Web, Detect Invisibility; 3rd (3) Fireball, Hold Person, Suggestion; 4th (2) Fire Shield, Ice Storm; 5th (1) Cone of Cold]

TREASURE

+3 Dagger, Spell Scrolls (includes all known spells), Ring of Protection +1, Ring of Fire Resistance, 200 copper coins, 540 silver coats, 80 gold jaguars

Mithelvar's Shard [AC 13, HD 9d12+18, HP 72, Initiative +3, #AT 1, Hit +8, Dam Dagger 7 (1d4+5), Spellcasting (DC 14 saves and +6 to hit), Spells: Cantrips (at will) Fire Bolt, Mage Hand; 1st (4 Slots) Mage Armor, Magic Missile, Shield; 2nd (3 Slots) Misty Step, Suggestion; 3rd (3 Slots) Counterspell, Fireball, Fly; 4th (3 Slots) Greater Invisibility, Ice Storm; 5th (1 Slot) Cone of Cold]

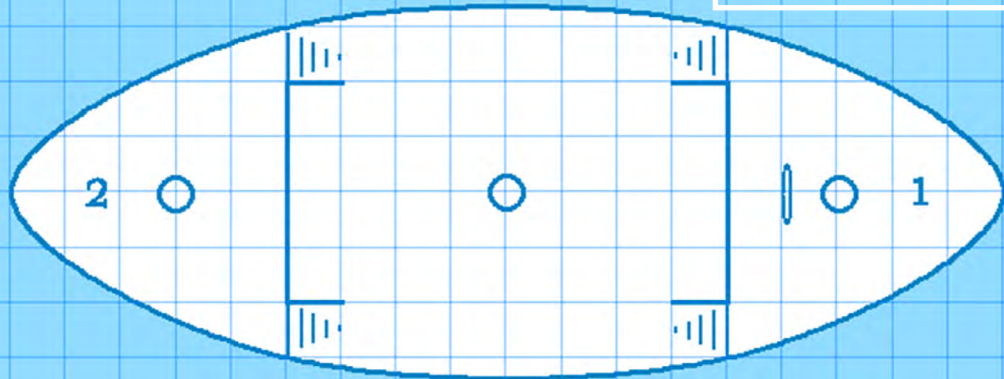
Closing the Stage

Once Mithelvar's Shard has been defeated, the players will have all the evidence they need to take down the arm of House Vash that has been after them. They need only to turn the documents over to Tohil, and the Sturgeons will take care of the rest. This means they are now free to stay in Taux, or leave it, without a lingering feud hanging over their heads and certainly with some experience as to the culture and politics of the city.

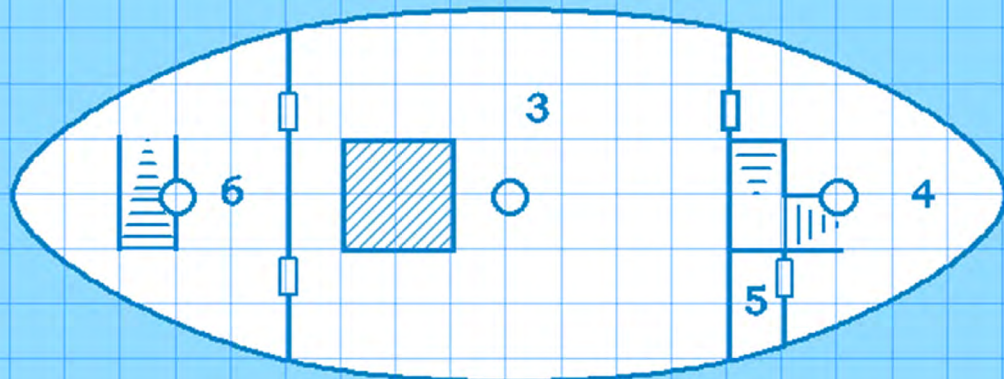
THE FOLIO

- ||| Stairs
- Mast
- Door
- S Secret Door

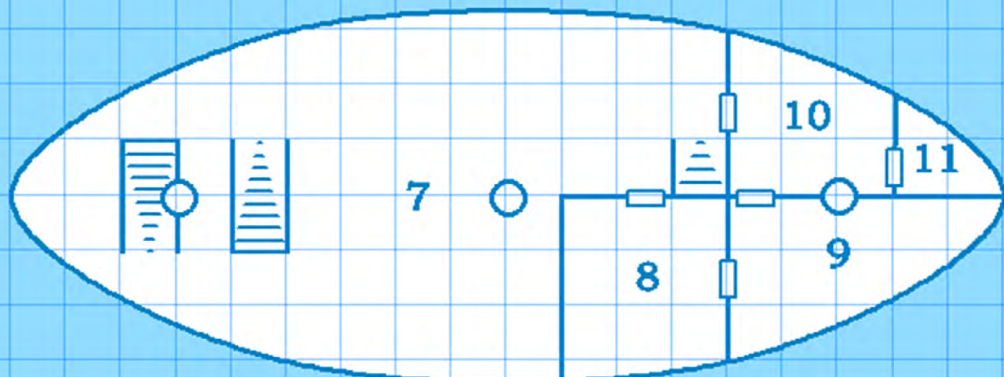
Upper Deck






Main Deck

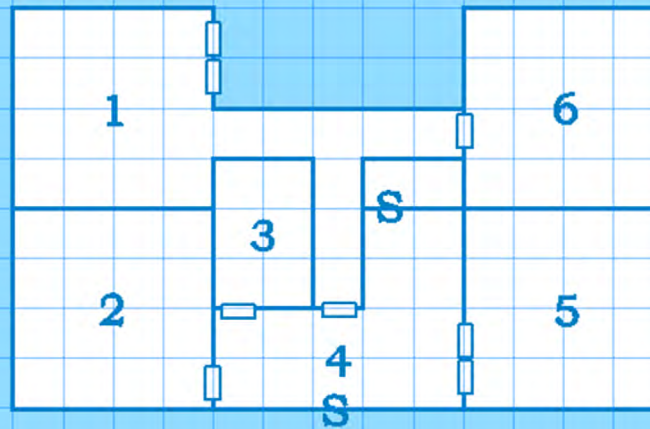


Middle Deck

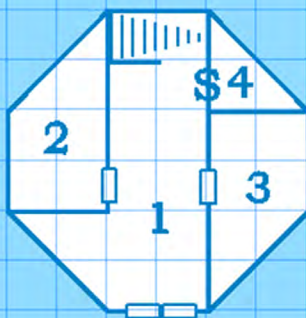


-  Stairs
-  Mast
-  Door
-  Secret Door

Warehouse

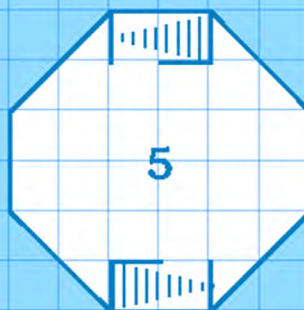


Level 1

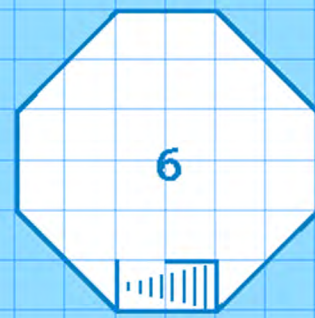


Tower

Level 2



Level 3

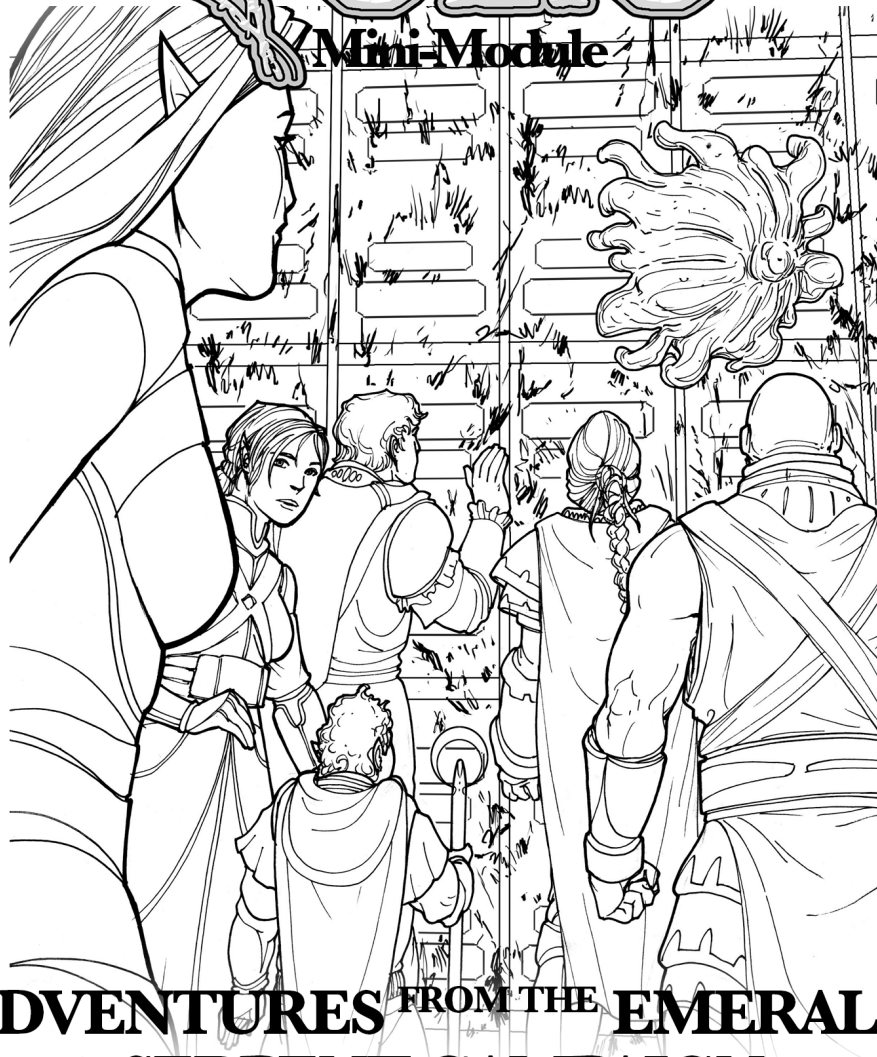


AT3.5

Bonus Module

THE FOLIO

Mini-Module



ADVENTURES FROM THE EMERALD SERPENT CAMPAIGN

A Wall Beyond Fury

Mini-Adventure AT2.5

by Scott Taylor

A Wall Beyond Fury is a companion adventure made to go along with the events unfolding in the Folio #13. 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.

With rage-infected lowl causing a xenophobic outbreak of paranoia in the city just days before the opening of the shadow dueling tournament known as the Chikin K'i'ik Tun or Circles of Blood Stones, the heroes must help discover if House Vash has a hand in the contagion. If they can prove it, perhaps they will have the leverage they need to finally be rid of their blood duel with the powerful family.



A Wall Beyond Fury

Dungeon Master Notes & Suggestions

This adventure is meant to wrap up events in the Taux trilogy with one final encounter concerning House Vash. With Timmer Vash having been discredited and stripped of his position, he has fled into the headlands of the Black Swamp with a last vestige of his hate, Ylissa Rummel, whom he abducted days after her crowning during the Festival of a Thousand Blossoms. His intent is to use Rummel's daughter, and friend to the heroes, in a ritual that will forever taint his own family while also ending the Rummel House once and for all. In an odd turn of events, Tlacotl Vash will promote the assassination of his kin as a way for the heroes to once and for all have a clean slate with the House Vash.

1. Primary Purpose

The bulk of this adventure will be to wrap up the final loose ends with House Vash and end the feud.

2. Secondary Purpose

If the relic, The Fists of the Onyx God, is still in play, then there is also a built in opportunity for the heroes to be rid of it once and for all.

3. Time for running

This mini-adventure is meant to be run AFTER the events that take place in Folio #13. It will set up the final conflict and resolution that should ensure the heroes no longer have a 'hot feud' brewing with House Vash and can therefore go about their lives without looking over their shoulders.

The Ebon Swamp

Also called the 'Black Swamp', this is the massive corrupted delta that surrounds the city of Taux and eventually gives way to uncharted rainforest to the east and the low plains to the north. It is an unforgiving habitat, and home to great darkness. Unbeknownst to most, the swamp actually has border-plane crossover to the Elemental Plane of Shadow. In these crossover points, the swamp becomes dark and deeply corrupted. It is from these pockets that some of the greatest legends of the swamp come, including the dreaded death's kiss flowering vine and the ebon tendrils. A ranger with some skill (4th level) is needed to navigate the swamp without incident, otherwise a random encounter with one of the below can occur (1 in 6).

Candon Lizardmen

Information on the candon can be found in Folio #6, otherwise, they can be considered standard lizardmen for the purposes of this adventure.

Winged Serpents

The black scales of the winged serpents in the swamp are highly prized among merchants worldwide, but they can be a deadly enemy. Although hit dice varies depending on the size, I've provided a standard medium-sized winged serpent below, which would be near 10 feet in length.

Winged 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)]

TREASURE

10 gold jaguars per foot of scales



Winged 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, Poison (DC 16 Constitution 20 (2d20) + Acid 15 (3d8+1))]

Death's Kiss

This deadly black flower grows on a strangling vine and draws nourishment by passing the souls of its victims into the Elemental Plane of Shadow. It has no direct attack, hit dice, or defense, but when a living soul comes within five feet of the flowers they will send forth a poisonous gas. The poison is a deadly neurotoxin, and a saving throw versus poison at -2 is required or death will occur in 1d4 rounds **[DC 18 Constitution saving throw]**.

Ebon Tendrils

Little more than wispy ropes of hateful dark energy, these slithering vapors twine through the swamp drawing power away from the living world and funneling it back to the Elemental Plane of Shadow. Some say that ebon tendrils can sense dark thoughts and are drawn to such things, making people with evil alignments a beacon to the plants.

Ebon Tendril [AC 4, HD 7+7, HP 49, #AT 3, D 2-12 (Necrotic/Slash), +1 or better weapon to hit]

TREASURE

None

Ebon Tendril [AC 16, HD 7d12+14, HP 56, Initiative +3, #AT 3, Hit +6, Dam Slashing Appendage 9 (2d6+2) + 6 (1d8+2) Necrotic, Multiattack, Damage Resistance: non-magical weapons, Vulnerability: radiant]

Running Combat

This is perhaps the most straightforward combat adventure in the Taux series, and should be run as such. Random encounters in the swamp and room-to-room combat within the ruined outpost will flow as needed, the player by this point ready to take some revenge on House Vash without hiding or tricks.

Telling the Story

This is the final page in the tapestry novella you should have created over the course of the Taux trilogy. Be sure not to lose focus here, find the threads that have bound the party to this point, and especially use any relationship fostered between players and Ylissa during their time together in Folio #12.

Set up from Folio #13

An agent of the Vash will approach the heroes after the events of Folio #13 unfold and will make them an offer they likely 'can't refuse'. The abduction of Ylissa Rummel can be confirmed through agents such as Tohil, Savino, or Dethocrates, but without the knowledge of the Vash agent, the current location of Timmer Vash will be near impossible to find.

'I know what you must be thinking, and perhaps you are correct that it is insane for an agent of the very power you've struggled so mightily against to be here before you making an offer, but this is Taux, and that means infinite possibility. You see, even among the Vash, there are laws that cannot be broken, and dear Timmer has crossed those boundaries for the last time. So, I offer each of you this, a pardon among all factions of the family if you see to it that Timmer is no longer a problem for us, and what you choose to do with the Rummel girl is your own affair, although I hear there is a good market for such virgin flesh in Zimbolay...'



The Swamp

'There are things in the world known as swamps, but this tangle of darkness is beyond anything that could hold such a definition. Sucking 'quick water', thorns the size of a duelist's dagger, biting insects beyond numbers, and a dark canopy of dusky leaves holds a heat that bakes the water from a man like an oven. This is the Ebon Swamp, and only the foolhardy would choose to come here willingly.'

1. The Hard Entry

Twin metal doors rise up twelve feet before you precluding entry into the ancient temple. The facings having been clawed and scarred over the years, but the odd dark metal remains sturdy and imposing.

The doors are locked [DC 18] and barred from the inside. (Players will have to come up with a way to dislodge the heavy bar on the inside which is not covered under the Lock Picking skill.)

Once Inside

A large entry, twenty feet deep and forty feet wide, is dimly lit with a single guttering torch that has filled the chamber with oily smoke. Small bits of debris and light growth cover the floor. To the north, a twenty-foot hall stretches thirty feet to another set of double doors (wooden and rotting). Two openings, one on each side of the hall, are each marked with a single torch.

A Search check, 2 in 6 [DC 15 Perception], will reveal caltrops have been laid on the floor amid the debris. If undiscovered, the leading two characters must make saving throws versus petrification [DC 15 Dexterity] or be at -2 to all physical activity until magical healing it procured. Note: A Detect Traps will also work to discover the caltrops.

2. The Collapsed Room

The heavy stone walls of the structure have collapsed in on themselves at the back of this chamber, and it is filled with dark earth and tangling roots. Water has pooled near the north wall, and a steady drip from above disturbs the surface.

The mercenaries from Room 3 have stashed several bottles of wine in the cold water of the pool that can be discovered easily while searching the room.

3. The Disgruntled Mercenaries

The large opening to this chamber is covered with a heavy canvas, and the smell of old earth wafts from it to your nostrils.

Beyond the canvas, and certainly aware of the party due to the floundering while undoing the bar on the door, awaits a group of 4 jai-ruk mercenaries (if you are not using Taux races, use orcs). They aren't particularly happy about being in the swamp, but will nonetheless attack anyone who comes through the canvas with a pike rush before going to blades in round two. Once two of them have been killed or incapacitated, they will surrender, hoping to negotiate a withdrawal from the old temple to never be seen again. They will tell the players that Timmer has 'gone mad' and is preparing for some dark ritual that is supposed to align with the heavens two days from now. He is within the great chamber at the back of the structure (north), and has a tome-mage with him who is overseeing the ritual.

4 Jai-Ruk Mercenaries [AC 4, HD 6, HP 36, #AT 2/1, D (1-8)+2 (Longswords), Earth Magic (can add up to 5d6 to attacks over the course of a battle, or subtract 3 from their AC), Pike Rush (2d10+2 for initial rush attack with their pikes)]

TREASURE

109 copper coins, 63 silver coats between the four of them

4 Jai-Ruk Mercenaries [AC 16, HD 6d8+6, HP 30, Initiative +3, #AT 2, Hit +4, Dam Longsword 6 (1d8+2), Pack Tactics (Mercenaries are at advantage if attacking with allies within 5 feet.), Earth Magic (can add up to 5d6 to attacks over the course of a battle, or add 3 from their AC), Pike Rush (12 (2d10+2) for initial rush attack with their pikes)]

4. The Secret Hall

Beyond the sliding stone, a half-collapsed chamber, much similar to the vestibule in the opening chamber hall, is painted with grotesque demonic figures. A single door rests within the north wall.

A cleric will recognize the paintings on the wall as the lowl demon goddess Vitcoska. There is nothing of value in the chamber, and the door to Room 6 is locked **[DC 16]**.

5. The Waiting Darkness

The doors to the east stand ajar, and a slip of wispy darkness plays around your boots as you pass it by.

Within the chamber are 4 ebon tendrils that will spring out in ropy bands of dark ether to attack the players. The moment combat happens, Timmer and his tome-mage will be aware of the heroes' presence, and the tome-mage's dwellers will be loosed from the dais in Location 8 to assist in the attack. They will arrive in round two. Also, the tome-mage will leave his position in Location 8 and move to Location 7 to hurl spells at the party in round three.

4 Ebon Tendril [AC 4, HD 7+7, HP 49, #AT 3, D 2-12 (Necrotic/Slash), +1 or better weapon to hit]

TREASURE

None

4 Ebon Tendrils [AC 16, HD 7d12+14, HP 56, Initiative +3, #AT 3, Hit +6, Dam Slashing Appendage 9 (2d6+2) + 6 (1d8+2) Necrotic, Multiattack, Damage Resistance: non-magical weapons, Vulnerability: radiant]

2 Dwellers [AC 2, HD 8+8, HP 56, #AT 3, D 1-6 (Claw x2)/1-8 (Bite), +1 or better weapon to hit]

TREASURE

None

2 Dwellers [AC 18, HD 10d10+10, HP 60, Initiative +5, #AT 3, Hit +8, Dam Claw 9 (2d6+3), Bite 12 (2d10+2), Magic Resistance, Multiattack (2 Claws/1 Bite), Aversion to Flame (at disadvantage on rolls if hit by fire), Damage Immunity: non-magical weapons]

6. The Chamber of Ancient Secrets

Upon entry a flame bursts from a shallow iron bowl held by a dog-headed statue on the west wall. The light of the flames depict more images of Vitcoska and her lowl priests, one of which wears the artifact The Fists of the Onyx God...

Here is the place where the cursed artifact can be successfully dropped without a saving throw or Remove Curse. Any character wearing the artifact will feel compelled to drop it in the burning bowl, and once done will feel a surge of power and strength rush through his body. The character completing this task will receive permanent ability increases of +2 points to Strength, Constitution, and Dexterity. Afterward, however, he will grow an unusual amount of body hair (nothing crazy, but notable and requires daily shaving to avoid growing a large beard) as well as a taste for rare meat.

7. The Worshippers Salon

This massive gallery has seen better days with a half-collapsed western wall that has filled in with earth and vines bearing dark flowers. Three large pillars still support the roof twenty feet above, and to the eastern side another chamber is accessed by a ten foot rise of well-worn stone steps.

If anyone moves past the pillars in the west of this chamber, they will be subject to the poison of the death's kiss (see Ebon Swamp section) which grows abundantly in the collapsed wall section of the chamber. Otherwise, this chamber is empty, but movement through it will draw the attention of whatever NPCs still remain in Location 8.

8. The Raised Sacrificial Dais

Upon a large raised dais of dark stone, the mad-eyed Timmer Vash stands with blades drawn. At his feet the unconscious form of

Ylissa Rummel rests, a trickle of blood coming from her forehead. With a fractured laugh, Timmer calls out to you.

'So my dear patriarch has betrayed even his own blood, eh? Well, so be it, but know that I will take this miserable girl with me in death as both our souls will be consumed by the darkness of the swamp, and there is nothing you can do to stop me!'

Timmer is serious, and during this first action will kneel to slit Ylissa's throat unless somehow stopped. Any offensive action against him (spell, missile, etc.) will throw him into a bloodthirsty rage that will turn him from his assassination and cause him to rush the party screaming insults as he has hit the limits his mind can take.

Once he is defeated, the party needs only to collect his signet ring and then navigate the swamp back to Taux to settle the feud once and for all.

Timmer Vash [AC 5, HD 10+10, HP 70, #AT 3 (+4 to hit), D (1-6)+5/(1-4)+2 (2 rapier/1 dagger)]

TREASURE

Rapier +2, Dagger +2, 140 silver coatsls, 30 gold jaguars, signet ring of House Vash

Timmer Vash [AC 15, HD 10d8+20, HP 65, Initiative +5, #AT 3, Hit +7, Dam Rapier 8 (1d6+4), Dagger 7 (1d4+5), Multiattack (2 scimitars/1 dagger), Parry (+2 AC against one attack)]

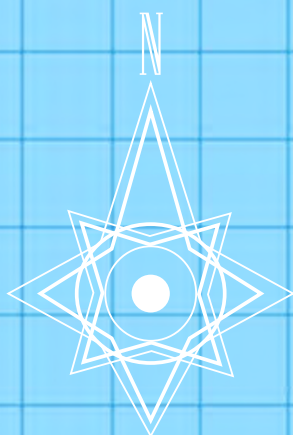
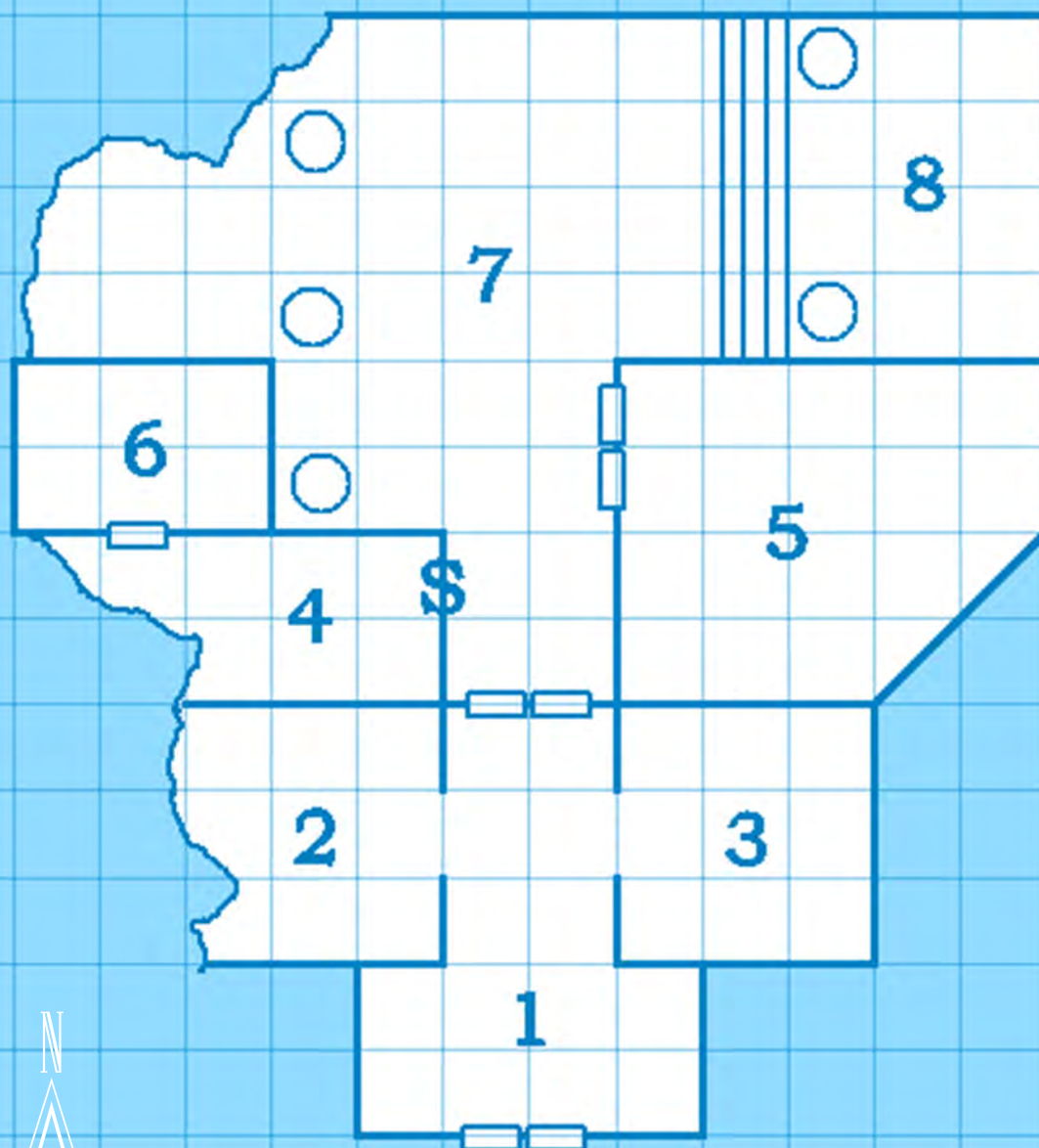
1 Tome-Mage [AC 7, HD 9, HP 18, #AT 1, D (1-6)+3, Spells: 1st (4) Shield, Shocking Grasp, Magic Missile, Charm Person; 2nd (3) Strength, Web, Detect Invisibility; 3rd (3) Fireball, Hold Person, Suggestion; 4th (2) Fire Shield, Ice Storm; 5th (1) Cone of Cold]

TREASURE

+3 Staff, Spell Scrolls (includes all known spells), Ring of Protection +1, 20 copper coins, 54 silver coatsls, 8 gold jaguars

1 Tome-Mage [AC 13, HD 9d8, HP 40, Initiative +3, #AT 1, Hit +8, Dam Staff 8 (1d6+5), Spellcasting (DC 14 saves and +6 to hit), Spells: Cantrips (at will) Fire Bolt, Mage Hand; 1st (4 Slots) Mage Armor, Magic Missile, Shield; 2nd (3 Slots) Misty Step, Suggestion; 3rd (3 Slots) Counterspell, Fireball, Fly; 4th (3 Slots) Greater Invisibility, Ice Storm; 5th (1 Slot) Cone of Cold]



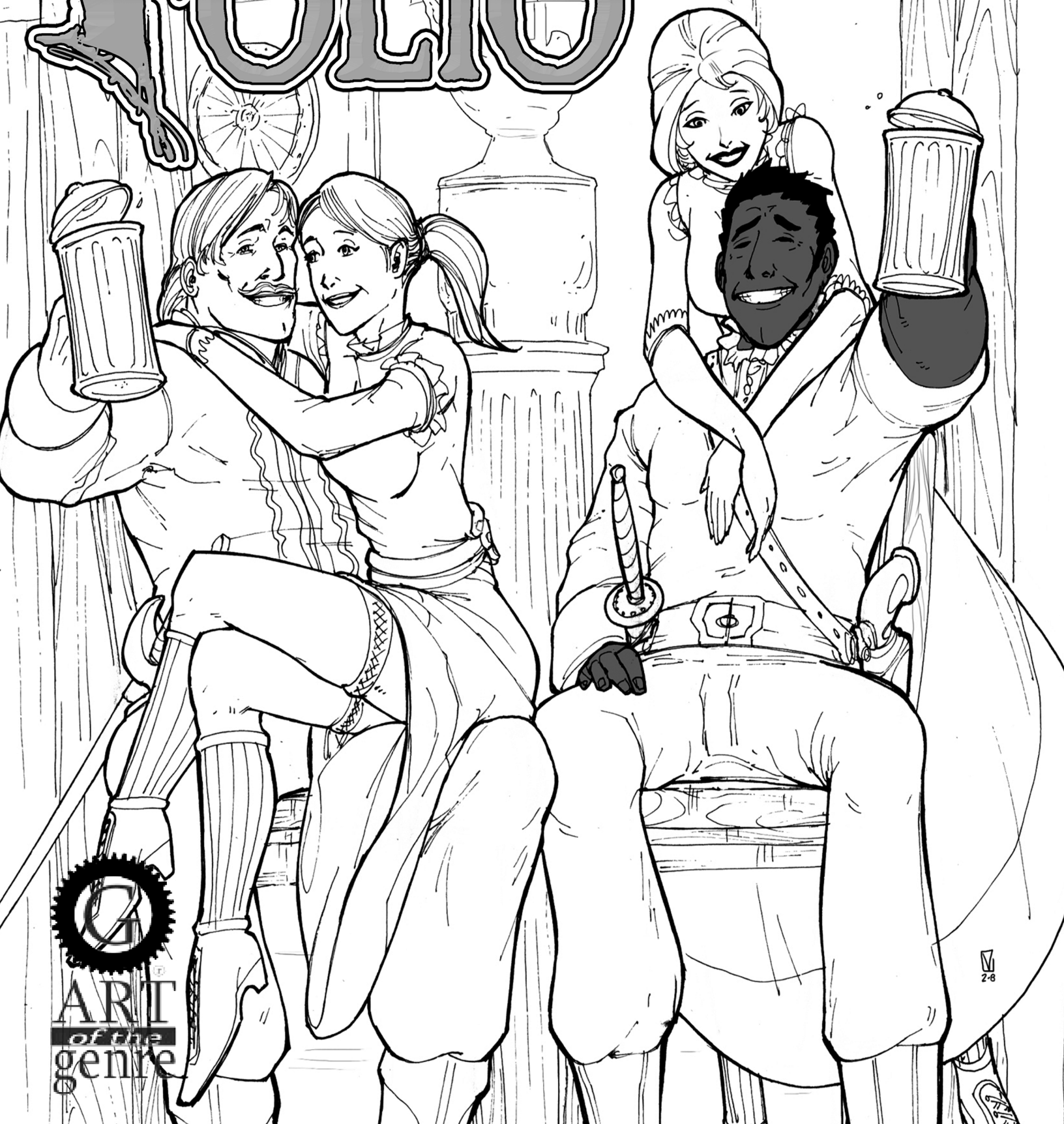


THE FOLIO

Valoria

Patina Court Places

By Scott Taylor



Welcome to The Patina Court Places. Below, you will find several establishments that are well known to the locals in the neighborhood as well as rumors and possible adventure hooks. The purpose of this expansion is to flesh out the Patina while giving players and DMs preparing to run the events of DF1 a chance to better acquaint themselves with the neighborhood and the NPCs they will come to know. It is my hope that as a DM, you will utilize many of the small storylines here to allow the players to 'grow roots' within the Patina and have a running start before they begin leveling throughout the trilogy that the DF series will become.

The Gracious Arms Inn

There are arguably four 'great' inns set about the city of Valoria, and while the Gracious Arms might not be the finest of those, it is in the conversation. Nestled along Main Street west of Odin's Way, this massive structure is home to more than fifty staff and typically boasts upwards of one hundred and fifty travelers each night.

History

Built by the Honorable Patriarch of Dionysus, Lauren Thomas, this priestess set about making a name for herself as a fine hostess to those travelling through the western gates of the city. Initially just a single building, Mrs. Thomas managed to grow the popularity of her establishment, as well as its size, over a period of nearly thirty years. However, it wasn't until her granddaughter, Eliza, that the Gracious Arms became one of the city's finest. During Eliza's tenure, the Patina Court was in full swing, and the wealth of its creation, as well as the trade it brought to the neighborhoods north of the Main, quickly turned the Arms into the prime waystation for those who came to the area.

Places of Interest

The Arms sports five buildings, including a well-appointed stable. Two buildings are reserved for guest rooms, with the upper floors containing suites that can be had by the week or the month. Building three, known as 'The Eatery', houses the spacious dining area and kitchens that serve those coming for meals from around the Main, guests who can have meals delivered to their rooms, and the staff of the Arms. Building four is home to the permanent staff of the Arms, although some staff live off-site in the Patina where they raise families. Building five is the stable, and can house up to fifty steeds as well as three carriages.

Costs

The Gracious Arms has an extensive menu as well as varied rooms for those having the coin to pay.

Breakfast:

Plain (porridge, toast, cheese) (1 SP)
Elaborate (eggs, ham, toast, gravy, sweet bun) (5 SP)

Lunch/Dinner:

Plain (pan-fried potatoes, breakfast ham, bread & honey butter) (1 GP)
Elaborate (sweet potato pie, beef stew, soft loaf & cinnamon butter) (2 GP)

Supper:

Plain (pan-fried chicken, hard rolls & gravy, fruit of the day) (1 GP)
Elaborate (venison steak, sweet bean gravy, baked potato & butter, soft loaf, hot fruit pie) (5 GP)

Spirits:

Beer, small, pint (5 CP)
Beer, heavy, pint (1 SP)
Ale, pint (2 SP)
Ale, Dwarven, pint (1 EP)
Mead, pint (1 EP)
Mead, Urn Special Brew, pint (15 SP)
Wine, table, pint (1 EP)
Wine, Sylph Snow Sparkling, pint (15 SP)
Wine, Erinthor Gold, pint (1 GP)
Wine, Valorian Ruby, pint (2 GP)
Wine, Halfling's Emerald, pint (5 EP)
Wine, Golden Lake Lilac, pint (4 GP)
Wine, Valorian Fireamber, pint (1 PP)
Brandy, Valorian, gill (1 EP)
Brandy, Urn special aged, gill (1 GP)
Orcish Hammer Liqueur, half-gill (5 GP)

Lodging:

Private Room: 2 GP per night
Common Room: 1 GP per night
Suite: 5 GP per night (20 GP per month)

Rumors:

1. The Way Men have been recruiting from 'over the Main' for an upcoming clash with the Tellers. TRUE, Davick Way, leader of the Way Men, has contacts all the way out to the docks, where his brother is a longshoreman, and has been recruiting those sick of sailing to his cause while training them up in fighting at Brawl Club.

2. Isildred is looking for a new mate, but only the handsome need apply. TRUE, Isildred has indeed felt the urge to once again procreate, but only those with a Charisma of 15 or higher (and a Comeliness of 15 if you use this stat from the AD&D Unearthed Arcana) need attempt the feat of wooing her.



3. Two men in red have been running beggars off from Beggar's Fountain. TRUE, these are the newest 'elite' enforcers of the Teller Gang (known as Crimson Centurions) and were pushed by Noturus Rexa to take Nasim and hold him for ransom from his guild.

4. A city guardsman disappeared near Hollow Tree last evening and there was supposed to be squeaking heard from the wood after. FALSE, however, the Hollow Tree (located behind the Rancid Cauldron toward the Wizard's Knoll) is a secret entrance into the lower dungeons.

5. Giant lizards live below the Patina and trade emerald scales to the House of Flying Daggers for weapons. TRUE, lizardmen do live below the streets of Valoria, and Ling Tuo enjoys using odd scales they bring him in the creation of his dagger sheaths.

Gaming Hooks

The Blind Leading the Blind

1. Nasim the White Eyed leads a group of beggars that frequent the Beggar's Fountain. Three nights ago he disappeared, and two men in red cloaks have since been running off beggars from their territory. These men in red cloaks are actually new Teller 'elite' thugs (3rd level fighters), and have been told by Noturus Rexa to capture Nasim and hold him in a small house just west of the Broken Warlock until the Beggar's Guild pays him 50 GP in ransom.

Seven Coppers Alley

1. Seven Coppers Alley is home to the Way Men, but trouble found the gang last night in the form of Noturus Rexa and the Tellers. There are two highly confused and angry survivors, and they are planning to attack Cano, 'Rogue of the Scarf', who one of them saw leaving the site of the attack at the Warlock Hostel late in the evening. The Tellers created Brawl Club to use against all the other gangs in the Patina, each fight observed and cataloged to gain an advantage in knowing their enemies' combat strengths and weaknesses. This means that anyone participating in a fight at Brawl Club will provide ALL members of the Tellers with a +2 to hit combat bonus against them. Using this advantage, the Tellers decimated the new nautical recruits of the Way Men and have scattered the gang. However, Cano was only an observer of the turf war, so this last attack (which the PCs likely stumble into at the Warlock) might be averted if proof can be had that Cano wasn't involved.



Sins of the Paladin

1. One of the servers at the Gracious Arms, a lovely girl named Paya, is actually the illegitimate daughter of Sir Ulrich Bright, Paladin of Apollo. Bright nearly lost his paladin stature by helping create the child (and only didn't because, hey, his god is Greek and we know how they 'roll'), but has since paid his penance by watching over her from afar. Recently, however, Abrella of the Third Eye read the girl's tea leaves and discovered the source of her parentage. This knowledge was recently stolen by one of Abrella's agents in the Patina and is now being offered to the highest bidder. Both Abrella, determined to protect her reputation, and Notorus of the Tellers, who wants the information, are seeking the agent. The PCs are approached by Abrella and offered 10 GP per party member if they find the agent and bring him to her before Notorus gets his hands on him.

The Broken Warlock Hostel

Home to a dozen permanent residents and half again that number of travelers, the Broken Warlock has gotten a name for itself as a place of refuge from the prying eyes of the Patina, and to a lesser degree Valoria itself. A soul can get lost here if they wish not to be found, and for those staying at the residence it can be a slippery slope when trying to engage neighbors in adjoining rooms with questions. The Warlock is still of solid foundation, and residents seldom complain when taking into account the costs for their rooms, especially within earshot of the establishment's owner, Alshock the Thrifty.

History

Built for laborers who worked to create the largest homes in the Patina, this building has gone through dozens of owners before finally coming into the hands of Alshock. By keeping his rent lower than the Gracious Arms, which sits south of the Warlock toward Main, Alshock maintains a strong business of folk clinging to the bottom rung of relevancy in Valoria. Clients are either moving up in the world or down, but the Warlock offers a seemingly safe haven to all who can pay the room rate.

Places of Interest

Boasting two stories with a repurposed third floor loft that serves as a common room, the Warlock is a microclimate of varied lifestyles and cultures pressed together between horsehair plaster walls. Most folk carry with them remnants of past lives and places, so seeing trinkets from distant lands is commonplace within. The most frequented room in the establishment is the rear parlor, a place where the more outgoing residents congregate during the day for talk and sometimes tea or spirits, while in the evening it turns into a gambling hall for no more than six intrepid hucksters with coins to spare.

Costs

There always seem to be rooms available at the Warlock with folk coming and going through this last rung of housing.

Lodging:

Private Room: 1 GP per week

3rd Floor Commons: 5 SP per week

Rumors

1. Folks in the parlor like to joke that Proprias the Learned is secretly pursuing Mrs. Nuln in some long, drawn out dwarven courting ritual. TRUE, Proprias has been after Mrs. Nuln for years, but she believes in only one marriage in a lifetime.

2. Niya, server of the Rancid Cauldron, is looking for a husband to help raise her daughter, Katie, a girl most agree is 'too wild'. FALSE, Katie's father is actually Notorus Rexa of the Tellers, and Niya hopes he will make good on his word to 'take them out of here' when he gets his big break.

3. Cano, 'Rogue of the Scarf', is actually a drug dealer who mixes a highly addictive drug called Dream Petal in his room. 'You can often see him carrying in strange herbs and roots to his room just after nightfall.' FALSE, Cano actually mixes poisons in his room and happily kills anyone peddling Dream Petal, which was the downfall of his wife.

Gaming Hooks

Only for Afternoon Tea

1. Lanka the Shade likes her tea, and the more exotic the better. She often brews tea in the parlor during the mornings she is in residence, but of late she has had a hankering for Yellow Cap Tea, a refreshing drink made from yellow cap mushrooms that grow among the tombstones along the Wizard's Knoll. She doesn't have time to collect them herself, but would gladly pay a PC 2 GP to collect a small bag of them. However, once among the stones, the PC will encounter a walking corpse sent by the crypt thing in DF1 to harry folks coming too close to his crypt. The corpse is a standard zombie build.

Mrs. Nuln's Scarf

1. Mrs. Nuln is an old dwarf, and former wife of one of the stoneworkers who helped cut crypts into the Wizard's Knoll for the Murtel Family years ago (a point that the DM might use to give characters useful info later in DF1). She recently had her burgundy silk scarf stolen by members of the Rovers gang as she was coming back from Beggar's Fountain (where she donates coppers to the poor humans there).

She will offer any PC 5 GP to find the scarf and return it to her. Beggars down at the fountain do know who among the Rovers took the scarf and where he can be found, the party need only part with a few coppers for the info.

Katie's Pet 'Dog'

1. Katie, the daughter of a server at the Rancid Cauldron, spends her days playing in her mother's rented room, pestering travelers for stories in the rear parlor, or dashing between the Warlock and the Cauldron to visit her mother. During one of these forays she spotted (or was spotted by) one of the giant bullet ant workers that have recently discovered the Rancid Cauldron's cellar. Thinking it 'cute', she fed the creature and has continued to do so from her window on the first floor of the Warlock each time she hears it hiss. Little does she realize that the creature is not unique, and that more and more are coming to be 'fed' at her window, a problem that is growing since she is running out of food. If unfed, Katie might be next, and then the entire Warlock if a larger 'food source' is relayed back to the colony.

The Rancid Cauldron

You need a very strong stomach and immune system to eat regularly at the Rancid Cauldron, but considering many folks in the Patina would starve without meals here, the tavern tends to maintain a steady business. Most information 'off the Main', as the folks in the Patina like to say, can be had here, as all manner of locals mingle during the three meal times of the day, or if you are on the rowdier side, the 'spirit hours' when drinks flow aplenty after dark.

History

Once the home of Gutav ArchStorm, Lama of Lightning, this old Patina Court home was turned into an eatery nearly fifty years before the current date. The owner, a red-haired and fiery-tempered gnome by the name of Noxis 'Emeraldclock' Pike, oversees the daily happenings of the tavern with an abacus in one hand and a tankard of beer in the other. He is a notorious miser, and many are warned to never make a

deal with him unless it is absolutely necessary (as he does lend money from time to time). As ArchStorm wasn't overly wealthy (much of his adventuring coin going to tithes at the Temple of Zeus), the building is only a single story, the bulk of which is now the common room, and the rest the kitchen. Noxis lives in the attic, which despite low and sloped ceilings, is perfect for his diminutive size.

Places of Interest

The common room is always a place to hear the latest rumors of the Patina, as gossip costs less than even the stew, and often times is thicker. Noxis also has a small room beyond the kitchen where he cooks his books and stores his treasures, or so the folk in the front of the bar enjoy saying.

Costs

Those choosing to break their fast here are of a stronger constitution (or worse economical condition) than most.

Breakfast: Cold Porridge (2 CP)
Lunch/Dinner: Stew (1 SP)
Supper: Stew & Bread (2 SP)
Spirits:
Stale Beer (1 SP)
Watered Wine (2 SP)

Rumors

1. The bones of ArchStorm are located in the cellar of the tavern. FALSE, but there are no shortage of other things down there as Noxis is a proud hoarder.
2. Brigit Murtel has recently gotten engaged to an adventurer from outside Valoria. FALSE, she's entered into a trade agreement with a human merchant from Urn (who deals directly with the gnomes there), but she is not engaged.
3. Abrella of the Third Eye is one of the daughters spawned from Isildred the Astronomer's relations with human men. FALSE, but close, she is actually the granddaughter of Isildred, so she is actually $\frac{1}{4}$ elven blood.
4. The 'black eyes', a strange race of furry thieves, come to the Cauldron at night and trade stolen goods to Noxis for uneaten food. TRUE, the black eyes do call on Noxis on occasion, as they very much enjoy spoiled human food.
5. There are five entrances to Valoria's sewer system in the Patina, and the gangs use them as secret throughways to avoid detection. TRUE/FALSE, there are indeed five access points to Valoria's sewers in the Patina, but no gangs use them for fear of running into ratmen or even worse, lizardmen.

Gaming Hooks

'Big' Gram Tolb wants a fight!

1. One of the locals, a drunk named 'Big' Gram, gets surly one evening during 'spirit hours' and will challenge the largest member of the PC party to a fist fight. No matter how the fight goes, the other PCs watching will hear a few drunk locals say, "Take it to Brawl Club," thus putting this secret fighting club into the PC's Patina knowledge. Note: Brawl Club IS NOT located on the map, therefore it is a secret that can be placed anywhere the DM sees fit.

The Gypsy Dancer

1. One night while dining, Brimbold Elderman the Lark begins playing a rousing tune with his lute. As he does so, a lovely young woman in skirts and scarves steps atop a nearby table to the PCs and begins dancing. Brimbold seems enchanted by her, and once he's done, tries to make his way to her, but she disappears amid the rowdy folk congratulating him on his 'best tune yet'. Distressed, he will hire a PC for a gold piece to find any information on the girl so that he can play for her again. What becomes of this is up to you.

Who ate the fish?

1. Notorious for giving folks who eat there intestinal pains, tonight's meal of 'fresh fish stew' has begun to set very poorly with all those who ate it. If any PC makes a saving throw versus poison, they are unaffected and will quickly be approached by Noxis who requests they run to the Warlock and retrieve a bottle of Estaban Moncrief's 'Stomach Soothing Elixir'. He will pay them a gold piece to get the bottle and bring it back so that he can charge the sick customers 1 copper piece per drop to soothe their cramps, diarrhea, and in worst case scenarios, vomiting.

Murtel's Mortuary

If you've ever seen the walls of Valoria, then you understand how ancient the city is. Still, one gets the same feeling when dealing with the Murtel family who have been running the 'paths of the dead' in Valoria since the first king took his throne. The mortuary is the final stop for the bulk of the dead in Valoria who had any money



at all. For some, that means interment into catacombs, others burial plots along the Wizard's Knoll, and for the rich dwarven-made crypts in the knoll and carved burial vaults above ground. To the Murtels, all are welcome, assuming you can pay.

History

Legend proclaims that Lovar Murtel was a companion of Queen Anuktata when she passed over the frosty peaks of the Erinthors against the demonspawn. Whatever the case, Lovar was bound to death, a priest of Hades, and once he retired to Valoria he set about tasking himself the keeper of the dead. Generations without count have passed since he built his small shrine against the wall of the Wizard's Knoll, and after centuries it has become a mortuary that has seen countless dead from Valoria's populous. Now, Brigit Murtel, lone member of her ancient household, lords over the 'paths of the dead', doing what she can to continue her family's traditions while bolstering what strength she can against those that would see entropy come full circle and at last claim the family that has so long had power over death in the city.

Places of Interest

Murtel's Mortuary is a full member of the Patina, its main building creating an 'L' that shields the family compound beyond, and to the east two structures act as body preparation facilities. The 'L' houses a Library of the Dead which keeps extensive lineages of the families of the city as well as viewing rooms for funerals, and a small shop dedicated to the various accoutrements of the dead. Little is known of the family compound beyond, save that it is three stories and could house more than two dozen guests at any one time. Some folk even indicate it has interior plumbing that includes hot and cold running water.

Costs

Burial costs vary greatly on your social station, but Murtel's Mortuary caters to all types of social strata. Costs of funeral services and 'special' ceremonies negotiable at time of contract signing.

Cremation: 2 SP
Catacombs: 1 GP
Private Grave: 5 GP
Crypt (Above Ground/Shared): 25 GP
Crypt (In Hill/Shared): 50 GP
Private Crypts and Mausoleums:
Negotiable, but upwards of thousands of gold

Rumors

1. The Murtels are actually undead, and Brigit is just the latest iteration of Lovar Murtel's wife Yevanna. FALSE, although Brigit is a priestess of Hades, so her connection with the dead is stronger than most.

2. Great treasures are housed in the dwarven-made crypts, but shadows guard those from grave robbers. FALSE, on both counts. The Murtels, although not Brigit, have stolen precious heirlooms from their crypts for centuries. Also, the rumor of shadows was perpetrated by Brigit's grandfather to help keep intrepid thieves from finding out his family's dark secret.

3. If you have enough money, you can 'displace' those who have already been buried by the Murtels. TRUE, money talks and the dead don't, and if you have enough, the Murtels have been known to relocate bodies to make room for new arrivals. What happens to the old residents is anyone's guess (although the crypt thing in DF1 might have been brought about by such practices).

Gaming Hooks

The Grave Digger

1. Brigit has recently placed a post on the door of the Broken Warlock seeking a gravedigger. The position pays 2 SP a day, and she needs the person for five days. The reason for this need is some of her staff have been lost to the crypt thing in DF1, but this is a good way for a PC to get to know Brigit. Also, Katie, the child resident of the Warlock will ask to accompany anyone going to dig a grave as she thinks that would be 'super cool' to see.

Driving the Dead Wagon

1. If a PC does the grave digging for Brigit, she will offer a side job paying an addition gold piece to retrieve a body in her 'Dead Wagon' from the Restuss family down near the docks. Again, not a terribly tough task, although the PC will certainly get some 'looks' along the way as people steer clear of the black wagon and horse.

Pallbearers for the Dead

2. Kaleb Hex, an ill-liked moneylender has recently died and left no family or friends. He has, however, paid for a Viking-type funeral from Murtel's, and Brigit needs six pallbearers to carry Kaleb's body, inside a small boat acquired from the Main boat maker, up to the high cemetery for a cremation service. She's willing to pay 3 SP per pallbearer. If the PC that has been working for her manages to gather friends to help her out, she'll also tip him/her another gold coin.

3. Note: If the PC completes all three of these scenarios, Brigit will be sure to offer the mission in DF1 to enter the crypt. She will also, however, ask the PC to a private dinner at the Murtel compound as she is weary, is looking for a friend (or perhaps more), and desperately needs an ally as she's just now discovering what dire deeds her family has been up to over the passing years.

Helicrium Bathhouse

Built even before the rise of the Patina estates in this venerable neighborhood, the Helicrium has stood longer than even Isildred can remember. The house itself is a large domed affair set with half a dozen large pools (only two of which still function) and a series of private saunas and hot spring pools that still serve the likes of the Teller Gang.

History

Built by some of the first Valorians to resettle the city after Posiedon's Cataclysm, this venerable structure has served as home to priests, rebels, rogues, harlots, nobility, the magically adept, and finally the gangs of the Patina. Its strong stone edifice, worn-marble pools, and seemingly endless supply of fresh water keep it a favorite spot for any with enough money to grab an occasional bath in the court. Currently run by the Teller Gang, the baths themselves range in price, and the 'front man' of the bathhouse is a human in his middle thirties by the name of Ulop the Spindle, because of his extreme thinness. He greets all patrons in a stately, if not a bit creepy, manner, and quickly sends them to whatever bath they require, even if they are known enemies of the Tellers, as business is business.

Places of Interest

The house consists of a central dome in which the Master Pool is located. This central location is a cold water pool that is five feet deep and constructed of marble with copper fixtures. It is here that the bulk of those who can afford service gather, especially enemies of the Tellers since it would be near impossible for any foul doings to befall someone with so many common eyes about. Around the central dome,

various arches lead to the six surrounding pool areas. One of these is the hot baths known as the Jade Pool, which is a green marble pool that can house up to eight patrons easily. The second, and last still functioning, is the Ebony Pool, set with black marble and steaming mineral water. It is the smallest of the baths and can only hold three patrons, but is popular among those wealthy enough to enjoy the spirit-refreshing waters. This pool was blessed by priests long ago and has the ability to cure disease, as the spell, if a person bathes in its waters for five straight days. The remaining four baths have been converted to living areas for the Tellers, a brothel chamber (broken into a series of private curtained tub rooms and a reserved back chamber for more elite customers), a sauna utilizing the last remaining water still pushing from a dying bath, and finally Teller's Hall, the home of the leader of the gang, Notorus Rexa.

Prices

Common Bath: 5 SP for an hour access to the Master Pool

Hot Bath: 10 SP for an hour access to the Jade Pool

Healing Mineral Bath: 5 GP for an hour access to the Ebony Pool

Private Bath: 8 GP for a bath drawn in a brass tub in the brothel chamber

Attended Bath: 15 GP for a 'Lady of the Helicrium' to attend you while you bathe in the brothel chamber

Master's Bath: 25 GP for a 'Maiden of the Helicrium' (Charisma 15) to attend you while you bathe in the reserved brothel chamber

Sauna: 15 SP for an hour in the sauna

Note:

Anyone partaking of these services is considered to have +1 to their Charisma score for the next 24 hours.

Rumors:

1. The Ebony Pool has special restorative properties in the water because a priestess of a long-forgotten healing goddess died in the bath. FALSE, no priestess died here, but priests did once enchant the pool to cure disease, so the part about the water is true.

2. There are three women known as Teller's Muses who can be had for a heavy purse of gold in the private baths of the Helicrium. All of these women are said to be of a level of beauty rarely seen in the Patina. TRUE, there are three 'maidens' under the ownership of Rexa that he shares with patrons of the house for the right price. All are Charisma 15 or higher.

3. Taking a private bath in the Helicrium puts those who have crossed blades or fists with the Tellers at risk for their lives. FALSE, to this point Rexa refuses to compromise his business with easy reprisals, and will quickly retaliate on anyone spreading this rumor. However, that isn't to say he wouldn't put an end to a large threat if he thought it was better for his well-being to do so.

Gaming Hooks

The Miserable Muse

1. Olivia the Pale, an incredibly beautiful (Charisma 17) young woman sold two years ago to Teller for her family's debt, has been serving Rexa as his most prized 'Maiden of the Helicrium'. However, she has recently heard of the Ladies of Prophet (see Folio #9) and wishes to flee the prostitution and servitude of Rexa for liberation among those ladies. However, she has no way out, but will try to slip a note to a character (assuming they are in any of the baths) or get them a message from another patron who knows of them, hoping they will help her.

A Child's Pain

2. Milo of Main, a street urchin known about the Patina for running messages for the shops, has fallen ill with an unknown disease. The various shop owners, including Bret Bozeman of the Boat Shop, have paid for a priest to cure the boy, but somehow the disease was resistant to the spell. However, they have heard of the restorative properties of the Ebony Pool and wish to take Milo there, but the boy had a nasty run-in with a Teller a month ago, and Rexa refuses to allow the boy entry. This is a perfect chance for a negotiation, perhaps ending in a trial of combat at Brawl Club, or even leading to the Scrub-a-dub-dub scenario below.

Scrub-a-dub-dub

3. A water weird has somehow found its way through the copper pipes of the Helicrium and taken up residence in the Jade Pool disrupting the Tellers' cash flow as the pool had to be 'closed for repair'. The Tellers are willing to offer any of the services of the bathhouse, including a Master's Bath, to anyone who can rid the pool of this deadly creature.

House of Flying Daggers

Perhaps the most out of place structure in all of the Patina, the House of Flying Daggers looks more like a gateway to the Orient than a shop amid the standard

architecture of the Patina, and even Valoria itself. Whatever the case, the 'House', as it is called by the locals, has become the only real business in the neighborhood that actively treats with customers from 'over the Main' or across Odin's Way. Patrons from all over Valoria, or at least their agents, come to the House seeking some of the finest small blades in the city, or perhaps anywhere in the world.

History

Established a dozen years ago and refurbished after a mysterious fire only five seasons ago, this oddly imported business has always been run by a stoic man of distant lineage called Ling Tuo. Tuo has had his problems inside the Patina over the years, but he has never been one to back down from a challenge, and doggedly continues to do business despite any setbacks. His wares are truly an inspiration, and often cause an envious eye among the local gangs, but nonetheless he does a steady business with agents from outside the Patina looking to resell his works in other districts. Where exactly he gets all his blades is a mystery, as certainly he forges some in the back of his shop, but most educated men know that there are too many wondrous items in his glass cases to have been created by a single man.

Places of Interest

There are three true rooms that matter in the House of Flying Daggers along with an assortment of smaller closets used for material storage. Room One consists of the large showroom for the products of the House. The bulk of this room is dedicated to an assortment of Asian-inspired tapestries, scrolls, ceramics, and incense statues which are all set around twelve large glass cases filled with blades. Blades also hang on the walls on peg displays. Nothing is priced, so a customer must inquire and engage in a hearty brand of negotiation (see Ling Tuo). Room Two lies behind the showroom and comprises the forge of Ling Tuo where he works during the evenings when the House is officially closed. (Hours are 9 AM to 3 PM.) Not many people have ever seen the forges of Tuo, but some in the dwarven neighborhoods whisper that it is finer than many noble forges in the holds of Erinthor Mountains. Room Three is on the second level of the House and is the abode of Tuo. No living soul has ever been invited to this chamber, although most would agree it would be rather large for a single man to live in alone.

Ling Tuo

The proprietor of the House isn't really a man at all, but in reality is a gold dragon, or in more distant circles a great kami. As such, Tuo is neither woman nor man, and is equally at peace with both sides of the sexual nature of mortals. Over the centuries 'he' has taken many different forms, and lived in many different cities, each time finding the best weaponsmiths in the lands and learning their secret techniques. When it is time that whatever human guise 'pass on', the dragon arranges for a funeral and then resettles in a new city for anywhere from 50 to 70 years. The dragon has become obsessed with blade-craft, and has bent his own magic to enchantment so that he can not only forge the blades he wants but also imbue them with arcane power. Still, he can't do everything himself, and on some nights he will teleport to cities where he once lived and purchase blades from old acquaintances or their descendants and apprentices. Currently, the dragon is at odds with several gangs in the Patina, one of which attempted to burn down the House a little over two years ago only to be completely wiped out when the normally pacifistic beast had enough. He is not pleased with the Tellers, but tries to stay out of human affairs, and rebuffs any attempts by gangs to force 'protection' on him. He loves to bargain with his clients, but will employ a Know Alignment spell before all such negotiations and typically take it easier on patrons who are of good alignment. In game terms, he has a Charisma of 20 and will make an opposed Charisma check against a purchaser. For every point the dragon wins the test by, he will increase the price of the item by a single percentage point as found in the DMG or Unearthed Arcana. If the purchaser wins the test, they can decrease the items cost in the same way.

Weapons

Weapon costs adhere to the pricing found in the DMG or Unearthed Arcana. ANY small blade can be found here, from buckle knives to tantos, but he never deals in anything over the length of a short sword. Butterfly knives, stilettoes, punch daggers, ninjatos, wakazashis, and the like are readily at hand.

Rumors:

1. Some folk in the Patina insist that they have heard hissing and rumbling from the House at night, and many insist that Tuo has too deep of a connection with the lizardmen of the Undercity. TRUE, the hissing comes from Tuo when he takes his true form at night and sprawls out in his spacious upstairs. He also has extensive dealings with the lizardmen beneath the Patina as he feels a distant kinship with them.

2. Tuo sometimes chooses a 'champion' among adventurous folk in the Patina to wear his weapons for free. FALSE, although Tuo sometimes has provided good-aligned characters with deep discounts on his weapons (up to 65%) when he feels they are protecting the interests of the Patina.

3. A lover sometimes comes to visit Tuo in the evenings, and this blond beauty has been seen leaving the House to cross the Main and return to a noble estate somewhere else in the city. FALSE, in reality it is yet another guise of Tuo, who takes the form of a lovely noble when he wants to see parts of the city he couldn't go to in another fashion.

Gaming Hooks

The Distance Between

1. Although powerful, Tuo isn't very good with the blades he forges, especially those that require the art of throwing. Thus, it is difficult for him to know exactly how good his throwing hardware is. To solve this issue, he sometimes arranges for a private knife throwing contest. One such event is scheduled soon, and any character with a high Dexterity will be invited to test some of Tuo's newest creations. The contest revolves around throwing three knives into a target (AC 10) and tabulating how many points the thrower manages to beat that number by. After three rounds the points will be calculated, and the total points will determine the winner. Many colorful characters, some from 'over the Main', will be in attendance, and the winner will receive his or her choice of blade from Tuo's stock (up to +3 in enchantment).

Daughter of the Night

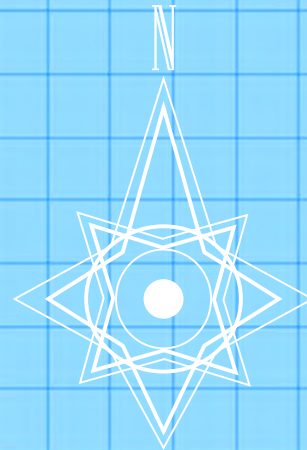
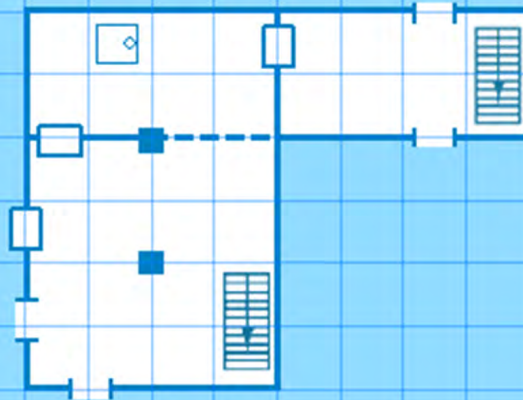
2. Tuo often goes into the city in his female guise, Kamisra Shimmer of Antaquim. Recently he has discovered a noble event in the south of the city called 'The Dance of the Masked Revelers'. Tuo desperately wants to go, but to get into the festival Kamisra has to be escorted by a partner that can dance. Again, this adventure is designed for a character with a high Dexterity (male or female, Kamisra enjoys the company of both) or even a bard. In 5E terms, the Perform skill will be enough to catch the notice of Kamisra, and considering her 20 Charisma, there is no doubt anyone would be happy to go to the festival with her. She will even pay for the carriage ride to the event, and for the dinner once there. Dexterity or skill checks will determine the character's success at dancing, but whatever the case, Kamisra will be thrilled to have company, and this 'help' will certainly be something Tuo remembers in future dealings with the characters.

The Scales of Justice

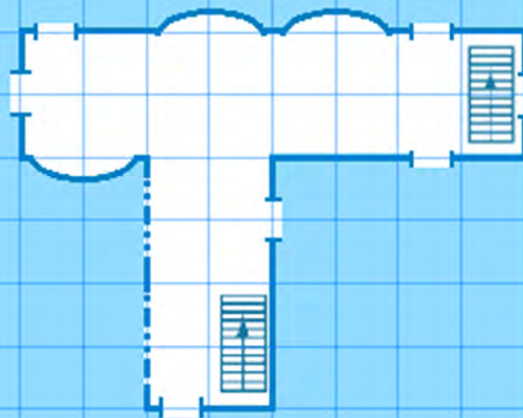
3. A little over a year ago a gang called the Maniacs attempted to burn down the House of Flying Daggers. In reprisal, Tuo killed every member save one, Narco the Slip, who managed to flee across the Main and successfully hide. Recent news of Narco has come to Tuo and he wishes the man brought to justice. Tuo has created a file on all of Narco's foul doings and wants to release it to the authorities (his initial rage and bloodlust abated), but without Narco in custody, he fears that the Slip will once again slither away to his hiding place. Thus, he will make a covert offer to the characters to go retrieve Narco for an astounding 100 gold pieces. Narco, a 5th level thief [Rogue], is currently in hiding just 'over the Main' in a safe-house where he is protected by two 3rd level fighters [Thugs]. If the party successfully captures and delivers Narco to the authorities, a special delivery will arrive two days later. Inside, Tuo has prepared (using his own scales) a gold dragon scale bracer that acts as a +2 buckler in combat.



1st Floor



2nd Floor



-  Door
-  Trap Door
-  Pillar
-  Partition
-  Railing
-  Window
-  Stairs



RACE & CLASS _____ BACKGROUND _____ PLAYER NAME _____

EXPERIENCE POINTS _____

ALIGNMENT _____

ADVENTURING GROU _____

Character Name _____

ART
person
gentle

INSPIRATION

PROFICIENCY BONUS

ARMOR
CLASS

MAX
HP

TEMP HP

d6

d8

d10

d12

HIT DICE

INITIATIVE

SPEED

VISION

ACROBATICS (DEX)

ANIMAL HANDLING (WIS)

ARCANA (INT)

ATHLETICS (STR)

DECEPTION (CHA)

HISTORY (INT)

INSIGHT (WIS)

INTIMIDATION (CHA)

INVESTIGATION (INT)

METICULE (WIS)

NATURE (INT)

PERCEPTION (WIS)

PERFORMANCE (CHA)

PERSUASION (CHA)

RELIGION (INT)

SLEIGHT OF HAND (DEX)

STEALTH (DEX)

SURVIVAL (WIS)

CHARISMA

SAVING THROWS

CONSTITUTION

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CONSTITUTION

DEXTERITY

STRENGTH

INSPIRATION

PROFICIENCY BONUS

ARMOR CLASS

MAX HP

TEMP HP

Maximus Brand



1E

Class: Fighter **Level:** 1st
Alignment: Chaotic Good

Patron Deity: Ares
HP: 11 **AC:** 3 **Bonuses:** Plate + Shield

Languages: Common

STR 18/21
DEX 11
CON 15
INT 10
WIS 12
CHA 11

Items:

Bronze Plate,
shield,
shortsword,
dagger, spear,
traveler's clothes,
backpack

Attack:

Short Sword:
Hit +2,
Damage +6
(Attacks 3/2)

Weapons of Proficiency:

Short Sword, Spear, Martial Arts (Karate)
Fighting Techniques (Unarmed Aikido)
Weapon Specialization (Short Sword) (Gladis)
Martial Arts Style (Choral Aikido)
Shadow Fist Karate, Open Hand Damage
1-5, #Wr 3/1, Base AC 8

Note: While in armor, martial arts attacks and bonus AC do not apply.



Born to a lower class family of fifteen children in Valoria, Maximus was always on the bottom rung amongst his siblings. Without much hope of an apprenticeship as a craftsman, he spent his teens running with gangs and building his strength as a longshoreman when work could be found with his brothers. It was during this period that he fell in with many sailors from far-flung shores, and one in particular, Shaz Ma, taught him the rudiments of a distant martial art known as 'Shadow Fist'. Although Shaz Ma left before he could reveal all the art's secrets, Maximus continued to practice and adapt the style to his own brawling skills learned among sailors in the port. By eighteen winters, Maximus had finally been caught by the City Watch in a petty theft perpetrated by his gang affiliates. The district's bailiff provided Maximus with a cloak, go to the City Quarter and spend time in the dungeon, or join the King's Army for a year of service. Maximus took the latter of the choices, soon completing his training in arms and serving as a foot soldier in garrisons from the Forest of Thorns all the way to the Brimhor Mountains. Having grown up 'feral' for all intents and purpose, however, Maximus chafed under the strictures of military life and relinquished his forced commission as soon as his year of servitude was up. Returning to Valoria, he quickly found that work was as scarce as ever for the unskilled. Not wanting to return destitute to his brothers who worked the docks, Maximus took low paying gigs as a lesser gladiator in the Arena, but his acting skills won him no fans and within two months he was no longer sought for entertainment work. This left him with two choices, rejoin the Valorian criminal underworld as made for some petty undertones, or follow the rumors and tall tales from his youth and try to search out riches below the surface of the city as an 'adventurer'. Seeing the criminal route as a more dangerous and less rewarding avenue than military service, Maximus took the last of his coppers and retreated to the shadow of the Wizard's Kind and the neighborhood of the Patina Court. He currently resides in a small room in the Fallen Watchers Hostel, and is a known adventurist conspirator with the apprentice wizard Huck Willows and even draftee, Alexa Revena.

Procyon Lotor



1E

Class: Mage **Level:** 6th
Alignment: Lawful Neutral

Patron Deity: Thoth (Egyptian)
HP: 18 **AC:** 6 **Bonuses:** Ring + Dex

Languages: Common, Dialect, Dwarven, Gnomish, Orc

STR 11
DEX 16
CON 13
INT 17
WIS 12
CHA 10

Items:

Wizard's robe, Ring of Protection +2, Wizard's Rod (Staff), Wizard's Rod (Staff), Backpack

Attack:

Wizard's Rod (Staff):
Hit +2,
Damage +2
(Attacks 1/1)

Spells:

Spells: Standard Day Preparation:
1st Mage: Misdeed, Sleep, Jump, Dancing Lights, 2nd Invisibility, Knock, 3rd Haste, Fly, 4th Haste, Fly, 5th Haste, Fly, 6th Haste, Fly, 7th Haste, Fly, 8th Haste, Fly, 9th Haste, Fly, 10th Haste, Fly, 11th Haste, Fly, 12th Haste, Fly, 13th Haste, Fly, 14th Haste, Fly, 15th Haste, Fly, 16th Haste, Fly, 17th Haste, Fly, 18th Haste, Fly, 19th Haste, Fly, 20th Haste, Fly, 21st Haste, Fly, 22nd Haste, Fly, 23rd Haste, Fly, 24th Haste, Fly, 25th Haste, Fly, 26th Haste, Fly, 27th Haste, Fly, 28th Haste, Fly, 29th Haste, Fly, 30th Haste, Fly, 31st Haste, Fly, 32nd Haste, Fly, 33rd Haste, Fly, 34th Haste, Fly, 35th Haste, Fly, 36th Haste, Fly, 37th Haste, Fly, 38th Haste, Fly, 39th Haste, Fly, 40th Haste, Fly, 41st Haste, Fly, 42nd Haste, Fly, 43rd Haste, Fly, 44th Haste, Fly, 45th Haste, Fly, 46th Haste, Fly, 47th Haste, Fly, 48th Haste, Fly, 49th Haste, Fly, 50th Haste, Fly, 51st Haste, Fly, 52nd Haste, Fly, 53rd Haste, Fly, 54th Haste, Fly, 55th Haste, Fly, 56th Haste, Fly, 57th Haste, Fly, 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Savino Emanura

Class: Bard Level: 4th (Fighter 4th / Thief 9th)

Alignment: Chaotic Neutral

Patron Deity: St. Erik (Norns Realm)

HP: 10 (AC: 5 Ring + Dex)

Languages: Common

STR	15
DEX	17
CON	11
INT	12
WIS	15
CHA	16

Items:

Duelist's robes
Sail Boots of
Speed Rapier
+3, throwing
daggers, Ring of
Protection +2
 thieves' tools,
actors makeup kit

Attack:

Rapier
Double
Specialization:
Hit +6,
Damage +6
(Attack 3/2)

Thieving Skills:

PP 60%, OL 32%, R/FT 45%, MS 57%,
HS 42%, HN 20%, CV 0%, RL 35

Spells:

Pass Without Trace, Detect Magic, Animal
Friendship, Charm Person, Obscurement, Tidy
Neighborhood, Raven, Know Alignment, Suggestion
Spell Slot: 1st 3, 2nd 3, 3rd 3

Korvs Ability: At Dancer Double movement rate for number of rounds equal to Constitution score and twice over water or above ground (ie number of feet equal to movement rate)



1E



Born in the mountain passes of Mistfin, Savino Emanura is a Korvs, a product of low affinity for elemental air. This makes him both long-lived and a man of constant movement, be it from lover, city, or job. At his core, he is a charlatan, a man who understands all that he isn't, and yet strives to be so much better than he is, even if it is a grand deception. His greatest fear is that at some point his house of cards will come crumbling down around him, but to this point he's managed to keep himself just above water, and his time in Taux has been both lucrative and dangerous, a combination that keeps him occupied enough to stay in the city despite his wanderlust always pressing him to move on. Handsome to a fault, and trained to be a stage actor and singer, he uses these skills to his advantage when devising any number of schemes to gain money in a way that requires the least effort or reflection of an actual honest day's work. Toiling away at the same thing every day is anathema to Savino, and he's always looking for the next score, the next conquest, and the next move.

Dethocrates

Class: Fighter Level: 7th

Alignment: Chaotic Good

Patron Deity: St. Erik (Norns Realm)

HP: 49 (AC: 6 Ring + Dex)

Languages: Common

STR	17
DEX	16
CON	15
INT	13
WIS	10
CHA	13

Items:

Troispartan robes,
Short Sword +1,
Dagger +1, Band of
Earth Boon of
Protection +2,
various belt pouches,
short bow, 12
arrows, cloak

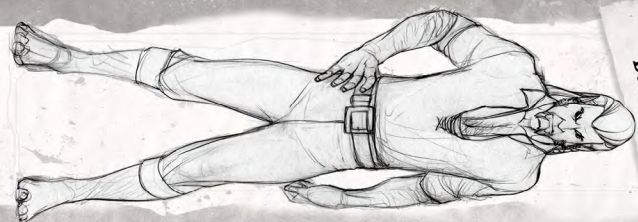
Attack:

Short Sword
Single
Specialize: Hit
+3, Damage +4
Short Bow
Single
Specialize: Hit
+2, Damage +3

Jai-Rak Ability: Hammer the foe add up to 7d6 from elemental pool to any damage (ideally in a single day)



1E



Most citizens of Taux don't think of jai-rak as unobtrusive; they think of them as dull, or brutish. This is how Dethocrates prefers things, as underestimation makes his job easier. Dethocrates—or Dethoc, or Deth, or occasionally 'Thock'—spends his evenings earning money in illegal pursuits, mainly burglary, smuggling, or swindling. He's rarely the mastermind behind a scheme, but he's able to find a way to pull it off. As an archer, Dethoc prefers to be methodical on the job; he likes to find a secluded 'perch' from which he can keep an eye on things, and when the 'perfect shot' appears, to strike. Of course, in a city like Taux, there are few perfect shots, and Dethoc spends much of his time improvising when a plan falls apart. Dethocrates sailed into Taux a decade ago, and immediately made his home within the busy streets of the Black Gate. He's fairly quiet about his earlier life; he'll mention on occasion an Aspara who taught him archery, and when drunk enough, he'll hurt curses at the Wounded Land, but apart from that, he keeps his past in the past and considers Taux to be the only place that matters.

Torrent

Class: Thief Level: 6th

Alignment: Chaotic Neutral

Patron Deity: St. Erik (Norns Realm)

HP: 28 (AC: 6 Ring + Dex)

Languages: Common

STR	11
DEX	16
CON	11
INT	14
WIS	10
CHA	15

Items:

Suit robes, sail boots,
Culottes +2 (light +1),
Leather Ring of Protection
+2, thieves' tools, 12
pouches, thieves' tools,
Red Blood Crystalite
Scorn, Core of Cold,
Wield the 3/6 day,
Saw versus splinter
each day of use or else
T (constitution
permanent)

Attack:

Culottes
(Scimitar)
Hit +2,
Damage +2

Thieving Skills:

PP 60%, OL 32%, R/FT 45%, MS 57%,
HS 42%, HN 20%, CV 0%, RL 35

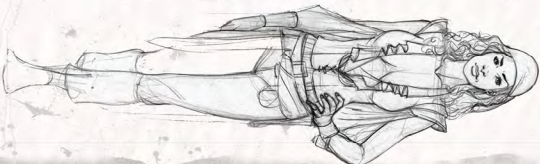
Consair Ability: Body Water Control Saw versus splinter or be stunned (1d4 rounds)



1E



1E



Torrent is a consair, the sea-going, very human-looking peoples attuned to a low affinity for elemental water. She has thick, wavy dark hair and dark eyes, and a heart-shaped face. Her hair is usually contained in some way, either in a bandana or tied back in a ponytail with the same bandana. Not tall—about 5'4", but with a lithe, athletic build and fluid, cat-like grace. She ordinarily wears breeches, soft calf-high leather boots, a shirt with loose sleeves (allowing for ease of movement), and a leather vest or sleeveless doublet. She wears her sword on her left hip. Torrent has a quick temper, but is introspective and wary. She thinks and acts quickly, occasionally with unfortunate haste. She has the rare ability to manipulate water in small volumes, in various ways. Most notably, she can attune herself to the flow of liquids in a person or animal she has touched and cause cramps, heart palpitations, blinding migraines, a sudden need or inability to eliminate body wastes, sweats, or spontaneous orgasm—or failure of same. She used some—but not all—of those abilities in the past at different times, in different ways in order to keep herself fed and safe. She used to run scams with Savino, and isn't above cheating people out of money. She has been a jill-of-many-trades, none of them crafts, unless slicing people with a deadly, slender curved sword is a craft. She's not a duelist, and would never willingly enter into a duel herself. She doesn't like rules. She was most comfortable as a hired sword on the ships of various merchant fleets, where she was also an adept sailor, but has found herself stranded in Taux.



The Cities of Sorcery

Scott Taylor

“Nights on the streets, especially those where walls whisper or ratmen lurk beneath, are never a place for those without purpose. Tonight, amid the gathering shadow, creeping fog, and guttering lamps a lone figure walks with a cool intent. Footfalls echoing on the cobbles and a single flare of a pipe, or was that magic, lighting a face that has seen more than its fair share of death...”

These are the Cities of Sorcery, Valoria and Taux. Two incredible swords and sorcery settings from the minds of masterful storytellers with a vision born from the works of great masters like Leiber, Howard, and Burroughs. Dare to enter these mean streets where gangs rule, mighty trade houses foster endless vendettas, and dark magic lurks behind the brightest of smiles. Join the adventure in two epic trilogies, a half dozen secondary adventures, and various gazetteers, as you blaze a path to glory and riches among some of the most fabled realms in fantasy.



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