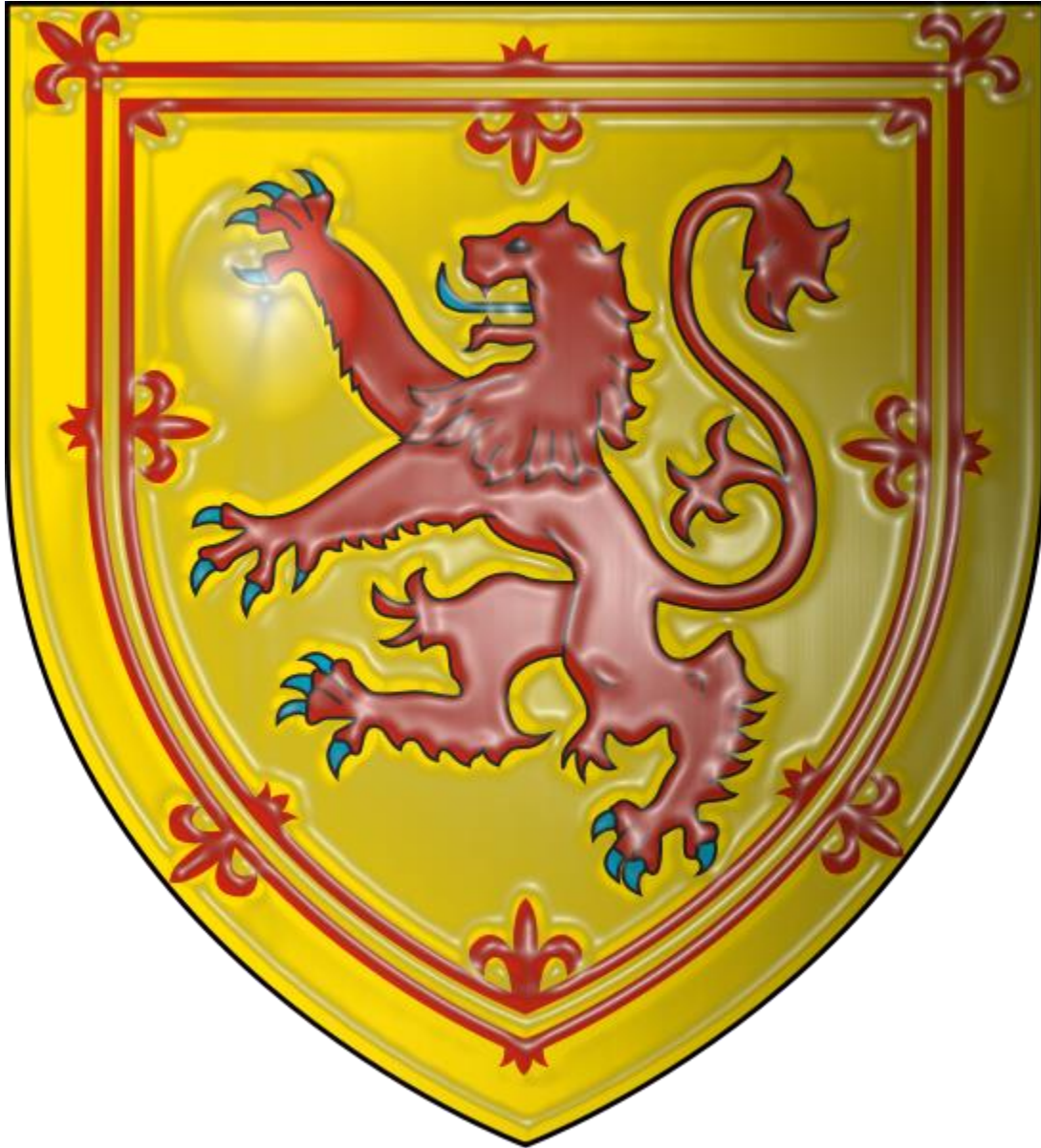


Adventures in Filbar



FA9 - The Festival Experience

The Festival Experience

At some point in time a group of adventurers will stumble into a town/city/settlement setting where they may find a random festival going on. While these celebrations are commonplace for deity, harvest, or general celebration reasons this can be used as a guide for a generic festival. Several standard venues are available at fairs but most notably food vendors will be floating around during all such gatherings. These merchants will usually ply their trades by walking around and "hawking" their wares but can also have a set spot for purchase of their goods.

Other encounters are also available at these fairs and can be mobile or set. Perhaps the fair has a mysterious creature such as a captured Troll, Minotaur, or Unicorn present. These items would certainly be confined to a cage-like atmosphere with guards present. While it is possible that these could be real creatures it can just as likely be that they are something that polymorph could have been used to put them into the current appearance. Adventurers who have seen these creatures will likely not be amused but the standard commoner would be thrilled at being close to these wonderful beasts. Aside from the captured creatures each fair would most likely have an "oddity" section such as a bearded woman, a simple conjurer, and artisans that would do face painting or character portraits. Your imagination is the only boundary for this event and this guide is only a starting point for this side jaunt by your party!

1. Ticket Booths

These areas are small wooden boxes that are locked with a single person inside. These structures serve as banks for the travelling festival as most items in this fair would require tickets in lieu of money. The tickets are then redeemed by the vendors for money thereby allowing the Festival Master his "cut" of the proceeds. This also helps weed out those who would encroach on the festival's proceeds. Armed guards make random stops at the ticket boxes to collect the revenue. Most of the time actors would handle this task until their show was scheduled.

2. Musician's Wagon

Decoratively painted in musical symbols, this wagon is the home to the musicians that help with rigging, ticket sales, and event handling when they are not performing for the crowd. Personal belongings as well as spare materials for routine maintenance can be found within the confines of this wagon.

3. Teamster's Wagon

Usually covered in side boxes this wagon belongs to the teamsters that take care of the wagons and mounts. This conveyance still acts as a residence for the teamsters but it is also their portable workshop. All manner of tools can usually be found here as they men and women have to know leatherworking to blacksmithing methods. This wagon is very important to keeping the festival "on the road".

4. Outhouses

Just coming within range of these structures gives the casual viewer a good idea what they contain. These small tents may or may not have signage noting them to be lavatories for personal business. A bucket or two outside of the tent allow people to clean up after using these temporary latrines. Some may actually contain a seat in order to do their business better others may simply be a hole in the ground with the tent for privacy. They are covered back up when the festival leaves town.

5. Oddities Wagon

Those festival folk that are considered unusual have this wagon. Human (demi-human) oddities are always a big draw at festivals even if a polymorph spell/potion has been used to "assist" in the appearance. Bearded ladies, fire eaters, flexible people, and strongmen are just a few of the people that may travel in this wagon.

6. Treasury

This wagon serves the dual purpose of Festival Master's quarters and treasury. All coinage taken from the booths are removed to this location where it is counted and noted in the book of accounts. At the end of the festival those vendors/participants that have tickets can turn them in here. An unscrupulous Festival Master may hire a thief to skim tickets from the vendors to give himself/herself a bigger cut of the overall take. This wagon will be well decorated and very secure with several guards around it at all times.

7. Guard Wagon

This wagon is fortified with iron bars on it with storage boxes on the sides. This vehicle functions as the guard/prisoner quarters. Those employed as security reside in this wagon which is filled with a small cage and multiple bunks. The cage is usually reserved for drunkards that get out of hand and have to be kept away from the patrons. The locked boxes on the sides contain weapons and armor and each member of the troupe are trained on how to use the weapons in the event the ensemble is attacked. During the festival it is always parked near the treasury wagon (#6). Guards will normally patrol the ticket booths and the festival wagons to deter crime. Inside the festival grounds the performers and vendors keep an eye out for potential problems.

8. Actor's Wagon

Brightly covered with murals of tasteful design, this wagon belongs to the professional actors and artisans of the festival train. With inventive minds these individuals have managed to use the space to the fullest advantage for sleeping, supplies, and costumes. This wagon is decorated inside and out by its crew who have taken great pride in their creative spirit. Textiles and other fabric related items can be found here as well as makeup and props for the performers.

9. Supplies and Kitchen area

These two wagons are the source of food and meal preparation for the festival staff. One and a half of the wagons total space is allocated to food for the performers and staff while half of a wagon is dedicated to holding cooking utensils for food preparation. The cook and assistant are always present here to make sure that the staff is well fed no matter how much they grumble about the quality of the food. The sides of these wagons fold out to allow seating and tables. This area is a frequent spot for birds flying throughout the area looking for a free meal.

10. Wardrobe Wagons

These wagons store and house tents, poles, ropes, riggings and other necessary items used for the stands and stages. When the festival is over everything is stored into these two wagons in a nice tight bundle. While the festival is going on a picket line of mounts and animals is here closed on by a rough rope corral. Present here are farm animals used for butchering or milk/cheese production.

11. Two Stages

Two raised platforms separated by several rows of curtains are present here and are used for musical, artistic, acrobatic, and other forms of entertainment. Seating is usually handled in the grassy area although smart festival goers will have brought seats to the event. Shows put on at this location are free with the expectation that good performances will merit copious tips from satisfied spectators. Most of the festival staff have at least one secondary ability that can be showcased on stage so the people are entertained.

12. Joust Field

One area that always draws a crowd is the Joust Field arena. When the festival finds a suitable spot to setup shop the first priority is the Joust Field. While larger festivals feature human-esque jousts the smaller venues entertain the crowd with a joust-like experience. Some of the events will

include trained monkeys riding pigs in a mock battle that can sometimes go awry. Other events include piglet races where the prize is a tasty cake. The small farm animals are well tuned to that prize and the outcome can be quite entertaining. Some venues will even include a children's donkey race where kids are allowed to race each other on small burros. Eating/drinking vendors are always circulating near this spot as it is populous and centrally located. Events are usually noted by the blast of horns which causes fairgoers to come to the area quickly.

13. Mysterious Dungeon or Thief's Challenge

This area can be one of two entertaining spots. Smaller venues will have a "Mysterious Dungeon" maze for kids and adults to go through where costumed staff will jump out of corners and scare those brave enough to wander the maze. Those who make it through the maze are given a sugary treat for their bravery.

A second option found in larger venues is the Thief's Challenge. This obstacle course is for adults who wish to test their mettle and acrobatic ability. There is a cost to try this "machine" but the best time during the festival will win the prize. This prize can be a trophy, medal, or a cash prize depending on the DM's discretion. The entry fee and reward value is also up to the discretion of the DM. The key to success is to make it through to the end with the best score.

There are ten stations to the challenge and if a DC check is failed a PC/person has to start that leg of the challenge again and receives no points for that leg. If there are three failures total then the person is eliminated from the event entirely.

Scoring is handled by the deviation on DC rolls. If a roll requires a 12 on a statistic and a 12 is rolled the player will get one point and one additional point for every number past that. For every failure the numbers are doubled i.e. a roll of 10 on a needed 12 would cost the player -4 (2 short x 2). The player with a larger number at the end (if they make it) will win the challenge.

14. Tent Row

This section of four combined tents has several areas that the party can visit for games or purchase items. The first section is a corn hole challenge game which is played for small trinkets and is aimed at youth although anyone can play. Three bags to throw and three holes made will equal a prize. The second booth is a game of chance for money (tickets) and is a large roulette wheel. The third section of this long row is a fabric sales area. Everyone needs cloth and this section offers choices from basic wool/cotton fabric to "rare silks" from the borderlands. The final section is a ring toss. Five rings aimed at sticks poking out of the ground. Four rings on sticks will net the winner a candy treat or small toy. Five rings will earn the participant both.

15. Booth Row

While flimsy in appearance this row of wooden booths is quite sturdy. The first section contains a standard 3 card Monte game that is for adults only. The second booth is a dagger throw that is also intended for adults only as the daggers are somewhat sharp. The daggers are thrown at a standard dart board with odds being determined between the PC and the booth operator. This game is played for money (tickets). The third section of the booth row is tossing a pea into a bottle. This game is oriented towards the youth with victors gaining a large lollipop. The final booth is a jewelry and gold chain booth. While the quality is low the standard commoner would not realize that they are getting what they are paying for (low quality = low prices).

16. The Big "L"

The largest row of sites is called the Big "L" and is a collection of tents and booths. At one end of the strip is a booth that sells turkey haunch to hungry festival goers. There are three spice levels but each cost the same. For younger patrons there "chicken haunches". The next area is a fried corn patty in a biscuit form. Buyers can choose from a choice of berries that will be added into the mix to flavor the small cakes. The next area is a canvas booth that sells small metal necklaces and inexpensive rings as well as hinges. Another wooden booth is next and it sells blueberry and cherry pies that are suitable for two people to consume. The fifth booth sells bricka brack for the

average commoner. Items can be marbles, twine, rope, fishing lures, back scratchers, small bottles, and other assorted items including spell components. The final leg of this building is a tent with an unusual aroma that belongs to the fortune teller. While she has no real powers she is quite perceptive and will be able to guess PC history with relative accuracy using vague statements but appear quite believable.

17. Circular Arena

This roped off circle will have three different functions depending on the size of the audience. One option for this area will be a bear wrestling area. The small black bear will be muzzled and have its claws cloaked in large padding but will still be quite a difficult opponent to defeat in melee.

Another option will be an exhibition (staged) fight of two great knights. While the armor and weapons appear real they are thin replicas and make loud noises and sparks when the fighters attack each other. This is more of a staged event but the food/drink vendors hawk their wares to a very cooperative audience.

A third option could be the area being used as a greased pole with a prize at the top of the pole. This challenge would be a DC19 vs. dexterity and DC15 vs. strength in order to win the prize. Both DC would need to be successful to climb to the top and claim the prize. Those wishing to attempt such a challenge would be required to put an entry fee up to offset the costs of the prize. There should be a large line for this challenge with a prize that is desired by the fair goers. One example would be a gold-like crown which looks more expensive than it is. The hawker would give it a significant backstory such as it belonged to a lost queen or similar story.

A final option for this arena would be a kid-friendly greased pig competition with the winner getting a small bag of candy. There could be several heats for the winner. The piglet will be non-threatening although it will squeal loudly as it is chased around the arena.

18. Showpiece Canvas Tent

This long brightly colored tent usually has flags adorning the main poles that can be seen at greater distances indicating that the festival is open for business. Contained within the tent are four stalls for vendors. A spicy cider vendor is usually located here for its central location in the fair. Next to that stall is a salty confection known as a giant pretzel. These items are paired together for obvious reasons. Next to the food vendors are small shops that specialize in kids toys. One is a noise maker booth that makes a loud ratcheting noise that can tend to be annoying to adults. The last booth is a toymaker that also makes trinkets. Each of these stalls are quite large with several points of purchase and tend to be bigger draws than the other stalls within the festival.

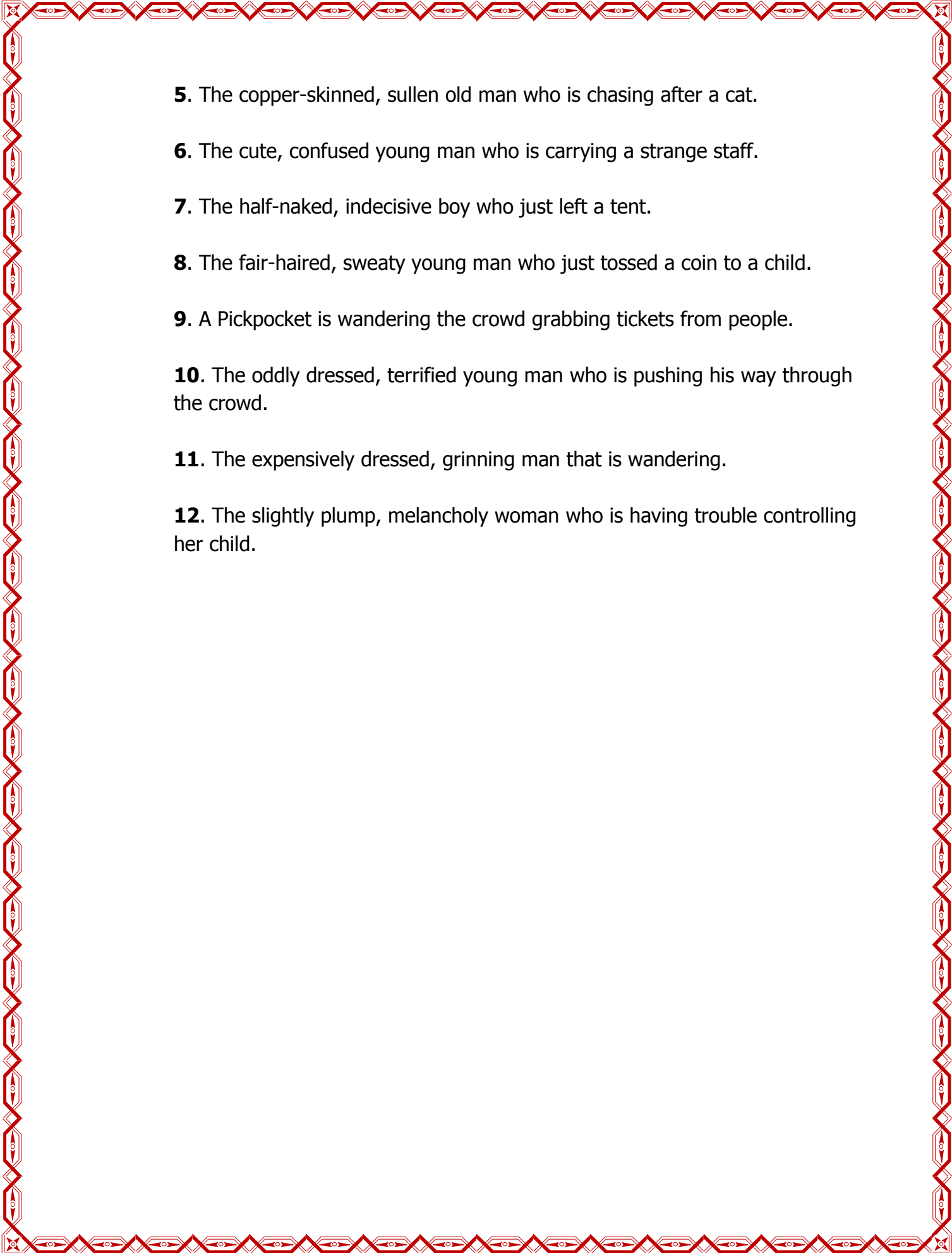
Along with the stationary items listed above there can also be wandering encounters that can be chosen from this grouping:

Wandering merchants: Sugar treats, Turkey Haunch, Fried corn, small pies, Cider

Roaming attractions: Bearded woman, Bendy man, sketch artist, face painter, juggler, fire eater

Crowd Participants: Along with the workers at the festival no celebration would be complete without a crowd. If your PCs are curious about who is present at the festival you may create your own characters or choose some of these to give depth to your event:

1. The willowy, grouchy man who seems to blend into the crowd.
2. The scrawny, exuberant old woman who just left a tent/booth.
3. The freckled, wide-eyed young woman who is feeling her way with a cane.
4. The very tall, bored old woman who is carrying a baby.

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- 5.** The copper-skinned, sullen old man who is chasing after a cat.
 - 6.** The cute, confused young man who is carrying a strange staff.
 - 7.** The half-naked, indecisive boy who just left a tent.
 - 8.** The fair-haired, sweaty young man who just tossed a coin to a child.
 - 9.** A Pickpocket is wandering the crowd grabbing tickets from people.
 - 10.** The oddly dressed, terrified young man who is pushing his way through the crowd.
 - 11.** The expensively dressed, grinning man that is wandering.
 - 12.** The slightly plump, melancholy woman who is having trouble controlling her child.



A festival layout <above>

Sights from a typical festival <next page>

