

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO THE

WORLD'S END



MASQUE & BALL

A HORRIFIC ADVENTURE FOR FIFTH EDITION

WORLD'S END



MASQUE & BALL

BY LUKE PULLEN

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The Horror of Castle Vereg

Some say the world is ending. At the muddy end of a fruitless harvest, famine and plague stalk the land. The armies of darkness gather on the horizon. And tonight is the night of a lunar eclipse, the time when the astrologers predict a world-devouring evil will be born.

For one group of decadent aristocrats, there is clearly only one possible course of action: lock themselves inside a castle, throw a masquerade, get loaded, and dabble in the occult.

For five desperate vagabonds, the masquerade is a chance to set things right—but on a night like this, they may get more than they bargained for...

The World Sheds Its Skin

As plague, war and starvation slowly devour the land, the Countess Amalia, wife of Count Vereg, has gathered around her a cadre of stranded nobles, lost souls and demimondaines. They huddle behind the walls of castle Vereg in a state of siege.

Out of these people, Amalia and her husband Titus have fashioned a cult. Using a cursed sapphire, the Tear of the Deep, the Veregs hope to awaken their god, a monstrous abyssal being known as the Well Singer that lives in the castle's cistern. The Veregs promise their followers that the Singer will protect them from the dreaded Red Lung, a form of pneumonic plague with a 100% fatality rate.

In fact, the Singer is the affliction's source, infecting anyone who comes into contact with its miasma, either in reality or in their dreams. The trick is that the faithful are able to survive the illness, even as it transforms them into monsters.

Tonight, when the world is fated, it is said, to be devoured by beasts, Count Vereg has invited all people of good breeding in the province to a 'world's end masquerade'. Vereg plans to kill his enemies, save his friends, and give life to the god that promises him unlimited power...

Before you Start

- If you're short on time: just print the character sheets (pages 12-16, if players aren't bringing their own), read this introductory section, and be ready to refer to the **Castle Plan**, **Guest List** and **Monster Statistics** when necessary. It will be helpful if you read the character sheets and adventure beforehand, but it isn't essential.
- Be flexible. There is no fixed story here: so long as the players are committed to going to the

masquerade, let them approach the ball in their own ways. Be willing to let them try and succeed at things.

- Don't bother tracking xp. Characters will receive rewards based on their performance in the **Aftermath** section.
- Players are authorised to award themselves Inspiration whenever their character suffers a disadvantage, loses an opportunity, or takes a big risk due to their traits. Your job in this case is to make sure they don't abuse the privilege.
- This adventure is not meant to be balanced, it is meant to be scary. Part of the fear comes from the fact that the PCs are outmatched by some of the threats they face; so don't pull your punches.
- Likewise, don't fudge die rolls. Luck is absolutely a source of suspense.

A Note on Themes

This adventure is meant to be dark. Things look bleak. Most likely, there will be death, and unspeakable horrors, and bloody murders.

That said, there is a fine line between (fun) horror and (unfun) discomfort. Exactly how you set the tone, and how far you take things, is up to your group. The World's End could end up being a black comedy, or a harrowing bloodbath. If any of your players are upset with the way something is going, or someone asks the group to step back from certain events or themes, then you should intervene to steer the game in a different direction. You don't have to do this 'in character' as the DM; if there's a problem, it's often better to call time out and state things openly.

Formatting

Italicised text helps to set the scene. You may wish to read it aloud. ***Bolded italicised text*** refers to other sections of the adventure.

The Masquerade

Once the PCs enter the ball, it will be up to them to pursue their goals and survive the night. Here's what you need to know.

Secrets

The Red Lung

In case someone comes down with the plague, you can refer to this section.

The plague has three stages. The first stage, lasting about a day, has flu-like symptoms. This is the contagious stage.

In the second stage, the victim becomes feverish and short of breath, and gains 1 level of exhaustion for every hour they spend not immersed in water. Immersing for a while removes the exhaustion. This stage lasts 1-2 days.

In the third (larval) stage, the victim becomes unable to breathe and dies. In fact, they can breathe, but only underwater. If submerged, they begin their slow transformation into a monster. After a week living underwater, and another week in a chrysalis, the victim emerges as an **Aberrant Imago**.

Desecrated Ground

In case the Lion uses their *divine sense* ability, be aware that there is a desecrated altar in the **Cabinet** and multiple large aberrations in cocoons in the **Cistern**.

The Clock is Ticking

This adventure is divided into 'hours' to keep things moving at a lively pace. After each hour of fictional time (or real time, whichever comes first), move to the next hour's events.

If the Player Characters are split up, switch the attention to a new character or group after each conversation, encounter, or other convenient break so that each character has a chance to do something.

8pm: Introductions

The Masks

Read the names of the 'masks' (character sheets) aloud, and let each player choose one before handing them out. The players are *not* allowed to see the sheets beforehand; nor are they permitted to reveal or discuss the contents with anyone.

Each Player Character has their own mission: the **Fool** to rescue their beloved (from the **Cistern**); the **Troll** to kill the Count (usually in his **Cabinet**); the **Magpie** and the **Plague Doctor** to take the Count's sapphire ring (on his person); and the **Lion** to prevent the **Summoning** ritual.

Once the players have read their character sheets, it is time to begin.

Setting the Scene

The muddy roads are cloaked in mist; the full moon gleams wanly through a haze. Packs of wild dogs slip through the silent streets of towns and villages.

Titus, Count Verreg, has opened his castle to nobles trying to escape the dreaded Red Lung, a mysterious and fatal affliction. Tonight, he is throwing a masquerade to welcome newcomers before he seals his castle until the plague passes.

The path up the hill to the gatehouse of Verreg Castle is lined with autumn leaves and bloody corpses. Somewhere in the mist behind you, a distant clock strikes 8.

Welcome

Let the PCs approach the gate individually. It is guarded by four armoured **Larval Guards** holding glaives, and a single **Masked Reveller** who does all the talking. All wear smiling masks.

Entering the Gate

The Reveller's job is to examine invitations (read the names of the guests aloud), check guests for the Red Lung (by putting his ear against their chest), and to make them hand over their weapons to the guards.

If PCs want to keep their weapons, they'll have to keep them concealed (using a Sleight-of-Hand check), or convince the guards that there's no point in searching them. Note that the Lion's sword cane and the Fool's marotte should always be let through.

If the guards find something, they confiscate it before letting the character through.

From the Gatehouse, the PCs enter the Courtyard, where the party is already in full swing.

9pm: Mingling

In the courtyard, guests talk and laugh amid candlelight and falling leaves. The music of a chamber ensemble drifts from the castle hall.

Points of Interest

The Courtyard and Inner Hall are open to all guests, and filled with revellers.

In the **Courtyard**, there are:

- Tables laden with wine and fruit.
- Games of chance at a busy table.
- Winding paths and trysts in the gardens.
- Archery contests near the stables.

Up the steps to the **Inner Hall**, there is:

- A dancefloor filled with dancers.
- Chamber musicians at the west end.
- Tables laden with food and drink to the east.
- Past the tables, the door to the Inner Hall is guarded by two **Larval Guards** and a **Masked Reveller**, who informs would-be intruders that the Inner Hall's tables are restricted to the family's closest friends due to lack of space.

Talking to NPCs

You can use the **Guest List** to find NPC characteristics if you need help fleshing out the other guests.

If players are passive or indecisive, draw them into the party by having guests engage them in conversation individually. There are plenty of things to do and people to speak to; let each PC do what they like, then cut to the next character after each major event or conversation.

Once everyone has had a chance to mingle and explore, the clock in the Inner Hall strikes 10.

What NPCs Know

Only the Verregs and their inner circle know the full truth. That said, asking questions might reveal the following information:

- **1:** Guests were seen going down to the cistern undercroft.
- **2:** The Count has been spending time in his study upstairs.
- **3:** The Count's children haven't been seen in weeks.
- **4:** The Count has a remarkable new sapphire ring.
- **5:** The Countess has been behaving strangely.
- **6:** The family's inner circle of friends and retainers all wear a strange broach, like a fanged sun.

10pm: Darkness

At this point, Amalia, Countess Verreg, toasts the courtyard from the balcony of the Inner Hall.

'Tonight, dearest friends, is a most special occasion. We shall see the moon's egg crack. Who knows what dawn will hold? To the dawn!'

The party really kicks into gear now. As before, let each PC have their moment. Whenever things get dull, hit your players with one of these incidents.

- **1:** Someone is gripped by a waking nightmare, screaming for help. When they snap out of it, they start coughing...
- **2:** Some guests start to filter out into the Inner Hall. Most are not permitted to follow.
- **3:** A contest gets out of hand. People bet lives, or other impossible things.
- **4:** Someone doubts a PC is who they say they are.
- **5:** Someone asks a PC to help them find a friend who has gone missing. Perhaps they went into the keep, or the cistern...
- **6:** A servant, looking like they are about to have a nervous breakdown, is being savagely bullied by a guest.

ABERRANT IMAGO

Large Aberration, CR 3 (700 XP)

Disposition

Appearance: a once-human face on a pallid white body covered with crenellations and spines, creeping on six impossibly long, spider-like limbs tipped with grasping hands. A mane of pale tentacles flows from its head as great wings spill from its back like sheets of silk.

Senses: darkvision 60 feet, passive perception 10

Languages: abyssal

Alignment: chaotic evil

Abilities

STR +3, DEX +0, CON +2, INT -2, WIS +0, CHA -2

Speed: 25, climb 25, fly 50

Saving Throws: DEX +2, CON +4

One of Us: the imago will not harm the Count's inner circle of cultists and guards, or anyone wearing his cult talisman.

Spider Climb: can climb difficult surfaces without an ability check.

Defences

AC: 15 (natural armour)

HP: 52

Condition Immunities: charmed, frightened

Actions

Multiattack: the imago makes two attacks. It can only make one attack of each type per turn.

Hands. Reach 10, one target, +5 to hit, 4 (1+3) damage. On hit, target is restrained.

Tentacles. Reach 5, one target, +2 to hit. On hit, target suffers 6 (1d6+3) necrotic damage and must make a DC 12 CON save or contract the second stage Red Lung.

Bite. Reach 5, one target, +5 to hit. On hit, target suffers 7 (1d8+3) slashing damage.

Being an Abomination

Seize your victims and feast on their tender flesh.

When you are sated, drag new victims down to the cistern, or fly away with them to the keep's rooftop.

11pm: The Eclipse

Once the clock strikes 10, Count Verreg, flanked by his wife and cronies, comes out to the balcony of the Inner Hall (overlooking the courtyard) to toast the guests. Most guests are shunted out into the courtyard, glasses in hand, to see the eclipse and hear Verreg's toast. The doors to the **Inner Hall** and the **Cellar Storeroom** with the stair to the cistern are locked by cultists.

Verreg toasts the crowd.

‘Honoured guests. Tonight, the old world may truly be ending. Fear not! We who have touched the god of the lake will be saved. Witness the birth of a new moon!’

At this point, the eclipse happens. People stare in awe. As it passes, the Countess speaks.

*‘And now, dear friends, tonight’s entertainment.’
Two revellers open the hatch on the courtyard well, and something crawls out. Large, pale, with impossibly long limbs, like a spider crab with human hands, billowy wings, and a once-human face with fanged jaws. As the beast begins to feast on the panicking guests, the Veregs and their cronies on the balcony laugh and cheer.*

Have the creature, an **Aberrant Imago**, casually murder someone to show it means business—make actual attack rolls vs. a civilian (10 AC, 4 HP) to demonstrate its power.

Guests are now fleeing and panicking. The ball is very much in the PCs’ court.

Summoning

The Cistern

At this point, the Veregs and their cultists should all head down to the **Cistern**. At the centre of the knee-deep reservoir, a faintly glowing, obelisk-like mass rises almost to the high vaulted roof. It is cold, smooth and slimy to the touch.

This object is the ‘egg’ of an aboleth in the process of substantiating in this reality. Without the Tear of the Deep, it is virtually indestructible—something like a hoard of alchemist’s fire, or a very heavy object, would be needed.

The egg is surrounded by face-down bodies. These bloated, pale men, women and children are stage 3 victims of the **Red Lung**. They are still unless disturbed, at which point they all begin writhing and groaning. They can only breathe underwater. One of these is the Fool’s beloved.

The walls are lined with cocoons of black silk in which plague victims are metamorphosing into **Aberrant Imagines**.

The Ritual

12 cultists (including the Veregs) hold lights and form a ring around the egg while they chant. In the hour before midnight, they will perform a long ritual involving a lot of cultist-type chanting.

At the final moment, the ritual requires two things.

- A blood sacrifice. Preferably a PC or someone they care about. The Count slits their throat, and the Countess leads the cultists in smearing blood over the egg.
- The Tear of the Deep. The count will punch the egg with the sapphire ring, shattering it and birthing the fully-formed and very hungry aboleth.

If the egg is broken without the correct procedure, or the summoning somehow misfires, the aboleth breaks out thrashing and screaming in a torrent of blue liquid, and dies soon after, curing the plague.

A Final Battle?

If the PCs attempt to take on the cultists in the cistern, most of them will be too scared or distracted to put up a fight. The contest is really against **Count Titus** and **Countess Amalia** (page 9), who will use their magic against anyone who gets in their way.

Aftermath

The Young God

If the beast is successfully summoned, very little will be able to stop it (if the PCs manage to kill an aboleth, they deserve a medal). The beast’s miasma will slowly spread, and a horde of Imagines and larval slaves will help it build a kingdom of pure horror in the ashes of the old world—unless someone can stop them.

If the beast is killed, the plague will also disappear with it. Victims will recover within a few weeks, though it will be a difficult process.

If the ritual is not completed but the aboleth remains, it will telepathically set its minions (including the Veregs) to work to retrieve it, and not stop until they have.

Rewards

Character sheet details a reward of 200xp for surviving, and 200xp for fulfilling that character’s mission. If this is just a one-shot, players can think of xp as a kind of score (if they’re competitive like that).

Castle Plan

The basic plan of the castle is very simple: an L-shaped complex with the keep tower above the gate at one end. High curtain walls complete the square, forming a courtyard with a well surrounded by gardens.

Cellar stairs and the gatehouse doors are at ground level; all other buildings are accessed via stairs in the courtyard.

Above-ground rooms have narrow windows (too small for a person to fit through). The living quarters and turrets are usually subdivided by wooden walls or screens.

Unless otherwise stated, areas are dimly lit by a combination of torches, candles and moonlight.

Locked doors can be forced (DC 20) or picked (DC 10).

1: Rooftop Garden

This high balcony is lined with terracotta pots holding all kinds of herbs. The gutter is at head height.

2: Servants' Garrets

No-one is around.

3: Tower Barracks

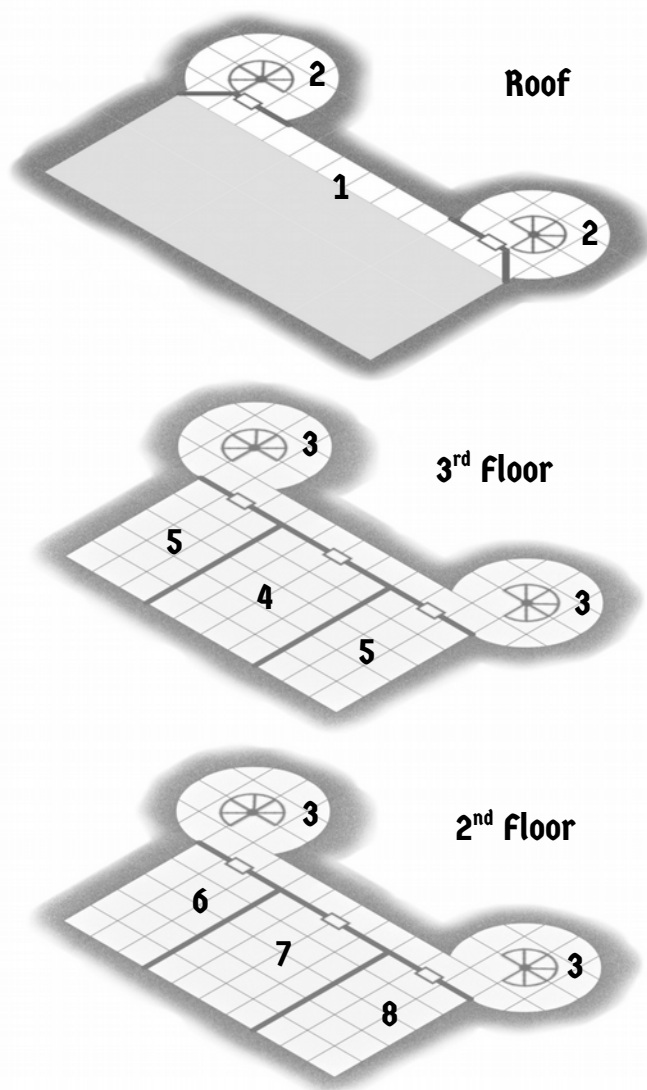
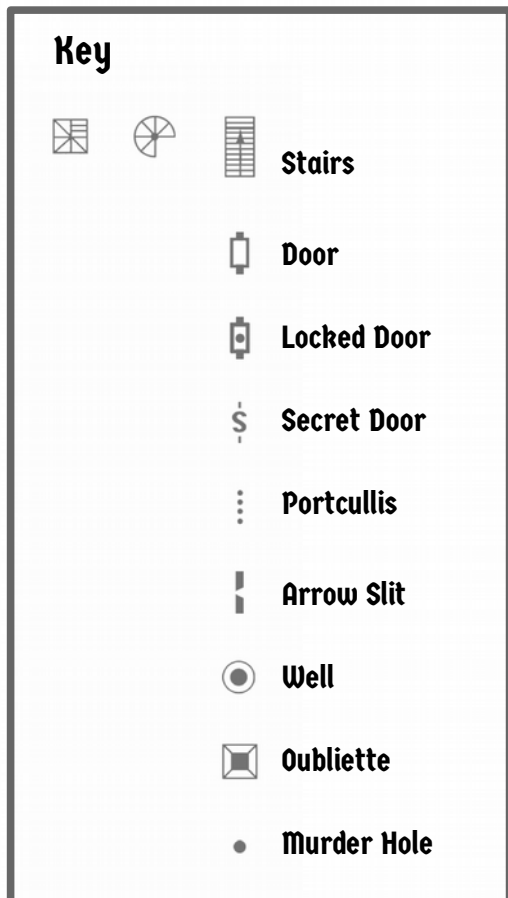
Guards are all on duty.

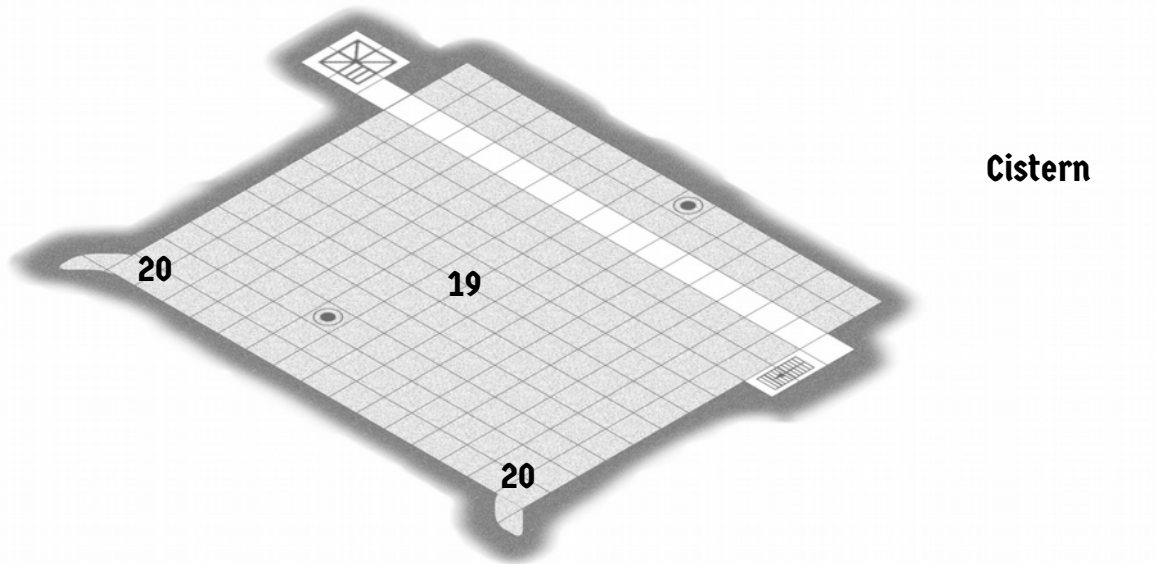
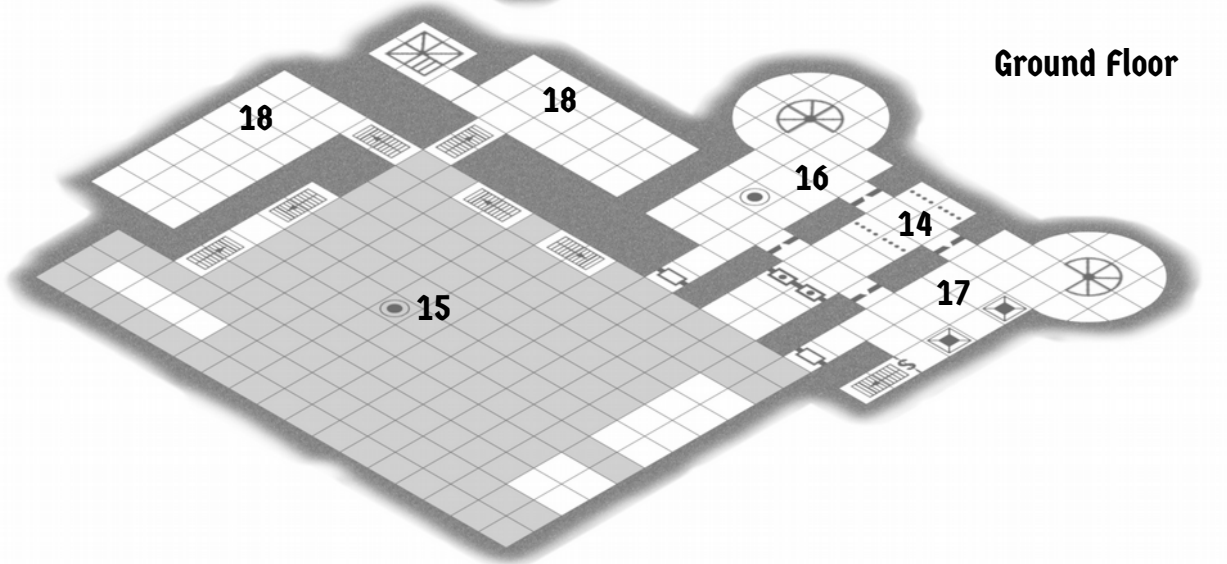
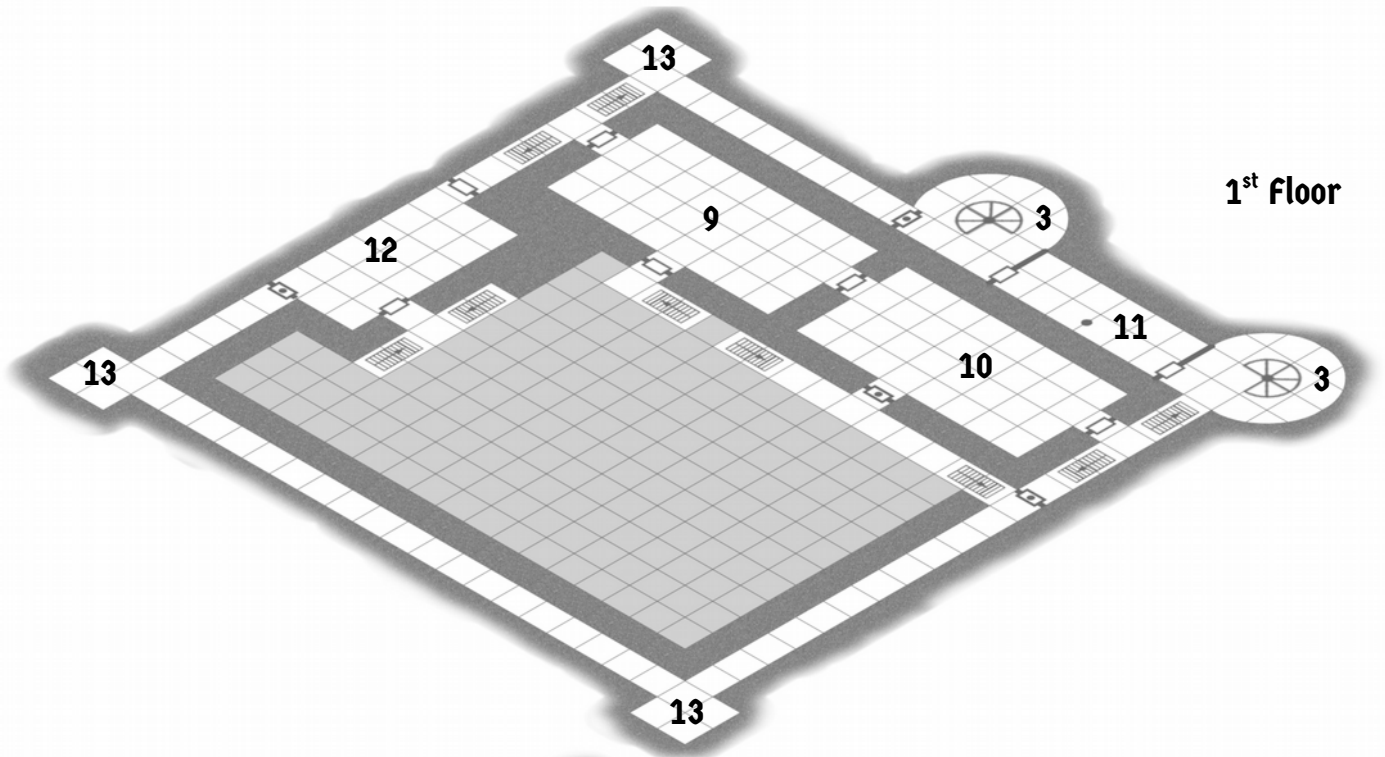
4: Storage Room

Has a large hinged window overlooking the courtyard. Filled with new but abandoned toys and furniture.

5: Living Quarters

These guest quarters are thronged by rowdy aristocrats drinking and entertaining their lovers.





6: Boudoir

- Women's' rooms. Baroness Koranye and Marchioness Ungern drink wine and chat quietly while looking out the window. They have much to say. Intruders are welcomed.
- *I had the strangest dream. There was this egg—this great egg, cold and white like marble, at the bottom of the black lake. And then it was here. Really here! I touched it—it was cold. So cold. The egg can touch you back—did you know that?*

7: Lord's Solar

Private quarters of the Count & his family. Master bedroom holds many fine clothes. A set of keys to the house is in the Count's dresser.

8: Cabinet

- Study & council room. Library against one wall, Count's ornate full plate & longsword against the other. Desecrated altar, smeared with blood, against the far wall.
- Open book on the table. Written in bizarre script. Those who know abyssal can read it. If they try to understand the book, DC 15 Arcana check to know it is a ritual for summoning an aberration, that only the Tear of the Deep can break its shell, and that premature damage to the egg will abort the process.
- Failed Arcana check means the reader is trapped in a nightmare in which they are attacked by giant, pale creature with three eyes, a mouth ringed with cruel fangs, and powerful tentacles. After one minute, the reader wakes up with Second Stage Red Lung.

9: Outer Hall

Main entertainment area. See description under *The Masquerade*.

10: Inner Hall

Exclusive guest area. The Countess entertains her most honoured guests at the high table. The uninvited are not permitted.

11: Gate Room

- All kinds of weapons, plus mail shirts & guards' half plate, and 20 flasks of alchemist's fire.
- Wheels to raise the portcullises, murder hole.

12: Kitchens

The staff are busy and exhausted.

13: Battlements

- The drop from the walls is 40 feet.
- Patrolled by a pair of Larval Guards.

14: Entrance

The gates is barred from the inside, and the portcullises dropped, after the PCs enter the castle.

15: Courtyard.

See description under *The Masquerade*.

16: Gatehouse Workshop

Covered well (to cistern), and armourer's tools and materials.

17: Gatehouse Oubliette

- 2d6 *Masked Revellers* tormenting someone. Not hostile.
- Two oubliettes (bottle cells) beneath trapdoors in the floor, and various instruments of torture.
- A captive knows about the secret door to the cistern stairs.

18: Cellar Storerooms

Filled with all manner of food, oil, lard, and wine. One of the rooms has a stair down to the cistern.

19: Cistern

A huge, dark, vaulted cavern, knee-deep with water, with something strange, massive and faintly glowing at its centre—the aboleth egg, evil and virtually indestructible without the Tear of the Deep.

Bodies of stage-3 plague victims (including the fool's beloved) lie face-down in the water around the obelisk, and cocoons of black silk adorn the walls. See description under *The Summoning*.

There are two well shafts in the ceiling.

The cocoons (containing *Aberrant Imagines*) count as evil aberrations and can be detected by the Lion's *divine sense* ability. Only one of the creatures is mature. It hatches during the eclipse, or if it is disturbed (e.g. by being attacked).

20: River Tunnels

Two narrow tunnels lead out through caves into the river. They are sealed by heavy doors that are barred from the inside (cistern side).

Random Encounters

If the PCs start wandering around the castle, chances are they will run into someone.

Each time an hour passes and/ or the focus shifts to a character who is exploring the castle, roll 1d6 against the following table.

1: An *Aberrant Imago*. If the Imago is outside, it may try to reach through a window or something.

2: A pair of *Larval Guards* on patrol.

3: A frightened servant running an errand.

4: 2d6 **Masked Revellers** looking for a sacrificial victim to take to the cistern.

5: The 'wild hunt'. 3d6 rowdy **Masked Revellers** dressed like elves and satyrs and running through the corridors causing mischief.

6: **Titus, Count Vereg**, going somewhere. Flanked by two **Larval Guards**.

Monster Statistics

ABERRANT IMAGO

Large Aberration, CR 3 (700 XP)

Disposition

Appearance: a once-human face on a pallid white body covered with crenellations and spines, creeping on six impossibly long, spider-like limbs tipped with grasping hands. A mane of pale tentacles flows from its head as vast wings spill from its back like sheets of silk.

Senses: darkvision 60 feet, passive perception 10

Languages: abyssal

Alignment: chaotic evil

Abilities

STR +3, DEX +0, CON +2, INT -2, WIS +0, CHA -2

Speed: 25, climb 25, fly 50

Saving Throws: DEX +2, CON +4

One of Us: the imago will not harm the Count's inner circle of cultists and guards, or anyone wearing his cult talisman.

Spider Climb: can climb difficult surfaces without an ability check.

Defences

AC: 15 (natural armour)

HP: 52

Condition Immunities: charmed, frightened

Actions

Multiattack: the imago makes two attacks. It can only make one attack of each type per turn.

Hands. Reach 10, one target, +5 to hit, 4 (1+3) damage. On hit, target is restrained.

Tentacles. Reach 5, one target, +2 to hit. On hit, target suffers 6 (1d6+3) necrotic damage and must make a DC 12 CON save or contract the second stage Red Lung.

Bite. Reach 5, one target, +5 to hit. On hit, target suffers 7 (1d8+3) slashing damage.

Being an Abomination

Seize your victims and feast on their tender flesh. When you are sated, drag new victims down to the nest.

COUNT TITUS /COUNTESS AMALIA

Human, CR 1/4 (50 XP)

Disposition

Appearance: a tall figure with a hideous, fanged white mask gleaming beneath a sable hood.

Senses: passive perception 10

Languages: common, deep speech

Alignment: neutral evil

Abilities

STR +0, DEX +0, CON +0, INT +1, WIS +0, CHA +2

Speed: 30

Skills: religion +3, arcana +3

Cultist: wears a talisman (an iron circle ringed by thorns on its inner edge) which protects him/her from the symptoms of the Red Lung.

Defences

AC: 11 (leather armour)

HP: 9

Actions

Eldritch Blast. Range 120 feet, +4 to hit, 5 force damage.

Spellcaster. Spell save DC 12, +4 to hit.

Cantrips: Eldritch Blast, Mage Hand

1st Level (one slot): Charm Person, Command

Being the Leader of a Cult

Do whatever is necessary to birth your eldritch lord. Makes enemies doubt themselves, or offer them bargains. If something goes wrong, always blame the victim or a scapegoat. Use your guards as a last resort.

LARVAL GUARD

Human, CR 1/4 (50 XP)

Disposition

Appearance: a human guard in gleaming armour threaded with brass tubes, a full helmet with a smiling bronze mask, and a velvet cloak of darkest blue. When they die, they leak water.

Senses: darkvision 60 feet, passive perception 9

Languages: common, deep speech (cannot speak)

Alignment: lawful evil

Abilities

STR +1, DEX +1, CON +1, INT -1, WIS -1, CHA -1

Speed: 30

Plague Bearer: the guard has the Red Lung. Their skin is bloated and translucent, and they cannot breath air—without the liquid in their armour, they die.

Defences

AC: 16 (half plate)

HP: 11

Condition Immunities: charmed, frightened

Actions

Glaive. Reach 10, one target, +3 to hit, 6 slashing damage.

Shortsword. Reach 5, one target, +3 to hit, 4 piercing damage.

Reactions

First strike. Make a glaive attack against one enemy you see moving into reach.

Being the Slave of an Unspeakable God

Obey your master. Bring intruders to the oubliettes beneath the castle, dead or alive. In combat, stick together and let the enemy advance into your deadly polearms.

MASKED REVELLER

Human, CR 1/8 (25 XP)

Disposition

Appearance: an aristocratic cultist in a mask and costume, wielding a cudgel, with a crazed gleam in their eye.

Senses: passive perception 10

Languages: common

Alignment: neutral evil

Abilities

STR +1, DEX +0, CON +0, INT +0, WIS +0, CHA +0

Speed: 30

Skills: deception +2, insight +2

Intoxicated: the reveller has disadvantage on any checks or saves involving intelligence.

Cultist: the Reveller wears a talisman (an iron circle ringed by thorns on its inner edge) which protects them from the symptoms of the Red Lung.

Defences

AC: 12 (mask & costume)

HP: 13

Actions

Club. Reach 5, one target, +3 to hit, 4 bludgeoning damage.

Being an Upper-Crust Psycho

The end of the world begins tonight! You always get what you want, and tonight you want to see blood.

Guest List

There are two ways to use this list. One is to simply read across from left to right. Each entry is a guest, with a mask, a bit of dialogue to break the ice, plus a name, background, and motivation.

Alternately, you can choose or roll elements (using a d20) as you need them. For example, you might roll a mask to describe the mask a guest is wearing; later, you might need to know more about the guest, roll again for a name or background.

1d20	Mask	Breaking the Ice	Name	Background	Tonight I will...
1	Pale Demon	'So good to see you here, uh...'	Titus	Lord	Birth the god
2	Porcelain skull	'I had the strangest dream...'	Amalia	Lady	Destroy my enemies
3	Unicorn	'Darling, how are you? It's been ages!'	Hekatrine	Noble daughter	Catch up on gossip
4	Cherub	'Have you seen...?'	Vasile	Minor son	Kill my rival
5	Comic	'Do you think we're really safe in here?'	Camelia	Merchant's wife	Dance!
6	Tragic	'So, do you believe in this prophesy business?'	Sorin	Grain Speculator	Show off
7	Dragon	'I have a theory about this affliction...'	Bloss	Physician	Ponder the plague
8	Halfmoon	'This really is the end, isn't it?'	Aurel	Scholar	Find love
9	Silver wolf	'Let's play a game!'	Sorina	Grifter	Find a mark
10	Red demon	'God has abandoned us.'	Foyst	Deacon	Pray for salvation
11	Big-nosed peasant	'You there, bring me a drink, will you?'	Blodmar	Bishop	Destroy the master's enemies
12	Rose	'So, how are you liking the end of the world so far?'	Mira	Lady in waiting	Kiss up, kick down
13	Lotus	'I can't wait to see the eclipse!'	Lacrima	Dame	Indulge dark appetites
14	Dwarf stereotype	'Where's my money?'	Gentian	Knight	Prove my prowess
15	Goat	'Why, aren't you pretty?'	Kazmir	Courtier	Climb the ladder
16	Raven	'I'm not sure what I was thinking coming here.'	Raisa	Poet	Find my muse
17	Sun	'Let's have a drink!'	Amorar	Mercenary	Get rowdy
18	Magenta feathers	'We're all doomed.'	Codrina	Bandit	Win at cards
19	Blue feathers	'There are bodies beneath this castle.'	Eladru	Seneschal	Forget
20	Peacock	'So, what's your secret, then?'	Amalka	Courtesan	Stay out of trouble

The Lion

Mask: Golden Lion

You are resplendent in your outfit of white silks and golden trinkets. You view the world through the jaws of a snarling lion, painted gold. In your hand is your trusty cane; no-one suspects the blade within.

Alias

Sir/Dame Adlestorre Brigante, a minor landowner with a reputation for breaking hearts. You alone know what you did with the real Brigante. It would be better if you kept the truth to yourself.

True Face: Human Paladin

You are a holy warrior in training. Cynical people might call you a fanatical vigilante, but you know that you have been chosen by the Unconquered Sun to destroy evil wherever you find it.

Background: Hunter

You belong to a secret order of hunters, sworn to eradicate black magic, undead, and intruders from other planes.

Feature: Secret Society

You are part of a secret society whose members are scattered around the civilised world. Members of your group are sworn to aid anyone who knows the secret pass phrase. Where appropriate, you can spend Inspiration to find a disguised hunter and ask them a favour.

Inspiration

You begin without Inspiration. Whenever your character does something because of one of the traits listed below, and it causes them to suffer a disadvantage, take a big risk, or lose an opportunity, they gain Inspiration.

Trait

You have impeccable manners.

Ideal

The innocent of this world must be protected from their hidden predators.

Bond

It is your duty to destroy evil wherever you go.

Flaw

When you feel cornered and powerless, you lash out in acts of extreme violence or become paralysed with anxiety.

Equipment

Dagger (worn on belt), talisman of the Unconquered Sun (holy symbol, worn under shirt), sword cane (concealed rapier), stiletto (concealed in hilt of rapier), folding hand

crossbow (concealed in boot), 10x silver bolts (concealed in other boot), leather armour (concealed under costume), and an invitation to tonight's ball.

Mission

Count Vereg is suspected of trafficking with an abomination. Find out what he is plotting and put an end to it.

You will receive 200xp for succeeding in your mission, and 200xp for surviving the night.

Abilities

STR +0 (11)	DEX +3 (16)	CON +2 (14)
INT +1 (13)	WIS -1 (9)	CHA +2 (15)
Speed: 30		

Proficiencies

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Saving throws: WIS, CHA

Passive Perception: 9

Skills:

Arcana +3

Investigation: +3

Persuasion +4

Sleight of Hand +5

Tools: herbalism kit

Weapons: all weapons

Armour: all armour & shields

Languages: common, abyssal, deep speech

Defences

Armour Class: 14 (leather armour)

Max Hit Points: 12

Max Hit Dice: 1d10

Actions

Sword cane attack. +5 to hit, 1d8+3 piercing damage.

Hand crossbow attack. Range 30/120, +5 to hit, 1d6+3 piercing damage.

Dagger attack. +5 to hit, 1d4+3 piercing damage.

Divine Sense (3x per long rest). Detect location and type (undead, fiend, or celestial) of evil creatures within 60 feet. Also, detect consecrated/desecrated places.

Lay on Hands. Heal 5hp or cure poison or disease by laying on hands. Healing pool replenishes after long rest.

The Troll

Mask: Hideous Troll

You hide behind a troll's shaggy face, huge nose and savage tusks and horns.

Alias

Tungol Singshatter, a rich dwarven iron merchant. You can't help but ham it up a little in this role that seems an awful lot like a racial stereotype. Only you can say what happened to the real Tungol Singshatter, but if your host were to learn you are an impostor, it might end very badly for you.

True Face: Sea Dwarf Barbarian

You are a survivor, fighting your way through barroom brawls, enemy soldiers, and hideous monsters with the same dour vigour.

Darkvision

See 60 feet ahead in the dark. Dim becomes bright, dark becomes dim.

Resilience

Poison resistance & advantage against poisoning.

Background: Exile

Your home no longer exists. Your people scattered to the winds after the empires of man burned their homes and enslaved their children. You've survived this long by putting one foot in front of the other and keeping your head down.

Feature: Last of Your Kind

You captivate audiences with impossible tales of the lost island cities of the Sea Dwarves. You may spend Inspiration to put yourself firmly in the spotlight and seize the initiative with a dramatic gesture—even if another character was in the middle of something.

Inspiration

You begin without Inspiration. Whenever your character does something because of one of the traits listed below, and it causes them to suffer a disadvantage, take a big risk, or lose an opportunity, they gain Inspiration.

Trait

You are a recovering alcoholic who has not touched a drink in years.

Ideal

Nobles and kings are robbing filth. One day, you will see them all swing.

Bond

You've had time to learn exactly who profited from the calamity that befell your people. The top name on your list is the host of tonight's party...

Flaw

You are terrified of chains, prisons and cages. You will do *anything* to avoid being put in them, even temporarily.

Equipment

An invitation to tonight's ball, a scimitar, a vial filled with deadly poison (victim suffers immediate exhaustion, and must make DC10 CON save or die after every hour for 1d6 hours), and 2 'tiger's claw' spiked brass knuckles concealed in your sleeves. Your claws and poison are easy to conceal, and you gain advantage when trying to hide them.

Mission

Find and kill Count Verreg.

You will receive 200xp for succeeding in your mission, and 200xp for surviving the night.

Abilities

STR +3 (17)	DEX +1 (12)	CON +3 (16)
INT +0 (10)	WIS +1 (13)	CHA -1 (8)
Speed: 25		

Proficiencies

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Saving throws: STR, CON

Passive Perception: 13

Skills:

Insight +3

Perception: +3

Survival +3

Athletics +4

Tools: deck of cards, carpenter's tools

Weapons: all weapons

Armour: light & medium armour, shields

Languages: common, dwarven

Defences

Armour Class: 14 (unarmoured defence)

Max Hit Points: 15

Max Hit Dice: 1d12

Actions

Tiger's claw attack. +5 to attack, 1d4+3 piercing damage.

Bonus Actions

Offhand tiger's claw attack. +3 to attack, 1d4+3 piercing damage.

Rage. Gain +2 to damage, resistance to bludgeoning, piercing and slashing, and advantage on STR checks and saves. Lasts 1 minute. Can use 2 times per long rest.

The Magpie

Mask: Pied Bird

Your beautiful, beaked mask is ringed by white and black feathers. Your elegant, bejewelled outfit matches perfectly.

Alias

Dimber Sooth, heir to extensive lands and titles. You alone, a penniless thief, know where Lord Sooth's heir really is. If anyone were to find out you are an impostor, it might end very badly for you...

True Face: Human Rogue

You are a thief and con artist, and you're not going home empty handed. Not only is this party full of rich idiots, but the manor is home to the Tear of the Deep, a giant sapphire of darkest blue. This time, your luck is bound to change.

Thieves' Cant

You know the secret language and signs of thieves.

Sneak Attack

Once per turn, deal an extra 1d6 damage if you are attacking with advantage.

Expertise

Skills marked with an asterisk receive a double proficiency bonus (already included).

Background: Chancer

You're not the greatest thief in the world, you don't have powerful underworld connections, and you're not a blue-blooded thrill seeker. What you are is someone who saw their parents ground to dust working for the great and the good of the world, and has no intention of doing the same.

Feature: No Good

You have a knack for finding reliable fences, impressionable naifs, and sturdy drinking pals wherever you go. In a social situation, spend Inspiration to find just the person you're looking for.

Inspiration

You begin without Inspiration. Whenever your character does something because of one of the traits listed below, and it causes them to suffer a disadvantage, take a big risk, or lose an opportunity, they gain Inspiration.

Trait

You like the finer things in life: fine food, heady drink, pretty trinkets, and everything else you were denied as a child.

Ideal

Why shouldn't you live off the fat of the land, amid all this misbegotten wealth?

Bond

You owe a lot of people—money, apologies, your head... If you don't get a big score soon, you will be in serious trouble.

Flaw

When your deceptions are uncovered, you panic and keep lying.

Equipment

A scimitar, 2 daggers (concealed in sleeves), leather armour (concealed under costume), thieves' tools (concealed in boot), and an invitation to tonight's ball.

Mission

Steal the Tear of the Deep so you can get paid. It must be in the manor house somewhere.

You will receive 200xp for succeeding in your mission, and 200xp for surviving the night.

Abilities

STR -1 (9)	DEX +3 (16)	CON +0 (11)
INT +1 (13)	WIS +2 (14)	CHA +2 (15)
Speed: 30		

Proficiencies

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Saving throws: DEX, INT

Passive Perception: 14

Skills:

Deception +6*

Acrobatics: +5

Insight +4

Stealth +5

Sleight of Hand +7*

Perception +4

Performance +4

Tools: thieves' tools

Weapons: simple weapons, hand crossbows, longswords, rapiers, shortswords

Armour: light armour

Languages: common, thieves' cant

Defences

Armour Class: 14 (leather armour)

Max Hit Points: 8

Max Hit Dice: 1d8

Actions

Dagger attack. +4 to attack, 1d4+2 piercing damage.

Bonus Actions

Offhand Dagger attack. +2 to attack, 1d4+2 piercing damage.

The Plague Doctor

Mask: Grim Physician

You wear the beaked mask of a plague doctor. Your body is draped in black robes and a black cloak. You wear a black hat, and white gloves.

Alias

Lapis Mollsettler, a student of theology. What actually happened to poor Lapis, only you know. If anyone were to learn your plague doctor outfit is not a costume, things might go very badly.

True Face: Human Warlock

You have made a pact with an otherworldly being in exchange for powers beyond the comprehension of most mortals.

Otherworldly Patron

You serve an ineffable god of absolute darkness, The Black Sun. 'Good' and 'evil' are not words that mean anything to such a creature.

Spells

You know the following spells. **Cantrips:** Eldritch Blast, Mage Hand. **1st Level:** Charm Person, Protection from Evil and Good.

Spell Slot

You have 1 spell slot. When you cast a spell other than a cantrip, you must use up the spell slot. It is replenished when you rest for an hour or more.

Background: Witch

You belong to the Coven of the Black Sun, a hidden sect of magicians sworn to regulate black magic by destroying rogue spellcasters, preventing demonic incursions, and keeping dangerous knowledge out of the hands of amateurs (and, it is true, in your own hands instead).

Feature: Coven

Your coven's familiars spy and carry news from across the world on midnight wings and paws. You can spend your Inspiration to be visited by a familiar that tells you a secret about someone: ask the DM a question about a character, and they must answer truthfully.

Inspiration

You begin without Inspiration. Whenever your character does something because of one of the traits listed below, and it causes them to suffer a disadvantage, take a big risk, or lose an opportunity, they gain Inspiration.

Trait

You hate poseurs. Magic is not a game, it is a grave responsibility.

Ideal

It is your coven's duty to protect people from otherworldly intruders.

Bond

Your coven is your family.

Flaw

When you feel helpless, you babble occult nonsense and perform strange actions that make no sense to others.

Equipment

Black Sun talisman (spell focus), staff, satchel with healing kit and spell components, and an invitation to tonight's ball.

Mission

The Count is a thief. His thugs stole the Tear of the Deep, a priceless, magically potent sapphire of deepest blue that belongs to the coven. Either bring it back, or make sure no one can use its power.

You will receive 200xp for succeeding in your mission, and 200xp for surviving the night.

Abilities

STR -1 (9)	DEX +1 (13)	CON +2 (15)
INT +2 (14)	WIS +0 (11)	CHA +3 (16)
Speed: 30		

Proficiencies

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Saving throws: WIS, CHA

Passive Perception: 10

Skills:

Arcana +4

Medicine +2

Intimidation: +5

Deception +5

Tools: herbalism kit

Weapons: simple weapons

Armour: light armour

Languages: common

Defences

Armour Class: 12 (heavy costume)

Max Hit Points: 10

Max Hit Dice: 1d8

Actions

Eldritch Blast. Range 120 feet, +5 to hit, 1d10 force damage.

Staff. +2 to hit, 1d8 damage.

Magic

Spell slots: 1

Spell save DC: 8

The Fool

Mask: Smiling Harlequin

You wear a jester's motley, with a mask of comedy, stupid hat, and a marotte (fool's sceptre) topped with a heavy brass head wearing a mask of tragedy.

Alias

Sogrimme Annescrept, a human courtier of the highest circles, stranded in this provincial hellhole while travelling. If your hosts were to learn you are an impostor, it would mean your death.

True Face: Hill Elf Ranger

You hail from an isolated hilltop enclave. You were trained to manage the surrounding forest and protect your people from intruders.

Favoured Enemy

You've seen things most people wouldn't believe. You have advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks when tracking aberrations, and to Intelligence checks to remember things about them. You understand their horrid Deep Speech.

Natural Explorer

You are at home in all kinds of forests, and receive a number of benefits when travelling through them.

Darkvision

See 60 feet ahead in the dark. Dim becomes bright, dark becomes dim.

The First Song

You can sing a chant that prevents and neutralises magic that effects the mind (e.g. sleep, charm) within 30 feet. The song requires concentration.

Background: Drifter

You are a five-hundred-year-old wanderer, scion of a dwindling people, warrior, poet and recluse. You've seen it all, lost everything, forgotten half of that, and long tired of this fickle world—or you had, until you went and fell in love.

Feature: Old Hand

Sometimes you just *know* how something works, or where it will be. You can spend Inspiration to make the DM truthfully answer a question about a place, plant or substance.

Inspiration

You begin without Inspiration. Whenever your character does something because of one of the traits listed below, and it causes them to suffer a disadvantage or lose an opportunity, they gain Inspiration.

Trait

You haven't survived this long without being cautious and aloof.

Ideal

What little beauty is left in this world, must be preserved, even if it does all rot in the end.

Bond

The count has your beloved. You're not sure where, but it's somewhere within the castle. *Nothing* will stop you from saving them.

Flaw

When faced by something you cannot kill, you flee. If you cannot flee, you panic.

Equipment

Heavy brass marotte, flute, 3 juggling balls filled with alchemist's fire, and an invitation to tonight's ball.

Mission

Find your lover and get them out alive.

You will receive 200xp for succeeding in your mission, and 200xp for surviving the night.

Abilities

STR +2 (15)	DEX +2 (14)	CON +2 (14)
INT -1 (8)	WIS +2 (14)	CHA +0 (10)
Speed: 30		

Proficiencies

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Saving throws: STR, DEX

Passive Perception: 14

Skills:

History: +1

Insight: +4

Nature: +1

Perception: +4

Performance: +2

Stealth: +4

Survival: +4

Tools: Elvish flute

Weapons: all weapons

Armour: light armour

Languages: common, elven

Defences

Armour Class: 13 (leather armour)

Max Hit Points: 12

Max Hit Dice: 1d10

Actions

Marotte attack. +4 to hit, 1d6+2 bludgeoning damage.

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