

A NIGHT OF MASKS AND MONSTERS

BY ASHLEY WARREN

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AND SOMETIMES, IT HAS CLAWS.

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A LEVEL 3 ADVENTURE FOR THREE TO SIX PLAYERS

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A Requiem of Wings PART ONE

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ABOUT THE ADVENTURE

SUMMARY

In the city of Ibrido, locals enjoy a life of splendor and frivolity. Every week, a lavish party is held at the Castel di Maschera, hosted by the Marquis di Maschera, Prospero, who has a reputation for being a generous party-thrasher and avid patron of the arts. Receiving an invitation to a Marquis di Maschera party is coveted, and those who enter his social circle never leave it.

But the Castel di Maschera holds many secrets. When a strange, hybrid creature — half bird, half man — is found brutally murdered in Ibrido's city square, tattooed with the Marquis's signature symbol of two masks, rumors have begun to spread throughout Ibrido that something more sinister may be occurring.

Did a Marquis di Maschera party simply get out of hand, or does a real danger threaten the inhabitants of Ibrido?

ADVENTURE HOOK

The characters, as a thanks for completing a previous quest, are given an all-expenses-paid vacation to the luxurious city of Ibrido. Having received word of their visit, the Marquis di Maschera has sent them an invitation to a party at the Castel di Maschera. (See *Invitation*, pg. 21, for printout.) There is a port to Ibrido in the docks of Waterdeep.

The characters are transported by gondola across a deep blue lagoon, and deposited at the Ibrido city square. For an extra moody and romantic scene, have the characters arrive at sunset.

NOTE FOR DMS

NPCs use the **commoner** stats unless otherwise stated. Statistics not included in the module can be found in the *Monster Manual*. This adventure is designed for an **APL of 3** and works best for groups with three to six players. Scalable difficulty is provided with the boss battle.

MOOD

This story is a classic masquerade-meets-murder-mystery-party with a twist. Inspired by the mercurial beauty of Venice, this is an atmospheric adventure enhanced by in-person details such as music, candlelight, and perhaps a beverage or two to enjoy.

WHERE IS IBRIDO?

Ibrido is an Amnian colony in the void of Emberez, which is currently embroiled in an ongoing war between angels and demons — although on the surface, life appears to proceed as usual. For more information on Emberez, read *The War of Emberez* supplement provided with this module. **This story is part of a larger narrative; however, you are of course welcome to disregard this lore entirely and adapt the location as you see fit!**

Ibrido is a city comprised of many islands connected via canals. Because it serves as a trading post for Amn and all of Emberez, its inhabitants are extraordinarily wealthy.

This adventure is relegated to a specific area in Ibrido. Once the characters arrive on Ibrido's main island, they will not be able to leave until the main quest is complete.

A CLASSIC WAR BETWEEN ANGELS AND DEMONS

The characters will not know until the conclusion of the game that they have just participated in one battle in a much larger war. For centuries, an order of celestials known as the Aureum have fought to defeat the Malum Animus: a collective of demons, hybrid creatures, and cursed werewolf.

Marquis Prospero di Maschera is a pseudonym for a **cambion** named **Akro Dimiryan**, who can alter his appearance at will. After losing a battle against the Aureum, Akro was forced to remain for centuries in the Nine Hells, where cambion are born.

Akro eventually found his way out of the Hells via the portal in Ravukoi, the capital of East Emberez and the seat of the Malum Animus. Disguising himself as an Ibridian, he began building an army of chimera, searching for more monsters to recruit to his cause. The best subjects for his experiments are adventurers, which he turns into hybrid creatures to “enhance” their abilities.

In attendance at Akro's party is **Kara Krasandel**, a **deva** and high-ranking commander of the Aureum. If she goes after Akro in Emberez, this could instigate a devastating battle that would destroy the all of Emberez and eventually spill into the Material Plane. As such, Kara hopes a group of heroes will defeat Akro in Ibrido so his soul will be transported back to the Nine Hells, and the Aureum can defeat him there once and for all.



PART 1

ARRIVAL IN IBRIDO

The entirety of Ibrido is divided up by canals, and bridges connect the islands to one another. The gondola docks at Ibrido's city square. **Read or paraphrase the following:**

You are taken to a lovely city square, paved with cobblestone. The perimeter is lined with buildings painted in jewel tones. Each building varies in structure — some have arched windows and doorways; others have rectangular windows filled with stained glass — but the effect is altogether very pleasing. In the evening, the streetlamps are lit, casting a warm glow over the city.

There are a few notable details in the square:

- ***A makeshift memorial commemorates the recent death of a strange creature.*** The memorial includes a cluster of lit candles; several long, blue feathers; and a wooden amulet, onto which a symbol of an eye has been carved. This is the symbol of the Aureum. A successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Religion)** check suggests that it might be some sort of holy symbol, but unless characters have somehow visited Ibrido before, they won't be familiar with the Aureum.
- ***A large, stone bridge leads to the front entrance of Castel di Maschera.*** A canal runs underneath the bridge. The bridge is 20 ft wide and 30 ft long.
- ***A tall clock tower looms over the square.*** It is a very beautiful clock, depicting the phases of the moon and astronomical symbols alongside the time. It chimes every 30 minutes, and the sound is heard throughout Ibrido.
- ***An human woman named Kara Krasandel lingers near the base of the stairs.*** She has long, black hair bound in an intricate braid, and she wears a very beautiful blue and gold gown. Atop her head is a golden dragon mask; it does not yet cover her face. If they do not approach her first, Kara greets the characters in the square. She has information about the memorial.

The Murder of a Strange Creature

"It happened last week, a day after the Marquis's last party: the body of a strange creature was found in the square. He was half human, half bird; large blue wings sprouted from his back, and his arms and shoulders were covered with feathers. We think he was murdered because his wings were broken and half-torn from his back, and his bones were broken as if he had fallen from the sky. Nothing like this has ever occurred in Ibrido. Most of the citizens regard it as a fluke. Ibrido receives many visitors, after all."

— Kara Krasandel

ROLEPLAYING KARA

Kara is warm and genuine, but hides her secret well. She is there with an agenda. Because of her ties to the Aureum, Kara does not tell the characters the truth about herself and maintains a disguise to mask her true nature as a **deva**. She has dedicated her life to protecting the residents of Emberez.

Kara claims to have lived in Ibrido her whole life, and has attended Marquis's parties before. She expresses worry about the murder, and asks the characters to be on alert when they attend the party. Much of this is true and passes scrutiny, but a successful **DC 16 Wisdom (Insight)** check catches on to a small lie among the truth: Kara is from Aurea, another city in Emberez that serves as the seat of the Aureum, and is not native to Ibrido. She has, however, spent significant time in the city and knows much about it.

A successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** check notes strange markings on Kara's hands — the symbol of an eye is tattooed onto each palm. If asked, Kara says that a tattoo artist who frequently attends parties at the Castel di Maschera did them for her. Knowing that the characters are likely outsiders and not familiar with Ibridian customs, she says that eyes are wards against evil. This is also true, if understated: the tattoos serve as wards against demons and fiends.



KARA'S TATTOO

MAP OF IBRIDO CITY SQUARE



- A:** The makeshift memorial.
- B:** The tall clock tower.
- C:** The stone bridge to the castle.



PART 2

THE CASTEL DI MASCHERA

When the characters proceed across the bridge, they see a queue of people waiting to get into the party, all dressed in finery and chatting amongst themselves.

APPROACHING THE DOOR

As the characters wait in line, a tall woman wearing a very detailed black cat mask waves the characters to the front. Her name is **Sewing Needle**. A **DC 11 Wisdom (Perception) check** draws attention to her paws; Sewing Needle is a Tabaxi. She asks to see the invitation for entrance to the party.

In addition, Sewing Needle offers each character a mask to wear for the duration of the party. If asked, Sewing Needle says that Marquis fears that plague will strike Ibrido again; several years ago, the sickness wiped out a significant portion of the population. Because of this, the Marquis insists that everyone wear masks. Plus, she says, it adds to the atmosphere.

THE MASKS

Be sure to read *The Masks* on pg. 22 for information on the masks. You may choose to administer the masks randomly by having the characters draw one of the nine cards, or allow the characters to select the mask.

Characters can detect magic on the masks and the masks *are* certainly magical; however, they have to attune to the masks before learning the effects. It is recommended to play this out in real-time; you can choose to wait for 30 minutes to an hour during the session before sharing the effects with them. This is, of course, entirely up to you, but allows the characters time to explore the party and the castle.

DESCRIBING THE PARTY

It's all about the atmosphere! The Castel di Maschera is a beautiful, old castle, and the party atmosphere is divine. Nearly one hundred people are in attendance, all wearing masks. **Read or paraphrase the following:**

It is dusk, and the castle is candlelit within; chandeliers emit a golden glow over the festivities. Metallic accessories glint in its rays. A feeble remaining daylight filters in through the stained glass windows, casting colorful patterns onto the high stone walls.

Once the characters enter the castle, this light will only last for another half hour before night falls over the city.

In the main hall, there is much to see and do. Many performances are happening simultaneously.

- **A gnome bard**, wearing a mask adorned with finch feathers, enthusiastically plays a fiddle;
- **A trio of belly dancers**, each wearing an owl mask, move in syncopation;
- **A snake charmer**, an elven man wearing a serpent mask, sits cross-legged on the floor before his snake basket;
- **A drow fortune teller**, donning a scorpion mask, sits behind a low, velvet-covered table.

There is also plenty of food. The back wall is lined with long rectangular tables covered in a variety of offerings: goblets of wine, cakes and cookies, plaited black breads, and a roast pig with an apple in its mouth. The festivities are an assault on the senses, and it is very overwhelming.

THROWING PUNCHES WITH PICCOLO

A chance encounter may kick off a round of combat. A tiny halfling man named Piccolo Troppovino, wearing a corgi mask, has crashed the party. He collides with a character selected at random. Angry and growling, the halfling attacks the character by throwing a punch.

“How dare you trod — hyuk! — on Piccolo! Ruff!”
— *Piccolo Troppovino*

Piccolo’s stats are on pg. 18. The encounter catches the attention of the Marquis himself, Prospero, who greets the characters after the encounter. If the characters kill Piccolo, Prospero is displeased by the disruption and tells the characters that he used to hire Piccolo as a guard for his parties. The abundance of accessible wine was too much for Piccolo, and over time he grew increasingly more unstable. However, Prospero does not blame the characters for retaliating. A **DC 18 Wisdom (Insight)** check suggests that Prospero’s claim is not entirely truthful. The truth is that the qualities of Piccolo’s mask took effect more quickly than Prospero intended, thanks to Piccolo’s consumption of wine, turning the halfling feral. If the characters subdue Piccolo or attempt to negotiate, Prospero has Piccolo removed from the party and enthusiastically thanks the characters for their efforts.

MEETING THE MARQUIS

Regardless of the fight’s outcome, Prospero is pleased to meet the characters. He is very charismatic and warm and knows much about the characters. (You can infuse Prospero’s greeting with some tidbits from the player’s character sheets or from their prior adventures.)

If asked about the dead bird-man, Prospero responds that he was very saddened by the event, but denies that anything occurred at the party. It is very difficult for a level 3 character to see through this lie, but a **DC 20 Wisdom (Insight)** check hints that Prospero is not telling the whole story.

Prospero says the tattoo of the two masks is indeed his symbol, but was likely a party gift from the tattoo artist, who attends each party. After conversing with the characters for a minute or two, he excuses himself to attend to other guests and pulls the mask over his face.

ROLEPLAYING PROSPERO

Prospero’s real identity is Akro, a cambion and Demon Prince of the Malum Animus. Because adventurers frequently travel to Ibrido on vacation, Akro saw this as an opportunity to recruit them to his cause. The masquerades are a cover that enables him to transform people into hybrid beasts to serve in his army.

To partygoers, Prospero appears to be a tall elven man with perfectly coiffed black hair. His goatee is becomingly streaked with gray, and he wears opulent red robes. Prospero has a mask depicting three faces with three different expressions: horror, joy, and sadness. Like Kara, he wears his mask propped up on the top of his head while he speaks with attendees. Akro is incredibly charismatic and should pass Charisma checks with advantage.





PART 3

SECRETS IN THE CASTLE

After the encounter with Piccolo, characters can determine what to do next. They may choose to explore the castle, partake in games or activities, eat and imbibe, or converse with NPCs. (A list of random NPC guests can be found on pg. 17. Be prepared to ad lib conversations.) After thirty minutes, or whenever you determine, the characters hear the bell chime from the nearby bell tower. Each character has attuned to their mask at this point and can flip their card over and learn about the mask's qualities. If they try to remove the mask, they learn at this point that their masks cannot be removed. If they ask an NPC, the NPC is unconcerned and says that the masks ensure that they won't be infected by the plague.

AREAS OF THE CASTLE

See *Appendix 3A. Map. The Castel di Maschera*, pg. 19.

C1. MAIN HALL

The main hall of the castle is a large, open space, about 100 feet wide. In the center, a large staircase leads to the upstairs floor. There is plenty of space to mingle and entertain, and the floor is covered in various rich carpets that serve as makeshift stages for performers. For the full list of performers, see *Party Performers*, pg. 17.

The back walls are lined with tables of food — breads, cakes, and a roasted pig — and three large casks of wine.

The Wine

The wine is tart and delectable — and poisoned with a sleeping draught that knocks a person out for eight hours. The poison can be detected with a **DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine)** check. A *Purify Food and Drink* spell easily purifies a whole cask. If a character consumes the wine, it takes affect after 30 minutes in-game. The effects can be removed with a *potion of healing* (any level), or a healing, restoration, or remove curse spell of any level.

C2. STAIRCASE TO THE KITCHENS

A spiral staircase leads into the kitchens and basement of the castle. This is also where the **secret laboratory** is located, but there is no entrance to it from the kitchens.

C3. STAIRCASE AND BALCONY

A large staircase leads to the second floor balcony, which overlooks the main hall below.

C4. CENTER ROOM — TATTOO ARTIST

A table and two stools have been set up in the center of the room for the tattoo artist. There are a few dark red armchairs also set up in the room for additional seating. The tattoo artist is Zula Ozu, a tiefling with crimson skin and large black ram horns. (See *Appendix I*, pg. 14.) She wears a simple bejeweled mask. When the characters enter, she is administering a tattoo to a random NPC. It is not a tattoo of Prospero's masks, so you can choose a design that fits the NPC.

Zula can be a source of information about Kara's eye symbol. She has never tattooed Prospero's symbol, although she is familiar with it. She is earnest, which is confirmed with a **DC 10 Intelligence (Insight) check**. Despite what characters may assume, Zula is simply an artist. She is happy to administer tattoos for free.

The War of Wings

"The symbol of the eye is the symbol of the Aureum: celestial creatures from the heavenly realms. They are mortal enemies of the demons the call the Malum Animus. The angels and demons have been waging war for centuries. We Ibridians have lived for many years in the shadow of their conflict."

— Zula Ozu

C5. FAR RIGHT ROOM — MARQUIS'S CUP

This spacious room contains only wall decorations — tapestries and curtains — and a large area rug, but no furniture. Those in this room sit on the floor in a circle, playing a game of Marquis's Cup.

The characters see the following guests (descriptions are on pg. 15):

- A halfling wearing a mouse mask
- A dragonborn wearing a rabbit mask
- A dwarf wearing a crab mask
- A half-elf wearing a moon mask
- An elf wearing a crocodile mask
- A human wearing a skull mask

Each participant has a goblet in front of them. The characters are invited to join the game.

PLAYING MARQUIS'S CUP

See the *Marquis's Cup Rules* on pg. 16. You may choose to use a real deck of cards, or have characters roll a D20. Numbers 1-13 correspond with the cards, beginning at 1 for Ace, and 13 for King.

If all of the characters choose to participate in Marquis's Cup and prepare to consume wine, Eya Harisa, the half-elf donning the moon mask, nudges the closest character and shakes her head in warning. If the characters speak further with Eya, she tells them that she detects something strange about the wine, but doesn't have the ability to purify it. A **DC14 Wisdom (Perception) check** draws the character's attention to Eya's silver amulet, from which the symbol of an eye hangs (the symbol of the Aureum). A **DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check** convinces Eya to share that she is a member of the Aureum and has attended the party to investigate Prospero, whom the Aureum suspects is a member of the Malum Animus in disguise.

If fewer than half of the characters participate in the game, Eya does not give the warning about the wine. However, characters can still converse with her and ask her questions.

A Risk Worth Taking?

Participating in the drinking game puts the characters at risk for succumbing to the sleeping draught, if they are unable to cure it. However, it also presents the chance to earn the trust of intoxicated party members and learn more about the recent murder. All of the NPCs in this room speak freely about their fears and suspicions.

C6. PROSPERO'S ROOM

The door to Prospero's chamber is locked, but can be lockpicked, magicked or forced open. A **DC 12 Stealth (Sleight of Hand)** successfully lockpicks it open; a **DC 15 Strength** check forces it open. Depending on the characters' approach, an intoxicated guest may warn the characters that they'll alert Prospero about a break-in to his private chamber. You may decide to set a Stealth check for this; however, most of the guests are busy socializing and are not particularly observant.

This room is large, impeccably clean, and lavishly furnished. There is a tall mahogany bookshelf lined with books that look like they've never been read. The books are religious texts about the gods worshipped by the Aureum. Several swords of different designs — a scimitar, a shashka, and a sabre — are mounted to the wall. To the left of the door is a floor-to-ceiling tapestry depicting a three-headed beast — a chimera. The large window on the back wall is covered with silk curtains. The view beyond is the Ibridian lagoon.

C7. SECRET DOOR

A secret door can be uncovered behind the chimera tapestry with a **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation)** check. The door is made of stone and has no handle; it can be pushed open from either direction. The door opens into a dark staircase leading down into the secret laboratory.

C8. SECRET LABORATORY

A steep, tight staircase leads downstairs into a windowless stone chamber in the lower level of the castle. Dried herbs hang from hooks on the walls, and there is a wooden table covered with empty vials that smell foul. Several censers emit a gray smoke.

Smoke Signals

In Emberez, both the Aureum and the Malum Animus use incense to detect and deter their enemies. While in the laboratory, characters who are celestial in nature, or closely linked to a celestial, suffer from an allergic reaction to the gray smoke puffing from the censer. They should make a **DC 15 Constitution save**. On a fail, they sneeze, announcing their presence to the wererat. Fiendish creatures find the scent quite pleasant.

The laboratory contains a gruesome sight: five dead creatures lay atop five tables. The races of the creatures vary: there is a human male, a dwarf woman with vivid red hair, a half-orc woman, a half-elf man, and a gnome man. None of them wear a mask. Each of the bodies is missing a limb, and animal parts that look canine in nature have been crudely sewn to the bodies in place of the missing limbs. The rest of the animal's bodies cannot be found.

The basement also houses a gaunt, disheveled, and feral **wererat** (*MM*, pg 209) in hybrid form. The wererat has gone mad from its captivity and cannot communicate. The wererat is hostile and difficult to hide from, since the room is small and the creature is on high alert. Although it has a knife, it will prefer to bite.

After defeating the wererat, a **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation)** check reveals the Marquis di Maschera's symbol tattooed onto the wererat's wrist. If the characters inspect the other dead creatures, they find the same tattoo on the corpses' wrists or chests.

Wererat

Medium humanoid (human, shapeshifter), lawful evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| 10 (+0) | 15 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 11 (+0) | 10 (+0) | 8 (-1) |

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages understands Common, can't speak in rat form
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Keen Sight and Smell. The wererat has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight or smell.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. one target.
Hit: 4 (1d4 +2) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with wererat lycanthropy.



PART 4

THE TRANSFORMATION

After being at the party for a while, the characters start to notice a change in their demeanor or appearance. Prompt the characters to reflect on

this by selecting a random player to roll a perception check. A **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** check reveals that another character is beginning to show signs of the animal that corresponds with their mask; for instance, they see a hint of fur on their hands, or tiny horns protruding from their skulls (if they do not already possess fur or horns).

As this happens, another event takes place regardless of where the characters are in the castle. You can decide when this event occurs depending on what the characters are doing. Essentially, the aim of this is to instigate a confrontation with Prospero. This event should lure the characters to the main hall.

THE BEASTS

At this point, the mood of the party begins to shift. The characters hear or see a dragonborn guest, wearing a tiger mask, suddenly crouch to all fours and give a great roar. A minute later, another guest, a half-orc wearing a lizard mask, convulses and collapses to the floor. A long, green tail protrudes from his backside, and he writhes on the ground, attempting to crawl. Neither of these beastly guests will be able to communicate.

THE BATTLE BEGINS

The other guests begin to panic and try to remove their masks, realizing that they have been tricked. If the characters do not yet suspect Prospero, an NPC of your choice — Zula or any of the Marquis's Cup players — can prompt the characters by telling them that the effects of the masks will likely end if Prospero is defeated.

Create urgency by introducing Malinov, Prospero's giant vulture. The characters hear a screeching sound as Malinov swoops into the main hall.

Ideally, the battle occurs in the main hall; partygoers move away to give the characters room. Once Malinov spots the characters, he gives a shrill squawk, summoning Prospero. Prospero flies in, transforming into his true form: a cambion. He introduces himself as Akro Dimiryan, a prince of the Malum Animus.

You may allow the characters a quick chance to ask Akro about the murder, or allow a brief reprieve from combat if initiative has already begun. Akro says that the bird-man was named Uccello Omo, and while Akro did transform him into a bird beast, Uccello ultimately died by his own hand — he tried to rip the wings from his body, and when that failed, he attempted to fly out of the castle, and fell to his death.

The Prince of the Malum Animus

“Uccello was undeserving of his gifts and tried to rid himself of the qualities I blessed him with. For years I have been assembling my legion of beasts and hybrids, and you will be my most magnificent new soldiers. Together we will conquer the Aureum!”

— Akro Dimiryan

GUIDELINES FOR SKILL CHECKS

- **Understanding the curse:** **DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana)** reveals that the masks are indeed cursed, and defeating the source of the curse will stop the effects and allow the masks to be removed.
- **Spellcaster limitations:** **DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana)** reveals that any magic that banishes or transports the target to another plane will not work while in the castle.
- **Creature knowledge:** **DC 11 Intelligence (Nature)** reveals that the giant vulture, while terrifying, is not a magical familiar that can be re-summoned.

SCALING THE BATTLE

Should the battle prove too difficult or too easy, there are a few options for scaling the battle:

EASY

Malinov (Akro's giant vulture) attacks first, giving the characters an attack round (or two) against only him. Akro comes in after Malinov has been killed, starting a new round of combat but maintaining the characters' initial initiative role.

MEDIUM

Malinov and Akro both enter combat in the same round.

HARD/DEADLY

Malinov, Akro, and the two creatures that transformed in the main hall — the dragonborn tiger and half-orc lizard — all enter combat in the same round. Eya Harisa can serve as an ally to the characters (See these stats on pg. 18).

Malinov (Giant Vulture)

Large beat, neutral evil

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 22 (3d10 + 6)

Speed 10 ft., fly 60 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 15 (+2) | 10 (+0) | 15 (+2) | 6 (-2) | 12 (+1) | 7 (-2) |

Skills Perception +3

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages understands Common but can't speak

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Keen Sight and Smell. The vulture has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight or smell.

Pack Tactics. The vulture has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the vulture's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The vulture makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its talons.

Beak. Melee Weapon Attack. +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. one target. Hit: 7 (2d4 +2) piercing damage.

Talons. Melee Weapon Attack. +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. one target. Hit: 9 (2d6 +2) slashing damage.

Akro Dimiryran (Cambion)

Medium fiend, lawful evil

Armor Class 19 (scale mail)

Hit Points 82 (11d8 + 33)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 18 (+4) | 18 (+4) | 16 (+3) | 14 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 16 (+3) |

Saving Throws Str +7, Con +6, Int +5, Cha +6

Skills Deception +6, Intimidation +6, Perception +4, Stealth +7

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks.

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Fiendish Blessing. The AC of the cambion includes its Charisma bonus.

Innate Spellcasting. The cambion's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14). The cambion can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components. 3/day each: *alter self*, *command*, *detect magic*. 1/day: *plane shift* (self only).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The cambion makes two melee attacks or uses the Fire Ray twice.

Spear. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack. +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 8 (1d8 +4) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack, plus 3 (1d6) fire damage.

Fire Ray. Ranged Spell Attack. +7 to hit, reach 120 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (3d6) fire damage.

Fiendish Charm. One humanoid the cambion can see within 30 feet of it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be magically charmed for 1 day. The charmed target obeys the cambion's spoken commands. If the target suffers any harm from the cambion or another creature or receives a suicidal command from the cambion, the target can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful, or if the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the cambion's Fiendish Charm for the next 24 hours.

PART 5

CONCLUSION

Once Akro is defeated, the characters feel the masks loosen on their faces, and they can remove them. All negative effects of the masks are gone, but the buffs remain, and the characters may want to keep the masks in their inventory. Guests who have not yet begun to transition are also able to remove their masks. The guests who have turned beastly need to be taken to a high-level cleric to restore them to their natural state.

This information is given to them by Kara. The characters feel a strange sensation as time stops around them, but they remain unaffected. This gives Kara the chance to change into her true form, a **deva**. Her spectacular celestial presence is bright and awe-inspiring in the dimly-lit castle. Kara thanks the characters for defeating Akro, and informs them that his essence has been transported back to the Nine Hells, where he will be reborn. The Aureum is preparing an ambush to kill him for good while he is weak.

Kara bids the characters good fortune. She tells the characters that she is returning to the city of Aurea, where the Aureum has gathered; the characters are welcome there at any time. Kara disappears, and time resumes as normal.

REWARDS

Kara awards each character with a gold amulet bearing the symbol of the Aureum. The amulet is an **Amulet of Protection**, which awards a +1 bonus to AC.

If a character has died, Kara can resurrect them. If you are playing through other stories in this series, this adventure earns the party **5 points of renown** for the Aureum.



APPENDIX 1. DRAMATIS PERSONAE

MAIN CHARACTERS

Kara Krasandel

Kara is a young human woman with pale skin and long black hair. She has a golden dragon mask bound to her head, but it is not pulled over her face. In reality, Kara is a deva, passing as a human woman. Her true form is magnificent; she has long white hair, silver skin, and expansive feathered wings. A deva is a celestial being, able to shapeshift and cast healing spells. Devas are also formidable enemies when crossed, yielding mighty maces. She is not found during the party, but addresses the characters at the start and end of the game. Kara is a commander of the Aureum cavalry, and hopes to lead the celestials to victory by defeating Akro once he has been defeated on the Material Plane and sent back to the Nine Hells to be reborn.

Marquis Prospero di Maschera (Akro Dimiryan)

The Marquis Prospero di Maschera appears to be a tall, handsome elf. His features are very angular; he has a pointed chin, high cheek bones, dark eyes and dark hair. When the characters meet Prospero, he is dressed in ornate robes and wears a mask of three faces, depicting expressions of horror, joy, and sadness.

The Marquis's real name is Akro Dimiryan, and he is a cambion, born of a succubus and a human. Akro is a prince in the Nine Hells, and hopes to lead the legion of the Malum Animus. He is motivated by his desire to build his demonic army and wage war against the angels. As such, he lures people to his masquerades to imbue them with animalistic and beastly qualities.

When the final battle begins, Akro transforms into his natural demonic state. He has deep red skin, black eyes, a long red tail, and large wings that protrude from his back. Akro has a giant vulture, named Malinov, who does his bidding and engages the characters in combat alongside Akro.

Eya Harisa

Eya is a half-elf woman with olive skin and dark hair. She wears a mask in the shape of the moon. Eya is a celestial warlock and wears the symbol of the Aureum in support of their cause. Although Eya cannot purify the wine itself, she is able to cast a healing spell on a poisoned player.

Sewing Needle

Sewing Needle is a Tabaxi woman. She speaks in a low, husky voice that contains the hint of a purr and no shortage of rolled *r*'s. Over her feline face, she wears a mask of a black cat, and her bright green eyes are keen and observant. She serves the Marquis, and prevents party goers from entering without a mask. Sewing Needle also prevents guests from leaving the party once they are inside. If asked about this, Sewing Needle says it is to prevent the plague from infecting the wealthier inhabitants of Ibrido.

Piccolo Troppovino

Piccolo Troppovino is an odd, middle-aged halfling. Although he is trained and would be an intimidating opponent sober, his affinity for drinking makes him a poor fighter. However, this doesn't stop Piccolo from being a proud and haughty halfling, and he will gladly go to fisticuffs over those who get in his way. Despite his bravado, he wears an adorable corgi mask.

Zula Ozu

A tiefling with red skin and large black ram horns, Zula is the tattoo artist giving out tattoos at the party. She knows about the Aureum and the Malum Animus, and shares this information with the characters. Early in the game, Kara may claim to have received her eye symbol tattoos from Zula, but that is false. Similarly, Prospero claims that the bird-man's tattoo was from Zula, and that is also untrue. Despite her tiefling heritage, Zula is not at all involved in any of Akro's plot. She is simply an artist. (Zula hails from Ravukoi, the setting of *Altar of Holy Fire*, part 4 in the *A Requiem of Wings* series.)

MARQUIS'S CUP PLAYERS

Carina Coda, Halfling

Carina is a halfling woman with a high-pitched voice that gets increasingly higher in pitch the more she drinks. She wears a mask of a mouse, and it covers her whole face. She has blonde hair that sticks up in all directions. Carina tells the characters that the half-bird man found in the city square looked vaguely familiar to her, and she wonders aloud if she saw him at last week's party. However, her drunkenness makes this unreliable information.

Alto Orec, Dragonborn

Alto is a silver dragonborn and he wears a furry bunny mask over his scaled face. He does not care much for wine, but enjoys the more clever aspects of Marquis's Cup. He laments the absence of more intelligent games that don't involve drinking. If asked, he tells the characters that he lives near the city square, and never sees Prospero leave the castle.

Polpo Torabek, Dwarf

Polpo's goblet is empty, and he is quite drunk. He regularly attends Prospero's parties, but is starting to suspect the man is up to something. Polpo wears a crab mask. He is very eager to share his suspicions about Prospero with the characters, and mentions that a friend of his, a dwarf woman named Barba, went missing several weeks ago. If the characters have found the secret laboratory, Barba is the red-haired dwarf woman on one of the tables. If they share this information with Polpo, he becomes irate, but the sleeping draught in the wine takes effect before he is able to confront Prospero.

Eya Harisa, Half-Elf

Additional information about Eya can be found under *Main Characters*.

Rezmar Birk, Elf

Rezmar has very tanned skin, long ears, and brilliant robes of deep green and blue. He wears a very ornate crocodile mask that is likely made out of a real crocodile. A **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** may reveal to a character that Rezmar twitches his fingers in an odd way, perhaps affecting the selection of cards in the deck. This hints that Rezmar has magical abilities, and he

does; he is a sorcerer. Depending on how many of the characters choose to drink (at least two characters must remain sober for this), Rezmar may voice his suspicions that Prospero is not who he says he is. If the characters persuade Rezmar to say more, he may say that he knows that certain demons are able to alter their appearance at will. If the conversation continues on long enough, Rezmar confirms that he is a sorcerer and has personally met shapeshifting demons during previous travels.

While Rezmar is neutral in alignment, a player may be suspicious of his previous dealings with demons.

Jasna Mesic, Human

Jasna wears a mask decorated to look like a skull, and her wine sits untouched before her. If she senses the characters are asking questions in an effort to learn more about the murder, she provides them with some lore about the war of Emberez. If Rezmar is spoken to first, Jasna muses that it's possible Prospero is a demon in disguise.



MARQUIS'S CUP RULES

Adapted from traditional King's Cup Rules. You are encouraged to create your own rules! For additional fun, let the players act out the game at your table in-character.

| CARD | INSTRUCTION |
|-------|---|
| Ace | Waterfall. To perform a waterfall, each player starts drinking their beverage at the same time as the person to their left. No player can stop drinking until the player before them stops. |
| 2 | Give 2 and Possibly a Third. Player points at two people and tells them to drink. Player can also tell one person to take two drinks. |
| 3 | Three is Me. Player takes a drink. |
| 4 | Give 2 Take 2. Player gives out two drinks, and takes two for themselves. |
| 5 | Rule. Set a rule to be followed, e.g. <i>drink with your left hand, tap your head before you drink, don't use first names, etc.</i> |
| 6 | Thumbs. The player puts their thumb on the table, and tries to do this without anyone noticing. As people notice, they will also have to put their thumb on the table too. The last person to place their thumb on the table drinks. |
| 7 | Raise Your Hand to Heaven. Last person to raise their hand takes a drink. |
| 8 | Mate. Player chooses a person to be their mate and their mate drinks when they drink for the rest of the game. |
| 9 | Nine is Rhyme. Player says a word, and the person to their right has to say a word that rhymes. This continues around the table until someone cannot think of a word. This person must drink. The same word may not be used twice. |
| 10 | Categories. The player comes up with a category of things, and the person to their right must come up with something that falls within that category. This goes on around the table until someone can't come up with anything. This person must drink. |
| Jack | All the men must take a drink. |
| Queen | All the women must take a drink. |
| King | Marquis's Cup! When each of the first 3 Kings are drawn, the person who drew the card puts some of their drink into the Marquis's Cup at the center of the table. When the 4th King is drawn, the person who drew the 4th King must drink the contents of the Marquis's Cup. |

PARTY PERFORMERS

Fiero the Bard

Fiero is a jovial gnome bard, wearing a half-faced mask adorned with finch feathers. He enthusiastically plays the fiddle, tapping his small feet to the tune.

Mia, Dia, and Lia the Bellydancers

Mia, Dia and Lia each wear a different owl mask. Each human dancer has two different colored eyes, one hazel and one brown. They are each dressed in jewel-colored clothing, with belled belts tied around their hips.

Adamo the Snake Charmer

Adamo is an elven man wearing a serpent mask, sitting cross-legged on the floor before his snake basket. His actual serpent is emerald in color, matching Adamo's emerald mask.

Giorgia the Fortune Teller

Giorgia is an elderly drow woman wearing a scorpion mask. Her white hair is tightly plaited in a single braid. She has a deck of tarot cards and a crystal ball displayed on her velvet-colored table. Despite her trade, she lacks magical abilities. If characters seek to have their fortunes told, consult the table below and roll a 1d4 to determine the prediction. You can also use a tarot card app, such as Golden Thread Tarot, to share more thorough readings.

| D4 | PREDICTION |
|----|---|
| 1 | "Your well-being will soon be threatened. Remain observant in strange places." |
| 2 | "Someone close to you harbors deep feelings for you." |
| 3 | "Your deepest fear will soon become a reality. It is a test; do not cower from it." |
| 4 | "You have been indecisive about a major decision. The answer is yes." |

PARTY GUEST NPCS

If the characters want to interact with other attendees at the party, randomly select an NPC from this list.

| NAME + RACE | MASK |
|-------------------|-----------|
| Strella, Halfling | Bat |
| Maya, Human | Otter |
| Diggo, Gnome | Gecko |
| Calarmo, Tiefling | Squid |
| Gallo, Human | Parrot |
| Amira, Human | Raven |
| Ruh Ruh, Dwarf | Poodle |
| Liam, Human | Horse |
| Hoben, Halfling | Donkey |
| Akra, Dragonborn | Iguana |
| Phaedrus, Human | Deer |
| Arcadie, Half-Elf | Moth |
| Alinar, Elf | Butterfly |
| Ella, Gnome | Squirrel |
| Ander, Human | Monkey |
| Ragnar, Dwarf | Boar |
| Aunder, Human | Firefly |
| Aduan, Elf | Goat |



APPENDIX 2. ENEMY/NPC STATISTICS

Dragonborn-Tiger Hybrid

Medium beast, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 20

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|
| 17 (+3) | 13 (+1) | 14 (+2) | 8 (-1) | 12 (+1) | 11 (+0) |

Damage Resistance Lightning

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages understands Draconic and Common but can't speak

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Keen Sight and Smell. The dragonborn-tiger has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight or smell.

Pack Tactics. The dragonborn-tiger has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the dragonborn's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. one target.
Hit: 8 (1d10 +3) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. one target.
Hit: 7 (1d8 +3) slashing damage.

Breath Weapon. *Lightning.* Distance 30 ft. Target must roll a Dexterity saving throw; on a failed save, they take 2d6 lightning damage. This ability can be used once per day.

Piccolo Troppovino

Halfling, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 32 (5d8)

Speed 25 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 15 (+2) | 11 (+0) | 14 (+2) | 10 (+0) | 10 (+0) | 11 (+0) |

Skills Intimidation +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Halfling

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Piccolo makes two melee attacks.

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. one target.
Hit: 5 (1d6 +2) bludgeoning damage.

Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack.* +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

Half-Orc-Lizard Hybrid

Medium beast, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 20

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|
| 18 (+4) | 14 (+2) | 14 (+2) | 8 (-1) | 12 (+1) | 10 (+0) |

Racial Trait Advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks.

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages understands Orcish and Common but can't speak

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Keen Sight and Smell. The half-orc-lizard has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight or smell.

Pack Tactics. The half-orc-lizard has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the half-orc's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Maul. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. one target.
Hit: 8 (1d12 +3) bludgeoning damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. one target.
Hit: 6 (1d8 +2) slashing damage.

Eya Harisa

Half-elf celestial Warlock of the Harbinger, chaotic good

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 20 (1d8 +12)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 8 (-1) | 13 (+1) | 10 (+0) | 14 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 17 (+3) |

Racial Trait Advantage on saving throws against being charmed.

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Elvish, Celestial

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Harbinger's Light. Eya can heal wounds for 1d6, four times a day.

ACTIONS (SPELL DC 13)

Sacred Flame. *Cantrip.* The target must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or take 1d8 radiant damage.

Flaming Sphere. *Spell.* Reach 60 ft. The target that ends its turn within 5 feet of the sphere must make a Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the target suffers 2d6 fire damage, and half as much on a successful save.

APPENDIX 3A. MAP: CASTEL DI MASCHERA

- C1: Main Hall
- C2: Staircase to the kitchens
- C3: Staircase and balcony
- C4: Center room — tattoo artist
- C5: Far right room — Marquis's Cup
- C6: Prospero's room
- C7: Secret staircase to laboratory



APPENDIX 3B. MAP: SECRET LABORATORY

- L1: Stairs leading to/from Prospero's room via the secret door
- L2: Secret laboratory
- L3: Staircase to main hall
- L4: Kitchen
- L5: Servant sleeping quarters

L1

L2

L3

L4

L5

APPENDIX 4. INVITATION FROM PROSPERO

Adventurers,

I have received word of your impending travels to Ibrido. As a thank you for your service to the Realms, you are hereby invited to attend a masquerade ball at the Castel di Maschera during your stay in Ibrido. Partake in decadent food, wine, and entertainment!

Please dress in your finest attire. Decorative masks will be provided to you upon your arrival. Present this invitation at the door to be admitted entry.

I look forward to meeting you in person.

Prospero, Marquis di Maschera

APPENDIX 5. THE MASKS

MORE THAN JUST DISGUISES

The masks serve a few purposes in both the game and the story:

- to add a unique strategic element;
- to create an immersive atmosphere;
- and to incentivize the characters to complete a goal within a short amount of time.

In the story, the Marquis di Maschera uses the magicked masks to lure people to his parties and transform them into hybrid creatures that he will recruit as soldiers in his war against the Aureum.

MASK MECHANICS

Note: The masks have been provided with your download of this module as a separate, printable file. Characters must each select a mask before entering the party.

You can facilitate this in two ways:

- Have the characters roll initiative. Based on this order, let them select a mask. Characters will only see the visuals of the mask, and not the stats and effects.
- Shuffle the masks, and hand them out to the characters at random.

Characters must attune to their masks before learning the masks' qualities. It is up to you to determine when to do this. The recommended time is 30 minutes into the game, so the characters may become motivated to figure out how to remove them. The city square's bell tower may chime to indicate how much time has passed. However, depending on what the characters do, you may choose to shorten and lengthen this time to affect the pacing.

BEASTLY QUALITIES

Once the characters have attuned to the masks, the effects of the mask begin immediately. Characters must declare when they intend to use the once-a-day skill. Given the length of the party and the story, this essentially means they will be able to use this skill once during the game. Be sure to document who has which mask to ensure that they correctly modify their stats.

The longer the game proceeds, the more the masks affect the characters. The masks worn by other guests also affect the NPCs over the course of the night. You can pepper in these details throughout the game.



AUTHOR'S NOTES

At the time of writing this note, it has been about nine months since I first published this module. I can't believe how much my life has changed in that short period of time, all because of this little story I decided to share with the world. I had no idea how people would respond to my very first adventure. I've learned so much about game design in these past few months. As this series continues to expand, it felt like a good time to revisit this module and make a few small updates, based on your wonderful reviews and comments. Thank you for taking the time to play this story! It means more to me than I can express.

Cheers,
Ashley Warren



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- My husband, Andrew, for editing the story, designing the maps, and providing constant love/support. Love you!
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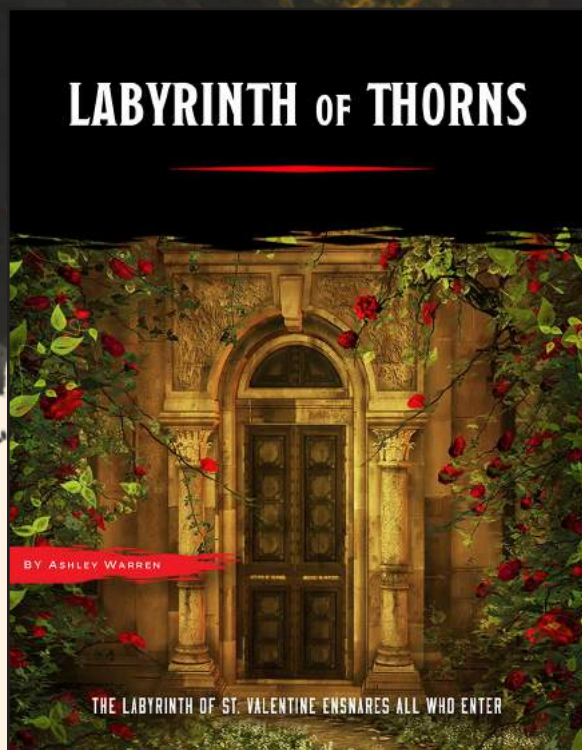
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