

# THE GRAND MASQUERADE



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By Ma'at Crook & Amy Lynn Dzura

# THE GRAND MASQUERADE

## A Ravenloft®: Mist Hunters Adventure

You are approached by Alanik Ray, a master investigator working on behalf of a secret society. Seeking agents to aid in the search for a missing scholar, he asks that you attend the Grand Masquerade—a great ball in the city of Port-à-Lucine. Hope you brought your dancing shoes!

The first epic adventure in the Ravenloft: Mist Hunters series of adventures. A four-hour epic adventure for 1st-level characters.



CONTENT WARNING: Possession, insomnia, oppressive aristocracy, gaslighting, forced impersonation, anxiety of living a lie, death, abduction  
Reference the [Mist Hunters' Safety Kit](#) article and *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft* for tips and tools on running a safe and fun game.

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# ADVENTURE PRIMER

*There were much of the beautiful ... much of the bizarre, something of the terrible, and not a little of that which might have excited disgust.*

—Edgar Allen Poe, *The Masque of the Red Death*

This adventure is designed for three to five 1st-level characters and is optimized for four 1st-level characters. Characters will reach 3rd level by the end of the adventure.

*The Grand Masquerade* occurs in the city of Port-à-Lucine in Dementlieu, one of the Domains of Dread.

## BACKGROUND

**ALANIK RAY**, an investigator hired by the **ORDER OF THE GUARDIANS**, is searching for a scholar named **RADAGA** whose pursuits into taboo subjects appear to have led her astray. To that end, he asks the characters to assist him in his search in the decadent city of **PORT-À-LUCINE** within the domain of **DEMENTLIEU**—a realm of psychological horror set in a land rife with social decay and decadent aristocrats.

The characters must attend the **GRAND MASQUERADE**—a weekly social event hosted by **DUCHESS SAIDRA D'HONAIRE**, the domain's **DARKLORD**. While at this high-status—and high-stakes—event, the characters seek Radaga, hearing that she was in attendance earlier but has left. After ferreting out clues and investigating some of her favorite locations in the city, the characters seek her at her residence—hoping to find her before she vanishes again.

## OVERVIEW

The adventure starts with a call to action and is then spread over three parts, each taking between 60 minutes and 90 minutes to play. The above estimations don't include time spent in pre- and post-game discussion:

**Call to Action: Inviting Suspicion.** The characters meet with Alanik Ray, a legendary investigator, and agree to assist him in the search for the missing scholar Radaga.

**Part 1: The Grand Masquerade.** The characters infiltrate the masked ball on the estate of Duchess Saidra d'Honaire to look for Radaga. Interacting with a number of the other guests reveals that the scholar has already left the masquerade, but turns up clues to her whereabouts.

**Part 2: Port-à-Lucine.** The characters follow the clues they've collected to check in on some of Radaga's favorite sites in the city. There, they uncover hints of the mysterious research the scholar was involved in, and learn the location of her residence.

**Part 3: Someone Left in a Hurry.** Moving quickly to Radaga's apartment, the characters hope to catch the scholar at home. But the always-celebrating folk of Dementlieu are in their way—as is the scholar's unusual undead servant.



## STORY AWARDS

At certain points in the adventure, you may see this glyph along with an entry that describes how the specified story award is earned or impacted by the story. Ignore the entry if it refers to a story award none of the characters have. If it refers to a story award the characters have just earned, the entry instead provides information for you and the players.

## CHARACTER HOOKS

As the adventure begins, the characters are in the city of Port-à-Lucine and the domain of Dementlieu—a decadent realm of suspicion, false pretenses, and betrayal. Their reasons for being here are entirely their own, but all have recently received a mysterious letter asking that they visit a tea shop run by a human named Rhian. The letter was signed by someone named Alanik Ray.

## NOBLE AND COURTIER BACKGROUND

Any characters with these backgrounds are used to being in the thick of any social event—especially events involving people pretending to be more important than they are. Such characters have advantage on Wisdom (Insight) checks during part 1 of the adventure.

## DEMENTLIEUSE CHARACTERS

Characters with a connection to the domain might be known by some of the partygoers and residents of Port-à-Lucine. Whether this is good or bad remains to be seen, but either way, such characters know their way around the city, and have advantage on Intelligence checks made during part 2 of the adventure.

### SINGLE TABLE EXPERIENCE

This adventure can be enjoyed with one group of players just as well as it can with one. If only one group is playing the adventure, the Dungeon Master fills the role of the administrator and performs the tasks therein.



# CALL TO ACTION: INVITING SUSPICION

**Estimated Duration:** 30 minutes

## CHARACTER INTRODUCTIONS

Allow each player a minute or so to introduce their character, describe their appearance and mannerisms, and establish the reason why they chose to answer the mysterious letter. Be sure to give everyone equal time in the spotlight and be prepared to gently stop players if they run on. Character introductions are crucially important for the players to understand who the other characters are, to build a basis for roleplaying opportunities, and for you as DM to learn more about the characters so you can create story elements that really speak to them.

Once everyone has introduced themselves and their character, award each of them inspiration.

## OUTFITTING FOR THE INVESTIGATION

Before proceeding on this leg of their investigation, the characters decide what they'd like to take with them on their journey:

**Mundane Equipment.** The Order of the Guardians has offered the characters access to its substantive resources to aid in their investigation. Each character has access to any mounts and equipment from the *Player's Handbook*, as well as the material components for any spell that they themselves have prepared—provided the gp cost of the mount, item, or material component doesn't exceed 200 gp. The characters are still bound to the normal rules regarding carrying capacity and, at your discretion, may find themselves in a situation that precludes being able to haul around too much—while their resources are great, the Order discourages excessively frivolous requests.

**Magical Equipment.** As they adventure, the characters “unlock” magic items for later use. The group begins this adventure with one copy of each of these unlocked items and then decides who will use them. At the end of the adventure, each item is “returned” to the character that brought it with them. Magic items that are destroyed or that lose their magic, such as a quaffed *potion of healing* or an exploded *horn of blasting*, however, are marked off the character's investigation journal and are no longer unlocked; they must find another one if they want to use it in a later adventure. The character who brought an unlocked item to the table has ultimate discretion in who gets to use it. They should, however, consider that their investigations necessitate teamwork and cooperation.

## INVESTIGATION (ADMIN-RUN)

The event administrators announce the commencement of this epic when the event is ready to begin. This part of the adventure is a timed event. One of the administrators should use a stopwatch to determine that the following announcements occur as prescribed below:

**0 Minutes:** “Investigation” announcement

**20 Minutes:** 10-minute warning announcement

**30 Minutes:** Time is up

## THE MEETING

The characters meet with Alanik Ray, an investigator working on behalf of the Order of the Guardians. The Order has hired Alanik to search for one of their members, a missing scholar named Radaga. In recruiting the characters to aid in the investigation, Alanik asks them to attend the Grand Masquerade—a decadent event rife with political intrigue and social manipulation—on his behalf.

### EXAMPLE: OUTFITTING FOR INVESTIGATION

Peter's character, Gregov the Fighter, is preparing for their next adventure. He requisitions a greatsword, a longbow and some arrows, and a suit of chain armor. He's also heard rumors of werewolves, so he asks for a silvered dagger... just in case. In his previous adventures, Gregov unlocked a *horn of blasting* and a *potion of healing*. The group decides who should carry the horn and the potion. At the end of the adventure, both of the items are returned to Gregov. However, if one of the characters uses the potion or the *horn of blasting* explodes during the adventure, Peter marks it off the investigation journal where it was unlocked.

## THE GAME IS AFOOT!

To start this epic, an event administrator reads the following:

At the request of an interested party, you've come with a number of others to the tea shop of the human known as Rhian the fate-steepener, who seems to expect you. After a short wait—and a number of cryptic Tarokka readings—the shop's door opens again and a human wheels into the room. A halfling following close behind closes the door with a quick kick of their heel.

Rhian nods to the newcomers but speaks to all of you gathered there. "The time has come for you to understand where you are going." They then collect their Tarokka deck, saying, "I leave you to it," and amble into a back room.

The human studies you for a brief moment before introducing himself. "My name is Alanik. Alanik Ray. And this is my associate, Kabe Whippoorwill. I am working at the behest of the Order of the Guardians, who are seeking one of their own—a human woman named Radaga who has gone missing. As part of this investigation, I am hiring field operatives. And I hope that you will be among them."

Kabe removes an envelope from their jacket pocket, placing it on a table. "Word is that Radaga will attend Duchess Saida's d'Honaire's Grand Masquerade tonight. Another agent got a sneak peek at an invitation, then whipped up a few extras." Kabe winks and clicks their tongue in the side of their mouth. "Now you can mingle at the ball with other covert investigative teams and hopefully find Radaga. Or, at the very least, gather some information about where she's been hiding out, and why."

Alanik nods agreement with his associate. "I believe that infiltration, deduction, possible rescue, and solving a mystery might appeal to you, even at the risk of your being discovered.

Kabe chimes in, "And the point is not to be discovered. If you go in heavy-handed, you'll get nothing out of people. And if you don't cooperate with your fellow investigators, you'll be making things more difficult for yourselves."

"Quite," Alanik continues, "I thus implore you to investigate. Learn what you can about the disappearance of Radaga if convenient. And, even if inconvenient, I implore you to investigate, nevertheless. Now, I'm sure you have questions, and more introductions need to be made. Let's get these formalities out of the way as quickly as possible. The game is afoot!"

Characters introduce themselves ("Character Introductions"), gather supplies ("Outfitting for Investigation"), and ask Alanik for more details ("Rhian's Shop").

### RHIAN LOCKHART

*Human fate-steepener*

Rhian (ree-AHN) is a tall human with light-brown skin, short-cropped dark-brown hair, and heavy-lidded brown eyes. They are a Tarokka reader of great skill, and a practiced traveler of the Mists. When Rhian speaks, their rich voice rings throughout the room. Their measured words and practiced mannerisms are intended to relax those who come to their tea shop for Tarokka readings, to allow the cards to speak.

**What They Want.** Rhian has been tasked with bringing together a group of individuals well suited for traveling through the Mists.

**Oracle.** "What would you say if I told you that your perceived weaknesses are actually your strengths?"

### TABLE CAPTAIN

Once introductions are done, each group designates a table captain. This is a player who relays information to the event administrators, a vital role that allows the DM to continue running the adventure without interruption.

### DEVELOPMENT

DMs, proceed with Rhian's Shop, below.

## RHIAN'S SHOP

While in Rhian's shop, the characters can introduce themselves and gather more information about their objectives.

**Themes:** Intrigue, mild desperation, stuffy

### DEMENTLIEU: DOMAIN OF DECADENT DECEPTION

**Darklord:** Saida d'Honaire

**Hallmarks:** Masquerades, decadent aristocracy, social decay, illusions, impostor syndrome

Every night brings another glittering affair in Dementlieu, whose citizens live glamorous and exciting lives. They enjoy the finest clothes, elegant jewels, grand ballrooms—and most extravagantly, the Grand Masquerade hosted by Duchess Saida d'Honaire every seventh day at her island estate. Everyone who is *anyone* attends the duchess's balls, and everyone who longs to be someone tries to wrangle an invitation or sneak in uninvited. But Duchess Saida's wrath upon those who dare to set foot where they don't belong is truly horrible—and inevitably fatal.

For more information about this domain and the people who reside there, refer to *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft*.

### NPC INFORMATION

Alanik Ray and his associate Kabe Whippoorwill share everything the characters need to know to accomplish their mission.

Alanik has been hired by the Order of the Guardians, a group of scholars who ensure that dangerous supernatural trinkets and treasures don't fall into the wrong hands. One of their members, a brilliant and well-respected scholar named Radaga—a slender, olive-skinned human woman with black hair—is missing. During their initial inquiries,

Alanik and Kabe have learned that Radaga recently held court with the Darklord of Dementlieu, Duchess Saidra d'Honaire, and that she is familiar with other members of Saidra's court. Alanik wants the characters to attend the duchess's next Grand Masquerade to seek information on Radaga. The invitations that Kabe has had prepared will grant them entrance.



#### ALANIK RAY

*Elf investigator*

A confident, insightful, and shrewd investigator, Alanik Ray (uh-LAHN-ick RAY) is one of the most well-traveled mortals in the Domains of Dread. He is a master of insights and deduction, able to glean the most intimate details of other creatures' lives only moments after meeting them—including almost instantaneously deducing a character's native domain from their accent and mannerisms. An accidental fall during an investigation years before caused a spinal injury that paralyzed Alanik's legs. He now uses a custom wheelchair that he created with the assistance of his husband and investigative partner, Arthur Sedgwick.

More information on Alanik can be found in *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft*.

**What They Want.** Alanik is investigating the disappearance of the scholar Radaga. As a highly recognizable figure, he often recruits field agents to aid him in his investigations, and he has tapped the characters to help him now.

**Lead Investigator.** Radaga's disappearance has been brought to Alanik by the Order of the Guardians, a group dedicated to seeking out and neutralizing dangerous magic.



#### KABE WHIPPOORWILL

*Halfling interdomain scout*

Alanik Ray's scout, associate, and friend, Kabe Whippoorwill (KAYB WIP-er-wil) is also secretly a member of the Keepers of the Feather (a fact known only to Alanik). A lightfoot halfling with a quick smile and a mean right hook, Kabe possesses a dark gift that allows them to traverse the Domains of Dread. Acting as both a guide for the characters and a field contact, they are an invaluable member of the investigative team.

**What They Want.** Kabe's line of work is dangerous, so they want to ensure that everything goes smoothly. Losing an agent is never the desired outcome.

**Mist Walker.** Kabe is Alanik's scout, investigatory partner, friend, and an invaluable member of the team. They also work as the party's field contact.

## THE GRAND MASQUERADE

At Duchess Saidra's grand fete, the characters must gather **at least three clues** about Radaga from the other guests—where she lived while in Port-à-Lucine, how she spent her time, and so forth—while convincing those guests that the characters belong at the ball. Guests of the Grand Masquerade are typically all well-to-do, well connected—or both.

As Alanik and Kabe forewarn the characters (and as any characters from this domain will already know), the people of Dementlieu can be tight-lipped about many things. Nearly all have deep secrets, striving through illusion and deceit to always appear grander and richer than they truly are, and they live in constant fear of being revealed. If caught or exposed, folk risk being disgraced, discharged, or disintegrated by the duchess. As such, great care should be taken in asking too many questions, and the characters should be prepared to make reasonable explanations for their curiosity.

### THE INVITATIONS

Kabe Whippoorwill provides each character with an invitation for Duchess Saidra's imminent Grand

Masquerade. Each character must possess an invitation and wear their best finery (including a decorative mask) to enter the d'Honaire estate. The duchess doesn't let just anyone into her residence, though, and Kabe urges the characters to not be too cocky, promising that they and their invitation will be heavily scrutinized. Even more importantly, the masquerade has an important and seemingly ever-changing list of social niceties that must be adhered to, lest attendants arouse the duchess's wrath.

Upon examining the invitations provided by Kabe, any character with the criminal or charlatan background, the Keen Mind or Observant Feat, or who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check notices subtle flaws in the forgery. The paper is too crisp for something that was supposedly delivered through the mail, and the handwritten script has a few unnatural starts and stops. Though the invitations are likely to pass at a glance, they won't stand up to intense scrutiny. A character can attempt to improve the forgeries by making a DC 10 Intelligence check using a forgery kit. On a success, any Charisma (Deception) check made to gain entrance to the masquerade in part 1 of the adventure is made with advantage.

### THE FINERY

In addition to the invitation, each guest of the Grand Masquerade must appear in their best finery and an elegant mask. Repurposing, recycling, and repairing is a way of life for the people of Dementlieu, whose ability to make subpar clothing look fabulous is second to none. Never-been-used items are rare in the domain, and require scrimping and saving that is seldom an option for even the most affluent-appearing guests.

Ask each player to briefly describe their characters' appearance, and what steps they've taken to spruce that appearance up.

### THE RULES

Kabe provides the characters with a collected list of rules of etiquette for the Grand Masquerade, as detailed in handout 1: Dementlieu Etiquette, which you should give to the players. Any character who gets caught breaking any of these rules has committed a faux pas that might hinder the investigation—or, worse, reveal the character as an impostor.

In addition to the known and accepted rules of etiquette, Duchess Saidra thrives on social manipulation, and forces guests of the masquerade to create rules of their own. Each group of players in this event must create their own rule for potential addition to the list. A group's table captain submits the group's rule to the event administrators for consideration.

## DEVELOPMENT

The event administrators announce when it's time to proceed to part 1 of the adventure, which begins after the administrators have decided on the additions to the rules of etiquette. When the additional rules are announced, the DM, the table captain, or another player should write them down on handout 1.



### INTERACTIVE ELEMENTS

As with many epics this one includes interactive elements.

**Etiquette Rules.** Handout 1 lists the etiquette rules everyone in Dementlieu must follow, except the Duchess, of course. Mark off or edit any that don't work for your event (for example, "No One Nose" does not work if you are unable to see if the players touch their noses. So, remove it or change it to a different rule).

The list comes with five rules, but it is an incomplete list. Tables submit suggestions to add to the list. From those submitted, the event administrators choose two to five to add to the list; the higher the number, the more challenging. Administrators are encouraged to choose rules that are fun, creative, and unique—and which are also likely to risk being broken during the ball. Once the new rules are chosen, an event administrator announces the complete list of ten rules to DMs before the ball begins.

Make sure every player and DM has an easy way to reference the complete list, throughout the epic.

One rule of etiquette requires the characters to say, "May the Duchess favor us all" every time the city bell rings. Event administrators set times for the bell to toll throughout the adventure, at which point the players should all repeat the phrase.

**Table Interaction.** As the characters investigate, they may earn benefits to give away, learn information to share, or need to consult with other tables. If this is an in-person event this mean a player physically visits a table of their choice. If this event is online that may mean a player enters the voice chat of another table.

Please encourage these players to not be hesitant and to interact with their fellow investigators as quickly and respectfully as possible.

# PART 1: THE GRAND MASQUERADE

**Estimated Duration:** 90 minutes

## ADMINISTRATING PART 1

The event administrators announce the commencement of part 1 of the adventure when it's ready to begin. This part of the adventure is a timed event. One of the administrators should use a stopwatch to determine that the following announcements and activities occur as prescribed below:

**0 Minutes:** "Infiltration" announcement

**40 Minutes:** 20-minute warning announcement

**50 Minutes:** 10-minute warning announcement

**60 Minutes:** Time is up, and announce contest winners

**70 Minutes:** 20 minutes to advance characters

**90 Minutes:** Instruct DMs to proceed to part 2

### INTERACTIVE ELEMENT: DON'T LET YOUR MASK SLIP

As part of the etiquette challenges, administrators set a repeating timer as a reminder to "ring the city bell" multiple times throughout the adventure.

During part 1, DMs document each faux pas on the tally sheet in appendix A, to be reported to the event administrators at the end of part 1. Administrators use this information to determine which table had the "Best Manners" and if the characters alerted the guards' suspicions. Both are announced before moving on to part 2. More information is provided in "Contest Winners!" and "Rising Suspicions" story award below.

During parts 2 and 3, DMs continue to keep track of faux pas, as breaking etiquette affects social interactions. See the "Let Me Count the Ways" sidebar below for more information.

## INFILTRATION (ADMIN-RUN)

This part of the adventure begins with the characters dressed up, masked up, and outside Duchess Saidra's estate. An event administrator reads the following:

The time has come for Duchess Saidra's Grand Masquerade to begin. You have come to her opulent estate on an island in Lucine Bay, joining the other beautifully dressed and masked guests who excitedly line up awaiting permission to enter. You've watched many nervous hopefuls be assessed, announced, and ushered in. But others have had their hopes dashed, as their invitations are rejected and torn, or their attire is deemed unacceptable. Now it is your turn.

## DEVELOPMENT

DMs, proceed with "Duchess Saidra's Estate."

## DUCHESS SAIDRA'S ESTATE

The characters are set to infiltrate Duchess Saidra's estate using their forged invitations. But even if invitations

are rejected, characters can gain access to the Grand Masquerade through other creative means.

Once inside the estate, the characters will carefully question other celebrants, gathering information about Radaga's comings and goings. But even as they do so, they are being watched and judged. Characters must follow the ball's strict rules of etiquette and prove their dance skills, while the DM tracks the number of clues they gather—and how many etiquette faux pas they commit.

**Themes:** Pomp and circumstance, skepticism, suspicion

### DEMENTLIEUSE: TERRIFIED IMPOSTORS

Despite wearing the finest clothes and the most extravagant jewels, spending most of their time bumping elbows with other nobles and socialites at fancy parties, the people of Dementlieu live in a state of constant fear. Everyone here pretends to belong to a social circle higher than their own. The poor maintain a middle-class appearance, while the true middle-class struggle to portray themselves as aristocracy. However, the only true noble in this domain is its Darklord, Duchess Saidra d'Honaire.

Anyone who lets slip their "mask" while at the Grand Masquerade meets a grisly end. A seeming aristocrat who loses a button from a fraying coat is declared an impostor and disintegrated by the duchess. And though a merchant who fails to keep up appearances in their day-to-day life might not meet quite as public or dramatic an end, they might well end up penniless and homeless, then inevitably fall prey to the Red Death—a murderous spirit that stalks the domain.

For more information about Dementlieu and the people who reside there, refer to *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft*.

## AREA INFORMATION

The duchess's estate has the following features.

**Dimensions.** The masquerade is held in a large hall with plenty of room for a dance floor, tables, and chairs around the room's edges at which guests talk and gamble, and long tables bearing refreshments. No more than a hundred guests attend the ball on any given week—it's an exclusive event, after all. But although the ballroom appears to glisten and gleam, as the characters spend more time here, they notice magical illusions concealing cracks in the marble floors, and masking where gold veneer is peeling from ceilings and walls.

**Lighting.** Crystal chandeliers hang from the draped ceiling of the ballroom, burning with candles that flicker as the movement of dancers causes the air to disturb them. Closer inspection reveals dirty, cracked, and cobweb-covered crystals.

**Sounds and Smells.** Polite conversation and the excited voices of gamblers sound out against the playing of a chamber orchestra near the dance floor. The light scents of candles and roses covers the subtle smell of food gone past its prime from the lavish spread on the buffet tables.



**Careful Snacking.** If any character chooses food from the buffet tables, other attendees watch to see if they break etiquette rule three (never reach over food). Describe the available food, its location on the table, and ask what the character reaches for. If they break etiquette and commit a faux pas, refer to the “Let Me Count the Ways” sidebar and track the faux pas on the tally sheet of appendix A.

### LET ME COUNT THE WAYS

During the masquerade, keep track of how many faux pas the characters commit, marking those faux pas on the tally sheet in appendix A. At the end of part 1, the table captain takes the total number of faux pas to the event administrators. The table with the fewest faux pas earns a Best Manners award (see “Contest Winners!” below). Among all the tables, if too many faux pas are made, the Duchess’ guards are alerted imposters may have infiltrated the ball (more information in “Rising Suspicions” sidebar below).

**Social Effects.** Anytime a character commits a faux pas, witnesses spread the word. The next Charisma check that character makes during the ball is made with disadvantage. (Word gets around fast!)

### PARTY POOPERS!

Things in Port-à-Lucine tend not to get overtly violent. As such, a fight is likely to break out at the Grand Masquerade only if the characters start it. If any character instigates a fight or otherwise acts with hostility, the other attendees all use the **commoner** and **noble** stat blocks. However, members of the Port-à-Lucine city watch (use the **veteran** and **knight** stat blocks, with a **mage** or two mixed in) and private bodyguards (**ghouls** and **veterans**) are also present. Fighting these NPCs should be particularly challenging—if not wholly unwinnable.

It’s more likely that characters caught someplace off-limits will be openly and embarrassingly called out for their trespass, rather than attacked. Still, extreme circumstances might call for a bodyguard or member of the city watch to escort the humiliated character from the event.

## ARRIVING AT THE MASQUERADE

To gain admittance to the Grand Masquerade, each character must present their invitation. The duchess has stationed three **ghouls** led by a human **veteran** at the main entrance to ensure that everyone bears an invitation and is appropriately attired. The characters must make a group Charisma (Deception) check upon stating their names and presenting their invitations (with advantage on the check for any invitation improved through forgery). The guards’ reactions depend on the result of the group check.

**13 or Higher.** If half or more of the characters get a check of 13 or higher, the duchess’s servants are entirely convinced of the legitimacy of the invitation and accept the characters’ finery as sufficiently regal. They quickly and politely admit all the characters to the ball—announcing their names loudly for all to hear.

**8 or Higher.** If more than half the characters get a check of 8 or higher without being able to attain the result above, the guards intuit that something is amiss with the invitations, but they are hesitant to say anything without more solid proof. Instead, they project those doubts into criticism of the characters’ clothing and regalia,

demanding that metal be polished, fabric be mended, jewelry be cleaned, and so forth. Once the guards’ demands have been met, the characters are allowed to enter the estate but aren’t announced.

**7 or Lower.** If more than half the characters get a check of 7 or lower, all the characters’ invitations are roundly rejected, and they are asked to leave the estate grounds. That said, though the guards take pride in their jobs, they are not above accepting a bribe to allow the characters inside. They might also be bullied or deceived into admitting the characters.

Each character can attempt one DC 15 Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion) check to convince the guards that they deserve to attend the ball. Allow each character to briefly describe what they’re doing to impress the guards, and grant advantage on the check for clever or resourceful thinking. Alternatively, the characters might also try to sneak in through a side door or a delivery entrance, or use other methods to covertly gain access. Assign ability checks for such activities as you deem appropriate, rewarding cleverness and creativity.



# THE GRAND MASQUERADE

Once inside the duchess's house, the characters can bump elbows with the well-to-do of Dementlieu society and learn clues as to Radaga's fate. During this section, the characters should be able to obtain at least **three clues**. How many partygoers the characters choose to speak to—and which ones—depends on their choices and the time allowed. This is a scenario where splitting the party could save the characters time and earn them more clues.

## INTERACTIVE ELEMENT: DON'T LET YOUR MASK SLIP

Keep an eye on the characters' actions to know when to mark the etiquette tally sheet (Appendix A).

Keeping track of the etiquette expectations can be a fun challenge, that is indeed challenging (for players and DMs). Someone is likely to forget or miss something. In the game this raises challenges. In real life, don't stress too much, just do your best.

As you feel is necessary, you can encourage and respectfully remind players to follow Dementlieu manners. For example, when the event organizers ring the bell narrate the NPCs' actions as they say the required phrase. A character with the highest passive Insight would recognize the frustration, resentment, or determination other characters are feeling as they try not to let their manners or "masks" slip.

## KEY PARTYGOERS

While many guests are too engaged in furthering their own agendas to interact with the characters, a few catch the characters' eyes. Eight possible NPCs are noted below, but it's not expected or encouraged that the characters speak to each one. (They likely won't have time to do so.)

## BREAKING DOWN A PARTYGOER

Each partygoer has a brief description that includes what they look like and—more importantly—the secret they fear being revealed. Though it might be the characters' first instinct to blackmail a guest using knowledge of their secret, more benevolent characters might be able to use what they know to help a partygoer. For example, a character who learns of Zolane's plight (see his entry in this section) might ask around for detailed information about the priest's position and what he's charged with doing. Once they have a good idea of his job, Zolane would undoubtedly be thankful for the information.

The characters gather the information they seek by succeeding on **DC 15 Charisma checks**. They can ask multiple questions, rolling as many Charisma checks as they want to get the information the NPC knows.

**Clue.** In addition to their description, each partygoer's entry notes a clue that they're able to share, as well as any conditions that might make it easier to convince them to do so. Most of these conditions involve the characters doing the guest a favor, such as providing a specific item or performing a small task.

**Area.** In addition to a partygoer's own details, an entry might note something in the area immediately nearby that is relevant to other guests, and which the characters can notice.

The partygoers the characters notice (along with their recognizable masks) are presented in alphabetical order below:

- Araisnée Stoermer (spider mask)
- Captain Lasal (fox mask)
- Gilbert Moreno (elephant mask)
- Julien Vallotton (cobra mask)
- Lady Olivia Stuart (jellyfish mask)
- Lisle Durand (butterfly mask)
- Rosalind Addington (bird mask)
- Zolane the Appointed Blessed (swarm of bees mask)

(These roleplaying-focused NPCs are intentionally not provided with stat blocks.)

## THE CLUES LEAD THE WAY!

During the masquerade, keep track of how many clues the characters have gathered from speaking to the other attendees. When a certain number of clues have been collected, the characters gain certain benefits. (Clues obtained from other tables don't count as clues the characters have collected themselves.)

**Two Clues.** After collecting two clues, the characters recognize another field agent among the crowd. One player can visit a neighboring table and ask the group there for one clue they've uncovered. The characters at the visited table choose a clue from those they've gathered and give it to the visiting player. If this epic is being run as a single-table event, provide the players with random clue from the Possible Clues table in appendix A.

**Four Clues.** With four clues collected, the characters find an out-of-the-way closet holding city watch uniforms for each member of the party. If worn, these uniforms give advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to interact with the general public, but impose disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks and Charisma (Deception) checks made to interact with real members of the city watch. See the "Watch My Disguise" sidebars in parts 2 and 3 of the adventure.

**Six Clues.** If they collect six clues, the characters win the Superlative Sleuth story award. See the end of Part 1 for details.

## ARAIGNÉE STOERMER

More so even than the rest of the partygoers, Araisnée Stoermer (ah-REN-yeh STOR-mehr) isn't what she appears to be. This (apparently) human actor's primary talent is for manipulation and murder, which she carries out as an arachnid shapeshifter. Usually, she dazzles victims with the vibrant spectacle of the Red Widow Theater (a scandalous cabaret seen in part 2 of the adventure), but she metaphorically spins a web this night at the duchess's ball, playing dice games with other attendees. She is dressed in lavish black silks and a spider mask decorated with many jeweled eyes.

If asked about Radaga, Araisnée answers while continuing to play dice. She says she saw the scholar, but Radaga didn't seem to recognize Araisnée behind her mask. She won't answer any other questions unless the characters roll dice with her. (To save time, handle any dicing between her and the characters with roleplaying as opposed to ability checks.)

**Area: Araisnée may not be what she seems.** Any character who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to look around the area notices that Araisnée's hair is as light and thin as gossamer spider silk. They also notice her dice are made of polished bone.

**Clue: Radaga didn't recognize her friend, was arguing with herself, her eyes turned red.** Radaga and Araignée frequently chat when Radaga attends events at the Red Widow Theater, where Araignée is a performer. She was thus surprised when Radaga didn't recognize her—and even more surprised to overhear Radaga seemingly arguing with herself, and struggling as if trying to control her own movements. Even stranger, right before Radaga composed herself, Araignée thought she saw the scholar's eyes turn red.

### CAPTAIN LASAL

This tiefling noble relies on the formalities of military life to insulate her from becoming too close to anyone who might learn she did not attend a prestigious naval academy. Instead, Lasal (LAS-uhl) rose up in the ranks as an enlisted sailor. She is dressed in her well-pressed captain's uniform and a half-face mask depicting a fox. The tufted ears, made from barber's cuttings, blend well into her own hair, which is pulled back out of her face.

When the characters first see her, Lasal is leaning against one of the gilded columns near the dance floor, tapping her foot and watching the dancers. If asked about Radaga, she frowns in disappointment. Radaga was supposed to have delivered a pair of fine earrings to Lasal before the masquerade, but never did.

**Area: A sewing kit for Lisle.** Any character who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to look around the area finds a small sewing kit lying where someone seemingly dropped it. The needle has been hand-filed from a piece of wire, and the thread consists of delicately twined multicolored fibers. If Lisle Durand, below, is given the sewing kit to mend their clothing, the characters have advantage on Charisma checks while speaking with them.

**Clue: Radaga isn't keeping commitments, Legacy Library at Jalabert Museum.** Lasal is carrying a book called *Visiting with Visions* that Radaga left behind the last time the two had lunch together. She brought the book to the ball to return it, but Radaga became irritated when Lasal asked about the earrings, acting as if she didn't know what Lasal was talking about before storming off. Lasal now needs to return the book to the Legacy Library at Jalabert Museum, but has little free time to do so. She is happy to give the book to the characters if they offer to return it for her.

### GILBERT MORENO

This human noble is a survivor, and wants his life to consist of more than just eking out a living. The main factors behind the survival of Moreno (mor-EH-no) are his calculating mind and a dark deal he made with an unnamed entity in exchange for a place in Dementlieu society. And beneath his cheerfulness lies the dread of one day fulfilling his end of that bargain.

For the ball, Moreno sports a gray elephant mask with a long, flexible snout and broken pieces of pottery protruding from under his chin as tusks. He teases others near him, tapping his snout on their shoulders and pulling away when they look for the source. If asked about Radaga, his smile can't hide his irritation. "I haven't seen her at all, and I was going to give her a stern talking-to."

**Area: Radaga's mask to show Zolane.** Any character who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to look around the area finds a discarded black velvet mask (see "Treasure" below). This is unusual, for no one would risk being unmasked or unmasking themselves at the masquerade. (The mask was Radaga's, as the characters learn if they speak to Zolane; see below.)

**Clue: Radaga isn't keeping commitments, Mother of Tears Cathedral.** Radaga was recently supposed to accompany Moreno to services at the Mother of Tears Cathedral. She had asked him to schedule a ritual to have her handkerchief blessed by Ezra, God of the Mists, but never showed up. The clergy at the cathedral promised to complete the ritual despite her absence, and Moreno now needs to get Radaga a message telling her she can pick up the blessed handkerchief at her convenience.

### JULIEN VALLOTTON

An orc landlord and secrets broker, Julien Vallotton (joo-lee-EHN val-oh-TOHN) stands next to a table laden with trays of food when the characters first see him (a faux pas challenge opportunity). From this vantage point, he keeps his ears and eyes open for closely guarded information, and keeps the arthritis in his legs from becoming too uncomfortable. His cobra mask (made from real serpent skin) reveals enough of his mouth to allow him to enjoy refreshments without unmasking. If asked about Radaga, he nods. "She was here much earlier but left rather abruptly."

**Area: "VV" copper key.** Any character who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to look around the area notices a copper key resting on the floor at Julien's feet, decorated with "VV" elegantly worked into the head. If shown to Julien, he says the key is his and thanks the characters, who have advantage on Charisma checks when speaking with him for the rest of the adventure. (He doesn't share what "VV" stands for, but the characters will find out in chapter 2.)

**Clue: Radaga broke etiquette, Red Widow Theater** When he saw her earlier, Julien heard Radaga absent-mindedly humming a tune he's often heard coming from the Red Widow Theater. He wonders openly if she risked offending the duchess with an early departure to attend the cabaret.

### LADY OLIVIA STUART

Nothing stops the human noble Lady Olivia Stuart (oh-LIV-ee-uh STOO-ert) from doing what she wants and thinks is right. After all, titles don't mean anything if you don't take advantage of what they bring. And what's a lie or two among acquaintances if it helps you get your way?

Lady Olivia's long hair is styled into tight twists, cascading down her back. Her mask is made of elegantly worked wire, twisted into intricate filigree shaped like a delicate jellyfish whose tangled tentacles hide her face. She unsuccessfully fans herself with her hand, as she is uncomfortably warm. If asked about Radaga, she smirks as she says that Radaga remembered some things and forgot others.

**Area: "VV" iron key.** Any character who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to look around the area notices an iron key nearby on the floor with "VV" elegantly worked into the head. Neither Lady Olivia nor any other NPC nearby claims ownership of the key if the characters

ask. If the characters offer this key to Julien Vallotton (see his entry for information on a similar key), he says he knows who it belongs to (but does not reveal that this person is Radaga). The characters have advantage on Charisma checks when speaking with Julien for the rest of the adventure.

**Clue: Radaga's forgetful, Moth Orchid Tea House.** Radaga approached Lady Olivia earlier to say that she remembered the two were meeting tomorrow, but couldn't remember their regular meeting place—the Moth Orchid Tea House. Any character who knows thieves' cant notices a subtle movement in Olivia's hand gestures as she speaks of the tea house, which translate to: "Assam, sugar." (This is Olivia's regular tea house order, which might be useful to the characters in part 2 of the adventure.)

### LISLE DURAND

Human noble Lisle Durand (LEEL duh-RAHND) wants everyone to know their name, and prides himself in having met and memorized the names of everyone in attendance at the ball. Their butterfly-inspired mask features wings that flutter as the noble moves about the room, fussing with their clothing and attempting to hide its threadbare finery and fraying hems.

If asked about Radaga, Durand grows visibly upset, and says that she embarrassed them and was rude to a guest that she herself had asked to meet at the ball.

**Area: Duchess disintegrated a guest.** Any character who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check barely get a glimpse of the Duchess through a crowd of hopeful guest. Read or paraphrase the following.

The Duchess is gracious and striking in a red dress and exquisite bird mask; she speaks personally, giving attention to each guest flocked around her.

Guards push their way through the crowd, whispering in her ear. Her posture becomes more rigid, and the guards take positions not far away. The Darklord raises her hand for all to be silent and smiles, surveying the hushed masquerade. With no warning her smile flashes to a grimace, "How dare you! You who are uninvited take advantage of my benevolence!" She lowers her hand, pointing a long finger at you and every guest. With no compassion, a ray of sickly energy exudes from her palm, enveloping a terrified guest dressed as a happy piglet. Within seconds nothing remains but dust. Her threat is clear to all, don't let your "mask slip." When her smile returns, she compliments an ostrich on their beautiful costume. Although it is not a joyous moment, the guests continue their revelry, as is expected of you all.

**Clue: Radaga snubbed her guest, Legacy Library at Jalabert Museum.** Lisle and Radaga went to a lot of trouble, expense, and favors to set up a meeting with Isolda Savant, an archivist at the Legacy Library at Jalabert Museum. But when Radaga arrived at the ball, she couldn't have been less interested in meeting Madame Savant.



## ROSALIND ADDINGTON

The human noble Rosalind Addington (ROZ-uh-lind ADD-ing-ton) attends the Grand Masquerade with regret. She wishes that she could instead retire to the quiet of her family's estate on Chateaufaux, the (in truth, nonexistent) countryside surrounding Port-à-Lucine. Rosalind has chronic insomnia but overextends herself in social situations, as it is expected that the people of Dementlieu act jovially in public. She lives in constant fear of her manners slipping and offending the duchess.

When the characters first see her, Rosalind is just excusing herself from a dance partner and adjusting her bird mask—in response to which, feathers fall. The feathers make her nose itch incessantly, and with every scratch, she covers her mouth as a reminder not to speak. (This can be a fun faux pas challenge opportunity. If you act out Rosalind scratching her itchy nose, it might make a player subconsciously touch their own nose while speaking.)

If asked about Radaga, Rosalind murmurs about the scholar's horrid faux pas, and says she's grateful that Duchess Saidra didn't notice it. She says she hopes that if she ever breaks etiquette, someone would be so kind as to distract anyone from noticing.

**Area: Folding fan for Lady Olivia.** Any character who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to look around the area spots a folding fan discarded on a table. If given to Lady Olivia to help her cool off, the characters have advantage on Charisma checks while speaking with her.

**Clue: Radaga broke etiquette, Moth Orchid Tea House, Secret signals.** When the city bell rang earlier, Radaga ignored correct etiquette by failing to say, "May the Duchess favor us all." Rosalind has never seen her make such a faux pas before, whether at the ball or at their bimonthly dates at the Moth Orchid Tea House. Rosalind might go on and on about how she never knows what to order, and the type of tea Radaga always orders (Pleine Lune blend), and about how Radaga's hands are always busy fidgeting and moving her tea leaves around her cup.

## ZOLANE THE APPOINTED BLESSED

The largely inept half-elf priest Zolane (zoh-LAIN) was gifted his position at the Mother of Tears Cathedral, but doesn't really know what he should be doing. Unfortunately, it's been so long that he fears that if he reveals his ineptitude, the duchess will be furious. (If this comes up in roleplay or deception, you and the players can decide what the priest's unknown duties are.)

Zolane wears an ill-fitting robe and a mask festooned with beads and stones painted to resemble bees swarming around a hive. He stands against a wall watching the other guests. If asked about Radaga, he smirks, casually mentioning the black velvet mask she wore to tonight's masquerade, and how much he would love to get a closer look at it.

**Area: Captain Lasal's earrings.** Any character who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to look around the area notices a pair of hairwork earrings with a stylized "L" dangling from them on the floor next to Zolane. These earrings belong to Captain Lasal, returning them to her gives the characters advantage on Charisma checks made to speak with her. The earrings are somewhat unusual for Dementlieu, insofar as they appear to be

actually valuable. Rather than being crafted of cheap lead wire covered in paint, the earrings are made of fine silk hairs and braided into intricate designs that must have taken a master artisan a great deal of time to complete.

**Clue: Radaga was too inquisitive at Mother of Tears Cathedral, broke etiquette, arrived without her familiar.** Radaga occasionally joined Zolane for services at the Mother of Tears Cathedral, but he stopped inviting her when she pried too closely into what he did there. He says that she arrived unusually early for the masquerade and left unfashionably early as well. Even more oddly, she normally always uses her crawling claw familiar to open doors, hold her glass, and so forth, but the creepy undead hand was not with her this day.

### THE CLUES LEAD THE WAY!

Send the table captain to the event administrators with the total number of clues uncovered by the characters. Any tables that gathered six clues earn the Superlative Sleuth story award, and every table playing the epic is given a spell scroll as part of that award. See "Story Award: Superlative Sleuth" at the end of part 1.

## WANDERING NPCs (ADMIN-RUN)

To bring the setting to life during the play of this epic, special partygoers played by event administrators approach each table to engage the characters and offer the potential for additional rewards. An administrator might play one or all of these wandering NPCs, depending on how many administrators the event has. Wandering NPCs engage the players until each NPC has visited every table or part 1 of the adventure ends, whichever happens first.

### WANDERING NPC I: TSARRREVNA ARRAYONA PURRRFUNCTORY

This tabaxi wears a paper-mache sun mask (doubling as a starfish this night) and a flowing dress made of strips of fabric. She approaches the characters to say, "Hello, I'm Tsarrrevna Arrrayona Purrrfunctory. This is a wonderful song. May I have this dance?"

#### TSARRREVNA ARRAYONA PURRRFUNCTORY

*Tabaxi self-titled noble*

Tsarrrevna Arrrayona Purrrfunctory (zah-RRREV-nuh ah-rray-AH-nuh purrr-FUNK-tuh-ree, with "rrr" representing rolled "r" sounds if possible) is a tortoiseshell tabaxi. A mane of thick fur along her neck and head accentuates the sun mask she wears for the Grand Masquerade. Arrrayona is rather energetic and is excited to get to know guests she's never met before.

**What They Want.** Arrrayona wants to dance.

**Not-So-Quiet Rebel Lion.** In a land where everyone has little but must pretend to have much, Arrrayona has lost patience with the charade of Dementlieu. She chose her name and title as a rebellious act, knowing it could very well worsen her life—or end it. But if Duchess Saidra d'Honaire understands that "tsarevna" is a title almost as powerful as duchess, she has never seemed angered by it. In fact, it might well be her name that has gotten Arrrayona regular invitations to the Grand Masquerade.

The characters work together to choose one character to indulge Arrrayona in a paired dance, whose success is determined by the character attempting a DC 10 Dexterity (Performance) check. During the dance, Arrrayona occasionally adds an almost imperceptible flourish to her moves, her gaze daring the character to add a personal touch to their own dance steps. A character who chooses to add a flourish to their steps makes the check with disadvantage but earns the respect of Arrrayona even if they don't pull it off. Any characters from Dementlieu have advantage on the check.

#### INTERACTIVE ELEMENT: DANCE CONTEST!

The administrator portraying Arrrayona logs the names of all dancer characters who succeed on their Dexterity check, noting the total of the check. At the end of this section, the administrators choose one winner with the highest Dexterity roll, breaking any ties among dancers with d20 rolls. The dancer with the highest roll is crowned Best Dancer at the end of the masquerade (see "Contest Winners" below).

Characters who succeed or who risked adding a flourish to the character's dance moves impress Arrrayona, and she provides one tidbit of juicy gossip that might be helpful if the characters choose to speak with a particular partygoer.

Reading as Arrrayona, the DM chooses a bit of gossip related to one of the partygoers below (ideally an NPC the characters haven't talked to yet):

- **"Captain Lasal (fox mask)** is said to have received her education at a prestigious naval academy—but the truth is, it was only her uncle's alma mater. You might say she dove in headfirst to get on-the-job training as an enlisted sailor—a perfectly legitimate way to earn rank and skills, and pay off family debts. But Lasal fears others' judgment and losing what opportunities her manufactured history has gained her."
- **"Gilbert Moreno (elephant mask)** mysteriously gained access to the duchess's court, and since then has shown signs that he fears something else even more than her wrath."
- **"Julien Vallotton (cobra mask)** is a sly one. He listens and watches, exchanging secrets for compensation. But some of us are perfectly aware of this and choose to have him hear the information we want him to spread."
- **"Lady Olivia (jellyfish mask)** is a secretive one, but who among us isn't? Still, for someone so reticent, she's not good at hiding that she has secrets. Facial expressions and body language tell all."
- **"Lisle Durand (butterfly mask)** wants nothing more than to be remembered. Simply calling them by their name is a boost to their self-esteem."
- **"Rosalind Addington (bird mask)**, like so many others, wishes for an alternative to the lives we have here. The difference is that Rosalind has a real opportunity to be out of constant view of the duchess and her expectations. She could go live in the country at her family home."
- **"Zolane the Appointed Blessed (swarm of bees mask)** doesn't know up from down. The duchess gave him his title, but he has no idea what he's meant to do with it. By now, he's far too afraid to ask—but he cares little for others' safety. Make sure you use your best manners

when talking to him. He's quick to expose someone else to cover his own shortcomings."

#### WANDERING NPC 2: BASIL THE ATTENDANT

Wearing a zombie woolly mammoth mask, Basil is less a guest than a member of the estate staff. However, he's well respected among the duchess's court. He wanders the ball with undead puns and a tray of assorted finger foods, saying, "Pardon me. I'm your necroserver, Basil. We must always dismember to party on a full stomach. Would you like some hors d'oeuvres? Of corpse you would!"

#### BASIL

*Human necromancer*

Basil (BAY-zel) works on the d'Honaire estate as a server, but even that position is held only by those Duchess Saida deems worthy. Though a relatively young necromancer, he is unmatched at his craft.

**What They Want.** Basil wants every ... body to have a good time. He's ... risen to the occasion and brought his best undead puns. This is a very fancy party!

**Necroserver.** Basil is often sought after for his quick and precise castings to help loved ones gain clear communication with the dead. He has even more enthusiasm and skill for carrying out even darker deeds at the duchess's command. Today, she commands that he serve hors d'oeuvres. He's into it.

Basil offers a tray of hors d'oeuvres to the characters, whose contents are shown on handout 2:

- Corpse flower nectar tarts
- Bearded devils (crispy shrimp heads with only a little mold)
- Stone rolls (large croutons)
- Carrot sticks (an illusion covers how wilted they are)
- Rat fingers (breaded, deep-fried rat legs)
- Deviled griffon eggs
- Bits and pieces (kitchen scraps mixed into salsa atop a fragment of bread)
- Angel wings (stirge wings topped with house dressing)

Basil answers truthfully if asked about the ingredients in his appetizers, or a character who studies the food can determine those ingredients with a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check or Wisdom (Perception or Survival) check. Any character who has proficiency with cook's utensils makes this check with advantage.

Basil's tray of hors d'oeuvres presents a faux pas challenge. The characters might remember (or you can allow a character with the Keen Mind feat to automatically remember) that they should not reach over other food lest they break etiquette rule three. A character can pick up a corpse flower nectar tart or a bearded devil without reaching across foods, but to safely take any of the other hors d'oeuvres requires that the tray be turned, the character use a *mage hand* spell, or other creative means. If a character breaks etiquette and commits a faux pas, refer to the "Let Me Count the Ways" sidebar and track the faux pas on the tally sheet of appendix A—Bone appétit!

If all characters at the table follow food etiquette, Basil asks if anything "remains" for him to help them with,

If asked about Radaga he says the last person to see her was Zolane the Appointed Blessed (swarm of bees mask).

If asked about the Duchess, he believes he just saw her by Lisle Durand (butterfly mask).

## “PARTY’S OVER!” SAID THE DUCHESS (ADMIN-RUN)

The event administrators announce the end of the masquerade 60 minutes after it begins. At this point, players should return to their tables if they’re not there already.

By the end of the masquerade, each group should have obtained at least three clues to locations elsewhere in the city that Radaga is known to frequent. Multiple clues might point to the same location, so if a group fails to uncover clues to two sites, the table captain can go to a neighboring table to ask the players there to share the clues they gathered.

Event administrators receive the “Best Dancer” information from the Wandering NPC, Arrrayona. They review the tables’ tally sheets, looking for the “Best Manners” winner, number of “Superlative Sleuths!” story awards, if the “Rising Suspicions!” story award was triggered, and other information worth sharing (how many guests out of the eight did tables question, et cetera).

### CONTEST WINNERS!

The event administrators announce the following results.

**Best Dancer.** The dancer who cut a rug with Arrrayona and had the highest Dexterity check (see the “Wandering NPCs” section) wins the Best Dancer award. The character is awarded an intricately folded paper fan, which the player can keep at the table. The fan can be used to grant advantage on one Dexterity check for to one bearer or the unused fan can be given to another table. By giving the fan away, the previous bearer has advantage on two Charisma checks. If the new bearer chooses to give the unused fan to a neighboring table, they too earn advantage on two Charisma checks. Sharing information (or, in this case, a fan) amongst fellow investigators is good practice.

**Best Manners.** The table whose characters committed the fewest faux pas win the Best Manners award. The party earns two tiny meringue desserts, each of which can be used to grant advantage on one Charisma check. The bearer of an unused meringue dessert can choose to give it to a neighboring table. The character that gave the dessert away earns inspiration for each meringue given away. If the new bearer chooses to give that meringue dessert to a neighboring table, they too earn inspiration.

**Kabe’s Impressions.** This isn’t a win that the Duchess or her court would be aware of. However, Kabe is proud of the Mist Hunters’ collective accomplishments. Tell the tables how many out of the eight guests they questioned. State how many or which tables earned the “Superlative Sleuths!” story award. Warn them of the “Rising Suspicions” story award.



### SUPERLATIVE SLEUTHS!

Any characters who find six clues at the Grand Masquerade earn the respect of Kabe Whippoorwill, and notice clues others don’t later in the adventure. Their hard work also earns every table playing this epic one *spell scroll of comprehend languages*, compliments of Kabe.



### RISING SUSPICIONS!

The tables at the epic averaged five or more faux pas each. The characters let their “masks slip” too often. Now the city watch is on the lookout for imposters.

Each DM, during part 2 or 3, inserts one encounter at their table with the Port-à-Lucine city watch (a **veteran**, a **knight**, and one or two **mag**s). Combat in public may raise suspicions and should be challenging—if not wholly unwinnable.

## DEVELOPMENT

The event administrators announce when it’s time to proceed to part 2 of the adventure. In the meantime, the DM should inform each player that their character has advanced to 2nd level. The event allows 20 minutes for players to advance their characters. Players can also use this time to use the restroom, stretch their legs, or just talk, but they shouldn’t stray too far. Everyone needs to be back in time to begin part 2.

## PART 2: PORT-À-LUCINE

**Estimated Duration:** 60 minutes

### ADMINISTRATING PART 2

The event administrators announce the commencement of part 2 of the adventure when it's ready to begin. This part of the adventure is a timed event. One of the administrators should use a stopwatch to determine that the following announcements and activities occur as prescribed below:

**0 Minutes:** The city awaits and DMs begin part 2

**40 Minutes:** 20-minute warning announcement

**50 Minutes:** 20-minute warning announcement

**60 Minutes:** Time is up

### PORT-À-LUCINE

After gleaning clues from the attendees of the Grand Masquerade, the characters must follow those leads across the city of Port-à-Lucine in search of Radaga. Four possible locations where Radaga is known to have spent time might be followed up on:

- Legacy Library at Jalabert Museum
- Mother of Tears Cathedral
- Moth Orchid Tea House
- Red Widow Theater

Which and how many locations the characters choose to visit is dependent on what clues they received, their preferences, and the time allowed.

**Themes:** Social decay, well-to-do, feigned niceties

#### KEEPING A LOW PROFILE

Since being open about their goal of finding Radaga might attract unwanted (and socially unacceptable) attention, the characters must mask their investigation. Knowing that Radaga is well placed within Duchess Saidra d'Honaire's circle, the easiest cover story consists of seeking the scholar in the hope of obtaining an invitation to the next Grand Masquerade, to be held the following week.

### AREA INFORMATION

The city of Port-à-Lucine has the following features.

**Dimensions and Terrain.** This port city lies along the Sea of Sighs and encompasses Pernault Bay and Lucine Bay. Its glitzy, wealthy facade belies the decay and ruin shot through its streets and buildings.

**Light and Weather.** A heavy fog roils beyond the city docks to drift into the business and residential areas. It diffuses the light from the sun during the day and reflects the moonlight at night.

**Smells and Sounds.** The city is generally bustling with citizens seeing to their daily tasks—and attempting to look busier and more important than they actually are. When the wind blows in from the water, the scent of salt doesn't quite manage to disguise a foulness to the air.

#### LET ME COUNT THE WAYS

Strict etiquette is followed throughout Dementlieu, not just at the ball. During parts 2 and 3 do not report faux pas to the event administrators, however, keep a tally.

**Social Affects.** Anytime a character commits a faux pas, witnesses spread the word. The next Charisma check that character makes is made with disadvantage. (Word gets around fast!)

**More Rising Suspicions.** For every five faux pas you tally, the Port-à-Lucine city watch notices the characters' "masks slip" and investigates (a **veteran**, a **knight**, and one or two **mag**s). Combat in public may raise suspicions and should be challenging—if not wholly unwinnable.

#### WATCH MY DISGUISE

Characters who found four or more clues at the Grand Masquerade each now have a city watch uniform. While wearing a watch uniform, a character has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to interact with the general public but has disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks and Charisma (Deception) checks made to interact with real members of the city watch.

Moreover, at any moment that feels appropriate, you can decide there is a 30 percent chance that a real member of the city watch notices the characters and become suspicious.



#### RISING SUSPICIONS!

If your table earned this story award, insert one encounter with the Port-à-Lucine city watch (a **veteran**, a **knight**, and one or two **mag**s), in part 2 or 3. Combat in public may raise suspicions and should be challenging—if not wholly unwinnable.

### LEGACY LIBRARY AT JALABERT MUSEUM

Characters can follow up on Radaga's connections to the Legacy Library at Jalabert Museum, provided by Captain Lasal and Lisle Durand at the Grand Masquerade. They pass through the city's cultural district en route to the small museum, which is just one of many such spaces in the culture-rich Port-à-Lucine. The district boasts several large art installations that pay homage to Duchess Saidra and her reign over the city. However, close inspection of any of the pieces reveals that they are dented, stained, and crumbling.

A set of grand stairs leads up to the Legacy Library at Jalabert Museum. But as you pass through the entrance, you realize the museum is as silent as a tomb. To one side of the hall, a human woman sorts and organizes the contents of a book cart. She appears surprised to see visitors.

**Themes:** Loneliness, forbidden knowledge



## AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features.

**Dimensions.** The museum's grand foyer features ample open space and is approximately 100 feet on a side. Heavy double doors separate the foyer from the building's east and west wings. A large desk covered in books is centered on the rear wall of the foyer.

**Lighting.** *Driftglobes* mounted at fixed positions along the walls fill the museum with bright light.

**Sounds and Smells.** The air is heavy and musty, as if the building has been sealed up for years. Footsteps ring soundly against the marble floor as the characters walk.

### ISOLDA SAVANT

*Human curator*

Isolda Savant (ee-SOL-duh sav-AHNT) is a tall, broad-shouldered woman with ochre skin, a deep-blue headscarf, and a severe look on her face. If asked about her favorite books, her brown eyes glisten, her wide mouth grins, and she'll talk the listener's ear off.

**What They Want.** Adding volumes to the library's collection is Isolda's singular passion in life. She's constantly searching for new books carried by travelers, though she's frequently disappointed by the museum's lack of patrons.

**Bibliophile.** Isolda would gladly spend the rest of her days surrounded by the volumes she cares for, preferring the quiet of the archive to a more social life.

## DUE DATE

If the characters bring the book given to them by Captain Lasal and return it to Isolda, she nods gratefully—but not before narrowing her eyes at the thought of someone losing track of one of her books.

## LISLE'S FAVOR

Mentioning either Radaga or the favor she asked of Lisle Durand draws a deep sigh from the archivist. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that Madam Savant disapproves of Radaga and what she sees as Radaga's manipulation of Lisle.

## MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK

If the characters begin asking questions of Isolda, she gestures to the number of books she needs to sort through before the end of the day. "If you can help me return these books to the stacks, I'll be glad to sit and chat with you over a cup of tea."

## THE STACKS

Isolda opens the heavy doors to the west wing of the building, gesturing for the characters to enter so she can lock the door behind them. Above the door is stenciled the phrase: "Only by looking back can we find the way forward." Beyond, the west wing is filled with rows and rows of bookshelves, all full of books of varying ages—from delicate volumes with crumbling leather covers, to newly copied tomes that practically still smell of fresh ink.

Isolda and the characters can make short work of her shelving, with the characters carefully carrying stacks of books while navigating the tight space between shelves, and not tripping over cozy reading chairs and small tables. A character who succeeds on a DC 13 Dexterity check manages their tasks without dropping their books.

**Unexpected Visitors.** At one point, in between two stacks of bookshelves, a bookcase suddenly pivots to block the party from Isolda. The shelf is a **mimic**, accompanied by two **swarms of animated books**. Any character who failed their Dexterity check while shelving made enough noise dropping books that the mimic and the swarms of animated books are drawn to them instead of Isolda.

## TALKING TO ISOLDA

Even after the characters take care of the threat, Isolda remains startled by the treacherous books and the shelf mimic, and is desperate for that cup of tea. As she and the characters return to her desk to sit and talk, use the following information to guide the conversation.

**How Did You and Radaga Meet?** "I've never actually met Radaga, but I understand that she has been asking dangerous questions. One of my fellow archivists was assisting her with her so-called research until they were too uncomfortable to continue. They directed her, it seems, to me. She persuaded Lisle Durand to introduce us, but frankly, I'm glad we haven't met. I'm loath to deter the pursuit of knowledge, but I don't think this Radaga has good intentions."

**What has Radaga Been Studying?** "It's all been very strange. My coworker tells me she's been looking into methods of contacting some sort of otherworldly beings. She's lucky she didn't come to return that book. I'd give her a talking-to about meddling in things she doesn't understand."

**Where Might We Find Radaga?** Isolda purses her lips when questioned about Radaga's whereabouts. A charismatic appeal or a persuasive argument can sway her to procure the library's register of borrowers, which details the name of the apartment complex where Radaga is staying: Vallotton Villas.

### INTERACTIVE ELEMENT: A BOOK SEPARATED FROM THE SWARM

If characters complete their encounter with the swarm of books, upon leaving the library it is discovered that a book from the swarm hid itself in an adventurer's pack.

During this adventure, characters may convince the book to pester the city watch, keeping them away if the characters have the "Raised Suspicions!" story award or otherwise attract the attention of the city watch ("Let Me Count the Ways: More Rising Suspicions").

Once used in this way, the book has a 30% chance of surviving. If the book survives, send them to a neighboring table to help in the same way.

## MOTHER OF TEARS CATHEDRAL

Characters who follow up on Radaga's connections to the Mother of Tears Cathedral, provided by Gilbert Moreno and Zolane the Appointed Blessed at the Grand Masquerade, can arrange to attend services at the cathedral, in the heart of Port-à-Lucine.

The modest Mother of Tears Cathedral is dedicated to Ezra, God of the Mists. The air within the sanctuary is filled with the sobbing cries and mourning wails of worshipers, all gathered around an impressive ivory statue of Ezra, who weeps into her hands with her sword and shield set beside her.

**Themes:** Abuse of power, uselessness of inaction, secrecy

### EZRA, GOD OF THE MISTS

Of all the deities worshiped in Ravenloft, Ezra might well be the only one who exists in a role that can be considered benevolent. Some followers of Ezra—including the clergy and worshipers found at the Mother of Tears Cathedral—teach that it is better to passively mourn and weep for the horrors of the world than it is to actually combat and defeat them.

### AREA INFORMATION

The cathedral has the following features.

**Dimensions.** The cathedral's inner sanctum measures 100 feet wide by 150 feet long, making it large enough to host significant numbers of the city's worshipers. Tall arched windows line the sanctum, with the statue of Ezra presiding over all present from the far end.

**Lighting.** The windows are illuminated magically, filling the sanctuary with bright light.

**Sounds and Smells.** Murmurings abound as those attending service converse with each other or offer prayers and thanks to Ezra. The scent of snuffed-out candles lingers in the room.



### SUPERLATIVE SLEUTHS!

Characters with the Superlative Sleuth story award find Radaga's handkerchief that Gilbert Moreno had blessed, carefully folded at the statue's feet. A character holding the handkerchief has advantage on one Wisdom (Insight) check. The handkerchief can also be given away to another table, granting the table of the characters who found it advantage on two Intelligence checks. Story items are usable only during the adventure in which they are earned.

### NPC INFORMATION

Zolane the Appointed Blessed loiters in the cathedral's antechamber, outside the sanctuary. If the characters didn't meet him at the ball, he eyes them suspiciously.

If asked about Radaga, Zolane says the last time he saw her she was wearing a hideous blue silk jacket that wasn't, at all, an appropriate style. He hasn't seen the scholar as of late. According to him, that's probably for the best, as it seems like she's up to no good. He expresses concern that the duchess will find out about Radaga's mysterious research, but any character with a passive Wisdom (Insight) score of 13 or higher gets the distinct impression that Zolane is likely to have an active role in the duchess "finding out." He also reveals that he heard a rumor that Radaga asked her landlord if she could paint the door to her apartment red—something about warding off evil. The priest rolls his eyes at the notion.

Radaga's behavior has started to affect Zolane's work as well. He's caught her skulking around the sanctuary, lingering after services—poking around like she's looking for something in the northeast corner of the sanctuary, near the cloakroom.

The characters have several options for investigating the cathedral further to see what Radaga was up to. If they wish to involve the Appointed Blessed, they might try to talk Zolane into cooperating with them (a DC 18 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check). (Convincing him that his superiors might blame him for whatever Radaga was doing, but that the characters will happily help him cover it up is easily done.) The characters might also attempt to distract Zolane or disguise their search.

### ZOLANE THE APPOINTED BLESSED

*Half-elf tattletale priest*

Zolane (ZOH-layn) is a tall, thin man with bright blue eyes, tidy blond hair, and steely features with a light purple undertone. He often feels judged and imagines the worst about what others think of him—true or not. To deflect attention from himself, he is the first to accuse others of misdeeds—true or not.

**What They Want.** Zolane wants to be in the duchess's good graces.

**You Can't See Me.** Zolane's title was given to him by the duchess, but she never told him what it means or what his role at the cathedral is meant to be—a fact he doesn't feel safe admitting to anyone. He's so afraid that someone will notice his lack of knowledge that he tries to catch others in their own failures, hoping it takes attention off him.

### THE VAULT

Investigating the area where Radaga was snooping around brings the characters to the cathedral's cloakroom, where any thorough search spots a secret trap door—a 5-foot-by-5-foot section of flooring that is slightly lower than the rest of the floor. Any character who succeeds on a DC 11 Intelligence (Religion) check recalls that most cathedrals boast an underground storage facility to protect their holy relics.

**Opening the Vault.** Any character who has proficiency with mason's tools or the Stonecunning trait, or who makes a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check, can work out how to open the vault's entrance by depressing and rotating the lowered section of floor, which secures it under the adjoining floor. The entrance to the vault isn't trapped but manipulating the stone flooring requires that two characters work together—one succeeding on a DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check and the other succeeding on a DC 16 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check simultaneously.

The door grinds open, revealing a flight of stone stairs that descends into darkness. At the bottom of the stairs, a passage 50 feet long extends under the cathedral's sanctuary. Any character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 16 or higher notices two sets of footprints in the dust on the stone floor of the hall. At the end of the passage stands a door with two locks and two levers on either side. The levers don't open the door, but each must be pulled up to allow the lock to be picked with a successful DC 13 Dexterity check using thieves' tools.

**What's in the Box?** The vault is in a state of disarray. From the disturbances in the dust of the floor, it is apparent that someone entered here recently, looking for something. Aside from dusty tomes and moldering scrolls, all unreadable, the only things of note are a 2-foot-by-3-foot jeweled box and a button, recently torn from blue silk (like what Zolane reported Radaga was wearing). The jeweled box lid has been removed and tossed aside, suggesting that the intruder claimed whatever was inside.

When the characters emerge, Zolane is waiting anxiously in the cloakroom. If they explain what they've found below, he seems more distressed about the duchess finding out about the robbery than the break-in itself.

**Treasure.** The characters can claim the empty jeweled box.

#### INTERACTIVE ELEMENT: BUTTON, BUTTON

The characters found one button from Radaga's hideous jacket. The button can be used to grant advantage on one Wisdom check.

During this adventure, the bearer of the unused button can choose to give it to a neighboring table. The character that gave the button away earns advantage on two Intelligence checks, in exchange. If the new bearer chooses to give the unused button to a neighboring table, they too earn advantage on two Intelligence checks.

## MOTH ORCHID TEA HOUSE

Characters who follow up on Radaga's connection to the Moth Orchid Tea House, provided by Lady Olivia Stuart and Rosalind Addington, make their way through the city toward the popular shop. All locals know that the tea house is named for an orchid that grows well in darkness.

You find the Moth Orchid Tea House among many other boutiques in an elegant and exclusive section of the Port-à-Lucine business district. Small cafe tables line the sidewalk in front of the shop's large picture window, and a bell chimes over the door as you enter.

**Themes:** Covert communication, fortune telling

#### AREA INFORMATION

The tea house has the following features.

**Dimensions.** The tea house is more extensive than it appears from the outside, featuring a front area approximately 20 feet by 60 feet, much of which is taken up by small tables, chairs, and a long counter where customers place their orders. At the far end of the counter hangs a dark velvet curtain the same sapphire color as the walls, which divides the front seating area from a 40-foot-by-30-foot back room with booths built into the walls. Each booth has its own velvet privacy curtain.

**Lighting.** Magical wall sconces shed bright light throughout the front room, and light streams in the large picture window at the front of the building by day. The back room is decidedly darker, with dim light shed by fixtures hanging from the ceiling.

**Sounds and Smells.** An earthy scent is prevalent from various tea canisters and the wooden floorboards that creak under the characters' feet. The delicate clinking of china cups rises above the gentle hum of conversation.

#### HOW CAN I HELP YOU?

The shop's proprietor, Esemir Marek, calls out to the characters as they enter: "I'll be with you in just a moment!" She then finishes rearranging canisters behind the counter before approaching her new customers.

#### ASSAM, SUGAR

If a character noted Lady Olivia Stuart's subconscious recollection of her order in part 2 using thieves' cant signs, they can place the same order with Esemir using thieves' cant. A character who does so has advantage on Charisma checks with Esemir during this encounter.

#### PLEINE LUNE BLEND, PLEASE

Characters who learned of Radaga's go-to tea, Pleine Lune blend, from Rosalind Addington might order it for themselves. This results in an almost imperceptible rise of Esemir's eyebrows.



#### ESEMIR MAREK

*Human tea-monger*

Esemir Marek (ESS-uh-MEER MARE-eck) is a short, heavyset woman with orange-brown skin, dark-green eyes, salt-and-pepper hair, and a friendly smile. She could pass as anyone's doting aunt, but her sharp eyes size up any newcomers to her shop quickly.

**What They Want.** Though the tea house looks pleasant enough from outside, it is a frequent gathering place for local ne'er-do-wells, and Esemir protects their secrets with her disarming charm.

**Read Between the Lines.** Esemir is a charming confidante and attentive listener. It's almost as though she's trying to decipher a second level of meaning in your words.

## TEATIME

When the characters have ordered, Esemir nods quietly and escorts them to a private booth in the shop's back room, then draws the curtains closed. Not long after, a server appears to set cups and steaming teapots in front of the characters, all of whom notice the cups' unusual glazing. The outside of each cup is decorated in a colorful floral pattern, while inside is a thin outline of an orchid with five petals. Between each petal are five symbols.

A character who has proficiency with an herbalism kit or who succeeds on a DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana, Nature, or Religion) check recognizes that the cup is perfectly designed for fortune-telling—and for passing messages. (The characters can also learn this from Esemir with suitable roleplaying.) People either allow the tea leaves to fall where they may to predict their fortune, or they covertly move the tea leaves where they want to pass secret messages to those who know how to read the leaves.

Handout 3: Reading Tea Leaves shows the interior of the cup, and sets out the basis of using the tea leaves to predict the future, as discussed below.

## TEA READING

The pattern inside the cup is representative of aspects of the drinker's life, as noted in handout 3 or use the random table below. The orchid has five petals whose meanings are as follows (working clockwise from the top):

### TEA READING: ASPECTS OF YOUR LIFE

d10	Modifier	Meaning
1-2	top	career – your work life
3-4	top right	world – global matters
5-6	bottom right	self
7-8	bottom left	relationships
9-10	top left	home – your home life

Five symbols are stamped between the petals, symbolizing the following (working clockwise from the top):

### TEA READING: SYMBOLS

d10	Symbol	Meaning
1-2	dagger	dangers
3-4	scissors	losses
5-6	acorn	gains
7-8	anchor	safety
9-10	candle	help

The three columns at the bottom of handout 3 show the various shapes that the tea leaves might take on the bottom of the cup. The positions of a shape in relation to the petals of the orchid and the symbols outside it is what reflects the drinker's fortune.

## CLUMPED TEA LEAVES SHAPE

After a character drinks their tea, they can use handout 3 to show where their tea leaves land—or where they are covertly moved to if they want to try using the leaves to create a hidden message. To randomly tell their fortune, a player drops any number of d12s onto handout 3 so that they land in the teacup. The areas the dice landed in (the

nearest petal and icon) and the shape determined by the roll on the d12 generates the tea leaf reading, which the character can interpret as they feel is appropriate.

## TEA READING: CLUMP SHAPES

d12	Petal	Meaning
1	Bell	Outside demands
2	Bird	Good fortune
3	Clock	Time passing
4	Circle	Achievement, perfection
5	Diamond	Material well-being
6	Egg	New beginnings
7	Flower	Growth and healing
8	Heart	Love and happiness
9	Key	Solutions revealed
10	Square	Learn from mistakes
11	Mountains	Challenges overcome
12	Snake	Enemies and falsehoods

## COVERT MESSAGES

To send a covert message to the server, a character describes what the server sees when they look at the character's teacup, and what message they are trying to send.

## TALKING TO ESEMIR

The characters might send a message through the server to Esemir, asking to talk to her about Radaga directly. Or they might try to ease into the discussion by asking her about the art of tea leaf reading. Either way, when the conversation turns to Radaga, use the following information to guide it:

**How Did You and Radaga Meet?** “Radaga started coming here to ask questions in her search for hard-to-find and rarely discussed items and knowledge.”

**Where Might We Find Radaga?** “From time to time, she spoke of her dealings with her landlord, **Julien Vallotton**. Perhaps if you head to the cultural district and ask for directions to his property, you might find her” (Characters who do so are informed that the orc landlord owns an apartment block called Vallotton Villas).

## INTERACTIVE ELEMENT: PASSING MESSAGES

The characters may leave one secret message at the tea house for one neighboring table. The message cannot have more information than the tea reading meanings listed on handout 3. For example, the characters could warn their fellow investigators about the murderer still roams the Red Widow Theater. To send a message, they may mark handout 3 or write about a “career” matter, “dangers,” “enemies, falsehoods,” and “learn from mistakes.”

This message doesn't spoil anything for the table but, at the least, it could give a small clue and build tension. At the most, it will be interesting to hear how the table interprets the message.

## RED WIDOW THEATER

Characters who follow up on Radaga's interest in the Red Widow Theater, provided by Araignée Stoermer and Julien Vallotton at the Grand Masquerade, can make their way to the notorious cabaret. The Red Widow caters to those who wish to indulge in life's pleasures as a way to escape its hopelessness. It's also frequented by arachnid shapeshifters like Araignée, who tempt attendees with danger and decadence before preying upon them.

The Red Widow Theater becomes visible blocks before you arrive there, thanks to the enormous arachnid sculpture on the roof, towering above the other buildings of the cultural district.

**Themes:** Lively music, decadent pleasures, shady dealings

### AREA INFORMATION

The theater has the following features.

**Giant Spider.** The gigantic spider statue on the roof is a garish crimson color, with a black hourglass shape on its abdomen. At night, the statue is illuminated with dancing crimson lights that give it an even more foreboding appearance.

**Dimensions.** Inside the theater, the main performance area is approximately 60 by 60 feet, with a stage 30 feet deep. A dozen tables scattered around the room seat either two or four guests. Small alcoves along the walls perpendicular to the stage provide darker spaces for darker deeds.

**Lighting.** Footlights run the length of the stage to illuminate the performers, but the rest of the area is dimly lit. Each table features a small nonmagical lantern that sheds bright light in a 5-foot radius and dim light for an additional 5 feet.

**Sounds and Smells.** When performers are not on stage, lively music is projected into the room and the tables are pushed to the perimeter to allow for dancing. The rich redolence of lacquered wood mingles with the scent of dozens of enthusiastic dancers.

### ARE YOU THE NEW TROUPE?

Some of the performers at the Red Widow like to play pranks on visitors they don't recognize, acting like the characters are the new talent that has been hired for an evening's festivities. Unless confronted and told to stop, the performers herd the characters on stage as soon as they appear, chanting encouragement for them to entertain the crowd. The characters can decide how they perform (whether individually, in pairs, or all together) and what kind of performance they want to create. Various theater props are available backstage to aid the characters, including but not limited to:

- A coffin
- Acrobatic hoops
- Batons that can be lit on fire
- A feather boa

One of the performers acts as an emcee, introducing the party. "Hello, friends and other fine folks! We're pleased to

introduce to you tonight to our newest act ..." The emcee then leans into the characters to catch their troupe's name. (Let the players come up with one quickly.)

You can allow players who want to go along with the ruse to roleplay the characters' attempts to entertain the crowd, or call for ability checks of your determination. If the characters successfully entertain the crowd, they earn a bit of notoriety in the city, granting each character advantage on their next Charisma check. The players can additionally grant this benefit to one other table of their choice.

### A MEMORABLE MEETING

Araignée Stoermer is warming up for her next performance while the characters are on stage (or while they refuse the invitation from the other performers). She wanders over to say hello, either remembering them if they met her at the Grand Masquerade, or out of general interest.

#### ARAIGNÉE STOERMER

*Human (shapechanger) actor*

Araignée Stoermer (ah-REN-yeh STOR-mehr) takes on many guises as an arachnid shapeshifter. But the one she uses in public is that of a human woman with near-translucent skin bearing pale yellow undertones, black-brown eyes, and whisper-thin strawberry-blond hair. When working the Red Widow Theater, she is casually dressed in a flowing ensemble fit for acrobatics.

**What They Want.** Araignée is a shapechanger who feeds on humanoids—and her primary desires are all centered on her next victim.

**And All That Jazz.** The vibrant nightlife of Dementlieu suits Araignée, and she enjoys toying with her conquests before escorting them to their end.

### TALKING TO ARAIGNÉE

Araignée is happy to talk to the characters, assessing them as possible allies—or victims. If she's asked about Radaga, she says she hadn't seen the scholar in a week or more before the Grand Masquerade. After the ball, she expected to meet with Radaga at the Red Widow, but Radaga hasn't turned up. Use the following information to guide the rest of the conversation.

**How Did You and Radaga Meet?** Araignée claims that it's natural for performers and audience members to mingle after shows, but a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check hints that her relationship with Radaga is more complicated. If pressed further, the acrobat confesses that Radaga originally began attending the cabaret's performances because of the dark rumors surrounding them. "Radaga was ... looking for something. She wouldn't tell me what. She questioned me so thoroughly and seemed disappointed when she found out that some of my fellow performers and I can ... work up an appetite." With a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check, characters sense they are in the presence of a predator, although they are not in immediate danger. Araignée and this theater may not be what they seem.

**Where Might We Find Radaga?** Araignée has grown fond of Radaga, regardless of what trouble the scholar seems to have gotten herself into. She's told the other shapeshifters at the Red Widow that Radaga is under her protection, and watches from a window on the cabaret's upper floor to make sure she gets home safely. "She

doesn't live far from here. Though I've never visited, I know she walks home after performances, and I can see her turn into a street down the block. The Rue du Bercy."

### MY, WHAT BIG EYES YOU HAVE

Before leaving, if time permits, ask the characters if there's anything else they want to do. If the characters explore the Red Widow more fully, either before or after talking to Araignée, they stumble upon a shapeshifter performer who has lured a reveler into one of the cabaret's dark alcoves—and is clearly about to murder them. If interrupted, the creature shifts into their **phase spider** form and attacks. While the reveler comes to their senses and flees, the shapeshifter fights to the death.

#### INTERACTIVE ELEMENT: RED WIDOW REVENGE

When the shapeshifter performer is killed, send the table captain to report the killing to the event administrators. After 10 percent of the event's tables kill the shapeshifter performer, the event administrators announce the following ramifications.

Red Widow staff found the lifeless bodies of their coworkers. Any parties currently within the Red Widow Theater are immediately kicked out, without finishing their investigation or interviews. All field operatives are now banned from entering the Red Widow Theater. The performers at the Red Widow grieve their coworkers' murder and seek revenge.

For each further location entered in part 2 and for each location entered in part 3, each DM rolls for a 50 percent chance that a Red Widow performer hunts down the party, transforms into a **phase spider**, and attacks. This Red Widow revenge encounter is triggered once for each table.

## DEVELOPMENT

The event administrators announce when it's time to proceed to part 3—the exciting climax of the adventure.



# PART 3: SOMEONE LEFT IN A HURRY

**Estimated Duration:** 60 minutes

## ADMINISTRATING PART 3

The event administrators announce the commencement of part 3 of the adventure when it's ready to begin. This part of the adventure is a timed event. One of the administrators should use a stopwatch to determine that the following announcements and activities occur as prescribed below:

**0 Minutes:** "Further Investigation" announcement

**40 Minutes:** 20-minute warning announcement

**50 Minutes:** 20-minute warning announcement

**60 Minutes:** Time is up

## FURTHER INVESTIGATION (ADMIN-RUN)

The characters' investigations into Radaga's whereabouts have turned up information leading them to her residence—an apartment with a red door at Vallotton Villas on the Rue du Bercy. An event administrator reads the following:

You've infiltrated Duchess Saidra's d'Honaire's Grand Masquerade ball, learned of a number of locations where Radaga has been recently seen, and gathered clues pointing to her residence. After comparing notes with Alanik Ray's other field agents, you are looking for a red door within an apartment complex called Vallotton Villas, down Rue du Bercy in the cultural district.

When you arrive there, Rue du Bercy is illuminated by a rainbow of magical and mundane lighting, and is clogged with an unorganized parade of costumes and merriment. Fresh illusions make the facades of buildings in the cultural district sparkle. Vallotton Villas shines with gilded trim, new crimson paint, and fluttering flags that seem to say: "Better to stay in here."

Residents dressed in their best finery fill the street and the apartment courtyards in a festive intermission before their next party or show. Finding and gaining access to Radaga's apartment unnoticed won't be easy.

DMs should then proceed with "Is Anyone Home?"

## IS ANYONE HOME?

Clues obtained in part 2 lead the characters down Rue du Bercy to an apartment block where Radaga is rumored to reside. The street out front and the building's hallways are crowded with residents celebrating and gossiping—and bargaining, manipulating, and pleading for invitations to the next Grand Masquerade.

The characters must make their way to Radaga's apartment, then find her. If unable to find her, they must seek out clues about what might have happened to her.

**Themes:** Stealth, break-in, possession, mind control

## AREA INFORMATION

Vallotton Villas has the following features.

**Dimensions and Terrain.** The apartment complex occupies a city block about 200 feet by 300 feet in size. It quickly becomes clear that the complex is glamourped to look better maintained than it actually is. Its wallpaper is patched with mismatched scraps, and its fine gilding is a shimmering illusion over plain brown paint. Each of the building's residents uses varying amounts of decoration, illusions, and upkeep on their apartment doors.

**Lighting.** Hallways in the building are bright in some places and dimmer in others, depending on the residents' preferences.



### RISING SUSPICIONS!

If your table earned this story award and has not yet had their encounter with the Port-á-Lucine city watch (a **veteran**, a **knight**, and one or two **mag**es), they are questioned during part 3. Combat in public may raise suspicions and should be challenging—if not wholly unwinnable.

## POSSIBLE APARTMENTS

From the clues gathered in part 2 of the adventure, three potential apartments appear to be Radaga's. The players can choose which apartments their characters check, but they don't need to visit them all.

**Apartment One:** This dark red door is ill lit, and easy to mistake for an off-lobby storage room. A large concentration of partying residents mill about here.

**Apartment Thirteen:** This dark red door is poorly decorated. A group of six laughing friends congregates in front of the door—one of whom is Lisle Durand.

**Apartment Twenty-Two:** This dark red door has been freshly painted and stands at the end of the hallway. The door is somehow easily overlooked, and any character who studies or touches it confirms that an illusion is being used to make the door more innocuous. Three members of the city watch are in the hallway, in front of the door.

## AVOIDING NOTICE

Countless people (mostly human **commoners** and **nobles**) mill about around and inside the apartment block, whiling away their time until their next cultural event. For the most part, situations where a character must pass unnoticed or otherwise avoid attention require a successful DC 12

Dexterity (Stealth) check. Alternatively, a character can blend in with the crowd with a successful DC 12 Charisma (Stealth) check—unconventional but effective. This check is made with advantage if you feel that the character making it has a suitable distraction.

You can decide which characters need to keep a low profile based on what they're doing. You can also determine how badly a check needs to be failed that the city watch is summoned, and whether the characters can talk their way out of bad checks with roleplaying.

### THE PORT-À-LUCINE WATCH

If summoned, the city watch responds with a squad of two **veterans** led by a **knight**. This is a more-than-deadly encounter for 2nd-level characters and wastes valuable time. If the watch is summoned, the characters can placate the members of the patrol by promising that everything was a misunderstanding, that they're terribly sorry, and so forth. However, if repeatedly called out to investigate wrongdoing, members of the watch will quickly run out of patience.

#### LET ME COUNT THE WAYS

Strict etiquette is followed throughout Dementlieu, not just at the ball. During part 3 do not report faux pas to the event administrators, however, keep a tally.

**Social Affects.** Anytime a character commits a faux pas, witnesses spread the word. The next Charisma check that character makes is made with disadvantage. (Word gets around fast!)

**More Rising Suspicions.** For every five faux pas you tally, the Port-à-Lucine city watch notices the characters' "masks slip" and investigates (a **veteran**, a **knight**, and one or two **magés**). Combat in public may raise suspicions and should be challenging—if not wholly unwinnable.

#### WATCH MY DISGUISE

Characters who found four or more clues at the Grand Masquerade each now have a city watch uniform. While wearing a watch uniform, a character has advantage on DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to interact with the general public but has disadvantage on DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) checks and Charisma (Deception) checks made to interact with real members of the city watch.

Moreover, at any moment that feels appropriate, you can decide there is a 30 percent chance that a real member of the city watch notices the characters and become suspicious.

### APARTMENT ONE: JULIEN VALLOTTON

Apartment One is in the crowded lobby. The door to this apartment is locked and requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to open—or the copper key found near Julien Vallotton at the Grand Masquerade. Attempts to pick the lock first require a successful check to avoid notice (see "Avoiding Notice" above). On a failed check, the crowd pushes characters away from the residence either in anger or merriment, depending on the characters' behavior.

#### NPC INFORMATION

Julien Vallotton is at home. If the characters break into his apartment or open the door using the copper key found in part 1, he is incensed at the unwanted intrusion. He calls

out for the city watch to remove the trespassers if they don't leave on their own.

#### JULIEN VALLOTTON

*Orc secrets broker and landlord*

Whether out on the town or relaxing at home, Julien Vallotton (joo-lee-EHN val-oh-TOHN) has a keen interest in others' secrets—and a strong desire to keep strangers away from his own secrets.

**What They Want.** In addition to his profession as a landlord, Julien trades in secrets. A keen observer, he is adept at blending into social situations and filing away what he hears for future use.

**Keeping Watch.** Julien respects his tenants' privacy in their own homes. But he feels justified to exploit anything he observes and overhears in public.

If the characters choose instead to knock on the door, Julien answers. Presuming that their interaction with him isn't immediately hostile, he identifies Radaga's residence to any character who succeeds on a DC 15 Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion) check. If the characters found the copper key in part 1 and returned it to Julien, this check is made with advantage.

### APARTMENT THIRTEEN: ABSENT NEIGHBORS

The door to this home is locked and requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to open. Attempts to pick the lock first require a successful check to avoid notice (see "Avoiding Notice" above and "NPC Information" below).

#### NPC INFORMATION

If the check to avoid notice fails by 5 or more, Lisle Durand spots the characters where Lisle and a group of friends congregate nearby. Lisle recognizes them from the masquerade (even if the characters didn't interact with them there), asking the characters how they enjoyed the ball, if they know the people who live in the apartment, why they are here, and so forth.

#### LISLE DURAND

*Human self-conscious noble*

Lisle Durand (LEEL duh-RAHND) is a buff figure of average height, with yellow-brown skin, darting brown eyes, and short black hair. They seem to never stop moving, and are constantly adjusting their garments, glancing about, or fussing at other people. An astute observer might notice that Lisle's reluctance to hold still for even a moment is an attempt to hide their threadbare finery and fraying garments.

**What They Want.** More than anything, Lisle Durand wants everyone to know their name.

**Social Butterfly.** Lisle is inquisitive, wanting to know everything about the characters and their presence in Dementlieu.

Lisle doesn't know Radaga's apartment, but says they've always imagined it as having some manner of creepy magic about it. They confirm that they did see Radaga's door key once and noted that it was made of iron. With a successful DC 13 Charisma (Deception, Intimidation,



or Persuasion) check, a character can convince Lisle and their friends to congregate elsewhere.

Characters entering the apartment find very little of any value. It is decorated sparsely, and the setup of the bedroom and closets suggest that a couple lives here. Any character searching the apartment who succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds an envelope tucked behind a pedestal by the front door. The envelope is labeled as being from “The Shadow Archives” and addressed to “Apartment Twenty-Two.” If opened, the Shadow Archive letter promises to correspond soon with directions for viewing their library, if her registration application passes the review process. In the apartment, the characters also find a note (handout 4).



### SUPERLATIVE SLEUTHS

Characters with the Superlative Sleuth story award who search the apartment also find a note left by one of the apartment’s residents for the other (see handout 4: The Couple’s Note). It reads as follows:

“While you were out, it happened again. I saw that ‘thing’ alone in the lobby, getting her mail. It dropped an envelope when I tried to shoo it outside. I don’t know why Julien allows her to keep that around when he doesn’t allow pets. And it’s been alone in her apartment for who knows how long today. When I get back from my visit, I hope you will have spoken to Julien about this. It shouldn’t be here.”

If the players share the couple’s note with another table that does not have this story award, the characters have advantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks when they enter Radaga’s apartment.

### APARTMENT TWENTY-TWO: RADAGA

The door to this apartment has an illusion on it that makes it less noticeable. In front of the door are the city watch. The door is also locked and requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves’ tools to open—or the iron key found near Lady Olivia Stuart at the Grand Masquerade. Attempts to pick the lock first require a successful check to avoid notice (see “Avoiding Notice” above and “Creature Information” below). If the characters announce that they’re looking for Radaga (whether in the course of knocking on the door or simply speaking together outside the door), her crawling claw familiar (see “Creature Information”) takes notice and unlocks the door for them.

#### AREA INFORMATION

Radaga’s apartment has the following features.

**Dimensions and Terrain.** The 20-by-50-foot apartment is separated into front room, office, bedroom, and bathroom. It is cluttered with books, maps, research notes, oddities, and everyday items that have seemingly been thrown around. (This gives Radaga’s familiar a lot of objects to hide behind or throw at the characters.)

**Lighting.** The apartment is dark except for light the characters bring with them.

#### CREATURE INFORMATION

Radaga lives next to someone who works on the city watch. The characters arrive as the neighbor and their watch partner (two **veterans**) are starting their shift.

With a successful DC 15 Charisma check using an appropriate skill, the characters can convince the watch to go elsewhere. On a failed check, the city watch attacks, trying to kick them out of the apartment complex.

In addition to the city watch outside the apartment, Radaga’s **crawling claw** companion—the desiccated, animated hand of a long-dead mage colleague—is inside. If the characters enter uninvited, the familiar suspects that the characters are trying to steal Radaga’s dark secrets or wishing to harm its best friend. It protects Radaga’s possessions while she is away, throwing objects from its hiding spaces at the intruders (+2 to hit; 1d4 bludgeoning damage). See the “Creature Statistics” section for the crawling claw’s stat block and additional features.

Wherever the characters go in the apartment, the hand uses magic Radaga has imbued into the walls to write threatening messages: “Leave,” “Do not harm Radaga,” “Do not take what is hers,” and so forth.



#### CRAWLING CLAW COMPANION

*Creepy undead hand*

Once the hand of a powerful mage, Radaga’s undead familiar is fiercely protective of its friend.

**What They Want.** To protect Radaga.

**Best Familiar Forever.** The crawling claw worries about Radaga, and is willing to fight sinew and nail to make sure she is safe.

## RADAGA'S SECRETS

Any character who succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check finds the crawling claw where it hides. The characters can also convince the crawling claw that they have come to help Radaga with a successful DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If convinced to stand down, Radaga's familiar is relieved, and speaks to the characters by way of the writing on the walls. "I kept that parcel to show someone. Radaga is not safe. She is not right. Something is not right. We must find her. We have to help."

A search of Radaga's apartment finds her dresser and wardrobe empty of important personal possessions. Necessities, scholarly books, and most magic items that once might have been here have all been packed up and taken away. From all evidence, it appears that Radaga has left and has no intention of returning.

With a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check, a character finds a recently wrapped parcel hidden under a chair. (The crawling claw kept it from being taken with the rest of Radaga's belongings). Inside are several cryptic documents that will take time for the Order to decipher. However, one note catches your eye; it was seemingly passed from one person to another, with two distinct handwriting styles, using the same writing implement and ink. The text of the argument can be seen in handout 5: Radaga's Notes.

A character who studies the notes in greater detail and succeeds on a DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check notices that even though they were written by two people, the notes were all written using the same ink pen.

## TREASURE

Misplaced when Radaga's belongings were packed up, a jar of *rotsalve* has rolled under the bed (see handout 6: Investigation Journal).



### LET'S GIVE HER A HAND!

If the characters interact with Radaga's crawling claw familiar and make it clear they are looking for Radaga with the intent of helping her, they earn her familiar's trust.

The crawling claw travels with the party as a DM-controlled NPC through the next few adventures in the campaign, hoping the characters help it reunite with its friend.

## WRAP-UP (ADMIN-RUN)

With the characters' investigation at Vallotton Villas done, the adventure finishes up with them returning to Kabe Whippoorwill. To conclude this epic, an event administrator reads the following:

Like you, Kabe Whippoorwill was hoping Radaga could have been found. But they can't hide their pleasure at the results of your investigations.

"I'm not going to lie," the halfling says. "Your assistance has been invaluable. Were it not for you, I don't think we'd have figured out half as much as we have. I guess this is the downside of being a devilishly rakish investigator whose wits and charm are outshined only by their reputation. If it weren't for you there's no chance we would have known Radaga was looking for amber sarcophagi or that she's been taken through the Mists. Obviously, something more complicated is going on with her."

"I'm sure Alanik and I will be able to sort out some of the other leads to know how best to proceed next. We've got our research team chomping at the bit, trying to decipher those cryptic documents you unearthed. You did good. Now, here," Kabe says with a smile, tossing a coin pouch in your direction. "Go explore the city and have a drink on me. We'll be in touch soon."

With the adventure concluded, an event administrator should inform all the players that their characters have advanced to 3rd level.

## INVESTIGATION JOURNAL

Provide each player with a copy of the Investigation Journal. Before the session is over, each player must choose which of the items found during the adventure they'd like to keep, and line out others.

# DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following NPCs feature prominently in this adventure.

## ALANIK RAY

*Elf investigator*

A confident, insightful, and shrewd investigator, Alanik Ray (uh-LAHN-ick RAY) is one of the most well-traveled mortals in the Domains of Dread. He is a master of insights and deduction, able to glean the most intimate details of other creatures' lives only moments after meeting them—including almost instantaneously deducing a character's native domain from their accent and mannerisms. An accidental fall during an investigation years before caused a spinal injury that paralyzed Alanik's legs. He now uses a custom wheelchair that he created with the assistance of his husband and investigative partner, Arthur Sedgwick.

More information on Alanik can be found in *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft*.

**What They Want.** Alanik is investigating the disappearance of the scholar Radaga. As a highly recognizable figure, he often recruits field agents to aid him in his investigations, and he has tapped the characters to help him now.

**Lead Investigator.** Radaga's disappearance has been brought to Alanik by the Order of the Guardians, a group dedicated to seeking out and neutralizing dangerous magic.

## ARAINÉE STOERMER

*Human (shapechanger) actor*

Araignée Stoermer (ah-REN-yeh STOR-mehr) takes on many guises as an arachnid shapeshifter. But the one she uses in public is that of a human woman with near-translucent skin bearing pale yellow undertones, black-brown eyes, and whisper-thin strawberry-blond hair. When working the Red Widow Theater, she is casually dressed in a flowing ensemble fit for acrobatics.

**What They Want.** Araignée is a shapechanger who feeds on humanoids—and her primary desires are all centered on her next victim.

**And All That Jazz.** The vibrant nightlife of Dementlieu suits Araignée, and she enjoys toying with her conquests before escorting them to their end.

## BASIL

*Human necromancer*

Basil (BAY-zel) works on the d'Honaire estate as a server, but even that position is held only by those Duchess Saida deems worthy. Though a relatively young necromancer, he is unmatched at his craft.

**What They Want.** Basil wants every ... body to have a good time. He's ... risen to the occasion and brought his best undead puns. This is a very fancy party!

**Necroserver.** Basil is often sought after for his quick and precise castings to help loved ones gain clear communication with the dead. He has even more enthusiasm and skill for carrying out even darker deeds at the duchess's command. Today, she commands that he serve hors d'oeuvres. He's into it.

## CAPTAIN LASAL

*Tiefling concerned captain*

Captain Lasal (LAS-uhl) relies on the formalities of military life to insulate herself from becoming too close to anyone who might learn the truth of her upbringing. Even the few friends she allows herself to care for find her quite reserved.

**What They Want.** Captain Lasal has her eyes on taking the title of commodore in the navy, in hopes of finally securing her family's stability in the social ranks.

**Military Formality.** Though she claims to have trained at a most prestigious naval academy, the captain enlisted in the navy at a young age to pay off her family's debt. She dreads the day that she is exposed as a fraud.

## CRAWLING CLAW FAMILIAR

*Creepy undead hand*

Once the hand of a powerful mage, Radaga's undead familiar is fiercely protective of its friend.

**What They Want.** To protect Radaga.

**Best Familiar Forever.** The crawling claw worries about Radaga, and is willing to fight sinew and nail to make sure she is safe.

## ESEMIR MAREK

*Human tea-monger*

Esemir Marek (ESS-uh-MEER MARE-eck) is a short, heavyset woman with orange-brown skin, dark-green eyes, salt-and-pepper hair, and a friendly smile. She could pass as anyone's doting aunt, but her sharp eyes size up any newcomers to her shop quickly.

**What They Want.** Though the tea house looks pleasant enough from outside, it is a frequent gathering place for local ne'er-do-wells, and Esemir protects their secrets with her disarming charm.

**Read Between the Lines.** Esemir is a charming confidante and attentive listener. It's almost as though she's trying to decipher a second level of meaning in your words.

## GILBERT MORENO

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### *Human noble in dire debt*

Gilbert Moreno (mor-EH-no) is a survivor, and wants his life to consist of more than just eking out a living. His calculating mind is up to the task—but will his dread fear undo him?

**What They Want.** A name that all others respect.

Why should the duchess be the only true nobility in Dementlieu?

**Be Careful What You Wish For.** Gilbert's cheerful demeanor belies his thirst for power. He's made a dark deal with an unnamed entity in exchange for a place in Dementlieu society, and the closer he gets to fulfilling his end of the bargain, the more desperate he is to avoid it.

## ISOLDA SAVANT

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### *Human curator*

Isolda Savant (ee-SOL-duh sav-AHNT) is a tall, broad-shouldered woman with ochre skin, a deep-blue headscarf, and a severe look on her face. If asked about her favorite books, her brown eyes glisten, her wide mouth grins, and she'll talk the listener's ear off.

**What They Want.** Adding volumes to the library's collection is Isolda's singular passion in life. She's constantly searching for new books carried by travelers, though she's frequently disappointed by the museum's lack of patrons.

**Bibliophile.** Isolda would gladly spend the rest of her days surrounded by the volumes she cares for, preferring the quiet of the archive to a more social life.

## JULIEN VALLOTTON

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### *Orc secrets broker and landlord*

Whether out on the town or relaxing at home, Julien Vallotton (joo-lee-EHN val-oh-TOHN) has a keen interest in others' secrets—and a strong desire to keep strangers away from his own secrets.

**What They Want.** In addition to his profession as a landlord, Julien trades in secrets. A keen observer, he is adept at blending into social situations and filing away what he hears for future use.

**Keeping Watch.** Julien respects his tenants' privacy in their own homes. But he feels justified to exploit anything he observes and overhears in public.

## KABE WHIPPOORWILL

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### *Halfling interdomain scout*

Alanik Ray's scout, associate, and friend, Kabe Whippoorwill (KAYB WIP-er-wil) is also secretly a member of the Keepers of the Feather (a fact known only to Alanik). A lightfoot halfling with a quick smile and a mean right hook, Kabe possesses a dark gift that allows them to traverse the Domains of Dread. Acting as both a guide for the characters and a field contact, they are an invaluable member of the investigative team.

**What They Want.** Kabe's line of work is dangerous, so they want to ensure that everything goes smoothly. Losing an agent is never the desired outcome.

**Mist Walker.** Kabe is Alanik's scout, investigatory partner, friend, and an invaluable member of the team. They also work as the party's field contact.

## LADY OLIVIA STUART

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### *Human brusque noble*

Not much stops Lady Olivia Stuart (oh-LIV-ee-uh STOO-ert) from doing what she wants and thinks is right.

**What They Want.** Life is short and often boring, so it's best to enjoy as much of it as you can. Titles don't mean anything if you don't plan to take advantage of what they bring.

**Trust Me.** Lady Olivia is exceptionally well spoken, and she speaks a lot. She's able to convince anyone of virtually anything. What's a lie or two among acquaintances if it helps you get your way?

## LISLE DURAND

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### *Human self-conscious noble*

Lisle Durand (LEEL duh-RAHND) is a buff figure of average height, with yellow-brown skin, darting brown eyes, and short black hair. They seem to never stop moving, and are constantly adjusting their garments, glancing about, or fussing at other people. An astute observer might notice that Lisle's reluctance to hold still for even a moment is an attempt to hide their threadbare finery and fraying garments.

**What They Want.** More than anything, Lisle Durand wants everyone to know their name.

**Social Butterfly.** Lisle is inquisitive, wanting to know everything about the characters and their presence in Dementlieu.

## RHIAN LOCKHART

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### *Human fate-steeper*

Rhian (ree-AHN) is a tall human with light-brown skin, short-cropped dark-brown hair, and heavy-lidded brown eyes. They are a Tarokka reader of great skill, and a practiced traveler of the Mists. When Rhian speaks, their rich voice rings throughout the room. Their measured words and practiced mannerisms are intended to relax those who come to their tea shop for Tarokka readings, to allow the cards to speak.

**What They Want.** Rhian has been tasked with bringing together a group of individuals well suited for traveling through the Mists.

**Oracle.** "What would you say if I told you that your perceived weaknesses are actually your strengths?"

## ROSALIND ADDINGTON

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### *Human noble and busy procrastinator*

Rosalind Addington (ROZ-uh-lind ADD-ing-ton) is talkative and honest, which is not always the best combination for someone who unknowingly mingles with members of a secret society.

**What They Want.** Rosalind is desperate to retire to her family's estate on Chateaufaux, the (in truth, nonexistent) countryside surrounding Port-à-Lucine, and put society life behind her.

**Fake It Till You Make It.** Rosalind has chronic insomnia. She compensates for her perpetually exhausted state by overextending herself in social situations and acting jovially in public. But she lives with the constant fear that her manners will slip and she will offend the duchess.

## TSARRREVNA ARRAYONA PURRRFUNCTORY

*Tabaxi self-titled noble*

Tsarrrevna Arrrayona Purrrfunctory (zah-RRREV-nuh ah-rrray-AH-nuh purrr-FUNK-tuh-ree, with “rrr” representing rolled “r” sounds if possible) is a tortoiseshell tabaxi. A mane of thick fur along her neck and head accentuates the sun mask she wears for the Grand Masquerade. Arrrayona is rather energetic, and is excited to get to know guests she’s never met before.

**What They Want.** Arrrayona wants to dance.

**Not-So-Quiet Rebel Lion.** In a land where everyone has little but must pretend to have much, Arrrayona has lost patience with the charade of Dementlieu. She chose her name and title as a rebellious act, knowing it could very well worsen her life—or end it. But if Duchess Saidra d’Honaire understands that “tsarevna” is a title almost as powerful as duchess, she has never seemed angered by it. In fact, it might well be her name that has gotten Arrrayona regular invitations to the Grand Masquerade.

## ZOLANE THE APPOINTED BLESSED

*Half-elf tattletale priest*

Zolane (ZOH-layn) is a tall, thin man with bright blue eyes, tidy blond hair, and steely features with a light purple undertone. He often feels judged and imagines the worst about what others think of him—true or not. To deflect attention from himself, he is the first to accuse others of misdeeds—true or not.

**What They Want.** Zolane wants to be in the duchess’s good graces.

**You Can’t See Me.** Zolane’s title was given to him by the duchess, but she never told him what it means or what his role at the cathedral is meant to be—a fact he doesn’t feel safe admitting to anyone. He’s so afraid that someone will notice his lack of knowledge that he tries to catch others in their own failures, hoping it takes attention off him.



# CREATURE STATISTICS

## COMMONER

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

**Armor Class** 10

**Hit Points** 4 (1d8)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** any one language (usually Common)

**Challenge** 0 (10 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Club.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

## CRAWLING CLAW

Tiny undead

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 2 (1d4)

**Speed** 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	4 (-3)

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, poisoned

**Senses** blindsight 30 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 10

**Languages** understands Common but can't speak

**Challenge** 0 (10 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Turn Immunity.** The claw is immune to effects that turn undead.

### ACTIONS

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) bludgeoning or slashing damage (claw's choice).

### STAT BLOCK MODIFICATIONS

This crawling claw companion uses the **crawling claw** stat block with these changes:

- It has a flying speed of 20 feet.
- It has the Innate Spellcasting trait. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 7). The crawling claw familiar knows the following spells:

At will: *friends*, *minor illusion*, *illusory script*

- It has the following additional action option:

**Throw Object.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 10/40 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

## GHOUL

Medium undead, chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 22 (5d8)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature.  
*Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage. If the target is a creature other than an elf or undead, it must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

## KNIGHT

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

**Armor Class** 18 (plate)  
**Hit Points** 52 (8d8 + 16)  
**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

**Saving Throws** Con +4, Wis +2  
**Senses** passive Perception 10  
**Languages** any one language (usually Common)  
**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Brave.** The knight has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The knight makes two melee attacks.

**Greatsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

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

**Leadership (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).** For 1 minute, the knight can utter a special command or warning whenever a nonhostile creature that it can see within 30 feet of it makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear and understand the knight. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if the knight is incapacitated.

### REACTIONS

**Parry.** The knight adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the knight must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

## MAGE

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

**Armor Class** 12 (15 with mage armor)  
**Hit Points** 40 (9d8)  
**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

**Saving Throws** Int +6, Wis +4  
**Skills** Arcana +6, History +6  
**Senses** passive Perception 11  
**Languages** any four languages  
**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Spellcasting.** The mage is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The mage has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, light, mage hand, prestidigitation*  
1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, mage armor, magic missile, shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *misty step, suggestion*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, fireball, fly*

4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility, ice storm*

5th level (1 slot): *cone of cold*

### ACTIONS

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

## MIMIC

Medium monstrosity (shapechanger), neutral

**Armor Class** 12 (natural armor)  
**Hit Points** 58 (9d8 + 18)  
**Speed** 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	5 (-3)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)

**Skills** Stealth +5  
**Damage Immunities** acid  
**Condition Immunities** prone  
**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11  
**Languages** —  
**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Shapechanger.** The mimic can use its action to polymorph into an object or back into its true, amorphous form. Its statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

**Adhesive (Object Form Only).** The mimic adheres to anything that touches it. A Huge or smaller creature adhered to the mimic is also grappled by it (escape DC 13). Ability checks made to escape this grapple have disadvantage.

**False Appearance (Object Form Only).** While the mimic remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an ordinary object.

**Grappler.** The mimic has advantage on attack rolls against any creature grappled by it.

### ACTIONS

**Pseudopod.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage. If the mimic is in object form, the target is subjected to its Adhesive trait.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) acid damage.

## NOBLE

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

**Armor Class** 15 (breastplate)  
**Hit Points** 9 (2d8)  
**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

**Skills** Deception +5, Insight +4, Persuasion +5  
**Senses** passive Perception 10  
**Languages** any two languages  
**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

### ACTIONS

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

### REACTIONS

**Parry.** The noble adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the noble must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

## PHASE SPIDER

Large monstrosity, unaligned

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)  
**Hit Points** 32 (5d10 + 5)  
**Speed** 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

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

**Skills** Stealth +6  
**Senses** Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10  
**Languages** —  
**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Ethereal Jaunt.** As a bonus action, the spider can magically shift from the Material Plane to the Ethereal Plane, or vice versa.

**Spider Climb.** The spider can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

**Web Walker.** The spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.



## SWARM OF ANIMATED BOOKS

Medium swarm of Tiny constructs

**Armor Class** 12 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 22 (4d8 + 4)

**Speed** 0 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)

**Damage Vulnerabilities** fire

**Damage Immunities** poison, psychic

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, stunned

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 10

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**False Objects.** If the swarm is motionless at the start of combat, it has advantage on its initiative roll. Moreover, if a creature hasn't observed the swarm move or act, that creature must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to discern that the swarm is animate.

**Swarm.** The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a 1-foot-tall, 8-inch-wide, 2-inch-thick object. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

### ACTIONS

**Book Club.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 6 (2d4 + 1) bludgeoning damage, or 3 (1d4 + 1) bludgeoning damage if the swarm has half its hit points or fewer.

## VETERAN

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

**Armor Class** 17 (splint)

**Hit Points** 58 (9d8 + 18)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Skills** Athletics +5, Perception +2

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** any one language (usually Common)

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The veteran makes two longsword attacks. If it has a shortsword drawn, it can also make a shortsword attack.

**Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

**Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

**Heavy Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

# HANDOUT 1: DEMENTLIEU ETIQUETTE

Anyone in Dementlieu must follow specific rules of etiquette that are largely unspoken and always changing. It can be challenging to keep up with the most up-to-date expectations, and faux pas can come with unwanted or terrifying consequences. Any faux pas might raise suspicion about the characters—or expose them as impostors.

Duchess Saidra d'Honaire thrives on social manipulation and forces the guests at her Grand Masquerade to create rules of their own. Your group should create one rule, which your table captain will submit to the event administrators as a possible addition to this handout. The event administrators will announce five new rules before part 1 of the adventure begins.

## 1. WHEN THE BELL TOLLS

When the city bell tolls, guests say, "May the Duchess favor us all."

## 2. NO ONE NOSE

Don't touch your nose while you are speaking to another person.

## 3. THE BREAD AND BUTTER OF FOOD ETIQUETTE

Never reach over food.

## 4. UNQUESTIONABLE

After greeting a stranger, your next sentence is never a question.

## 5. DON'T LET YOUR MASK SLIP

Never be unmasked (literally or figuratively).

6. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

----- Cut or tear this section to have the table captain submit the etiquette rule your table creates. -----

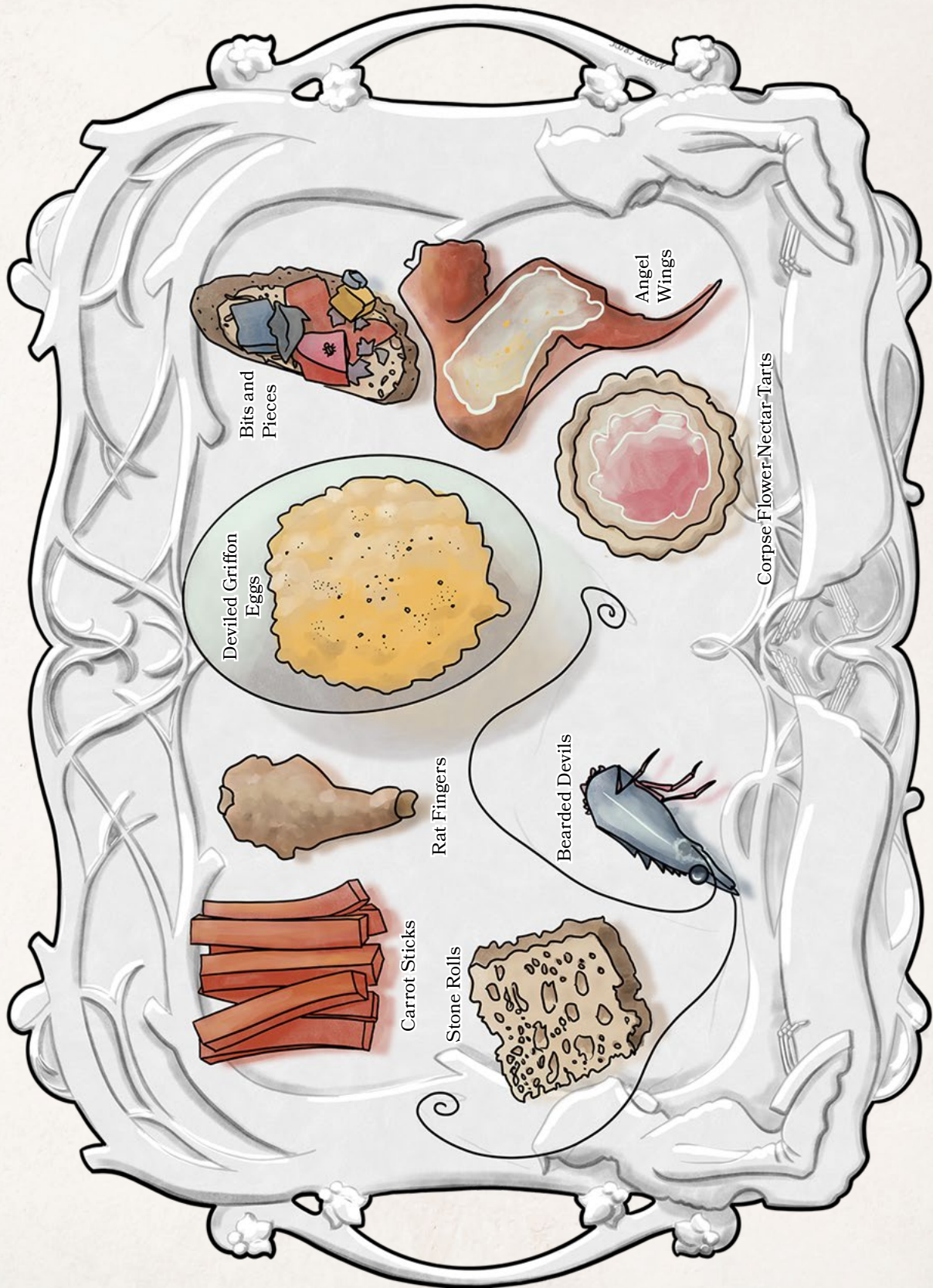
TABLE # \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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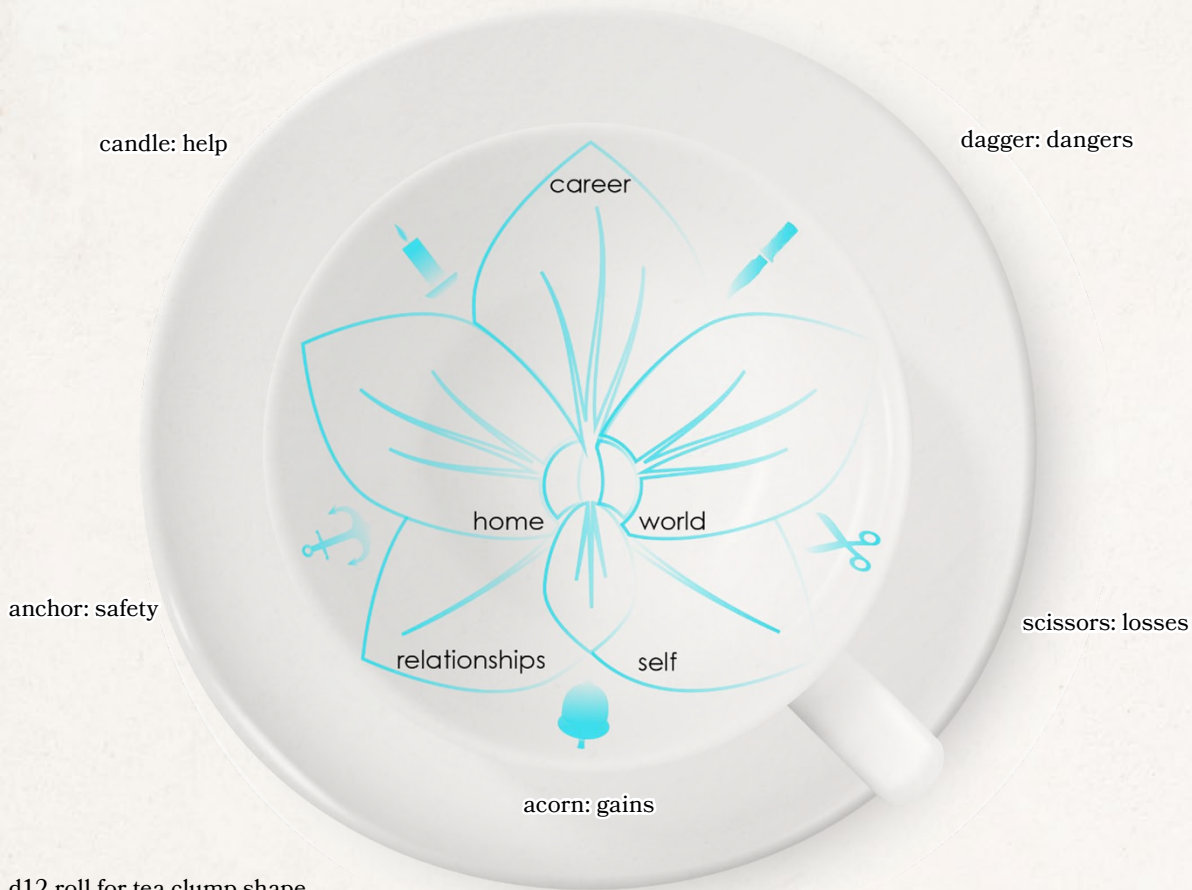
# HANDOUT 2: BASIL'S HORS D'OEUVRES TRAY

Basil the attendant presents his tray of hors d'oeuvres. Bone appétit!



# HANDOUT 3: READING TEA LEAVES

The pattern inside the teacup is a five-petaled orchid flower and is representative of aspects of the drinker's life. Each petal has a meaning, as do the five symbols stamped between the petals. The three columns at the bottom of the page show the various shapes that the tea leaves might take on the bottom of a cup. The position of a shape in relation to the petals of the orchid and the symbols outside it are what reflects the drinker's fortune. After a character drinks their tea, they can roll any number of d12s so that they land in the teacup. The areas the dice landed in (the nearest petal and icon) and the shape determined by the roll on the d12 generates the tea leaf reading, which the character can interpret as they feel is appropriate.



## d12 roll for tea clump shape

- |   |                                     |   |                                 |    |                                   |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|----|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | Bell:<br>outside demands            | 5 | Diamond:<br>material well-being | 9  | Key:<br>solutions revealed        |
| 2 | Bird:<br>good fortune               | 6 | Egg:<br>new beginnings          | 10 | Square:<br>learn from mistakes    |
| 3 | Clock:<br>time passing              | 7 | Flower:<br>growth & healing     | 11 | Mountains:<br>challenges overcome |
| 4 | Circle:<br>achievement & perfection | 8 | Heart:<br>love & happiness      | 12 | Snake:<br>enemies & falsehoods    |

## HANDOUT 4: THE COUPLE'S NOTE

This note was found in apartment thirteen, written from one of its residents to the other.

If this note is shared with another table that does not have the Superlative Sleuth story award, the characters sharing it have advantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks when they enter Radaga's apartment.

"While you were out, it happened again. I saw that 'thing' alone in the lobby, getting her mail. It dropped an envelope when I tried to shoo it outside. I don't know why Julien allows her to keep that around when he doesn't allow pets. And it's been alone in her apartment for who knows how long today. When I get back from my visit, I hope you will have spoken to Julien about this. It shouldn't be here."

## HANDOUT 5: RADAGA'S NOTES

You found a recently wrapped parcel that Radaga's crawling claw familiar hid when her belongings were packed up. Inside are several cryptic documents that will take time for the Order to decipher. However, one note catches your eye; the paper seemingly passed from one person to another, with two distinct handwriting styles, using the same writing implement and ink. Below, the messages on the left represent one handwriting. The responses on the right represent the second handwriting.

Surely, you've researched the amber sarcophagi. I know it is something you and the Order would seek out.

We won't let you—

Tsk, tsk. I admit, my search here has been rather disappointing. Your sources and archives proved lacking. And your friends failed you too. I noticed the trail of items you "dropped." But no one recognized them as calls for help. You're alone, Radaga.

Free me. I won't help you.

Hush now. Our task is unfinished and I believe you can serve me elsewhere. Time to leave this domain.

# HANDOUT 6: INVESTIGATION JOURNAL

Parties are always fun...except when they're not. I trust that the food, fashion, and friends in accompaniment were to your liking. As entertaining as it can be to rub elbows with the elite of our fair domain—though as you no doubt found out, none of them were actually that—it was on to more important tasks.

Your keen wit led you to the clues you needed to locate Radaga's apartments. Unfortunately, she wasn't home when you came calling. That isn't to say that you didn't find important clues, though.

I'm eager to dive into them and see where they lead.

Yours in reason,

Alanik Ray

PS: As usual, the item that you found along the way is safe and sound at my chateau. I pray that you'll let me know if you have need of it in the future.

Choose one item from the list below by checking the box next to it.

- Spell scroll of *comprehend languages*
- Rotsalve\*

\**Rotsalve* functions as *Keoghtom's ointment* which is found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. This salve is made of rendered humanoid fat. The putrid scent of the ointment attracts the ire of the undead, and for 1 hour after a creature receives the ointment, attack rolls by undead against that creature are made with advantage.

## STORY AWARDS

- Let's Give Her a Hand
- Superlative Sleuths

# APPENDIX A:

## TALLY SHEET

During part 1 of this epic, the DM tallies the number of clues the characters uncover and how many faux pas they make, tracking those items on this sheet. At the end of part 1, the table captain submits this tally to the event administrators.

TABLE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

### POSSIBLE CLUES

The table below notes the possible clues the characters can uncover. The characters must uncover three clues, each of which gives them an idea of where to investigate next.

### POSSIBLE CLUES

d8	Clue
1	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Araignée Stoermer.</b> Radaga attends the Red Widow Theater. Radaga argued with herself and her eyes turn red.
2	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Captain Lasal.</b> Radaga didn't give Lasal her earrings. Return a book to the Legacy Library at Jalabert Museum.
3	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Gilbert Moreno.</b> Radaga didn't attend the ritual at the Mother of Tears Cathedral.
4	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Julien Vallotton</b> Radaga broke etiquette. She hummed a tune from the Red Widow Theater.
5	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Lady Olivia Stuart.</b> Radaga forgot her meeting at the Moth Orchid Tea House (The characters might also learn that Olivia's regular order is "Assam, sugar.")
6	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Lisle Durand.</b> Radaga snubbed the archivist from the Legacy Library at Jalabert Museum.
7	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Rosalind Addington.</b> Radaga broke etiquette. They meet regularly at the Moth Orchid Tea House.
8	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Zolane the Appointed Blessed.</b> Radaga was too inquisitive at the Mother of Tears Cathedral. She broke etiquette and arrived without her familiar.

TOTAL CLUES: \_\_\_\_\_

### CLUES

#### TWO CLUES COLLECTED!

One character asks another table's players for one clue their characters uncovered. (For a single-table epic choose one random clue from the table below). Do not tally this clue.

#### FOUR CLUES COLLECTED!

The characters find city watch uniforms for each of them. If worn, these uniforms give advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to interact with the general public but impose disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks and Charisma (Deception) checks made to interact with real members of the city watch.

#### SIX CLUES COLLECTED!

The characters earn the Superlative Sleuth story award (see the end of part 1).

### FAUX PAS

**1. When the Bell Tolls.** When the city bell tolls, guests say, "May the Duchess favor us all."

**2. No One Nose.** Don't touch your nose while you are speaking to another person.

**3. The Bread and Butter of Food Etiquette.** Never reach over food.

**4. Unquestionable.** After greeting a stranger, your next sentence is never a question.

**5. Don't Let Your Mask Slip.** Never be unmasked (literally or figuratively).

6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

Total Faux Pas \_\_\_\_\_



# APPENDIX B:

## WANDERING NPCs

To bring the setting to life during the play of this epic, special partygoers played by event administrators approach each table to engage the characters and offer the potential for additional rewards. An administrator might play one or all of these wandering NPCs, depending on how many administrators the event has. Wandering NPCs engage the players until each NPC has visited every table or part 1 of the adventure ends, whichever happens first.

### WANDERING NPC 1: TSARRREVNA ARRAYONA PURRRFUNCTORY

This tabaxi wears a paper-mache sun mask (doubling as a starfish this night) and a flowing dress made of strips of fabric. She approaches the characters to say, “Hello, I’m Tsarrrevna Ararrayona Purrrfunctory. This is a wonderful song. May I have this dance?”

#### TSARRREVNA ARRAYONA PURRRFUNCTORY

*Tabaxi self-titled noble*

Tsarrrevna Ararrayona Purrrfunctory (zah-RRREV-nuh ah-rrray-AH-nuh purrr-FUNK-tuh-ree, with “rrr” representing rolled “r” sounds if possible) is a tortoiseshell tabaxi. A mane of thick fur along her neck and head accentuates the sun mask she wears for the Grand Masquerade. Ararrayona is rather energetic and is excited to get to know guests she’s never met before.

**What They Want.** Ararrayona wants to dance.

**Not-So-Quiet Rebel Lion.** In a land where everyone has little but must pretend to have much, Ararrayona has lost patience with the charade of Dementlieu. She chose her name and title as a rebellious act, knowing it could very well worsen her life—or end it. But if Duchess Saidra d’Honaire understands that “tsarevna” is a title almost as powerful as duchess, she has never seemed angered by it. In fact, it might well be her name that has gotten Ararrayona regular invitations to the Grand Masquerade.

The characters work together to choose one character to indulge Ararrayona in a paired dance, whose success is determined by the character attempting a DC 10 Dexterity (Performance) check. During the dance, Ararrayona occasionally adds an almost imperceptive flourish to her moves, her gaze daring the character to add a personal touch to their own dance steps. A character who chooses to add a flourish to their steps makes the check with disadvantage but earns the respect of Ararrayona even if they don’t pull it off. Any characters from Dementlieu have advantage on the check.

#### INTERACTIVE ELEMENT: DANCE CONTEST!

The administrator portraying Ararrayona logs the names of all dancer characters who succeed on their Dexterity check, noting the total of the check. At the end of this section, the administrators choose one winner with the highest Dexterity roll, breaking any ties among dancers with d20 rolls. The dancer with the highest roll is crowned Best Dancer at the end of the masquerade (see “Contest Winners” below).

Characters who succeed or who risked adding a flourish, impress Ararrayona, and she provides one tidbit of juicy gossip that might be helpful if the characters choose to speak with a particular partygoer. (If the character added a flourish to their dancing, Ararrayona provides two tidbits of gossip.)

Reading as Ararrayona, the DM chooses a bit of gossip related to one of the partygoers below (ideally an NPC the characters haven’t talked to yet):

- “**Captain Lasal** is said to have received her education at a prestigious naval academy—but the truth is, it was only her uncle’s alma mater. You might say she dove in head-first to get on-the-job training as an enlisted sailor—a perfectly legitimate way to earn rank and skills—and pay off family debts. But Lasal fears others’ judgment and losing what opportunities her manufactured history has gained her.”
- “**Gilbert Moreno** mysteriously gained access to the duchess’s court, and since then has shown signs that he fears something else even more than her wrath.”
- “**Julien Vallotton** is a sly one. He listens and watches, exchanging secrets for compensation. But some of us are perfectly aware of this and choose to have him hear the information we want him to spread.”
- “**Lady Olivia** is a secretive one, but who among us isn’t? Still, for someone so reticent, she’s not good at hiding that she has secrets. Facial expressions and body language tell all.”
- “**Lisle Durand** wants nothing more than to be remembered. Simply calling them by their name is a boost to their self-esteem.”
- “**Rosalind Addington**, like so many others, wishes for an alternative to the lives we have here. The difference is that Rosalind has a real opportunity to be out of constant view of the duchess and her expectations. She could go live in the country at her family home.”
- “**Zolane the Appointed Blessed** doesn’t know up from down. The duchess gave him his title, but he has no idea what he’s meant to do with it. By now, he’s far too afraid to ask—but he cares little for others’ safety. Make sure you use your best manners when talking to him. He’s quick to expose someone else to cover his own shortcomings.”

### WANDERING NPC 2: BASIL THE ATTENDANT

Wearing a zombie wooly mammoth mask, Basil is less a guest than a member of the estate staff. However, he’s well respected among the duchess’s court. He wanders the ball with undead puns and a tray of assorted finger foods, saying, “Pardon me. I’m your necroserver, Basil. We must always dismember to party on a full stomach. Would you like some hors d’oeuvres? Of corpse you would!”

## BASIL

### *Human necromancer*

Basil (BAY-zel) works on the d'Honaire estate as a server, but even that position is held only by those Duchess Saidra deems worthy. Though a relatively young necromancer, he is unmatched at his craft.

**What They Want.** Basil wants every ... body to have a good time. He's ... risen to the occasion and brought his best undead puns. This is a very fancy party!

**Necroserver.** Basil is often sought after for his quick and precise castings to help loved ones gain clear communication with the dead. He has even more enthusiasm and skill for carrying out even darker deeds at the duchess's command. Today, she commands that he serve hors d'oeuvres. He's into it.

Basil offers a tray of hors d'oeuvres to the characters, whose contents are shown on handout 2:

- Corpse flower nectar tarts
- Bearded devils (crispy shrimp heads with only a little mold)
- Stone rolls (large croutons)
- Carrot sticks (an illusion covers how wilted they are)
- Rat fingers (breaded, deep-fried rat legs)
- Deviled griffon eggs
- Bits and pieces (kitchen scraps mixed into salsa atop a fragment of bread)
- Angel wings (stirge wings topped with house dressing)

Basil answers truthfully if asked about the ingredients in his appetizers, or a character who studies the food can determine those ingredients with a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check or Wisdom (Perception or Survival) check. Any character who has proficiency with cook's utensils makes this check with advantage.

Basil's tray of hors d'oeuvres presents a faux pas challenge. The characters might remember (or you can allow a character with the Keen Mind feat to automatically remember) that they should not reach over other food lest they break etiquette rule three. A character can pick up a corpse flower nectar tart or a bearded devil without reaching across foods, but to safely take any of the other hors d'oeuvres requires that the tray be turned, the character use a *mage hand* spell, or other creative means. If a character breaks etiquette and commits a faux pas, refer to the "Let Me Count the Ways" sidebar in part 1 of the adventure and track the faux pas on the tally sheet of appendix A.

Bone appétit!



# APPENDIX C:

## DUNGEON MASTER

### TIPS

To run an adventure as a DM, you can have no more than five players, each with their own character within the adventure's level range (see the "Adventure Primer" section at the start of the adventure).

#### NEW TO D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE?

Information about the Adventurers League, including finding places to play, organizing events, and a list of supporting resources and documents, can be found here: <http://dnd.wizards.com/playevents/organized-play>

#### PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself of while running it, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use during a combat. Familiarize yourself with the adventure's appendices and handouts.
- Gather any resources you'd like to use to aid you in running the adventure, such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battle maps.
- Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Wisdom (Perception) score; and anything the adventure specifies as notable (backgrounds, traits, and flaws, etc.).

A player can play an adventure they previously played as a player or Dungeon Master, but they can do so only once with a specific character. Ensure that each player has their character's adventure logsheet (if not, get one from the organizer) with their starting values for level, magic items, gold, and downtime days. These values are updated at the conclusion of the session. The adventure information and your information are added at the end of the adventure session—whether the character completed the adventure or not.

Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet. If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player's character sheet to ensure nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If they can't, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array.

Point players to the *D&D Adventurers League Players Guide* for reference. If players wish to spend downtime days and it's the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days immediately, or they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode. Players should select their characters' spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give the players hints about what they might face.

#### NEW PLAYERS? NO PROBLEM!

With starter adventures like this one, it's possible that you might have players who are new to D&D, or new to fifth edition D&D. It's up to you as the DM to ensure that these players have fun with the game, and that they learn the basics of how to play. At this level, having fun is more important than learning every rule exactly right. Be gentle with new players who make mistakes.

Make sure to keep your players smiling and rolling dice. Be positive and enthusiastic when describing the action, and you'll notice that they'll quickly follow suit.

If you are a new DM, then welcome—and thank you! New DMs are the lifeblood of the D&D community. To help you run your game, some adventures include sidebars like this one that provide an explanation of the game's rules as they're used in the adventure.

#### ADJUSTING THIS ADVENTURE

To determine whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, assess the **party strength** by consulting the table below.

#### DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH

Party Composition	Party Strength
Fewer than four characters	Weak
Four characters	Average
More than four characters	Strong

#### SAFETY TOOLS

Safety tools help ensure players aren't pushed beyond their comfort levels. These tools show your players you want them to have a positive experience. Some common safety tools are summarized below and this [article](#) provides more information.

- **Code of Conduct.** This is a group agreement for play. It outlines desired and prohibited behaviors, confidential reporting, and possible consequences.
- **Pre- and Post-game Discussions.** Use time before the game to explain content warnings, set boundaries, and collaborate on a safety plan. Then decompress and discuss improvements at the end of the game.
- **Be Welcoming.** Welcome and encourage respectful and open conversations about issues as they arise. Show you are listening by avoiding defensive responses.
- **Confidentiality.** Provide contact information for private and confidential conversations between players and DM. Only disclose another player's name if that player gave unpressured permission for you to do so.
- **Safety Tools.** Learn about the safety tools that TTRPG community members have created and compiled. A broad range of such safety tools are available for you and your players online. You can also reach out to your event organizer or [community@dndadventurersleague.org](mailto:community@dndadventurersleague.org).