



Bard's Gate

The Riot Act

James M. Spahn



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Bard's Gate

The Riot Act

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The Riot Act

An Adventure in Bard's Gate

By James M. Spahn

Introduction

The Riot Act is an urban adventure for 4 characters averaging 2nd level, set in the city of Bard's Gate. It highlights several of the city's locations, especially those in the Bridge district. A mixture of encounters includes roleplaying, investigation, dungeon crawling, stealth, and combat. The adventure does not require any specific classes or races, though bards and rogues may be useful given the nature of their special abilities. It is assumed that the PCs are sympathetic to the Lyreguard or other agencies that serve the interests of Bard's Gate — or at the very least that their loyalty can be purchased for a few gold coins.

In addition to the encounters, *The Riot Act* also includes information on a nefarious organization new to Bard's Gate, known as The Fool's Entourage. This group can serve as reoccurring antagonists for a campaign based in Bard's Gate, or may be replaced if another group of the GM's own design is a better fit. There are also several modular encounters which could be included or removed, allowing GMs to lengthen or shorten the adventure to suit the individual play style of their group. Finally, there are several new magic items to spice things up. There's always something new to discover in the belly of Bard's Gate!

Players should not read any further so that they can experience all the surprises and thrills offered by *The Riot Act*. This adventure assumes that the GM has the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* and *Bard's Gate* for reference. However, the adventure can easily be adapted to suit any urban environment in your fantasy campaign.

Adventure Background

The Fool's Entourage arrived in Bard's Gate a few weeks ago with little fanfare. They were little more than a troupe of traveling performers — or so the citizens of Bard's Gate believed. Made up of acrobats, fire-eaters, minstrels, and dancers, they soon distinguished themselves by way of their robust and daring performances. After a few weeks of street performances in the Bridge district, The Fool's Entourage drew the patronage of a mysterious merchant princess: Lady Asmarisa. No one in Bard's Gate could recall where Asmarisa had come from or how long she had been doing business in the city — but she quickly established herself as a trader of silks as well as a patron of the fine arts.

Unbeknownst to the good people of Bard's Gate, Asmarisa is a cult leader who wears a magical ring known as a *ring of demonic deception*. While the ring does not grant her much in the way of magical abilities (it's meant for demons, after all), it is slowly working its evil upon her — and eventually turns her into a full-fledged succubus. For now, however, she is a beguiling, vain actress with the ability to charm those who hear her song. The Fool's Entourage that follows her is a cabal of symphonic devotees who worship her. Asmarisa hopes to enthrall all of Bard's Gate, beginning with those in the Bridge district. With enough worshippers, and their souls, she believes that after she transforms into a true succubus, she can make her mark on the infernal landscape. She has either laid her enchantments upon or made business pacts with many greedy merchants in Bard's Gate, allowing her to swiftly build her identity as a reputable merchant. Now she is beginning to set the final pieces of her great plan into motion.

Several months ago, Asmarisa purchased a large building on the southeastern shore of the Bridge district and converted it into a grand

theater that she has named The Motley. The Motley opened a few weeks later, and its first show, *The Maiden's Kiss*, has become the hottest show in town. Word spread like wildfire, and soon every noble, merchant, peasant, and priest was clamoring to see the show. Reviews from critics in the district were gushing, praise-filled proclamations. In fact, no one had a bad word to say about Asmarisa, The Fool's Entourage, The Motley or *The Maiden's Kiss*. Not one.

That was when some of the more astute citizens began to get suspicious. The clergy of Oghma at the Auditorium of the Silver Harp were the first to become concerned as their worshippers began turning away from the god of performance and instead began attending shows at The Motley. They went to the Lyreguard claiming that The Fool's Entourage was engaged in illegal dealings and even that some of those who attended performances at The Motley entered the theater, but never left. They vanished without a trace.

Several members of the Lyreguard were sent to investigate the matter — if for no other reason than to satisfy the complaining clergymen. After attending a performance, these guards announced that not only was The Fool's Entourage a magnificent troupe of performers, but that they intended to attend another performance of *The Maiden's Kiss* as soon as tickets became available. Thus, the sworn protectors of Bard's Gate remained oblivious to the truth of Asmarisa and her servants.

In the week since this investigation closed, *The Maiden's Kiss* has become overwhelmingly popular. Shows sell out in minutes. Citizens crowd the Bridge district in dim hopes of getting their hands on a ticket to the next performance. Scalpers sell forged passes. The people demand more shows be added to the playbill, and Asmarisa's gentle promises that everyone will get the opportunity to see the show are now creating only frustration.

It's only a matter of time before the frustration of the people boils over and blood is spilled in the Bridge District.

Adventure Summary

A typical night in Bard's Gate (if such a thing exists) is interrupted as the PCs are passing through the Bridge district and find themselves caught up in a riot! After surviving city-goers who have been driven to violence by — of all things — a sold-out theater performance, they are hired to investigate the performers at this theater and find out why their stage show is driving citizens to madness.

First, they must survive a riot in the Bridge district and acquire tickets to *The Maiden's Kiss*, which is easier said than done. They can attempt to contact a scalper or, if they are particularly bold, petition Asmarisa personally for passes. Each of these options has its own difficulties. Once in the theater and viewing the performance, they find themselves at risk of falling under the same enchantment that has so many other residents of the Bridge district under its thrall. However, during this performance, perceptive PCs may get clues to the truth of The Fool's Entourage.

After discovering a secret passage beneath the orchestra pit of The Motley, the PCs explore a hidden tunnel that leads from the theater to the hidden camp of the troupe. Along the way, they must confront thralls who are so deep under Asmarisa's enchantment that they would kill to protect her. The secret tunnel opens on the camp of The Fool's Entourage, where if the PCs are stealthy, they learn the terrible plans that Asmarisa has laid out for her servants. If caught, a battle ensues, and the heroes might have to flee for their lives.

Realizing they must put a stop to the next performance put on by The Entourage, the PCs must storm the theater during its next performance.

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In the middle of the show, they are drawn into an epic conflict with the principal performers that begins on stage and eventually leads to a climactic confrontation between a fully demonic Asmarisa atop the Auditorium of the Silver Harp amid throngs of rioting fans who are trying to slay the very men and women attempting to save them.

to traverse the raging crowds and other dangers in hopes of finding a way into The Motley theater if they hope to find the terrible secrets behind Asmarisa and *The Maiden's Kiss*.

Beginning the Adventure

Assuming the PCs have been in Bard's Gate for more than a few days, they have undoubtedly heard rumors regarding *The Maiden's Kiss*. Everyone who is anyone is already raving about it, which might pique their interests and draw them into the adventure. What's more likely, however, is that they have a contact, patron, or trusted employer who works for the Lyreguard or the Auditorium of the Silver Harp. If they do not know such an individual, the GM could draw them into the adventure via a simple flyer or posting by either organization looking for independent contractors willing to investigate the growing tension surrounding The Fool's Entourage. The GM should select whichever organization best suits his individual campaign. No matter who offers the PCs the job, they are offered a payment of 50 gp each to investigate and put a stop to these troubles.

Act One: Bridge District Blues (CR Varies, 2+)

Investigating The Fool's Entourage, the Bridge district is a natural starting point for the PCs. The Bridge district is normally a safe, if sometimes raucous, district in Bard's Gate. Unfortunately, that is not the case this evening. As the investigation begins, the PCs find themselves smack dab in the middle of a riot at the heart of the district! They'll need

Bard's Gate is the heart of the Stoneheart Valley, and the Bridge district is the heart of Bard's Gate. It is here that the city's culture is at its zenith. The gleaming Auditorium of the Silver Harp shines down on smaller businesses and homes. Through the King's Bridge, the lifeblood of Bard's Gate flows ceaselessly, day and night.

But tonight, her heart is racing. Tasked by your patron, you have come to the Bridge district on an errand of great importance. *The Maiden's Kiss* is being hailed as the greatest stage show ever put on in the history of the city. Despite added showings in recent weeks, tickets are sold out in minutes. It is on the lips and minds of every citizen of the city. They want to see the show. They need to see the show. Nothing will stop them from seeing the show. Nothing. The city is at a fever pitch.

As you step into the middle of Central Island, you see that this desire has turned violent. Hundreds of city-goers have gathered out in front of the Auditorium and the Temple of Skilled Hands, screaming and yelling. They are demanded tickets. They demanded more shows. Now it seems that they demand blood. Rocks and bottles, fists and elbows, screams and outrage. Here, in the middle of a riot, you and your companions must find a way to acquire tickets to the most exclusive show in town — all while avoiding being trampled to death by a raging mob.

The central courtyard of the Bridge district is cluttered with rioting locals. The PCs will have some difficulty pushing their way through the crowd



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(consider the courtyard as difficult terrain). Moving at half speed requires a DC 15 Strength check; movement at full speed requires a DC 25 Strength check. Attempts to shove through the crowd in this fashion have a 50% chance of drawing a stray elbow or punch from one of the rioters (25% chance the strike lands, inflicting 1d2 points of bludgeoning damage).

Characters may attempt to make their way to the box office in front of The Motley where they find **Braldo**, the beleaguered ticket salesman, who is being protected by **four other members** of The Fool's Entourage desperately holding back the crowd. Characters who manage to reach Braldo find him frazzled and fearful. Attempts can be made to calm the crowd, but this is not easy. Any attempts to calm the mob (Diplomacy, Intimidate, etc. skill checks) suffer a -4 circumstance penalty due to their frenzy and the cacophony. Particularly clever players might make use of enchantment spells or other methods to convince the crowd to cease their rioting. If these attempts fail, the crowd grows more violent, and Braldo begs the PCs to protect him along with his guards as they fall back into The Motley, where the doors are barred.

If the PCs manage to calm the crowds or protect Braldo during his escape, he offers them profuse and sincere thanks in addition to a reward of one ticket each to tonight's showing of *The Maiden's Kiss*. If the PCs manage to get tickets from Braldo, reward the PCs as if overcoming a CR 2 encounter.

More subtle PCs might attempt to skirt the edge of the rioting crowd and observe the conflict. If such is the case, a shadowy figure confronts them and offers them quite a deal.

"Psst. Psst!" you hear a hiss cutting through the roar of the crowd and turn to see a hunched and cloaked figure hiding in the shadows of an alley on the edge of the square, unseen by the rioters. His sharp nose and sly grin combine with greasy dark hair and gleaming eyes to mark him as one of the many grifters who thrive in Bard's Gate. *"You seem a better lot than this rabble, with your fine armor and polished weapons. Undoubtedly, y've got a coin or two to spare for a working bloke? Ol' Tom's got what e'ryone wants tonight."*
A quick hand flashes a handful of parchment slips. *"A few coins will get ye a glimpse at The Maiden's Kiss."*

Old Tom is a member of The Fool's Entourage, as are his **four friends** hidden in the shadows of the alley. Asmarisa has learned that her troupe is under investigation and hopes to draw the investigators under her enchantment before they can be a threat. Tom sells one ticket to each of the PCs for 10 gp each, though he can be negotiated down to half that price if the PCs try to drive a hard bargain (and make a successful DC 15 Diplomacy or DC 17 Intimidate check). Should the party draw their weapons or attempt to attack him, Tom and his friends attack the PCs, hoping to use the chaos of the riot to slay the party outright and escape. While Asmarisa would rather have the PCs under her control, dead is the next best option.

If the PCs manage to acquire tickets from Tom for less than full price, reward the PCs as if overcoming a CR 3 encounter.

BRALDO CR 1
XP 400
hp 15 (see *Bard's Gate*, Appendix A "Shyster")

BRALDO'S MEN (4) CR 2
XP 600
hp 20 (see *Bard's Gate*, Appendix A "Fortune's Fool Rogue")

OLD TOM CR 2
XP 600
hp 23 (see *Bard's Gate*, Appendix A "Cutpurse")

TOM'S MEN (4) CR 1/2
XP 200
hp 10 (see *Bard's Gate*, Appendix A "Riverfolk Rogue")

RIOTERS (2d6)

XP 600

hp 19 (see *Bard's Gate*, Appendix A "Pretender")

CR 2

Before the Show

Whether the PCs receive their tickets from Braldo or Ol' Tom, they'll have to wait a few hours before the show begins. Wise PCs might choose to hang out near The Motley to make sure things don't get out of hand again and to make sure they can get good seats. *The Maiden's Kiss* begins three hours after they receive the tickets. During that time, there is a 25% chance each hour that they encounter a resident of the Bridge district looking for their own tickets.

This encounter should be used to emphasize how sought after these tickets are. While it is most likely that they encounter normal residents asking around about tickets, a rich merchant or local celebrity might possibly offer up to 50 gp for their tickets. An inept pickpocket looking to relieve an imperceptive PC from their treasure might also target the party. The GM should customize any such encounters to suit their style of play, but in all cases, use the same statistics as those for the rioters or Ol' Tom's men for any of these NPCs.

Act Two: Backstage Passes

Now that the PCs have gotten their hands on tickets to the hottest show in town, the investigation can truly begin. After attending a performance of *The Maiden's Kiss* (and potentially suffering some unexpected consequences), they discover something sinister buried beneath the drama of it all — quite literally!

The Curtain Rises (CR Varies, 2+)

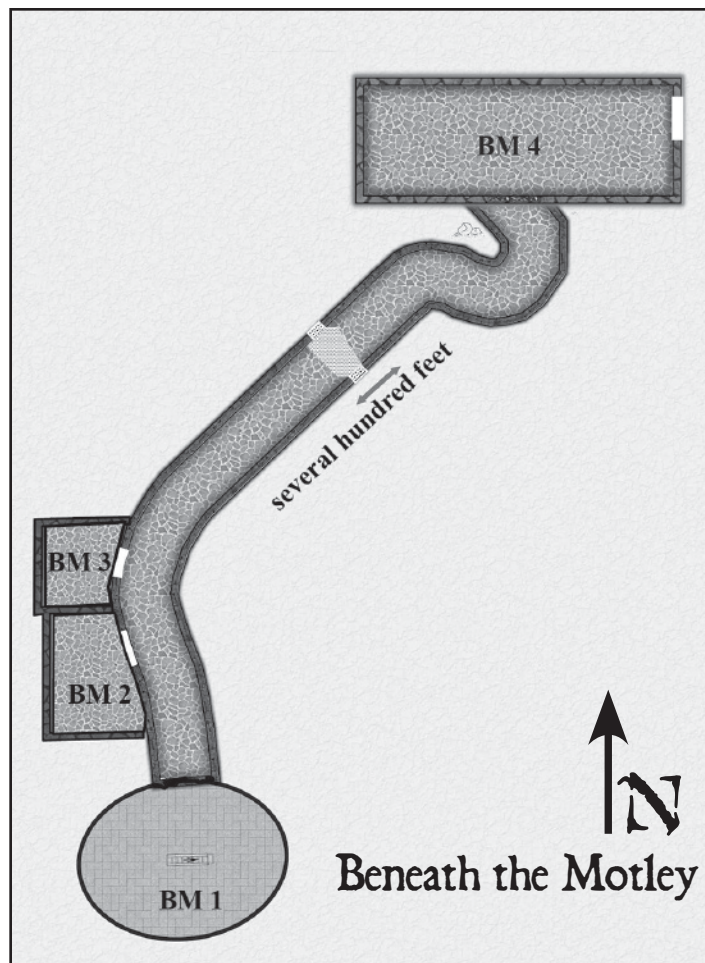
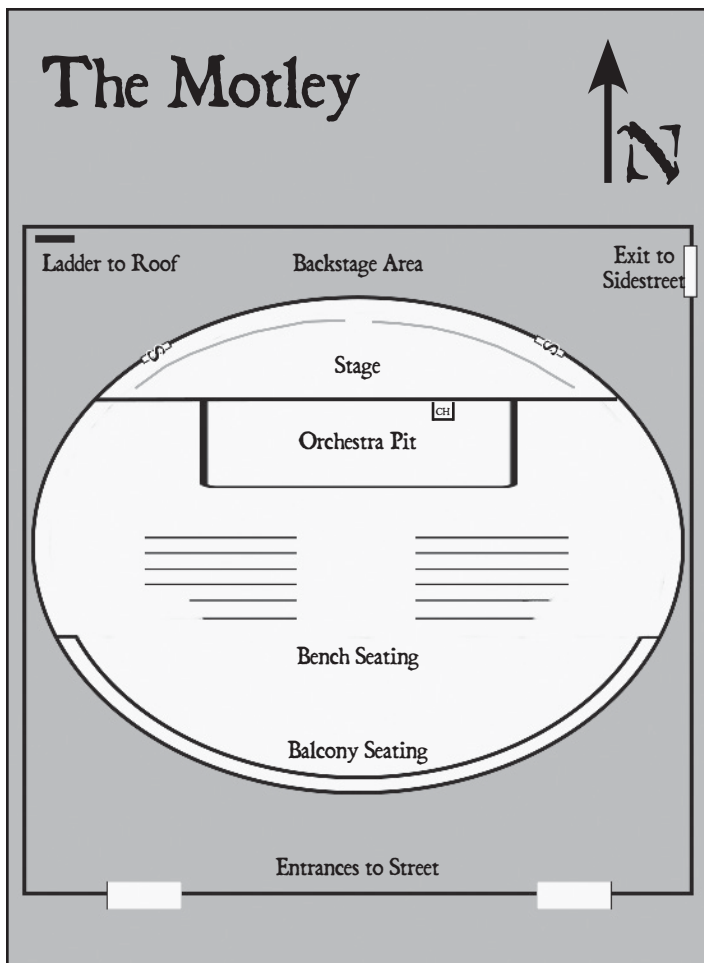
The characters are either ushered into The Motley with the rest of the crowd, or if they got their tickets from Braldo, they're invited to wait inside the theater until the show begins. If they did get their tickets from Braldo, he tells them to take any of the balcony seats they like. While waiting, the PCs hear the din of performers behind the stage preparing, and see several musicians come out of a small concealed door in front of the stage with a plethora of instruments and take their places in the orchestra pit. If the PCs approach and attempt to talk to either the performers or the musicians, they politely but firmly tell the party that they are busy preparing for the show and have other business to attend to before the curtain rises.

As attendees begin milling in, the crowd's excitement and fervor dims along with the stage lights. Then the show begins...

By the dim lights of The Motley theater, you and your companions watch the epic tragedy of *The Maiden's Kiss* unfold. Powerful performances and untamed passion unfold before your eyes. Heroism and villainy are yours to witness. By the time you realize you've been drawn into the high drama so utterly and completely, it's too late. With an orchestral crescendo and the flash of a bloody blade, all are left dead on stage, and the lights slowly rise.

The crowd erupts in a roaring ovation, and you find yourself again part of the mob, leaping to your feet with thunderous applause. The performers come forth one by one for the curtain call. The lead, Lady Asmarisa herself, is the last to appear. Her beauty is unparalleled. Blood red hair, eyes as dark as midnight, with a smile that could drive men to madness. She makes her final bow, as do all the others, before they slowly disappear back behind the heavy velvet curtain.

The GM should require a DC 15 Will save from each of the PCs, as Asmarisa's plan unfolds. Woven into the dialogue, music, and dance steps are an insidiously powerful, but undetectable *mass charm* effect. Those



who fail their save find themselves unknowingly under the effects of a latent *charm person* effect, one that takes full effect much later, after the last part of the ritual is performed. They are now unwitting pawns of the seductive actress, as are most who have attended a showing of *The Maiden's Kiss* thus far.

Any PCs making a successful DC 10 Perception check notice that the orchestra exits back through the small concealed hatch that leads into the chambers beneath the stage. If the PCs make successful DC 15 Stealth checks, as the crowds begin to file out into the streets, they can remain hidden in the many shadows and alcoves of The Motley until the theater is empty.

As the PCs make their way to this concealed door, they'll need to make an additional DC 15 Stealth check or they risk alerting the stage crew still doing clean up backstage. If the PCs fail the check, **2d6 stage crewmembers** come from behind the curtain and rudely usher the PCs out. If the PCs show any resistance at all, the workers become violent and attack.

STAGE CREW **CR 1**
XP 400
 hp 20 (see *Bard's Gate*, Appendix A "Guild Journeyman")

Once the PCs make their way into the secret passage beneath the orchestra pit, the truth of The Fool's Entourage begins to reveal itself.

Passage Beneath the Motley

What should be a simple crawlspace beneath the stage of The Motley is something more. While there is such a passage that undoubtedly leads to the backstage area, what surprises you is the hole of worked stone with iron ladder rungs that descends deep below the theater and into some deeper, darker place.

The problem is that one of the rungs near the top is loose and rusty. The Fool's Entourage is aware of this and avoids it, but PCs are not likely to do the same. The first time the rung has more than 50 lbs. of weight put on it, the PC that does so must make a DC 15 Reflex save or lose their footing as the rung snaps and they fall, suffering 2d6 points of damage.

In addition, the noise of the fall alerts the musicians in **BM 2: Performer's Hall**. One of them stops playing and goes to investigate. Once he sees the PCs, he runs to alert his allies, which gives them time to prepare for the PCs' arrival.

BM 1: The Slow Descent

A long winding passage of roughly cut stone slowly meanders at a downward slope, gently easing in a northeasterly direction. Sconces on the wall hold flickering torches, and the ground is damp with moisture. The passage winds into darkness with two stone archways leading to other chambers on the western side. Faint music can be heard coming from one of these rooms.

The torches that line the walls provide ample light for the PCs, but the floor is slick and wet, which makes quick movement difficult and dangerous. If any of the PCs attempt to fight or run, they must make a DC 12 Reflex save or fall prone. If combat occurs in this chamber and the PCs opt for speed over safety, things can get slippery.

BM 2: Performer's Hall (CR 3)**PERFORMING GUARDS (3)****CR 1****XP 400****hp 20** (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game NPC Codex "Street Performer"*)

This room has no door, but instead the archway opens into a lavishly decorated chamber with a round, vaulted ceiling. Hanging from finely crafted wooden racks along three walls is a collection of elegant musical instruments. A plush carpet covers the floor, and expensive furniture fills several corners. What stands out is the small window into the adjacent chamber, barred like a jail cell.

Three men sit in the center of the room, playing one of the most beautiful pieces of music you've ever heard. The playing skips slightly as you enter the room, and the serene looks upon the faces of these musicians vanish. It seems odd that one of them continues his playing, with a nervous look to the window, while the other two quickly stop their performance and produce deadly weapons before advancing.

The **three performers** remain here performing to keep the zombies in the next chamber sedated, lest they break free of their prison and rampage. However, once the PCs observe the situation, then they have seen too much and must die.

These thieves-turned-musicians are armed with daggers and wear chain shirts. In addition, if the performers have been alerted to the PCs' presence ahead of time, they all take the time to poison their blades in preparation.

While two of the performers actively engage the party in combat, the third one joins only if the battle seems to be going poorly. An unforeseen consequence of combat with these three men is that the zombies in **BM 3: Thrall Pit** become enraged if the music stops. There is a way to slake their madness. If any of the PCs play a musical instrument, they may attempt a DC 15 Perform (musical instrument) check to calm the zombies while they play. Otherwise, the zombies rampage until destroyed.

Add 2 doses of blue whinnis poison to each performer

BM 3: Thrall Pit (CR Varies, up to 5)

Through a door of iron bars more at home in a castle dungeon, you see the crude cut stone walls of a room wet with ambient moisture. The scent of mildew hangs heavy in the air. Easily a dozen or more humanoids in tattered clothing shamble about this room, appearing to almost dance in slow, stilted, unnatural motions. They turn to look at you as you enter, moaning in an oddly musical fashion. A mindless bloodlust fills their eyes as they reach out with gnarled, blood-drenched hands.

If the **12 zombies** locked within this chamber have not already torn free of their prison due to the end of the music from **BM 2: Performer's Hall**, they are a raging frothing mass. Without the music to placate them, these zombies gain +2 to all attack rolls and damage rolls while enraged. Their movement also increases by 10 feet per round while in this state. Empowered by this rage, the zombies surge forth and attempt to rip the door off the hinges to attack the nearest living targets. This takes 2d6 rounds for them to accomplish after the music stops. Otherwise, they are placid — for bloodthirsty zombies. They do not become aggressive if music is playing. However, if the PCs enter the chamber and linger, their



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natural instincts take hold. Within 1d6+1 rounds of PC drawing within 10 feet of any of these zombies, their desire takes over and they attack.

ZOMBIES (12)

CR 1/2

XP 200

hp 12 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* "Zombie")

Add **Zombie rage***

***Note:** If the music from **BM 2** ends, these zombies become enraged, gaining +2 to attacks and damage. They also move +10 ft. faster per round.

BM 4: Exit Chamber (CR 4)

A heavy stone disk, slightly ajar, sits at the far end of the chamber. Groundwater seeps in from the edges and pools around it, creating a thin, murky puddle on the stone floor. The disk has several spidery runes carved across it that are reminiscent of musical notes. This swirling pattern covers nearly half its surface. You can see faint light from the city as well as the evening sky streaming through it.

The stone disk doorway is under a unique enchantment. It cannot be moved on its own due to a specialized use of *arcane lock*. To open the door, the would-be user must perform the tune the bards in **BM 2: The Performer's Hall** were playing. It need not be a particularly good or accurate performance; a DC 10 Perform check suffices. Humming a few bars does nicely.

Attempts to open the door without doing this cause the runes to flash and arc with electricity, activating the *glyph of warding* placed upon the door. Because of the large puddle on the floor, anyone standing in the water also suffers this damage, not just the PC who opened the door. The shallow puddle covers an area 10 feet back from the door.

If PCs cast *comprehend languages*, or if they make a successful DC 13 Linguistics check, they can make out the musical notation — the same song as the zombie-guards were performing. Alternately, one of the performers from **BM 2** is carrying a parchment of sheet music containing the same arrangement.

GLYPH OF WARDING (BLAST)

CR 4

XP 1,200

Type magical; **Perception** DC 28; **Disable Device** DC 28

Trigger touch; **Reset** none

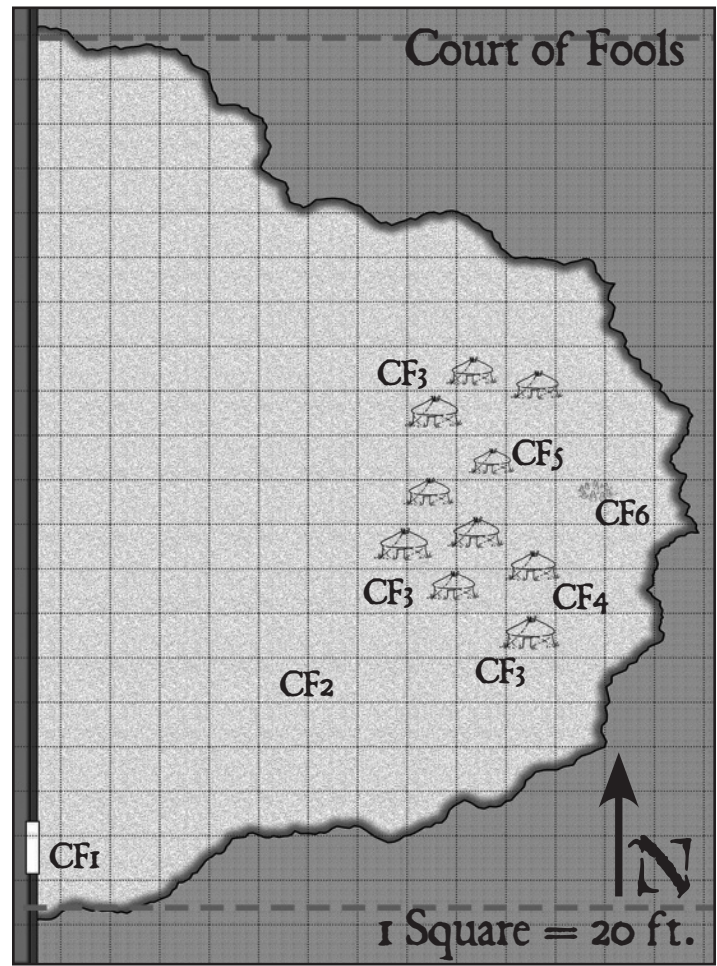
Effect *glyph of warding* (blast) (2d8 electricity damage, DC 17 Reflex save); multiple targets (all targets in a 5 ft. radius)

If the PCs manage to play the correct tune to bypass the door, award them experience points as if overcoming a CR 3 encounter.

Court of Fools

The PCs exit the carved stone tunnel under The Motley to find a descending shoreline that ends at a campsite. This riverside camp is where The Fool's Entourage relaxes, spends their evenings, and hatches their evil plans for Bard's Gate. As seen on the **Court of Fools Map**, several tents are set up around a large cooking fire just a few feet from the Stoneheart River. When the PCs arrive, they hear crewmembers of The Motley celebrating after another successful performance. They are talking, rabbleroxing, and generally having a good time. They certainly aren't expecting intruders to have discovered their secret camp beneath the Lyre Bridge. This gives the PCs the chance to sneak into the camp and, if they are stealthy and subtle, learn some crucial secrets that could save Bard's Gate from the vile enchantments of Asmarisa.

PCs must make a successful DC 12 Stealth check to approach the camp. It's only when they draw to the edge of the firelight (as indicated on the map) or try to actively sneak into the tents or rifle through the storage chests that they need to move even quieter (DC 17 Stealth check).



CF 1: Stone Disk Entrance

The stone disk slides away to reveal something unexpected: the shores of the Stoneheart River under the shadow of the Lyre Bridge. You wouldn't be able to see a thing under this long darkness were it not for the campfires twinkling along the shore. A merry music twinkles in the air, along with laughter uttered by those who care nothing for the plights of the world.

If the PCs remain cautious and move quietly, as mentioned above, they shouldn't draw the attention of any of The Fools gathered in their small camp.

CF 2: Drawing Closer (CR Varies, 1+)

The darkness thins in the light cast by numerous campfires. The Entourage performers are gathered together in celebration among a dozen tents. All the grace and glory of the stage is gone under the harsh red glow. Instead of enchanting smiles, you see leering and wicked grins. In place of lavish, colorful costumes, you see dingy and discordant rags barely hiding their shame. Their laughter becomes a thing of wickedness. In the darkness and firelight, you see The Fool's Entourage for what it is: a cabal of degenerate men and women celebrating their own madness. Lingering on the edge of shadow, you feel their ichor creep into your heart.

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If the PCs draw within 60 feet of the performers' camp, they get their first hint at what the actors truly are. At this distance, they are drawing dangerously close to the firelight. They need to remain as still and silent as possible to avoid being noticed. A DC 17 Stealth check is required to move any closer to the camp undetected. If the PCs are noticed, **1d4 wicked performers** attack initially, with **1d2** joining the attack each round, until a total of 10 performers are subdued or slain. The other performers flee the camp, either into the river or back along the passage to The Motley.

THE FOOL'S ENTOURAGE (10)

CR 1

XP 400

hp 16 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game NPC Codex* "Street Performer")

CF 3: Performer's Tent

Five tents of brightly colored cloth, each one high with a pointed top, ring the outer edge of the performers' camp. While tall, they are not large and likely capable of sleeping only one or two at a time. Still, they cast long shadows, and their canvas is damp in the night air.

Each tent serves as home to 2 people, either performers or crewmembers. The entry flaps all point toward the fire, thus making direct entry rather difficult. Characters can use a small bladed weapon such as a knife, handaxe, or short sword to cut a hole and enter in that fashion. Characters must do so delicately if they hope to avoid notice, making a successful DC 15 Stealth check to cut through silently. Lifting one of the cloth walls and entering is not possible because the tents are staked down very tightly. The tent collapses if these stakes are removed.

Characters who manage to slip into one of the tents run the risk of encountering one of the members of The Entourage. There is a 1-in-6 chance that one of these NPCs is in the tent, though there is also a 65% chance that the person is sleeping. If PCs enter carefully, making a successful DC 17 Stealth check, it is possible to perform a coup de grace or pass unnoticed. If a performer is awake or awakened, they immediately scream out that intruders are present and attacks.

Each tent contains a pair of bedrolls laid out on the floor with a footlocker set in front of it. These wooden footlockers are unlocked. See "**Footlocker Contents**" to determine what the PCs find.

CF 4: Stage Manager's Tent (CR 4)

This tent — just as brightly colored, but larger than the other tents surrounding the performer's camp — has a red pennant flying from its crest. It is easily large enough to house half a dozen people. Light streams out onto the sandy edges of the Stoneheart River from a large, open flap.

Like the regular performer's tents, PCs who are careful in their attempts to cut the canvas of the stage manager's tent can slip in through such a tear (DC 17 Stealth check to succeed). However, because of the interior light and its open flap, it is far more difficult to remain unnoticed once inside. Between their closeness to the campfire and the long shadow their passage would cast, PC may attempt a DC 20 Stealth check to remain unnoticed. A single failed attempt immediately reveals their presence. The interior light comes from a small lantern sitting on a footlocker at the edge of the stage manager's bed.

Footlockers, large wooden chests, a full-sized wardrobe, and an array of props used in the performances put on by The Fool's Entourage pack the interior of this tent. Any PCs who casually root through the tent find items similar to what can be found in the normal performer's tents. What they do not realize is that the stage manager has a secret storage chest buried in the sandy ground beneath a large rug set in the center of the floor (discovered with a successful DC 20 Perception check). His cot sits atop

Footlocker Contents

The footlockers of The Fool's Entourage contain 5d10 sp and a collection of 1d3 random items determined by rolling 1d12 and consulting the chart below:

| 1d12 | Result |
|------|--|
| 1 | A set of stage clothes. |
| 2 | A small makeup kit. |
| 3 | A set of loaded dice. |
| 4 | A bottle of cheap wine. |
| 5 | A stage dagger with a collapsible blade (it inflicts no damage in combat). |
| 6 | A collection of ragged beggar's clothes with half a dozen hidden pockets. |
| 7 | A stage sword with blunted edges (–1 to all attack rolls due to improper balance, inflicts 1d4 points of damage in combat). |
| 8 | A <i>heckler's recorder</i> (1 only; see New Magic Items). |
| 9 | A reinforced mask of tragedy. If worn in combat, it protects the face. |
| 10 | An <i>electric slide whistle</i> (1 only; see New Magic Items). |
| 11 | A longsword that appears to be nothing more than a cheap wooden prop, but can actually serve as a well-balanced club if wielded in combat. |
| 12 | A large pouch containing 22 sp. |

the rug. Moving the rug and digging up the tent is no easy task, however.

The footlocker is **locked and trapped**. The stage manager has the key. Any attempt to open the chest, after the lock has been disabled, activates the trap — a simple poison needle trap coated in a reagent that, while not deadly, does inflict horrible pain on its victim. Those who fail their DC 14 Fortitude save to resist its effects suffer 1d6 points of damage and scream out in agony as a violent, white-hot pain shoots through their body. For the next 1d4 rounds, they are blinded by this pain and unable to act.

Inside the stage manager's chest are a copy of his journal, several sets of very fine clothing, a bright red high-collared cloak that functions as a *cloak of protection +1*, a *potion of cure light wounds* in an old wine bottle, and the stage manager's personal weapon — a gentleman's walking cane that is a *+1 club*. A small journal in the bottom also reveals Asmarisa's nefarious plot (see **Handout 1**).

POISON NEEDLE TRAP

CR 4

XP 1,200

Type mechanical; Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 20

Trigger touch; Reset automatic reset

Effect Atk +15 melee (1 plus Galera's toxic touch poison)

GALERA'S TOXIC TOUCH

Type poison (injury); save Fort DC 14; frequency 1/round; initial effect 1d6 points of damage; secondary effect blindness and paralysis for 1d4 rounds; cure 2 consecutive saves

CF 5: Asmarisa's Tent (CR Varies, 2+)

This large and lavish tent is easily twice the size of any of the others. Silk cloth the color of blood is dusted with silver. It looks to be more appropriate for traveling royalty than any performer. Its entrance is large enough for two to walk abreast and, judging from the size, it could probably sleep a dozen or more travelers quite comfortably. Two wooden poles hold up the entry flap as an awning. Inside, you can see it is finely decorated.

Because it is so close to **CF 6: The Firepit**, getting into Asmarisa's tent is no easy task, requiring a DC 22 Stealth check, and nosing about likely draws attention. It is lavishly furnished with finery of all manner. A small table is set with a silver dinner set and a large bed with silk sheets is in the far corner. Opposite this corner is a small stone altar carved with demonic symbols and covered with the tools and trappings of demonology. Standing on one side of this altar is a quasit named **Marlowe**.

When the PCs first enter the chamber, Marlowe is standing still and is likely to be mistaken for a statue. It requires a DC 12 Perception check to even notice the "Marlowe statue" amongst the trapping of the tent, and another DC 18 Perception check to notice it is "alive". If the PCs discover him, Marlowe does everything in his power to flee, flying immediately to alert Asmarisa that her plans have been discovered. He does not attempt to engage them in combat.

The altar has a hidden compartment that can be discovered with a successful DC 18 Perception check. Unfortunately, this secret door is **trapped** with a *glyph of warding*, and spouts a gout of fire whenever anyone other than Asmarisa touches it. What's more, the flame is large enough to alert anyone outside the tent to the presence of the PCs, and sets the tent on fire.

Once the tent is on fire, the flames spread quickly. On the first round, the fire burns the tent behind and beside the altar, but inflicts no damage. On the second round, any PC standing next to the altar must make a DC 13 Fortitude save or suffer 1d3 points of damage as the flames spread. On the third round, the tent is so engulfed in fire that anyone inside suffers 1d3 points of damage. This damage continues for 10 rounds until the entire tent has burnt to nothing.

Inside the hidden compartment are a sapphire (250 gp), a pair of silk gloves stitched with pearls (150 gp), a ruby studded domino mask (400 gp), and a concealable bodice dagger that functions as a *+1 dagger*.

GLYPH OF WARDING (BLAST) TRAP CR 4
XP 1,200
Type magical; Perception DC 28; Disable Device DC 28

Trigger spell; Reset none

Effect spell effect (*glyph of warding* [blast], CL 5th, 2d8 fire, DC 15 Reflex save half damage); multiple targets (all targets within 5 ft.); additional damage (catches tent on fire)

MARLOWE, QUASIT CR 2
XP 600
hp 16 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* "Demon, Quasit")

Remove **DR** due to Asmarisa's *ring of demonic deception*.

CF 6: Firepit (CR Varies, 2+)

Gathered around a roaring bonfire are a dozen or more men and women in varying states of drunkenness. They are laughing, singing, and generally having a grand time. Every few moments one of them cries out "*For Asmarisa!*" and they all raise their glasses before taking a drink. After a minute or two, one of them climbs atop a large footlocker and calls for order. He is better dressed than the other members of The Entourage, with a fine doublet, a broad baldric, and an over-size top hat. When he smiles, the dark edges of his lips accentuate his perfectly kept van dyke.

"Tonight, my fellow Fools! Tonight! Before the rising of the sun, indeed at the very stroke of midnight, all of Bard's Gate shall bow before our beloved Lady Asmarisa and we shall be the rulers of this wretched city! As we speak, Asmarisa is preparing the final components of the ritual at The Motley!"

"They call it King's Bridge for a reason, eh lads! Soon our lady Asmarisa will climb atop the Auditorium and lay her enchantment upon the great idol at its peak! One song from its silver strings, and everyone in this city will be hers — and ours — to command! So raise your glasses to the Fools who became Kings!"

The crowd erupts with a raucous cheer and tilts back their drinks, pleased to know the vile schemes of their beloved queen will come to pass all too soon.

In their drunken revelry, The Fools have revealed Asmarisa's plan to the unseen PCs. Unfortunately, being close enough to hear their madness is a dangerous thing. Each round, even if the PCs remain stealthy, there is a cumulative 10% chance that they are discovered. The speech giver is the stage manager **Kit Phillips**. If Kit or any of the others notice the PCs, they immediately draw weapons and make every possible effort to slay the PCs. Unfortunately, they are all mildly intoxicated and suffer a -1 penalty to all their attack rolls.

The PCs may stand and fight, or they may decide to fall back to the stone tunnels that led them to the performer's camp. This is not the only means of escape, however. If the PCs draw far enough away, they could

Oops!

This scene requires delicacy and stealth on the part of the PCs, and any experienced GM knows that this is not often gamers' strong suit. Many players often prefer to charge in, swords swinging and spells flying. Such recklessness prevents them from discovering the secret truth behind The Entourage. Clever GMs can keep the PCs on the right path by making slight changes to the adventure as it is written. Here are two examples:

Example 1: If the PCs accidentally reveal themselves to The Fools before discovering the journal of Kit Phillips or before hearing his speech, the performers attempt to kill them. During the battle, the PCs see that one of these men is carrying a note, which the GM should highlight to the players. He clutches this note in one hand as he charges into battle — having been reading it when the PCs were discovered. The PCs can recover it, and the GM can provide them with **Handout 1** instead of providing it to them when they discover the stage manager's journal.

Example 2: If the performers drive the PCs away or force them to flee down the stone passage, the GM can move right to **Part Three: All the Gate's a Stage**, though the GM is encouraged to make sure the performers who discovered them continue their pursuit, thus adding to the chaos of the final part of the adventure

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attempt to dive into the cold evening waters of the Stoneheart River and swim away, though the members of The Entourage likely try to follow them along the riverbank.

KIT PHILLIPS CR 2
XP 600
hp 16 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game GameMastery Guide* "Wanderer")

THE FOOL'S ENTOURAGE (12) CR 1
XP 400
hp 16 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game NPC Codex* "Street Performer")

Act Three: All the Gate's a Stage

With the terrible truth of Lady Asmarisa's plan revealed, the PCs must hurry to stop her before she can bring all of Bard's Gate under her spell. Rushing back to The Motley, they must climb to the roof of the theater and leap from rooftop to rooftop in a tense chase with Lady Asmarisa and a handful of her bodyguards as the rioting populous swells below — eager to protect their newly crowned goddess.

The Motley (CR 5)

Read the following if the PCs flee back down the stone tunnel to The Motley. Change details as needed to fit the situation. If PCs fought the Fool's Entourage under the Lyre Bridge, for example, they may not be in full flight as they return. If they departed the camp in some other way, you'll also need to adjust accordingly.

Fleeing the encampment of The Fool's Entourage, you and your allies rush back down the stone passage and into The Motley. You emerge from the hidden passage and into the orchestra pit to hear cries of alarm! Above and behind you, the curtains that separate the stage and backstage areas have been pulled away. Several of the performers are there, weapons drawn as if waiting.

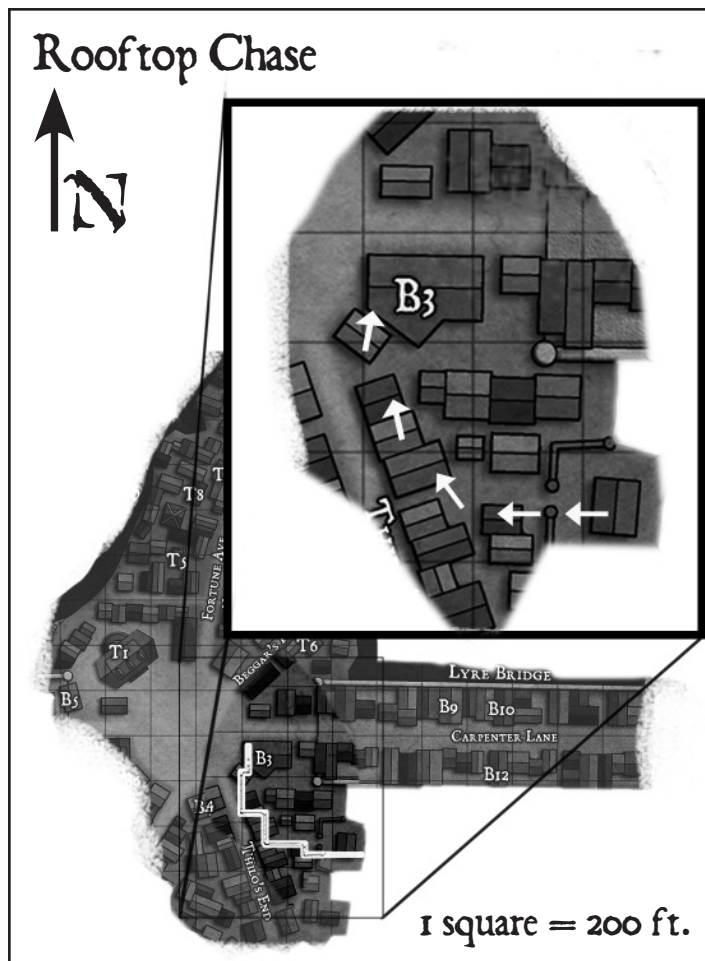
In the long shadows against the rear wall of the backstage area is a ladder that undoubtedly ascends to the roof of the theater. Holding onto its highest rungs is Lady Asmarisa herself. Cascading hair the color of blood and glowing, infernal emerald eyes give her a deadly, exotic beauty. To your surprise, she smiles and blows a kiss to you and your friends. "*Farewell, my devoted fans. You can die knowing that your spilled blood pleases me to no end.*"

She motions for her men to dispatch you and ascends the last few rungs of the ladder, vanishing to the roof above.

Five members of The Fool's Entourage are here and immediately attack the PCs, using the high ground to their advantage. While they are attacking PCs still in the orchestra pit, they receive a +1 bonus to melee attack rolls. PCs who take the time to move out of the pit and into the aisles or onto the stage suffer no such penalty.

Two of the attackers move to protect the ladder by which Asmarisa escaped, throwing daggers at the most dangerous targets while the other three thugs engage the PCs in melee.

THE FOOL'S ENTOURAGE (5) CR 1
XP 400
hp 16 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game NPC Codex* "Street Performer")



To the Roof! (CR Varies)

As if the forces of nature or the gods themselves were accentuating your pursuit of Lady Asmarisa, you open the hatch to the roof of The Motley to a crack of thunder, a flash of lightning and a sudden rainstorm. The wooden roof itself has a flat center and slopes gently down on each side. Just as you get to your feet, you see Lady Asmarisa leaping from the northern edge of the roof, easily clearing the distance of the street below and scrambling across the adjacent building. She's moving with amazing speed and grace, charging from rooftop to rooftop in hopes of reaching the Auditorium of the Silver Harp.

Even through the storm and amid this chaos, you are shocked to see the evening streets of Central Island flooded with citizens. Locals milling about in a stupor fill the alleys, roads and plazas. A low moan comes from crowd, a sluggish song of worship: "*Asmarisa. Asmarisa. Asmarisa.*" Already, she is beginning to bring the city under her control...

This encounter has multiple aspects. As the PCs pursue Asmarisa to the roof of the Auditorium of the Silver Harp, they face several threats along the way. These include:

- Dangerous jumps between various buildings.
- Using clotheslines and banners that run between some buildings to shimmy longer distances.
- Marlowe, Asmarisa's quasit companion.
- The rioting crowd hurling things from the streets below.
- The rain-slicked roofs of the city.
- Facing off against Asmarisa herself.

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The GM is encouraged to remove the rain-slicked roofs or the encounter with Marlowe if the party is already in rough shape, but the plethora of threats is designed to ratchet up the tension and keep them going from danger to danger as they struggle to save the city. Each aspect of this encounter is detailed below.

Always with the Greatest of Ease

Whenever the PCs come to the edge of a roof, they can leap to an adjacent building. Each rooftop is 1d6 x 5 feet apart. Characters may attempt Acrobatics checks to jump the distance, but as the roofs are wet, they suffer a +2 penalty to the DC.

Characters who fail the Acrobatics check plummet to the hard cobblestone streets below, suffering 2d6 points of damage. Moreover, throngs of local citizens under the influence of Lady Asmarisa surround them and immediately attack.

Clothesline Climbers

Instead of leaping between rooftops, PCs may instead attempt to use the clotheslines between some of the buildings to move hand-over-hand across longer distances. This requires a successful DC 13 Climb check for two consecutive rounds, which can slow their progress and expose them to attack from Marlowe.

Particularly reckless PCs might grab hold of one of the clotheslines, cut it free and swing across the span. This is a bad idea, as the cords are long enough that such a swing results in them immediately falling to the cobblestone streets, suffering 2d6 points of damage.

Demonic Interloper

Asmarisa's companion is her last line of protection. He is a quasit, though Asmarisa's *ring of demonic deception* diminishes his power. He does not have the defenses normally granted a quasit, and can be damaged by mundane weapons. He is a constant nuisance to the PCs, flying in and out of melee range and using his claws and bite to deadly effect. Additionally, he uses his *cause fear* effect to slow the PCs pursuit. Fortunately, if the PCs slay the annoying demon, Asmarisa permanently loses 15 hit points as their unholy connection is severed. If Marlowe is reduced to 8 or fewer hit points, he abandons Asmarisa and flees into the night as a desperate effort at self-preservation.

MARLOWE, QUASIT

CR 2

XP 600

hp 16 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* "Demon, Quasit")

Remove DR due to Asmarisa's *ring of demonic deception*.

Rioting Rabble

Asmarisa's enchantment grabs hold of many citizens who have seen *The Maiden's Kiss*. She has summoned them to the streets tonight to witness her final victory and to protect her from any interlopers who might attempt to stop her. If the PCs don't plummet to the streets, they can avoid the thralls attacking them directly. However, their stupor builds to a fever pitch and eventually they begin to hurl whatever is at hand at PCs while the heroes move across the rooftops of the Bridge district in pursuit of Asmarisa.

Once PCs reach the rooftops, one of the rioters has a cumulative 10% chance per round to throw whatever is at hand at one of the PCs. After 10 rounds (a 100% chance that one of the rioters attacks), an additional rioter attacks during each successive round thereafter. This means two rioters attack on the 11th round, three on the 12th, etc.

When the rioters attack, roll 1d6 on the **Rioter Attack Table** to see exactly how these thralls attempt to stop the PCs.

Rioter Attack Table

| 1d6 | Result |
|-----|--|
| 1 | A large rock hits a PC in the leg, inflicting 1d2 points of damage. |
| 2 | The PC is stuck in the side by a thrown dagger and suffers 1d4 points of damage. |
| 3 | A handful of offal hits a PC square in the face. The character reeks of dung and must make a DC 12 Acrobatics check or risk slipping from the roof (20% chance if save fails) and falling to the streets below for 2d6 points of damage. |
| 4 | An expensive bottle of wine hits the PC (1d2 points of damage), ruining both a fine vintage and the character's clothes. |
| 5 | One of the deranged rioters hurls a live cat skyward! The poor feline strikes the PC and immediately sinks its claws into him, clinging for dear life while hissing and scratching. The PC takes a single point of damage each round for the next 1d4 rounds unless they spend an entire round dislodging the angry beast. |
| 6 | How in Bard's Gate did they manage to throw an entire halfling this high!?!? A full-sized, 3-foot-tall halfling comes barreling into the sky and hits one of the PCs full on. The PC suffers 1d4 points of damage as the halfling flails drunkenly. The PC must then make a DC 15 Acrobatics check or be knocked off the roof by the 50-lb. living projectile. |

ENCHANTED RIOTERS

CR 2

XP 600

hp 20 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game GameMastery Guide* "Noble Scion")

Remove mwk longsword, shortbow and lance

The Song of the Succubus

You leap onto the roof of the Auditorium of the Silver Harp, the temple to Oghma, so named for the massive silver harp that rests atop the holy site. Asmarisa stands before this large harp, a flashing blade in her hand as she is about to pluck the glittering strings. She turns and gazes at you with a mirthless twinkle in her jade eyes. "*You're too late! Bard's Gate is mine and its people will worship me as the goddess I am! You shall be the first sacrifice made in the name of Asmarisa, Succubus Queen of Bard's Gate! Indeed, I already have worshippers among you!*"

Her jade eyes suddenly darken to a blood red color, and horns break from her forehead to curl in black swirls around her hair. Surprisingly, she offers you a warrior's salute with her sword and takes a duelist's stance.

If any of the PCs failed the Will save while watching *The Maiden's Kiss* in the early scenes of this adventure, Asmarisa's dormant enchantment now takes hold of them. They come under the effects of the *charm person* effect, and defend Asmarisa as if she were their beloved — including defending her against their former friends!

The *ring of demonic deception* that Asmarisa wears has finally fully claimed her, turning her into a true **succubus**. She still wears the ring, however, so her abilities are reduced. If slain, her physical form vanishes — as does Marlowe the imp if he is still alive — both banished back to the infernal planes for a century.

Once Asmarisa is defeated, her enchantment upon the people of Bard's Gate ends. They awaken as if from a deep stupor and slowly disperse back to their homes, rain soaked and confused.

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CR 7

LADY ASMARISA

XP 3,200

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar)
(*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* "Demon, Succubus")

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., detect good; **Perception** +21

AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+3 Dex, +7 natural)

hp 84 (8d10+40)

Fort +7; **Ref** +9; **Will** +10

Immune electricity, fire, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10; **SR** 9

Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (average)

Melee longsword +9/+4 (1d8+1/19–20) or 2 claws +11 (1d6+1)

Special Attacks energy drain (1 level, DC 22), profane gift

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; melee touch +11):

Constant—*detect good*

At will—*charm person* (DC 22)

Str 13, **Dex** 17, **Con** 20, **Int** 18, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 27

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 22

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Combat Reflexes, Iron Will, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +27, Diplomacy +19, Disguise +19, Escape Artist +11, Fly +14, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (local) +15, Perception +21, Sense Motive +13, Stealth +14; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Bluff, +8 Perception

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft., tongues

SQ change shape (small/medium humanoid; alter self)

Gear longsword, *ring of demonic deception* (**New Magic Items**)

Energy Drain (Su) A succubus drains energy from a mortal she lures into an act of passion, such as a kiss. An unwilling victim must be grappled before the succubus can use this ability. The succubus's kiss bestows one negative level. The kiss also has the effect of a *suggestion* spell, asking the victim to accept another act of passion from the succubus. The victim must succeed on a DC 22 Will save to negate the *suggestion*. The DC is 22 for the Fortitude save to remove a negative level. These save DCs are Charisma-based.

Profane Gift (Su) Once per day as a full-round action, a succubus may grant a profane gift to a willing humanoid creature by touching it for 1 full round. The target gains a +2 profane bonus to an ability score of his choice. A single creature may have no more than one profane gift from a succubus at a time. As long as the profane gift persists, the succubus can communicate telepathically with the target across any distance (and may use her *suggestion* spell-like ability through it). A profane gift is removed by *dispel evil* or *dispel chaos*. The succubus can remove it as well as a free action (causing 2d6 Charisma drain to the victim, no save).

Concluding the Adventure

In the aftermath of what eventually becomes known as The Maiden's Riot, the people of Bard's Gate find their interest in theater waning for quite a few months. The Lyreguard attempts to hunt down members of The Fool's Entourage and are likely to ask the characters to assist in their efforts, which gives the GM the opportunity to expand the material in this adventure into an extended campaign. The city puts The Motley up for sale, and enterprising PCs might even try to purchase the theater — if they can manage to scrounge up 10,000 gp. Their patron awards them with their promised payment, and most certainly comes to them again should any other troubles arise.

If the PCs are defeated or if Asmarisa manages to play the Silver Harp atop the Auditorium for five uninterrupted rounds, she brings all



the assembled rioters under her control. This has serious ramifications for the enchanted. Asmarisa sends these poor thralls out into the district, systemically causing as much chaos as possible. The PCs may find themselves drawn into guerilla fights against the Succubus Queen and the newly formed Fool's Army.

However, such an action does not go unanswered atop the patron temple of the city. Jared Strahn does not sit idly and allow this transgression to continue through the evening. Jared arrives within the hour with a contingent of Lyreguard to drive off or destroy Asmarisa, and works tirelessly with the Brothers of Song to subdue and aid any of the enchanted citizens. Being a vain tactician, Asmarisa quickly sees the writing on the wall, and flees Bard's Gate, for now. It is up to the GM to determine how much chaos the rioters cause, and how long they cause it.

Bard's Gate is a strong city, and while Asmarisa's plan shows that the city is vulnerable to acts of aggression, the characters and NPCs of Bard's Gate can be counted on to rally and protect the city to the best of their ability.

Asmarisa, extremely pleased with herself over her new transformation, is an excellent long-term foe for the characters as they rise in power and prestige. She can be brought back at nearly any time as a power "behind the scenes". She may back other groups to harass the characters or the city, leading to no end of further adventures.

New Magic Items

Wondrous Items

Electric Slide Whistle

Aura faint evocation; **CL** 7th
Slot —; **Price** 3,305 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This unassuming slide whistle has a unique, but odd property. Once per day when played, 1d4 bolts of electric energy leap from the tip of the whistle, each functioning as a *magic missile*. Unfortunately, if used more than once per day, a single such electric *magic missile* leaps from the whistle and strikes the user.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements

Craft Wondrous Item, *magic missile*; **Cost** 1,655 gp

Heckler's Recorder

Aura faint abjuration; **CL** 3rd
Slot —; **Price** 1,150 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This appears to be a crudely crafted, almost unplayable, wooden flute. However, it has the bizarre ability to interrupt any musical performance with a single, discordant note that cuts through all other noise. While this can make it a useful but irritating signal whistle, it also allows the user to interrupt or end any musical effect or harpy's song. This sharp, off-key note rings so loudly that those affected by it cannot use their musical abilities for one hour afterward.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements

Craft Wondrous Item, must possess bardic performance (countersong) class feature; **Cost** 650 gp

Ring

Ring of Demonic Deception

Aura moderate abjuration and transmutation; **CL** 13th
Slot ring; **Price** 90,000 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

A single red bloodstone adorns this simple silver ring. While not useful to non-planar beings, outsiders highly value and seek after it. When worn by an outsider, that creature has its abilities reduced. For example, damage reduction is removed, spell resistance is halved, and the being cannot cast any spells or use any spell-like effects that mimic a spell of 3rd level or higher. Any familiars bound to an outsider wearing this ring also experience these effects.

While a huge limitation for most outsiders, it grants several benefits. Any attempts to cast divination magic on them, magically reveal their true nature, or otherwise discern their identity reveal the outsider to be nothing more than a mundane commoner. This allows the outsider to act almost invisibly on the mortal plane of existence — a dangerous advantage while scouting the Prime Material planes.

Any familiars bound to an outsider wearing this ring also experiences these effects.

If worn by a mortal, the ring has a 1% chance per day of turning the wearer into a demon (succubus, incubus or GM's choice). However, the ring grants the wearer the *charm person* ability of the succubus to use at will.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements

Forge Ring, creator must be an outsider, *greater polymorph*; **Cost** 45,000 gp

Player Handout I

Soon Bard's Gate will be in the service of its new queen. Lady Asmarisa has promised unimagined rewards to members of the Entourage. I shall have the grandest estate in the city and a veritable army of servants and lackeys. Wine will flow like blood and gold beyond counting shall be laid at my feet! I can practically taste it!

Ah, the Lady is as clever as she is beautiful. With each performance, the people of this city are bent more and more to her will. Many are little more than unknowing thralls, awaiting her call. And soon, that call shall sound! Indeed, at the stroke of midnight!

Already, she has departed for the Auditorium. Once she ascends to the great silver harp at its crest, lays her dark enchantment upon its strings and plays her song for all to hear, the city shall be hers! Or, should I say ours? Surely, she shall be the queen, but I shall be her prince — loyal beyond measure, devoted beyond love, and powerful beyond imagining. Bard's Gate shall be ours — all for a simple song.

BARD'S GATE

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The Riot Act

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