

# The Traitor's Feast

A "Funnel Adventure" for use with the D&D Next playtest, intended as a preface to *CM1 - Test of the Warlords*

**About This Adventure:** Not long ago I had the pleasure of playing in a brief *Dungeon Crawl Classics* campaign. Randomness, is one of the core conceits of the game and this is expressed in a lot of ways (IE: a lot of charts). But the true culmination of this concept is the "Funnel Adventure." My group decided to take a stab at one of these old-school meat-grinders and I had a blast!

The Funnel works like this: each player rolls up 2-5 characters of 0 level. Stats are randomly rolled for, randomly distributed, and the character begins with no class, merely a profession, a few items requisite to that occupation, and a handful of coins. The characters are not bold and resilient heroes...yet. They are everyday average peons, hoping to be the one clever, or lucky enough, to survive the adventure, and be granted a level in a full adventuring class.

The attrition rate is incredibly high (given very low hit point totals) and most challenges come through problem solving rather than combat or spell use.

But the real fun is getting attached to these disposable mooks, only to see them crushed in a rockslide or electrocuted by the treasure chest you were *sure* wasn't trapped. Ideally each player ends the adventure with at least one surviving character, who then becomes their PC.

It's a trial-by-fire character creation system. And it jives really well with the D&D Next playtest!

This adventure sets up the guidelines for playing such a game, covering level 0 character creation.

While originally intended as a prologue to a campaign using the old AD&D Companion Set adventure *CM 1 - Test of the Warlords*; the adventure and the concept can be easily adapted to any setting. Following the character creation outline is the adventure itself, intended for (potential) PCs who are of noble birth and from a variety of well-to-do and important families.

**Playtest Disclaimers:** To prevent violating the D&D Next Playtest Agreement, this adventure includes no statistics or information from any of the playtest documents. As such, it *does* reference which document relevant rules and information can be found on. Because this is an ever changing playtest, later versions of the game may render some references in this adventure obsolete. Adjust on the fly as need be.

This adventure is intended to encourage players to experiment with the system; not to infringe upon the dictates of the playtest.

**Inspiration:** This adventure attempts to follow in the footsteps of a beloved narrative trope: that of royal betrayal or, "coup as right-of-passage." There are numerous examples that I kept close in mind: the Human Noble origin story from *Dragon Age: Origins*, The "Red Wedding" in J.R.R. Martin's *A Storm of Swords*, early plot elements of *Suikoden V*, the impetus to action in *Dune*, and so on.

No doubt, your players are familiar with these narratives. While that will bolster their enjoyment of the adventure's content, it also means you will need to be wary of their meta-game knowledge - consciously or unconsciously - effecting their decisions. Do your best to plant red-herrings and misdirection (A spy sympathetic to the hero's cause may at first appear to be the likely enemy - play this up!) They will know that someone is the villain. They just don't know who, or from where they will strike!

**Proficiencies:** Normally lacking proficiency in a weapon or armor results in a major handicap



when using that item. That said, these Level 0 characters have few or no proficiencies to begin with. Consider waving the normal rules requiring prior training with a weapon or armor to properly wield or wear it - it wouldn't be much fun to plan an elaborate trap for some guards only to find you can't put on their armor and use their swords.

DMs looking for a more brutal challenge might stick to the normal rules however, forcing their players to accept carrying Disadvantage on many of their rolls as the cost of having superior equipment.

**Splitting the Party:** This adventure presupposes the possibility that the PCs are separated during the dramatic betrayal that begins the adventure. Given the unusual nature of this kind of game, players might have characters in both groups! This is the intended situation, as it mimics the kind of narratives common in fantasy and sci-fi literature in which groups of protagonists work towards common goals from different locations - their stories followed in separate chapters.

That said, the game is unpredictable! If you find that one or more players is just sitting things out when you jump between groups of PCs, suggest that a fellow player "loan" one of his or her characters to the idle player to keep them in the action. With the high attrition rate of the funnel adventure, it may be necessary for players to pass around characters to ensure everyone has fun.

**Character Creation:** Your DM will determine how many characters are appropriate for each player to make. Generally, the fewer players, the more characters they will want in hand to increase the chances of one surviving. Try to have a total of 15 PCs.

This adventure presumes five players, each creating 3 characters.

### Step 1 - Roll Ability Scores:

To determine stats for each of your characters roll:

- 4d6 and drop the lowest die rolled and add the remaining together

You will roll 6 ability scores. Place these stats as you roll them in order on the character sheet, beginning with Strength and ending with Charisma.

### Step 2 - Choose Race:

Choose each character's race as per normal for the game. Consider that your characters will be from the same noble family, and will likely all be of the same race or of conceivable races (IE: it is possible that a family that is predominantly human might have some half-elven or half-orcish offspring). Alternately your noble house might be a consortium of families, or practice "merit adoptions" from outside the family bloodline.

### Step 3 - Roll for Profession:

Next, roll 1d100 (d%) and consult the corresponding charts to determine your character's "profession," or what has been their principal diversion. Each profession grants your character a bonus skill training (in addition to those you will gain as a level 1 character) and determines some of your starting gear.

The skill bonus is the same as a level 1 character.

Though these professions will likely guide your choice of Background (do not choose a Background and Skills until your character achieves level 1) you need not require it. The events of this



d%	Profession	Skill	Signature Equipment
1	Falconer	Handle Animal	Hawk (as <i>Find Familiar</i> , Claws +1, 1d3 dmg)
2	Troubadour	Perform	Lute
3	Mystic/Cultist	Forbidden Lore	Kriss Knife (Dagger)
4	Scholar	Any Lore	Pen, Ink, 1d4 Tomes
5	Dilletante	Bluff	Jewelry (30 gp)
6 - 10	Courtier	Gather Rumors	Jewelry (30 gp)
11	Soldier	Military Lore	Shortsword
12	Mercenary	Intimidate	Handaxe
13	Explorer	Search	Compass
14	Hunter	Natural Lore	Shortbow, 10 arrows
15	Merchant	Persuade	Scales, +1 d8 gp
16	Sailor	Swim	Cutlass (Scimitar)
17	Barrister	Sense Motive	Legal Tomes, +1 d6 gp
18 - 20	Apprentice Wizard	Magical Lore	Arcane Tomes
21 - 23	Acolyte	Religious Lore	Holy Symbol
24	Foreman	Intimidate	Sap (Club)
25 - 27	Druidic Initiate	Natural Lore	Quarterstaff
28	Fencer	Balance	Rapier
29 - 30	Seneschal	Political Lore	Unfinished Writ, Pen, Ink, Dagger
31	Money-Lender	Intimidate	Club, +1 d8 gp

adventure might cause a sudden shift in the character's worldview and see him/her pursue a wildly different course for their life. This adventure presumes several years intervening between its events and regular campaign play - ample time to take on a new trade or life experience.

Seeing as how each of your characters will be a noble of some sort, the "Noble" background is a likely choice.

NOTE: Some professions include an animal as their "gear." Presume that this animal is trained and collared. Use the stats provided for a familiar (consult the *Feats* document) though this is a mundane animal with no magical link to its master, nor any of the other benefits of the feat.

#### Step 4 - Roll for Hit Points:

Each of your characters receives the following hit points:

- $2d4 + \text{CON bonus HP}$  (Minimum of 1)

These hit points will be in addition to those you normally gain when achieving level 1. Unlike most starting characters, these hit point are rolled randomly.

#### Step 5 - Determine Equipment

Your character begins with the piece of signature equipment included with their profession (if this is a weapon, or armor, they are considered proficient with the item. This proficiency is a bonus in addition to those gained when you achieve your character class).

In addition to any profession-based equipment, all characters begin with the following:



d%	Profession	Skill	Signature Equipment
32	Brawler	Break Object	Brass Knuckles (Cestus)
33	Gambler	Sense Motive	Loaded Dice
34	Con Artist	Bluff	Snake Oil Poultices x3
35	Zookeeper	Handle Animal	Snake (as <i>Find Familiar</i> , Bite +1, 1d3 dmg)
36	Horseman	Ride	Riding Crop (as Club but 1d3 dmg)
37	Jeweler	Subterranean Lore	Jewelry (30 gp)
38	Alchemist	Forbidden Lore	Invisibility Potion
39	Astrologer	Magical Lore	Star Charts
40	Armorsmith	Folklore	Studded Leather
41	Architect	Climb	Drafting kit, Hammer (as Club)
42	Navigator	Swim	Spyglass
43	Libertine	Persuade	Whip
44	Art Connoisseur	Spot	Small Statue (30 gp)
45	Music Connoisseur	Listen	Lyre
46	Shipwright	Folklore	Hand-saw
47	Fortune-Teller	Forbidden Lore	Tarot Deck
48	Herbalist	Natural Lore	Healing Potion
49	Jester	Perform	Jester's Cane (Club)
50	Apothecary	First Aid	Healing Potion
51	Dancer	Perform	Silk Scarves, Costume
52	Spelunker	Climb	Pick (1d6 Piercing)

d%	Profession	Skill	Signature Equipment
53	Minstrel	Perform	Flute
54 - 56	Scribe	Political Lore	Pen, Ink, Vellum Sheets
57	Sychophant	Bluff	Jewelry (30 gp)
58	Smuggler	Conceal Object	Book with hidden compartment
59 - 62	Squire/Page	Ride	Longsword
63	Tax Collector	Sense Motive	30 gp
64	Bailiff	Gather Rumors	Mace
65	Weaver	Folklore	Fine cloth x3
66	Ruffian	Break Object	Bootknife (Dagger)
67	Rake	Bluff	Bodkin (Dagger)
68	Loiterer	Gather Rumors	Fine Wine x2
69	Philanthropist	Persuade	Thank-You Letters, +1d6 gp
70 - 73	Herald	Political Lore	Heraldic Banner (Spear)
74	Cartographer	Political Lore	Map Scrolls x3
75	Novelist	Folklore	Autographed Novels x3
76	Painter	Spot	Portrait (30 gp)
77	Sculptor	Spot	Sculpture (30 gp)
78	Chef	Natural Lore	Cleaver (Dagger)
79	Vintner	Natural Lore	Fine Wine x3
80	Weaponsmith	Military Lore	Bastard Sword



81	Bandit	Sneak	Dirk (Dagger)
82	Antique Collector	Search	Curio (30 gp)
83	Scout	Sneak	Light Crossbow + 10 Bolts
84	Surgeon	First Aid	Medical Bag, Large Scalpel (Dagger)
85	Acrobat	Tumble	Costume, +1 d4 gp
86	Spy	Sneak	Stiletto (Dagger)
87	Historian	Military Lore	Antique Helm (+1 AC/Disadvantage on perception rolls)
88	Ingenue	Sneak	Poison Ring (DC 12 CON or 1d10 Poison)
89	Archeologist	Subterranean Lore	Ever-burning Torch
90	Free-Runner	Jump	Hooded Cloak, 50 feet Rope
91 - 93	Alcoholic	Conceal Object	Strong Hooch x2
94	Zealot	Religious Lore	Cat o' nines (as Whip but no reach)
95 - 99	Second-Born	Political Lore	Leather Armor, Short Sword
100	Secret Heir	Persuade	Locket, Longsword

- Noble's Outfit (x3)
- Belt pouch
- Signet ring
- Waterskin, Wineskin, or Hip Flask
- 5 gp worth of jewelry
- 3d10+ CHA score gp

### Step 6 - Finishing Touches:

The final touches to each of your characters are your typical fare: your character's name, age, etc. This is also a good time to think of your characters in context to their status as lesser nobles. What is your family's name? Do they have any significant relationships to the other player's houses? Do they have a sigil? A motto? Are they beholden to another house?

Make certain that in playing multiple characters at once, they all stand apart from one another. There are a plethora of random charts to help you determine personality quirks and physical characteristics. Consider how your own characters behave toward one another. It might be fun to play an internal rivalry, a fractious pecking order, heartwarming brotherly/sisterly love.



## Adventure - The Traitor's Feast

Noble families from across the realm have been invited to the Mageocracy of Glantri (or a similar highly civilized location appropriate to your setting) to celebrate the nation's anniversary. Tourneys, demonstrations of high magic, feasts, dancing, parties, and celebrations of all kinds are exploding throughout the realm. Even the less magnanimous lords are allowing their servants to partake in one festivity or another. It is a time of revelry...and vulnerability.

One of the Archmages of Glantri, the half-elven **Egan Tolarian**, has been plotting a shift in allegiance; and he's using the holiday to sew as much chaos as possible before he vanishes from the country. One component of this betrayal involves absconding with a plethora of noble hostages for several reasons. Some are to be ransomed, other kept as insurance to cover his escape. But some are intended for a more sinister purpose.

The archmage has recently been studying the dangerous though not forbidden practice of blood magic. normally the key reagent in these spells is difficult to come by without alerting the authorities, but given that he is already attempting a coup, this is the perfect time. Certain spells require the blood of those from noble birth, and so he intends to exsanguinate several of his captives.

Archmage Tolarian has left the matter of obtaining these high-born captives (and harvesting his gruesome spell components) to his apprentice, **Osrik Veyn**. Veyn is a young man of only twenty summers, but is well versed in the culture of royal courts. He is charming, amiable and even a bit attractive. The savvy villain knows that getting on the PCs good side will make them vulnerable, and he intends to carry out all his master's demands with minimal help and no complications.

While the more important nobles are attending banquets and tourneys, the PCs have been invited to a meet-and-greet feast held in one of the sprawling palaces in Glantri. In his master's absence, Osrik Veyn is presiding over the feast and seeing to Archmage Tolarian's guests. Though large

and difficult to navigate, the palace seems oddly empty, as the majority of the staff has been released to enjoy the festivities. The PCs are given plush rooms and provided with a few hours to freshen up after their journey before the meal is ready.

At the feast, Veyn does his best to alleviate any concerns the PCs have (here you will use a little misdirection to address the player's meta-game knowledge as well - encouraging them to expect the action to come from without the palace, rather than within). Veyn has arranged for a sleeping poison to be slipped into the food, so that he can easily dispose of his guests to the dungeon. With only men loyal to Veyn and his master able to access the palace, they will be able to hold out until they receive their ransom, then slip away by magical means before a proper siege can be arranged.

Or rather, that is the plan. Veyn assumes the PCs to be like most of the nobles he knows: frightened and foppish cowards. He's in for a distressing surprise.

### Part 1 - Take a Load Off

Read the following text to set up the action:

*Your long journey to the Mageocracy of Glantri has been exciting, if uneventful. With the nation's next centennial approaching, a massive festival was planned with celebrations occurring throughout the country. In a rarely-seen show of peace and camaraderie, guests from most nations, including many lesser tribes, clans, guilds, and organizations- were invited to partake. You can look forward to a week of feasts, dances, tourneys, carnivals, and other diversions.*

*Being a lesser member of a lesser house this is a working holiday for you: while your more senior family or superiors attend major events, you are to hob-knob with knights, scholars, seneschals and various other functionaries and royal underlings. It's your job to make the political connections that might blossom into mutually beneficial alliances. And if you can wind up arranging a favorable marriage, trade contract, or just get blindingly and delightfully inebriated, mores the better!*



Your stay will be in the palace of one of the Archmages of Glantri's ruling council: Egan Tolarian. You've been told that the half-elf wizard keeps to himself for the most part and allows his chief apprentice, Osrik Veyn to handle his affairs.

Archmage Tolarian's palace is a sprawling wonder; clearly built with the aid of magic. Though mostly a show of wealth, the structure carefully conceals many sound tactical features and no doubt a few magical deterrents to intruders.

As you assemble in the courtyard, envoys from other noble families are arriving as well. From out of the main doors comes a smartly dressed young human wizard, a welcoming smile spreads across his boyish good looks as he slips a half-cape back over his shoulder. He is followed by a small cadre of servants.

"Good afternoon my friends! I trust your journeys went well? I have some unfortunate news; it seems my master, the Archmage Egan Tolarian has been...impressed, into attending another function of the centennial and won't be joining us for tonight's festivities. It's terribly rude, I know, but I assure you he had little choice in the matter. Nevertheless, I will be happy to entertain you! I am his apprentice, Osrik Veyn, and I'll be your host for the night. Come, let's get your things and get you into your rooms! We've a few hours before the feast and I'm sure you'd all appreciate a chance to get off your feet."

Veyn will happily answer any of the PCs questions as his servants take their clothing and traveling gear to their rooms, stable their horses, and attend to whatever duties are required. Each family (player) receives a spacious and well appointed little apartment with individual rooms for each PC, as well as solar and a water closet (an ingenious magical device has replaced the need for crude chamber pots in this palace.)

The PC's apartments empty into a large common area providing the players with opportunity to have their characters interact before the feast. Veyn takes his leave of the PCs here.

Allow the players to role-play or prepare as need be. Before moving on to the feast, roll once on the random event table for each *player*. These events are opportunities to interact with the palace staff

Roll 1d20	You pass two palace guards who are speaking in hushed tones: <b>WIS DC 12 (Listen)</b> - <b>SUCCESS</b> : "...Veyn says to keep an eye out. Sentries spotted someone creeping around outside the walls. Probably nothing but stay frosty." - <b>FAIL</b> : Read any 5 words from the above script
1 - 4	
5 - 8	Select a PC at random: When they enter their room a maid (male or female) is finishing up and makes flirtatious small talk with the PC, leaving with an obvious wink and a "...Perhaps we will bump into each other again, milord."
9	Select a PC at random: A small half-orc boy is filling the wine mugs in the solar, when he turns to suddenly and bumps the PC, spilling dark wine and ruining their clothing permanently. A show of kindness or cruelty to this boy should be a useful plot-point later.
10 - 12	Down a hallway the PCs see a senior butler berating a young serving girl. "What did the master say about touching the paintings in this hallway? Don't dust here, go elsewhere! Go!" The butler inspects the wall opposite the painting for a moment before moving on.
13 - 14	You pass by a room where a palace guard and two servants on break (or loafing) are playing cards. Catching your eye the guard says "G'day there milords! You're quite welcome to join if the spirit moves you." Their participation should be a useful plot-point later.
15 - 16	A palace guard and servant are frantically searching through niches off of the hallway. Their chatter indicates the guard has misplaced a dungeon key. The keys are being collected as a security measure. Apparently the Archmage had to leave two criminals in their cells before he left.
17	A kitchen boy gruffly brushes past you toward a cook. "Ingredients you needed! Special I guess. Something about dietary restrictions of the guests." he mumbles. "Did Arcanist Veyn ask you to bring these?" The cook asks skeptically. "Naw, head cook's orders. Said you knew what they was." The cook sighs. <b>WIS DC 15 (Natural Lore)</b> : Some of these ingredients look dangerous...
18	A palace guard snags a rasher of bacon from a flummoxed kitchenmaid. "For the guard dogs, ma'am. Silly bastards love the stuff."
19	An elderly servant approaches a PC bashfully and admits "Milord, I over heard one of the other guests making some very rude accusations about you." She implicates another player's character.
20	A maid slips an envelope half under a door. The envelope contains a love letter, describing a forbidden romance, plans to meet, and a <i>Ring of Entry</i> (x1 cast of <i>Knock</i> )



and to establish relationships that you can callback to in order to aid (or hinder) the PCs when the action starts. If the event is inconsistent with what any of the player's several characters are doing, roll again. Each event can only occur once (unless it seems appropriate for two groups to be present at the same event).

Players with the appropriate skill training have a chance to notice the following:

•**INT (Military) DC 12:** The palace guard's appearance seems to mark them as mercenaries rather than a standing force.

•**INT (Political) DC 12:** There's an unusually small number of servants and staff on hand.

•**WIS (Sense Motive) DC 20:** Veyn and some of the staff and guards exhibit moments of distraction; looking out the windows and double checking entrances into the palace.

•**WIS (Subterranean) DC 15:** This region has sturdy yet easily worked bedrock. No doubt the palace is criss-crossed by underground tunnels.



*receive butters and jams, as soups are ladled out into elaborate bowls with decorative runes -meant to grant wealth and luck- etched on the sides. Tarts, gaily colored halfling pastries, cakes and pies all sit at a side table wary of their impending consumption.*

*The only question now is...where would you like to sit?*

During the meal encourage the PCs to chat with one another. Veyn is a pleasant and courteous host (despite being evil, he is not rude, and doesn't want to give his deception away too early).

Once dinner has begun, a guard will enter and whisper something to Veyn. If pressed, he waves off any concerns, explaining that:

"The guards caught sight of someone snooping around outside the palace walls. But I assure you, there are abundant physical and magical wards in place - we are quite secure here."

Below are a number of topics that Veyn will bring up during conversation at the feast. Much of what he says is polite small talk; but

he is also searching his guests to see if some might be of value beyond being mere hostages:

- "Have any among you considered apprenticeship in wizardry - What school of magic interests you?"

- "Tell me of your families! Are any of you related to auspicious heroes I might know?"

- "With several major empires annexing land I have often wondered: is it better to negotiate with and acquiesce to these power, or to remain independent despite the dangers?"

- "Tell me, what would you consider life's greatest pleasure?"

Once the player have had a chance to interact with their host and the others, determine who is eating and drinking (this will likely be everyone).

## Part II - Food Coma

*Servants and a pair of escorts come to walk each family to the dining hall. As you enter, you are announced by a guard serving as herald who declares your names, lands, titles, and who your current liege is. As per custom, the seats nearest to Veyn are empty, as these are reserved for important heads of the palace (and to avoid showing favoritism for one family over the other).*

*Because this is an initial meeting for all parties, you have been given the choice of where to sit - no doubt your host is curious to see how you will behave in this unusual social circumstance.*

*As seats are taken, a small army of servants bursts in and out of the kitchens with practiced and hurried grace. Flagons of mead, dark dwarven ales, flavorful elven wines and a bubbly halfling concoction wet your throats. Plates of boar, and duck arrive, trays of delectable sweetmeats, braids of soft bread and harder loaves are cut to*





## Hazard - Sleeping Poison

- If the PC has partaken in food or drink  
CON saving throw DC 15  
FAIL: The PC falls into a deep sleep  
PASS: Disadvantage on all rolls for 1d4 rounds
  - If the PC partakes in *both*  
Disadvantage on CON saving throw
- \*Elves are immune to this poison. Dwarves gain advantage against it

Those who have are subject to the following hazard and the beginnings of Osrik Veyn's nefarious betrayal.

Those PCs effected by the poison begin nodding off simultaneously. Once this happens, Veyn stands and calls in the palace guards (ten of the eighteen total, a major show of force), while unsheathing a wand from his belt. Veyn warns those PCs still awake to relinquish their weapons and stand down.

**Possible Combat:** This is the first major opportunity for conflict and death in the adventure. While Veyn hopes to keep all his hostages alive (for now) he knows that some will need to be killed to acquire their blood - and that can be done just as well after violence. The guards will kill any PC who draws a weapon against them. PCs attempting to flee will be attacked, but the guards will opt to instead knock them unconscious.

Veyn opens combat by casting *Sleep* on as many awake PCs as he can. Afterwards, he will use whatever spells are most appropriate to stop any attempt to flee or fight.

The servants and cook staff will flee from combat, though they might report fleeing or hiding PCs.

Unarmed PCs can easily use chairs and candle stands as improvised weapons. Two large knives on the table are sharp and sturdy enough to qualify as daggers. The rest would not be suitable weapons.

**Taking Flight:** Wise PCs will realize that surrender means imprisonment and resistance means death. They may instead opt to flee down the winding corridors and abundant rooms of the

palace - a valid plan given the building's large size and small staff.

If a PC moves out of the dining hall then they have a chance to escape the confrontation and hide somewhere in the palace. The nearest guard will leave as well to give chase (if applicable. A lucky PC might capitalize on the distraction of combat to make a break for it without immediate pursuit). Quickly resolve any such escapes as follows:

- Opposed **DEX (Sneak)** vs. **WIS**  
FAIL: The guard makes an attack  
PASS: The PC escapes into the palace

**Aftermath:** At the end of this scene, some PCs will be unconscious, fled, or dead. The palace guards begin taking sleeping PCs to the dungeon. Servants are assigned to retrieve corpses and remove them to Osrik Veyn's private apartment tower. If any PCs escape, Veyn assigns two guards per PC (up to a maximum of six) to search the palace grounds for those who escaped. Seeing as how the entire building is on lockdown, he has no fear of them slipping out of the palace.

## Part III a - Must be Some Kind of Way Out of Here

*Panting heavily, you chance a glance back. It seems the guards have not caught up with you just yet. The halls of this grand place are strangely quiet, and its labyrinth of corridors which were once so impressive, now hold only threats and dread. You have to get out of here. Where are the others? Why would Veyn do this? What is going on!?*

*Down the hallway, you can hear the shouts of the guards. "There's nowhere to run, lordlings! The palace is locked up tight and magically trapped to boot! We've got all the time in the world to find you. It'll go easier for you if you just give up!" The man's voice is growing closer. It's time to move.*

At this point, some PCs may be separated (a player may even have some characters in one location and the remainder elsewhere). The adventure resolves once a majority of PCs escape - whether they seek revenge against Veyn or rescue their comrades first is up to them.



## Hazard - Warded Doors

•Unless you hold the corresponding key to a major exit (Main gates, side doors, portcullis, drawbridge, etc.) any attempts to open or tamper with the door cause an electrical discharge

**2d8 Lightning dmg (DEX save for half)**

**Locked In:** Escape won't be easy. Every outside door, gate, portcullis, window, and garbage chute is locked up tight, with the only keys being in Veyn's possession. Both the PCs, staff, and guards are locked inside (a big problem were a fire to start).

Worse yet, the major entrances/exits are magically warded as well, requiring anyone wishing to safely exit to have the corresponding key in hand. If any of the main doors is tampered with by anyone but the holder of the door's key, they receive a brutal shock.

**Outside Help:** Unbeknownst to the PCs, the Archmage Tolarian and Veyn's ploy did not go unnoticed. Another of Glantri's powerful political rulers, himself an Archmage, began to suspect some treachery brewing. Though his spies found nothing conclusive, one of his agents has been actively attempting to sneak into the palace in its vulnerable state.

The spy is a fiery haired human woman named **Glynis of Iremarsh**. When she finds that a plot is underway, it is her duty (and her orders) to attempt to stop Veyn's undertaking at all costs.

*Use the stats for "Edna Yate, Bandit Leader" from the "Against the Cult of Chaos" document of the D&D Next Playtest for Glynis.*

Grant the PCs an opportunity to spot Glynis skulking around if they spend much time looking out a window. If they find a means of escaping, she will approach them before they can get too far away from the castle, speaking honestly about her intentions once she discovers they are the victims of treachery. She offers to help them rescue anyone inside, or at the very least take revenge against Veyn for imprisoning them, and encourages PCs to go back in and help her.

If the PCs refuse to show her their means of escaping the castle, her friendly demeanor will turn cold, businesslike, and potentially lethal.

**Behind Enemy Lines:** PCs who escaped the carnage of the feast are now forced to sneak through the labyrinthine and eerily quiet palace. The structure is unfamiliar to them, and to make matters worse, they are being hunted. Though sparsely populated, there are still some people - and things - moving around throughout the palace that might interfere with their coming and going.

Due to the size of the palace, it is not fully mapped and largely up to the PCs imagination. If their ideas of the palace layout sound reasonable, then it is so. Take advantage of this abstraction to

### "Behind Enemy Lines" Random Events

d 20 roll	Event
1 - 5	You round the corner and almost collide with a servant. His look of shock turns to determination. "Give up - I'm calling the guards!"
6 - 8	That clanking is getting louder. A tiny golem guardian comes into view (PCs must flee or fight a metal golem - use Fire Beetle stats with AC 15)
9 - 11	An eye trailing smoke floats through the hall seeking you. <b>DEX (Sneak) DC 15</b> or the eye spots the PCs and goes to alert the guards (Eye:AC 13, 2 HP)
12 - 14	One of the servants spots you and beckons you forward; "This way. There's a secret entrance, I can get you out of here!" (This is a trick, she leads them to the dungeon)
15 - 16	A guard in the next room is preoccupied trying to pick the lock to a display case containing a +1 <i>Longsword of Bloodletting</i> (+3 dmg to creatures at less than 50% HP)
17 - 19	One of the servants spots you and beckons you forward; "This way. There's a secret entrance, I can get you out of here!" (She leads them to a secret exit)
20	You pass a map room. On the table, out in the open, is a detailed map of the palace and grounds (including escape tunnels beneath)



run this sequence quickly in a "theatre of the mind" style of play.

Encourage the players to find creative resolutions to this problem. Remind them that while mostly empty, the palace did maintain its still sizable skeleton crew of servants. Be generous with the application of Advantage if the players use clever tricks to stack the odds in their favor.

Below are general guidelines for resolving escapees actions:

**Laying Low:** Opposed **DEX (Sneak)** vs. Guard/Servant **WIS** (This must be rolled with some other actions to avoid being caught. If the guards are not actively searching for the PCs, roll for the servants instead.)

- *Locate a room in the palace* - **WIS DC 15**
- *Find a secret passage out.* - **INT (Search) DC 20**
- *Ambush a Patrol* - Opposed **CHA (Bluff) vs.**

**WIS** (All but one of the participating PCs gain a surprise round against guards they attack.)

Before, during, or after each action that a group moving through the palace attempts, have them roll on the corresponding random events table.

### Part III b - Palace Dungeon

*Consciousness returns to you slowly. Cold bites into your bones and dampness clings to your skin and body. Rough voices around you at first sound far away, then come into clarity. Torch lights blaze into your eyes at first until your vision recovers.*

*You imagine that each of these prison cells is much alike. Strewn with straw and dirt, the scratchings of vermin on the floor and of former occupants on the walls. Distantly you can hear your former host and current captor speaking: "Don't be too rough on them now, they are worth more intact. However if they cause trouble, feel free to make examples of a few, we won't need each of them. Bring any you must kill to me as soon as possible."*

*"Aye, milord." responds one of the traitorous mercenaries.*

*"I've some preparations to make but shall return shortly," continues Veyn, "When the Archmage returns he will be riding with two-hundred swords to hold the palace as long as we can. Mark me well - our actions*

*won't be forgot. Those lordlings might be your safe ticket out of here."*

*The creak of armor heralds the man's salute, and with a groan and a slam Veyn is gone, ignorant of any voices calling out to him from the cells. The guard outside the bars in front of you grins wickedly.*

Most of the PCs will awaken roughly thirty minutes later in the palace dungeon. Escaping is no small order as the dungeon is rigged with traps and is being watched by the guards. Each room of the dungeon is described in detail in the following section:

#### **I - Cells**

*Light:* Well lit (torch sconces)

*Smell:* The pungent stench of mildew

*Sounds:* Guards talking, Other prisoners

*Opponents:* x5 Palace Guards

The PCs awaken in small prison cells with barred walls in the front. The matching barred doors are (naturally) locked.

Each cell contains a bed of straw and a bucket for use as a chamber pot. Some lucky cells contain a dead rat covered in flies.

The guards have orders to stand watch in front of each cell, one guard to a cell. Fortunately, they take frequent breaks and often split this responsibility, leaving weaknesses in their vigilance. This does not apply to the two original prisoners who are locked up in **Cell A** and **B**.

While the guards are not buffoons, they are indeed mercenaries, and eager to make a bit of coin or profit in any way they can. If the PCs can come up with some compelling scheme, they might listen. Just as well they are career ruffians who are used to a code of plunder and loose morality. They do not take to the jailor role with patience or fairness, and will happily abuse the PCs if encouraged - though this cruelty might open up avenues for escape.

The guards have a card game going on a table in the corner, as well as several plates of food (unpoisoned) from the feast upstairs. The food includes a large quantity of bacon - favorite treat of the guard dogs in the kennel.



The guards all have keys to the cells and to the torture chamber and kennel. They are all well versed in avoiding the dungeon's security measures.

**Disarmed:** Before hauling the hostages into their cells, each PC with a weapon is stripped of their steel, and their armaments are stashed in a trunk underneath the table where their jailers have set up a card game. The trunk is padlocked, but each guard has a key. Armor, clothing, and items not otherwise considered weapons were left on the PC's person (as even traitorous villains exhibit some measure of respect when capturing the wealthy).

Any animal companions the PCs might have are confiscated and caged in the Kennel (**Area 4**).

**Bargates:** The iron barred doors creak gratingly when opened. With no handle they can only be opened with a key from the outside. They are shut up by cheap, simple locks that could potentially be picked - even by someone without proficiency or experience in lock picking - though this is physically infeasible unless attempted from outside the cage: **DEX DC 13** (The roll is made with disadvantage and requires a long thin object to serve as a lock-pick).

**Behind Bars:** Ideally the PC's behavior, relationships, and actions have created enough impetus for action and inspiration for you to throw kinks into their plans and have the NPCs around the castle playing some role in their escape (for better or worse). If the players take too long in their planning, feel free to roll for a random event on the "Imprisonment" table.

**Other Prisoners:** Two of the other cells are occupied by inmates incarcerated earlier.

One of them is a minstrel named **Liam Lighthand** who was caught stealing (money, a magic item, and a kiss or more from one of the Archmage's female acquaintances). In response to the Archmage's promise to geld him, he is more than willing to help the PCs get revenge and/or

escape (Use the stats for the **Human Commoner** - add CHA 16, DEX 14).

The other prisoner, **Doral Marston**, is more quiet but just as eager to escape. He claims to be a political prisoner who spoke out against the Archmage's draconian economic policies. In truth, this man is a serial killer, incarcerated for good reason. He will accompany the party but should he find himself alone with any PC, he will turn on them, taking great pains to then cover up the murder. Use the same stats as the guards, but adjust

#### "Imprisonment" Random Events

d 20 roll	Event
1 - 5	"Boss says we can't kill ya, but we sure can make you scream, little princess!" The guard draws his weapon, opens the door, and approaches a random PC, taking them into <b>Area 2</b> for torture.
6 - 8	One of the guards begins spouting virulent racial epithets against the non-humans in the room. If there are any non-human characters in the player's control, he steps in and beats one to half HP while another guard watches his back.
9 - 11	Two guards open the cell. One beats a PC to half HP while the other watches his back.
12 - 14	A huge rat crawls out of a loose brick in the wall and attacks the nearest PC.
15 - 16	Your guard hangs his head, barely making eye contact before saying; "Look, I'm really sorry about this. I was just following orders. Can I get you anything?" This guard might be convinced to help an escape <b>CHA DC 15</b>
17 - 19	Tolarian placed an enchantment on the cells in case he ever needed to escape them himself. A previous occupant has carved the command word that will instantly open the door into the wall. The PCs do not know what this word does, however. It works instantly if spoken aloud.
20	As your guard wanders off to start a card game, you notice a seam in one of the bricks. It's loose. Someone before you dug a painstaking path to freedom! (A cramped tunnel leads to the pit in Area 5)



for equipment (he conceals a wicked shiv on his person that acts as a dagger).

**Reinforcements:** Similarly, you might remove Liam Lighthand from your game, and instead give a player the opportunity to pick up a "replacement" PC. This adventure is intended to have a high attrition rate, but ideally each player ends up with at least one survivor. It may be necessary to "fudge" in a new PC if one player or another runs low on bodies.

Simply have the player quickly generate a new level 0 PC, think about how he/she wound up in the dungeon in the first place, and go from there.

**Blood Harvest:** Give the players time to get their bearings and begin making overtures of escape. Before any plan can come to fruition, choose a random PC. Veyn arrives, flanked by two of his men, and removes this PC (casting *Sleep* on cellmates for the duration of the transfer if possible). This character is the first victim of his bloodletting. Withhold information about what is happening to the character from his/her player (lest you risk meta-game temptation).

The process of carefully draining and preserving the blood for magic purposes requires some time - thus your other characters will have a chance to rescue the PC, albeit a very slim one.

If the players are waffling or taking too long, feel free to move the action along by having Veyn come to recover another PC in this way. With their friends vanishing and not returning (Veyn drains them past the point of death) there should be ample reason motivating obstinate PCs.

### 2- *Torture Chamber*

*Light:* Dimly lit (Candles, a single guttering torch)

*Smell:* Blood, Fear

*Sounds:* Creak from the rack

*Opponents:* Variable

The Archmage keeps this torture chamber well stocked for dealing with personal enemies as well as the criminals of his lands.

If a torture device is used on a PC, they take 1 HP of damage and gain a status effect from the following list: Blinded, Deafened, Frightened (triggered by the guards), or Crippled (loss of the use one hand or speed reduced by 10 feet). These devices impair but deal little actual damage - the point of this torture is to inflict pain and intimidation more than to create lasting bodily harm. The PC may make a **CON DC 13** check once per hour to shrug off the strain of their ordeal, or remove it if they receive magical healing.

Close inspection of the room's only torch (positioned oddly in the back of the room) reveals that it is fake. Turning the torch on it's bracket opens a secret passage in the wall beside it.

### 3 - *Secret Room*

*Light:* None

*Smell:* Old Books

*Sounds:* None

Entry is gained by turning the false torch located in the Torture Room. This small, cold chamber appears to be a hidden office of sorts. Inside the room is a desk strewn with papers, magical scrolls, and unlit candles, above which are cabinets. Adjacent on the sides of the desk are a waist high glass front cabinet and a bookshelf. There is a comfortable chair under the desk.

The bookshelf contains several diaries, rare books, personal family and important legal documents. The cabinet on the floor is locked, though easily seen through the glass front are five tomes of dangerous, forbidden lore (most of these are commonly banned by organizations of wizards).

On the desk are documents indicating some research into blood magic, and Archmage Tolarian's worn journal. Even a quick flip through the journal finds that there's enough evidence in here to convict Tolarian of a number of ghastly crimes.

A Potion of healing rests in a potion rack on the desk

**Cursed Countermeasure:** The cabinets attached above desk all contain small crystals, faintly glowing red. Each is set in a labelled nook, with ten in all. One of the nooks reads "Osrik



Veyn." The Archmage placed a curse of weakness - in secret - upon all his apprentices, lest he ever need to turn on them. Crushing the delicate crystal causes the associated apprentice to take 1d6 psychic damage. In addition, they can only deal half damage with spells, and their speed is reduced by 10 feet.

**Tools of the Trade:** Strewn about the office are several useful items: a *Wand of Magic Missiles* (1d8+1 charges, can be used as the spell *Magic Missile* as an action), a *Staff of Firebreath* (treat as a Quarterstaff with 2 charges of *Burning Hands*, useable as an action), and a *Potion of Invisibility* (labelled as such). These items are specially designed for ease of use by very young apprentices, and as such, do not require special knowledge of how to use magic devices. Their properties are known by the wielder from an instant magic link that the item establishes.

#### 4 - Kennel

*Light:* Well lit (torch sconces)

*Smell:* Wet dog, Meat

*Sounds:* Panting, sniffing, the occasional whimper, a man cursing

*Opponents:* x1 Palace Guard, x3 Guard Dogs  
The three angry mastiffs that serve as the palace guard dogs are quartered here, chained up by the collar. The length of their chain allows them to reach anywhere in the room, including the inside of the doorway.

Also present is the guard serving as kennel master. In a grim twist of fate to all involved, this man hates dogs, and has treated the hounds cruelly. As such, appropriate coaxing on the part of the PCs could easily sway the canines to their side. This guard has the key to **Area 6**

Offering the dogs bacon will grant advantage on any roll to coax or cow them into obedience.

A cage hanging from the ceiling contains any animal companions the PCs might have had.

#### 5 - Hallway 1

*Light:* Well lit (torch sconces)

*Smell:* None

*Sounds:* Quiet

*Opponents:* x4 Rats (Rat-king)

Torch sconces line only one side of the wall. This is a hint to the guards as to which side of the room is safe to walk on. The other half of the hallway is rigged partway through the corridor to drop into a 10 foot deep pit. The walls of the pit are irregular, and provide abundant handholds, making escape a small task for an athletic PC.

At the bottom of the pit, four rats have managed to carve out a burrow. Cramped crawl spaces and living in or filth has caused their tails to become muck encrusted and entwined together. This horrible rat-king moves together as one and will happily snack on any PC who falls in - living or dead.

#### Hazard - Pit Trap

- The floor opens slides apart beneath you with a mechanical click and a slam.

- DEX saving throw DC 15

- PASS: Avoid the trap and leap back a few feet into the last occupied area

- FAIL: 1d6 Falling Damage

- STR DC 10 to climb out of the pit.

#### 6 - Storage Room

*Light:* None

*Smell:* Booze, Rotting Wood

*Sounds:* **WIS DC 18 (Listen)** - Rats gnawing

*Opponents:* x3 Rats

Barrels, crates, and sacks of sundry goods and food are stacked up in this room. Included are ales of varying quality, salt, planks of wood, boxes of nails and hammers, potatoes, etc. This room is locked, and the only keyholders are Veyn, the kennel master (**Area 4**) though any given guard has a 1-6 chance of carrying the key as well (A '6' on 1d6).

Hung up on two wooden stands are suits of **Ringmail Armor x2**, and **x2 Shields**.



**Pest Control:** Beneath a sack, three oversized rats gnaw at a bag of grain. They will attack if the sack is disturbed.

### 7 - *Alchemy Lab*

*Light:* Well lit (Candles, Magical Stones)

*Smell:* Various potions and ingredients

*Sounds:* Bubbling beakers, dripping noise

This is where Tolarian and his apprentices go to brew potions and experiment with new alchemical concoctions. There are an abundance of arcane reagents, devices, and paraphernalia on several tables.

**Rigged Cabinet:** In the corner of the room is a potion cabinet marked with glowing runes and clearly padlocked. None of the PCs will possess the necessary skill to unlock it. Tampering with the cabinet results in a bolt of lightning shooting straight forward, striking the interloper and anyone else in a straight line out to the opposite wall (**2d6 lightning dmg, DEX 14 for half**). If the PCs manage to find a clever (or brute force) way of opening the cabinet, they will find that the discharging trap damages some of the contents, but a *Potion of Healing*, *Potion of invisibility*, a *Potion of Heroism*, and a *potion of Speed* survive.

**Cookin' Something Up:** Dedicated PCs can make use of the equipment here to make a handful of useful potions. If the guards are searching for the PCs, make a secret d20 roll. On an 11 or higher, 2 guards will find the PCs, and burst into the room, ready to attack as a third hustles off to warn his comrades.

**Dangerous Ingredients:** Any rough treatment of the tables of potions and ingredients, or a roll of a '1' while experimenting, results in an explosion in a 15 foot radius, dealing **2d6 acid dmg (DEX save DC 12 for half)**

The concoctions the PCs can brew are as follows:

**INT (Arcane, Forbidden) DC 15:** You mix together some volatile reagents to make an explosive vial (Thrown weapon: range 10/25, 3d6 Fire, DC 12 DEX save for half)

**INT (Arcane, Forbidden) DC 20:** Following the recipe laid out in a book, you manage to brew a single potion of *Lesser Spell Reflection*. (Automatically causes a Level 1-2 spell's effects to be suffered by the caster when target is "hit")

**INT (Natural, Religious) DC: 15** You manage to mix up a potion of minor healing (heals 1d4+1 HP)

**INT (Natural, Religious) DC: 20** You have just enough ingredients to mix together a *Potion of Fortitude* (Gain 2d4 temporary HP for 24 hours).

### 8 - *Hallway 2*

*Light:* Dimly lit (torch sconces)

*Smell:* None

*Sounds:* Eerily quiet

Oddly well appointed for a dungeon hallway, two portraits of Archmage Tolarian's ancestors adorn the walls. Both are well armed men in gilded platemail atop sturdy horses. Below each portrait is a small plate giving the man's name, age, titles, and accomplishments. Each shares the same tiny scripture at the bottom:

*Greatness is not given, it is earned  
Punishment is the reward of the ignorant  
Deference in the face of your betters,  
Is the only solace for the meek*

If the PC's do not genuflect in some way to the portraits, then as one of them passes between, the art comes to life, and both paintings strike at each passing victim (**+3, 1d8+1 slashing dmg**).

Destroying the paintings will neutralize these dangerous magical apparitions.

The door at the end of this hall leads out of the dungeons and into the palace.



### Part III c - Switching Sides

*The two guards behind you keep their gloved hands clamped tight on your shoulders, forcing you to kneel. "There seems to be some potential in you," muses your traitorous host. "I suppose there's no harm in telling you, as everyone will know by tomorrow. My master, the Archmage Tolarian and I are defecting to the Thiresian Empire. The Imperials offer great wealth and power to the clever and ambitious. Two traits I detect a whiff of in you."*

*The young wizard leans closer, eyeing you intently. "What say you? Would you be willing to turn on your family and join us?"*

If any of the PCs showed some hint of rebelliousness, magical potential, cruelty or machiavellian predilections, Veyn will have the guards throw bags over their heads, and escort them to his private chambers. Once there he makes the offer for them to join him.

The stipulation to this is that the PCs who agree to being turncoats must return to their cells and serve as spies among their family. They must take all due action to foil escape attempts and discourage intent to flee. Killing their fellows is not desirable as Veyn needs them alive, though there are certain circumstances where that might please the devious apprentice.

Veyn warns them that he is not to be crossed, and he keeps tabs on his new converts. If they show the slightest sign of betrayal, he kills them outright and personally, without hearing excuses or rationale.

If a PC attempts to lie to Veyn, or to play double agent, they must pass a **CHA (Bluff) vs WIS** against the wizard.

The benefit of being one of Veyn's lackeys is that the PC may request audience with him (ostensibly to make reports on fellow inmates) and that request will often be granted by the guards.

Note that this wrinkle in the adventure makes it quite possible for the game to become adversarial. It is even possible that a single player could have characters of both allegiances!

### Part IV - Fight or Flight

Unless the PCs have found one of the secret escape routes out of the castle, they will likely have little choice than to confront Veyn in order to obtain his keys and escape the palace. More than likely this will also serve as a rescue attempt if one or more PCs have been abducted by the perfidious young mage.

Veyn spends most of this stage of the adventure in his private apartments (which double as a lecture hall for the lower-ranking apprentices), located at the penthouse level of the Apprentice's Tower. It will be necessary for the PCs to locate the tower; a challenge that can be accomplished through interrogation, trailing guards who are reporting in, or by sheer trial and error of searching the maze-like palace. Use the rules for "Laying Low" in *Part IIIa - Some Kind of Way Out of Here* and the associated random encounter table to adjudicate travel through the palace.

While the lower floors of the Apprentice's Tower are empty, Veyn's apartments will be more challenging to traverse.

With few doors in the upper level tower, sound travels easily from room to room. If combat breaks out, all of the inhabitants on this floor will know. That said, Veyn will likely wait for his guards to handle any intrusions before going to address the problem directly.

#### **I - Mess Hall**

*Light:* Well lit (Torch Sconces, Daylight, Candles)

*Smell:* Food, Spices, Perfumes

*Sounds:* Conversation, Clanking

*Opponents:* If PCs have escaped x2 guards - If all PCs were imprisoned: 1d4+1 guards  
This dining area is both Veyn's solar and kitchen, as well as a small mess hall for the apprentices that he instructs. At all times, there are at least two mercenaries here to bodyguard Veyn. They while away the hours eating, drinking, telling crude jokes and playing cards - cautious not to let their conversation grow loud enough to disturb their master.





**2 - Wardrobe**

*Light:* Dimly lit (Candlelight)

*Smell:* Mothballs

*Sounds:* Birds chirping outside

*Opponents:* Animated Mannequins

Veyn's personal wardrobe is an immense walk-in closet with outfits for every occasion. Mannequins around the room display his most fashionable or best enchanted ensembles.

Included are three robes enchanted to protect against elemental attacks of Fire, Cold, and Lightning (Each reduces 2HP of damage from the associated element). The mannequins upon which these robes hang are enchanted. If the PCs try and take one of these robes, the mannequin will come to life, attempting to grab and hold the thief as a *magic mouth* appears in its head and screams for aid. Each mannequin has 4 HP, and AC 9.

**Hazard - Rigged Mannequin**

If any but Veyn or his valet attempts to remove the garment, the mannequin begins to scream as loudly, and reaches out to grab the offender

- GRAB: +3 vs. Target's **STR** or **DEX**
- ESCAPE: Contested **STR** vs. Mannequin (+3) to break free

**3 - Lecture Hall**

*Light:* Well lit (Torch Sconces, Daylight, Candles)

*Smell:* Perfumes, Old Books, Upholstery

*Sounds:* Distant conversation, Clanking

*Opponents:* Veyn (Unless he is in the Bloodletting Chamber), Animated Desk

This open room with its prominent throne is the lecture hall where Veyn teaches classes in magical theory and praxis to Archmage Tolarian's more experienced apprentices.

The room is extravagantly decorated and the veritable throne from which the head apprentice dispenses his wisdom is certainly designed to intimidate.

The most noteworthy feature is Veyn's writing desk, easily identifiable as it shifts about near the

throne like a impatient dog. The animated furniture moves with a strange and unnatural gait, clomping to and fro without throwing its contents asunder.

**Hazard - Animated Desk**

*AC* 10, *HP* 15 *Move* 20 feet

•As an action can impose Disadvantage on all actions of one target within 5 feet of it.

In combat, the enchanted desk rushes to its master's aid, smashing into PCs, leaping in the path of their weapons, and generally posing a distraction.

**4 - Senior Apprentice Quarters**

*Light:* Well lit (Torch Sconces, Daylight, Candles)

*Smell:* Old Books, Musty Sheets, Flowers, Leftovers

*Sounds:* Soft snoring of an Owl Familiar  
This room and its three sets of double-bunked beds serve as the spartan quarters for the more advanced of Archmage Tolarian's apprentices. Though these young men and women are away attending the festivals, they likely intended to return late that night.

The chests of personal effects are locked, and contain a combination of clothing, letters from home, journals, notebooks, textbooks, magical reagents, and 3d10 gp. The armoires contain robes and an assortment of rods, wands and staves. A **WIS (Spot) DC 20** or an **INT (Arcane, Forbidden) DC 15** identifies a *Staff of Firebreath* (treat as a Quarterstaff with 2 charges of *Burning Hands*, useable as an action) and a *Wand of Ray of Frost* (treat as the spell, 2d4 Charges)

**5 - Bedroom**

*Light:* Well lit (Torch Sconces, Daylight, Candles)

*Smell:* Soap, Old Books, Clean sheets

*Sounds:* Birds chirping outside

This corner of the tower houses Veyn's bedroom. A very comfortable bed, down pillow and immaculate



bookshelf are the major adornments. Most of Veyn's clothing is in the wardrobe down the hall and any magical equipment he uses is kept elsewhere.

Beneath the pillow is a +1 *Dagger of Impact*. (1/Day; Target makes a STR DC 13 save or be knocked back 10 feet).

Several shelves built into the wall above head level house books of all sorts though it is hardly an extensive library. A small chest beneath the bed is well locked and contains 1,000gp, a healing potion, and the young man's personal journal, which contains little useful information (Veyn was too careful to write anything that could legally incriminate him).

A thick curtain closes off either end of the hallway. These drapes are enchanted to block out noise from the rest of the floor.

### 6 - Bloodletting Chamber

*Light*: Well lit (Magical Runes, Candles, Daylight from other rooms)

*Smell*: Blood, Ozone

*Sounds*: Eerie hum from the magic circle, incantations

*Opponents*: 11 Dark Acolyte (possible)

A runic circle in the middle of the turret is ringed with dripping candles. The arcane sigils give off a morbid red glow. A rack on the wall stores knives, saws, crude tubes and devices used to draw out blood - typically without killing the subject.

In the corner sits, an acolyte of an evil deity who has come visiting Archmage Tolarian to share knowledge. When the PCs enter, he is likely seated comfortably, reading over a notebook of the Archmage's. He will attack immediately when interlopers enter the room.

If Veyn is present in the room conducting a bloodletting, then the Acolyte is elsewhere in the palace.

**Desperate Rescue:** If Veyn has taken one of the captured PCs, they will be in this room. The PC will be paralyzed on the magic circle and their body marred with cuts and gashes patterned into strange symbols (pulling the victim bodily off the

circle will return their mobility and end the syphoning off of their energy). His or her blood is slowly flowing lazily through the air from a sickening cut across their chest into phials and canisters sitting on the ground at the edges of the circle. The PC is in agony.

Roughly every ten minutes the circle drains enough blood to deal 1 HP of damage to the PC. Once they are dead, Veyn has his men dispose of the body into the palace blacksmith's furnace, and goes to recover another subject.

The lifeblood of noble born is an extremely valuable and usually rare material component for blood mages, so this process needs to be carried out carefully. The collected blood is a resource Veyn will go out of his way to protect, though it has no power until used in spells and rituals.

### Part V - Epilogue

The players can complete the adventure in a handful of ways:

- Getting at least one PC out of the castle
- Killing Veyn
- Siding with Veyn and imprisoning all other PCs for ten hours
- The adventure ends if all PCs are killed, abandoned, or resign themselves to their fate

Within the next few days a whirlwind of activity occurs. The Archmage Tolarian's plans for a coup elsewhere have also failed, and if Veyn is foiled in holding the hostages of the palace he is unable to return to his home, instead going to ground. The PCs learn of a month long man-hunt that turns up many of the Archmage's underlings, but not the wizard himself.

The other rulers of Glantri are appalled by their colleague's behavior, and many reparations - political, financial, and economic - are afforded to the PCs families in apology for the disaster. The failed coup does much to cut the joy of the great festival, and most participants return to their home realms within a couple days.



## Advancing Characters

The original intention of this adventure was to hone characters for an ongoing realm management campaign. If you would like to carry these characters on in your own game, use the following guidelines:

- Apply all the normal benefits of gaining a class at the appropriate level
- Hit Points applied for being a level 0 character are in addition to those gained for full character levels
- If you are playing in a game with the Skill training rules, your Noble's "profession" skill is in addition to the total number of skills you normally gain, and follows the same rules for increasing its skill bonus
- All gear is kept (unless the DM says otherwise)
- If your DM used the rules for Backgrounds, consider choosing one that matches your character's Noble "profession" or simply choose the "Noble" background
- Presume at least a year of time has passed between this adventure and your character's new career with a full character class
- Because of the capricious nature of the dice used in determining ability scores, talk to your DM about granting additional points to represent conditioning over the intervening years. The recommendation is to slot a +3, +2, and +1 into three abilities of your choice.



**Appendixes:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ House Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Race: \_\_\_\_\_ Profession: \_\_\_\_\_

STR ____ <i>Mod</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	INT ____ <i>Mod</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	AC	Armor	Weapon Attack
DEX ____ <input type="checkbox"/>	WIS ____ <input type="checkbox"/>	HP	Current HP	Damage
CON ____ <input type="checkbox"/>	CHA ____ <input type="checkbox"/>	Skill +1d6		House Sigil / Character Portrait
Equipment:				
Coins:				

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ House Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Race: \_\_\_\_\_ Profession: \_\_\_\_\_

STR ____ <i>Mod</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	INT ____ <i>Mod</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	AC	Armor	Weapon Attack
DEX ____ <input type="checkbox"/>	WIS ____ <input type="checkbox"/>	HP	Current HP	Damage
CON ____ <input type="checkbox"/>	CHA ____ <input type="checkbox"/>	Skill +1d6		House Sigil / Character Portrait
Equipment:				
Coins:				



**NPCs****Palace Guards**

As per "Human Warrior" in the Bestiary with the following modifications and considerations:

**MODIFICATIONS**


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**Melee Attack—Short Sword:** +3 to hit. *Hit*, 4 (1d6+1)

**Ranged Attack—Hand Crossbow:** +3 to hit (ranged 30 ft./120 ft.; one creature) *Hit*, 4 (1d6+1) [Carries x10 bolts]

**Unscrupulous:** The usual palace guards have been replaced by a band of mercenaries. though disciplined in battle, they are cruel, selfish, and perfidious men of loose morality. For every 10gp spent to bribe a guard, the corresponding CHA roll gains a +1 bonus (cumulative)

**Well Equipped:** At the DM's discretion, one guard in each group will be wearing Scale Mail (AC 14)

**No Reinforcements:** The palace has only 18 guards within the walls at present, and no more will arrive during the course of the adventure. The PCs can make their exploration of the palace easier via attrition.

**Palace Servants / Staff**

As per "Human Commoner" in the Bestiary

**Glynis of Iremarsh**

As per "Edna Yate, Bandit Leader" (Page 5-6) in the "Against the Cult of Chaos" conversion document

**Guard Dog**

**Medium Beast**

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 7 (1d8+2)

**Speed** 45 ft.

**Senses** low-light

**Str** 12 (+1) **Dex** 13 (+1) **Con** 12 (+1)

**Int** 2 (-4) **Wis** 12 (+1) **Cha** 6 (-2)

**Alignment** unaligned

**Languages** ----

**TRAITS**


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**Light Sensitivity:** While in sunlight, the drow has disadvantage on attack rolls.

**ACTIONS**


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**Melee Attack—Bite:** +4 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit*: 3 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage. If the attack deals maximum damage, the dog also knocks the target prone.

**EQUIPMENT**


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Spiked Collar

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**Level 1 XP 20**



**Chief Apprentice Osrik Veyn****(Medium Human)****Armor Class** 14 (mage armor)**Hit Points** 30**Speed** 45 ft.**Senses** normal**Str** 9 (-1) **Dex** 10 (+0) **Con** 12 (+1)**Int** 16 (+3) **Wis** 14 (+2) **Cha** 16 (+3)**Alignment** Neutral Evil**Languages** Common, Elven, Draconic

## ACTIONS

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**Melee Attack—Lightning Wand:** +3 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 5 (1d6+3) lightning damage.

**Ranged Attack—Lightning Lance:** (range 50 ft.; one creature). The target must succeed at a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw *Failed Save:* 1d8 lightning damage. All enemies within 5 ft. of the target also take 1 lightning damage.

## SPELLS

**Save DC 14**

Cantrips: *mage armor, mage hand.*

1st-Level (4/day): *burning hands, magic missile, shield, sleep*

2nd and 3rd-Level spells are subsumed with Blood Magic preparations.

## REACTIONS

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**Shield (1st-Level Spell):** When hit by an attack or targeted with *magic missile*, Osrik can gain a +2 bonus to AC and immunity to magic missile for 10 minutes.

## ENCOUNTER BUILDING

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**Level 3 XP 110**



## Maps

### A Note About Maps:

Most of the maps accompanying this adventure are composited from Wizard's of the Coast's "Dungeon Tiles" line of game aids. In particular I have utilized pieces from *DU 6 - Harrowing Halls* for the banquet hall. Osrik Veyn's apartments can be reconstructed without modification using pieces from *DN 6 - Castle Grimstead*, and *Master Set - The Dungeon*.

Additional map art comes from the *Dwarven Forge* Kickstarter's "Map Tiles" beta map maker. Utilizing the pieces included in single sets of the *Dwarven Forge* "Room and Passage," and "Room Set" products, you can create all but the final long hallway of this dungeon.

### Palace Grounds:

There is no extensive and detailed map for the palace. Whatever rooms, features, and amenities one might reasonably find in a late-middle ages/early renaissance style of western european fantasy castle are there. As such, the player's imagination is largely responsible for building the structure.

A few examples of areas in the palace are given below, though this is hardly an extensive list. (NOTE: The courtyard, stables, well, and any other outdoor facilities are cut off due to the lockdown).

- Blacksmith/Armory (provides any simple, and most martial weapons. Abundant suits of leather, studded leather, and ringmail armors.)

- Kitchens

- Drygoods storage

- Chapels to various deities

- Infirmary

- Bedrooms of the well-to-do

- Hippogriff Hatchery

- Apothecary (Chance to find a few odd potions)

- Lounges

- Bars

- Rookery (For messenger birds)

- Ballroom



## Part II Map - The Banquet Hall

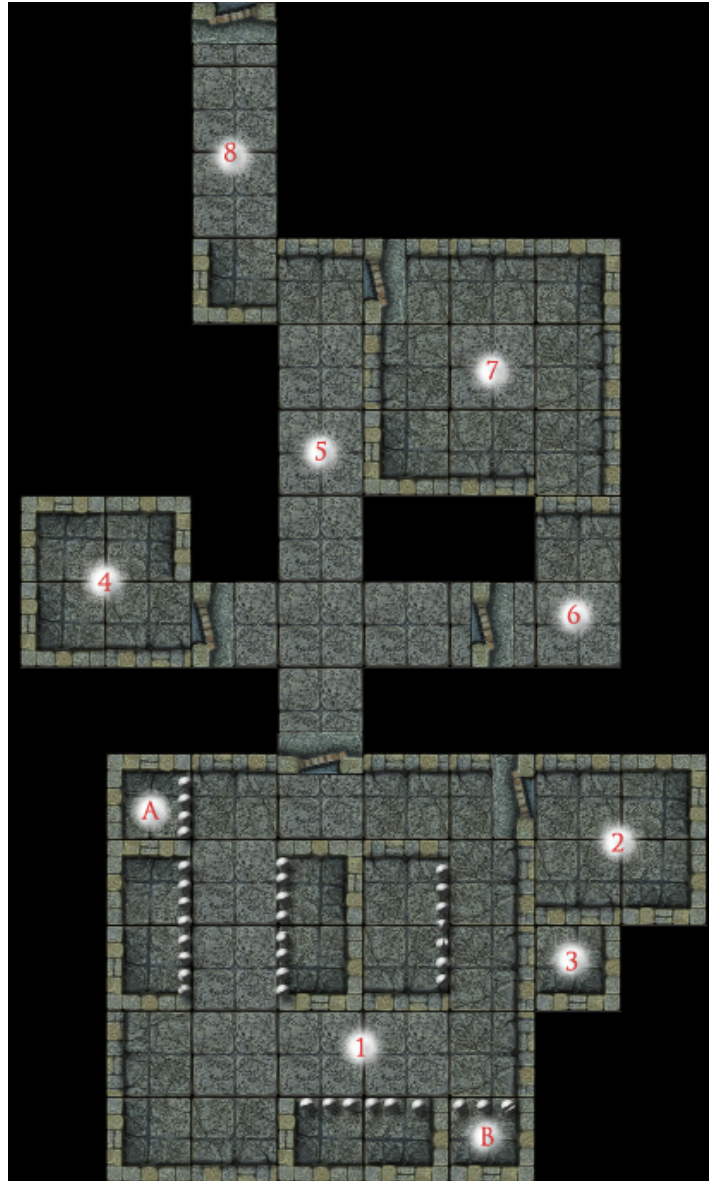


### Features of the Area:

- **South and North Entrances:** To the kitchens
- **West and East Entrances:** To the palace
- **Large Table:** Veyn sits alone at the south end of this table. The table itself is heavy, sturdy, and stands on a stone platform raised two feet off the ground
- **"U" Table:** Where the PCs are invited to sit and dine
- **Candle Poles:** These metal poles stand 6 feet off the floor and are topped with four lit candles each. They could serve as an improvised weapon (1d6 bludgeoning, Reach)
- **Hearth:** The hearth roars with warm flames. It is large enough that someone could potentially fall in (1d6 fire damage)



### Part IIIb Map - The Dungeon



**Part IV Map - Osrik Veyn's Apartments**

