

AGE 12+



MURDER AT THE GALA

PART 1

A night of revelry becomes a dark affair as the Verdant Company plans to murder a traitor in the middle of an elegant gala.

5E COMPATIBLE ADVENTURE

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Few events are as momentous as Thamarya's Assembly elections, the moment when noble houses, guilds, and commoners vote for their candidates and hope to push their agendas. The weeks prior to this occasion are hectic, full of dirty politics and intrigues to discredit opponents, bribes to get favors, and sometimes, the negotiation of a compromise between opposing factions. The elf commoner, leader of the fishermen, and President of the Assembly, Heledir, is set to retire after serving for more than fifteen years. This decision has activated the political machinations of numerous factions in the prosperous city, including the noble houses and the guilds. Honoring his departure, the House of Pech is staging a gala to celebrate Heledir, where secret political maneuvering to favor certain candidates will transpire. However, the most intriguing event (unknown to the guests) is that the assassination of Harbor-master Njord is set to occur during the gala, sending a clear message that the "Green Hand" tolerates no treachery.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Murder at the Gala, a 5e compatible RPG adventure by Cast n Play.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

Murder at the Gala is a 5e adventure meant for four to six 9th level player characters. The adventure takes place during a gala to honor exiting President Heledir in the House of Pech's château.

- As a Game Master, you know your players better than anyone. Make your decisions accordingly.
- You have the last word. This adventure is a guide, but you can improvise as you see fit.
- Fun is the ultimate goal. Never forget that.

STORY OVERVIEW

Murder at the Gala takes place inside a small château. The plot is as follows:

- After informing the Juerii and the Nschair of the planned assassination of Harbormaster Njord during the gala, the players were asked to attend the event and stop the assassination from taking place.
- The Juerii got the characters invitations but they will have to pretend to be someone else.
- The party's objective is to capture the Verdant Company's leader once his identity is revealed. In order to do this, they'll have to wait until a move is made against Harbormaster Njord.
- Although the event is to honor the outgoing President Heledir, numerous houses and guilds will be lobbying for their chosen candidates during the gala.
- Masquerading as an influential courtesan, Nobu Carmack is seducing the leader of House Gimot to support the candidate allied to the Verdant company
- Nobu Carmack is the Verdant Company's second Captain, and she is also the one who will eliminate Harbormaster Njord. However, she is not the leader of the Verdant Company.
- The Verdant Company has charmed numerous servants who will act as sleeper agents should the need arise. They are unaware of their condition.

ABOUT THE CHÂTEAU

House Pech has one of the most splendid dwellings in Thamarya. Although it only has two levels, the place is renowned for its beauty, from the delicate red and black marble that makes up the floor to the exquisite collection of sculptures scattered around the rooms. The gala will primarily occur on the first floor of the château. Other areas will be closed off by armed guards or powerful magic.

ABOUT HOUSE PECH

Members of House Pech come from a long lineage of magic casters, and are considered one of the Elder Houses because tracing their roots to when Agrippa Thlen was named the first Prince of Thamarya. The current leader is Ingole Pech, a powerful sorcerer and twin sister to the late Grand Advisor, whose place in the Royal Council has remained vacant for numerous years because King Archibald has refused to name a successor.

Ingole has not been seen in public ever since her brother passed away. Some say she is a recluse and others that she is on a long journey. The truth is that she has long suspected foul play and has remained isolated until she can ascertain the identity of her brother's murderer. The running of the house has fallen to Angül Pech, who is the de facto host and the planner of the gala. A capable wizard, Angül (as all his family) is well regarded by the guilds and commoners although disliked by numerous noble houses. The reason being that House Pech has long sided and done business with the guilds and commoners, rejecting the elitist attitude of the nobility even though one of its members is traditionally named the King's Grand Advisor.

ABOUT THE GALA

The gala is a farewell for Assembly President Heledir, a commoner about to retire, provoking a race for his post between the noble houses and the guilds. The players were given invitations and proper attire for the occasion. They will be free to move around specific areas and interact as they see fit. However, all guests will be asked to head to the Dragon Hall to make a toast for Heledir. There is no trigger for this event, and it should occur at the GMs criteria.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

For this adventure consider the following character hooks:

Cutting the head. The criminal syndicate will collapse if their leader is exposed and captured.

Clearing your name. If the Verdant Company is crushed and its leadership decapitated, their crimes will be exposed and the characters will be exonerated.

Enough is enough. “They started it, I’m going to finish it”.

PROLOGUE

Silence reigned in the secret tavern as Danaria and Ramnulfids absorbed all the new information that had come to light, including the planned assassination of Harbormaster Njord during the gala to be staged at the Pech family’s chateau. After some moments, the two deliberated and came up with a plan.

Both of them arranged invitations for you, asking you to attend the gala and to wait until the attempt on the Harbormaster was made. They highlighted the need for discretion, especially since the main objective was to capture the Verdant’s Company leader, which can only be accomplished until the criminal syndicate makes its move against the Harbormaster.

Hours have passed since that conversation. And now, a colossal silver gate stands in front of you. The gate is 80 ft. across and decorated with a statue on each end. The one on the left is a red dragon blowing a deadly cone of fire against the statue on the opposite end, which has a wizard wearing a crown of feathers and is covered with tattoos.

The smell of perfume is overwhelming as the crème de la crème stands in line as servants check the guests’ invitations. Although your invitations are legit, your assumed identity is not, and a slight chill runs down your spine as you realize that should you be discovered, the consequences can be rather bloody.

OUTSIDE AREA

There are two main accessible areas before reaching the main structure. The first is the gate where guards are checking invitations and keeping away the uninvited. A few feet after it, the Red Courtyard begins. A large open area with columns on the sides and exquisite painted ground, made of volcanic ash and lime, beyond which lies the chateau itself. As its name implies, the ground is painted red.

OI. GUTIER’S GATE

The gate depicts the story of the founder of House Pech, Gutier, who arrived in Thamarya and battled a powerful red dragon. It is made of silver and adorned with ethyx. It must be worth an entire kingdom. The people in line chuckle as they joke about, although there are a few that remain serious. There are all kinds of people: elves, orcs, humans, halflings, etc. However, the one unifying factor is their elegant attires. It doesn’t take an expert to spot the finest furs and silks, and that the individuals wearing them must be of high standing. The line keeps advancing, and your turn is coming up...

The silver gate is the only entrance to the chateau; the rest being a round brick wall surrounded by a force field. Two **servants** check the invitations while six **guards** stand beside the gate, ensuring that nobody tries to force their way inside.

Before the PCs left for the chateau, they were given access to clothes so that they could disguise themselves, and hide their weapons in magic sacks.

The invitations state that they were invited because they are nobles, merchants, guild members, or somebody of importance. Each player should think of a fake identity before playing begins.



Noble Woman

When the party reaches the two servants, they will be asked their names and occupation. A successful DC 16 Charisma (Deception) check is needed to get past the servants. Should any player fail the check, the servants will become suspicious, and a successful DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check will be needed to convince them that all is in order.

Should any PC fail both checks, the guards will approach them and ask them to leave, willingly or by force. It should be noted that discretion is vital for the mission's success, and that it is not the party's benefit to initiate combat, it should be avoided at all costs. If passing as a guest failed, there are two additional ways inside.

The first is a weak spot on the force field located 200ft. to the left of the dragon statue. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check will reveal the area where the field is weak. To create a gap to get through, a successful DC 17 dispel magic is needed. The other method of gaining entrance is to lure some guests away from the line and use their clothes and invitations to get past the servants (although the PCs will need to roll the check again).

Both of these methods lead to the red courtyard.

O2. RED COURTYARD

Writers and servants are already attending the guests loitering in the courtyard. Part of the guests are admiring the two rows of columns that lead to the chateau, while a small minority waltz straight to the main structure.

The courtyard is out in the open with the night sky firmly above as some of the guests partake in drinks and some games. There is a pair of rows of marble columns found on either side. The rows are 400 ft. long, and the columns are 50 ft. high. The columns are flawless; the marble is resplendent and made from the marble of the outer islands of Thamarya, recognised by experts as the finest, and immune to the negative effects of exposure to the elements. Some of the columns depict the story of the Pech family, and others just have famous national events.

Roll the following table for some possible events depicted by the columns. As a GM, feel free to create your own.

D6 Events

1 A landscape of a dark mountain range, the peaks are covered with snow and the sky is dark as a deep abyss. There is a strange detail however. Just between the sky and the mountains there is a thin golden coat, like some sort of fog or light reflecting phenomenon.

2 Gutier Pech is standing over the body of a red dragon, eating part of its heart as he stands bathed in his foe's blood, and missing an arm.

3 The image of ancient ruins located underneath a splendorous city. It could be Thamarya.

4 Two dragon armies clashing in a red sky. Volcanoes erupt behind them as the land cracks and the fields are covered with the bodies of thousands of humanoids and dragons. A battle of godlike proportions.

5 An unknown member of the Pech family wearing the feathered crown bows to the King of Thamarya.

6 Five figures wearing black capes stand at the top of Mount Magma, a peak located far beyond the Elven Woodlands, and believed by many to be the place where life originated or a sleeping Xeneth, one of the gods of Eluan.

Both rows end with fountains where numerous couples are throwing coins. The fountains mark where the main structure begins, with the center area being the section where the Pech live and have their events. The guests who loiter in the Red Courtyard are nobles, guild representatives, and important commoners. However, they are minor players who genuinely came to enjoy the celebration and maybe spread a rumor or two.

The more important guests head straight for the chateau. If the characters decide to mingle and/or obtain some information in the courtyard, here's a list of what they can learn:

- The leader of the house is Ingole Pech, but she has not made a public appearance since her brother, the Grand Advisor to the king, disappeared years ago. She is believed to be away from Thamarya or to have become a recluse.
- The host of the event is Angul Pech, a well liked and competent magic user, and the future head of the House.
- House Pech is liked by most of Thamarya except by most of the other noble houses. The reason being that they treat everyone the same, and have dealings with anyone should it prove interesting.

- All members of House Pech are magic users of one sort or another.
- The big shots in the gala will be trying to convince one another to support each other's candidate.
- Orteg Rivjertes is one of the strongest candidates but everyone detests that house because they are too close to the empire.
- The Rivjertes are bankers and moneylenders, with those two elements being the reason behind their tremendous power.
- President Heledir is a charming individual, loved and respected by all even though he's a commoner.
- The château is protected by magic so powerful that many careless servants have perished after activating a trap or alarm by mistake.
- It is rumored that the Pech family have one of the greatest collections of magic artifacts in the land.

CHÂTEAU

The château is built in the shape of a letter C facing down. The main structure has two levels, with the upper one hosting the Pech's chambers.

CHÂTEAU AREAS

The château has numerous rooms and areas, but the majority are closed off by guards and/or magic. The areas open to guests are the following: the reception hall, the Dragon Hall, the recreational room, and the guest's library.

The first room is the reception hall, from where the PCs can access the Dragon Hall. Unless pointed otherwise, all the rooms are lit by colossal chandeliers, and servants come and go with trays of food and drinks. The PCs' objective is to wait and observe until the Verdant Company tries to assassinate the Harbormaster. Until that happens, they have to blend with the other guests while they observe. That means that they can chat, play games, dance, argue politics, or anything the GM considers prudent whilst keeping their eyes open to suspicious activity.

THE RINGING BELLS

The main event is the toast for President Heledir; when that happens, bells will ring, and all guests inside the château will be asked to head towards the Dragon Hall. This can occur whenever the GM finds it pertinent. However, some events have to occur before this. First, they must interact with Elean and Heledir, and they must be introduced to Nobu Carmack and Gimot.

CI. RECEPTION HALL

Two masked servants open a large crystal gate and bow, welcoming you to the gala. It takes some moments to adapt to the new ambiance, as the lighting here is brighter than outside, thanks to five colossal chandeliers spread around the ceiling forming a pentagon. But it is not only eyes that need adjusting, but the ears as well since all the laughter and murmurs now bounce off the ceiling instead of escaping freely into the night sky. The ground on which you stand is made of wood so well polished that you can see your own reflection. The walls are painted with a creamy white color, and decorated with golden and ethyx moldings. The reception is the very definition of elegance, one very different from others you have seen. The reception is brimming with clusters of guests chatting with each other. Unlike the others outside, these seem different. Is it the more elegant clothes or the way they carry themselves? It is not clear, but the ambiance here feels more pompous.

The reception room is rectangular shaped and is 150 ft. long and 60 ft. wide. It is lit by five chandeliers, one on each of the four corners and the largest in the middle. There's a large crimson curtain in the center of the back wall which leads to the Dragon Hall. There are two pairs of **red guards** standing watch in the hall. They wear the crimson red of House Pech and are as skilled as the Blue Capes.

DANARIA

Danaria, the genasi and one of the Juerii's leaders is talking business with some of the guests. Even though she knows about the mission, she has obligations to attend to, and proselytising in favor or against certain candidates.



Feast Table

She will not deny she knows the PCs' new identities, and when they approach her she will remind them to be on the lookout and to be careful. The Harbormaster has not arrived yet or he is not in the reception. The PCs can mingle, observe the guests or continue to the Dragon Hall. However, if they remain in the reception, roll the table below for some events that will happen to the characters for every ten minutes they spend there.

D4 Reception events

- 1 Drunk skunk. A drunk noble will become infatuated with one of the PCs and persist in flirting or more. He will be highly persistent.
- 2 Ethyx dealer. An independent armorer will be asking about ethyx. It is running out in the city for unknown reasons, and he is willing to buy for triple the price because he needs it to adorn the armors he sells to very "aristocratic" clients.
- 3 Rat sightings. A group of guests will be discussing the "rat" rumors. Many sightings of giant rat-like shapes or shadows creeping around the city at night. And they are linked to a vast amount of merchandise being stolen in the last couple of weeks, including food and artifacts, and devoured pets or mounts. It's either a rumor that has now gotten out of hands, or maybe there's some truth behind it.
- 4 I know you. One noble wearing the civilian clothing of the Blue Capes stares at the PCs as if he recognized them. The more the characters remain in his field of view without doing something about it, the higher the probability of being recognized as the prisoners who escaped the dungeons.

Waiters. Various waiters carrying trays are offering canapés and drinks to the guests. They will offer the players each time they come across them.

C2. DRAGON HALL

Music blows in your ears the moment the crimson curtain is crossed; it is as if it acted like a buffer, keeping the sweet notes from invading other rooms. Unlike the reception, some guests are dancing as a small orchestra called "Panic in the Dungeon" plays a selection of the most popular hits in Thamarya. Awe best describes the reaction at the magnificence and the elegance of this chamber, twice as large as the reception, and painted in a deep crimson color.

The Dragon Hall is twice the size of the reception, and has double the amount of guests, some of which are dancing while others are chatting. Located right at the back wall is the famous "wizard's staircase," a marble staircase decorated with the wing membranes of an ancient red dragon.

The staircase leads to the upper floor but is closed off by four red guards. The hall's ceiling is also decorated with five chandeliers, although the center one is a dragon's skull, most probably the same as with the membranes. Located on the left of the hall is a door that leads to the kitchen and the wine cellar. The door is guarded by two red guards and by magic ward which only the servants are capable of crossing. Finally, standing just opposite the kitchen door lies the door that leads to the recreation room, which is open to guests.

The PCs can also mingle or observe the guests in the Dragon Hall. Roll the table below for some specific events taking place in the Dragon Hall.

D4 Reception events

- 1 Who do you think you are? Another guest will ask one of the PCs to dance and be offended if rejected because they are a significant individual in Thamarya. The longer it takes to solve the scene, the higher the chance of calling too much-unwanted attention.
- 2 Familiar faces. "As some merry guests dance and sing, you stare at a gorgeous and beautiful lady. It takes a few moments for you to recognize her since the last time you saw her, she wasn't wearing such an elegant dress, and she was showing off more skin, but it is the snake sorcerer from the Ethyx mine, Erata". Erata disappears beyond the door that leads to the recreation room. If the PCs follow her, she is nowhere to be seen in the room. Skip to C3 Recreation room.
- 3 In vino veritas. Surrounding a small table, guests participate in a wine tasting competition, a contest worthy of this celebration's guests. The participants are blindfolded and asked to name the tasted wine by name and year. The PCs are invited to join. However, it has an entrance cost of 50 gp, but the winner takes 1000 gp. Roll a 1d8, and the PCs must guess the number, or they are out. Characters with the noble background or something similar get two guesses. Three consecutive successful guesses are needed to win.

4 Suspicious waiter. Among the waiters, there's one that has been acting odd. First of all, he's been sweating profusely, and has dropped his tray at least twice. There's something off. If the PCs follow or confront him, they will eventually discover that the reason the waiter is behaving strangely is that he sneaked his partner into the party as a guest.

5 Holding the key. A small circle of individuals are talking about politics. It appears that the leader of House Gimot, the only nobles that are sailors, are still undecided of which candidate to support in the coming elections. Whomever they support will gain a considerable advantage as commoners and guilds are fond of House Gimot.

6 The Harbormaster will fall. The noble Orteg Rivjertes is surrounded by his sycophants and declares that Njord must fall, whatever the cost. The Harbormaster is too close to the King and the harbors are a mess. As a banker "he knows how to do business," and he will deal with all the corruption.

LADY ELEAN RAMNULFIDS

After the PCs engage in at least two of those events, Elean will call them over. Lady Ramnulfids is chatting away with Zmeygori Manov, a **half-elf** and a very important noble, member of the oldest house, and treasurer of the Assembly, making him one of the most important persons in the Dragon Hall. She will also acknowledge she knows the PCs (their fake identities). If the characters approach her, she will introduce them to Zmeygory, with whom she's talking about Orteg Rivjertes.

"Orteg Rivjertes is rich, influential, and powerful. He is also a manipulator who will not hesitate to take credit for others' work, betray associates, and squeeze every debtor dry. You can probably guess, he's a banker and a loan shark, which makes him extremely dangerous and insecure. However, it would be a mistake to dismiss him; he's keen and carries a lot of favor with numerous guilds, houses, and individuals. For decades he's been obsessed with obtaining more power."

At this last comment, Zmeygory snickering interrupts Elean. He apologizes and jokes about when Rivjertes asked for the princess' hand in marriage and was rejected, to which Elean smiles, and then continues.

"He believes that he is the best thing that has happened to Thamarya since its foundation. He's even convinced the commoners that he is like them and will do all to crush the elites if he comes to power. So, as you can guess, he wants to be the Assembly President at all costs..."

At this moment, Lady Elean Ramnulfids stops talking. A successful DC 16 Wisdom (Insight) roll reveals that Elean, signaled you with her eyes to turn to the approaching couple Senbed Gimot, **human sailor**, leader of House Gimot; and Nobu Carmack, **elf noble courtesan**.

The two will greet Lady Elean and Zmeygori with extreme courtesy, but after the formalities end, Gimot will talk to them as if they were old friends.

During this interaction, it becomes clear that Nobu is more of an outsider, but she will try to make up for it with humor, and will be the friendliest with the PCs, asking them who they are and what they do, and if they are enjoying the celebration. The conversation will lead to politics, and Gimot will confess that he doesn't know who he'll support, probably Rivjertes because he's the only one that will surely defeat Harbormaster Njord.

After he finishes uttering those words, Nobu will say "speak of the devil" and point to Harbormaster Njord who has just arrived.

The Harbormaster will interact with dozens of guests in the hall, and partake in the food and drinks. Should the PCs try to listen in, Njord will talk about politics and his candidacy, which was approved by King Archibald. Something which will surprise the listeners since nobody has ever held two Assembly posts simultaneously.



A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) roll will reveal a high number of guests staring at the Harbormaster with disdain, and even mouthing insults. The Harbormaster will move from group to group, and the flow of individuals talking with him will be constant since he is powerful, but nothing vital will be stated.

Note for GM: Players here should be encouraged to move around more since nothing of interest is happening around the Harbormaster at this current moment. If the PCs are stuck, roll another event from the table or invite them to investigate another area.

C3. RECREATION ROOM

A room assorted with numerous games for guests to enjoy, and some couches for individuals that just want to sit and watch or take a rest.

A room where guests can sit down to enjoy a game of cards, chess, or just relax next to a cozy fire and comfortable couches made from unicorn skin.

There's a group playing blackjack while some are talking, but there's one that stands out who is forcing a waiter to hold a dartboard as they throw their darts. At the bottom of the room there's an open door that leads to the guests' library. No major event happens in the recreation room but valuable information and flavor rumors about happenings in Thamarya can be obtained.

Blackjack. PCs will roll 2d10 dice. The GM will do the same. Both characters and the GM then have the option to roll as many additional dice as they see fit without surpassing 21. Whoever has the highest number without passing that number wins. If it's a tie, the GM wins. The prize is: four *superior healing potions*, three *greater restoration potions* and two 6th level *magic scroll*.

Dart Game. A group of nobles is using a waiter to hold a board as they throw their darts. If the players intervene, the nobles will hold their ground, but a successful DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) check will make them begin to back off, and Gimot and Nobu will appear, thus making them retreat with tails between their legs. Gimot will praise the PCs for their rectitude and bravery. The waiter will also be grateful, and when possible, will pat back the favor.

Election talk. Guild members are talking about the five candidates: Orteg Rivjertes, noble and Thamarya's leading banker; Harbormaster Njord, participating with the King's blessing; Vysyd of the Juerii guild, which the PCs didn't know; Magallus Portug, sailmakers guild.

Rumors of petrification. A tiny caravan was found beyond the city's walls. The eight members were all found petrified. Whispers point out that lonely travelers have also been found, but it is kept secret. The most disturbing element is that the silhouette of a woman has been heard laughing in the distance. A successful DC 18 Intelligence (History) check reminds the PCs of what they came across underneath the dungeons the time they escaped.

Small guest. A waiter who has kept his face hidden underneath the tray will approach the players and then reveal himself as Flakas, who is undercover and observing the elections. He will wink and inform them that he has not detected anything weird so far, except that everyone has it out for the Harbormaster.

C4. GUEST LIBRARY

The smallest of the areas to which the guests have access to. However, it is the coziest, with tall bookshelves made from dragon bone, and two chimneys. Unlike the others it is quiet, and there are only three people inside: an **old elf** wearing fisherman's robes but with an ethyx coronet, a **blind man** wearing silver silks, and a **warforged child** that is the blind man's guide.

The two men are chatting while the child is reading a book. The elf is Heledir, the retiring President, and the blind man is Hukumu Panthus, a friend of his and Thamarya's most prominent notary. If the PCs helped the waiter holding the darts, the President will praise them, but either way will invite them to sit down because he likes talking to new faces. Heledir and Hukumu will ask them who they are, and about their family background; the old elf knows almost everyone in Thamarya but will not be suspicious about not knowing the PCs.

Portrait. Hanging behind the two old individuals is a colossal portrait of twins, one brother, and one sister. Heledir will point out that they are the former Grand Advisor and his sister Ingole, the leader of House Pech. "He died in mysterious circumstances, and until this day, the King has not appointed another Grand Advisor. Something which has vexed Ingole deeply." Both Hukumu and Heledir stress the fact that the King has been acting erratic for years.

Harbormaster Njord. Heledir and Hukumu have nothing nice to say about the Frostlander, with the President adding that he's even worse than Orteg Rivjertes who even though has a too personal connection with the Empire, and his fortune has increased too much in the last couple of years, at least cares for the wellbeing of Thamarya and it's autonomy. He also believes that the two are linked somehow but has not been able to prove it yet.

THE RINGING OF THE BELLS

All the guests and PCs are asked to gather at the Dragon Hall, since the toast is about to take place.

Waiters and servants ring bells around the château, followed by calls to head towards the Dragon Hall. The guests, some with reluctance and some with excitement, arrive at the hall, their perfumes starting to impregnate the large chamber, and their outfits creating a rainbow of colors and styles. Angul Pech stands underneath the massive dragon skull and asks for silence as he makes a speech and introduces Heledir, the President who waltzes in regardless of his old age. All present cheer, some louder than others, but it is clear that he is respected and loved. He begins to speak:

"Hello, my dear Thamaryan's, it is with great honor and some reluctance that I retire from public life..."

... Without warning, a sharp scream interrupts the President, as all guests turn around towards the direction it came from.

The scream came from a guest standing next to Harbormaster Njord just as he collapsed dead on the ground. Angul Pech goes over and proclaims him dead after checking his vital signs. Pech immediately discovers a clockwork dragon stinger on Njord's neck. It is an artifact used to assassinate opponents, forbidden in Thamarya but used throughout the rest of the empire. Angul becomes convinced that there was foul play, and will order his château to be closed, and all guests will be forbidden from leaving until the culprit is found.

The murderous artifact has the shape of a dragon, is no bigger than a human nail, and is controlled via a linked ring. The poison is so deadly that the resurrection of the victim is impossible.

However, the poison released by the stinger takes minutes, sometimes an hour, to take effect, which is what happened in this case. What happened is that Nobu Carmack struck the Harbormaster, and then having recognized the PCs true identities, she slipped the ring into one of them.

SUSPECTS

Pandemonium grips the Dragon Hall, as guests fall prey to their prejudices, and quickly declare their innocence but also point the finger of blame at their political opponents. During the chaos, Angul, holding the tiny stinger, will cast a spell and find the ring that controlled the artifact. This is when the players are accused of the assassination.

PCs can attempt to deny the accusations, but they must prove their innocence. This is an excellent opportunity to let the players develop their own strategy or plan.

Whichever way things play out, when tension is at its highest, one of the guests bending over the body of Harbormaster Njord points out that it is not Njord, and the body soon transforms into that of another humanoid, a decoy. The real Harbormaster then makes his appearance and declares that this was all a ruse to discover the real identity of the leader of the Verdant Company, whom he wanted to expose, and prove that he is the best suited to become President. He then points at Nobu Carmack, who denies it at first.

She will lie and declare that the Harbormaster and the PCs are in cahoots, and many will believe her because of her charisma and skill.

The PCs will need a successful DC 22 Charisma (Persuasion) check to convince the guests that she is lying. When Nobu accepts that she is cornered, the Harbormaster will congratulate himself for exposing the Verdant Company leader, and bringing the nights of terror to an end.

The cheering is deafening. The Harbormaster is a natural orator; however, not all believe his words, the look on Elean and Heledir's faces betray worry. As Njord is about to continue his self-congratulating tirade, his eyes suddenly turn black, and his veins start to extrude from his body as he battles for breath. After a few seconds, his body starts to sound like popcorn being made as his veins begin to pop, and he bleeds to death. However, the body does not drop to the ground, it is held up by some mysterious power, like a puppet held by strings, and it begins to speak. It is clear from the sound that it is not the voice of the Harbormaster:

"Fool, did you really think you could get away with your treachery? You're nothing; you're an insignificant insect. It was thanks to me that you were named Harbormaster, you're nothing, and now you pay. Nobu, do it now!"

Development. The final words were an order given by the real leader of the Verdant Company to Nobu, who then presses the jewel on her beautiful necklace, activating the sleeper agents, most of whom are waiters, servants, and some guests under the effect of a spell.

Several explosions occur around the château as the bombs and artifacts the Verdant Company placed via the sleeper agents go off. Nobu takes advantage of the situation and sprints up through the wizard's staircase, which is now unguarded.

Guards and guests now battle against the numerous sleeper agents or deal with the fires caused by the explosions. Amid the confusion, Danaria will scream to the players to chase after Nobu as she lies wounded on the ground.

THE UPPER LEVEL

The staircase leads to a large gallery filled with priceless statues and paintings. The gallery has two doors, one leading to the west and the other to the east wing. The west wing houses Angul's chambers, and the east wing houses Ingole's.

NOBU'S LAST STAND

Nobu is standing in the middle of the gallery, waiting for her pursuers and ready to attack. Hidden in the gallery are five **elite verdant fighters** who had pretended to be guests. See Appendix A for their stats.

ROLEPLAYING NOBU CARMACK

Nobu Carmack belongs to the minor nobility. She is educated and refined but also deadly, joining the Verdant Company at a very young age after her family was destroyed. She will portray herself as polite, charming, which she indeed is, but she is also ruthless and totally loyal to her leader. She is a master manipulator, and has worked on seducing Gimot for a year without him discovering her true intentions. In combat, she is a powerful **sorcerer**.

SAVE THE KING!

When Nobu is close to being defeated or dying, the PCs suddenly become paralysed. To break the effect they must succeed on a DC 28 Wisdom saving throw or remain paralysed.

The commotion on the ground floor has not receded, the sound of combat and screams of agony still flourish and travel around the château. However, amongst them, there's the distinct sound of footsteps approaching your position. They come from behind a row of statues, and then you see a familiar face.

Standing in front of you is Hukumu Panthus, and his warforged guide. The old man chuckles as he admires the scene.

"I must confess that I did not expect you here. I like being surprised. You see, I'm usually the one who makes the surprises, seldom the other way around. And now, two surprises, Njord's betrayal, and you still being alive. To be frank, I was already getting bored of Thamarya, and was planning my exit to greener pastures (laughter). Well, it seems that tonight I get to close all unfinished business, and what more fitting venue than here, Grand Advisor's home."

After the blind man finishes those words, there's a slight tremor that shakes the château. Hukumu is surprised but quickly returns to the situation and begins casting a spell to destroy the PCs.

Just as the spell is about to be cast, Hukumu Panthus is hit by a bolt of energy, and Nobu by another. Hukumu deflects and counter attacks, but his attack is canceled in the process while Nobu perishes from the strike.

Ingole Pech, a human sorcerer wearing a head-dress made of phoenix feathers, stands at the end of the gallery, preparing another spell against Hukumu. She has waited for this day for years.

She knew her brother had been murdered, but the perpetrator remained elusive. Ingole had long suspected somebody well connected and powerful, so she pretended to be away but her eyes and ears were all over Thamarya as she bided her time.

Hukumu Panthus proceeds to reveal his true nature. He admits that he is the Verdant Company leader in Thamarya, and that he killed the Grand Advisor because he suspected his true identity.

Sensing that all his work in the city is now destroyed, Hukumu orders his warforged guide to slay King Archibald while he takes care of Ingole and the PCs. The warforged bows as a portal opens, and soon after jumping through, the portal begins to close.

Hukumu's shape turns to that of a humanoid tiger dressed in the finest clothes. Without another word, a silver chain with markings in draconic wrap around the Verdant Company leader. "Stop the warforged! Save the King!" screams Ingole, as Hukumu focuses his attention on her as the portal closes.

A successful DC 14 Dexterity (Acrobatics) is needed to successfully jump through the portal. Any creature failing the check passes through but comes into contact with the portal's energy field. Their hp is reduced in half and has disadvantage on combat or physical checks until they have a short rest or a *greater restoration* spell is cast on them.

Treasure. See appendix A for Nobu's belongings.

Milestone. All surviving players reach 10th level after jumping through the portal.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The players hear the combat between magic users behind them as they jump through the portal to save the King of Thamarya.

- Will Ingole defeat Hukumu Panthus?
- Will it be discovered what is wrong with the King?
- Will the party be able to save the King?
- What happened to the Grand Advisor?



Royal
Announcer

APPENDIX A: NPCs AND MONSTERS

NOBU CARMACK

Medium humanoid (elf), chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (Natural)
Hit Points 52 (10d6)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	17 (+3)	11 (+0)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Con +5, Int +5, Cha +8
Skills Deception +8, History +9, Perception +5, Performance +4, Persuasion +8
Senses Darkvision 60ft., Passive Perception 13
Languages Abyssal, Common, Elvish, Infernal

Spellcasting. Nobu Carmack is a 10th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). Nobu Carmack has the following sorcerer spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *Dancing lights, friends, light, mage hand, mending, poison spray, prestidigitation*
1st level (4 slots): *Magic missile*
2nd level (3 slots): *Shadow blade, crown of madness, misty step*
3rd level (3 slots): *Fireball, fly, major image*
4th level (3 slots): *Dimension door, dominate beast*
5th level (2 slots): *Cone of cold, dominate person*

Magic Initiate. Nobu Carmack can cast *fire bolt* and *mage hand* cantrips at will.

Ritual Caster (Sorcerer). Nobu Carmack can use *comprehend languages* and *detect magic* as rituals.

Poison Spray Cantrip. *Ranged spell attack.* Nobu can target a creature within 15ft. The creature must succeed a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or take 2d12 poison damage. No damage is taken if the save is successful.

Distant Spell. For one sorcery point, a spell's range is doubled.

Extended Spell. For one sorcery point, a spell's duration is doubled.

Quicken Spell. For two sorcery points, a spell can be cast as a bonus action instead of action.

Special Equipment. One *quarterstaff of warning*, one *necklace* (worth 700 gp) two *potions of greater healing*, two *scrolls of thunderwave*, and one *potion of invisibility*.

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff of warning. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 1d6 + 0 bludgeoning damage, or 1d8 + 0 if using two hands.

SLEEPER AGENT

Medium humanoid, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 27 (6d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Perception +6, Persuasion +5, Stealth +4, Perception +2
Senses Passive Perception 16
Languages Common
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Cunning Action. On each of its turns, the sleeper agent can use a bonus action to take the *Dash*, *Disengage*, or *Hide* action.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The sleeper agent deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the sleeper agent that isn't incapacitated and the agent doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The sleeper agent makes two melee attacks.

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

VERDANT ELITE FIGHTER

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (Studded leather, shield)
Hit Points 50 (6d8+10)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Con +5, Wis +4
Skills Perception +4, Stealth +10
Senses Passive Perception 14
Languages Common
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The elite fighter's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At Will: *Dancing Lights*
1/day each: *darkness, faerie fire, levitate* (self only)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The elite fighter makes two shortsword attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 8 (2d6) poison damage.

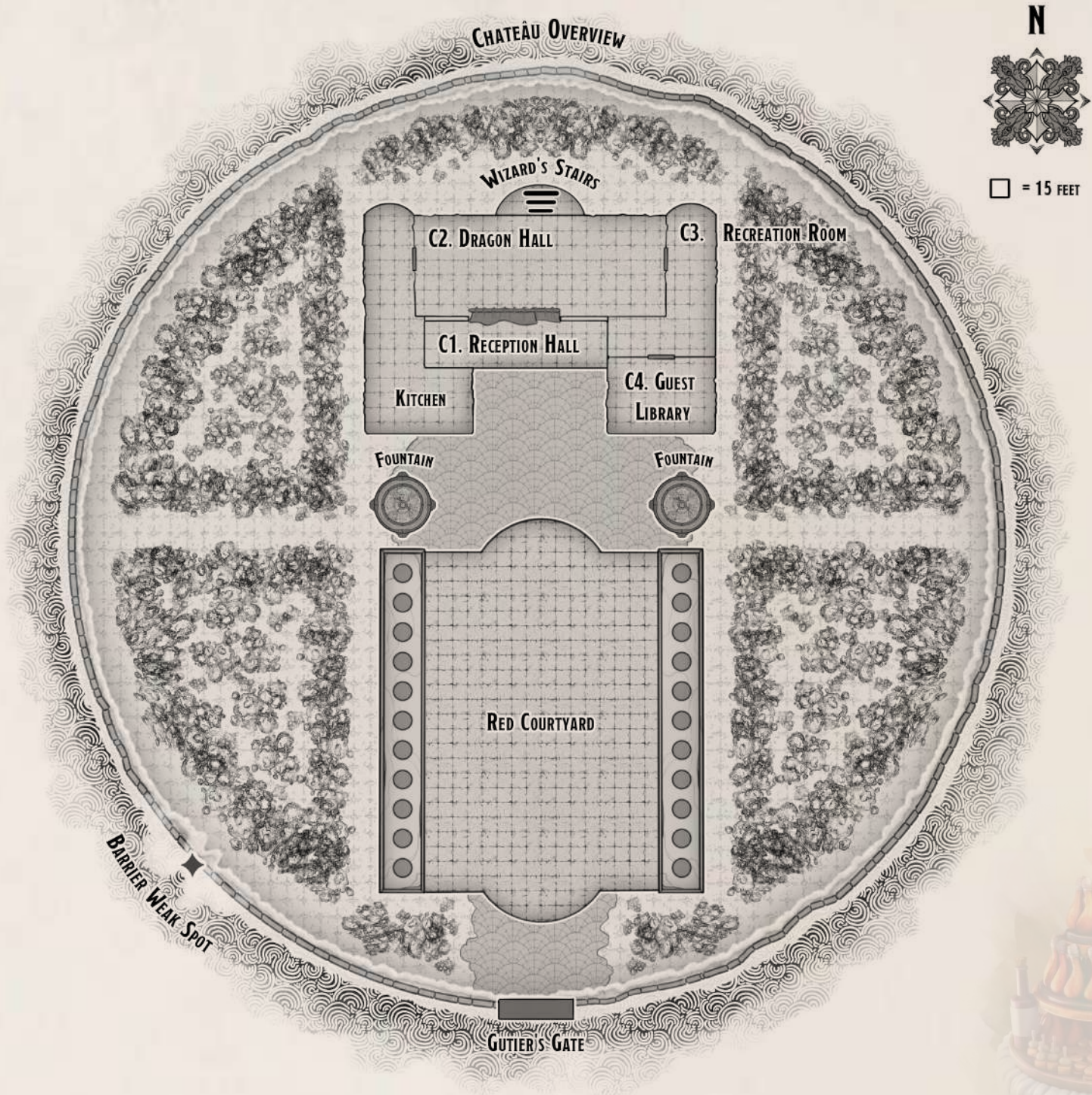
Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the target is also unconscious while poisoned in this way. The target wakes up if it takes damage or if another creature takes an action to shake it awake.

REACTIONS

Parry. The elite fighter adds 3 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the drow must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

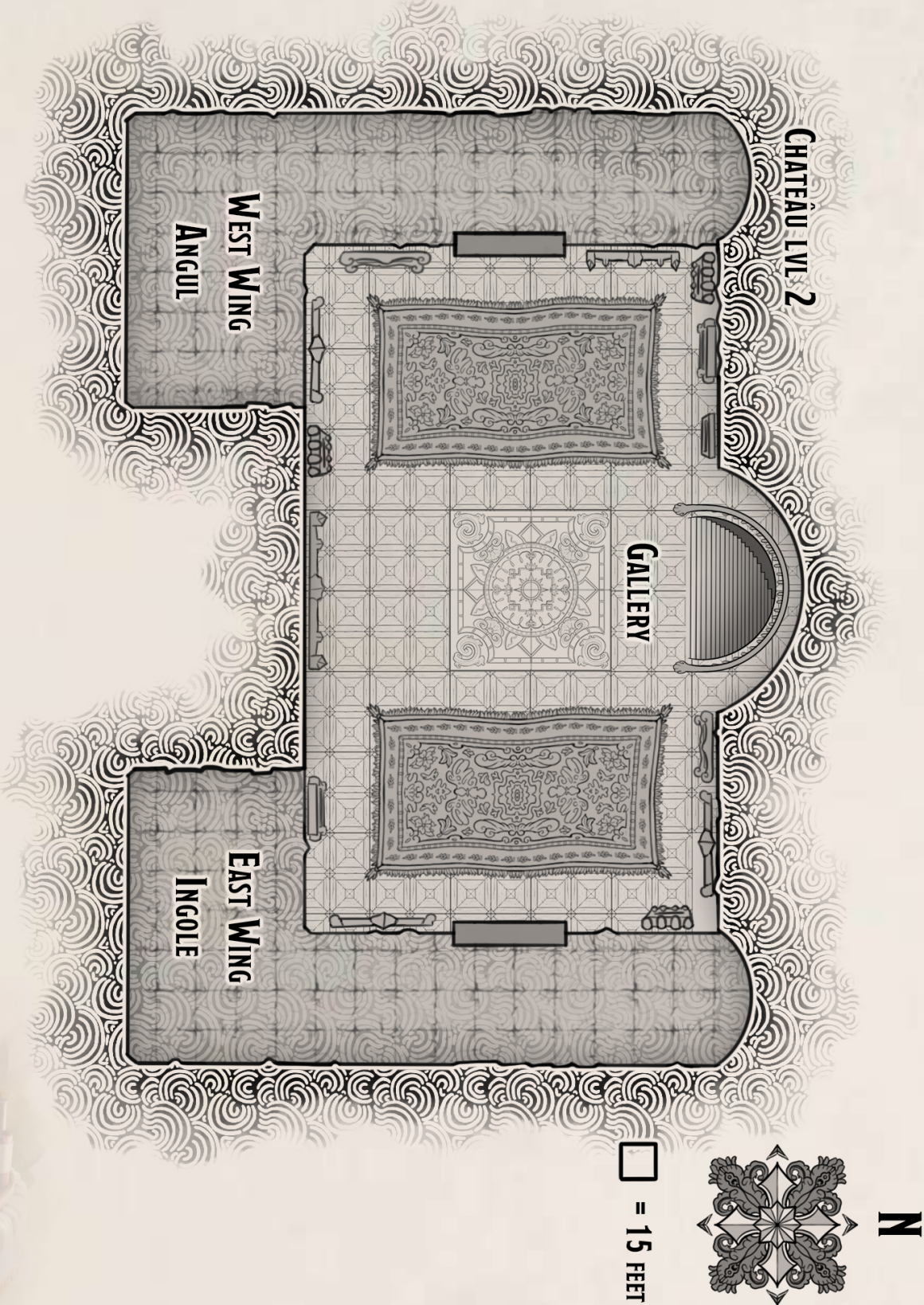
APPENDIX B:
MAPS

CHÂTEAU OVERVIEW



APPENDIX B:
MAPS

CHÂTEAU LVL 2





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