

A detailed illustration of a masquerade ball. In the center, a man in a black tuxedo with a white ruffled cravat and a black mask stands next to a woman in a black, sequined, off-the-shoulder gown with a large feathered mask. They are holding hands. Above them hangs a large, ornate chandelier with many lit candles. The room is filled with other guests seated at tables with white tablecloths and lit candles. The architecture is highly ornate with arches and intricate carvings. The overall atmosphere is elegant and mysterious.

THE MASQUERADE BALL

ROLEPLAYING ADVENTURE

BY BATGLEE

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CREDITS:

All art done by Bing AI

Created with [The Homebrewery](#)



INTRODUCTION

This one-shot adventure is written for D&D 5e, but it can easily be run on other systems, due to the focus on roleplay. It can be used as a roleplaying exercise.

The point of the adventure is to try to solve the problems in a creative way and to have tons of fun with friends! *Fighting is strongly discouraged*. Still, know that anything might happen and be prepared. I have added the Monster Manual page for some NPCs.

DISCLAIMER

If your party consists of murder-hobos, there's a big chance they might not like this adventure.

Feel free to change anything you like to be more fitting for your group.

SETTING

The adventure takes place in the city of Damara, located somewhere in the Forgotten realms. It is a big city, run by a council of lords. It's full of life, drama, power struggles and crime.

The players' characters are **rogues, level 3**.

THE START OF THE ADVENTURE

The adventurers are thieves sharing a prison cell. They have no possessions aside from the clothes on their backs.

Backstory: They could be from the same crime organization or they could have met in prison.

A dark figure wearing a black robe approaches the cell. His face is barely visible beneath the hood.

His name is Tanaxis and he came to set the prisoners free. The condition is that they have to steal something from lord Garnelli. The item in question is a crystal (roughly the size of a golf ball) with an irregular shape and glowing blue light inside it.

Tanaxis states that there are a few requirements:

- You are being freed illegally. You have to bring the crystal by 7:00 o'clock the next morning to a specified location. After that, Tanaxis has a meeting with the prison chief and he will arrange your official release. If you fail, you'll be captured again and suffer the consequences of your escape.
- You have to be stealthy and discreet. No murders or noticeable violence.
- The castle is big and you don't know where the crystal is. You have to mingle and investigate **discreetly**.

Known to the adventurers:

Lord Garnelli is well known in the city. He's one of the rulers, part of the council of lords. Everybody knows of his lavish castle, where he lives with his wife, lady Garnelli.

Unknown to the adventurers:

- Tanaxis is a demon.
- There is a rival gang, trying to sabotage them and steal the crystal first. It is led by the vampire Sistrrella.
- The crystal is a soul gem, in which the soul of an extremely rare being is trapped – a mix between a genie and a fey (called Shalosoan).
- Tanaxis, Sistrrella and lord Garnelli want the being for the same reason – to bind it to themselves and enslave it, using its immense power for their own gain.

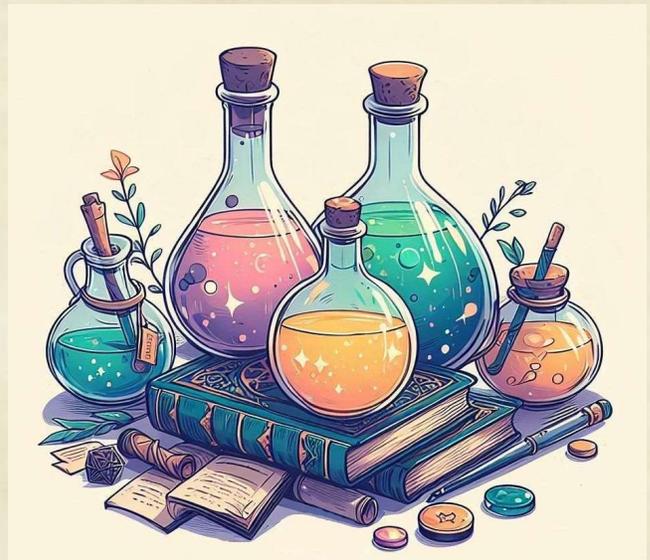
Tanaxis sends the adventurers to a small room, where they'll find everything necessary. Inside the room there are items for everyone – festive clothes, elaborate wigs, masks, invitations and one dagger for each. There is also one potion for each, with different colors.

OPTIONAL FOR EXTRA COOLNESS

You, as a DM, can prepare actual potions for your players (they sell all kinds of small interesting bottles) with different juices/alcohol.

Each player chooses one potion and rolls a die for its effect. Some effects appear instantly, some - later.

I prepared 12 effects (so I used d12), but you can have any number of effects, just make sure that for each player there are at least 1 good and 1 bad effect. [1]



Potion effects

1. You only speak the truth.
2. You shout as you speak.
3. Your fingers become tentacles.
4. A huge amount of hair grows in your ears, which blocks your hearing.
5. You can't walk without dancing.
6. You hear voices. [2]
7. You look more intimidating (advantage for intimidation). [3]
8. You have better reflexes (advantage for sleight of hand).
9. You look more handsome (advantage for persuasion).
10. You become less noticeable (advantage for stealth).
11. Your senses are improved (advantage for perception).
12. You lie more skillfully (advantage for deception).

[1] *The bad effects come from Sistrella, who managed to sneak into the room and meddle with the potions.*

[2] *The voices the player hears are up to the DM, depending on the situation. The end goal is confusion. There is a list of examples below.*

[3] *The advantages last for the whole one-shot.*

"YOU HEAR VOICES"

- The waiter behind you is planning to kill you.
- The ceiling is covered with bats.
- This statue is looking at you.
- The lady in front of you has the crystal hidden in her bosom.
- Lord Garnelli is your childhood friend, why rob him?
- There are tentacles coming out of the punch bowl.
- Your glass was poisoned.
- This lady's diamond earrings will be enough to set you for life.
- Your greatest love is hidden behind this closed door.
- Your dagger is scorching hot.
- This gentleman is actually your aunt Silvia in disguise.
- Your arms are wings.

Whenever necessary, ask the player who hears the voices to roll a Wisdom saving throw, with DC depending on the absurdity of the claim. If s/he fails, s/he must act as though s/he believes the voice.

This list is just examples of what the voice could be saying.

THE CASTLE OF LORD GARNELLI

There is a masquerade ball in the castle. The adventurers have invitations for it.

[See the floorplan of the castle](#)

The event is held on the main floor, predominantly in the Art gallery, Reception room and Dining room, but people are free to roam the rest of the floor. The second floor is forbidden for guests. Lord and lady Garnelli are in the Art gallery.

The east bedroom on the second floor has another room on top (east tower room). There's a secret tower room above the music room (accessed through a secret door).

Below the main floor are the kitchen, servant's quarters and the way to the basement.

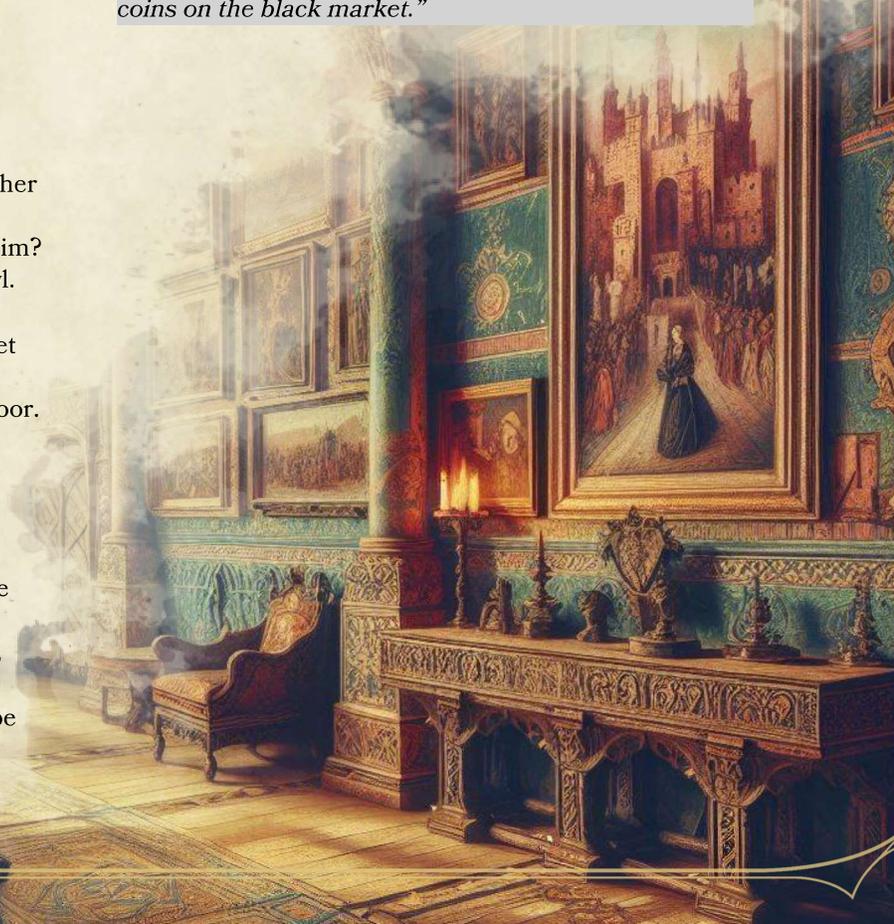
There are men with cat masks and swords – the guards. No visible weapons are allowed in the castle.

Guarded points:

1. At the main stairs – 2 guards
2. At the tavern room stairs – 1 guard
3. At the reception room – 2 guards
4. The servant's stairs (next to the main stairs) are heavily traversed by servants
5. The butler's pantry has a heavy traffic of servants

Describe the rooms as you think they might look. It's important to add details, which your players can use in their roleplay. For example, the Art gallery could hold some interesting paintings and artefacts, worth checking out or stealing.

"King Leopold's chamber pot might not be a pleasant sight to behold, but it'll surely sell for a hefty bag of coins on the black market."



EVENTS BY LOCATION

MAIN FLOOR

Armory (the small unmarked room, next to the library) – it is locked. The guards at the main stairs need to be distracted to attempt lockpicking. It is full of regular weapons and armor.

Investigation 13 will reveal a hatch on the ceiling, leading to the private study upstairs.

Openly carrying weapons in the castle will result in kicking out the offenders.

SECOND FLOOR

Private study – investigation 12 will uncover a hatch under the carpet. It leads to the small locked room underneath, next to the library (the Armory).

Private bedroom – there is a small poodle with bows on the bed. It starts barking loudly when approached. It will attract a servant, if not dealt with fast.

Investigation 14 will reveal the lord's diary in the dresser, underneath the underwear. He writes about the research on Shalosoan.

If some adventurers are caught doing something they shouldn't be doing or if they get in an open confrontation in front of other people, one option would be to have them locked up in a cell in the basement. If they don't escape the cell in time, they will be submitted to the authorities in the morning.

Honored guest bedroom – there's a couple making out inside – friends of the owners. They will question the intruder. They're cheating (insight 12), so they could be blackmailed (intimidation/persuasion 11).

East guest bedroom – when the guard on the stairs is missing, perception 18 will reveal a wire on the stairs up. In the bedroom, one of Sistrrella's men is rummaging around, and will hear them and hide if they trip on the wire. If found, he'll try to escape.

There is a small stairwell leading up to the tower room above.

East tower room (above the east guest bedroom) – it's used for storage, full of dusty items and books. Investigation 13 will reveal a document – a layout of the castle. In it, the secret room above the music room can be seen.

Music room – someone plays a short melody on the organ. A bat (Sistrrella) will fly out after that.

Stairs are leading to the organ loft. Up at the loft, investigation 14 will reveal a hidden door, leading to the secret tower room above.

Tower room above the music room – secret research room. Sistrrella's man is rummaging there. He'll try to fight or escape.

The room is full of old history and arcane books, strange devices, and painted symbols.

Arcana 13 will recognize attempts to contain/bind something.

Investigation 16 will reveal that one of the walls is an illusion. Behind the illusion is a niche. There are 3 bronze pedestals.

- The first holds the glowing crystal (soul gem).
- The second holds an old tome with powerful magic rituals.
- The third holds a golden orb.

It's not clear what this orb's purpose is. (See the next page for the explanation.)



EVENTS BY OCCASION

Lord Garnelli – pickpocketing him will grant a note with instructions for the secret tower room.

MM p. 348 Noble

Lady Garnelli – pickpocketing her will grant a key to the armory.

Lady Fani Piruli – if enticed, she could reveal or even give her secret sleeping powder. It puts the target to sleep by blowing it in his face, lasts 1 hour or until the target is woken up by someone. 3 doses.

Lady Astoria and lady Garnelli – perception 13 – overhear lady Astoria asking about the secret passage (armory), lady Garnelli pretends she doesn't know what it is about.

The Jester – he jokes that you don't fit in here, but you're not the scariest one around. Persuasion 11 – he will point out Sistrella.

Father Paladius – the priest is very fond of alcohol. He will mention that Lord Garnelli is meddling with magical stuff.

Lord Tazarski – very snobbish. He will insist on knowing if you are nobility.

Lala the succubus – you will meet her in some dark corner, leading some poor man to his detriment. She appears to be irresistibly beautiful.

Lala can be convinced to be an ally against Sistrella.
MM p. 285

SISTRELLA AND HER MEN

Sistrella is a vampire. She wears a mask in black, white and gold, similar to her minions, but more lavish and feminine.

She will try to eavesdrop on the adventurers, taunt them, charm them, threaten them, anything to divert them from the main goal.

If cornered, she will turn into a bat or a cloud of mist.
MM p. 297

Sistrella's men are 4 in number. You can add more if needed. All of them are wearing identical masks in black, white and gold.

They are rummaging through the house, looking for the crystal.

They will try to pickpocket and/or threaten the adventurers. They will mostly avoid fights, unless cornered.

MM p. 345 Cult fanatic

ENDING THE ADVENTURE

Here are a few options:

1. When the adventurers try to leave the castle, Sistrella's men repeatedly try to steal the crystal, they set traps for them, they try to discredit them and get them thrown in the cell in the basement.
2. Sistrella herself tries to stop the adventurers in a non-violent way.
3. Sistrella confronts them and threatens violence, if the crystal is not given to her.

BATTLE WITH SISTRELLA

Normally, a bunch of 3rd lvls should not be fighting a vampire. BUT if it gets to this point, do not fret. Start the fight normally.

If the adventurers **took the golden orb** from the niche, ask the player who holds it to make a Dexterity saving throw (DC 14) each turn. If he fails, he drops the orb.

Dropping the golden orb results in a blast. Everyone is blinded and deafened for a couple of seconds. This bomb does not harm the living beings, but the crystal is smashed to powder.

If the adventurers **did not take the golden orb** from the niche, you have a few options:

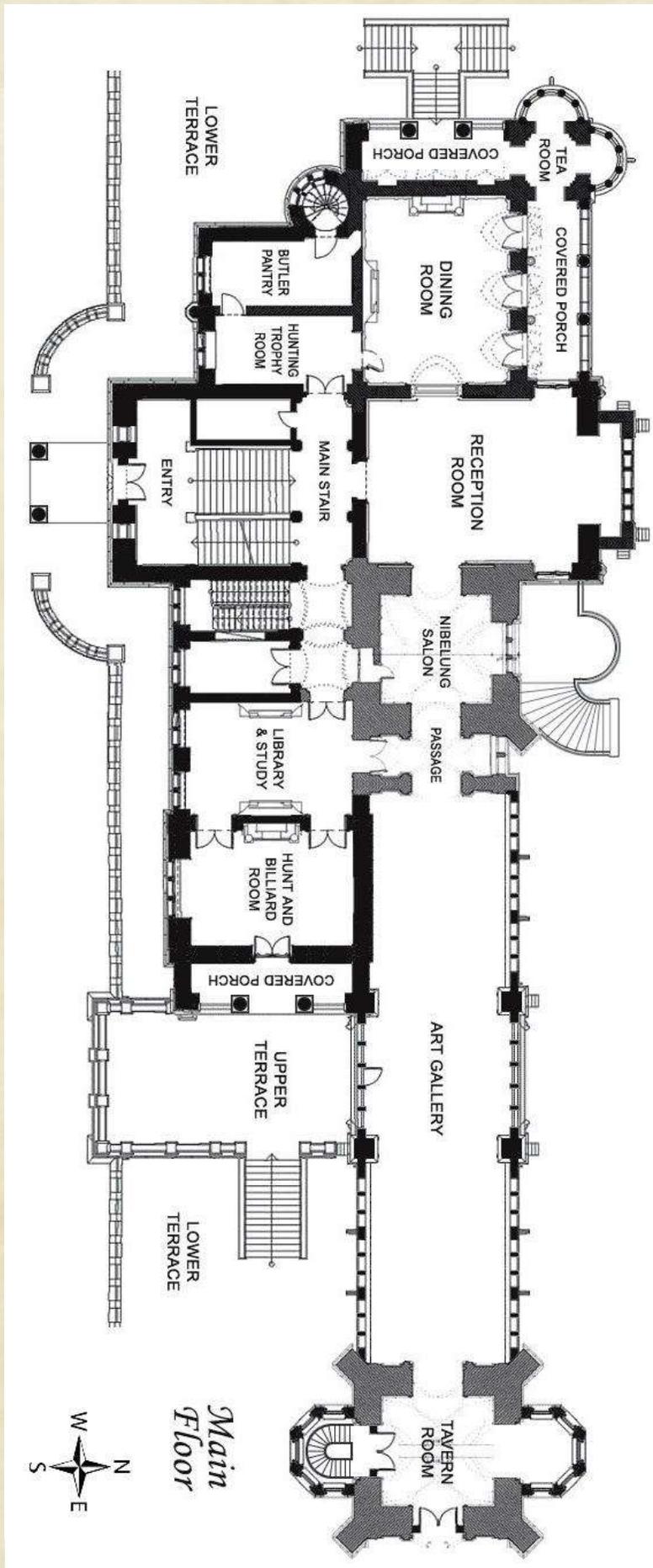
1. You let them fight to death, whatever happens - happens.
2. Tanaxis enters the scene and intervenes. After the fight, he would get the crystal himself and fulfill his part of the deal.
3. Lord Garnelli appears, having heard the commotion. He will summon his guards and try to break up the fight.
4. One of Sistrella's men has taken the golden orb and appears on the scene to help his master.

SHALOSOAN

After breaking the crystal (soul gem), Shalosoan appears. He is very grateful that he has been released from his prison. Shalosoan offers to fulfill 3 wishes to the adventurers. After that, he opens a portal to another plane and vanishes inside. There are no stats for him, consider him to be a very powerful, almost godlike being. He is half-genie, half-fey.



CASTLE GARNELLI FLOOR PLANS - MAIN FLOOR



CASTLE GARNELLI FLOOR PLANS - SECOND FLOOR

