

THE NUTCRACKER BALL

Winter Solstice Massacre

It was just another Solstice Party until the entertainment became a little less fun. The Baron had enemies with means and they hired assassins, little did you know those assassins were you.

A 2-3-hour adventure for 3rd-5th level characters

by N3rdM3tal Gaming



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Welcome to the Party

Setting up the Party

The party will be unarmed and unarmored for the beginning of this event as they are at a fancy ball. Their weapons are checked and they are wearing fine clothes. After "the Dance Begins" they will all be considered in common clothes armed with a standard *rapier* (1d8 + str/dex piercing damage.) After "the Chase" their gear will reflect the gear on their character sheet.

Party Introduction

On a snowy day in a warm ballroom the party are guests at a winter solstice ball held by a local baron. they were invited for their service to the region. Musicians play the music associated with winter dances and seasonal foods are abundant at the buffet. The baron and his wife are dressed most elaborately almost regal. At the halfway point of the night the music stops and the baron goes on stage.

He says aloud:

"I want to thank everyone for coming to this year's solstice ball. I want to try something new this year. Or rather something old in a new way." he chuckled. "There is a very old tale we all know that is told every year at the solstice, this year I have hired a group of minstrels to tell the tale here at the ball."

A group of four finely dressed musicians enter the ballroom and walk on stage. They take their places. Three musicians; one with a lute, one with a drum, and one with a violin line themselves up behind the fourth minstrel who carries no instrument at all. He begins to orate:

This is a tale you all know, a tale of daring adventure, sorrow, fear, and of course celebration.

At a party not unlike this one, a young girl danced among the friends and family at her parents ball. She danced beautifully among her many dance partners, all made of wood, and handcrafted by the guest of honor, her grandfather. A woodcarver by trade who every year made the girl a new wooden doll. This year the girl was 10 and for her 10th solstice her grandfather delivered to her a doll of the most

exquisite detail ever seen by man. "I began working on it last solstice" he told her "it is the finest work I have ever done and I've carved in service to barons, lords, and kings." He handed her the wooden soldier doll with moveable arms and a mouth that was open wide.

Grandpa why is the mouth open like this?" the girl asked.

Because my child this doll is not just a doll but a tool." and he produced a nut from the pocket of his breeches. "Here like this" and he placed the nut in the open mouth of the soldier and cranked down on the arm wielding the sword. A resounding crunch rings out and out of the mouth falls a broken shell and a whole nut. Music begins and the girl takes her new doll to the dance floor and begins an exciting twirling dance.

The three musicians begin to play an exciting upbeat song.

The Dance Begins

The room goes hazy, colors swirl, and finally darkness falls. After a moment light returns to the world.

The characters are still in a solstice party but everything seems to be smaller scale. The outfits are less elaborate, the buffet is smaller, and the band only has two people.

In the room is the baron's wife, no longer in a dress that rivals the finery of a monarch but a simply cut knee length dress. More of soft bag with head and arm holes than clothing, something a commoner would wear.

A quick look around and shows the other guests are all dressed oddly. Soldiers, everyone in this grouping is dressed in a crisp soldiers formal uniform. Blue breeches with a gold stripe down the leg, a red coat over a white tunic, a rapier on the hip, and short black flat topped cap with a small brim and yellow chinstrap. The party too are dressed in this manner. The baroness bounds back out on the floor and begins dancing alone, beckoning the group to join her in her twirling dance.

Welcome to the Party cont.

She comes bounding with childlike energy across the dancefloor to where you and a couple other guests are standing. She asks for a dance of the group, whoever will dance with her first.

A quick look around and shows the other guests are all dressed oddly. Soldiers, everyone in this grouping is dressed in a crisp soldiers formal uniform. Blue breeches with a gold stripe down the leg, a red coat over a white tunic, a rapier on the hip, and short black flat topped cap with a small brim and yellow chinstrap. The party too are dressed in this manner. The baroness bounds back out on the floor and begins dancing alone, beckoning the group to join her in her twirling dance.

The main door to the hall bursts open and in comes a *swarm of rats*. Following just behind the swarming mass of rodents is a man, the Baron, dressed in fine clothes with a golden crown on his head. His features are strange and rat-like but it is very clearly the baron who addressed the room not 5 minutes ago. The *rat swarm* surges toward you and the group you are in. Realizing that they have swords on their hips many of the guest/soldiers draw their weapons and begin defending themselves and the other guests against the rats that are now attacking everyone in sight. *The rat faced baron* attacks.

If a party member is knocked out the Baroness/Little girl casts fireball into fray causing the Rat Faced Baron to flee. If he is defeated before a party member falls then he runs away on his own. He cannot be knocked out in this fight.

A guest who looks suspiciously like the lead minstrel shouts from the crowd:

King Krysa is escaping! Soldiers please kill him. He is not a real king, but the king of rats. Him and his soldiers raid the surface killing and enslaving civilians. End this madness for us please.



Image Credit: Pexels.com

<https://www.pexels.com/photo/architecture-building-castle-city-301469/>

Swarm of Rats

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class: 10

Hit Points: 24 (7d8 -7)

Speed: 30 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	11 (0)	9 (-1)	2 (-4)	10 (0)	3 (-3)

Damage Resistances Bludgeoning, Piercing, Slashing

Condition Immunities Charmed, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Prone, Restrained, Stunned

Senses Darkvision 60 ft passive Perception 10

Languages --

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Keen Smell. The swarm has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny rat. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

Actions

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. Hit: 7 (2d6) piercing damage, or 3 (1d6) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer. Hit 5 (1d6 + 2)

King Krysa (The Rat-faced Baron)

Medium humanoid, lawful evil

Armor Class: 12

Hit Points: 33 (6d6 +6)

Speed: 30 ft

STR **DEX** **CON** **INT** **WIS** **CHA**

10 (0) 15 (+3) 12 (+1) 11 (+1) 10 (0) 8 (-1)

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +4

Condition Immunities Fear

Senses Darkvision 60 ft passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Pack Tactics. The Rat Faced Baron has advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of his allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Keen Smell. The Rat Faced Baron has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Actions

Multiattack. The Rat Faced Baron makes two attacks, only one of which can be a bite.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

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

Hand Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

King Krysa (The Rat Faced Baron)

King Krysa skulks about as if he is always sneaking around even when he is clearly not. When he fights, however, he moves about with the grace of a seasoned dancer. He hardly speaks because when he does it is shrill and unpleasant.

His prowess with a sword is matched only by his devious nature. Unless attacked head on he prefers to use his Hand Crossbow and keep his distance. A bolt from the dark is his preferred method of dealing with those tyhat enter his lair without permission.



herbert2512

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The Chase

Forest Pursuit

As the party chases the fleeing rat king into the forest they are followed by the Little Girl. A short way into the forest outside the house she stops them and says:

I'm so glad I found you. Krysa is dangerous we will need help. Come with me, I know who will help us.

The baroness leads the party deep into the woods. As they venture it begins to snow but the snowflakes are not ordinary. They seem to dance as though alive, guiding you toward a clearing in the woods. In the distance, a fire and music. The smell of sweet foods wafts in the party's direction. A stern but pleasant female voice from beyond the trees calls out:

Who dares interrupt the sacred solstice celebration? We seek help from the Fey Queen to defeat Krysa the Rat King" calls out the baroness.

Bushes part and the way is now open for the party to head toward the lighted bonfire. All manner of fey dance about to the tune of pipes. Pastries, candies, and coffee are abundant and enjoyed by all. A Dryad approaches and asks

Who is it that seeks an audience with me on the night of the winter solstice?" "Do you not realize how sacred this night is? What could be so important?" she asks. "King Krysa raided my solstice ball. Killed my guests and nearly killed me. We seek to destroy him for his transgression and ask for your help in doing so as I know you have suffered at his hands before." Says the baroness. "Krysa besmirches the solstice!" shouts the Fey Queen. "Come with me, I will aid you. Never again will we suffer at the hands of the Rat King Krysa!"

Gear, matching the the party's original equipment, is distributed to the party. The Fey Queen calls a Snowflake Fairy to lead the party

toward the lair of King Krysa. The Little Girl stays behind with the Fey Queen

(Snowflake) Fairy

Tiny fey, neutral good

Armor Class: 15 (Leather Armor)

Hit Points: 2 (1d4)

Speed: 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	18 (+4)	10 (0)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	11 (0)

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Sylvan, Common

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Actions

Longsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 1 slashing damage.

Shortbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, range 40/160 ft., one target. Hit: 1 piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 minute. If its saving throw result is 5 or lower, the poisoned target falls unconscious for the same duration, or until it takes damage or another creature takes an action to shake it awake.

Heart Sight. The Snowflake touches a creature and magically knows the creature's current emotional state. If the target fails a DC 10 Charisma saving throw, the sprite also knows the creature's alignment. Celestials, fiends, and undead automatically fail the saving throw.

Invisibility. The Snowflake magically turns invisible until it attacks or casts a spell, or until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment the sprite wears or carries is invisible with it.

Snowflake Faeries

Are these snowflakes or faeries? Or is it both? The snowflake Faeries dance with the snow to the sounds of winter. Creating what appears to be isolated blizzards that are actually just very tiny parties.

The Fey Queen (Dryad)

Tiny fey, neutral good

Armor Class: 11 (16 with *Barkskin*)

Hit Points: 22 (5d8)

Speed: 30 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (0)	12 (+4)	11 (0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +5

Senses Darkvision 60 ft passive Perception 14

Languages Common and Sylvan

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Actions

Innate Spellcasting. The dryad's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14). The dryad can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: druidcraft

3/day each: entangle, goodberry

1/day each: barkskin, pass without trace, shillelagh

Magic Resistance. The dryad has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Speak with Beasts and Plants. Melee Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 1 slashing damage.

Tree Stride. Once on her turn, the Fey Queen can use 10 feet of her movement to step magically into one living tree within her reach and emerge from a second living tree within 60 feet of the first tree, appearing in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the second tree. Both trees must be Large or bigger.

Club. Melee Weapon Attack: +2 to hit (+6 to hit with shillelagh), reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage, or 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage with shillelagh.

Fey Charm. The Fey Queen targets one humanoid or beast that she can see within 30 feet of her. If the target can see the dryad, it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be magically charmed. The charmed

creature regards the dryad as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under the dryad's control, it takes the dryad's requests or actions in the most favorable way it can.

Each time the Fey or its allies do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 24 hours or until the dryad dies, is on a different plane of existence from the target, or ends the effect as a bonus action. If a target's saving throw is successful, the target is immune to the dryad's Fey Charm for the next 24 hours.

The Fey Queen can have no more than one humanoid and up to three beasts charmed at a time.

The Fey Queen of Winter

Graceful, beautiful, and powerful The Fey Queen of Winter is holding her annual solstice ball to celebrate the beginning of winter and the height of her rule during the Winter Court. She speaks with an ethereal



Image Credit: Skeeze

pixabay.com/en/ballet-ballerina-performance-534357/

Enter the Chamber of the Rat King

And Down We Go

A hollow at the base of a large tree is the entrance to Krysa's lair. As the party descends several Rats will be seen. They can be fought. The path to the King is a twisted and narrow subterranean path. A pair of Giant Rats flank a large double door. Beyond the door is Krysa atop a throne of crates in a 25ft by 25ft room with crates and barrels of food and drink along the walls.

King Krysa (Final Form)

Medium humanoid, lawful evil

Armor Class: 12

Hit Points: 33 (6d6 + 6)

Speed: 30 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (0)	15 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (0)	10 (0)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +4

Condition Immunities Fear

Senses Darkvision 60 ft passive
Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Pack Tactics. The Rat Faced Baron has advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of his allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Keen Smell. The Rat Faced Barron has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Actions

Multiattack. The Rat Faced Baron makes two attacks, only one of which can be a bite.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

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

Hand Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Lair Actions

In his lair King Krysa can do one of the following on initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties)

- Summon 1 Giant Rat
- Summon 1 Swarm of Rats
- Summon 2 Rats

Giant Rat

Small beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 7 (2d6)

Speed 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	15 (+2)	11 (0)	2 (-4)	10 (0)	4 (-3)

Senses Darkvision 60ft passive
Perception 10

Languages --

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Keen Smell. The rat has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Pack Tactics. The rat has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the rat's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

The Final Act

Rat

tiny beast, unaligned

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 1 (1d4 - 1)

Speed 20ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (-4)	11 (0)	9 (-1)	2 (-4)	10 (0)	4 (-3)

Senses Darkvision 60ft passive Perception 10

Languages --

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Keen Smell. The rat has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Actions

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +0 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 1 piercing damage.



Image Credit: mimzy

www.pixabay.com/en/kitchen-utensils-wooden-cooking-2754116

As King Krysa lets out his final cry the room begins to spin, the colors haze, and blackness falls over the party. When they awake they find themselves in a root cellar. In front of them is the Baron, dead. They see that they are clad in pots, pans, and butchers aprons. They wield kitchen knives, brooms, cook books, and meat tenderizers. Their makeshift weapons covered in blood. Also in the room are several of the Baron's guards, slain.

At the top of the stairs is the kitchen which is filled with the scent of desserts cooking and coffee brewing. A scullary maid runs around the kitchen in a panic and the cook sits on a flour dusted counter weeping. Their faces seem familiar, they are the Fairy and the Fey Queen



Image Credit: aureliofoxrj

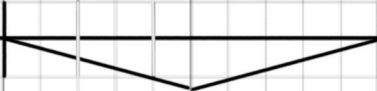
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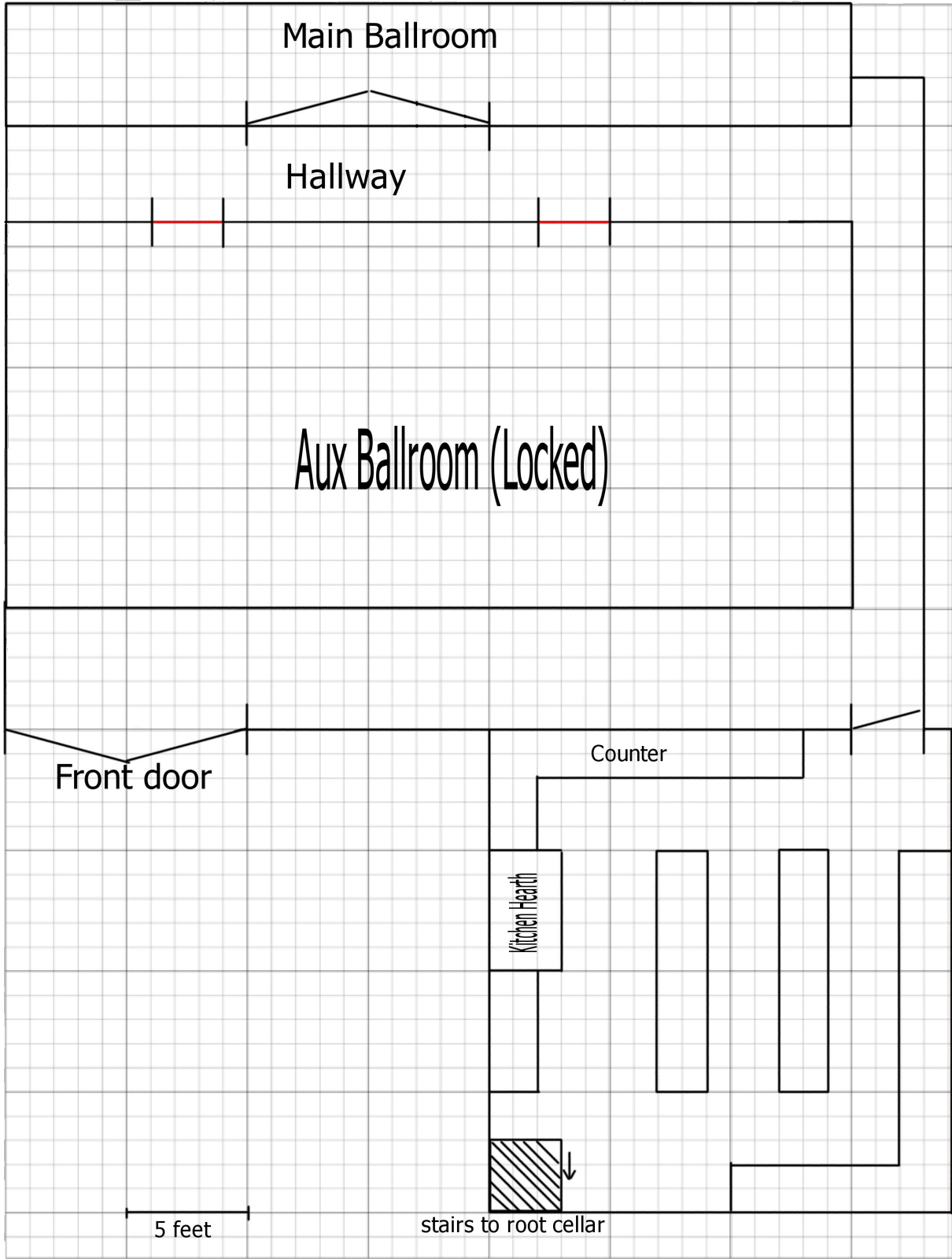
The hallway back to the ballroom is littered with the corpses of guards and guests alike. The door to the ballroom is ajar. Inside are the guests all in a stupor, some wounded, others dead. The Baroness sits on the edge of the stage and weeps. The everyone in the ballroom is accounted for, except the musicians. The four minstrels who began their story as the events unfolded have vanished. Their bodies are not in the cellar, the hall, or the ballroom. A window appears to have been broken during the fighting, or was it smashed in an escape? The snow outside is falling heavily any tracks would be long buried by now.

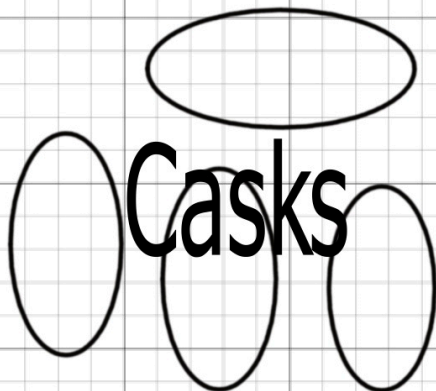
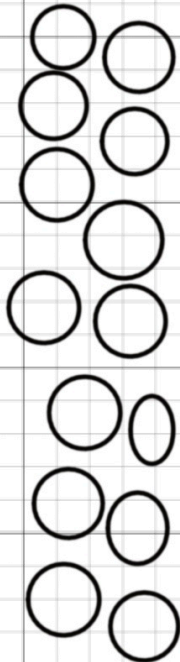
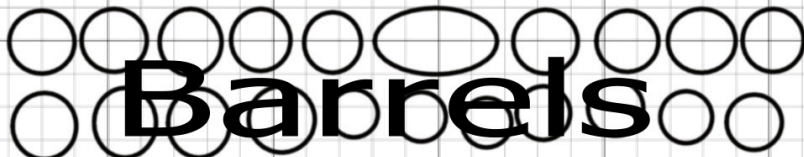
Stage



5 feet







cheese shelf

King Krysa







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