



A WRINKLE IN THE WEAWE

A Waterdeep Adventure

The Blackstaff has discovered an oddity in the Weave that surrounds Waterdeep. The enigma may have been there all along or it might be new and the Blackstaff intends to figure it out using an ancient artifact from the reign of Emperor Shoon III. Part One of the *Folded Time Trilogy*.

A Two-Hour Adventure for Tier 1 Characters.

Optimized For: APL 3



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ADVENTURE PRIMER

“Study the past if you would define the future.”

— Confucius

BACKGROUND

There’s been a recent increase in interest in Waterdeep surrounding rumors of a large dragon’s cache beneath the city. Parties interested in acquiring the cache for themselves have sprung up all over from inside the city as well as from the farther reaches of Faerûn.

In the interest of security, **VAJRA SAFAHR**, the current Blackstaff of Waterdeep, has been tasked by the Open Lord of Waterdeep with examining the defenses of the City of Splendors.

During the course of her research, she discovered a very odd **“WRINKLE”** in the **WEAVE** surrounding the city. Vajra determined that the resonance surrounding the wrinkle matched that of an ancient **MAGICAL RING** dating back to 130 DR, during the reign of **EMPEROR SHOON III**.

Laeral Silverhand, the Open Lord of Waterdeep, has ordered the adventurers to head to **BLACKSTAFF TOWER** to undertake a plan to gather information on the ring’s tie to the wrinkle.

Unbeknownst to them, the Blackstaff plans to project the adventurers back in time where they will meet **HILATHER** and **ARTOR MORLIN** at a party at the **SHOON PALACE** on the night of a coup by Amahl Shoon IV.

EPISODES

The adventure takes place over three episodes that take approximately two hours to play. These episodes are initially introduced by a Call to Action encounter.

If you’re planning to play the entire adventure at once, you only need to introduce the Call to Action once. However, if you plan to play them over several sessions, you’ll want to revisit the Call to Action each time you play.

- **Episode 1: Meeting the Blackstaff.** The adventurers are summoned to a meeting with Vajra Safahr, the current Blackstaff of Waterdeep, who requests that the adventurers allow her to cast a spell to project them mentally back in time. This is the **Call to Action**.

- **Episode 2: An Intimate Affair.** The adventurers land in 130 DR as a small party at the Shoon Palace is getting underway. Introductions are made with various guests and interesting connections are made. This is **Main Objective A**.
- **Episode 3: Escaping the Palace.** Artor Morlin attempts to spirit as many guests as possible from the palace as he spreads news of a planned coup by Ahmal Shoon IV against his brother Shoon III. After an eventful night, the adventurers reconnect with Artor and Hilather on the outskirts of Shoonach to learn where their new friends aim to set out. This is **Main Objective B**.

BONUS OBJECTIVES

This adventure includes bonus objectives that the characters can pursue if they have additional time to do so—earning additional advancement checkpoints in the process. These objectives can’t be pursued in a convention setting. These bonus objectives are found in this adventure’s appendices.

- **Bonus Objective A: A Coup Uncovered.** The adventurers discover evidence of Shoon IV’s foul plan during their exploration of the palace. This bonus objective is found in **Appendix 4**.
- **Bonus Objective B: Saving the Family Book.** The adventurers assist Saamas in saving a family heirloom from the Great Library. This bonus objective is found in **Appendix 5**.

EPISODE SEQUENCE

Depending on your time constraints, and play style and environment, this adventure will take approximately two to four hours to play.

HOW WILL YOU PLAY?

The duration of your session depends on how much of this adventure you utilize. At the very least, your session will last approximately 2 hours. However, if you wish, you can provide a longer experience for your players by pursuing the bonus objectives.

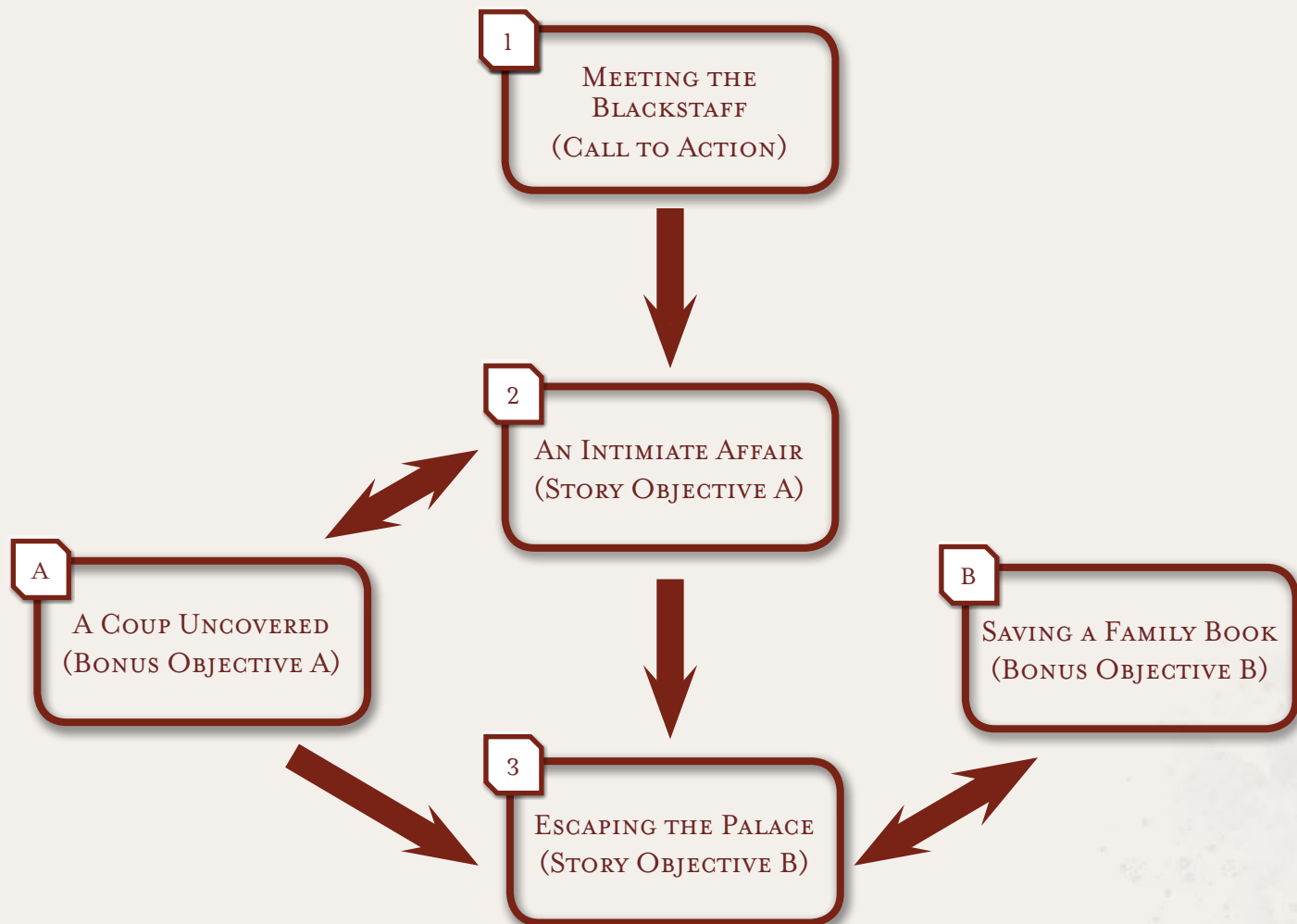
Main Objective Only. To complete the adventure’s main objective, the characters participate in Episodes 1 through 3 in order, however, you may include the opportunity to pursue bonus objectives.

Bonus Objectives. You can extend this adventure by one or two hours by including opportunities for the characters to pursue the bonus objectives. Bonus Objective A can be added to episode 2 or 3 as flow allows. Bonus Objective B branches off from Episode 3 after the adventurers learn of the planned coup.



ADVENTURE FLOWCHART

This section provides a basic understanding of not only the flow of the episode, but also the outline of the different paths that your players may take in reaching their stated objective.





EPISODE 1: MEETING THE BLACKSTAFF



Estimated Duration: 15 minutes

SCENE A. THE WRINKLE

The current Open Lord of Waterdeep, Lady Laeral Silverhand, has been working overtime with the Masked Lords of a Waterdeep in an attempt to keep the city under control and ensure safety for her citizens as chaos breaks out at every turn since the rumors have begun circulating about the hoard of dragons hidden in the city. Her attention has been brought to the adventurers, and she has instructed them to make haste to the Castle Ward and Blackstaff Tower to meet with the Blackstaff, Vajra Safahr, to assist with a plan to further fortify Waterdeep.

Blackstaff Tower is located near the palace, on Sword Street in the Castle Ward. The adventurers meet up at the main gate, where they are lead into an audience chamber on the ground floor for their meeting with Vajra.

AREA INFORMATION

This area has the following features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The three-story tall tower of smooth black stone appears to have no windows or doors, and is surrounded by a 20-foot high wall. The only means of entering is magical in nature, requiring the Blackstaff or one of her apprentices to escort the visitor. The audience chamber is small, semi-circular, approximately 20-feet across. The bustling city street is visible through a window that can be seen from inside.

Lighting. Light filtering into the chamber from a window fills the interior with bright light.

CREATURES/NPCs

Vajra Safahr, the Blackstaff Wizard of Waterdeep is here along with her apprentice, **Corlin Cardin**, her apprentice.

Objectives/Goals. Corlin has been instructed to escort the adventurers to the audience chamber; he refuses requests to go elsewhere in the tower. Vajra wants to know more about the ring's (see **Treasure & Rewards**) history as it pertains to the city of Waterdeep and the odd wrinkle that she has found and is willing to send the adventurers back in time to satisfy her curiosity.

What Do They Know? Vajra is the youngest Blackstaff to ever take up the mantle, only in her thirties even now, however she takes the position very seriously. She has discovered a strange “wrinkle” in the Weave surrounding the city that resonates precisely at the same frequency as an ancient ring—hinting that something significant must have occurred around the time of the ring's creation that could explain the anomaly.

Vajra instructs them on how to read the engraving as she casts a ritual to project the characters mentally back into past events to investigate. She advises that interferences with past events won't affect present-day with the particular ritual she is using.

CALL TO ACTION

The adventurers must project back in time to investigate past events in order to find out how the ring is related to the wrinkle in the weave. The adventurers must blend in and meet as many people as they can and find out what major event happened at the point in time in which they arrive and how it relates to the weave around present-day Waterdeep.

TREASURE & REWARDS

Vajra provides the characters with a *ring of mind shielding*. The ring is engraved with the words “*Be where they are not*” in the Alzhedo language of southwestern Faerûn.



EPISODE 2: AN INTIMATE AFFAIR



Estimated Duration: 75 minutes

THE PALACE AT SHOONACH

The adventurers find themselves in the palace at Shoonach in the year 130 DR. They must explore the palace and meet other visiting dignitaries while seeking a connection to the wrinkle.

Allow players to freely roam the palace and gardens so long as they are not acting in an obviously suspicious manner.

The scenes below can be run in any order that makes sense as the adventurers are moving throughout the palace and meeting key figures.

Reward the players for excellent roleplay by providing information on the NPCs encountered and on the history of the Shoon Imperium.

PREREQUISITES

The adventurers must complete the **Call to Action** before beginning this episode.

STORY OBJECTIVE A

Exploring the palace and becoming acquainted with its guests and staff alike while puzzling out the connection to the wrinkle in the weave is **Story Objective A**.

AREA INFORMATION

This area has the following features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The palace of Shoon III (**Appendix 3**) is the grandest building in the new capital city. Large, open rooms and beautiful gardens play host to nobles of the court and visiting dignitaries from across Faerûn. The palace is made of stone, with a large walled in garden surrounding it, unusual for this region.

The lower level of the palace hosts all of the public spaces and entertaining chambers, while the upper level only houses private and guest bedchambers.

Lighting. Unless otherwise stated, each room of the palace is brightly lit by lamps or braziers. The gardens are dimly lit by occasional braziers.

Palace Guard. A dozen palace **guards** are assigned to the palace: two groups of five patrolling through the palace and gardens with two additional **guards** standing watch in the throne room. In the event of trouble, palace guards blow brass whistles; any patrols not in the vicinity arrive within 5 rounds. Characters that succeed at a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check are able to discern the patrol pattern well enough to access other areas without notice.

BONUS OBJECTIVE A

The adventurers hear whisperings of a planned coup. If utilizing this content, Artor does not share his fears when the party meets him for the second time. See **Appendix 4** for additional details.

SCENE A. THRONE ROOM AND SOLARIUM

In this room, the adventurers observe Shoon III greeting various members of his court and visiting dignitaries.

AREA INFORMATION

This area has the following features:

Dimensions & Terrain. This 35-by-20-foot hall is ostentatious in design and décor. Lavish wall-hangings hang from the 20-foot high ceiling, and gaudily extravagant furnishings cover the polished marble floors.

An equally large chamber adjoins, separated by a few small sections of wall. The solarium has a 25-foot wide floor to ceiling section of windows that would allow the sun to filter in freely during daylight to nourish the lush vegetation scattered throughout the chamber.

Lighting. Ornate braziers are interspersed throughout the room and the adjoining solarium, providing bright light.

Secret Tunnel. Characters inspecting the throne (which no doubt draws unwanted attention from the Qysar and his guards) that succeed on a DC 11 Perception (Wisdom) check find the entrance to a secret tunnel behind the throne which leads to Shoon III's bedchamber on the upper level. A DC 14 will also allow the characters to find a *spell scroll of Arcane Lock* mostly stashed away behind a loose stone in the tunnel wall.

CREATURES/NPCs

The reigning Qysar, **Shoon III** is here, holding court. **Hilather** and **Malcar Gost** are here petitioning the Qysar. Two **guards** are here, guarding Shoon III. Various other court nobles are in attendance.

Objectives & Goals. Shoon III is the noble host of the party, however he seems to be more preoccupied with entertaining the members of his harem than mingling with the guests. Malcar Gost is seeking to establish trade with Shoon III. The guards are here to keep the Qysar and his guests safe, and to make sure visitors don't stray from designated areas. Hilather is reluctantly in attendance at court as he has accepted a contract from Shoon III.

What Do They Know? Shoon III has invited Hilather to court in order to watch over him while he works on magical objects to control demons that the Qysar has commissioned. Hilather recognizes the ring that the adventurers have and seems interested in speaking to them, but not in front of the Qysar. (The adventures might not interact with all the people in this area, Hilather and Malcar can also be found in other rooms or in **Bonus Objective A**, if utilizing that additional content).

TREASURES AND REWARDS

Spell scroll of Arcane Lock (Level 2, uncommon)

SCENE B. THE GARDENS

In this area, the adventurers can encounter several party guests. They first meet Artor in the gardens as he watches suspiciously over a group of guests of the Qysar's brother, Shoon IV.

AREA INFORMATION

This area has following features:

Dimensions & Terrain. Lush plants and water features dominate the gardens in a maze of vegetation allowing for some measure of privacy for guests wandering through and enjoying the vibrant beauty of the flowers.

Lighting. Braziers stand in various corners throughout the garden and encircle the center water fountain, these provide dim light to any guests nearby.

CREATURES/NPCs

Artor Morlin is a mercenary on hire by Shoon III for general protection. **Amahl Shoon IV** can be spotted passing through the gardens speaking to several of his acquaintances (a dozen **bandits** and one **bandit captain**) who appear to be wearing armor beneath their robes.

Objectives/Goals. Artor is loyal to Shoon III and is distrustful of his brother, Shoon IV. He is keeping a watchful eye over Shoon IV and his invited "guests." Shoon IV is plotting to create a distraction later in the night with his hired bandits to allow him to stab his brother to death.

What Does He Know? Artor knows of many hidden passages throughout the palace that allow him to covertly watch the goings on. If this is the second time the party has encountered Artor, they have gained his trust enough for him to share his suspicions of the additional guests that Shoon IV invited to this party and their ill intent towards Shoon III. (If **Bonus Objective A** is being pursued, he does **not** share this thought.)

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very Weak:** Remove four **bandits**
- **Weak:** Remove two **bandits**
- **Strong:** Add a **spy** and a **thug**
- **Very Strong:** Add two **spies** and a **thug**

PLAYING THE PILLARS (SCENE B: THE GARDENS)

Combat

If the players confront Shoon IV or his bandits, combat could ensue. Shoon IV flees from the gardens at the first sign of violence, directing his bandits to stop the adventurers. The bandits fight until five palace guards arrive at the end of the third, before fleeing.

Exploration

If the adventurers explore the gardens in depth, they can find a secret entrance along one of the walls with a DC 15 Perception (Wisdom) check that would be useful for sneaking out of the palace without being noticed.

Social

Artor is quite willing to disclose his suspicions about the other guests to the adventurers. He approaches them upon noticing them. He expresses contempt for Shoon IV's obvious desire to have his brother's throne.

SCENE C. THE GREAT LIBRARY

In this area, the adventurers can uncover additional history on the Shoon Imperium and interact further with Hilanther.

AREA INFORMATION

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The library of the Shoon Palace (**Appendix 3**) is a large and soaring 30-by-30-foot room, with floor-to-ceiling bookcases containing haphazardly stacked books. Maps, journals, and other notes about the various lands encompassed by the Shoon Imperium are spread on multiple tables arranged throughout the room.

Lighting. The library has several large windows to allow in natural light, but is only lit by three small lamps at this time of day; two near seating areas, and a third by the doorway on a small table.

On the Shelves. The following information can be found from various books and notes throughout the room.

- Akkabar Shoon the Elder founded what is now known as the Shoon Imperium.
- Akkabar was the first wizard ruler of Calimshan in hundreds of years, and he used magic to extend his lifespan well beyond what was natural for a human.
- Amahl III was his heir at the time of his death, and the ruler of Tethyr when he inherited the Calimshan throne, naming himself “Qysar.”
- Hilather was known to be a powerful archwizard before disappearing around -2488 DR and only recently reappearing.

CREATURES/NPCs

Hilather has been hired for magical research by Shoon III. If the characters did not interact with him in the throne room, he might be found here perusing the books on magical theory and lore.

Malcar can potentially be found here as well, perusing the maps scattered around the room depicting the various reaches of the Shoon Imperium and neighboring kingdoms.

Aside from those listed above, a total of twelve palace **guards** patrol the area: two groups of five patrolling the palace and gardens, and an additional pair standing watch in the throne room.

Objectives/Goals. Hilather is scouring the shelves, especially the Shoon family books on magical theory, for knowledge or lore that he doesn't yet possess in his tireless search for new secrets and additional power. He speaks to the party of a ring that he made, which was identical to the one they possess, inquiring as to where they acquired their ring.

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very Weak** or **Weak:** Remove a **guard**
- **Average:** Five palace **guards**
- **Strong** or **Very Strong:** Add two **veterans**



PLAYING THE PILLARS (SCENE C: THE GREAT LIBRARY)

Combat

Palace **guards** attempt to persuade the adventurers and Malcar to return to the main party areas if they are noticed in the library. Hiding from the guards requires a successful Dexterity (Stealth) check. The guards actively investigate loud noises, and if they leave the door open, they may close and lock it—potentially locking the characters inside the room!

Exploration

The adventurers might locate another hidden tunnel behind a cleverly disguised rotating bookshelf on the wall with a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. This tunnel could lead to the gardens or to the throne room, or even out to the city streets. Adjust as desired.

Social

If Malcar or Hilather is present, the adventurers can attempt to extract information from him on his impression of the court. Either has interacted with Shoon III and Artor and finds Artor to be generally likeable and loyal to the Qysar. They found the Qysar's brother to be a power-hungry fool.



SCENE D. KITCHENS AND SERVANTS QUARTERS

In this area, the adventurers can interact with the servants of the palace and learn rumors of daily palace life along with more salacious rumors on the ruling family.

AREA INFORMATION

This area has following features:

Dimensions & Terrain. Almost 20-by-30-foot in size, the large kitchen is bustling with activity as servants scurry to-and-fro ensuring that all guests are served in a timely fashion with drinks and food befitting their stations. Through a small door in the back, a 3-by-10-foot room contains cots for the various servants that live in the palace, along with a plain chest at the foot of each bed for any personal belongings they might have.

Lighting. The kitchen is brightly lit by lanterns and cookfires, which also throw off an extreme amount of heat in the space.

CREATURES/NPCs

Saama, the head palace cook, and twenty other **commoner** servants can be found in this vicinity of the palace, bustling to and fro with laden trays of food and drink for the guests.

Objectives/Goals. Saama has been on staff for Shoon III since he began his rule and has developed a fondness for the oft disliked qysar. He wishes to protect him from any ill intent.

Other staff members might express a dislike of Shoon III due to his cruelty at times towards the palace staff. Allow players to roleplay various conversations as time allows in this area in order to develop a sense of the emotions in the palace.

What Does He Know? Saama knows that there are some very powerful people present tonight. The wizard Hilather was hired allegedly to ensnare demons for the Qysar to command, although Saama does not believe that possible. He also knows that the wizard claims to be thousands of years old! Feel free to make up other rumors about the various nobles.

SCENE E. THE ENTERTAINING ROOMS

In these areas (the Parlor, Grand Ballroom, and Banquet Hall), the adventurers can mingle with various party guests.

AREA INFORMATION

This area has following features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The Grand Ballroom is an immense room 35-by-50-foot in total. The walls are bedecked with elaborate tapestries and gilded accents that reflect back the light from the torches and braziers. Musicians are set up in the far corner of this room playing while various guests dance around the center of the room.

The Parlor is 30-by-35-feet in size and contains many plush sofas and chaises upon which guests are found lounging and conversing.

The Banquet Hall is 30-by-45-feet and houses a massive table that could easily seat fifty guests. As a full dinner is not being served for this occasion, the fine dishware of the Qysar's household is only arranged upon it for decoration.

Lighting. Glass sided lanterns hang from many walls, along with sconced torches and braziers throughout the larger ballroom, providing bright lighting throughout the main entertaining rooms.

CREATURES/NPCs

Various **noble** party guests are milling about in these rooms. The ballroom also contains a small musical ensemble in the far counter, along with various palace servants wandering through serving the guests. The DM also has the option to include **Hilather**, **Shoon IV**, **Artor**, or **Malcar** if the party has not yet interacted with them.

Objectives/Goals. Noble guests are seeking to gain favor with Shoon III and enjoying the fine food and wine of court.

Artor is loyal to Shoon III and is distrustful of the qysar's brother, Shoon IV. He is keeping a watchful eye over Shoon IV and the large number of invited guests he has this evening. Shoon IV is plotting to create a distraction later in the night with his hired bandits to allow him to stab his brother to death. The bandits are currently located in the garden.

Malcar Gost is a merchant from faraway, here at the Shoon court hoping to procure valuable trading rights and learn more about this region. Hilather is seeking to gain knowledge from the qysar's trove of family books on magical lore. He is here because he has been hired by Shoon III.

What Do They Know? If this is the second time the party has encountered Artor, they have gained his trust enough for him to share his suspicions of the additional guests that Shoon IV invited to this party and their ill intent towards Shoon III. (If Bonus Objective A is being pursued, he does **not** share this thought.)

Hilather can share additional details on some of his magical research and various items he has crafted, including a magical ring to shield minds. Malcar speaks of trading and his family's importance to him. Shoon IV speaks very courteously, mostly engaging in small chit chat, steering the topic away from any attempt to discuss himself or his guests. He is most interested in hearing any backstory the characters wish to share.



EPISODE 3: ESCAPING THE PALACE

Estimated Duration: 30 minutes

CONFIRMING THE WORST

In this episode, the adventurers hear from Artor about the coup (possibly confirming what they uncovered in Bonus Objective A) and help to get as many guests safely from the palace as possible.

PREREQUISITES

The characters must complete **Story Objective A** before proceeding to this episode.

OBJECTIVES

Escaping the palace with Hilather and Artor is **Story Objective B**. If they choose to stand their ground and fight, convey to the characters that additional enemies continue to arrive in waves, while screams can be heard from throughout the palace as guests are attacked and murdered—staying too long would be folly.

AREA INFORMATION

This area has the following features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The palace of Shoon III (**Appendix 3**) is the grandest building in the new capital city. Refer back to Episode 1 to any specific rooms for further information on those areas.

Lighting. Unless otherwise stated, each room of the palace is brightly lit by lamps or braziers. The gardens are dimly lit by occasional braziers.

Secret Tunnels. Any secret exits that the players discovered in Episode 2 can be used to help sneak from the palace out into the city. Allow players to have bonuses if they have discovered these tunnels.

Alarm. A general alarm has been raised by the palace guard at this point, as it has become apparent that an assault on the palace is underway. If **Bonus Objective B** is not being run, after 2 rounds, the palace guards locate find the body of Shoon III in his bedchamber and the palace begins to go on lockdown with no one allowed to leave via the main exits.

CREATURES/NPCs

Artor Morlin relays to the adventurers that his worst fears have been confirmed by a conversation he overheard. He is heading to try and find Shoon III to protect him. He urges the adventurers to flee now and to take any guests to safety if they are able, and if **Bonus Objective A** is being run, to bring him any evidence they might encounter of Shoon IV's treachery.

Guards and Bandits. Five **guards** are on patrol nearby. A dozen **bandits** follow orders to keep all guests contained in the palace.

After 3 rounds, five palace **guards** show up (to assist or fight the party at DM's discretion)

Objectives/Goals. Artor flees towards the Throne room immediately in search of the Qysar, but is too late to save him.

What Do They Know? Artor knows of many hidden passages throughout the palace that can be used to sneak out undetected.

BONUS OBJECTIVE B

If utilizing this additional content, the head cook, **Saama**, refuses to flee from the palace without assurance that the party will retrieve a journal from the Grand Library that has been in his family for many generations. See **Appendix 5** for more details.

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very Weak:** Remove four **bandits**
- **Weak:** Remove two **bandits**
- **Strong:** Add a **spy** and a **thug**
- **Very Strong:** Add two **spies** and a **thug**



PLAYING THE PILLARS

Combat

Shoon IV's hired **bandits** try herding all party guests into the banquet room. If characters fought bandits previously in garden, reduce to six bandits. The guards and the bandits all attack the party in the confusion, the guards.

Exploration

The adventurers might try to find hidden passages to help them escape. Refer to the locations of those in each of the rooms from Episode 2. Allow for bonuses to save guests for any such passages found and used.

Social

If the adventurers might want to follow Artor to the throne room, they discover the body of Shoon III stabbed to death; they could persuade Artor to leave with them via a DC 12 Persuasion (Charisma) check or by offering to help him find the killer.

ADVENTURE REWARDS

Upon completing the adventure, the characters each receive rewards based upon their accomplishments. These rewards include advancement and treasure, and may include special rewards, such as story awards or new downtime activities, as follows:

ADVANCEMENT CHECKPOINTS

The characters receive an advancement checkpoint for each objective completed:

- **Story Objective A:** Find the ring's connection
 - **Story Objective B:** Escape with Hilather and Artor.
- The characters receive 1 advancement checkpoint and 1 treasure checkpoint for each bonus objective that they complete, as follows:
- **Bonus Objective A:** Find the evidence.
 - **Bonus Objective B:** Find Saama's journal.

PLAYER REWARDS

The characters earn the following player rewards for **completing the adventure**:

MAGIC ITEM UNLOCK

Characters that complete Main Objective B unlock this magic item.

Ring of Mind Shielding. This ornate silver ring is engraved with the words “*Be Where They Are Not*” in the Alzhedo language of southwestern Faerûn. This item can be found in **Appendix 7**.

CONSUMABLE MAGIC ITEMS

Potion of Poison. This concoction looks, smells, and tastes like a Potion of Healing or other beneficial potion. However, it is actually poison masked by Illusion magic. An Identify spell reveals its true Nature.

If you drink it, you take 3d6 poison damage, and you must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be Poisoned. At the start of each of your turns while you are Poisoned in this way, you take 3d6 poison damage. At the end of each of your turns, you can repeat the saving throw. On a successful save, the poison damage you take on your subsequent turns decreases by 1d6. The poison ends when the damage decreases to 0.

Spell Scroll, Arcane Lock. You touch a closed door, window, gate, chest, or other entryway, and it becomes locked for the Duration. You and the creatures you designate when you cast this spell can open the object normally. You can also set a password that, when spoken within 5 feet of the object, suppresses this spell for 1 minute. Otherwise, it is impassable until it is broken or the spell is dispelled or suppressed. Casting knock on the object suppresses arcane lock for 10 minutes.

While affected by this spell, the object is more difficult to break or force open; the DC to break it or pick any locks on it increases by 10.

DUNGEON MASTER REWARDS

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn **advancement and treasure checkpoints** and downtime as though you played the adventure, but none of the adventure's **player rewards**.

However, this adventure may qualify for rewards earned by completing DM Quests. See the ALDMG (*Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide*) for more information about DM Quests.

APPENDIX 1: LOCATIONS & NPCs

The following NPCs and locations feature prominently in this adventure.

- **Amahl Shoon III (AH mall SHOON).** The reigning Qysar of the Shoon Imperium. He is in his early 20s and surrounds himself with opulence. He seems generally distrustful of outsiders to the court.

- **Amahl Shoon IV (AH mall SHOON).** Young and brash, he is obviously jealous of his older brother's title and power.

- **Hilather (HILL a thur).** A guest of Shoon III, Hilather was hired in 128 DR to develop a more secure means of binding fiends to the will of their summoners. Hilather is a wizard of notable power, purported to have been born sometime between -4000 DR and -3750 DR in the ancient Imaskarian Empire. An artificer of some skill, Hilather rose to power becoming a Lord and archwizard before disappearing around -2488 DR and only recently reappearing. In 132 DR, Hilather will present 13 Demonshields to Shoon IV before disappearing again.

Personality: *When I set my mind to something, I follow through no matter what gets in my way.*

Ideal: *I work hard to be the best there is at my craft.*

Bond: *I sold my soul for knowledge. I hope to do great deeds and win it back.*

Flaw: *I'd risk too much to discover a lost bit of knowledge.*

- **Malcar Gost (MAL car GAHST).** Tall fair-skinned human with raven hair. Has traveled from the far north on the Sword Coast looking to establish trade with Shoon III.

Personality: *My eloquent flattery makes everyone I talk to feel like the most wonderful and important person in the world.*

Ideal: *I'm determined to make something of myself.*

Bond: *My family is the most important thing in my life, even when they are far from me.*

Flaw: *Gold seems like a lot of money to me, and I'll do just about anything for more of it.*

- **Artor Morlin (ARR tore MORE linn).** Known in present-day Waterdeep as the Baron of Blood, a vampire Lord, Artor was a mercenary of the Shoon Imperium at the time of this party, working for Shoon III.

Personality: *Loyalty must be earned, not given.*

Ideal: *Neither forgiveness, nor forgetfulness come easily.*

Bond: *I follow through on my promises.*

- **Corlin Cardin (CORE-lin CAR-din).** A human male, appearing to be approximately 15 years of age. He wears a simple brown robe and has a meek, yet proud demeanor. He is honored to serve the Blackstaff and will not disobey her commands.

- **Vajra Safahr (VAJ rah sah FAHR),** Blackstaff Wizard of Waterdeep. A human female, diminutive in stature, with dark skin, short black hair, and indigo blue eyes. She appears rather young for someone of her station, perhaps only in her thirties. She is headstrong, but not entirely comfortable in her role as Blackstaff.

Personality: *I act with wisdom and grace older than my age.*

Ideal: *The pursuit of knowledge is the most honorable.*

Bond: *I live to serve and protect Waterdeep.*

Flaw: *I second guess myself, but I'd never admit it.*

- **Blackstaff Tower.** Located near the palace, on Sword Street in the Castle Ward. The three-story tall tower of smooth black stone has no windows or doors, and is surrounded by a 20-foot high wall. Home to each of the Blackstaff wizards since Khelben, and their apprentices. It is protected by various magics.

- **Shoon Palace.** The grandest building in the new capital city, boasting large open rooms and beautiful gardens.

Personality: *Bustling with activity, the main emotion felt throughout the palace is that of distrust.*

Ideal: *Strong and imposing, the new palace represents the ideals the reigning qysar wishes to embody.*

Bond: *The palace represents the burgeoning empire of Shoon.*



APPENDIX 2: CREATURE STATISTICS

This appendix details monsters that are encountered in this adventure.

BANDIT

Medium Humanoid (any race), any non-lawful alignment

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

ACTIONS

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80 ft./320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

BANDIT CAPTAIN

Medium Humanoid (any race), any non-lawful alignment

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +4, Dex +5, Wis +2

Skills Athletics +4, Deception +4

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any two languages

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The captain makes three melee attacks: two with its scimitar and one with its dagger. Or the captain makes two ranged attacks with its daggers.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Parry. The captain adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the captain must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

COMMONER

Medium Humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 4 (1d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

ACTIONS

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

GUARD

Medium Humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (chain shirt, shield)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

ACTIONS

Scimitar. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage.

NOBLE

Medium Humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 15 (breastplate)

Hit Points 9 (2d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Insight +4, Persuasion +5

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any two languages

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

ACTIONS

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Parry. The noble adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the noble must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

SPY

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 27 (6d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Insight +4, Investigation +5, Perception +6, Persuasion +5, Sleight of Hand +4, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages any two languages

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

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

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The spy 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 spy that isn't incapacitated and the spy doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The spy makes two melee attacks.

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.

THUG

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-good alignment

Armor Class 11 (leather armor)

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Intimidation +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

ACTIONS

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The thug makes two melee attacks.

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

VETERAN

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 17 (splint)

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

ACTIONS

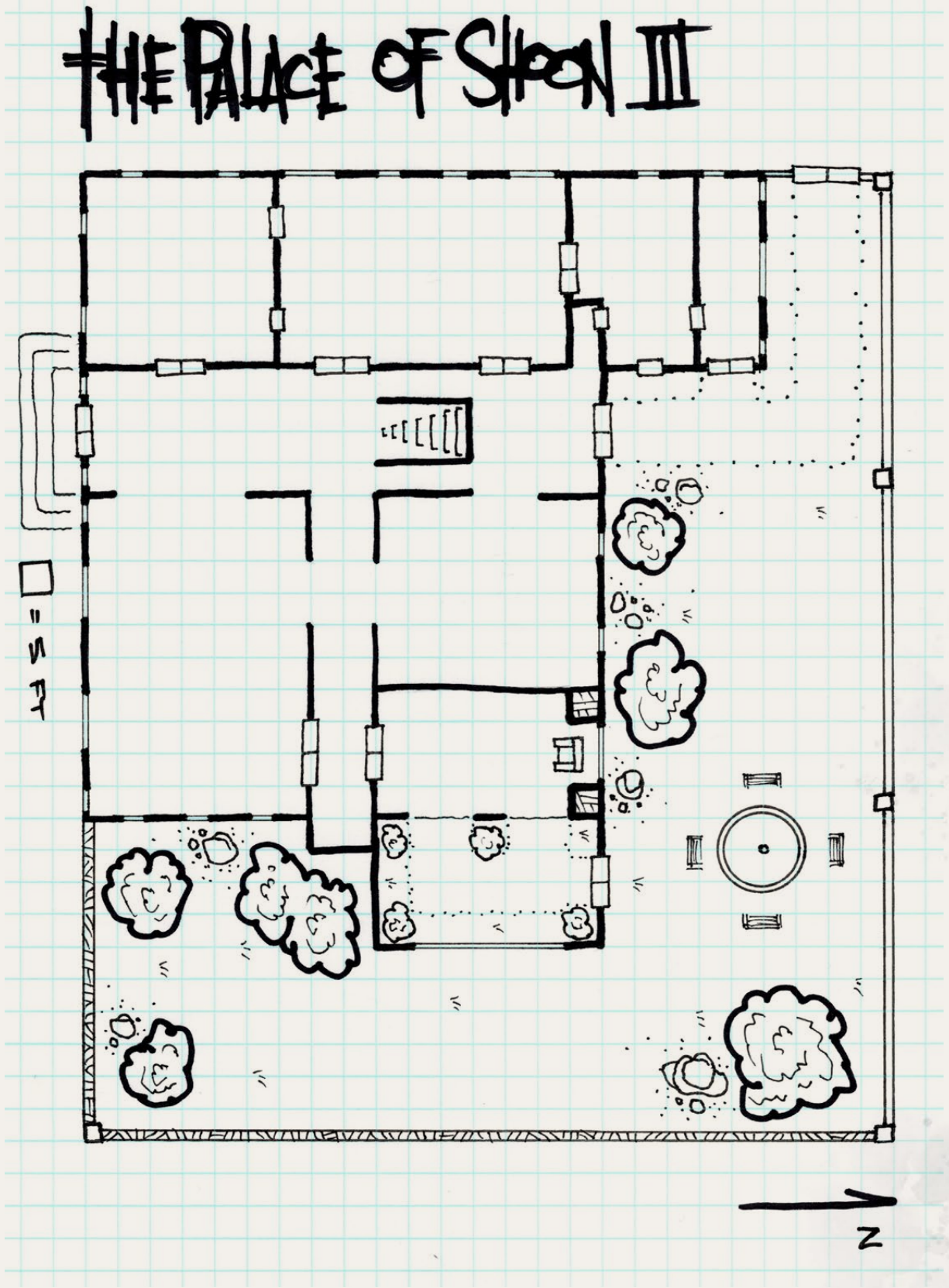
Multiattack. The veteran makes two longsword attacks. If it has a shortsword drawn, it can also make a shortsword attack.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10+1) piercing damage.

APPENDIX 3: PALACE OF SHOON III MAP



APPENDIX 4: A COUP UNCOVERED (BONUS OBJECTIVE A.)

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

SCENE A.

SEARCHING THE PALACE

In this section, the adventurers uncover evidence of a treacherous plan against the Qysar. Allow the players to search through the various rooms of the palace.

PREREQUISITE

The characters must have completed Episode 1 and spoken to at least two people in the palace.

BONUS OBJECTIVE A

Having spoken to several people, there is a general sense of unease about the palace and currents of discontent with the current ruler. Seeking out and finding evidence of the plot to murder Shoon III is Bonus Objective A.

AREA INFORMATION

This area has the following features:

Dimensions & Terrain. See Episode 2 for full descriptions on each of the various palace rooms.

Lighting. Unless otherwise stated, each room of the palace is brightly lit by lamps or braziers. The gardens are dimly lit by occasional braziers.

Searching. Consider allowing for bonuses for searching any rooms previously visited if the characters can remember any information gleaned there, or for creative use of skills. Excellent roleplay should be rewarded if the characters seek to use other party guests for information.

Calling out specific areas of the rooms that they wish to search is recommended rather than allowing a single search check for each room. Encourage players to be specific and describe what they are doing to try to uncover clues rather than relying only on Investigation or Perception checks. False clues can be inserted at the DM's discretion.

CREATURES/NPCs

As the characters search throughout the many rooms, they have the chance to encounter a variety of people based on where they are looking. The characters will need to be subtle about their search, lest they rouse the suspicion of the palace **guard** or of Shoon IV's hired **bandits**.

Objectives/Goals. **Noble** party guests could also interfere with the characters' attempts to move from room to room closely examining all nooks and crannies or they could offer helpful information, depending on the characters' approach.

What Do They Know? If the characters interact with at least two guests, they should find out that Shoon III most commonly frequents the banquet hall, library, and the sunroom when he is not in the throne room. Shoon IV enjoys relaxing in the library, sunroom, and parlor when he is in the palace.

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very Weak:** Remove five **guards** and five **bandits**
- **Weak:** Remove five **guards** and two **bandits**
- **Strong:** Add two **bandits** and a **veteran**
- **Very Strong:** Add two **veterans**

SCENE B.

UNCOVERING THE TRUTH

In this section, the adventurers uncover evidence of a treacherous plan against the Qysar, Shoon III.

AREA INFORMATION

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The library of the Shoon Palace (**Appendix 3**) is a large and soaring 40-by-30-foot room, with floor-to-ceiling bookcases containing haphazardly stacked books. Maps, journals, and other notes about the various lands encompassed by the Shoon Imperium are spread on multiple tables arranged

PLAYING THE PILLARS (SCENE A: SEARCHING THE PALACE)

Combat

Eight palace **guards** are roaming the palace, along with seven **bandits**. The guards are wary of anyone snooping about, and the bandits fear that their true cause could be discovered before the time has come!

Exploration

Allow for potential bonuses to stealthily entering and leaving rooms if the characters use any secret tunnels. The Qysar likes to move without being noticed, allowing others to easily do the same!

Social

The noble party guests (including any named NPCs as fitting) stop to question the characters on their reasons for being at the party, or how they are finding the palace. A DC 16 Persuasion (Charisma) check can be used to gain one of their trust enough to have them help you find proof.

throughout the room.

Lighting. The library has several large windows to allow in natural light, but is only lit by three small lamps at this time of day; two near seating areas, and a third by the doorway on a small table.

Desk. In the northwest corner of the library, sits an ornately carved desk with gracefully curving sides, and a top that closes on a hinge. A character with a set of thieves' tools that succeeds on a DC 12 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) check can unlock the desk to find a sheaf of papers—one of which outlines a plan by Shoon IV to create a distraction allowing him to murder his brother during tonight's party. (Appendix 6). The desk also contains a *potion of poison*. (Treasures and Rewards).

CREATURES/NPCs

Malcar Gost is a visitor to the court from the far north of the Sword Coast and **Hilather** has been hired for magical research by Shoon III. If the characters did not interact with one or the other in the previously, he might be found here.

Aside from the NPCs listed above, a total of 12 palace **guards** can be found. Two groups of 5 patrolling through the palace and gardens and an additional 2 standing watch in the throne room.

Objectives/Goals. Malcar peruses the maps on the tables and the many journals on the shelves, paying special attention to any maps that he finds in hopes of gaining valuable knowledge of competing trade routes or locales with valuable trade goods.

What Do They Know? He knows that the desk in the far corner is locked, he has tried it himself, suspecting that there might be valuable trading information for Shoon III hidden away inside it.

TREASURES AND REWARDS

Potion of Poison (uncommon)

See the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information.

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very Weak** or **Weak:** Remove a **guard**
- **Strong** or **Very Strong:** Add two **veterans**

PLAYING THE PILLARS (SCENE B: UNCOVERING THE TRUTH)

Combat

Five palace **guards** attempt to persuade the adventurers and Malcar to return to the main party areas if they are noticed in the library. Hiding from the guards requires a successful Dexterity (Stealth) check. The guards actively investigate loud noises, and if they leave the door open, they may close and lock it—potentially locking the characters inside the room!

Exploration

The adventurers might locate another hidden tunnel behind a cleverly disguised rotating bookshelf on the wall with a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. This tunnel could lead to the gardens or to the throne room, or even out to the city streets. Adjust as desired.

Social

If Malcar or Hilather is present, the adventurers can attempt to extract information from him on his impression of the court. Either has interacted with Shoon III and Artor and finds Artor to be generally likeable and loyal to the Qysar. They found the Qysar's brother to be a power-hungry fool.



APPENDIX 5: SAVING THE FAMILY BOOK (BONUS OBJECTIVE B.)

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

SCENE A. FINDING SAAMAS

In this episode, the adventurers encounter Saamas, the head cook, while they are attempting to get people to safety from the palace. He requests their help in retrieving a family treasure from the library.

PREREQUISITE

The characters must have completed **Episode 2** before proceeding to this Episode.

BONUS OBJECTIVE B

The head cook, Saama, refuses to flee from the palace without assurance that the party will retrieve a journal from the Grand Library that has been in his family for many generations. Locating the book, and giving it to Saama is **Bonus Objective B**.

AREA INFORMATION

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The palace of Shoon III (**Appendix 3**) is the grandest building in the new capital city. Large, open rooms and beautiful gardens play host to nobles of the court and visiting dignitaries from across Faerûn. Almost 20-by-30-foot in size, the large kitchen is bustling with activity as servants scurry to-and-fro ensuring that all guests are served in a timely fashion with drinks and food befitting their stations. Through a small door in the back, a 3-by-10-foot room contains cots for the various servants that live in the palace, along with a plain chest at the foot of each bed for any personal belongings they might have.

Alarm. A general alarm has been raised by the palace guard at this point, as it has become apparent that an assault on the palace is underway. After 2 rounds, the palace **guards** locate find the body of Shoon III in his bedchamber and the palace begins to go on lockdown with no one allowed to leave via the main exits.

Secret Tunnels. Any secret exits that the players discovered in Episode 2 can be used to help discretely smuggle guests from the palace out into the city.

CREATURES/NPCs

Three dozen **noble** guests and a dozen **commoner** palace staff can be found in various states of panic throughout the palace and gardens.

Objectives/Goals. The guests and staff are trying to flee and being turned back by palace guards or hired bandits as they are encountered in the general chaos.

Use creative methods to determine what effects the panicking crowds have on the characters, as they attempt to make their way back across the palace to the Grand Library to fetch Saama's book.



PLAYING THE PILLARS

Combat

The **bandits** hired by Shoon IV attempt to stop anyone from leaving the palace. After the body is located, ten **guards** also turn on all guests (including the characters) suspecting everyone of the murder.

Exploration

The adventurers can use any of the hidden passages they located in Episode 2. This could provide them with a bonus on stealth rolls to avoid detection or other benefits as appropriate.

Social

The adventurers could try to talk their way out of the palace past any remaining palace guards or bandits via means of persuasion or intimidation. Allow bonuses for creativity!

APPENDIX 6: EVIDENCE OF TREACHERY (PLAYER HANDOUT 1.)

The necessary arrangements
have been made.

Expect for the distraction to
occur late in the evening.

Take advantage of it as we
have discussed to do the deed.

I await my service to you as
the new Qysar.

Your humble servant,

Memp

APPENDIX 7: MAGIC ITEM (PLAYER HANDOUT 2)

Characters completing this adventure's objective unlock this magic item.

RING OF MIND SHIELDING

While wearing this ring, you are immune to magic that allows other creatures to read your thoughts, determine whether you are lying, know your alignment, or know your creature type. Creatures can telepathically communicate with you only if you allow it.

You can use an action to cause the ring to become invisible until you use another action to make it visible, until you remove the ring, or until you die.

If you die while wearing the ring, your soul enters it, unless it already houses a soul. You can remain in the ring or depart for the afterlife. As long as your soul is in the ring, you can telepathically communicate with any creature wearing it. A wearer can't prevent this telepathic communication. This item is found on **Magic Item Table F** in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

This ornate silver ring is engraved with the words “*Be where they are not*” in the Alzhedo language of southwestern Faerûn.

APPENDIX 8: DUNGEON MASTER TIPS

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 1st-4th level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 3**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

NEW TO D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE?

<http://dnd.wizards.com/playevents/organized-play>

NEW TO WATERDEEP?

<http://dnd.wizards.com/story/waterdeep>

NEW TO BEING THE DUNGEON MASTER?

<http://dndadventurersleague.org/storyline-seasons/waterdeep-adventures/>

To DM an adventure, you **must** have 3 to 7 players—each with their own character whose level is within the adventure's level range. Characters playing in a **hardcover** adventure may continue to play to but if they play a different hardcover adventure, they **can't return** to the first one if they're outside its level range.

PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself of while running the adventure, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use in a combat. Familiar yourself with the adventure's appendices and handouts.
- Gather any resources you'd like to use to aid you in running this adventure—such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Wisdom (Perception), and anything specified as notable by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, etc.)

Players can play an adventure they previously played as a Player or Dungeon Master but may only play it once with a given character. Ensure each player has their character's adventure logsheet (if not, get one from the organizer). The players fill out the adventure name, session number, date, and your name and DCI number. In addition, the player also fills in the starting values for advancement and treasure checkpoints, downtime days, and renown. These are updated at the conclusion of the session.

Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet. If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player's character sheet to ensure that nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array.

Point players to the D&D Adventurers League Players Guide for reference. If players wish to spend downtime days and it's the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now, or they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode. Players should select their characters' spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure, unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give players hints about what they might face.

ADJUSTING THIS ADVENTURE

When combat is a possibility, the adventure will provide a sidebar that helps you to determine the best mix/number of opponents to provide them with to create an appropriate challenge. While you're not bound to these adjustments; they're here for your convenience and consideration.

To determine whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, add up the total levels of all the characters and divide the result by the number of characters (rounding .5 or greater up; .4 or less down). This is the group's average party level (APL). To approximate the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the table below.

DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH

Party Composition	Party Strength
3-4 characters, APL less than	Very weak
3-4 characters, APL equivalent	Weak
3-4 characters, APL greater than	Average
5 characters, APL less than	Weak
5 characters, APL equivalent	Average
5 characters, APL greater than	Strong
6-7 characters, APL less than	Average
6-7 characters, APL equivalent	Strong
6-7 characters, APL greater than	Very strong