

The Vipers Crown - 507SuViCr

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The sovereign prince of the Kingdom of Arelia has always had a strong connection to its people. The royal family are frequently seen amongst their people supporting them however they best deemed fit. However lately the prince has been making different decisions, straying away for what was best for his people and looking at something else.

The party witnessing one such interaction the party are unknowingly brought deeper into the kingdom's conspiracy.

DM: (The Prince is being manipulated by the woman that he was set up with to cease spending the wealth from the royal vaults on the people of the kingdom and to use that wealth to fuel war efforts for her home kingdom. This would lead them open to attack by her allies and so her rulership of Aleria is all but confirmed.)



As the party ventured towards the kingdom of Arelia ruled by Queen Emera and King Leon, the picturesque streets showcased a society where the citizens were well-fed and healthy. Cheerful guards, ever ready to assist, exemplified the kingdom's utopian charm. Children played and studied under the watchful eyes of their guardians, painting a scene of tranquillity. However, as the party decided to call it a day and head toward their inn, the Royal Fillet, the atmosphere shifted. Ahead of them several royal guards stood around a man who stood and talked with a beautiful woman. Unlike their friendly city guard counterparts, these warriors were resolute and unwelcoming. As they drew near one guard approached them quickly, directing them to a different route. However, they were quickly overruled as a summons by the prince interrupted the hasty conversation. The prince enhanced pleasantries and seemed proud of the kingdom his family had created. However the mood changed drastically. 'However to support this we have to accept charitable donations from all visitors to the kingdom, a tithe of one tenth. It's only fair that if you're enjoying yourself and if you wish to see the children of this land flourish that you contribute to their health.'

DM: (The party are guilty and surrounded by the guard until the tithe is paid, the female guard, Tuille, and her captain obviously dislike this Tithe but they do as their prince commands otherwise it could be considered treason. Refer to **507MoSuSp**)

The party having had a decent sum of their coin and valuables extolled to support the virtues the kingdom upheld the party were led away.

The party were escorted away by Tuille, the guardswoman who saw fit to take them a few blocks away from the prince and his lady. She discreetly handed them a small pouch in an attempt to make amends for the forced donation. Tuille briefly discussed the prince's rigid views on supporting the kingdom, hinting at the harsh consequences for those who resisted. Her words revealed a kingdom newly under strict control, where even minor infractions could lead to severe punishment. As the party parted ways, Tuille expressed hope that their next royal encounter would be with the more benevolent queen, before offering them a job that would be beneficial for them with someone who would benefit from their assistance.

As the party settled down after their unsettling encounter with the prince, they attempted to enjoy their meal, a fillet from local farms where the inn got its name from. Their dinner was soon interrupted by a woman introducing herself as Em, who sat nearby and explained that she needed their help. Em, dressed in a red dress and brown tunic, looked at the party with a mixture of intrigue and hope. She revealed that her friend Tuille had mentioned the new tithe imposed by the prince and assured them it was not the kingdom's policy, as there were ongoing investigations.

Em now more comfortable disclosed her true identity as Queen Emera. She confided that her son, influenced by a neighbouring princess named Ramiera, had begun making questionable decisions. Believing Ramiera to be the cause, Queen Emera requested the party to investigate her discreetly, as she and her servants could not be seen doing so. The queen



promised protection and a handsome reward, emphasising the importance of this action for the kingdom's future.

DM: (The Queen mentions that at the end of the week there is to be a celebration for the latest harvest where she hopes the party will find a way in. She offers them to pose as serving staff but advises them to not interact with her son as he has a keen memory (refer to **507TuRoFi**))



As the ballroom music played on, the party approached Princess Ramiera, who stood talking with her countrymen. She greeted them with a polite smile, though something hidden lurked behind it. After dismissing her entourage, she expressed her curiosity about the party, musing on Arelia's focus on its people over the kingdom itself. Engaging in conversation, she inquired about their

origins and adventures, sharing her views on governance. Eventually, she excused herself, raising a hand to signal her departure.

Once they believed the coast was clear, the party attempted to leave, only to be intercepted by Princess Ramiera's guards. The guards, with clear disdain, informed them that the princess requested their audience for a proposition. Escorting them through dimly lit passageways, the party was led to an empty storeroom. As the door closed, a hissing sound persisted, and to their horror, dozens of large snakes emerged from the crates, revealing a new threat from the princess.

As the snakes slithered out of the baskets and crates their sheer size had the party hesitating. Twice as long as a person was tall, if not bigger, these reptiles moved forward with the angular head that identified them as some type of viper. Excessively venomous, aggressive and agitated they advanced in large sweeping arcs towards the party, their tongues flicking menacingly.

DM: (The snakes are low to moderately challenging with the main concern being their strong venom. Refer to **507WeBaBu** and **507FrRaMa** for the encounter. The image on the next page and **507ThArCaHa** can guide the scene.)

Emerging from the storage room, the party is confronted by a dimly lit hall, its opulence palpable despite the lingering scent of blood. Muted chandeliers cast dancing shadows on the intricate wood panelling and ornate carvings, which tell tales of the castle's royalty. The luxurious red carpet underfoot, remembered from their earlier stumble, offers a stark contrast to their recent peril. Cushioned chairs line the walls, inviting rest, though the sense of looming danger prevails. As the party surveys the hall, they notice several doors leading to other rooms and hear faint noises, likely from Princess Ramiera's men, indicating their ordeal is far from over. Still suffering from snake venom, the party encountered a woman emerging from the shadows. She taunted them, saying Princess Ramiera would be disappointed they survived and warned that no help was coming, as Ramiera had started the dance. Soon, others dressed in dark clothes, the same people seen with Ramiera earlier, emerged from the other rooms, ready for a fight. One of them roared about ensuring Ramiera's plans came to fruition and charged at the party, forcing them into a life-threatening battle once again.

As the battle reaches its climax Tuille rushes forward having heard the commotion and watches the party as they are attacked. She sees to the parties wounds and urges them to come report to their majesties.

The party bursts into the hall once again with Tuille with them to confront Ramiera in front of the king, queen and prince..

DM: (Ramiera can be caught in her dance by the parties after the battle with her guard, Ramiera skillfully manipulates the nobles of Arelia to advance her plan of becoming the kingdom's princess and redirecting its wealth to strengthen her homeland, Del'tursh, ultimately leaving Arelia vulnerable to conquest., refer to **507SaRaVi**)



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