

The Silk & Velvet Arc

An Urban Intrigue Adventure for *Fate's Edge*

Tiers I–III — 6–10 sessions — Social maneuvering, ritual peril, political theatre

What This Is

A complete, table-ready arc set across the trade-bridge city of **Silkstrand**, a night of high etiquette at **Ravenswood Manor**, and the stair-ruled metropolis of **Thepyrgos**. Themes: contracts and crowds; masks and glamour; law as performance. The adventure emphasizes **Position** play, interlocking **clocks**, and a flavorful **SB** economy.

At a Glance

- **Part I — A Song of Poison and Plague** (Tier I–II): Urban investigation as the Gemcutters and Alchemists edge toward riots while a bard of Desire plays both sides.
- **Part II — The Gilded Cage** (Tier II–III): Survive a night of velvet hospitality; each room is a social encounter with taboos and tells.
- **Part III — The Crimson Masque** (Tier III): A public ritual threatens to swap the souls of the city's elite with the troupe; stop it on stage before the final bell.

System Notes. Use the game's Position ladder and **DV** to make leverage matter. City-specific *s* represent codified outcomes (permits, seats, escorts) that shift **Position** without a roll. Clocks pace consequences. The GM spends **SB** when 1s appear to twist crowds, shift law, or advance rails.

Adventure Background

Silkstrand sits over dyed waterways and legal bridges; permits and seals are visible power. Two guilds—**Gemcutters** and **Alchemists**—blame each other for “poisoned” water. **Sel Virelle**, a charismatic devotee of Desire, orchestrates paranoia to ripen the city for a prestige heist by the **Crimson Masque** troupe, agents of Glamour. Their endgame plays out in Thepyrgos, where bell-law and stair-rights can crown or crush reputations overnight.

Session Count & Tier Flow

Intended for 6–10 sessions. Start at Tier I, crest at Tier III. Each part includes typical **DV** and **Position** guidance to ease scaling.

Core Tools for the GM

Position & DV Quick Reference

| Position | Typical DV | Examples of Fictional Advantage |
|------------|-------------------------|--|
| Dominant | Tier + 2 | You hold permits, the crowd favors you, law is on your side. |
| Dominant | Tier + 3 | Proper introductions, stable footing, watch is neutral. |
| Controlled | Tier + 4 | Time pressure, hostile witnesses, partial leverage. |
| Desperate | Tier + 5 or more | No permits, hostile crowd, taboo broken, the clock is high. |

Typical DVs by Part

| Part | Common DV Range | Notes |
|----------------|-----------------|--|
| I: Silkstrand | 3–4 | Documents and Diamonds can drop DV by 1 before rolling. |
| II: Ravenswood | 4–5 | Etiquette taboos raise DV; reading tells can lower DV by 1. |
| III: Thepyrgos | 5–6 | Public ritual actions start high; dismantling pillars lowers DV. |

Diamonds as Leverage

| Diamond | Fictional Authority | Effect |
|-------------------|--|---|
| Matron's Audience | You may petition Silkstrand's Matron in session. | Shift Position one step up once/scene; –1 DV on petitions. |
| Arsenal Key | Authorized access to a guild armory or lockup. | Once/session, declare gear or evidence “on hand”. |
| Bellmark | A stamped right to invoke bell-law in Thepyrgos. | Once/scene, freeze a crowd or call watch for 1 beat. |
| Stair-Pass | Priority use of a named stair during events. | Downshift Position consequences from crowd pressure. |
| Escort Writ | Legal escort through markets/bridges. | Ignore one blockade or mob once/session. |

SB Spend Menus (Use When 1s Appear)

Silkstrand

- Bridge duel erupts nearby; escalate a scene or split the party.
- Market panic closes a route; add 1 to a public clock.
- Dyewater omen flips the crowd's mood against the PCs.
- Notary “corrects” a permit; **Position** downshift for one exchange.

Ravenswood Manor

- Etiquette whisper spreads; tick **Etiquette Breach** [1].

- Hospitality favors a rival; your next roll is at higher DV.
- Servant intervention reroutes you to a new room at a cost.

Thepyrgos

- Bell strikes early; advance the Act clock.
- Stair-right revoked temporarily; block or split routes.
- Law change mid-scene; transform a planned action's **Position**.

Clocks to Start With

Keep clocks lean at first; layer more as play demands.

- **City Unrest** [6] (Silkstrand)
- **Poisonings** [4] (Silkstrand)
- **Sel's Glamour Net** [4]
- Choose *one* guild reputation to track first: **Gemcutters' Favor** [4] *or* **Alchemists' Favor** [4]

Part I — A Song of Poison and Plague (Tier I–II)

Strong Hooks (Choose 1–2 to Open)

- **Dyewater Omen:** The river runs a prophetic hue; the crowd demands action from anyone wearing steel or sigils.
- **Bridge Duel Gone Wrong:** A fatal misstep during a public duel implicates a guild; the watch seeks neutral witnesses (the PCs).
- **Missing Ledgers:** Archivolt records vanish; without them, permits are void and riots loom.

Core Clocks

City Unrest [6], **Poisonings** [4], **Sel's Glamour Net** [4], plus one Guild Favor clock.

Key NPCs

- **Guildmistress Kavra (Gemcutters)** — *Desires:* stability, monopoly on luxury. *Leverage:* bravos, patronage. *Tell:* rubs thumb over a signet when lying.
- **Master Orun (Alchemists)** — *Desires:* legitimacy, funding. *Leverage:* inspectors, antidotes. *Tell:* recites measurements under stress.
- **Sel Virelle (Bard of Desire)** — *Desires:* acclaim, volatility. *Leverage:* charmed witnesses. *Tell:* mirrors phrasing to draw agreement.

Scenes

Redwater Audit. Enter the dyeworks with forged or earned permits. **Position** starts Dominant; DV 3–4. On success with cost, allow entry but spend **SB** to tick **Poisonings** [+1] or call an Alchemist observer. *Magic:* Alchemical detection, illusions to mimic stamps, or subtle glamours to steer crowds shine here.

Alleyway Serenade. Sel “rescues” a bystander from a mob to win PC trust. Reading her tells can downshift DV. Failure-forward: the PCs earn a (Escort Writ) but tick **Sel’s Glamour Net** [+1].

Three-Queens Duel. A formal bridge duel settles a permit dispute. Stakes: purse, permit, or pride. Victory can clear 1 from a Guild Favor clock; loss still reveals a planted second’s testimony.

Archivolt Ledgers. Track falsified entries to a clerks’ circle. Options: bribe (Diamonds), debate in public (drop DV by 1 with a crowd), or stealth (risk Desperate). On a miss, the ledgers you *do* find implicate an ally—use as leverage later.

Climax Options

- **Public Debate at Lion Bridge:** Expose Sel. If you sway the crowd, cool **City Unrest** [-2]. If you fail, you still win a legal foothold but **Glamour Net** [+2].
- **Quiet Sabotage:** Collapse distribution of forged evidence; gain a permanent (Matron’s Audience) but sour one guild permanently.
- **Arrest & Bargain:** Trade Sel’s testimony for guild peace; start Part II with social capital at Ravenswood.

Fail-Forward Examples (Part I).

- *Audit Miss:* You are barred, but a junior clerk slips you an *appointment chit* (treat as a temporary)—and the watch starts tailing you.
- *Duel Miss:* You lose the bout, but the crowd turns on the victor over a rule infraction; shift **Position** up in the next public scene.
- *Ledger Heist Miss:* You grab the wrong ledger; it names a friend. Keep it and gain leverage, or return it and earn a favor.

Part II — The Gilded Cage (Tier II–III)

Structure

Track **Midnight Duel** [8] (the rival’s plot) and **Etiquette Breach** [4] (your faux pas). Every room lists an *Intent*, a *Taboo*, and a *Tell*. Violating taboos increases DV or ticks **Etiquette Breach** [+1]. Reading tells can reduce DV by 1.

Rooms

Conservatory of Masks. *Intent:* choose alliances. *Taboo:* wearing the same mask twice. *Tell:* a rival never mirrors your stance. *Magic:* Disguises and glamours gain a clear advantage; clever

illusions can “prove” etiquette creatively.

Library of Additions. *Intent:* alter contracts with lawful flourishes. *Taboo:* citing a text you cannot produce. *Tell:* a steward coughs before lies. *Magic:* Divination or memory magic can surface the missing clause; ritual ink resists forgery unless properly countered.

Ballroom of Vows. *Intent:* demonstrate poise. *Taboo:* cutting a trio dance to two. *Tell:* a partner flinches at touch. *Magic:* Subtle enchantments risk taboos; protective magic can prevent social harm without force.

Outcomes

- **Favor the Host:** Gain introductions—begin Part III with a Bellmark.
- **Favor the Challenger (Glamour-touched):** Receive access to the Masque’s rehearsal; start Act I behind the curtain.
- **Seize the Venue:** Control the guest list that matters later; start with **Position** at Dominant for Act I scene one.

Fail-Forward Examples (Part II).

- *Mask Faux Pas:* **Etiquette Breach** [+1], but you notice a hidden side-door used by rivals.
- *Contract Gaffe:* Your addition is rejected publicly; the steward, impressed by your boldness, offers a private reading later (lower DV once).
- *Dance Misstep:* You stumble, but hear a whispered cue that reveals the rival’s schedule.

Part III — The Crimson Masque (Tier III)

Act Structure

Run as a three-day countdown to the final performance.

- **Act I (Day −3):** Infiltrate rehearsals, court patrons, secure stair access.
- **Act II (Day −2/−1):** Decode the rite; seed counters in law, masks, or music.
- **Act III (Performance Night):** On-stage skill challenge; illusions are real; dismantle ritual pillars.

Ritual Pillars (Break One to Stop the Rite)

- **Bell Cadence:** The final peal synchronizes souls. Counter with bell-law, a forged bellmark, or a timed silence.
- **Mask Index:** Masks hold targeted identities. Swap labels, smudge index entries, or sanctify a mask to render it immune.
- **Applause Escrow:** The ovation stores consent. Split the crowd, mute applause, or redirect acclaim to the troupe alone.

On-Stage Challenge (Guidance)

Start at DV 6 (Desperate). Each broken pillar lowers DV by 1 and shifts **Position** up. Failure-forward should always change the stage: a mask cracks, a bell peals off-time, an actor falters.

Endings

- **Expose & Redirect:** Law halts the rite; only the willing swap. Reputation boons carry forward.
- **Strike in Glamour:** Duel within unfolding illusions while allies sever a pillar.
- **Take the Price:** Bargain with Glamour or Desire; end the rite, owe a favor.

NPC Roster (Quick-Use)

| Name | Desires, Leverage, Tell, Voice |
|-------------------------|--|
| Guildmistress Kavra | Stability; bravos, patronage; signet rub; clipped, economical speech. |
| Master Orun | Legitimacy; inspectors, antidotes; muttered measures; careful, exact. |
| Sel Virelle | Applause; charmed witnesses; mirrored phrasing; warm, rising cadence. |
| Lord/Host of Ravenswood | Prestige; hospitality law; fixed smiles; velvet, measured tone. |
| The Challenger | Territory; glammers, etiquette zealots; perfect posture; honeyed cruelty. |
| Masque Director | Immortality-by-swap; troupe fanatics; eye-contact tests; theatrical whisper. |

Appendix A: Session 1 Outline (3 Hours)

1. **Cold Open (15 min):** Choose a hook; paint the crowd; surface a visible Diamond (Escort Writ in a steward's hand).
2. **Investigation Beat (45 min):** Redwater Audit or Missing Ledgers. Offer Position shifts via Diamonds.
3. **Pressure Beat (30 min):** Alleyway Serenade or Bridge Duel challenge.
4. **Choice Beat (30 min):** Which guild gets aid? Start one Guild Favor clock.
5. **Climax (30–40 min):** Public mini-debate or duel; on any miss, spend **SB** to tick **Sel's Glamour Net** [+1].
6. **Fallout (10 min):** Hand out one Diamond; foreshadow Ravenswood with a sealed invitation.

Appendix B: Printable Clocks

City Unrest [6]

Poisonings [4]

Sel's Glamour Net [4]

Gemcutters' Favor [4]

Alchemists' Favor [4]

Midnight Duel [8]

Etiquette Breach [4]

Act Countdown [6]

Appendix C: Player-Facing Rumors (Silkstrand)

- “Gemcutters bribe the river with rubies; the water drinks poorly of greed.”
- “Alchemists dump antidote pre-cursors at dawn—no poison, just panic.”
- “A singer can still a riot if the key is true.”