

Documentation

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The Spider's Web

Episode 3 of Shadows of War

For 4-6 players, level 6-7

SETUP

A series of grand balls and noble gatherings masks a sinister network of cult influence reaching into Aldemar's highest circles. The investigators must navigate deadly social waters while uncovering how deeply the cult has corrupted the nobility, all while preventing the assassination of key reform supporters.

LOCATIONS

Silvermere Palace *Noble Gathering Place*

Public Areas: - Grand ballroom - Royal gardens - Art galleries - Dining halls

Hidden Areas: - Secret meeting rooms - Ritual chambers - Hidden passages - Scrying rooms

The Opera House *Cultural Center* - Performance hall - Private boxes - Underground tunnels - Cult gathering space

Noble Quarter *Power Center* - Family estates - Private clubs - Secret societies - Ancient temples

KEY NPCS

Duchess Eleanor Vale *Reform Leader* - Political mastermind - Target for assassination - Hidden protector - Society queen *Secret: Ancient guardian bloodline*

Lord Sebastian Crane *Cult Noble* - Master manipulator - Reality bender - Social puppeteer - Information broker *Secret: Cult Hierophant*

Lady Rose Blackwood *Society Informant* - Master of secrets - Double agent - Survival expert - Hidden loyalist *Secret: Reformed cultist*

SOCIAL MECHANICS

Noble Interaction

- Etiquette rules
- Status hierarchy
- Alliance networks
- Favor trading

Infiltration Methods

- Social disguise
 - Identity theft
 - Invitation forgery
 - Servant impersonation
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ENCOUNTERS

Social

- Noble interrogations
- Ballroom intrigue
- Political negotiations
- Society scandals

Combat

- Ritual interruption (CR 5)
 - Assassin duel (CR 6)
 - Cultist nobles (CR 5)
 - Guard confrontation (CR 5)
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KEY SCENES

The Grand Ball **Features:** - Political maneuvering - Hidden messages - Assassination attempt - Ritual preparation

The Secret Auction **Features:** - Cult artifacts - Noble gathering - Information exchange - Reality manipulation

The Opera Night **Features:** - Public spectacle - Hidden ritual - Mass sacrifice attempt - Noble confrontation

INVESTIGATION ELEMENTS

Social Evidence

- Party invitations
- Noble correspondence
- Society gossip
- Political alliances

Supernatural Traces

- Ritual components
 - Reality distortions
 - Cursed jewelry
 - Cosmic symbols
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COMPLICATIONS

Social

- Class barriers
- Political rivalries
- Society rules
- Family loyalties

Supernatural

- Mind control
 - Reality warping
 - Time manipulation
 - Memory alteration
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DM GUIDANCE

Social Intrigue

- Allow multiple approaches
- Reward clever deception
- Create alliance opportunities
- Enable political maneuvering

Horror Elements

- Corrupt nobility
 - Hidden monsters
 - Social decay
 - Reality breakdown
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VICTORY CONDITIONS

Required

- Prevent assassination
- Identify noble cultists
- Document ritual plans
- Secure allies

Optional

- Save innocent nobles
 - Recover artifacts
 - Maintain cover
 - Gather evidence
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RESOURCES

Social Assets

- Noble contacts
- Society invitations
- Servant networks
- Political favors

Investigation Tools

- Forged documents
 - Disguise kits
 - Secret passwords
 - Hidden messages
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REVELATIONS

Political

- Noble corruption
- Power structures
- Alliance networks
- Cult hierarchy

Supernatural

- Reality manipulation
 - Cosmic influence
 - Ritual purposes
 - Ancient bloodlines
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HOOKS FOR EPISODE 4

Major

- Palace infiltration
- Royal corruption

- Final ritual
- Military coup

Minor

- Missing artifacts
- Noble disappearances
- Strange phenomena
- Political shifts

Continues in Episode 4: “Palace of Lies”