

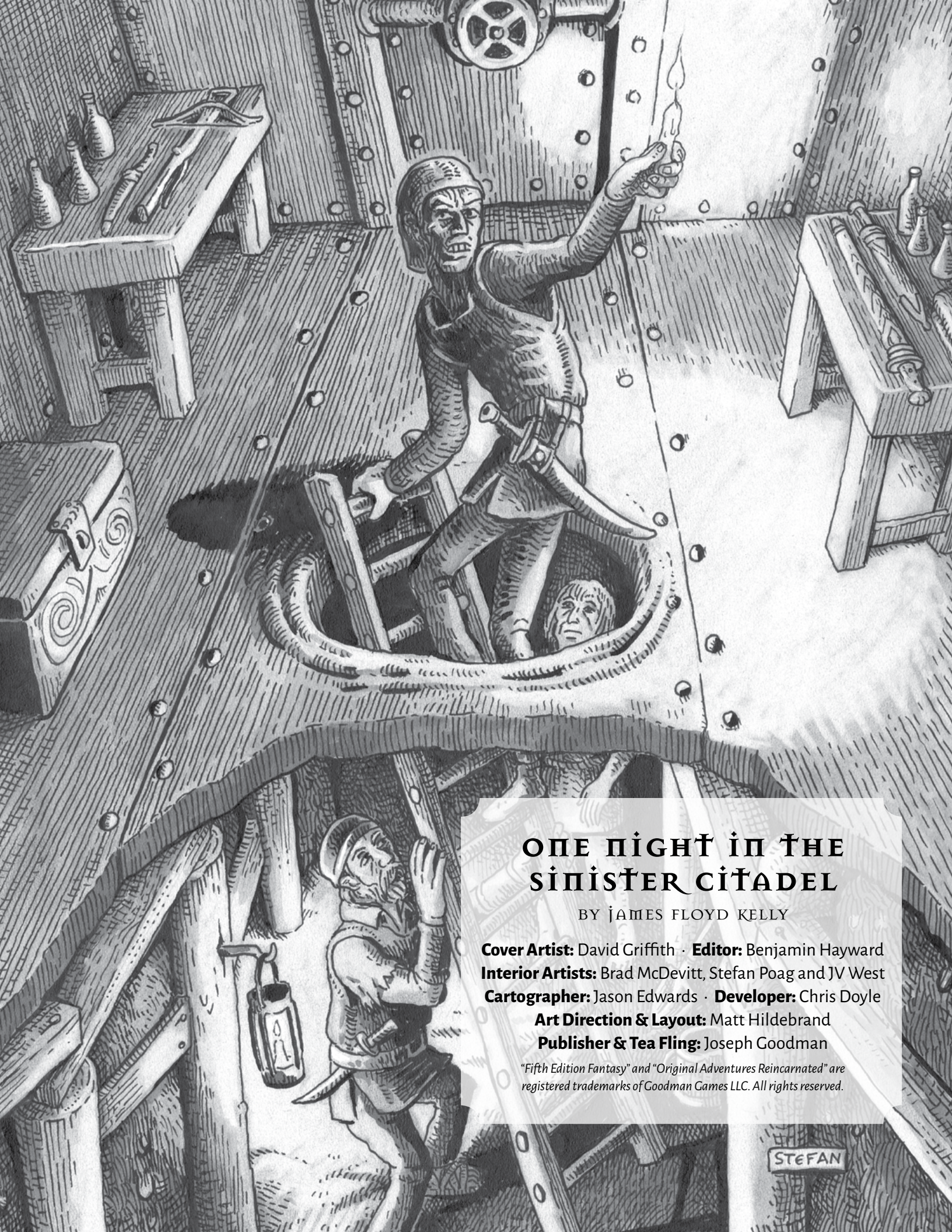
LEVEL 2 ADVENTURE MODULE

FIFTH EDITION FANTASY #20

ONE NIGHT IN THE SINISTER CITADEL

BY JAMES FLOYD KELLY





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ONE NIGHT IN THE SINISTER CITADEL

By James Floyd Kelly

ne *Night in the Sinister Citadel* is an adventure designed for use with the 5th edition of the first fantasy roleplaying game. It is intended for four to six 2nd-level characters and can be completed in a single session. Any mix of character classes is suitable.

Set in the city of Broadgard, the adventure can easily be modified to fit any other city of sufficient size to have a well-established thieves' guild and numerous businesses. The adventure takes place fully inside the ancient walls of one of the city's old citadels that has recently been converted to an auction house. Owned by the Crylla clan, an odd but honest merchant family of tieflings with a long history in Broadgard, the auction house is preparing for its inaugural event in which the adventurers are recruited to assist with security.

BACKGROUND

What began centuries ago as a group of four neighboring farms has grown into the prosperous city of Broadgard. With a thriving collection of docks on the Red Ash River and its close proximity to the Verda Forest and the Chiselfist mines, Broadgard's leaders invested in its defenses early on, ensuring the city would survive and flourish. Deep-rooted families mix with the newly arrived here. Lofty walls surrounding the city protect the guilds, businesses, libraries, schools, and homes that provide for its residents as well as for traveling adventurers, who can find both rest and opportunities for coin in Broadgard.

Shirf Crylla, the youngest daughter of the matriarch of the Crylla merchant clan, Maif Crylla, has recently purchased her first piece of property: an old but solid citadel on the east side of the city near the docks. Shirf's intent is to host four auctions per year, and her first auction is tomorrow. While a few areas of the citadel are still closed off and will soon be refurbished, the primary auction hall and a majority of the remaining structure are in good shape and ready for business. The Crylla family's reputation has allowed Shirf to assemble a good mix of items to sell, which are currently being held in the citadel's newly built vault and protected by a mix of traps, magical wards, and other surprises that await any who might attempt robbery.

Maif Crylla is proud of her daughter's accomplishments, but she is also quite protective. The new Crylla Auction House resides in a questionable area of Broadgard where the town's guards have been rumored to turn a blind eye on dubious business transactions in exchange for payoffs. Maif wishes to have her daughter's first auction succeed, and she is paying the human Jisper, an ex-rogue-turned-hireling, a significant sum to travel to Broadgard and help provide security for the auction. Unfortunately, Jisper has almost no knowledge of Broadgard's shady underclass. While Jisper has hired a few qualified sorcerers and engineers to quietly enhance the vault's security, he has failed in his attempts at determining what the local thieves' guild may know about the auction house. Jisper privately believes the low value and limited number of auction items will keep troublemakers away; for this reason, he is looking to hire a few less-experienced adventurers to provide on-site security and pocket the rest of the significant fee paid by Maif.

The local thieves' guild is fully aware of the location and contents of the auction house vault, and it is not impressed with the value of the items inside. For months, they have observed the repairs of the citadel, often sending in their own members as laborers to provide detailed maps of the building. Because the guild is still unaware of the traps and wards placed on the vault, it is unwilling to assign some of its more competent rogues to the task given the apparent low value of the items for auction. For this reason, the thieves' guild is assigning some of its new recruits as a test of their mettle... and for the entertaining stories they believe may come from the likely botched attempt.

As the auction house prepares for its grand opening, Figg Plyth, an old adventurer and friend of the Crylla clan, has decided to repay a debt to Maif Crylla by quietly alerting his rich and powerful friends that he intends to sell a number of valuable magic items at the event. These items will be delivered the night before the auction while Jisper is carousing at a local tavern and a small group of not-so-smart thieves is tunneling in beneath the structure.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The adventure begins once the party is within the walls of Broadgard and resting or looking for employment. The GM may determine how the adventurers find themselves employed as night security for the auction house or can adapt one of the adventure hooks below:

- A day's travel from Broadgard, the adventurers discover the remains of a group of guards that the Crylla family hired. Among their possessions is a letter from Jisper explaining the duties required and the payment to be made after the auction is completed. The guards are expected to meet with Jisper and the auction house owner tomorrow evening at Crylla's Auction House near the docks. The letter hints that Jisper doesn't have a description of the guards other than knowledge that they are trustworthy.
- A member of your party has received word from a family member about a long-lost heirloom that has reappeared as part of an upcoming auction in Broadgard. Letters of introduction were sent, and your party has been hired to guard the auction house the night prior to the auction. This is the perfect opportunity for the party to infiltrate and re-acquire the heirloom if they can make a suitable fake and swap it without being discovered.
- While enjoying a stout drink and meal at the Broken Oak tavern in Broadgard, your party is approached by a rakish-looking fellow who calls himself Jisper. Jisper informs you that a lucrative employment opportunity has dropped in his lap: he needs a number of guards for one night only to help protect a local auction house's vault that has just been sealed. Jisper says the auction house owner is offering 1% of the auction's profits to be divided between the guards. (The other 1% Shirf will offer is his finder's fee.)

ADVENTURE TIMELINE

Below is a summary of likely progression of the adventure, including events and opportunities to interact with keyed encounter locations.

1. **Event 1 – The Party Arrives.** The adventurers arrive at the auction house for the night. Shirf and Jisper provide a short tour to the group. Shirf departs. Jisper says he is leaving to patrol outside.
2. **Explore.** The adventurers have a brief period to examine areas such as Shirf's office (area 1-3) and the vault room (area 2-1). If they avoid the decrepit northeast cellar (area 3), unusual sounds come from below followed by a slight tremor.

3. **Event 2 – Figg's Arrival.** Figg arrives with more items for the auction and then departs. The adventurers do not have much time to examine the newly arrived items before the break-in occurs.
4. **Event 3 – The Break In.** Thieves manage to pass from an excavated tunnel into the vault using a magical scroll. They do not leave a hole, and the only way out of the vault is for them to open the door from the inside, triggering traps and wards (and possibly injuring any characters outside the vault). The triggering of the magic ward awakens a construct known as "the general" and two ghosts within the citadel. The thieves attempt to escape with their loot through the front doors. Chaos ensues.
5. **Conclusion:** Jisper arrives at daybreak, and the party has a decision to make: they can either flee with Jisper or stay and inform Shirf of the night's activities.
6. **Epilogue.** If the party stays and was successful, Figg hires them to track down Jisper at the Blinded Troll Tavern (area 4).

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

After the party has been hired as guards for the auction event, they receive instructions to meet Jisper and Shirf Crylla at the auction house the evening before the first auction. Jisper expects the adventurers to be rested and ready for a quick tour and explanation of duties. Read or paraphrase the text below:

The smell of the river and the noisy bustle of the docks surrounds you as your party makes its way through the busy streets of East Broadgard in the evening. Pickpockets mix with food sellers and trinket peddlers, and not a single city guard is spotted in the vicinity of the old stone citadel. The citadel has seen better days, and its stonework is crumbling in many places along the walls and down the sides. Two ironclad wooden doors, however, are new, as is the large sign tied between two poles mounted above the doors. Bright yellow letters stitched into green fabric indicate you've arrived at the Crylla Auction House.

AREA 1 – THE AUCTION HALL

GENERAL FEATURES

Structure. The old citadel has grand 30-foot ceilings on the main level but no windows. It's basement rooms have 15-foot ceilings. The central room of the auction hall is accessible only through the exterior south doors. Other areas of the citadel are falling apart or are under renovation and are outside the scope of this adventure.

Lighting. The auction hall and its rooms are lit by *continual flame* spells cast to look like forever candles or elegant lanterns. The grand hall (area 1) is well lit. The vault basement in the northwest (area 2) is only dimly lit so that the auction guests understand the area is private. The collapsing basement section in the northeast (area 3) is in darkness.

Sound. The common sounds of the street do not penetrate the citadel doors; however, once the tour is finished, the sound of distant thunder rolls across the waterway. When the doors to the auction house close for the night, the crack of lightning and a heavy rain will begin, which can be heard through the citadel's slate roof.

EVENT 1 – THE PARTY ARRIVES

Once the party has arrived at the auction house and knocked on the doors, read or paraphrase the text below:

One of the large doors opens inward, and two figures stand in an entry hall lit by a large chandelier with candles that do not seem to produce smoke. A small-statured woman dressed in green robes smiles at your party, but the man to her left only stares from one non-patch-covered eye. The woman motions you into the hall and closes the door behind you.

When Shirf is confident that the party is the hired guards, she provides them with a brief tour of the auction house floor (area 1) and the entrance to the vault (area 2-1). Jisper takes the tour with the party, showing strong interest, asking questions of Shirf, and pointing out areas to the party that should be checked frequently through the night. Any party member with a passive Insight of 14 becomes suspicious of Jisper's (lack of) expertise in the area of security. If Jisper is questioned on this, he becomes agitated and informs the party, "Just do your job and let me worry about the details."

Shirf is happy to answer questions during the tour, and explains that the guards' payment consists of 2% of the total take of the auction (estimated to be around 12,000 gp for a payment of 240 gp). She shows the party the vault door and points out the magical ward but does not allow them to enter. She does not ask any personal questions of the party, assuming that Jisper has done the proper vetting of their skills. Jisper asks a few unimportant questions, and rushes the group through as fast as possible.

Characters who speak to Shirf can obtain some (but not all) of the information below if they ask the proper questions:

- A set of roped-off stairs lead down in the northeast corner to a section (area 3) with walls that are at risk of falling in. Guests and guards are requested not to go down there.

- The auction house was previously one of seven citadels, and it was decommissioned almost one hundred years ago when the city's walls were completed. The other six citadels in the city are still operational.
- The vault is protected by a ward and traps. Shirf gives no further details.
- The auction begins tomorrow at midday. Over twenty guests have RSVP'd, and all are known and trusted by the Crylla family. The party is expected to depart the auction house when Shirf arrives in the morning with her family.
- Most auction items have been delivered and are now sealed in the vault.
- Shirf overheard her mother telling a friend that "Uncle Figg" may attempt to deliver a few last minute items, but Shirf doesn't think Figg is coming.

If the party asks too many questions, Jisper cuts the tour short by reminding Shirf that she has a meeting with a potential seller on the other side of the city. When the tour ends, read or paraphrase the following:

Shirf thanks you for your service in helping to guard the auction house overnight. Food has been set out in her office, and she requests that anyone other than her Uncle Figg arriving at the auction house be politely turned away and asked to come back the following morning. Jisper then thanks Shirf for her trust in his crew and escorts her out of the auction house. When the front doors close, Jisper turns quickly to your group. "Listen up. I want you to bar these doors when I leave. I'll be making regular checks around the perimeter as well as keeping an eye from across the street at the Broken Oak tavern, so don't even think about sneaking out. I want someone near the vault at all times, too. Am I understood? And don't forget—Figg Plyth might be arriving soon with some additional auction items. Secure the door again when he leaves."

Jisper provides a key to unlock the gate blocking the entrance to the vault so they may assign a guard to the vault entryway (area 2-1). He will answer one or two more questions before he leaves. He has no intention of walking the perimeter of the auction house; instead, he's going carousing a few blocks away, but he plans to arrive back at the auction house at sunrise before Shirf is scheduled to return. Anyone leaving the auction house and entering the Broken Oak or walking the perimeter will find no signs of Jisper.

Once Jisper leaves and the doors are barred, the group is on their own.