

Sam Siam gaming modules

Mini-game modules for online roleplay



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The Regent's Spy

by Mel. White

#1 in a set of extended Sam Siam modules on tinygames.
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Notes

This is a gaming module designed for online roleplaying games. While you can use it in an offline campaign, you might find it's a bit too simple and over and done with too quickly. Since there are no stats counters online (or very few), player and monster stats have been eliminated from this module. Unusual strengths and abilities are noted, where they're relevant.

Feel free to deviate from the scenario at any point.

This module can be adapted for either a science fiction setting or a magical/fantasy setting simply by changing the names of the devices and a few minor details (such as how they get the doors open). The game can be run in a single private room, using spoofed descriptions of places and spoofed characters. If your character is a very powerful one, they should be suffering some sort of curse/illness that takes the advantage away from them and allows your gaming partner to make the capture (you'll assist in the capture, of course.)

Notes for New Gamemasters:

I find it easiest to prewrite short room descriptions (so I can cut and paste rather than typing the stuff in) and prewrite some of the spoofed character descriptions.) When you come back to the room, you can give a 'short and sweet' version of it ("you're in the west chamber. There's a doorway to the east and a chair against the wall) if you feel it's needed.

The story is a guideline and does NOT need to be kept to very rigidly. It's a world setup, and you can bring on characters to help direct your partner's actions ("Down the hall, a door opens. You see a strange figure hurrying across to another room. Gold rings wink on its fingers – but it's dressed like a servant." Or "the boy who tends the ovens makes a secret gesture like he's trying to get your attention.")

Even when you think you've planted enough clues to give your partner directions, you may find that you still need to do lots and lots of hinting.

Notes for online roleplaying

Location is everything when it comes to online roleplaying, and the more private the location, the better. It's frustrating and distracting to go through a really great setup only to have your partner suddenly fall silent because a friend has started up a private conversation with them and is begging them for conversation and advice. Worse, still, you can be tapped by a friend to help with a problem, leaving your gamers hanging, waiting for your return.

Game in a private area, with your contact options turned off. You'll save yourself a lot of headaches.

How long the game runs is an important issue. This particular module can be made very short (3 hours) or can be embellished to run for several days. Depending on how long you want to make this campaign, you can start either with you and your partner receiving a message to go talk to the Queen's spymaster (and be taken to the Queen) or to simply start with you briefing your partner about the campaign. I recommend the shorter approach (you give the briefing) unless you've done a lot of online gaming and want a longer plot. Long plots for new players can get very awkward.

Also, be aware of how bad net lag is at any moment. You may want to cut your game short (by providing lots of Instant Clues) if netlag is severe.

Resources: Character Names

Sometimes it's hard to come up with a character name on the spur of the moment. Here are some names you can use (mostly American Indian in origin) for the naming of walk-on characters: Nuru, Kital, Cocheta, Delsin, Hateya, Jaci, Kers, Minda, Nodin, Orenda, Paco, Sahale, Tehya, Skelda, Larra, Dedi.

The Game

The game of royalty is a game of spies and poisoners and plots. Agranna of Pralgo, widow of King Lega, rules her country until her son is old enough to become king. The problem is that Duke Muri, Lega's brother, wants the kingdom for himself and Agranna's spymaster says that Muri has an assassin hidden in the palace. The assassin will strike some time during -- or after -- the coronation ball planned for this very evening. Queen Agranna's spies are well known to Duke Muri's people, which is why her spymaster recommended YOU for the job of tracking and capturing the assassin.

Kepia, the Queen's spymaster, has almost no information about the assassin -- only that their name, "Yenene", means "wizard who poisons the sleepers." Yenene likes to use poison -- the danger to the young king will not be from an arrow but from either poisoned food or poisoned jewelry or something like a splinter that's been covered with poison. Yenene will have to get close to the food or the king or the king's throne (or maybe the crown) to place the poison. This means that someone in the palace is helping Yenene.

It's rumored that Yenene is not from this world...which SHOULD make Yenene easy to find. But the coronation ball is also a masquerade, which means everyone will be in disguise. Yenene could be any of the 400 guests or 50 servants or 30 musicians at the ball.

Kepia, the spymaster, hands you a map of the palace showing the rooms and the known secret hiding places and secret corridors. He gives you a quick briefing about the staff and the palace and gives you the badges and clothing to set up your undercover identity: You and your team will be distant relatives of the Queen, minor nobles from another province. He tells you that a suite of rooms on the second floor (where the royal family lives) has been reserved for you and enough luggage put in there to make your cover story look good.

You also are given servant's clothing so that you can talk to the staff and get the latest gossip without making everyone suspicious.

The Spymaster asks what equipment you'd like to have. He can supply you with devices to breathe underwater, disguises, truth

drugs (truth serum), poison detectors (should be a variety of crystals if you're using a low-tech world -- for a high tech world it will be a palm-sized unit set to detect poisons specific to that world), clothing showing that you're minor nobility related to the Earl of Wephilin -- and antidotes to specific poisons as well as some discrete weapons. He also has some vests in stock that will protect you from knife attacks, if you want to wear those. They will slow you down a bit.

There's nothing much unusual about the palace area (if you investigate) -- except that in several of the hidden closets ("spy holes") there is a pile of clothing. Some of it is men's clothing and some of it is women's clothing. During your searches you have a random encounter with a servant (who seems to belong to one of the visiting nobles) who wears far more gold rings than you'd expect a servant to own. Flip a coin to see if the encounter is with a male servant or a female servant. If you try to stop them, they will dodge into a nearby room and head for the secret corridors. This mysterious servant can move (and run) faster than you.

You will see a similar-looking servant in the banquet room -- a servant who suddenly heads out of the room when you walk toward them. They use the nearest secret corridor to "vanish."

During the day, guests are entering the Palace. Eventually there will be about a thousand people there (400 of the nobles, the rest are servants and guards). The Spymaster will check the newcomers (discretely, of course).

Sometime early in the afternoon, a note comes from the spymaster saying that the pastry assistant saw Akoda meeting someone in the back hall on the second floor (where she's not supposed to be going) and now Akoda's missing. The head cook is angry because they're serving the feast right before sundown and he thinks Akoda's run away. In truth, she's dead. Akoda's body turns up in the gardens outside the palace, with a jeweled pin stuck through her heart. One of the guards saw a man in green running toward the Lake Gate, but the runner was too fast and got away.

The first attempts on the crown prince's life will be at the feast -- there's poison on the fork and on the knife. If this fails, there is a thorn

hidden in the crown that the young prince will wear – a thorn laced with poison. One scratch from the thorn will result in the boy’s death.

If neither of these work, Yenene will be at the ball, dressed as a countess pretending to be a famous historical lady. Her hairstyle is very elaborate and conceals six long jeweled pins -- each one with a different poison. Her backup plan is to stab the Crown Prince and as many of the nobles as she can with the poisoned pins. She will then try to escape by dodging into the nearest secret passage, heading for the lake, diving into the water and staying there till it's assumed she's drowned. If unmasked, her face looks very odd indeed and her webbed fingers will be very noticeable. She wants to stay to see the poison acting on the Crown Prince and will not leave before the first symptoms appear.

If the crown prince is poisoned, he can still be saved if you and the spymaster can figure out which poison is being used.

When caught, Yenene will try to commit suicide. She won't give any details of what she intended and once caught, the Spymaster will take charge of her and bring her to justice.

The grateful Queen and Crown Prince will reward you nicely for your service to the crown.

Questioning the staff:

The Guards

The guards are devoted to the Queen and the Crown Prince. They are concerned about rumors of an assassination attempt and Abeni, the Captain of the Guards is eager to help. She's been told who you are and will help you establish your cover. As you find places that you want guarded (such as secret stairways), she will assign guards to watch the area.

Although she hasn't seen anyone she thinks is suspicious, she reports that three nights ago there was a severe thunderstorm over the palace. During that time, someone was running around the palace opening windows – some of the people who caught a glimpse of the

prankster said it was a man; others said it was a woman. Nobody can agree on the description of this person.

In the morning, after the storm was over, they found that the Lake Gate (the one in the dungeon) was open and unlocked. They searched but did not see anyone, and nobody saw anyone enter through the gate. They found it open again today and while this is being blamed on a broken lock, she thinks it might have been a deliberate break.

When talking about the staff and what their duties are, she makes an offhand remark about how the job would be a lot easier if they hadn't hired a set of twins in the past two days.

If you talk to the guards, they won't have much beyond this to tell you (though one of them has seen an odd set of twins: a very handsome (but somewhat masculine) female and a very handsome (but somewhat feminine) male. The guard thinks that the twins are part of the kitchen staff because they've been seen talking to one of the cooks named Akoda.

The household staff

The head of the household staff is the Palace Chatelaine, Jabari. She has been briefed by the Spymaster and will help establish your cover as "visiting nobility" to the servants. She's very stern and the maids and footmen are somewhat afraid of her -- and of you, too. The chambermaids are particularly scared (though it turns out they're only afraid that you'll blame them if anything's missing from your room.)

Questioning Jabari or any of the household staff will reveal that the Queen Mother thought someone had stolen the coronation jewels three days ago (during the storm) but Jabari found them in the treasure room after a short search. The Queen shrugged it off, saying she was getting absentminded. The Queen's chambermaids will report that at this time (during the storm), the palace was drafty because some mischief maker was running around and opening all the windows. Nobody ever found out who this was, but there's a rumor it was a woman from the kitchen.

If asked, none of them know anything about a set of twins that have been added to the staff. As far as Jabari knows, there are no

twins on the staff – not even a man and a woman who look fairly similar.

The Kitchen Staff

The kitchen staff consists of the head cook, three minor cooks including Akoda, a pastry chef, a person in charge of the cellars (brandies, whiskies, wines, etc), a boy who turns the spits (for whole roasted beasts) and four assistants who chop vegetables and help prepare and serve the food. Today, they are in a state of panic. They've got 400 guests for dinner and the head food taster is lurking around, staring at everyone and insisting on having EVERYTHING tasted.

The head cook is yelling at everyone and a minor cook named Akoda is sulking in a corner after a fight. If you try to talk to her, Akoda only sneers about quitting this job soon and won't look at you directly when she answers.

There are no twins here.

Sometime during your visit to the kitchen, the boy who turns the meat spits will indicate he wants to talk to you privately. He tells you he's tired of working for the royal family, tired of the cook yelling at him, and most tired of Akoda's attitude and all her problems. He thinks she's involved in a big plot. He saw Akoda opening the windows in a downstairs chamber the night of the big storm. He also says he's seen mysterious twins (and can tell you that one is male and one is female and they were hired recently to serve at this event.) He also says they wear a lot of jewelry (rings).

The Musicians

Nothing new can be learned from them. They can confirm the stories about open windows and the strange twins (who may or may not be part of the staff). No twins are playing in the orchestra.

Character Information:

YENENE

(Duke Muri's master assassin): Yenene is a hermaphrodite and can appear as either a male or a female. Sie's been pretending to be a pair of twins.

The only unusual thing about hir appearance is that hir fingers and toes have a slight webbing between them -- which sie is very careful to disguise by wearing heavy gold rings. The rings also function as a sort of "brass knuckles" -- but the poison on small needles inserted in the rings makes sure that whoever Yenene hits stays down. Yenene is not strong (in fact, sie is weaker than any character in your group) but Yenene is very clever. Yenene's mother was one of the Lake People.

Yenene has already set up three batches of poisons to use on the crown prince. Fortunately, the Spymaster's detection devices will show where the poison is -- once you find an area that looks suspicious. Yenene's using slow-acting poisons because sie wants time to get away. However, sie won't leave until the first symptoms appear.

Sie has been altered by magic/science and fitted with a set of gills to breathe underwater. The gills are located on Yenene's torso (at the sides, near the waist) and can't be seen as long as the assassin is clothed. Yenene is aware of the plot to stop the assassination but thinks the Spymaster represents the real danger. Hir only regret is that sie can't kill the Spymaster as well as the crown prince.

In hir disguise as a countess, sie is not very convincing. Sie seems uncomfortable and will NOT dance with anyone -- sie is a VERY awkward dancer -- in fact, noticeably so. People would instantly suspect that sie is not one of the invited nobles because sie dances so badly.

KEPIA

The Queen's spymaster: Fiercely loyal to the Queen and the Crown Prince, the Spymaster has been part of the household for 50

years. He wears his age well, though and seems much younger and more vigorous than expected. He has a team of three spies there at the palace (and a network of 60 or so in other parts of the world.)

AKODA

A junior cook, a fairly arrogant young woman (a commoner) who wants to rise to a position of importance. Yenene has seduced her and promised her that the Duke will reward her highly if she helps assassinate the prince. She has a rather nasty temper.

Akoda won't talk to anyone. If approached, she sneers about how they'll be sorry someday for the way they treated her. She is loyal to Yenene and will lie her head off. She will tell you the plans ONLY if she's convinced that Yenene means to kill her before she kills the crown prince. She doesn't know where Yenene is hidden in the palace and only knows that she will show up in a costume that's mostly green. Akoda doesn't know if Yenene will dress as male or female.

Yenene's paid her a little bit of money (and if her room is searched after her death, you'll find some loose gemstones from the Queen's treasury. The Queen will be grateful for their return and will reward you.)

QUEEN AGRANNA OF PRALGO

widow of King Lega, mother of Prince Lega. She's an older female, quite dignified and kind, but rules with a firm hand. She's liked by the people but hated by some of the nobles who are tired of her policies of fewer taxes (less money for them).

CROWN PRINCE LEGA

He will be crowned King Lega the fifth -- if he survives his coronation ball. He's about 11 years old, and seems very mature for his age. There's an air of sadness about him.

Possible Poisons: (The Gamemaster Can Choose Any Of These)

JUMA: Very quick-acting poison (within 15 minutes). Victim starts to shake uncontrollably and complains of being cold. They will shake so hard that they can't stand -- and then they'll suddenly collapse. At this point, death is inevitable.

MUNA: Slow poison. First symptoms are asthma-like -- it's hard for the victim to breathe. Victim's lips appear to be bluish. An hour after the first symptoms appear, the victim suddenly complains of being hot and starts sweating. A short while after that, they suddenly begin vomiting and at this point, death is inevitable.

PAKI: Moderately quick poison (half an hour). First symptoms are that victim's eyes itch. Hives appear on their skin, and shortly cover the victim's body. The victim suddenly has trouble breathing -- and at this point, death is inevitable.

RETH: Very quick poison (5 minutes). The victim is hit with severe cramps (so severe that they can't walk and can barely talk). Nausea follows, then breathing problems. At the point they start vomiting, death is inevitable.

THE PALACE:

It's a lake fortress, and feels sort of like a maze. There are three floors plus a dungeon level.

Dungeon Level:

At the dungeon level, a gate leads to the lake. This is the one that was found left unlocked. If you examine the gate and the lock,

you'll see that someone broke the locking device and it provides no security at all.

There's nothing remarkable about the dungeons (they're mostly deserted) -- just five cells plus a much larger area that might have been used for a torture setup but now is used to store the Queen's royal barge. If you examine the barge, you'll find signs that someone was living there in the past few days.

First Floor:

There's a huge entry hall with twin marble staircases framing a doorway that leads back into the ballroom. To the east is a chamber with a guard post. The stairs from the dungeon emerge in this room. To the west is the chatelaine's office. Behind the chatelaine's office is the kitchen complex -- a long hallway that leads past the storage rooms to an enormous kitchen. Stairs in the kitchen lead downward to the cellars where the meat and wine are stored.