

THE VAMPIRE SOIRÉE

W

ELCOME, DEAR TRAVELERS, TO THE DISTRICT of Grimsvale, a beautiful region of whimsy, invention, and... Oh, who am I kidding? You're all here for the hot vampires, aren't you? Heathens. Fine. Let's get cracking.

LOCATION: GRIMSVALE

READ: Grimsvale, in spite of what its name might lead one to believe, is a pretty decent place most of the time. Ruled by a long line of vampires known under the title of Sanguini, it's a strictly and cleverly regulated area, but it's certainly no Avernus. A bit of a fantasy Iceland-Greenland situation with its terrifying sister district of Happiville, if you will.

IT ALL STARTS OUT SO SIMPLY...

READ: Now, it's the start to a relatively peaceful night, and you emerge from your interdimensional hub, long voyage, or whatever else plot device you fancy into the warmth of *The Drunken Loch*, Grimsvale's local, most well-kept tavern.

LOCATION: THE DRUNKEN LOCH

READ: The scent of surprisingly well-spiced mead fills the air. *The Drunken Loch* is known for being a decent sort of place – not too rowdy and, more importantly, not too expensive. Its cozy, hut-like structure rests smack-dab in the middle of town, and warm magic lanterns light the streets with a comforting glow to compensate for Grimsvale sitting in the shadow of Sanguini Manor on the hill.

At a quick glance, you all get the sense that the night ought to be pretty nice, given the group of folks scattered around. There's a pair of tieflings in the corner on a first date. A gaggle of adventurers take up the table in the centre of the back room. By their volume, you can hazard a guess that they're bards.

ASK: Where do you gravitate towards in the tavern?

WAIT FOR PLAYERS' RESPONSES

A STRANGER FROM THE FOG...

READ: As you guys are all chilling in *The Loch*, the tavern door swings open and a mysterious, mist-shrouded figure emerges from the cold of the night..

ASK: What do you guys do?

WAIT FOR PLAYERS' RESPONSES

CHOICE

IF THE PARTY APPROACHES...

READ: The stranger turns in your direction, hood obscuring their features, and regally greets you.

AS BLUEBELL:

"Now, you don't happen to be adventurers for hire by any chance, do you?"

IF THE PARTY DOESN'T APPROACH...

READ: You watch as the stranger approaches the group of probably-bards and is harassed into joining them for a drink.

One of the bards knocks off the figure's hood in the drunken commotion and, for a moment, eyes like those of a deer in the fantasy headlights meet yours. *Help*, they seem to plead.

WAIT FOR PLAYERS' RESPONSES

INTRODUCTIONS...

READ: The stranger nods at your introductions and finally takes off their cloak in full, allowing you your first proper glimpse at them.

The first thing you notice about this person is that they are, in a word, beautiful. Ethereal, stunning, jaw-dropping, knock-your-figurative-socks-off beautiful. Their purple hair and pale lavender dress ensemble contrasts their dark brown skin nicely, and their tall, spindly stature is accentuated by their cape and corset. Their sly eyes practically sparkle at you, and as they clock you clocking them, their lips curl upwards into a beaming smile.

That's when you notice the second thing about them. They are also, very clearly, a fucking vampire.

[This is Bluebell. Introduce them in-character.]

BLUEBELL

HP 27	SPD 30	AC 13
STR +1	DEX +2	CON -1
INT +3	WIS +2	CHA +4

In character as Bluebell, inform the party of the following:

Bluebell is a manservant of the Sanguini nobility sent to discreetly recruit some security for the following night's grand masquerade celebrating the birth of the newborn Sanguini heir, Crocus.

There have been rumours of an assassination attempt on the boy, and they and their employer, Lady Sanguini – Crocus’ mother – believe that someone on the party invite list is going to smuggle in a Sun Sprite, a small creature that feeds on blood and is poisonous if ingested by a vampire – though harmless to any other being.

These same Sprites are what rumoured to have killed the Lady’s husband and first son, many years ago, so it’s extra personal. Now, hopefully this is all one big false alarm, but security will need to be on high alert, as Lady Sanguini refuses to lose another child.

In return, the adventurers will be granted a magic item to use throughout the party to aid them – an item they may keep if the party (and its Bloodtea Ceremony) ends up being a success.

THE ITEM IN QUESTION...

READ: Bluebell hands you a set of four miniature silver circlets. They’re all engraved with matching symbols: a sun, a moon, a star, and a planet.

ITEM: THE CUFFS OF INTENT

These slip-on earrings allow the wearer to know if anyone within a ten foot vicinity is lying to them. Twice per long rest, a player whose character dons the Cuffs may ask the DM if someone around them has just told a lie and the DM must answer truthfully “Yes” or “No”.

The DM may not elaborate on their answer whatsoever. Lies of omission and white lies count as lies to the Cuffs. If someone tells a lie but believes they are telling the truth, their words do not count as a lie.

In character as Bluebell, also explain the following:

This Masquerade is a very big deal. The Lady Sanguini cannot have her enemies knowing she suspects an attempt on her heir’s life.

AS BLUEBELL: “You’ll have to blend in with the rich and the powerful if you want to keep your cover. I can provide you with enough gold for a shopping spree to help the party look the part, but you must figure out your own way of bypassing the night’s bouncers to surreptitiously infiltrate the venue. Do not tell me how you get inside; I need to be able to keep my plausible deniability.”

SOCIOMETRY:

AS BLUEBELL: “Finally, has your party heard at all of the concept of Sociometry? It’s the newest etiquette fad sweeping the parties of the wealthy and famous, so naturally, Lady Sanguini is in on it.

Sociometry is all about points. At the top of the party, all attendants will be magically gifted a number of SocioPoints – and if you lose all of your SocioPoints

before the end of the evening, you’ll be thrown for an hour into the Pit of Baahl – the Baahl Pit – and not let out until either the hour elapses or you pass a test of etiquette in order to earn your way back into the evening.

SocioPoints are gained and lost by displays of etiquette – extraordinary acts of poise may gain you extra SocioPoints, while social faux pas will have you lose them. Of course, I can’t tell you what the rules of etiquette are – I’m a vampire; not a monster – but I encourage you to be on your best behaviour nevertheless.”

EXPLAIN THAT: The party will have a shared pool of 12 SocioPoints to start off. The DM rewards or docks them SocioPoints according to the following rules, as well as their own discretion.

REWARD POINTS IF THE PARTY...

1. Compliments vampires
2. Eats any of the blood-food there and succeed their CON save to not throw up. (DC: 14)
3. Tells a solid, non-offensive vampire-themed joke.
4. Is kind to the spectral wait staff working the party.
5. Etc.

DOCK POINTS IF THE PARTY...

1. Offends vampires
2. Refuses food offered impolitely or fail any food-related CON save. (DC: 14)
3. Says the word “stake” or “steak” and fails to play it off.
4. Tries and fails to pass themselves off as vampires.
5. Etc.

READ: Bluebell tosses a bag of gold in your direction, then winks and heads out into the night. You’ve got a fashion disaster to evade and a party to crash.

ASK: What do you do now?

WAIT FOR PLAYERS’ RESPONSES

Allow the players to choose their PCs’ outfits and have fun making up a shopping venue. Once they’re ready, take them to...

LOCATION: OUTSIDE THE MANOR

READ: The Sanguinis are currently throwing the gothic vampire equivalent of one *bumpin’* party. Orchestral dance music pours out the open windows and the lineup to enter winds its way out of view.

ASK: What do you do now?

WAIT FOR PLAYERS’ RESPONSES

CHOICE

TO STEAL AN INVITATION FROM A GUEST...

A DC 13 sleight of hand check.

TO SNEAK PAST THE BOUNCERS...

A DC 17 stealth check.

TO DECEIVE THE BOUNCERS...

A DC 15 persuasion check.

TO PERSUADE THE BOUNCERS...

A DC 18 persuasion check.

WAIT FOR PLAYERS' RESPONSES

READ: When you finally gain entrance to the party in your fancy new duds, you see twelve of those shitty gold star stickers have appeared across your collective outfits. Guess those are your SocioPoints for the evening.

LOCATION: INSIDE THE MANOR

READ: Sanguini Manor's grand ballroom is bumping, the party already in full swing. Throngs of people congregate by the dance floor, the snack tables, the luxurious ice sculptures. In the centre of the hall, a fountain of blood that various guests seem to be dipping food into like it's fondue. Everything is colourful, from the outfits to the personalities to the swingin' music, and lively chatter fills the undead air.

ASK: Make a Perception check.

IF THE PARTY SUCCEEDS THE CHECK (DC 12)

READ: You notice that the guests aren't actually all vampires. A jovial ghost tends bar on the far wall. A fairy tries to spike the blood fountain. A few living dwarves and tieflings mingle on the dance floor.

You have two hours before the Bloodtea Ceremony that signifies the end of the party and brands Crocus' as the Sanguini heir. You can choose to investigate three places at the party.

ASK: Where will you head first?

CHOICE

END UP IN THE BHAAL PIT:

This is literally just the Dashcon ball pit. You have to answer five math questions (or various other riddles; up to the DM) to escape.

HEAD TO THE DANCE FLOOR:

You get crushed between masses shimmying and shaking their little hearts out. A pair of goblins break it

down in the middle of an impromptu dance circle. From here, the music is near overwhelming.

HEAD TO THE FOUNTAIN:

You arrive just in time to see the fairy getting lifted by the scruff of her fuzzy, bumblebee neck by an exhausted tiefling who seems to be her babysitter for the evening.

[These are Franzy and Miles. Introduce them.]

Franzy is a spritely fairy with a special interest in poisons, and Miles is her long-suffering adoptive older-brother-slash-handler. She's a relentless gossip and he's just plain tired, because she forced the both of them to crash this party.

FRANZY

HP 35	SPD 30	AC 11
STR -2	DEX +3	CON -1
INT +4	WIS +1	CHA +1

MILES

HP 40	SPD 30	AC 14
STR +2	DEX -1	CON +1
INT +3	WIS +3	CHA +1

RP NOTES:

If prompted, Franzy will spill that she heard underground rumours of a vampiric poisoning and just had to see it in action for herself. She's working on a potential antidote to Sun Sprite poisoning, but to complete it, she still needs a key ingredient, and somebody (Miles) won't let her root around behind the bar for long enough to find it herself, because apparently interrupting the nice bartender is "rude" and "obnoxious" and "going to hold up the rest of the party, Fran". Boring! She just wants to do her science in peace!

HEAD TO THE BAR:

The ghost bartender waves you over and greets you.

[This is Oswald the spectral bartender. Introduce him.]

Oswald is a jaunty ghost in an even jauntier cap. His many ghostly hands busy themselves making multiple alcoholic and blood-based beverages at once.

OSWALD

HP 60	SPD 40	AC 12
STR -2	DEX +1	CON +2
INT +2	WIS +3	CHA +4

ABILITIES/ACTIONS: Reskin a CR4 Ghost to be bartender-themed and have multiple arms.

RP NOTES:

If prompted, Oswald will reveal to the party that he's been working this manor since well before the current Lady Sanguini was a toddler, herself, and that the Sanguini practically consider him family. They've always treated him well. Won't mention the basement.

DM NOTE:

Oswald is the mastermind behind the poisoning attempts. He was killed in the Sanguini's takeover of the Manor countless generations ago, and wishes to end their bloodline in revenge for having ended his.

He knows the ins and outs of the Manor by heart and is the only person who knows for certain that Bluebell is Lady Sanguini's presumed-dead first child. His plan is to take out Bluebell and Lady Sanguini at the Bloodtea Ceremony, then raise Crocus to listen to him and him alone.

HEAD TO THE ICE SCULPTURES:

A small gaggle of vampires congregate in awe around the ice sculptures. They don't seem to be admiring the art, however – instead, they're gawking at a certain spot beneath the rightmost sculpture where, if a vampire sticks their head there, will cause an uproarious sneezing fit. Bluebell can be found here.

INVESTIGATES THE ORIGIN OF THE MUSIC PLAYING:

There's no apparent place from which the music is playing. It permeates the air equally throughout the room – weirdly equally.

ON A DC 16 PERCEPTION CHECK...

READ: There's an orchestra beneath you. You spy a door leading downstairs to the basement.

HEAD TO THE BASEMENT:

The orchestral pit is brightly lit and packed to the gills. The strict conductor keeps time as what looks to be Animal from fantasy *The Muppets* makes a killing on the double-bass.

THE CONDUCTOR

The Conductor is a wizened old gnome woman bossing around her Orchestra with every inch of her no-nonsense three-foot body.

RP NOTES:

If bothered, The Conductor will shoo you away and tell you to either play along under her instructions or leave. If you impress her, she'll reveal that the party is better than that no-name tuba player she just hired for this gig. Not recruitable.

CREATURE

Creature is a... Well, he's certainly a creature, and he's certainly good at the double-bass. He's really slapping that thing. He seems to be the star of the orchestra.

HP 28	SPD 30	AC 15
STR +1	DEX +4	CON +2
INT +0	WIS +1	CHA +3

RP NOTES:

If prompted, Creature will mention the only new member of the band is the tuba player. He's a potential ally for the final fight with Oswald. He loves music and also he loves violence.

TWO-BERT

Two-bert is the new hire, a rather weaselly-looking human tuba player whose instrument absolutely dwarfs him (pun intended). He's a coward and a tool, but you kinda gotta feel bad for the guy.

RP NOTES:

If pressed, Two-bert will confess to having smuggled the Sun Sprites into the venue inside the horn of his horn. He doesn't know the identity of his employer. He's in this for the cash and will flee if he thinks he's going to be found out. While setting up, he left the package of Sun Sprites by the ice sculptures as instructed. That's all he did.

AFTER INVESTIGATING 3 SPOTS...

READ: The magically amplified clinking of a spoon against a fancy goblet catches the hall's attention. It's Bluebell.

AS BLUEBELL: Make a grand speech about the generosity of the Sanguini. How Bluebell herself came from nothing, a lowly vampiric orphan with no family in sight, and how Lady Sanguini gave them a purpose, a job, a home. How they are ecstatic to announce Crocus' ascension to heirhood, and how they swear they'll do everything in their power to keep the Sanguini bloodline safe. How they'll commence the Bloodtea Ceremony by mixing the traditional beverage, tasting some herself, and proceeding to pour for the Lady and her heir.

READ: Bluebell mixes the drink carefully, with practiced precision, and take a delicate sip. For a moment, the hall holds its breath. Then they give a wide, toothy smile and offer the crowd a thumbs-up and a wink before offering the beverage to the Lady, who takes a grateful sip herself. And then they keel the fuck over, clearly very much having been poisoned.

The crowd erupts into chaos. The Lady pales dramatically before toppling over herself. Even the ever-present music comes to a screeching halt.

ASK: What do you guys do?

WAIT FOR PLAYERS' RESPONSES

IF: The party has yet to meet Franzy...

ASK: Make a Perception check (DC 12).

ON A SUCCESS: You notice the fairy who was trying to spike the blood fountain before making an even louder ruckus than she had been before. She seems to be arguing with the bartender.

OBJECTIVE: SAVE YOUR BOSSES

GET TO FRANZY

The party must run across the hall to the bar, where Franzy will meet them and create the antidote to Sun Sprite venom using ingredients found there.

ROLL INITIATIVE

OBJECTIVE: SAVE YOUR BOSSES

CREATE THE ANTIDOTE

When Franzy starts creating the antidote, Oswald will reveal himself as the mastermind behind the poisoning plot. Protect Franzy for one full round of combat – a.k.a. the time it will take her to brew the antidote.

CROSS THE HALL

Safely get the antidote from one end of the hall to the other, where Bluebell and Lady Sanguini are currently choking. The ballroom counts as difficult terrain due to the sheer amount of people in your way. The victims are 200 ft from you. Oswald will do everything in his power to stop you from arriving at the duo in time.

Once the antidote is brewed, you have five full rounds of combat before Bluebell dies, and one more round after that before Lady Sanguini dies as well.

GOOD LUCK!