

# The Hope (and Madness) Diamond

**Overview:** The Characters are tasked with saving a young lady from herself and forestalling a war... ...Without getting married themselves.

## Thread 1: Ask not for whom the Belle tolls, it tolls for thee....

The PCs are invited to the grand Winter Solstice Ball thrown by the Graf Todbringer in Middenheim as a celebration of Ulric's power and as a way to mingle with other nobles in hopes of arranging desirable marriages for their sons and daughters. Rumor has it that Marielle de Aquitaine from Bretonnia, a very lovely and very wealthy daughter of the Duke of Aquitaine will be in attendance for the week long event and every young man there will be hoping to get on her good side.

The Winter Solstice Ball is a chance for the young men to gather to show off for the young ladies and to impress the ladies' fathers, so this year a series of tournaments have been organized for the bachelors. *This should be played for effect (especially if one of the PCs is attending as a guest)*. One of the PCs may be approached by an NPC thinking he is a family retainer and asked to arrange a meeting with his liege, tending to a spoiled bratty teenager who got injured by a training sword, fencing/jousting lessons, etc.

In all of the comings and goings, Marielle will be captivated by one of the PCs who appears to be the most handsome and/or wealthiest. If none of the PCs match that description, she will tire of the noble life cloistered away in a castle and want a dalliance with a "real man, not one of these dandies" before she is betrothed. Of course the Duke of Aquitaine has sent a good number of retainers to protect his daughter's honor and the Graf will not tolerate anyone shirking his duties. This could provoke retaliations from other guests who want to gain standing with Marielle. Needless to say, the Duke of Aquitaine will not suffer his daughter to wed someone who is not of noble birth.

## Thread 2: It's not stealing, it's "retrieving"...

Johann "Wolf" von Hargenfels from Nordland has his eye set on Marielle and has determined to catch her eye but he lacks the skills to impress her in the tournaments. His skills lean towards the nefarious and he has determined to try and raid Graf Todbringer's study during the gala. He steals a rare blue diamond called The Lady's Eye and presents it to her on the second day of the gala. Little do either of them know, the gem is cursed (*see the end of this page for more information on the curse*).

Unfortunately, the journey and the chill air has not been kind to Marielle who has taken sick but insists on a room with a view of the festivities so she can observe the bachelors and the Graf is happy to oblige. Marielle thinks the jewel is stolen from Johann's own family so she does not wear it openly though her illness means she has ample time alone in her room, and a young lady of means does love the feel of diamond....

Naturally, the Graf will discover the theft and ask the PCs to discretely recover the gem. The Graf is aware of the curse, but the gem was taken as a trophy in battle from a vampire in Sylvania by one of the Graf's ancestors so it has value to him as an heirloom.

## Part 3: To sleep, perchance to arson.

The Good News: Marielle has recovered enough to attend the final dance on the Night of the Winter Solstice. The Bad News: She has spent too much time with The Lady's Eye and now suffers from the Firebug insanity (*Blasted Brain can also be a good choice*). One look at the bonfire burning in the great hall and her insanity will take hold. The Duke of Aquitaine is coming himself for the ball, having other affairs to attend to which delayed him from arriving earlier with his daughter. It is up to the PCs to solve the riddle of what has happened to Marielle, preserve her (and the Duke's) honor, return the Lady's Eye to Graf Todbringer and keep rumors from flying about what happens in the Graf's palace.

### **The Curse of the Lady's Eye**

Roll a d6 when the person wearing it falls asleep touching it. On a 1-2, nothing happens. On a 3-4, the wearer gains 1 Insanity point, but any effects from any new or existing Insanities are suppressed until the next roll is made. On a 5, gain 1 IP. On a 6, gain 2 IP.