

Ben Gibson 2023

Special thanks to play testers:
Andy, Michelle, Karen, Peter, and William

This adventure is released Pay What You Want under a creative commons attribution license, with author Ben Gibson, 2023.

Feel free to modify, reuse, excerpt, or stream any element of this adventure as long as the original author is credited in the work.



More than a mile away from the sweaty market-town that bears his name, Merchant-Lord Salmo spends most of his time in his formidable manse, luxuriating in wealth and style...wealth that nobody, not his slaves, nor his workmen, nor his rivals, would mind him losing...

Adventure Introduction

The Great Mansion Heist is an infiltration and theft adventure written for first or second level characters. In it players are set to raid the isolated country mansion of Merchant-Lord Salmo, the thoroughly detestable local rich ruler. The adventure is designed to function as a one-shot but can also be seeded into any campaign where the local ruler just needs a good burgling.

Adventure Background

This section of the rough and ready frontier is claimed by the rapacious Merchant-Lord Salmo, who rules his town from a sturdy mansion a mile away, where rumors say he's stashed his vast profits away from the prying eyes of even the Emperor's auditors. Several disenfranchised former servants and partners suggest his manse might be a ripe target for thieves, if sufficiently incriminating evidence of Salmo's perfidy could be uncovered there might even be some protection from retaliation in the offering...

The adventure begins with the party determined to rob Salmo's Mansion, but how they go about the robbery is entirely up to them. Bluffing their way in, sneaking in under cover of night, or even a swift frontal assault are all options for groups depending on their inclinations or wits. In addition to keys of rooms, Merchant-Lord Salmo's tendencies are outlined within, along with his hirelings for bluffs.

Some notes for the Game Master

This adventure is designed first and foremost to help you, the GM, to run it at a table setting. To this end each level and its key will appear on the same page. The session should be able to be run without back-and-forth flipping.

Map in this adventure are keyed by letter with the following highlights:

- **NPC and monsters** are noted in key or page references, oft with adjectives for personality. NPC stats are called out on the map on the corresponding or opposite page.
- *Treasure* is called out in a section in italics, typically with assumed valuations.
- Magic or special items are called out in the adventure within the text, with boxed descriptions in the printouts for players.

About ONE SESSION™ kits

Sometimes, you just need an instant adventure. Perhaps your usual GM got sick. Perhaps you are introducing new friends to the game. Perhaps you want to try out a new system, to shake things up a bit, or maybe just blow off some steam. That calls for a one shot; a self-contained adventure where people can sit down at the table with no prior knowledge of the setting or plot, and wrap up after four hours satisfied with the ending of their story. That's what the adventures in the ONE SESSION series are designed for; insert them into your ongoing game or play with strangers at a con. Bring your own ideas, equipment, and props in and mix and match all you like. But ONE SESSION kits are designed to give you not just an adventure, but also all you need to run the adventure besides the dice.

The map(s) where the adventure takes place are provided at the end of this PDF broken up into 11x8.5 sections designed to fit into the 5e/PF 1 inch=5ft scale, either pre-gridded or with handy 30/20ft rulers provided for tactical maneuvers.

Pregenerated characters are given on printable sheets with all their abilities and spells outlined, while another sheet is provided with print-and-play miniatures for characters and monsters appearing in the adventure. Handouts, notes, and item cards are printed as player aids. An optional sheet holds quick-reference rules explaining the basics of d20 resolution, action economy, and other common play terms, designed for the new player or GM's convenience at a home table or at a con, or even online imported to your virtual tabletop of choice.

Even if you intend to use your own aids or just run a game entirely theatre-of-mind, Coldlight Press is committed to designing adventures that are easy to run at the table; the game master should never have to have more than two pages open at a time, with everything needed to run the game seen on those two pages. Character sheets and stats are likewise designed so that either in combat or just having tea, all the role player needs to look at is a single piece of paper. Naturally, given the amount of rules even the simplest versions of the world's oldest roleplaying game has, we're not about to attempt to replace a core rulebook, but as long as at least one person at the table has a good handle on the game being played, printouts of the ONE SESSION kit should be all you need to look at for the session.

Merchant-Lord Salmo's Manse

Routines of the Manse:

Unless alerted, the manse normally has two guards posted at the front door and a single guard on patrol on each of the aboveground floors, to see where each patrolling guard is roll a d6 for the turret, a d8 for the upstairs, and a d10 for the ground, then increment each die once every minute along the routes shown. Servants are typically where keyed unless a special event has occurred. Each five-guard shift changes at dawn/dusk.

On Alert:

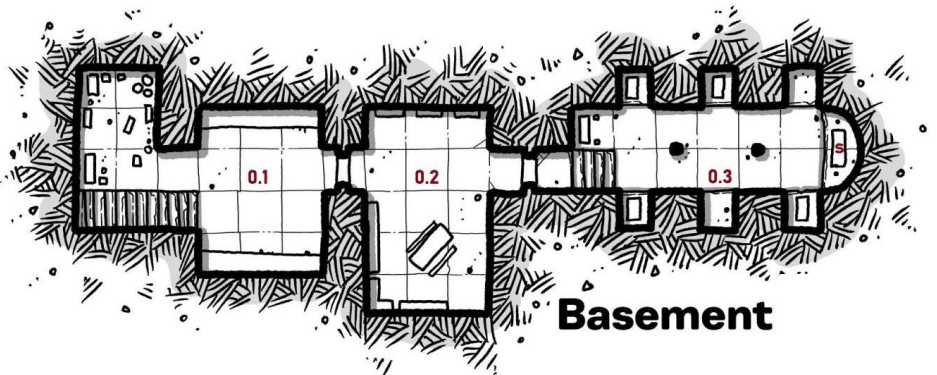
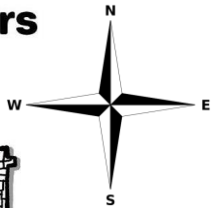
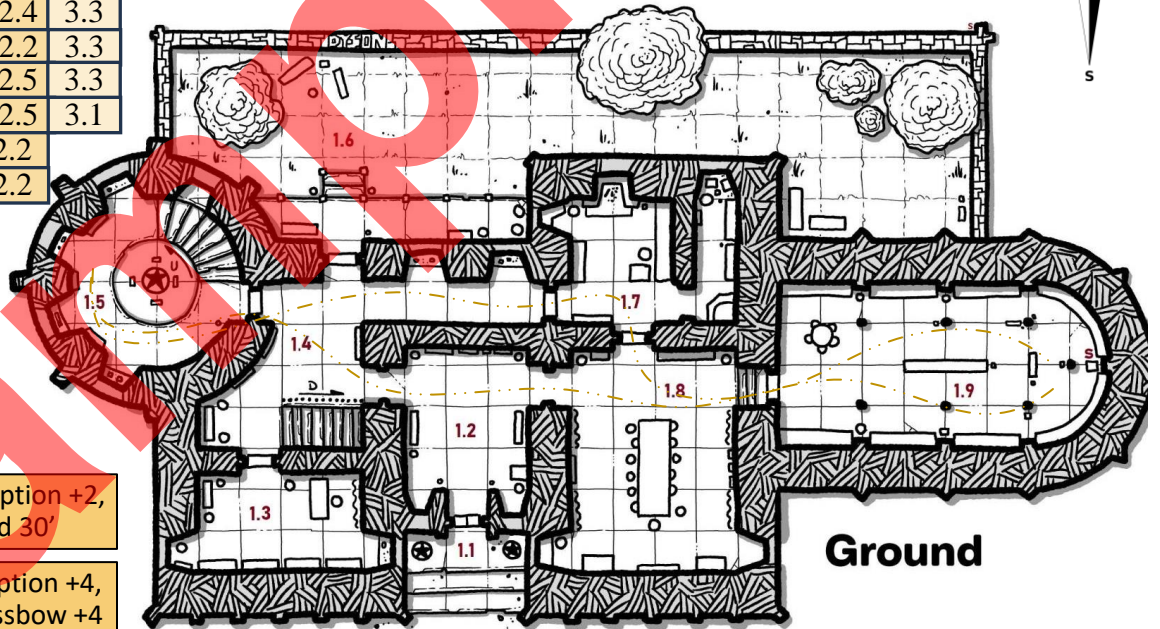
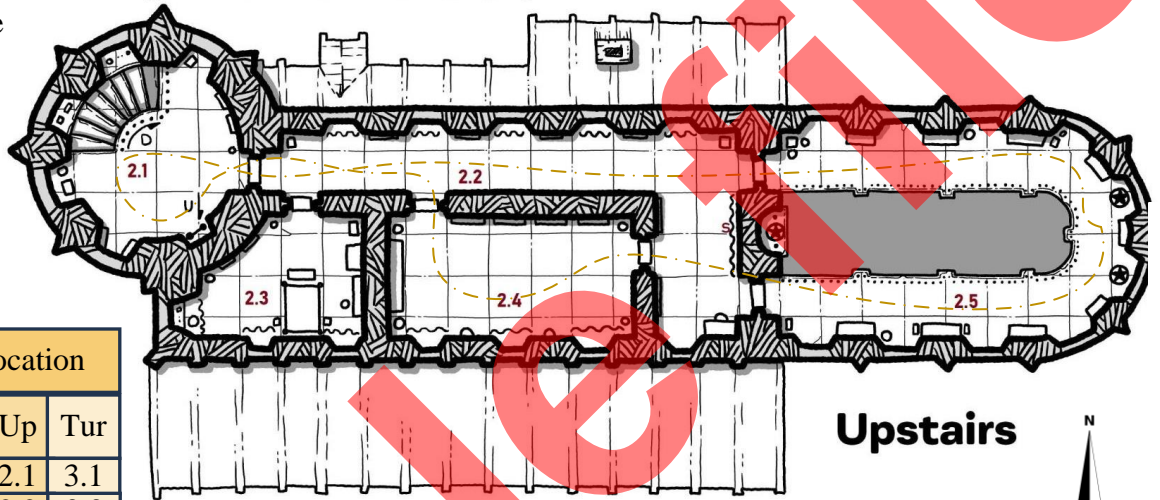
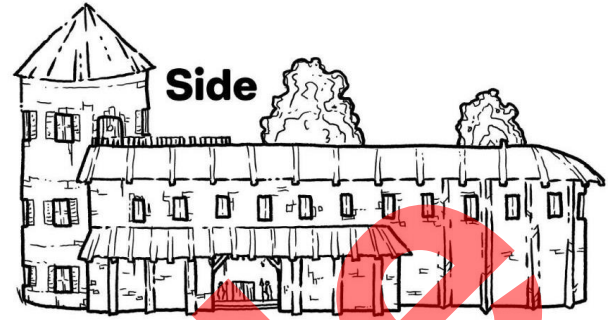
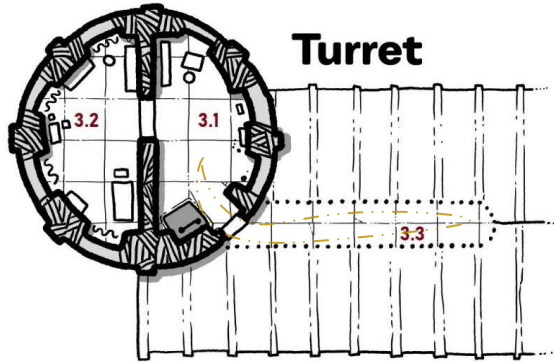
Guards if alarmed will blow a horn, summoning all other guards and the servants flee to room 1.4. Patrol of 5 more men from town will arrive at the manse in 15 minutes.

Guard Location			
Roll	Gnd	Up	Tur
1	1.5	2.1	3.1
2	1.4	2.2	3.3
3	1.7	2.4	3.3
4	1.8	2.2	3.3
5	1.9	2.5	3.3
6	1.9	2.5	3.1
7	1.9	2.2	
8	1.8	2.2	
9	1.2		
10	1.4		

Guard Dog: 5HP, 12AC, Perception +3, Bite +3 (1d8+1), Speed 40'

Servant: 5HP, 10AC, Perception +2, Improvised +2 (1d4), Speed 30'

Guard: 22HP, 16AC, Perception +4, Sword +4 (1d6+2s), or crossbow +4 (1d6+2p), Speed 30'



Possible Rumormongers/Hooks

1	Fired drunken steward Ehim, bitter, offers map to the manse in vengeance.
2	Failed handless thief Georg gives info about Mage Rogio's spell list for an ale.
3	Chalice the Hounder will talk at length about Salmo's dogs' favorite treats.
4	Merchant-Captain Telios has been instructed to hire a new manse guard.

Manse Keys (Normal Operations)

0.1 Long Storage: Various boxes of groundskeeping equipment, salt pork, pickled fish, pair of 20ft ladders, and old building tools. Hidden under the stairs in a secret compartment are *nine gallons of the old steward's high-proof moonshine* (very flammable). East door locked.

0.2 Secret Accountancy: Sparsely appointed room has cot for **Accountant-Slave Orso** and rude desk for his double-book *accounts*; the books show Salmo's cheating of his creditors, if they're taken Salmo won't pursue the thieves out of blackmail fears. East door locked and deadbolted.

0.3 Shrine to Atam-Mamon: Cold room lit by a single black *everburning candle*. The twisted wooden idol of Atam-Mamon, devil of cheating, is to the east below the hidden ladder (1.9), touching the idol inflicts a curse of greed (DC15 WIS resists), diminishing CHA by -1d6 and leaving victim *sickened* until the next dawn. *Five offering coffers* each hold 600gp in cursed gold (anything purchased by the gold is tainted to rust, fail, or break unless used by a cultist of Atam-Mamon). **Peior the Atamite** skulks here when he's visiting.

1.1 Great Doors: Wooden, but heavy to withstand siege. **Two bored guards** are stationed at either side of the doors day and night.

1.2 Lobby: Hushed, with wood-carvings on displays stolen from Salmo's slaves. **Verner** the steward sleeps here at night on a temporary cot.

1.3 Proud Library: Somber room's shelves mostly filled with scrolls and Salmo's official accounting books, but a *fine set of history books* (all 12 books worth 300gp) is noticeable on a lower shelf.

1.4 Servants' Stoop: The stools and bench to the west here are used by the servants when they're *shirking*; all servants retreat to here if they think the manse is being raided.

1.5 Lower Turret: Wooden shutters on these windows are reinforced with iron.

1.6 Back Garden: This pleasant back area is shaded by 10ft-high wall, secretly notched to be easier to climb at the northeast corner. The tallest tree can be climbed to leap on the lower roof (1.7). **Two hounds** laze in the garden in the southeast. Rear door has no lock.

1.7 Kitchen and Pantry: Warm and cheerful domain of **Donna** the cook, who sleeps in the pantry. Small creature can fit in the chimney. *Exotic spices* in the pantry worth 225gp.

1.8 Grand Dining Hall: Dark wood-walled room smells of spices and wine. Cabinet in the south holds *Salmo's wine collection* (19 bottles worth 1d20gp each), wine watered down due to servant and guard pilferage.

1.9 St. Atam's Chapel: This cool and peaceful room is decorated by *tasteful tapestries* (eight satin tapestries worth 150gp each) along the walls, with several benches all facing a plaster statue of St. Atam, the patron saint of commerce (secret ladder under statue leads to 0.3 below).

2.1 Middle Turret: Particularly echo-y. Five nice spears and fine bucklers hang on the walls.

2.2 Hall of Pride: Along the north of the wall six fine *paintings of Salmo's ancestors* (silver frames worth 25gp each), behind the curtain to the east is a grandiose painting of Salmo receiving keys and coins from St. Atam, in the unmarked wall behind the keys on the painting is a secret compartment that was used to install the statue (2.5), the *stash of Salmo* is here (four small chests hold 2,500gp each).

2.3 Master's Bedroom: Richly appointed bed, desk, and drawers in this stuffy room are of native pine, but the locked 50lb chest at the bed's foot (contains 35pp, 175gp, 325sp, and *deed to the locality*) is oak. Key to the chest and to the lower shrine (0.3) normally on Salmo's person, but a spare is hidden in hollowed bed leg.

2.4 Gallery of Trophies: Chilly room filled with valuables taken from Salmo's slaves: *Four woven tapestries* each worth 100gp, various *fine instruments* in the western case (collection worth 300gp), and *two +1 spears* between the windows, coated with contact poison (touch, make DC15 Fortitude save or take 1d12 damage (save halves) and *paralyzed* for 1d4 hours).

2.5 Upper Chapel: This upper gallery is well-lit and cool. To the west in the nook a *gilded statue of St. Atam* (400lbs but worth 2,500gp) stands, scales in one hand, three coins in the other.

3.1 Upper Turret Post: Dingy and dusty, with improvised table and chairs used by *shirking guards*. Crossbow (+5 hit, d12) trap at ladder.

3.2 Magician's Bedroom: Smells of sulfur and ammonia. **Ceparius**, cringing magician hireling of Salmo, rooms here with his work (*1d6 potions*).

3.3 Rooftop Overlook: Exposed to the elements, the **guard** assigned here inevitably hates it.

Manse Situations and Reactions

Salmo's Presence

Merchant-Lord Salmo is away from his manse more often than not seeing to his vassals, ventures, and plantations, but when he is present the staff and guards are all much more alert and competent; add a +2 bonus to their perceptions and to the difficulty of attempts to bribe, intimidate, or bluff members of the household. Despite this added alertness, the guards know to not interrupt Salmo for trivialities, so they will investigate odd sights or sounds before raising the alert (thus are less likely to shout or blow their horns). Salmo's normal routine at the house is to spend his days in the **library (1.3)** or the **back garden (1.6)** working over accounts, while after dinner at dusk he'll typically spend an hour meeting with **Orso below (0.2)** and worshipping at the **secret shrine (0.3)** before retiring to **bed (2.3)**.

Holidays and Events

Every 13th and 26th day of the month are considered holy to St. Atam and a service is held at the **chapel (1.9)** at the 13th hour of the day, conducted by the dyspeptic Atamite priest **Peior**, who stays late for the night afterwards and conducts secret rites with Salmo in the **shrine beneath (0.3)**. The manse is open to all comers for the daytime services and wealthy-looking visitors are often invited to stay for a banquet afterwards, to be plied subtly for donations for Atam-Mamon. The Festival of St. Atam takes place thirteen days after highest summer (or whenever is ideal for the game master) and is an even bigger event at the manse, with guards doubled and five more cultists (stats as guards but armed with daggers) skulk in the shrine beneath. The game master should consider Peior's presence optional based on how difficult the session is supposed to be.

Merchant-Lord Salmo also will host dignitaries, traders, and potential investors at his mansion if he thinks them worth impressing; he'll show off his **trophies (2.4)** and **his ancestors (2.2)** in a tour of the manse after dining, although he is notably circumspect about his own portrait given it conceals his hidden cache. Characters who bluff their way into his good graces might even find themselves invited meet Cerparius and take in the view from the upper **turret (3.3)**.

Food and wine are delivered by wagon once every ten days, and the deliverymen are well known to the manse staff, however, a sufficiently clever party could attempt to smuggle themselves in that way, particularly in extra-large shipments being delivered for a special day or event.

Responses, Alarms, and Capture

-If the **dogs (1.6)** are alerted to intruders they will set up to barking, although if no intruder is then immediately visible, the nearest guard will yell at them to stop barking at squirrels. The dogs are lonely and respond well to kindness.

-The **guards** have captured individual thieves before, so if a single character is seen the initial reaction will be "*Halt, who goes there!*" and pursuit, not to blow the horn to summon the town's watch a mile away; guards only sound their horn(s) if they believe there's a chance of being overwhelmed. A single horn blast will only summon **five guards in fifteen minutes** to check it out, while multiple horns brings a mounted response of **ten guards in ten minutes**. A captured guard will be willing to talk but they don't know much of general dangers besides the turret trap (3.1) they habitually rig.

-If a general melee breaks out then **Ceparius (3.2)** gets summoned to assist, the mage will chip in but if he sustains major wounds he will flee back to his turret room and barricade himself within. He hates his master Salmo but also owes him massive debts, so is extremely difficult to turn even if captured.

-The **servants** flee to their hallway (1.4) yelling for the guards if they witness intruders. If the manse appears to be completely overrun, they will try to run all the way to town, regardless of weather. If they cannot flee, none of them are willing to risk their lives for their employer, they will surrender and are willing to inform about the master's chest (2.3) but they don't know of his secret stash (2.2).

-Most visitors will just flee danger, but **Peior the Atamite** will defend his secret shrine (0.3) to the death if he is visiting. He doesn't fear death and resists capture with all his might.

-If present, **Merchant-Lord Salmo** is cautious of his own person, well aware of his own martial limitations but willing to help the guards if they seem to be winning a fight. If the mansion appears to be overrun he's willing to flee, but his priority is to first reach down his real accounts (0.2) to retrieve them. If captured, he points out how dangerous it would be to kill him, as both imperials and creditors would be hunting his murderers. He will grudgingly give up the secret location of the key to his chest (2.3) and only give up his stash's location (2.2) in extremis. He attempts to minimize or hide the importance of the basement, as the secrets there are what would really ruin him.

NPC Personalities

Merchant-Lord Salmo is a cold, calculating man, physically large, heavyset, and balding. He speaks with careful deliberation, like a classic mafia boss in media. He's greedy but always takes the long view in his investments and schemes, risk-adverse. Defaults to chilly courtesy but descends into quiet rage if he is stolen from.

Merchant-Lord Salmo: 101HP, 19AC (if armored), 13AC (if surprised), Perception +4
Attacks: 2 x longsword +7 (1d8+4s), and shield bash +7 (1d4+4b), Speed 30', Bonus Action: *Second Wind* (recovers 20hp)

The Guards are all vaguely resentful of having to pull mansion-watch duty, but they fear Merchant-Lord Salmo's wrath if they are caught shirking. Additionally, individuals are (d6): Alert, sleepy, hungry, curious, avaricious, or on the first day of the job.

Verner the steward is new to his job and jumpy, he really wants to keep this position. Prone to fumble. Ignores all the strange mansion noises.

Donna the cook is a kind and generous soul, worn down by lack of appreciation for her modest gifts as a cook. Sweet, will try to talk a thief into fleeing.

Orso the accountant-slave whispers and mutters to himself, lost in mathematical thought. Terrible people skills, barely registers threats.

Ceparius the mage, a weedy, strange-smelling man, never makes eye contact and fears just about everything, he just fears Salmo most of all. If he fights, he's very careful to not get trapped.

Ceparius the Mage: 75HP, 16AC, Perception +3
Attack: Staff +5 (1d6+2b), Speed 30', Spells: (4/2 per day):
0th *Acid Splash, Light, Minor Illusion, Ray of Frost*
1st *Burning Hands, Feather Fall, Color Spray, Fog Cloud*
2nd *Acid Arrow, Flaming Sphere*
Potion of Cure Wounds (2d8)
Scrolls of *Floating Disk, Unseen Servant, and Locate Object*

Peior the Atamite is an intense, passionate man, smoothly adept both at lofty St. Atam's Day sermons and in the secretive rites of Atam-Mamon. Believes in the Devil of Cheating with all his heart, would most prefer converts but will take sacrifices instead if he has to.

Peior the Atamite: 90HP, 16AC, Perception +7
Attack: Dagger +6 (1d4+3p), Sneak attack, Speed 30', Spells: (4/3/2 per day):
0th *Sacred Flame, Guidance, Light, Thaumaturgy*
1st *Bane, Bless, Command, Shield of Faith*
2nd *Hold Person, Blindness/Deafness, Augury*
3rd *Slow, Bestow Curse*

Concluding the Adventure

A Cold Wrath: If the characters are seen and leave witnesses to their theft, Merchant-Lord Salmo will immediately put a price on their heads, with wanted posters with their likenesses going up throughout the region and scattered cultists of Atam-Mamon instructed to target the PCs for assassination.

If they're stolen his real accounting books (0.2), Salmo will hold off on the public posters and instruct cultists to make quiet contact with the PCs, asking carefully what they want from him for them (although the agents will obviously steal them back if possible). In any case, the PCs have made an enemy of the cult of Atam-Mamon, and will be marked for vengeance or cheating whenever they've been met.

If they've stolen his deed (2.3) then the PCs technically have a right to his mansion, grounds and all. Possession being 9/10ths of the law, the Merchant-Lord still owns the manse while he lives but players who own the crooked books and the deed could attempt to kill Salmo and take his lands, showing his crookedness when auditors from his masters show up. This can lead to the party acquiring an early property/keep for domain play if that's an interest for the players.