

THE BRASS HOUSE SHOW

Campaign 2 · Session 5 · January 21st, 2026

Suzail, from cabaret stage to palace gate



The Brass House asked for ten gold in tips. The Blue Bloods brought down the house.

The Brass House booked the Blue Bloods for the 11 p.m. slot and expected a twenty-minute novelty act. What it got was fire blooming in open air, arcane doorways chained floor to ceiling, a party member spun at terminal velocity, and a finale catch lifted straight out of a romance ballad. And above it all, in the one box with the curtains drawn, sat the only audience member whose opinion would matter by midnight.

THE SHOW

Ferrick opened the act, and the fire did not behave like fire. It bloomed in midair above the crowd, flowers and rings and slow-falling sparks, stagecraft and threat braided so tightly together that the front tables could not decide whether to applaud or duck. They applauded.

Then Art took the fireman's pole. He chained **dimension door** on dimension door, ceiling to floor and back again, falling through the same stretch of air over and over, gaining speed with every pass while scanning the crowd for Faz on each drop. By the time he peeled out of the loop he had reached terminal velocity, and the Brass House had gone quiet in the way crowds do when they realize the trick is not a trick.

Balbi did not volunteer so much as get volunteered. Snatched by one hand mid-drop, he was spun like a sparkler stick, trailing light, hanging on through sheer stubborn grip. He was informed, mid-spin, that he was not a performer in this trick. He was the object in the situation.

The finale: Art leapt from the pole, caught Balbi out of the spin on a natural twenty, somersaulted, and landed the lift. The lights came back up. The crowd did not roar so much as detonate.

"You have won this crowd over!"

BRECK, OR WHATEVER HIS NAME IS

The take came to about twenty-eight gold scraped off the stage, the count approximate because, as the staff admitted, it's messy in here. One unruly gentleman tore his shirt off and whipped it overhead for the entire curtain call. A theater impresario from Waterdeep pressed forward talking bookings and tours; one step behind him came an agent offering to represent the act for **ten percent**, of what, he did not specify. For one warm minute the Blue Bloods were simply the best show in Suzail.

Then Art glanced up at the curtained box on the second floor, the one with the private staircase, and the night's second act began.



The King came unguarded, incognito, and far too pleased with his own test.

THE KING IN THE BOX

Every portrait in Faz's dossier had been crossed out except one. That face, the unmarked one, was sitting in the upstairs box: **the King of Cormyr**, in plain clothes, with no guards, no detail, and no weapon, watching the show and enjoying himself enormously. He had come incognito specifically to take the measure of the Blue Bloods in person. A monarch with a price on his head walked alone into the one building where his assassins were already waiting, on purpose, as a character test.

Art reached the box at intermission, and the wrongness arrived in layers. First a smell: a gas he had never encountered before, not unpleasant, but not pleasant either. Then the click of the box door behind him. "Mr. President, I think we need to go."

The man in the chair turned with the unbothered calm of someone who has never once had to go anywhere. What followed was less an extraction than a negotiation: the king did not want to leave. He wanted to see another show; he had heard there would be good juggling. Art applied every ounce of persuasion he owned, mid-intermission, in a cabaret box that smelled faintly of something designed to kill the man in it.

"President is my father. Hi, I'm the king."

THE KING OF CORMYR, DECLINING TO BE RESCUED



The trolls were not trolls. They were stacked gnome assassins in breathing skins.

TROLLS SHED THEIR SKINS

Downstairs, the heavy-breathing trolls at the back of the house, who had spent all evening standing too still, split open along their seams. They were not trolls. They were suits. Out of each climbed **three stout gnomes**, stacked shoulder to shoulder, a dozen assassins in all, and one of them wore **Faz's tiger tattoo**. A dagger flashed past, its hilt glinting in a way Art would remember later. He grabbed the king and dimension-doored onto a rooftop three streets toward the castle, leaving the Brass House to dissolve behind them.

Ferrick blind-fired a fire bolt up the box staircase, then followed it with **Aganazzar's Scorcher**, a sheet of flame at targets he could not actually see. There was one terrible moment when the small silhouettes in the smoke read as children. They were gnomes. **Irofine** was relieved and appalled at once: shocked, she clarified, not at the tactic, which she had been about to use herself, but that he simply did it.

The cell rappelled off the roof toward a **stolen griffin** in the street. Balbi ended Faz's evening by dropping a hundred vines on the tattooed gnome, caving him in. Irofine pointed at the griffin and spoke a single word of command: **halt**. The griffin failed nothing; its hijackers failed everything. It decided it wanted no part of this and simply strolled away, gnomes clinging to its tack going "get, get, get." Ferrick, needing gloves to slide the rappelling rope, scooped two handfuls of troll blubber, greased his palms, and rode down onto the entangled lump that was Faz.

Even tied up, Faz nearly won: a prick of his dagger set someone's legs turning to stone before an earthy energy from the old woods rolled it back. Twenty slaps later, checked between each, he was out cold.



Art delivers the king across rooftops, through an Apple Store, and toward the palace.

KING FRED

Three rooftops later, Art and the king dropped through a trapdoor into a satellite **Apple Store**. Art was invisible at the time; the staff greeted him warmly anyway. The cook? **Tim** was not here, Tim was at headquarters, Tim returns in ninety days. They offered AppleCare on the way out. Art said later.

The rest was a piggyback sprint through the snow to the palace gates. Along the way the question of address got settled: "Mr. President" was wrong, "Your Majesty" was a mouthful, and the king accepted **Fred** with grace.

At the gates, Art noticed the king's eyes: pale, the color of the mints. He asked, making no accusations, whether Fred had had **the struggle**. The king did not quite answer. "We've been testing things here in Suzail, for those who no longer wish to deal with such struggle. If you're interested, come back when it's time." To Art, five months on the clock, that sounded like hope and danger wearing the same coat. The king scratched out a signed, open-ended **royal favor**: choose what you need, if you ever need to get out of something. He promised to attend tomorrow's show, "just security this time, like, full security," then hailed a passing griffin like a cab: "Take me to the purple room."



Gerard arrives with beer, hot dogs, a bag jail, and centuries of trouble.

LETTER SIGNED C

Faz's dagger went into party custody: razor edge, hidden hilt compartment, petrification payload, the hilt-flash Art saw during the escape. The letter found on him was in ornate, formal Gnomish. "*Dearest Faz. Complete this, and all debts will be settled.*" Below that, a list of names. At the bottom sat a postscript no one should have known to write: "*If you, friends of the BB, are reading this, know that I am always close. Signed, C.*"

And then there was the turtle. **Gerard** was waiting outside, six or seven hundred years old ("Dude, I'm ancient"), smoking an old-timey pipe. He conjured frothy cold beers, lit a small fire in the snowy street, and set hot dogs spinning over the coals. Asked if he had a jail cell: "Not groovy, unfortunately." But he had a bag. Faz now resides in a **bag-of-holding jail**, aired every nine minutes. And Gerard knew the **Curator**. Personally. About six hundred years ago. He took a pull on his pipe and began: "So, five hundred years ago..." The session ended as the story started.

GOING FORWARD

- **Assets:** Faz alive and bagged, the petrification dagger, the dossier, the Curator's letter, a royal favor.
- **Scheme:** forge Faz's resignation to the Curator with the whispering quill from Gondeth.
- **Questions:** the king's mint eyes, the Suzail treatment program, and how close "always close" is.
- **Tomorrow:** the king attends the Brass House show under full security, party as de facto royal guard.
- **New guide:** Gerard, who knew the Curator six centuries ago.

✦ NEXT SESSION: GERARD'S TEA ✦