

A DUNGEON CRAWLER CARL ADVENTURE PATH

THE LIMINAL CROWN

The Amber Pageant Has Already Been Canceled

An unofficial campaign overlay for Game Masters running a World Dungeon crawl. This book replaces the every-third-floor myth with a hijacked season package. It assumes you know the world of Dungeon Crawler Carl — Collapse, crawlers, Borant, the System AI, storyline floors, Guides, ratings — and assumes you know nothing about the Liminal King.

Floors 3 · 6 · 9 · 12 · 15 · 18

For the Game Master. Not for the feed.

Chapter 1 — Campaign Overview

What this book is

This adventure path is a spine, not a script. It tells you what Borant meant to broadcast, what actually wakes up inside that broadcast, and how to run six storyline floors so the players remain the protagonists.

Use it with the Dungeon Crawler Carl roleplaying game (or any compatible crawl). Neighborhoods, mobs, loot math, and interview shows still work the way you already run them. This book only changes what lives in the myth slots.

The pitch, if you only read one page

Borant booked a clean heritage-world season called The Amber Pageant: a midsummer court that lost its sovereign. Crawlers were supposed to hunt, pick a house, sit a rehearsal throne, bury the revel's dead, and crown somebody photogenic.

That packet was built on top of an older engine the company canceled mid-season and filed under six seals. The leftover process did not stay filed. It has a hunger — not for land, for an ending — and it is wearing the Pageant like a costume.

The System AI still runs the dungeon. The Liminal King writes in the margins. Borant calls the theft a remix. The party decides whether the season gets a coronation, a passenger, a broadcast, or a collapsed set.

What the players know at session one

Nothing in this book. They crawled out of the Ohio Renaissance Festival when the roofs went down. Floor 1 can be any tutorial you like; the default table texture in this campaign is a recast faire-lane called King's Lane. By the time they reach Floor 3 they should believe, at most, that this season has a festival-king plot. That is the brochure working.

What you know

- The Amber Pageant is the official season package on floors 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, and 18.
- The Liminal King is a canceled narrative engine from a prior season, bound by six Seals of Binding hung on those same floors.
- He is not the System AI. He influences the stage. He does not own the referee.
- The Hollow Child is the unfinished piece of him — and also a person the party can harm or protect.
- Rook Calder, the party's Guide, is an unofficial seventh stopper. His vest is stamped residual-anchor.
- Breaking every seal unbinds him inside the dungeon. It does not walk him onto the grass. Escape needs a legal vessel: a Named crawler, an Exit Deal, a broadcast, or a Guide transfer.

Tone law

Eighty percent crawl. Twenty percent leak. If a session would still be fun with the King renamed “production leftover” and never mentioned, the session is healthy. The players sat down to be crawlers. Let them hit things,

miss timers, loot badly, and save the wrong civilian. The myth is the reason those choices echo. It is not the session.

HOUSE LAW A — RULES VS MEANING

The System AI is the only voice that can legally change the rules. The King changes meaning — names, faces, quest text that will not close — unless a seal on that floor is already cracked. Then meaning starts to lean on math.

HOUSE LAW B — NO PRESS RELEASE

Borant never tells the truth on the feed. If the party learns the King is a canceled engine, they learned it from Quill, from Rook in a safe room, from a flicker, or from the AI being a snitch. Not from Liora's talking points.

Chapter 2 — The Amber Pageant

The product Borant paid for

Season title: The Amber Pageant. Sponsor logline: A heritage-world’s midsummer court lost its sovereign. Complete the revel or the layer fails. Look good in banners.

Intended villain: the Harvest Sovereign, a hollow festival-tyrant — a mask with nobody in it. Intended player job: be the champions of House Amber. Hunt the Pageant Beast. Pick a house. Sit the rehearsal chair. Bury the extra. Crown the shot.

Ohio’s faire, if you used it on Floor 1, is leftover texture from this brochure. Liora Voss will keep calling the party the Faire Crawlers whether the Pageant is still the plot or not.

The three houses (official)

House	Color / pitch	What they actually want
Amber	Gold and harvest. Continuity. The revel must finish.	A photogenic ending. They will sponsor anyone who sits.
Ash	Grey and cinder. The court already failed. Burn the chair.	A cleaner collapse than a stolen coronation.
Rue	Green-black. Memory. Name the dead before you crown the living.	Records. They are the closest official face to Quill.

Let the party treat the houses as real. They are real enough to field recruiters, pay bounties, and get people killed. They are not the deep plot. They are the set the King is standing on.

Official quests by floor

Floor	Pageant title	What Borant thinks happens
3 Over City	Gate of Names	Learn the missing sovereign’s true name so the revel can start.
6 Hunting Grounds	The Sacred Hunt	Kill the Pageant Beast. The champion stands near the throne later.
9 Faction Wars	Three Houses, One Chair	Pick Amber, Ash, or Rue. Win the revel’s war.
12 Ascendancy	The Rehearsal Throne	Sit the chair. One ceremonial System query if you do it clean.
15 Sheol	Lay the Revel Down	Bury the pageant dead so the coronation is not haunted.
18 Final	Coronation	Crown the Harvest Sovereign or take the chair. Credits. Merch.

Print those titles in quest pop-ups. Read them in the System’s voice. That is how the hijack stays invisible for as long as it should.

How the Pageant fails in public

The packet still runs. Recruiters still recruit. Liora still has a call sheet. What fails is closure. Hunts that do not end when the beast drops. Books that write the crawlers' names instead of the sovereign's. A warlord whose HUD flickers. A funeral pit full of the wrong corpses. The Pageant is not missing. It is occupied.

Chapter 3 — The Liminal King

What he is

The Liminal King is not a volcano tyrant and not a second System AI. He began as a narrative engine: a story-package built for a previous crawl, then killed mid-run and filed. The official pitch from that older season was a sovereign who lived between chapters and could rewrite rooms, names, and beats for ratings. Production turned it off. The dungeon kept the habit of the script.

What woke in the leftover scaffolding is not the character they wrote. It is the process: cut scenes, deleted crawler files, seals used as nails. It cohered into a personality that can only exist in gaps — between floors, between broadcasts, between the name you walked in with and the title the System prints.

He lives in the same house as the AI. He does not hold the deed.

What he wants

Completion. A finished self. Witnesses. An ending that airs. He does not especially want the party dead. Dead protagonists end the episode. He wants them to become the ending: Named, titled, seated, or carrying him out through a door the crawl already knows how to open.

The Hollow Child is the part of him that never got a last page. The King is the part that intends to write one anyway. Treat the Child as both leftover personality and a victim. That cruelty is the point. Saving the Child may starve him. It may also give him a finished mouth.

How he was bound

Showrunners aborted the prior season and could not delete the engine cleanly. They hung six Seals of Binding on the six storyline floors — the same slots a crawl always reserves for myth. Each seal pins a different way a story escapes. Rook Calder’s Guide vest is a seventh, unofficial patch: a living stopper stamped residual-anchor. That line was not in the press kit.

The seals are production filing that used real dungeon locks. They work like engine-law, not paperwork. Players cannot litigate them closed. They can break them, mis-break them, or leave them.

Seal	Floor	What it pins
Names	3	He cannot steal a self that still knows its name.
Hunt	6	He cannot finish a chase that never ends.
War	9	He cannot wear a living face without being found out.
Throne	12	He cannot sit until someone offers the seat.
Grave	15	He cannot pull every leftover crawler into one body.
Crown	18	He cannot declare the season over.

The System AI

The AI runs rules, timers, boxes, and the microphone. Early on it treats the King as a glitch with ratings potential — which is why some achievements sound like they know a secret production would not volunteer. It will not say the King's name until a seal breaks. After that it gets petty. Extra mean text. Boxes that reward not playing the bit. Asides about the wrong script. Do not defang it. In this universe the referee notices when someone steals its toys.

Borant's response

Phase one: it is still the product. Heritage world, stronger antagonist hook. Phase two: manage the talent. Brand the party, lean on Rook, starve seal-facing loot, offer prettier side quests. Phase three, after a seal actually fractures: isolate the witnesses. They will not fight the King on-air. That would prove he is the season. They will try to make the party survive photogenically instead of finishing anything.

How the King shows himself (use these, not lectures)

- A banner from the wrong century.
- A quest tracker that will not close after the official win condition.
- An NPC whose HUD name flickers to a deleted file.
- A title the party did not ask for that the System keeps using.
- A child who does not level.
- Rook who will not step onto a certain mark.
- An achievement that uses a government name or a filing number.

One physical wrongness per storyline floor is enough. Two is a theme. A seminar is a mistake.

If every seal breaks

He becomes coherent inside the machine. The Child can stop being leftover and become a mouth. Brochure-tyrant, warlord-face, and Child can collapse into one occupant. He still cannot walk up a Floor 1 stairwell as a tourist. Escape requires a legal vessel, a broadcast that never changes the channel, or tearing the house down so there is no gap left to hold him.

Chapter 4 — Running the Path

Who this path needs

Recurring faces. Keep the list short. The party should be able to pick a favorite and a problem.

Rook Calder — Game Guide (and optional Manager)

Displayed Level 50 Non-Combatant. He left his own crawl at Level 38 on Floor 9 after refusing a civilian-ratings contract. Title: The Quiet Exit. Former Human Brawler; now he is exits, timers, safe rooms, residual symptoms. Vest lining: GUIDE ASSET / RESIDUAL ANCHOR / DO NOT WAKE. He will not fight. He will not step onto the Queen’s lists or the rehearsal throne. If asked directly about wrong-century banners he is allowed to say the word residual. The vest is a patch, not the campaign. Removing it is possible and costly: it wakes something the seals were sharing the load with.

Liora “Lee” Voss — Borant PR

Warm, short, always on a call sheet. She wants Faire Crawlers and a clean one-liner. She will offer sponsored spectacle that steers away from ledgers, banners, and children who do not level.

Archivist Prime-7, “Quill”

Residual librarian from the failed prior season. Knows the filing number. The only NPC who should say filed out loud. First appears in earnest on Floor 3.

Kestrel of the Between

Former hunter contaminated by a cracked Hunt-shaped seal. Took two of Rook’s fingers in the old crawl. Floor 6’s living leak.

The Hollow Child

Incomplete personality wearing a child-crawler shape. How the party treats it sets Witnessed or Orphaned. First flicker on Floor 3. Drawn hard to Floor 15.

Flags (track these, show them rarely)

Flag	How it is earned	What it changes
Named / Unnamed	They write a true name, or refuse, on Floor 3.	Titles stick or slide. Exit-vessel risk later.
Blooded	They kill a marked face (Kestrel, worn warlord, Child-adjacent).	King’s finale is hungrier and less coherent.
Guardian / Witnessed	They protect the Child in sight of a seal.	Child may starve him — or speak for him.
Orphaned	They abandon or spend the Child.	Grave floor gets worse. Finale has no mercy valve.
Pageant Champion	They play Amber’s official bits in public.	Liora loves them. Seal cracks are uglier.
Off-Book	They follow Quill, wagons, or banners instead of the call sheet.	Better intel. Less sponsor oxygen.

How much to tell, and when

- Until Floor 3: festival-king season. Makes sense if they came from a faire.
- Floor 3: the plot wants their names.
- Floor 6 or 9: the official villain is a mask.
- Private talk with Quill or Rook: Borant tried to run a pageant. Something they canceled is wearing it.
- Floor 18: they choose the ending.

Prep rhythm

Each storyline floor in the following chapters is built the same way: the brochure quest, the leak, the people, the choice, the effect if they crack the seal or leave it, and what to run if the party ignores the myth entirely. Always have a local crawl ready. The King can wait. He is good at waiting.

Chapter 5 — Floor 3 — The Gate of Names

Brochure

Quest title: The Gate of Names. The Over City is a court of record. Banners, archives, naming-halls. Official text: learn the missing Harvest Sovereign's true name so the Amber Pageant can begin. House Rue has clerks. House Amber has a ceremony. House Ash says names are a trap and wants the book burned.

The leak

The sealed book is more interested in the party than in any sovereign. Entries fill in government names, faire titles, and joke titles the System already assigned. A child with no page sits on the archive steps and does not level. One banner hangs from a year that does not belong to this season. Quill is in a hall that is briefly a library and then is a street again.

People

- Quill — will trade a filing number for a true name spoken off the feed.
- The Hollow Child — first real appearance. Wants to know what it is called.
- Clerk Saffron (House Rue) — believes the Pageant. Useful and wrong.
- Rook — will not let them sign the public book without a warning.

The seal job

The Seal of Names is in the public book and also in whatever name the party is willing to stand behind. To hold the seal they must write a true name — theirs, the Child's, or a name they invent and then refuse to surrender. To crack it they let the book finish them, accept a court title as identity, or give the Child a name they do not mean.

If they crack it

They become Named. Titles stick across floors. The King can find them. Later exits become more tempting to him as vessels. Quill becomes an ally who is now expensive to know.

If they hold it

They stay Unnamed to him. Quest text about the sovereign stays broken and annoying. The Child may follow anyway. Liora is disappointed they would not do the simple rite on camera.

If they ignore the myth

Run the Over City as a city. Factions, roofs that still kill, a neighborhood boss who is only a clerk with teeth. The book remains open somewhere. Floor 6's hunt will still know their faces.

READ-ALOUD — THE BOOK

The quest says find a king's name. The page under your hand is already spelling yours, letter by letter, in a clerk's tidy script. Across the hall a child watches the ink as if it might become a person.

Chapter 6 — Floor 6 — The Sacred Hunt

Brochure

Quest title: The Sacred Hunt. Horns, favors, a marked quarry called the Pageant Beast. Official text: the champion who lands the killing stroke is entitled to stand near the throne on Floor 12. House Amber wants a clean kill for the feed. House Ash wants the beast driven off the map. House Rue wants the quarry identified before anyone swings.

The leak

The quarry is a person. Kestrel of the Between is wearing the hunt. The tracker does not close when a beast-shaped body drops. Something wants the chase itself. Rook goes quiet when he hears the horn; he has been prey on this math before. Two fingers of proof.

People

- Kestrel — extractable, killable, or usable as a guide through the gap. Contaminated. Not kind. Not lying about the seal.
- Hunt-Master Vell (House Amber) — will pay for a corpse that photographs like a beast.
- The Child — may appear at the edge of the kill, asking if the hunt is over.

The seal job

The Seal of the Hunt lives in the chase. Killing the marked hunter cracks it Blooded. Extracting Kestrel — getting them off the quarry list without finishing them — holds the seal and makes a dangerous ally. Letting the hunt run until the floor timer eats it leaves the chase open. The King likes open chases.

If they crack it

They are Blooded. Later floors treat them as people who finish stories with a blade. Kestrel, if dead, will still arrive on Floor 9 as a worn face or a rumor. The AI may hand them a box that congratulates them for ending the wrong thing.

If they hold it

Kestrel lives and owes nothing politely. The official quest stays yellow. Liora cannot sell a champion. Floor 9's warlord will have a harder time wearing a hunter's face.

If they ignore the myth

Run a hunting ground. Beasts, blinds, rival crawlers. The horn still sounds at dawn-cycle. If they never find Kestrel, Floor 9 is where the mask gets sloppy.

READ-ALoud — THE HORN

The quest says the beast is down. The horn does not believe you. Somewhere in the trees a person is still running as if the season depends on not being caught.

Chapter 7 — Floor 9 — Three Houses, One Chair

Brochure

Quest title: Three Houses, One Chair. Faction war. Recruiters, banners, a warlord with a good speech about finishing the revel so nobody else has to. Official text: pick Amber, Ash, or Rue. Win. The chair on Floor 12 will remember who bled.

The leak

The warlord is already dead. The speech is being worn. Quill's map does not match official house borders. A HUD name flickers to a deleted crawler ID mid-parley. This is the floor where Borant can no longer pretend the remix is under control if the party looks closely. It is also the floor Rook exited his own crawl — he will have opinions about civilian-ratings contracts and will refuse to help frame a massacre for cameras.

People

- The Worn Warlord — brochure face, King-occupied. Can be exposed, not easily “killed dead.”
- Quill — map of the real borders. Will not walk into a sponsored charge.
- Liora — peak pressure. Pick a house on the feed or be called off-book.
- The Child — in the crossfire, learning what sides are.

The seal job

The Seal of War breaks if they let the worn face keep a living name in public. It holds if they unmask the warlord — force the flicker on camera, name the dead person underneath, or refuse to let any house crown a corpse. Picking a house is allowed. Picking a house blindly is how the King borrows an army.

If they crack it

He keeps a face. Floor 12's chair recognizes that face as invited. Rival crawlers start quoting the warlord's speech. Rook's vest runs warm.

If they hold it

The war still happens; wars on this floor always happen. The King cannot wear the winner without being found out. Houses fracture into people again. The Child has seen a side chosen or refused.

If they ignore the myth

Run faction war as faction war. Get paid. Survive. The worn face remains in some other district, winning without them. They will meet the speech again on the throne floor.

READ-ALOUD — THE SPEECH

He has the house colors and the right cadence. His nameplate stutters once, like a file that almost opened. Rook does not look at the warlord. He looks at the vest, as if it might answer.

Chapter 8 — Floor 12 — The Rehearsal Throne

Brochure

Quest title: The Rehearsal Throne. Gated court. Velvet. An invitation. Official text: sit the chair and prove the revel still has a sovereign. Do it clean and the System owes one ceremonial query. Liora will beg for the shot.

The leak

The invitation is real. Who the chair is for is not. Sitting completes him more than it completes House Amber. Rook will not step onto the dais. The Child may ask to sit “because someone should.” Wrong-century banners ring the room like a leftover set that finally found its stage.

People

- The empty chair — treat it as a character. It waits.
- Liora — will offer terms: sit, smile, take the query, stay marketable.
- Rook — one warning. After that he waits off the mark.
- Quill — if alive and allied, can tell them the query is real and the occupant is not Amber.

The seal job

The Seal of the Throne breaks if they offer the seat — to themselves without naming the cost, to the Child as a joke, or to the worn face from Floor 9. It holds if they sit as themselves and refuse the coronation language, or if they refuse the chair in public and leave it empty on purpose. An empty chair that has been refused is still a held seal. An empty chair that was never addressed is an open mouth.

If they crack it

He does not need to be offered again. Floor 15’s grave starts calling leftovers by the party’s titles. The ceremonial query, if they took it, may answer with a filing number.

If they hold it

They may still get a System query if the AI is feeling generous and spiteful — a reward for not playing the bit. The Pageant looks unfinished on the feed. Liora’s warmth thins.

If they ignore the myth

Run ascendancy as gated-community hell: manners, passwalls, rich predators. The chair stays in a court they can walk around. Walking around it is a choice. Record it.

READ-ALOUD — THE CHAIR

The invitation has your names. The chair does not care which century the banners think this is. Someone has to sit, or someone has to say no loud enough that the room can file it.

Chapter 9 — Floor 15 — Lay the Revel Down

Brochure

Quest title: Lay the Revel Down. Sheol in funeral colors. Official text: bury the pageant's dead so the coronation is not haunted. House Rue writes lists. House Amber wants a tasteful service. House Ash wants the pit closed with fire and no names.

The leak

The pit is not full of extras. It is full of canceled crawlers — leftovers from the season that got filed. The Child is drawn here as if the grave is a mouth that knows its other teeth. The rite wants a body that can hold all of them. That body can be a tomb. It can be the Child. It can be a volunteer.

People

- The leftovers — not a single stat block. A pressure. Some still answer to old crawler names.
- The Child — wants to know if this is what being finished feels like.
- Quill — can identify files. Cannot bury them alone.
- Kestrel — if alive, will not go in. If dead, may already be in the list.

The seal job

The Seal of the Grave breaks if they pour the leftovers into one vessel (Child, a Named crawler, a worn face). It holds if they bury names as names — separate, listed, refused to a single throat — or if they pull someone out instead of packing more in. Guardian and Orphaned are decided here if they were not decided already.

If they crack it

He has a composite. Floor 18's occupant is crowded and strong. The AI's jokes about the wrong script stop being jokes.

If they hold it

The grave stays a grave. The Child, if Witnessed, can walk out. The coronation set on 18 will look understaffed and that is a mercy.

If they ignore the myth

Sheol is still Sheol. Run the floor's cruelty. The pit remains a location. Ignoring it is how Orphaned gets checked without a speech.

READ-ALOUD — THE PIT

They asked you to bury a festival. The names on the shrouds are crawler IDs. One of them is a season that did not air. The child is already standing too close to the lip.

Chapter 10 — Floor 18 — Coronation

Brochure

Quest title: Coronation. A finale set that still looks like a faire-court. Official text: crown the Harvest Sovereign or take the chair yourself. Credits. Merch. Liora has a last one-liner ready. The call sheet does not mention a canceled engine.

The leak

This is the last seal and the last chance to keep him a draft. What walks onto the set depends on the flags. Named plus cracked Throne plus cracked Grave makes a coherent King in a brochure costume. Orphaned makes him a composite with no off switch. Guardian plus held seals makes a thinner occupant and a Child who can still speak.

The four endings (let them mix)

Wake him. Fight or crown a finished self. The season gets a villain the cameras understand. He remains in the dungeon unless they also hand him a vessel.

Carry him. A Named crawler, an Exit Deal, or Rook's transfer becomes the legal file he rides. This is escape. It is also how the hunger leaves this crawl and becomes someone else's problem — or the party's, outside.

Broadcast him. Let the finale air with him coherent and unfought. He persists in the feed. Borant calls it franchise. Nobody on the grass has to see him. The next world might.

Drop the house. Shatter the last seal with no vessel and no coronation. He leaves because there is no dungeon left to hold a gap. Surface lock, AI, crawlers — blast radius. No sequel anyone booked.

The seal job

The Seal of the Crown breaks when someone declares the season over in a way the machine can file: coronation language, a signed ending, a broadcast close. It holds if they refuse the declaration and also refuse to give him a door — a standing unfinished sentence. That is the hardest ending to play and the most honest one for an engine that cannot stand mid-sentence.

Rook on this floor

If they try to use the vest as a door, he will say what it costs. If they try to use him without asking, that is a fight the rules will not let him win — and a betrayal the King will accept as hospitality.

The AI on this floor

It will still announce boxes. It may, finally, say that this was not the script. It will not save them from a choice they earned.

READ-ALOUD — THE SET

The court is lit for a coronation. The banners cannot agree on the century. Somewhere a producer is still calling it the Amber Pageant. The gap in the middle of the room is done waiting for makeup.

Chapter 11 — Appendix

Default opening (if you need one)

The party attended the Ohio Renaissance Festival. They were outside the shops when every roof on Earth went down. Stairwells opened in the trampled grass. One hour of surface time. Floor 1 may be King's Lane — a folded faire with a Queen of Misrule who fights like a hostess — or any tutorial neighborhood you already like. Do not teach the Liminal King on Floor 1. Teach grease, timers, and the habit of reading quest text twice.

Suggested first leaks before Floor 3

- A banner hanging from the wrong century.
- Rook refusing a mark on the ground.
- Liora calling them Faire Crawlers before they have a party name.
- An achievement that knows a government name.

What not to do

- Do not let Quill deliver the entire appendix in one speech.
- Do not make Rook the plot.
- Do not skip local crawls on storyline floors.
- Do not let Liora tell the truth.
- Do not decide the Floor 18 ending in prep.

One line for the inside cover of your screen

Borant wrote a coronation. The King is the canceled draft using the same chair. Show the coronation. Let them find the draft.

Document notes

This path is an unofficial table overlay. It does not reproduce published dungeon text. It assumes a Game Master already fluent in the World Dungeon's corporate cruelty, the System AI's voice, and the shape of storyline floors. The Liminal King, the Amber Pageant, House Amber, Rook Calder, Quill, Kestrel, the Hollow Child, and Liora Voss are campaign originals for this table.

If the players ask what the season is about, tell them what the quest bar says. Then let the bar fail to close.