

THE MASTERMIND THEODORA BRATHWAITE

Theodora Brathwaite is a stately, middle-aged black woman, always impeccably dressed and never seen without her signature sapphire choker. She is a native of Montserrat, and a completely self-made woman, having built her vast fortune first as a pirate queen and later as a legitimate merchant. She arrived in London in her late-20s, already fabulously wealthy, and became a Madame du Pompadour-like figure in London society—graceful, intellectual, beautiful—even developing a friendship with a young Queen Victoria. She has since retired to Brathwaite Hall, her enormous manor house in the country, only returning to London when the need arises.

Quote: “They used to call me the Pirate Queen of Barbuda, but I preferred the Terror of Montserrat. In those days, the very mention of my name inspired a sort of trembling excitement, and no one feared me more than the Royal Navy. But even back then it was just business. It’s always been about business—every move I make, every palm I grease, every lord and lady I get on side, is about my commercial affairs. Unless it’s not: the Queen is special. There has always been more to the story when it comes to her, our dear queen...”

Why she wants to bring the Crown to its knees: Theodora and the Queen had a falling out. Rumors abound that the two were lovers (and that may well be the case) but Theodora’s principle motivation is that she simply disagrees with how the British Empire is being run. She rejects the Queen’s stodgy morality and meddling with Parliament from behind the scenes. She is driven by a desire to best her—to humiliate her—and if that means sowing chaos and terror throughout London, so be it.

The Mastermind Conspiracy

THE FIRST MASTERMIND CLUE...

...is always Theodora’s first appearance in the story.

It should be brief—perhaps the hunters see her watching them from the passenger compartment of her elegant growler—and you should emphasize the dazzling sapphire on her neck. Sapphire, both the gem and the color, should be prominent in scenes that include or allude to Theodora.

1 END OF SESSION SCENE

This layer is unlocked after the hunters discover the **FIRST** Mastermind Clue.

At the end of the session of play in which the first Mastermind Clue is discovered, narrate a scene showing Theodora in her gargantuan study at Brathwaite Hall. She is lovingly waited on by her servant, Elmore, while she stares at an enormous map of London hanging on the wall. She puts a pushpin in the location of Hargrave House, and one or two more where Threats are known to be. Her sapphire choker glimmers in the candlelight as the scene ends.

Between sessions, write down what you think Theodora’s ultimate scheme for bringing down the Crown is on the lines below.

2 THE HISTORY BETWEEN THEODORA AND THE QUEEN

This layer is unlocked after the hunters discover **THREE** Mastermind Clues.

The following details can now be revealed whenever you wish—and in any order—as a Keeper reaction:

☐ **1834:** Theodora is captured by the Royal Navy at age sixteen. She is already known as the legendary Pirate Queen of Barbuda, and her capture is considered a significant victory for the British Empire. A young Princess Victoria, enchanted by stories of the Pirate Queen, intercedes on Theodora’s behalf and wins her freedom. Theodora turns her skills (and ships) to legitimate enterprise after that.

☐ **1844:** Theodora arrives in London at age twenty-six. She goes on a buying spree, snapping up real estate and businesses that will later be the foundation of her vast fortune. She is the toast of London, and scandalous rumors suggest the young Queen Victoria has taken her as a lover.

☐ **1857:** Theodora becomes famous (again) for the masquerade parties she throws at Brathwaite Hall—events that are now legendary for the debauchery on offer. Queen Victoria, having embraced a program of morality and piety for her subjects, threatens to seize Brathwaite Hall if the gatherings continue, angering Theodora and creating a schism between them.

☐ **1861 (less than ten years ago):** Theodora attempts to stop a particular import tax from being set; the tax will cost her businesses a lot of money. She ably manipulates Parliament and is on the cusp of victory when Queen Victoria’s meddling behind the scenes renews the vigor of those who support the tax, and it becomes law.

Between sessions, write down the names of three Side Characters you’d like to see return during the Mastermind Threat.

Take some time to revise your idea about what Theodora’s ultimate scheme is. Take into consideration the roles that the above Side Characters might play.

3 A THREAT BECOMES A SERVANT

This layer is unlocked after the hunters discover **FIVE** Mastermind Clues.

Choose an active Threat and narrate a scene showing how the Threat becomes a servant of the Mastermind. Note this in the Servants section and tell the hunters that the Threat can no longer be resolved (it also ceases to be “active” for purposes of presenting new Threats, though it is still a danger in London).

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3 A THREAT BECOMES A SERVANT (CONT.)

Between sessions, write down the names of two more Side Characters you'd like to see return during the Mastermind Threat.

Revise your idea about what Theodora's ultimate scheme is. Take into consideration how the Threat that is now a Servant might fit into that scheme, as well as any Side Characters you have written down to this point.

5 THE MASTERMIND THREAT — This layer is unlocked after the hunters discover FIFTEEN Mastermind Clues.

You can now create the Mastermind Threat following the guidelines in the rulebook and your notes from this sheet. At this point, you may cease presenting new Threats. Once all active Threats are resolved, you may present the Mastermind Threat. After the Mastermind Threat has been resolved, select a new Mastermind to keep the story going, or end the game by asking each player to narrate a short epilogue for their character.

Servants

ELMORE

Shriveled skin. Wisps of gray hair. Pressed butler's uniform. Elmore has worked for Theodora since she arrived in London, and is unshakably loyal to her. His advanced age prevents him from "fixing" problems for her like he used to, but he has a small bottle of arsenic hidden in Brathwaite Hall in case one of her enemies needs to suddenly "fall ill." He never consults her when he takes such an action.

Quote: "Mrs. Brathwaite trusts me to keep her secrets. What kind of servant would I be if she couldn't speak candidly in front of me? Now then, if there's nothing else you need from me..."

MR. HIGGINS

Tweed suit. Pale, oily flesh. Only speaks in questions. Mr. Higgins is Theodora's man in London. He's a cobbler, and spends most of his days at his shop, but when Theodora needs some night work done, he can be found creeping around in dark alleys, conferring with police and prostitutes alike to find whatever—or whoever—she needs. He's a crack shot with a pistol and maintains a loose confederation of bullies and cat's paws in case violence is the remedy called for.

Quote: "Are you going to continue being a thorn in my employer's side? Do you know what happens to people who cross her? What if I told you I happen when people cross her? Do you suppose I have a gun in my coat? Would you guess I'm a very good shot?"

TATIANA "TATI" BRATHWAITE

Riding togs. Perpetual sneer. Smells of leather and horse. Tati Brathwaite is Theodora's adopted daughter. She enjoys all manner of bloodsport, but is particularly fond of hosting lavish hunts at Brathwaite Hall. Theodora considers her cruel and stupid, but loyal; she's not an ideal heir, but she cares deeply about Brathwaite Hall and is much more comfortable with the trappings of wealth than Theodora ever was. Tati will take direct action against Hargrave House by trying to capture one of the hunters and making them the quarry for her next hunt.

Quote: "Boxing, rats and dogs, bear-baiting—I love it all. But nothing gets my blood up like a hunt: hooves roaring through the glen, the thrill of leaping over hedges... the feeling of so much power between your legs. And the fear, of course; the fear of knowing that—in an instant—the horse can buck and send you crashing to your death, but also the fear that radiates from the prey. It's a sort of pheromone, isn't it?"

SERVANT FROM LAYER THREE & NOTES

4 DIRECT ACTION AGAINST HARGRAVE HOUSE

This layer is unlocked after the hunters discover TEN Mastermind Clues.

Theodora's Servants can now take direct action against the hunters, usually as the result of a Keeper reaction.

Make one final revision to your idea about what Theodora's ultimate scheme is. Take into consideration everything that has happened in the story up to this point.

Mastermind Clues

- ☐ A gift box tied with a sapphire blue ribbon; inside is (pick one: something sweet/something expensive/something bloody/something shocking/something else).
- ☐ A sapphire blue card with gold lettering: an invitation to a party at Brathwaite Hall, three nights hence.
- ☐ A note that a "T. Brathwaite" called while someone was out.
- ☐ A blue gem glimmering in a poorly lit place.
- ☐ A letter from Theodora Brathwaite indicating she is intrigued by someone's recent business proposal and would like to discuss it further.
- ☐ A revelation that Theodora Brathwaite is a Side Character's godmother.
- ☐ A story about Tati Brathwaite's drunken night on the town with her mates.
- ☐ A rumor about one of Theodora Brathwaite's social rivals "falling deathly ill" after taking tea with her.
- ☐ An order for an enormous amount of sapphire blue brocade fabric.
- ☐ Theodora Brathwaite's name turns up in a (pick one: ledger/social register/guest list/deed/something else).
- ☐ Evidence that Brathwaite Hall has recently acquired an enormous amount of (pick one: dynamite/guns/opium/gold/something else).
- ☐ A portrait of Theodora Brathwaite in an unusual place.
- ☐ Rumors that Tati Brathwaite is hunting people at Brathwaite Hall.
- ☐ A pair of sapphire blue opera gloves in an unusual place.
- ☐ The discovery that Theodora Brathwaite owns a location that figures prominently in a Threat.
- ☐ A shower of sapphire rhinestones comes down on the hunters—a message or a warning?
- ☐ The hunters suddenly find themselves in a room covered in sapphire blue: carpet, furnishings, drapery, artwork.
- ☐ The hunters suddenly find themselves in a place where everyone is wearing a Venetian mask in sapphire blue; no one will speak to them or explain themselves.
- ☐ A hunter with the Cosmic Passage marked has a dream: people fleeing in terror and screaming in pain as Buckingham Palace is consumed by sapphire blue flames.
- ☐ The Morning Chronicle's lead story: a pile of roses dyed sapphire blue was left at the door to the Queen's chambers in Buckingham Palace; no one knows who left them there.