

THE LEGACY OF ARRIUS LURCO

A CAMPAIGN FOR CTHULHU INVICTUS



Guerra '09

By
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THE LEGACY
OF
APPIUS
LUPCO

Dedication

This work is dedicated to fathers and sons in general, but to four men in particular.

To Keith Herber: a mentor who departed this world unexpectedly. He believed in me, and a man as close to me as a brother. We struggle, now and always, to be worthy of that.

To Pedro Lebron: my father-in-law, who passed away during the writing of this book. He battled a demon raging inside him and ultimately lost. I'm sorry we couldn't save you.

To Oscar Rios, senior: my father, who thankfully is still with me in this life. We may never really understand one another, but you have my love and I am proud to be your son.

To Zakary Rios: my only son. We may never really understand one another either, but know you are one of the greatest joys in my life. I love you and am proud to be your father.

Special Thanks

First to my dearest friends who went on this long and sometimes difficult journey with me: Dr. Ryan Roth, Gibel & Walter Attridge, Joel Jackel, Matthew Higgins and Mitzi Rios, words can never describe by deep gratitude. To the many players, especially those attending the Double Exposure conventions, thank you for your support and encouragement; Tandem

aliquando vicemus. To my friend, partner and publisher, Tom Lynch, thank you for your strength, faith and reminding me how we roll. My thanks go out to the great Scott David Aniolowski and Kevin Ross, for their advice and inspiration. To Ruth Downie, author of the *Gaius Petreius Ruso* series and Mike Duncan of The History of Rome Podcast for making the period come alive for me. And last but hardly least to my wonderful production team: Alberto Guerra, Steff Worthington, Justin Mansfield, Andi Newton, Chad Bowser & Badger McInnes – Thank you for passionate artistry and help in make this project a reality.

Clear Credit

Cover and interior Illustrations are by Alberto Guerra. Maps are by Steff Worthington. Latin and Greek translations provided by Justin Mansfield. Editing was done by Andi Newton. Deep consultation was made with Chad Bowser, creator of the Cthulhu Invictus setting. Cover design and countless other things were done by Tom Lynch. Proofreaders were Christopher Smith Adair and Lisa Padol. Proponomicon supplied handouts. Badger McInnes applied his genius and vision to the task of layout; the book's appearance is all Badger.

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Published in the United States by:

Miskatonic River Press, LLC
944 Reynolds Road, Suite 188
Lakeland, Florida 33801

ISBN 978-0-9821818-4-3

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



FLORIDA, NEW YORK

Guerra 10

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QUOD, PRO PECCATIS, HOSPITIUM MIHI DANT.

HOC ERAT OPTANDUM MUNUS-QUO MUNERE FUNCTUS,

NUMQUAM OMNINO POST ALTERUM HABERE VOLO.

—Oscarios Tabularius, *Apocalypsis 13.16*

The Legacy of Arrius Lurco

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I am writing this down so I do not forget, so I will remember why I do what is hard but right. I write this to remind myself of what has happened so that when the fear grips me and my resolve wavers, it shall not fail. I am not a hero; I am but a man, a mortal man without much time left upon this earth. But I will attempt to make a difference. I shall stand and fight and likely fail. But I will not go quietly or meekly. Let this, above all else, be my legacy.

- Quintus Arrius Lurco

The Year Is...

The actual year is not terribly important, as the campaign can happen over a broad period. The Cthulhu Invictus campaign world is set at about 100 CE. As written, this campaign begins in 130 CE, during the final years of Hadrian's reign as emperor. This can be changed without affecting the campaign in the slightest.

What Has Gone Before

Eihort Enters the Empire

When the first Roman settlers entered what is now known as the Severn Valley in the province of Britannia, they came into contact with many of the Mythos entities that had dwelled there for millennia. One of these was the Great Old One Eihort, God of the Labyrinth. As always, Eihort sought to make a pact with its victims: serve as a host for its brood or be destroyed. A number of Roman citizens who found themselves before the Great Old One accepted, becoming hosts for its broodlings.

Eventually some of these Romans left Britannia, returning to the continental Empire and even Rome itself, while inside them grew the children of an ancient and evil god. Invariably when these broods matured and emerged, they entered a much different world from Britannia. Eihort saw this, knowing what its broodlings knew, and soon desired greater involvement with humanity outside the isle of Britannia. Eihort wanted to extend its reach into the Empire.

Small cults sprang up here and there, the Great Old One slowly learning more about this civilization humans had created. One day it learned a story about a maze built by a king to house his monstrous son — the Labyrinth of Messara. Eihort wanted to see this place for itself, so it created a gate to the very center of the labyrinth. There the Great Old One met the Minotaur and the humans who cared for it, a cult calling itself The Tenders. Both the creature and the humans bowed down in awe to Eihort. The Great Old One quickly took control of them. It now had a secondary base near the heart of the Empire, in the province of Cyrenaica.

From here it was easy for the worship of Eihort to spread,

like an infection through the Empire's body. Small cults, each with its own particular culture and customs, sprang up. One such group, called The Children of Eihort, was formed in the city of Rome itself. For nearly a hundred years Eihort's influence and power has spread, so far unchecked by the forces of man.

The Tragic Tale of Arrius Lurco

Eight years ago, a wealthy patrician named Arrius Lurco experienced a life-changing event that set the campaign in motion. While Lurco was on a business trip to purchase horses in the city of Gortyn, members of a secretive cult called The Tenders drugged and abducted him and his entourage. Upon waking, Arrius Lurco and his men found themselves lost in none other than the subterranean Labyrinth of Messara, constructed by King Minos to house his son, the Minotaur. Soon, they were being stalked and driven forward, herded toward the center of the labyrinth by a hulking creature that lurked in the shadows. Once there, the men came face to face with the Great Old One Eihort, God of the Labyrinth.

Each was offered a bargain by the malevolent entity: become a host for its brood or die. Most of Arrius Lurco's entourage tried to flee, but there was no hope. Eihort killed several while others managed to scramble out of the chamber. Those who escaped Eihort were immediately killed and devoured by its minion, the thing that herded them to the center of the maze, the Minotaur.

None accepted Eihort's proposal, and soon only Arrius Lurco remained alive. Facing certain death, he agreed to the Great Old One's proposal and was implanted with Eihort's brood. Using its Cloud Memory spell, Eihort then erased Arrius Lurco's memory and directed the Minotaur to return him to The Tenders.

Arrius Lurco was released many miles away, near the town of Praesos. The villagers found him wandering aimlessly without any idea how he got there. Since his slaves, coins, and valuables were missing, most people surmised that the wealthy man had been beaten, drugged, and robbed. The patrician returned home and resumed his day-to-day activities, unaware of the creatures growing within him.

But soon Arrius Lurco began to suffer terrible nightmares. So troubled by them that he could barely function, he turned over his business duties to his oldest son, Arrius Casca. The House of Arrius is a primary shareholder in the Reds Racing Faction racing team, so these duties consisted mainly of managing them. Casca proved a natural, doing a splendid job and improving the faction's fortunes considerably as his father retired from public life.

Four years later, Arrius Lurco met and befriended a Greek philosopher named Damokles of Gaios. Soon he confided in Damokles, telling him about the recurring nightmares. The philosopher made a detailed record of these dreams, discussing them at length with Lurco. The patrician became Damokles' patron, fully supporting him. Eventually both men grew convinced that these dreams were lost memories of Lurco's missing time in Crete eight years before. In truth, while most of the dreams were memories, some were just dreams. The logs

compiled by Lurco and Damokles are both an incomplete and inaccurate account of what truly transpired.

Once again aware of his bargain with Eihort, Arrius Lurco decided to take action. He consulted physicians and mystics, but none could find anything physically wrong with him. The patrician soon gave up hope of being cured of the broodlings or of learning how much time remained before they matured and killed him. Instead, he chose to dedicate what was left of his life to ensure that the Great Old One never again struck such a bargain. He planned to destroy the cultists, the Minotaur, and the Great Old One, Eihort itself.

A Great Quest Begins (Involving the Investigators)

Getting investigators involved may be a little tricky for Keepers. A possible link for investigators to the quest is through the younger of Arrius Lurco's two sons, a man named Arrius Melito. Unlike his older brother Casca, Melito cares more about his father than about the Reds Racing Faction. He is very concerned by his father's erratic behavior and needs the investigators' help.

The investigators could be colleagues, neighbors, or friends of the family. They might meet Arrius Melito at a poetry reading, a bathhouse, or a temple and simply strike up a conversation with a thoughtful youth deeply concerned about his father. Whatever seems most logical or convenient to the Keeper should be employed.

The Tale of Theseus and the Minotaur

Much of this campaign was inspired by the Greek myth of Theseus and the Minotaur. The story itself is referenced many times, and the investigators will follow the path of the characters in the tale, sometimes without even knowing it. A synopsis of the myth is included here for the Keeper's reference.

Overview of the Campaign

The Legacy of Arrius Lurco presents the investigators with a quest that requires many sessions of play. The campaign is

Theseus

After his father, King Aegeus, had formally recognized Theseus as the prince of Athens, the young prince learned that Athens paid a yearly tribute to Crete in the form of seven Athenian youths and maidens. These young men and women would be fed to the Minotaur, the son of Pasiphae, wife of King Minos of Crete. Half-man and half-bull, the monstrous creature hungered for flesh. Theseus pledged to put a stop to this outrage and switched places with one of the young Athenians meant for sacrifice to the Minotaur, intent on slaying the creature.

The moment she laid eyes on him, Princess Ariadne, the daughter of King Minos of Crete, fell in love with Theseus. As he was sent into the labyrinth, Ariadne gave Theseus a sword to do battle with and a spool of thread to find his way out of the maze. Theseus found the Minotaur in the center of the labyrinth and killed the monster. He then returned to his ship and escaped Crete, taking the Athenian youths, maidens, and Princess Ariadne with him.

broken into four parts, or books, in two acts during which the investigators battle the forces of the Great Old One Eihort. What begins with investigating the strange behavior of a wealthy patrician eventually leads them into battle against two separate cults, various Mythos creatures, the Minotaur, and Eihort itself. The campaign begins in Rome and before concluding visits Athens, Delphi, and Gortyn on the island of Crete. The first act comprises the two scenarios that take place in Rome and Ostia. The second act contains the final two scenarios, which occur in Graecia and Cyrenaica.

Part One, The Seventh Turn

This scenario launches the campaign, starting with the investigators looking into the strange behavior of a wealthy patrician. They soon become embroiled in a struggle between a father and his eldest son. The investigators encounter civil unrest, murderous racing fans, and heartbroken lovers and begin to shed light on what actually happened to Arrius Lurco in Crete. Unfortunately, time has run out for the patrician. He meets his end before his mission to destroy the Great Old One Eihort even begins.

Part Two, Mask of the Funeral Clown

With Arrius Lurco dead, his son Casca takes control of the family. He throws a formal funeral befitting his father's rank. The investigators become targets of Eihort's cult in Rome, The Children of Eihort, which feels they know too much. To survive, the investigators must turn the tables on The Children. Doing so requires the investigators to work with a former member of the cult named Caelia and to deal with one of Rome's criminal collegia.

Part Three, Scion of Vulcan

Caelia tells the investigators they do not have the power to defeat Eihort. She knows of a mysterious figure called the



Scion of Vulcan who created a machine that could project a ray of death. Caelia helps the investigators in an effort to find this man and obtain the weapon. Along the way, they visit the Parthenon, obtain an audience with the Oracle of Delphi, and come into conflict with two powerful, non-human races.

Part Four, A Second Theseus

The investigators leave Graecia for Cyrenaica, pursued by the minions of Eihort at every turn. They face difficult choices, betrayal, captivity, death, and fulfilled prophecies before turning the tables on The Tenders. The investigators must free their captured patron and possibly loved ones. They must ultimately face and defeat both the Minotaur and the Great Old One Eihort. It is a battle that could mean mankind's freedom from the God of the Labyrinth for generations. In the end, great rewards and more difficult choices remain before the investigators.

Pushed to the Edge

Among the themes of *The Legacy of Arrius Lurco* are hard choices, harsh realities, and humanizing the struggles of the investigators against the forces of the Mythos. Facing such evil will not leave investigators unscathed or untainted. To achieve specific goals, they will be pushed to do things they

might not like. At times what they face won't be glamorous. They will come away with blood on their hands and heavy hearts, struggling to come to terms with their actions.

Some of these choices are intended to explore the moral differences of a pre-Judeo-Christian society. Others are personal challenges, testing the investigators' basic humanity. Parts of the campaign are for mature audiences. Keepers should judge what might be ill-suited to their players and omit or alter anything necessary to ensure that both they and their players have the most enjoyable experience.

The Cast of The Legacy of Arrius Lurco

The Legacy of Arrius Lurco has a cast of more than seventy NPCs. The investigators meet and talk with many people, some of whom are major characters and some of whom are not. All are important, as individual tiles are to a mosaic, but the investigators will deal extensively with certain characters. We will address them first, followed by lists of minor characters. Details about the minor characters are provided later, in the scenarios in which they appear.

Major Characters

Arrius Lurco

Quintus Arrius Lurco is a 57-year-old patrician from a respectable family. He is pater familias of the House of Arrius, an upstanding man with a good reputation. However, he is known for having a temper when his authority is questioned. As primary owner of the Reds Racing Faction, he personally managed the chariot racing team for many years before turning those duties over to his elder son, Arrius Casca. Fans regard Arrius Lurco as a good manager but admit the team's fortunes have improved under his son's guidance.

Most know of Arrius Lurco's kidnapping eight years ago and how he quietly withdrew from public life after returning to Rome. However, those closest to him know that since then he has slept poorly and his behavior has grown increasingly more erratic. Rumor has it he's moving large sums of money around. He also freed his long-time slave and suspected lover, Hedeia, then had the woman forcibly removed from his home. No one has dared asked him to explain, but his sons are concerned.

Arrius Lurco is planning a dangerous mission, but it is fundamentally flawed by mistaken memories and an underestimation of his adversary. However, these facts are irrelevant as the man's time is nearly up. By the end of the events covered in "The Seventh Turn", Arrius Lurco will be dead.

Arrius Casca

Decimus Arrius Casca is the elder son of Arrius Lurco and current manager of the Reds Racing Faction. He is a brilliant strategist, both in business and racing, driven and dedicated to his team. Like his father, Casca has a bad temper, and the two have had some famous disputes over the years. Casca brazenly moved out of his father's house, purchasing his own villa to live with his wife and children. While causing a scandal at the time, it proved a good move for the father and son, who seemed to get along better living under separate roofs.

Casca is unaware of much of his father's strange behavior. He is currently focused on managing the Reds Racing Faction, which is having its best season in a generation. Casca is very aware of his status and public image, taking steps to protect both. While friendly to most, his bodyguards are never far away, giving the impression that Arrius Casca isn't someone you'd like to have as an enemy.

Arrius Melito

Five years younger than his brother, Casca, Arrius Lurco's younger son was favored by his mother for being more sensitive and creative than outgoing and ambitious. Appius Arrius Melito took to literature, especially poetry, and had several works published (at his own expense, of course). Since his father named Casca as heir despite their often stormy relationship, Melito had greater freedom to pursue his own interests — as long as he did so with discretion. While Casca learned the family business and married to further the family's standing, Melito enjoyed reading books and writing poems in his

father's garden.

Being home with time on his hands has enabled Melito to see just how badly his father is suffering. He witnessed Hedeia being dragged out of the house, listened to his father screaming with night terrors, and overheard many conversations about his father's strange financial maneuvers. Frankly, Melito fears his father may be going mad and wants to help him. His concern is selfless, and he has no hidden agenda. Melito is a dutiful, loving son who is quite used to living in the shadow of both his father and his brother.

Hedeia (Lurca Hedeia)

Hedeia was a slave in the Arrius household since the age of seven. When Hedeia was only thirteen years old Lurco's wife, Calvia, died in childbirth. The child, a daughter, was stillborn. Shortly thereafter, Lurco sought comfort in the beautiful slave girl, sparking a love affair that lasted seventeen years. Most suspected Lurco never remarried out of grief, but the real reason was that with Hedeia at his side, he had no desire to.

Hedeia became Lurco's lover, friend, and confidant. She was like a mother to young Casca and Melito, who were eleven and six when their mother died. Hedeia cared about Lurco a great deal, never pushing the issue of manumission or commitment. She was simply happy to be a part of his life. The other slaves, servants, and close family friends knew of the affair but kept it a private matter within the household. In Hedeia's heart, Arrius Lurco is her husband and his sons are her children, even though she's aware of the realities regarding their relationship.

When Arrius Lurco returned from Crete, Hedeia was the first to know of his night terrors and recognize the change in his behavior. She tried to help him, to get him to talk to her about what had happened, but he became more and more distant. Finally, Lurco informed her one day that she was free and being sent to live in a home the Arrius family owned in Ostia. Hedeia was shocked and heartbroken; in a fit, she refused to go. Lurco struck her, had her dragged out of the house, and had her taken to her new home.

At the start of the campaign Hedeia is a heartbroken woman of thirty, still deeply in love with Arrius Lurco. Although freed, she still thinks very much like a slave. As the campaign continues, she finds new strength and determination, taking up the mantle thrust upon her, that of Lurca Hedeia. She becomes the investigators' patron, and possibly an adopted mother to one or more of them. In the end, Hedeia blossoms into a courageous woman determined to bring justice to the memory of Arrius Lurco, even at the cost of her own life.

Caelia

Entering our story in "Mask of the Funeral Clown", Caelia is a woman whose beauty is only surpassed by her ruthlessness. The Children, the local cult of Eihort, picked her up from the streets of Rome as an abandoned newborn. She was raised within the cult, rising through its ranks until she became one of its leaders. Publicly, Caelia appeared to be a high-priced courtesan and enjoyed a very good life.

This all changed the day her husband, Nelius, died, consumed before Caelia's eyes by a brood of Eihort. What should have been a joyous day of religious consummation filled Caelia with horror and regret. She left the cult, faking her death. At the start of the campaign, Caelia is living as a busturaria on the outskirts of Rome — literally a “grave watcher”, a prostitute who plies her trade in graveyards. She dreams of a better life and of somehow exacting vengeance on those who took from her the only man she ever loved.

To accomplish these goals, Caelia tries to ingratiate herself to the investigators. She has information the investigators need to move forward in the campaign. Caelia is a sociopath, self-centered and largely amoral. She is a master of manipulation, a skilled spell caster, and a natural survivor. Her mind constructs plans inside of plans, using everything and everyone at her disposal to accomplish her objective. Strangely, she craves contact and acceptance, often feeling lonely and vulnerable.

In the end, Caelia is the key to any success the investigators might have. She forms various plans to assist the investigators, always making sure to help herself along the way. Ultimately, Caelia betrays the investigators to The Tenders, only to turn around and betray the cult on the investigators' behalf. Much like Princess Ariadne in the tale of Theseus and the Minotaur, Caelia's actions are vital to the investigators' victory over Eihort (see **The Serpent**).

Taras

Primarily appearing in Scion of Vulcan, Taras is a well-educated, good-looking charmer. His involvement with the Mythos began when his father, Hesiod, had his consciousness switched with a time-traveling member of the Great Race of Yith. Hesiod, who had been a simple Athenian honey farmer,

became known far and wide as the Scion of Vulcan, a mysterious genius with a gift for science and invention. For many years, Taras assisted the alien that had usurped control of his father's body and in effect became a high-ranking Yithian agent. However, a disastrous mission ended this relationship; Taras no longer serves the Great Race.

Currently Taras is a slave working to earn his freedom, dreaming of the day he can be reunited with his father and they can return to their simple lives as beekeepers. His father is now also a slave, crippled by the attack of a Flying Polyp and abandoned by the Yithian consciousness. Taras left the service of the Great Race, killing an agent sent to free him after learning the Yithians had no intention of helping Hesiod.

Taras willingly leads the investigators to one of the Scion's greatest inventions, a machine constructed to hurl bolts of lightning. In return Taras requires his freedom, his father's freedom, and the investigators' help in acquiring land so he and his father can resume lives as rural farmers. The quest to find the Scion of Vulcan and recover his formidable death ray weapon comprises the campaign's entire third scenario, entitled Scion of Vulcan.

A Hero Falls (Bringing in Replacements)

The Legacy of Arrius Lurco can be a deadly campaign. One or more — possibly many more — investigators might die. If this happens, the Keeper can have players create new investigators to replace fallen ones. Working replacement investigators into a campaign is always a challenge for Keepers. In addition to the traditional sources of friends, colleagues and family members, investigator teams can replenish their depleted ranks with:

Slaves

The investigators can purchase slaves to help them, promising the slaves freedom if the mission is completed. Slaves can either be of the slave profession or be members of another profession who suffered the misfortune of being enslaved.

Hired Criminals

Once investigators make contacts within the plumbing collegium of the Aventine, they have an “in” with organized crime (see Mask of the Funeral Clown). Players can easily create inves-

Minor Characters for “The Seventh Turn”

Name	Description
Albius Macer	The Reds Faction's best driver
Brutus, Maro, Natta, and Scaeva	Bestiarii (gladiators who fight wild animals)
Corvinis	The Reds Faction's fastest horse
Damokles of Gaios	Greek philosopher and client of Arrius Lurco
Decrius Neops	Enraged and murderous fan wanting revenge
Gundislav, Gelvira, Euric, and Alewar	Slaves of Lollius Pudens
Lollius Pudens	Tabulae defixiones, or curse tablet, maker
Micilla	Lovely entertainer owned by Arrius Lurco
Moab of Tyrus	Aged Jewish mystic and rabbi
Porculus	Arrius Lurco's loyal personal slave
Ruga and Celer	Dimacherii (gladiators who fight with two swords)
Senitus Bellator	Roman scholar specializing in Greek myths
Taccius Avitus	Captain of The Lady of Athens
Ventor	Personal slave of Emperor Hadrian
Yoel	Younger Jewish rabbi
Curtis Sulinus, Papius Bato, Accius Ovidis, Sidonius Carinus, Florius Zeno, and Ullerius Abito	Wealthy partners and shareholders of the Reds Racing Faction

tigators who are members of the collegia seeking to help PCs for “a piece of the action.”

Rescued Individuals

Keepers can allow some of the NPCs rescued by the investigators to join their ranks. These could be some of the older children being raised by The Children of Eihort (see **Mask of the Funeral Clown**), villagers captured by swine folk (see **Scion of Vulcan**), or any other place throughout the campaign.

Societas Cryptaeidis Agents

After making contacts within Societas Cryptaeidis, replacement investigators can be created from their ranks. Many agents from Societas Cryptaeidis would volunteer to help the investigators on a mission to defend mankind from the sinister forces of the Mythos.

Encountered NPCs

Any minor NPC encountered anywhere during the campaign could be converted into a PC. Examples include consulted scholars, religious figures, soldiers, guards, and merchants. Basically, anyone willing to help the investigators and join their quest could become a replacement PC.

Shattered Minds

The investigators encounter countless horrors and learn unspeakable knowledge, both of which sorely tax their mental stability as much as their physical bodies. They may lose their minds before they lose their lives. If this happens, the investigators can recover Sanity in a number of ways.

The rules for recovering Sanity are found in the “Recovering Sanity” section of the Cthulhu Invictus sourcebook. Trips to bathhouses, temples, and resort villas like Lurca Hedeia’s home in Ostia or Caelia’s apartment in Piraeus allow investigators to recover 1D3 points of Sanity per week, for a period of up to three weeks.

Investigators suffering from indefinite insanity require a more substantial form of relaxation, such as a trip to a country villa or resort. The investigators can find such places at Delphi, where Elpidios sends all but one of the investigators for a week, and the home of Taras and Hesiod in the countryside north of Athens, where the investigators stay for more than a month. Both opportunities take place in “Scion of Vulcan” and enable investigators to recover 1D4 Sanity

Minor Characters for “Mask of the Funeral Clown”

Name	Description
Agorix	Slave of Arrius Casca
Apollina	Courtesan and member of The Children of Eihort
Dama	Pimp and member of The Children of Eihort
Gala	Maelius Primus’ second-in-command
Gratian, Martius	Professional assassins working for Maelius Primus
Grumio	Thuggish killer and member of The Children
Larcilla	Motherly apothecary and member of The Children
Maelius Primus	Leader of the Aventine criminal collegium
Magnilla	Possible future bride of Arrius Melito
Menia Tutella	Wife of Arrius Casca
Pavo	Plumber and member of The Children
Pavia and Proxia	Beautiful twin slave girls owned by Maelius Primus
Sarrius	Fatherly plumber and member of The Children
Thalna and Falto	Bodyguards of Melito and spies for Casca
Trogus	Famed and aged stallion of the Reds Racing Faction

points per week, for a period of no more than three weeks.

The investigators can recover 1D2 Sanity points for attending sporting events, if the Keeper allows this option. They can also attend gladiatorial contests, wild beast hunts, or public executions in various arenas. They can watch wrestling matches, particularly at The Academy in Athens. The investigators can spend a day enjoying the Empire’s favorite pastime, attending the chariot races. As they are likely associated with families owning the Reds Racing Faction, securing tickets to the races or even use of a luxury owner’s box should not be too difficult.

The Cults and Secret Societies

The Legacy of Arrius Lurco features a secret society dedicated to defending mankind against the Cthulhu Mythos and two separate cults that worship Eihort. The Children of Eihort are the antagonists of “Mask of the Funeral Clown”, with The Tenders encountered in “A Second Theseus”. Both are briefly discussed here and with greater detail in the scenarios in which they appear.

Societas Cryptaeidis, dedicated to fighting the dark forces of the Cthulhu Mythos, appears in “Scion of Vulcan” and “A Second Theseus” during the second act of *The Legacy of Arrius Lurco*. The investigators will be assisted by, and possibly recruited into, the secretive society.

The Children of Eihort

Located in the city of Rome, this small cult is dedicated to serving the Great Old One Eihort. Outwardly they seem little more than a group of slave trainers, pimps, prostitutes, courtesans, and plumbers. In actuality, they are a well-organized

and deadly religious group worshipping a powerful inhuman entity. The cult is organized as a large extended family, with new members not so much recruited as adopted. Nearly every member of The Children began life as an infant abandoned in the streets of Rome. Families regularly take such children to be raised as their own or as slaves. Otherwise they are simply ignored until they die from exposure.

The primary duty of The Children of Eihort is to assist Eihort's broods that emerge from hosts in Rome. This means helping them find passage into the Earth, where they join others of their kind. There the broods wait for the day the stars come right and Eihort rules over vast swaths of the world. Sometimes a brood takes on a humanoid form, called a broodling, in order to issue commands to The Children. When this happens, The Children joyously obey, as such orders come directly from their divine master.

So devoted are the members of this cult that their greatest desire is to serve as a host for Eihort's brood. To them, this is a glorious end and their ultimate religious fulfillment. Members make a pilgrimage to the Labyrinth of Messara to receive Eihort's brood, returning there if possible once the mature brood is ready to emerge. This kills the cultist and is the final part of a ritual they call Becoming One.

The Tenders

The Tenders are an ancient cult, older even than Eihort's presence in the Roman Empire. The group began as royal servants of King Minos who were charged with maintaining the Labyrinth of Messara, guarding its location and tending to the needs of its occupant. They were the keepers of the Minotaur, devoted to its well-being and protection. Over time they became a cult, donning bull masks and robes, delivering human sacrifices to the creature whenever possible.

Several times in the cult's history the Minotaur has been slain, most famously by the Athenian hero Theseus. The Tenders possess the spell of Resurrection and use it when necessary to restore their charge to life. Without a living Minotaur to tend, The Tenders would have no purpose. The cultists equip the creature with weapons, armor, and an enchanted torc to make it as formidable as possible. Today the cult controls marble quarries outside the city of Gortyn in Cyrenaica, below which lies the Labyrinth of Messara.

When Eihort claimed the Labyrinth it as its own, both the Minotaur and The Tenders accepted the Great Old One's mastery. The Minotaur and its cult had suffered a void in their hierarchy since the death of the last King of Crete. To them, Eihort has replaced King Minos as father, sovereign

Minor Characters for "Scion of Vulkan"

Name	Description
Aeton	Young priest of Apollo
Alexios	Restless shade of a fallen hoplite
Balios	Wealthy wine trader known for throwing parties
Elpidios	Proxenos and Societas Cryptaegidis commander
Gervasios	Metalworker and former assistant of the Scion of Vulkan
Hesiod	Humble honey farmer who became the Scion of Vulkan
Kadmos	Small-time merchant and owner of Hesiod
Kepheus	Philosopher and Societas Cryptaegidis agent
Makarios	Priest of Athena and Societas Cryptaegidis commander
Nikias	Priest of Vulkan serving at the Hephaisteion
The Pythia	The Voice of Apollo, the world's most famous oracle; The Oracle at Delphi

lord, and master. Even without Eihort, however, the cult of The Tenders would continue since their primary service shall always center on the Minotaur. So long as the Minotaur lives, The Tenders will care for it.

Societas Cryptaegidis (The Hidden Shield Society)

In 5 CE, during the reign of Augustus, a group of scholars began making connections among some of the most haunting and incredible tales recorded from all over the Empire. People from different provinces, with different languages, folklore and customs, all described similar creatures, sinister cults, and the names of dark, hidden gods. A legionary in Britannia and a merchant in Macedonia both reported being attacked by a huge, tree-like creature with tentacles. A messenger from Gaul, a priestess in Agyptus, and a finder working in Graecia all told stories about people worshipping a sea god called Cthulhu.

Scholars, scribes, and historians from all over the Empire gathered to compare their findings. The meeting took place in the vacation home of a well-known patron of the arts, a man named Lucius Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus. He was wealthy and well-respected, a former consul of the Roman Republic. More importantly, he shared the scholars' belief that something dark and sinister lurked in the shadows of the Empire. Piso felt they needed more information, but secrecy was required as well. He began to fund secret fact-finding missions to look into some of the stories.

The first teams found much more than they wanted to. Dark, hidden things do not take kindly to being the center of anyone's attention. Many team members died or vanished. Others survived, learned from their mistakes, and recruited new members into their ranks to replace the fallen. Investigation soon turned into opposition, as most of these uncovered horrors posed a grave threat to mankind. Operatives realized lives would always be hanging in the balance, lives which needed protecting.

The agents reconvened five years after that first meeting. They had amassed a small library of eyewitness accounts, mission logs, captured spells, and religious scrolls from various dark cults. Piso Caesoninus once again hosted the gathering at his villa in Herculaneum and proposed a radical restructuring of the group. It was not enough to investigate these things; mankind needed a protector. A group dedicated to protecting the lives of men and to keeping the nightmarish truth from tainting their minds. Caesoninus named this group himself, choosing the Greek “Societas Cryptaegidis” or “The Hidden Shield Society”.

Since then, teams of Cryptaegidis members have quietly investigated mysterious happenings. When they encounter the forces of the Mythos, they oppose it with whatever tools they have. The Society has hundreds of members scattered across the Empire, from senators to bathhouse girls, from centurions to pickpockets. Slave or free, man or woman, so long as someone can be useful to the society and is committed to defend mankind, they have a place in Societas Cryptaegidis.

Members are organized into small teams, or chapters. Some chapters are assigned to specific locations, while others are sent to wherever they are needed. Two such chapters are stationed in the city of Rome. Each chapter is led by a commander, who is seldom the most experienced agent of the team because the society feels that older agents tend to be overly cautious and less mentally stable. Commanders traditionally step down before the age of forty or when they feel they’ve lost their edge. Former commanders remain with their chapters in an advisory role.

Teams are given money, travel papers, letters of introduction, forged identities — whatever they might need. They once had access to the library of information gathered by the Society, which was located inside the Villa of Piso in Herculaneum. However, this was lost when the city was destroyed in the volcanic eruption of 79 CE.

All Cryptaegidis members wear a signet ring emblazoned with a shield. They swear never to betray their team, the society, or mankind, and to keep their activities a secret from outsiders. Agents keep an eye out for others fighting the same war, groups of people standing against the Mythos on their own. Sometimes such “independents” are offered a place within the society itself after an in-depth screening process.

Mythos Tome, Testamentum Arrii Lurconis

This Mythos tome is a collection of ten separate maps and scrolls. Housed in a specially designed box, the documents

comprise a single Mythos tome, detailing everything Arrius Luro remembers — or thinks he remembers — of his encounter with the Minotaur, the Great Old One Eihort, and the human cultists serving both. The tome contains five spells and information about the nature of magic. It also details what Arrius Lurco’s plans are, plans he will not live to see realized. More information about *Testamentum Arrii Lurconis* appears in “The Seventh Turn”.

TESTAMENTUM ARRII LURCONIS - *in Latin. Sanity Loss 1/1D4; Cthulhu Mythos: +8%; Study Time 4 weeks.* Spells: Bless Blade, Exile Eihort, Fist of Yog-Sothoth, Heal, and Impeccable Throw.

Magic and Spells

In addition to the spells contained in the mythos tome *Testamentum Arrii Lurconis*, investigators can learn other spells from Caelia. At various times, and for varying prices, she will offer to teach the investigators: Ariadne’s Twine; Balk Brood; Healing; Summon Typhoon; and, eventually, Resurrection.

Investigators should be careful when learning magic. Spells have a taxing effect on one’s sanity. Roman authorities also take a dim view of practitioners of magic, with known spell casters being exiled, beaten, and even executed. Such magicians are commonly banned from entering religious establishments, as they are considered living violations of the natural order. Investigators who become spell casters should take steps to keep their abilities a secret to outsiders.

Investigators wanting to learn spells can do so by reading Mythos tomes or by being tutored by other spell casters. Learning a spell from a tome requires 2D6 weeks of study and a successful INT x3 check (or as individual Keepers see fit). Being taught a spell by someone else takes considerably less time. Students must make an INT x3 check per week of study to learn a spell and can then teach it to others. For more information about learning spells, see the section on magic

Minor Characters for “A Second Theseus”	
Name	Description
Agathias	Landlord and leader of The Tenders cult
Andrea and Ceadda	Uncaptured members of Societas Cryptaegidis
Cinna	Roman centurion leading a construction detachment
Hostilius	Agent of Societas Cryptaegidis, deceased
Jodoc, Morcant, and Tallulah	Trio of Emissaries of Eihort
Krios	Miserable slave boy owned by Caelia
Kesi	Agent of Societas Cryptaegidis, captured
Sergius Messalla	Second-in-command of The Tenders
Sosius Cotta	Commander in Societas Cryptaegidis, captured
The Great Old One Eihort	The Pale God of the Labyrinth
The Minotaur	Bull-headed Cretan and powerful minion of Eihort
Titus	Captain of the merchant ship <i>Fortuna</i>
Vellius	Agent of Societas Cryptaegidis, deceased

in the *Call of Cthulhu* 6th edition rulebook.

Poisons

Poison is a part of life in Roman society. Both The Children of Eihort and The Tenders regularly employ exotic poisons in their operations. The Children use Hades Tears, and The Tenders employ Kiss of Twilight. Both poisons are listed here for quick reference and are described in more detail in the scenarios where they appear:

Hades Tears

Dose	2-4 drops
POT	16
Onset	1 hour
Duration	4 hours
Symptoms	Pain, diarrhea, death

Kiss of Twilight

Dose	1oz
POT	14
Onset	30-60 minutes
Duration	12-24 hours
Symptoms	Reduced to semi-conscious state

Five New Professions

Several new professions are scattered throughout this book:

- Charioteer (page 17)
- Advocate / Jurisconsultus (page 31)
- Newsreader (page 38)
- Laborer (page 51)

Note that the charioteer profession used in this campaign differs from the one listed in *Cthulhu Invictus* because the version here is for competitive sports entertainment, not military endeavors.

The Serpent

The beautiful and manipulative woman Caelia is vital to the investigators' success. She is above all else a survivor, ever seeking to better her position and security. The former cultist is intelligent and seductive, calculating and self-centered. She allies herself with the investigators for revenge, personal gain, and a share of the wealth they may gain once the Great Old One Eihort is defeated. She is not a heroine or a villain, an ally or an enemy; the only side Caelia is on is her own. However, this does not mean she is unfeeling. Caelia enjoys being a part of a group or team and craves social interaction and connection.

Keepers should portray this complex NPC carefully. Caelia tries to make certain her position with the investigators is secure. She helps them just enough that they know they need her, but never gives them so much information they'll be able to move forward without her. Some information she keeps to herself, if possible, but freely gives aid when it best serves her purposes. The investigators may never, and likely should never, fully trust her.

If the investigators harm Caelia or even kill her at some point, they will be unlikely to safely proceed to the final conclusion of the campaign. Without her help, and even her ultimate "betrayal", investigators cannot overcome the challenges facing them. Keepers should try to portray her as opportunistic but not threatening. If Keepers encounter players who outright refuse to work with Caelia, they should call for Idea rolls which advise the players that, without Caelia's information, the quest will be much more difficult, if not impossible. Keepers can also have Caelia try to win over reluctant investigators with gifts such as an enchanted dagger, poison, or antidote as a peace offering. The investigators might not like it, but Caelia is a necessary evil.



THE SEVENTH TURN

For a long time I was afraid I was going mad. The nightmares came, stronger each time. I would wake up screaming, covered in cold sweat. I withdrew from work, from family, from everyone closest to me. Slowly I pieced things together, as if I was creating a mosaic without knowing what it was meant to be. Soon I realized that I wasn't going mad. I was remembering. It was all coming back to me. I was living my nightmare, and it was real. I wasn't mad. For the first time in my life I saw the world as it truly was. Oh, would that Jove had stricken me mad instead!

– Quintus Arrius Lurco

Our story begins with a father, his two sons, and their family business. Casca and Melito fear their father, Arrius Lurco, might be going mad. His behavior has become erratic, and he's making decisions that drastically hurt the family's business. He doesn't explain himself, nor would they dare question him, for as *pater familias* he is not accountable to his children.

In the last few weeks, Arrius Lurco has liquidated several key assets and spent much of the family's fortune on some unusual things. While such actions would be troubling to any family or business, the House of Arrius is squarely in the public eye. As one of the primary owners of the Reds Chariot Racing Faction, Lurco's mysterious actions attract quite a bit of negative attention, some of which eventually turn deadly. However, the truth is far worse than bad business decisions and a patriarch going insane.

Keeper's Information, Rome (last six months)

Arrius Lurco and Damokles of Gaios have spent some time now rebuilding the patrician's lost time from when he vanished in Crete several years ago. Learning what they believe to be the truth and comprehending its full horror, they devised a daring plan. Lurco purchased various scrolls and maps, becoming familiar with the history of Crete. He consulted Senitus Bellator, a noted scholar, learning whatever he could about the legends of Theseus and the Minotaur. A Jewish mystic named Moab of Tyros taught Lurco several spells. The patrician purchased six of the finest gladiators in Rome, four bestiarii and two dimacherii, whom he has promised to free after they "perform in Crete." Lastly, he hired a fast ship and its crew for the entire season. All this cost Lurco a small fortune, so he decided to get involved once again with running the Reds Racing Faction to raise some quick capital.

Involving the Investigators

Melito, Arrius Lurco's younger son, can easily hire the investigators. He'll want them to look into his father's actions and discover if there's a purpose behind his irrational actions. Arrius Casca is more concerned with the Reds Racing Faction's future and the family's reputation than he is with his father's apparent descent into madness. The investigators may also simply find themselves invited to watch the races from the House of Arrius booth, possibly as a favor or reward from a close friend of the family or someone connected with the Reds Racing Faction.

The Reds Racing Faction

Since Arrius Casca became manager, the fortunes of the Reds have greatly improved. Traditionally an underdog to the Greens and the Blues, they've recently begun winning more often. Long-suffering Reds fans are saying, "Tandem aliquando vicemus!" or, "At long last we shall win!" This is mainly due to the energetic and cunning moves of their new manager. Arrius Casca has hired new riders, purchased new horses, and micro-managed nearly every aspect of the faction's operations. His talent for this is apparent to all, and Casca has become almost as famous as the beloved Albius Macer, the Reds' best driver, and Corvinis, their fastest horse.

However, Arrius Lurco has bigger things to worry about than the fortunes of a chariot team. The expenses of the operation he's putting together are immense, and he must raise additional money fast. Unbeknownst to anyone, Lurco has just sold some of the Reds Faction's best horses to competing organizations. He also sold the contracts of their best driver to the team's chief rival, the Blues. While this gives the patrician the money he needs to pay for his mission to Crete, it will enrage his eldest son, his business partners, and tens of thousands of obsessive Reds Faction fans. "The Seventh Turn" begins on the morning these transactions become public.

Part One - A Day at the Circus

By the start of this day, the investigators should have been invited by someone to the House of Arrius box suite in the Circus Maximus for a day of races. It's early in the racing season, and the day dawns bright and warm. A capacity crowd already sits hip-to-hip in the stadium, and excitement fills the air.

If invited by Melito the concerned young man asks the investigators to help discover what is wrong with his father. He will meet them in the hallway just outside the suite and greet them. "When we enter, I'll introduce you to my father,"

Chariot Racing in the Ancient World

While most people know about the popularity of the gladiators performing in the arena, it was not the most popular form of entertainment in Ancient Rome. That honor went to chariot racing. It unified the society, transcended classes, divided families, and obsessed commoners and emperors alike. If we today took the fan enthusiasm of international soccer and combined it with American mid-western college basketball, it still wouldn't compare to how seriously Roman citizens took chariot racing. Fortunes were won and lost in betting, fame was gained, and life ended on the track — and at times the streets of Rome ran red with the blood of rioting fans.

he tells the investigators. “That way you can start trying to find out what might be going on with him.”

At the Arrius Suite

Comfortable furniture arranged throughout the luxurious Arrius suite provides a wonderful view of the track. Slaves dressed in fine red tunics drift about serving chilled wine, fresh fruit, cheese, and tidbits of grilled meats on platters. The investigators meet Arrius Lurco, his elder son Casca, and about a dozen other hangers-on, personal slaves, and flunkies. If the investigators have not already met Arrius Melito, they are introduced to him as well. Investigators who make a successful Know roll are aware of the following information concerning the House of Arrius, chariot racing, and the Reds Faction. Multiple results are possible with 1 additional item granted for every 5 points rolled under an investigator's Know score.

1. The Reds have been coming up in the ranks for years, thanks to Arrius Casca's fine leadership.
2. Arrius Lurco, while a good manager of the faction, is not as skilled as his son.
3. Arrius Casca will inherit majority ownership of the faction upon his father's death.
4. Arrius Melito is a self-published poet of minor fame living off the family's fortune.
5. The current stars of the Reds Racing Faction are a skilled and charismatic driver named Albius Macer and Corvinis, a small, black, fleet-footed stallion.

Rumors in the Crowd

Any investigator who makes a successful Listen roll or deliberately seeks out the latest “hot tips” on his way into the stadium overhears a rumor sweeping the crowd. The exact details vary and nobody has firm information, but the story is that the Reds secretly met with their hated rivals the Blues last night. Most fans seem worried about it, with Reds fans angrily denying such a thing would *ever* happen.

Small Talk Before the Races

The only people of consequence in the House of Arrius suite are Arrius Lurco, Casca, and Melito. Lurco is quiet but pleasant, somewhat distracted and uncomfortable. A successful Insight roll will reveal to investigators that Lurco is nervous and hiding something. The elder Arrius will stick to mundane topics of conversation such as the wine and the weather.

Casca is animated and passionate, his conversations always gravitating toward the races. He'll inquire what faction the investigators root for; if they are rivals, he will try to get them to place wagers to back up their allegiances. However, his eyes constantly shift to his father, and he appears a little off balance. A successful Insight roll reveals to investigators that Casca is also nervous and is suspicious

about his father's return to the Circus Maximus.

Melito is shy and seems out of place here. No Insight roll is needed to determine that he's similarly nervous about his father attending the games. Melito also keeps glancing toward his father. The youngest Arrius tries to take part in the conversation, but in truth knows very little about racing, a topic his brother, Casca, constantly returns to.

If the investigators ask about the rumored secret inter-faction meetings, the tension level in the room rises considerably. Casca denies that any such meeting took place. However, if the investigators ask Lurco about the rumor, he quietly states, “The crowd is always talking. I'd pay it no mind.” Still, he makes sure that Casca is nowhere nearby when he replies.

The Augur

Before the races begin, a well-dressed older woman enters, a broad-shouldered man behind her carrying a small box in one hand and several caged chickens in the other. The woman, Noctullia, is a famed local augur hired by Casca to read the fates before the races begin. She practices *ex tripudiis*, auguries based on the feeding of sacred chickens, and her silent assis-

Charioteer (Sporting)

While gladiatorial matches may be popular, they seldom eclipse the excitement of the local chariot races. Teams are run by contractors and divided into the Reds, Greens, Whites, and Blues (marked by the color worn by the drivers). Romans are very passionate about the races, with team loyalties breaking friendships and dividing families. Spectators line up before dawn or pay someone to get seats for them, and betting is common. Races begin with parades that feature performers, musicians, public officials, and the priesthood carrying likenesses of gods or goddesses. Chariot racing is big business, a huge social event, and part of the very soul of the Roman Empire — and everyone is here to see you. You're a charioteer for one of the established teams. You're from the lower classes of Roman society or even a slave because, let's face it, who else would take these risks? Death and injury are a constant danger, with drivers frequently forced to cut themselves free and leap clear of wrecking chariots. Up to a quarter million spectators watch as you race either a two- or four-horse chariot around the circuit at one of the half dozen circuses in the Empire. A good day can win you fame and fortune; a bad day can kill you. But that's the life of a charioteer, and fortune favors the bold.

Skills: Animal Training, Dodge, Drive, First Aid, Jump, Repair, Status, Weapon – Whip.

Special: +2 to Dex, +10 to Drive, -1 to EDU, -10 to Status. This profession is available only to lower classes (Commons, Latins, Peregrini, Freedmen, and Slaves).

Money: 1D4 x 100 sestertii* **Yearly Income:** 1700 sestertii

* Charioteers with a starting Status higher than 35% own their own racing chariot and 1D6+1 horses.

tant is her *pullarius*, the keeper of the sacred chickens.

After a little chitchat, Noctullia takes the box from her *pullarius*, opens it, and tosses out a double handful of grain from the box her assistant carries. He then opens the cage and the fowl rush out. A single chicken greedily feeds while the rest stand around it aimlessly completely ignoring the grain. Noctullia watches intently, frowning, seemingly overwhelmed in thought. She then announces that, "The signs point to a trying day for your faction, kind and generous sir, but also that the Reds will rise stronger from the adversity." Casca isn't pleased, grumbling, "Well, you can't win every day." Arrius Lurco says nothing, sitting stoically without reacting to the pronouncement. Casca pays the woman her fee, inviting her to eat and drink something before she leaves.

However, once the grain is all snatched up, the chicken that fed hungrily does something very unusual. It goes to the feet of a random investigator, squats down, and lays an egg. The *pullarius* gingerly takes up the bird and returns it to its cage. Seeing the egg, he picks it up and gives it to Noctullia, whispering to her about the egg. The augur then goes to the investigator, asking to speak with him privately a moment.

The Egg

The augur explains that a sacred chicken laying an egg at someone's feet is a powerful sign. She asks for permission to break open the egg and see what the gods have in store for the investigator. Noctullia suggests that a payment of a few denarii is customary for such a reading. If the investigator agrees, she breaks the egg's contents into a goblet, peers at it, and gasps.

Pater, quid fecisti

There, coiled around the yolk, is a stillborn, hazel-colored serpent. Noctullia says that this is a powerful sign, one showing great hardships ahead, but also great rewards. She says, "The snake represents many things, danger as well as healing. You would do well never to shed the blood of a serpent, for its venom will make you strong." Investigators making a successful Insight roll learn that Noctullia believes what she is saying and in no way faked this sign. She leaves the Arrius booth soon after delivering this augury.

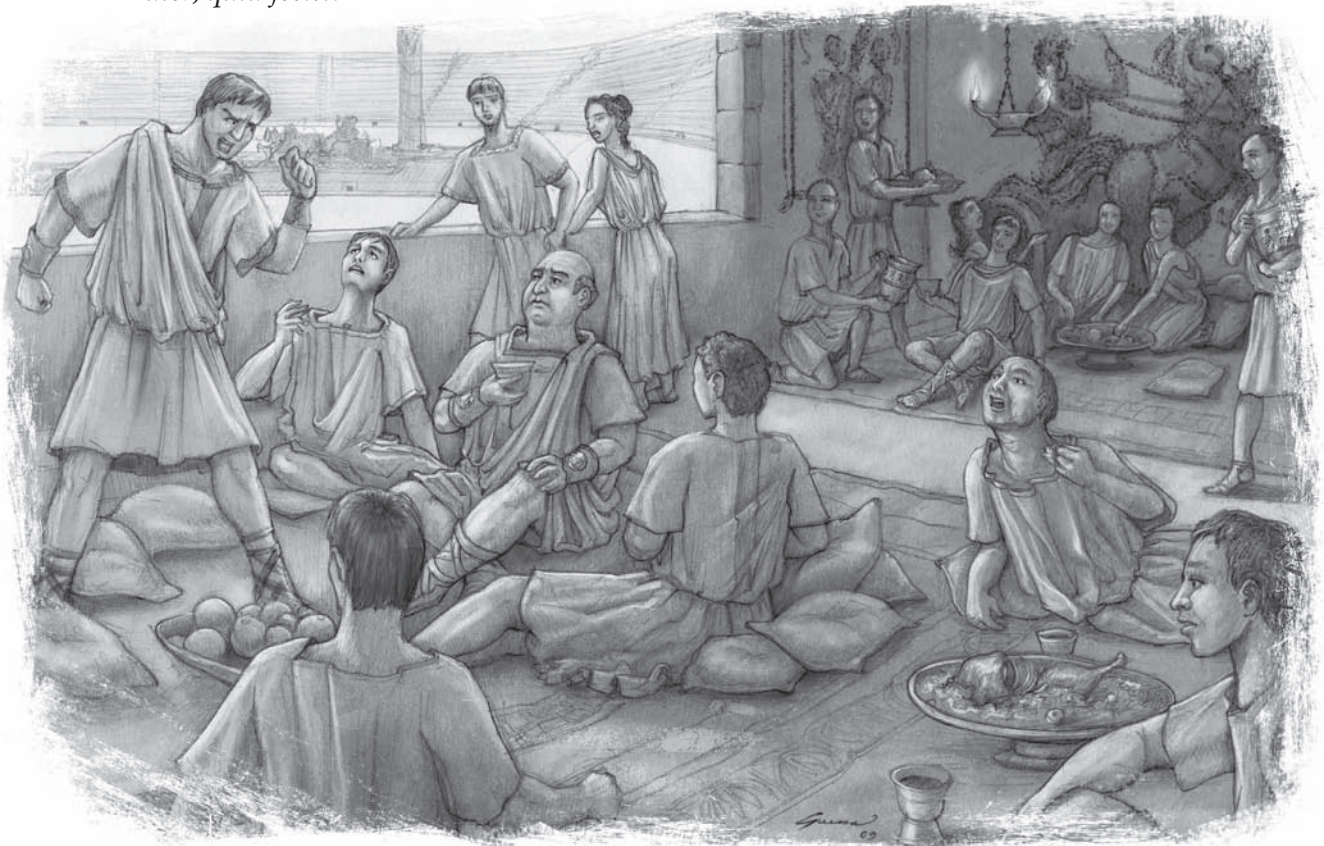
The Races Begin

The first four races go off without a hitch, the Reds Faction winning once and coming in second twice. Casca jokes, "Maybe the chickens just weren't hungry!" The day is going fine for his team. However, on the fifth race, when the Reds Racing Faction's star driver Albius Macer is due to race, everything changes.

As the teams line up, Macer takes the field wearing a new blue tunic. To make matters worse, the famous Reds Racing Faction horse Corvinis is leading Macer's team. Everyone in the box and the stands beyond is stunned. The crowd gasps, and then roars, some out of joy and others in outrage. Fights erupt in the stands and a few nearby praetorians move to break it up with a flurry of swinging clubs.

Casca screams, "WHAT? WHAT DID YOU DO, FATHER?"

Arrius Lurco answers, "I needed to liquidate some assets, so I sold Macer's contract to the Blues, along with a dozen or so horses."



This exchange erupts into a very angry argument. Casca accuses his father of betraying their fans and destroying years of work with a single act. He demands to know why his father needed the money. Lurco replies, "The Reds are still *my* faction. Any fans we lose will come back." He ends all debate with the statement, "Besides, this is *only* chariot racing, and I don't need to explain myself to you. Mind your place, Casca."

Casca nearly explodes with rage and is only stopped from physically attacking his father by his wife, who places a firm hand on his shoulder while whispering to him. Casca screams, "It's true then! You've lost your mind! You're going to ruin us!" Melito remains behind, sitting in stunned silence, as Casca storms out with his entourage.

The Races End

Arrius Casca rushes off to learn the extent of the damage done to the Reds Racing Faction. Macer wins every race he is in for the Blues, and the Reds fans grow angrier at each loss. By the time the races are over, melees are erupting everywhere and spectators are fleeing the Circus Maximus. Squads of the cohortes urbanae, or riot police, move into the area, trying to maintain order. Arrius Melito suggests that everyone should leave before things get worse and asks the investigators to accompany them back to their home, "just in case." Everyone in the family's suite leaves, forming into a procession around a litter carrying Lurco and Melito and heading back to the House of Arrius.

Part Two - A Night of Chaos

The investigators should now have joined the members of the House of Arrius as they travel home from the Circus Maximus. If they hesitate to join the procession, Keepers should explain that from their location it is the safest way to reach the streets. Things are complicated as a full-blown riot erupts outside the arena. The investigators are soon engulfed in a melee, after which they are invited to spend the night at the House of Arrius. The chaos doesn't end there as the investigators unearth strange rumors, meet unusual guards, and witness a violent exchange between Arrius Lurco and his eldest son.

The Riot

The mood of the crowds outside the Circus Maximus is ugly. People are battling in the streets with one another and the cohortes urbanae. People rush in all directions, screaming, crying and bleeding, while others overturn carts, topple statues, and set fires. Within moments, the chaos becomes a full-blown riot.

Suddenly, someone in the crowd yells, "It's Casca, the man who sold off Macer and Corvinis to the Blues!" He points toward the Arrius litters. In truth, Casca isn't with the family

at this time; he remains with the team, trying to learn the extent of the damage his father has done. Still, hundreds of people surge toward the Arrius family, murder in their eyes. Troublemakers, led by a crazed fan named Decrius Neops, positioned themselves here to instigate this attack.

Lurco and Melito, carried in a litter by eight slaves, cry out for help as it is dropped to the street. They cower and scream inside the covered litter, which is now lying on its side. The others, mostly slaves, servants, and a couple of bodyguards, do their best to protect the patricians. The melee lasts for four rounds before a group of well-armed cohortes urbanae drives off the crowd with a flurry of club blows, cracking the skulls of anyone foolish enough to stand against them. Each investigator who offered to protect the Arrius contingent while they traveled home is attacked as follows over the next four rounds:

Round One — Six attacks by hurled debris (rocks, wooden mugs, etc). 35% chance to hit, 1D2 points of damage.

Round Two — A rush attack by three men attempting to grapple the investigator. If successful, this knocks the investigator to the ground and enables the crowd to get at Lurco and Melito. The three men have a 25% chance to hit for a successful Grapple attack.

Rounds Three and Four — Each investigator is the target of four melee attacks. If players are grappled, they are attacked by two punches and two kicks. If they are not grappled, they are attacked by four punches.

Sports Rioters

STR 13 CON 11 SIZ 12 INT 10 POW 10
DEX 10 HP 12

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 50%, 1D3+db

Grapple 25%, damage special

Kick 25%, 1D6+db

Knife 50%, 1D4+db

Armor: None.

Skills: Loot 55%, Scream 75%, Throw 35%.

At the end of this melee, a dozen armed and armored cohortes urbanae surround the Arrius procession and escort them home. Along the way, the investigators hear, amid the screams and shouted commands, that a member of the Praetorian Guard has been killed in the riot. After this happens, the cohortes urbanae stop using clubs and start using their blades. This sparks a wave of panic that begins to disperse the crowd. The riot lasts for two hours, and blood flows in the gutters of the streets around the Circus Maximus.

Back at the House of Arrius Lurco

After escaping the riots, the investigators travel with the procession to the House of Arrius. It is an extravagant residence located on the high slopes of Caeline Hill in the Caelimontium regiones, or neighborhood. The area has a strong military presence since the Emperor's cavalry escort is based here. These troops are by now patrolling the streets

to ensure the riot does not spread into this part of the city. Arrius Lurco's villa has every comfort one would expect from the home of a wealthy Roman patrician.

Arrius Lurco personally thanks the investigators for their help. With a wave of Lurco's hand, his slave Porculus discreetly passes each one a pouch containing 150 sestertii. The patrician invites the investigators to stay until morning, as the streets are too dangerous for travel due to the riots, a curfew, and the normal peril of traveling the city's streets after dark. If the investigators ask to speak with the patrician at this time, he'll give them a few moments out of gratitude. However, he refuses to explain his actions in any way, saying, "What I do with my own money is my business." If so questioned, Lurco cuts the audience short and retires to his room after ordering his gladiators to guard the house (see **Calling Out The Guards**).

House Rumors

The slaves and servants of House Arrius are very troubled by all that has happened. Investigators who make a successful Listen check overhear them whispering about the falling out between Casca and his father. If any investigators are slaves of low caste, they can learn several rumors from these members of the household, provided they make a successful Fast Talk or Persuade roll. The rumors investigators learn are:

- Arrius Lurco just emancipated Hedeia, his favored slave and long-time companion. He sent her to Ostia and forbade her from returning to Rome or contacting him. This is strange because it was well known how fond he was of her. Hedeia had been owned by the Arrius family since she was a child and was "very dear" to the master for the last seventeen years. Hedeia was dragged out of the house in tears.
- Master Lurco spends much of his time with a Greek philosopher named Damokles who has been a cliens of Lurco's since the pair met three years ago. In that time, the master's behavior has become more and more erratic. Some believe the two are also now lovers and blame Damokles for Hedeia's forcible removal from the house.
- Master Lurco has paid out a great deal of money recently, which has depleted the household accounts and coffers considerably.
- Master Lurco has not slept well since he was kidnapped and robbed eight years ago in Cyrenaica.

Calling Out The Guards

The investigators notice that several of the men guarding the House of Arrius are armed and dressed unusually. They wear decorative leather *cingulum* (wide belts), *manica* (strips protecting the forearms and wrists), and *fascia* (padded shin guards). They are obviously gladiators. Four are *bestiarii*, wild animal fighters who are armed with long spears, and two are *dimacherii*, swordsmen who use twin gladii. Investigators who frequent the arena or make a successful Know roll with a -20% penalty recognize one or more of these guards. They are well known as among the most skilled gladiators

of their type. Each of them inexplicitly stopped performing publicly about a month ago. The *bestiarii* are named Brutus, Maro, Natta, and Scaeva; the *dimacherii* are Ruga and Celer.

If the investigators question the gladiators, the men are evasive. The investigators must make a successful Persuade roll to get any of the gladiators to open up. The men will admit that Arrius Lurco purchased them about a month ago and instructed them to train hard and stay fit. However, no matches are scheduled for them in the arena, and they have been forbidden to appear publicly. The men also say that they have been told they will earn their freedom by helping their new master in an upcoming job.

Later that Night

The investigators awaken just before dawn to the sound of screams and crashes coming from Lurco's bedroom. Arrius Melito rushes to his father's room to see what is going on. Inside the bedroom, Lurco and his son Casca are screaming at one another. Lurco has been knocked to the ground, but appears otherwise unharmed. An enraged Casca stands over him.

Lurco calls for help, yelling, "Guards! Patricide, patricide!"

Casca screams down at him, "You've ruined us! Our family's name is in ashes. People are dead today because of you! Lunatic! You and that Greek lover of yours, you don't care whose lives you destroy! The mob tried to burn down my house, with my children inside, because of you."

At this point, the gladiators arrive. With respectful apologies to Casca, they drag him from the room. Lurco orders Casca thrown out of the house, screaming, "You are no longer my son! I disown you!"

Casca yells back as he leaves, "The words of a madman mean nothing. Wait and see, old man, wait and see!"

Dawn Meeting

At dawn Melito meets with the investigators for a hasty breakfast in the gardens. He asks them to find out what madness has taken hold of his father before it's too late. Melito says, "He doesn't eat, can't sleep. If something doesn't remedy this soon, I fear the worst." The young man explains that he no longer has access to the family's coffers, but can offer them 1000 sestertii from his personal funds to take on the assignment. Melito answers any questions as best he can. He knows three possible leads:

1. **Damokles of Gaios** — "A Greek philosopher my father meets with at the Bathhouse of Nero every few days. He's a frequent guest here as well, dining with my father at least once a week. My father is the man's patron. I think they're working on some sort of book. They spend most of their time together working in my father's room. I don't know where Damokles lives."
2. **Hedeia** — "My father's favored slave, Hedeia, was practically a stepmother to me growing up. I've long suspected he loves her. I thought Father might free her one day and maybe even marry her. I was shocked that he'd banish her from Rome and can't imagine a reason for it. Father's given her a house in Ostia and enough money to live quite comfortably on."

3. **Taccius Avitus** — “A swarthy man with rough hands. My father introduced him to me as a captain. I know Father gave the man 35,000 sestertii about a month ago. He’s met with Taccius several times since then, giving him more money each time. I wish I knew more.”

Leaving the House

Investigators who make either a successful Listen or a successful Spot Hidden check while leaving the House of Arrius notice someone lurking in the shadows. The figure is dressed in a long, dark cloak that conceals his features, and flees as soon as anyone takes notice of him. Those who chase the figure notice him hurl a strange, black object onto the roof of the house before rushing away. The person vanishes into the crowd, shedding the cloak once he is out of sight to confuse any pursuers. This is Lollius Pudens, one of Rome’s best makers of tabulae defixiones, or curse tablets. He has been hired by the crazed fan Decrius Neops to curse the Arrius family.

Finding the Scroll

With a successful Spot Hidden roll, the investigators find the object Pudens tossed onto the roof of the Arrius villa. A thorough search of the grounds turns up four other such objects, all left by Pudens as he skulked around the property. All of these were buried and will be found under patches of hastily concealed, newly upturned earth.

The items are thin sheets of lead, each rolled into a tube

Melito the Poet

Investigators who want to banter with Arrius Melito may find themselves drawn into a conversation about his favorite topic, poetry. His favorite author is Martial, and his favorite type of poem is the epigram, of which Martial is a master. Epigrams are short poems, often witty, humorous and satirical. Melito himself has written a book of rather simple epigrams of which he is overly proud. Two examples of epigrams, one by the famous author Catullus and the other by Melito himself, are:

*I hate and I love. Perhaps you are asking how
I do this?*

*I do not know, I feel it happening, I am
tortured.*

— Catullus, poem #85

*Some crave to feel the sunshine, to distract
them. Others crave shade, to soothe them.*

But the dark, that is honest.

— Arrius Melito

and with a bronze nail driven through it. Inscribed within are elaborate curses calling upon the infernal gods to inflict various horrible things on the Arrius family (see Handout #1). Investigators making a successful Know roll identify these items as tabulae defixiones, which are quite common. The curse tablets and the man placing them are a red herring, as neither have any real power nor anything to do with Arrius Lurco’s recent behavior.

Part Three = Discovering “The Plan”

The investigators should have a number of leads by now. They have the names of three people to speak with and have encountered a red herring, Lollius Pudens, which they can also look into. Each lead may give the investigators some pieces to the overall puzzle. Soon the investigators should be able to form some idea what Arrius Lurco is planning, though not why he’s doing it. But time is running out; the brood inside Lurco is about to reach maturity. It will claim his life long before he can launch his operation.

Lead #1, Damokles of Gaios

The investigators can track Damokles down by making either a Fast Talk or Persuade roll when talking to someone at the Baths of Nero, as the philosopher is a regular patron. However, he has stopped going there recently because he focuses all his time and efforts on learning magic and preparing to leave for the island of Crete. Investigators hoping to meet him at the baths will be disappointed.

The Greek philosopher lives in a nice area of regiones Alta Semita, on Viminal Hill, in a spacious apartment paid for by Arrius Lurco. Damokles’ slave, an older Greek woman named Aglea, will answer the door. While she does know Latin, she’ll speak nothing but Greek as she does not want to make things easy on anyone. She knows her master hates being disturbed, so Aglea says that he is not home. However, she’s lying, and rather convincingly, with her Insight score being 50%. The investigators will have to make opposed insight rolls to determine her dishonesty. If the investigators speak Greek and make a successful Fast Talk or Persuade roll, Aglea lets them in and summons her master.

Damokles of Gaios is a fit man of about forty, well dressed and sharp eyed. He’ll be uneasy about having unexpected visitors so close to the start of “the operation”. Anyone making a successful Insight roll realizes that Damokles is nervous and hiding something. The philosopher avoids answering any questions that touch on the mission to Crete, saying only that Arrius Lurco is his good friend and patron. He refuses to betray Lurco’s confidence and politely asks the investigators to leave. If the investigators refuse to depart, or threaten

Finding Your Way in Rome

When Romans built a city, it was carefully designed. Cities were orderly and logical, easy to administer and defend. However, the Roman capital itself had grown organically over the centuries, expanding to encompass a vast area dominated by seven hills overlooking a bend in the Tiber River. Rome itself is a chaotic maze of marketplaces, monuments, civic and religious centers, entertainment complexes, restaurants, bathhouses, apartment buildings, dead ends, and twisting, nameless streets.

At the time when this campaign is set, Rome is divided into several administrative districts, or regiones. These neighborhoods, established during the reign of Augustus, all have distinct personalities and characteristics, as do the seven hills upon which the city is built.

Regiones

- I. Porta Capena
- II. Caelimontium
- III. Isis et Serapis
- IV. Templum Pacis
- V. Esquiliae
- VI. Alta Semita
- VII. Via Lata
- VIII. Forum Romanum
- IX. Circus Flaminius
- X. Palatium
- XI. Circus Maximus
- XII. Piscina Publica
- XIII. Aventinus
- XIV. Trans Tiberim

Hills

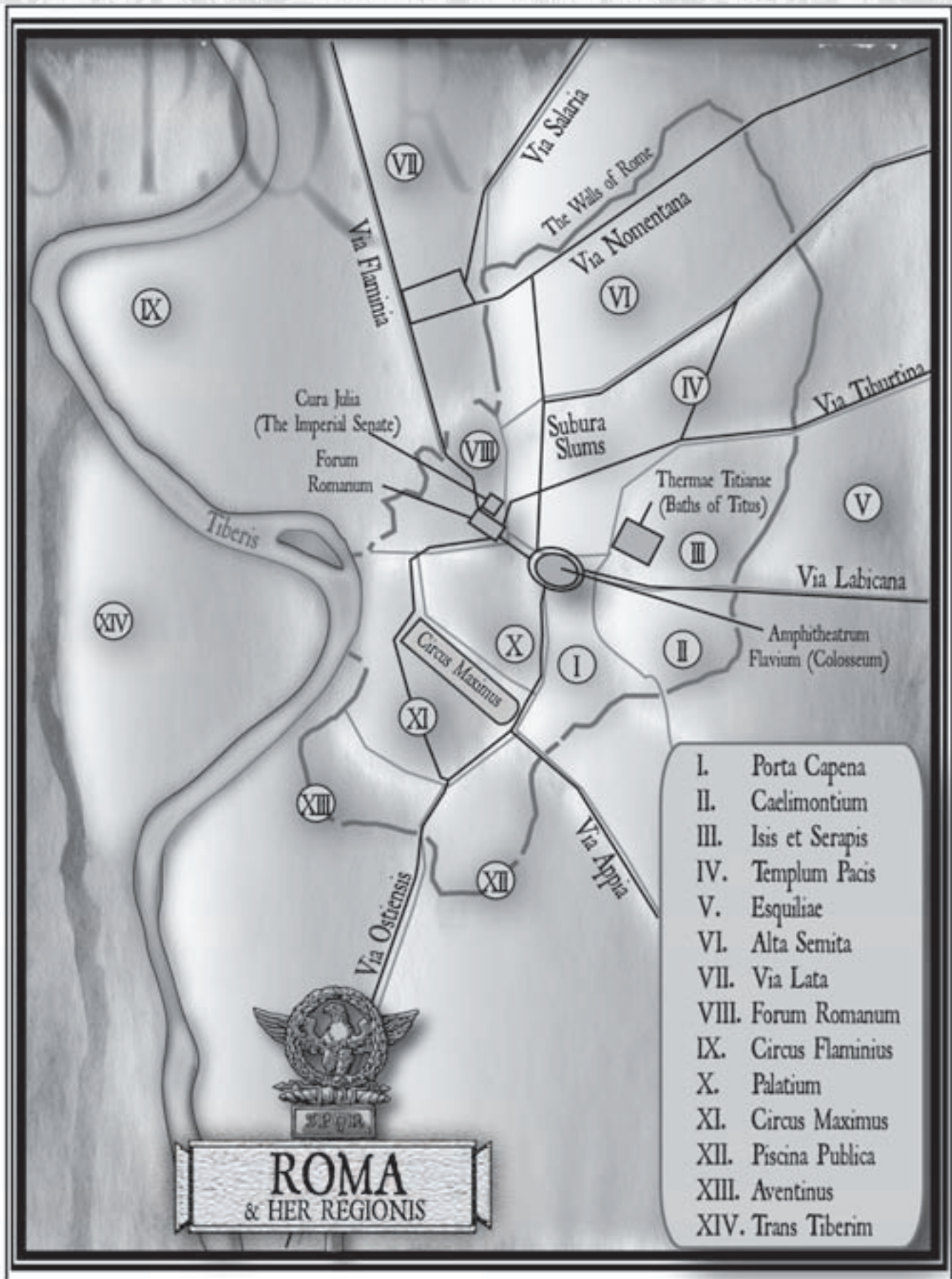
- A. Quirinal
- B. Viminal
- C. Esquiline
- D. Caelian
- E. Aventine
- F. Palatine
- G. Capitoline

Getting There is Half the Fun

There are no building numbers in Rome, and very few street names. This, combined with its chaotic layout, can make finding a specific location difficult. In Rome, the average citizen believes that if you don't know how to get somewhere, you probably don't belong there. Why didn't the person you are trying to visit show you how to get to his home? Why do you want to go somewhere you've never been? Those asking for directions are often met with suspicious looks, if not mild hostility.

Investigators who require directions must make a successful Persuade x2, Fast Talk, or Status check. If successful, they are given rough directions to where they are trying to travel. These directions likely include the regiones, the hill, possibly a notable landmark, and their relation to one another. Typical directions might be, "They live in Alta Semita, three quarters of the way up the southern slope of the Quirinal. You can find them on the third floor of the insula across from the wine shop near the fountain with the statue of Neptune."

Even armed with directions, investigators must make a successful Idea roll. Investigators failing this check become lost, and arriving at their destination takes 2-4 (1D3+1) times as long as it normally would. Mercifully, investigators who are natives or longtime residents of Rome need only make a successful Know roll to locate most places in the city. Teams of investigators who are all strangers to Rome might do well to hire a knowledgeable guide for 1-6 sesterii a day to bypass this constant challenge.



or attack Damokles, Aglea summons the neighbor's three strong sons to help. If a melee ensues, the slave then begins shouting for the local vigiles, alerting all her neighbors to the assault.

Lead #2, Hedeia

Investigators who want to speak with Hedeia, Lurco's freed slave and longtime companion, must take the short trip to Ostia. If they did not get directions to her house from Melito, they can ask around for information about a freedwoman who just moved into Ostia with plenty of money. If they make a successful Luck roll, the person they are speaking to knows where Hedeia can be found and offers directions.

Hedeia now lives in an elegant, fully furnished villa. It is richly appointed considering she is only a freedwoman. The villa has a staff of a half dozen slaves, which Hedeia treats more like friends than property. It should be obvious that the woman is experiencing some disorientation at her sudden change in station. When the investigators arrive, she personally answers the door, rushing ahead of one of the slaves to do so. She asks if Lurco has sent for her and is visibly disappointed when informed otherwise.

Hedeia invites the investigators in for a visit, offering them refreshments. While sitting with the investigators, she

Handout #1 (English)

Lady Brimo Hecate, we ask you to snatch up the life of all of the Gens Arria. May their bones be broken, may their skin blister from a bad disease, bescv. May they be trampled by their own horses, and freely suffer (their) bites, may their houses as well as their limbs be burned by fire berebescv. May their dick languish and fall off. May their lares abandon (them). May they undergo pains, madness, death. Hecate, take to yourself the aforementioned people. Bind them with every misery which the Infernal Gods might devise.

Domina Brimo Hecate te rogamus ut ei vitam omnium
gentis Arriae corripias
ossa frangantur malo morbo pellis pustulet bescv
per equos suos calcantur et remisse morsus patiantur bazagra
Tam edes tam membra igne urantur berebescv
mentula tabescat decadat
lares derelinquant
delores furiam mortem subeant
Ecate sdictos excipias
omni miseria devincias quam Dii Ileri excogitent

Handout #1 (Latin)

asks them about Lurco ("Has he asked about me? How is he sleeping? Is he eating enough? Is he ill?"), repeating many of the same questions. She refers to Lurco occasionally as "master", having difficulty thinking of him in any other way. Investigators who make a successful Insight roll ascertain from Hedeia's body language and constant questioning that the woman is heartbroken and filled with longing.

If questioned about Lurco, Hedeia will be hesitant to answer. She explains, "My former master is very generous to me. I will not speak of his business with strangers." However, Hedeia is hurting deeply and would like to talk about it. If the investigators explain that Lurco's son Melito has hired them, she will relax and begin talking. Failing this, an investigator must make a successful Fast Talk or Persuade roll before she opens up. Hedeia can share the following information:

Hedeia's Information

- Hedeia and Lurco loved one another, and she loves him still.
- Hedeia had been his lover since the death of his wife twelve years ago.
- Lurco promised to free Hedeia in his will and leave her this house.
- Hedeia did not ask for or want her freedom earlier than Lurco's death.
- Hedeia was heartbroken when Lurco freed her and sent her away.
- Hedeia begged and even fought Lurco when he did so. Lurco struck her, then had Porculus drag her out of the house and into a waiting litter that brought her to Ostia.

Traveling between Ostia and Rome

Ostia, Rome's primary port, can be reached by traveling the Via Ostiensis. This well-traveled road is fourteen miles long and enters Rome through the Porta Raudusculana, a gate in the Servian Wall. The journey can also be made by river barge, taking 1D6+4 hours. The investigators can book passage on a barge traveling between Rome and Ostia for 5 sestertii, or for free if they make a successful Bargain roll and put in 2 hours hard labor loading and unloading cargo.

- In the twelve years they were together, Lurco had never struck Hedea before that moment.
- Lurco's only explanation to Hedea was that he had little time left and did not want her with him now, saying she would be too much of a distraction.

Hedea cries softly as she tells the investigators these things. She can confirm the house rumors as true (see **A Night of Chaos**). If asked about the accusation that Lurco and Damokles are lovers, she denies it by declaring, "My master never touched a boy in his life!" However, bringing up Damokles compels Hedea to say, "It was Damokles and the other new clientes my master took on that led to the sad state he's in now. He had nightmares, yes, but we were happy. We lived our lives." If the investigators ask about these other clientes, Hedea will provide them with two additional leads.

The "Other Clientes"

Hedea confirms that her master was the patron of "that Greek philosopher", as well as two others. She describes the others as "the writer" and "that Jew priest". Hedea does not know much about any of these clientes, but has enough information that the investigators should be able to track them down.

About the Writer, Lead #3

Hedea says, "He's some scholar. My master gave him a great deal of money and purchased several books he wrote. He came to dinner many times, and they shared long talks in private, my master, the writer and Damokles. This went on for months. His name escapes me. Bellata, or something like that. Oh, I remember! The books he wrote were about legends and myths."

Investigators whose background or profession marks them as well educated can attempt a Know roll to identify this author. Others can attempt the same roll, but with a halved Know score. If successful, the investigators realize that Hedea can only be talking about Sentius Bellator, a noted Roman author and scholar. He specializes in the study of myths and legends, personally traveling to different lands to study and record them. Bellator lives in Rome, but spends much of his time in Alexandria. The investigators can learn where Bellator lives with a successful Know roll, or by asking someone who might know directions with a successful Luck roll. Sentius Bellator lives in regiones Templum Pacis, on Viminal Hill.

About the Priest, Lead #4

Hedea may suggest that Arrius Lurco could be going mad, but thinks it more likely he's being controlled by outside forces. She says, "If anyone has put a spell of madness on my master, it would be that Jewish priest he's been seeing. He's some crazy-looking fellow, with a long beard and big hat. Lurco visited his temple a few times, on the way back home from the Temple of Juno, had me wait outside in the litter once or twice. Mobaba was his name, or some such nonsense. I'm sure he's the cause of all this trouble." Once they return to Rome, the investigators can find "that Jewish

priest" by following the clues Hedea provides (see **Finding Mobaba**).

Love Letters and an Offering to Fortuna

Before the investigators leave, Hedea offers them a quinarius, worth 50 sestertii, to deliver a letter to Arrius Lurco. If they agree, Hedea quickly scribbles one on a wax tablet. She closes its lid, ties it closed, and heavily scents the whole thing with perfume before giving it to the investigators. Along with the letter, she hands investigators three quinarius, asking them to use one of the coins to make an offering at the shrine of Fortuna along the way. The second extra coin, she explains, is "for being so kind, and for your troubles." If the investigators read the letter, it contains only declarations of Hedea's everlasting love and desperate pleas for Lurco to call her back to his side.

Lead #5, Captain Taccius Avitus

This man, who has been seen meeting with Arrius Lurco, is difficult for the investigators to find. He is not hiding; he simply lives in Ostia, not Rome. Captain Taccius Avitus is busy preparing his ship, The Lady of Athens, for an upcoming voyage. Investigators making inquiries in Rome should ask individuals involved with shipping. Inquiries to such people about how to find Captain Avitus will be successful with a halved Luck roll. The same questions made in Ostia to the same sort of people will fare better. These attempts succeed with an unmodified Luck roll. Directions are as follows: "Ask for him at the docks in Ostia. He owns a villa there, but is seldom at home. He's usually at sea, so check if a ship called The Lady of Athens is docked before you go hunting him down. Be warned; his fees can be steep, and for good reason."

Reputation

The investigators can easily learn a bit more about Captain Taccius Avitus and his ship. A widely respected merchant and captain, Avitus owns both The Lady of Athens and the cargo she carries. He mainly trades and transports wines and olive oil between Hispania, Graecia, and Italia. Avitus is known for hauling high-value cargo and daring to sail routes plagued by pirate attacks. The Lady of Athens is widely considered one of the fastest vessels in the Mediterranean. Her crew is known for its loyalty, dependability, and ruggedness. On the rare occasions when Avitus hauls cargo for others, he charges

very high fees, but those who deal with him swear by him. The captain is a man known for getting tough jobs done both quickly and safely.

Meeting with Captain Taccius Avitus

The investigators can find Taccius Avitus aboard The Lady of Athens, which is currently moored at one of the better berths in Ostia's harbor. He will be hard at work unloading a cargo of Spanish wines before taking on supplies for his next voyage. The captain is a very busy man, with little free time to waste in idle conversation. He appears weathered and hardy, of middle years, with classic Roman features and a piercing gaze. Members of his crew are never far away and always ready to defend him.

Avitus will spare a few moments for those wanting to speak with him. He will apologize to the investigators that, "I've been hired out for the rest of this season. I can't take on any new business." If asked about the particulars of this arrangement, Avitus bristles, explaining that he never discusses such things since "pirates have spies in every port". If the investigators mention the name Arrius Lurco, Captain Avitus instantly becomes defensive. He orders the investigators to get off his ship and threatens to have them thrown over the side if they hesitate. Members of his crew stop working and draw closer with menacing scowls. It's obvious that if the captain gives the word these men will make good on his threat.

Avitus reacts this way because Arrius Lurco warned him that "outside forces" might try to threaten his voyage to Crete. He cautioned the captain to be suspicious of anyone making inquiries about it. Lurco also said that those wanting to stop his voyage were very dangerous and would stop at nothing, murder included, to prevent him from traveling to Crete. He hired Avitus and The Lady of Athens for their reputation of being tough and fearless. Unless the investigators leave peaceably and at once, there will be trouble. Avitus and his crew are often attacked by pirates and are familiar with how to conduct themselves in a pitched battle.

Average Crewman of The Lady of Athens

STR 14 CON 14 SIZ 13 INT 11 POW 12
DEX 12 APP 10 EDU 13 SAN 60 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 60%, 1D3+db

Kick 35%, 1D6+db

Grapple 45%, damage special

Club 55%, 1D6+db

Long Knife 50%, 1D6+db

Short Sword 55%, 1D6+db (only in battle)

Armor: 2 points of Leather Work Jerkin, Shield 40% parry (only in battle).

Skills: Climb 75%, Dodge 50%, Natural World 50%, Pilot Boat 55%, Swim 50%.

Taccius Avitus, Respected Merchant and Sea Captain

STR 15 CON 14 SIZ 14 INT 13 POW 14
DEX 12 APP 13 EDU 15 SAN 70 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 65%, 1D3+db

Grapple 55%, damage special

Kick 45%, 1D6+db

Sword 70%, 1D6+1+db

Knife 60%, 1D4+db

Armor: 2 points of Leather Work Jerkin, Shield 60% parry (only in battle).

Skills: Bargain 65%, Climb 75%, Dodge 50%, Insight 45%, Natural World 75%, Pilot Boat 55%, Spot Hidden 55%, Status 45%, Swim 50%.

Part Four - Myth, Magic, and Madmen

As the investigators follow leads, the situation becomes more complicated. The investigators might learn more about the scholar Senitus Bellator. They can also track down the old Jewish mystic, Moab of Tyrus, and Lollius Pudens, the maker of the tabulae defixiones left at the House of Arrius. Finally, the investigators will cross paths with a demented and enraged sports fan looking for revenge against the House of Arrius, a man named Decrius Neops.

Finding Senitus Bellator

Investigators traveling up Viminal Hill to visit the home of Senitus Bellator will not find him home. Alexio, his loyal and well-educated Greek slave, answers the door. Alexio will greet the investigators and apologize, explaining that his master will be away in Alexandria for the next three months. The slave will try to help the investigators as much as he can, offering to take down a detailed message for his master to read upon his return. Alexio mentions, offhandedly, that he is his master's scribe and manages his accounts and appointments. If the investigators say they are from the House of Arrius, the slave becomes eager to help them, explaining that Arrius Lurco is his master's most generous patron. The servant will say that Lurco purchased many of his master's books and consulted him a great deal. Alexio doesn't know much more, only that most of the books purchased were on the Greek myths. If pressed by the investigators, the slave remembers that the myths center on Athens and Crete, especially the tale of Theseus and the Minotaur. For a modest fee of 2D8 x 10 sestertii, Alexio can give the investigators copies of the books Arrius Lurco purchased, but the investigators can learn little else here.

Finding "Mobaba"

Based on the rough information provided by the freedwoman Hedeia, the investigators can locate the Jewish priest she mentioned. The investigators can search for a Jewish temple, or synagogue, located somewhere between the House of Arrius on Caeline Hill, in regiones Caelimontium, and the Temple of Juno on Capitoline Hill, in regiones Forum Romanum. By simply walking between these two locations and looking for such a temple, the investigators discover a rundown

synagogue nestled between the Esquiline and Caeline hills, in regiones Isis et Serapis. This is where the investigators can find the man they are looking for.

Meeting Moab of Tyrus

This small, decrepit synagogue is in obvious need of repair. Most of the worshippers seem to be either very poor or slaves. A group of rough-looking men gathered near the door glare at any investigators who are not obviously Jewish, but do nothing to hinder their passage. Those within the synagogue pretend to speak broken Latin in an effort to avoid communicating with the investigators without offering an obvious insult. The investigators are soon greeted and ushered into a small waiting room by a younger rabbinical student.

After a short wait, a man enters. He welcomes the investigators to the temple and introduces himself as Rabbi Yoel. He speaks perfect Latin, in respectful tones. The last thing he wants is to offend someone since his temple already has its fair share of problems. He asks why the investigators have come and how he can help them. If the investigators have been courteous thus far and ask for a priest named "Mobaba", Yoel thinks for a moment and then replies, "You mean Rabbi Moab?"

Rabbi Yoel appears uneasy and tries to dissuade the investigators from speaking with Moab. He says, "I'm sure I can help you with anything you might need. I am in charge of the temple. Rabbi Moab stepped down many years ago. He is not directly involved with temple business anymore." In

truth, Yoel is afraid that Moab will embarrass the temple; he knows the old rabbi is mentally unstable. If the investigators insist on meeting with Moab, Yoel sends the young student to summon him.

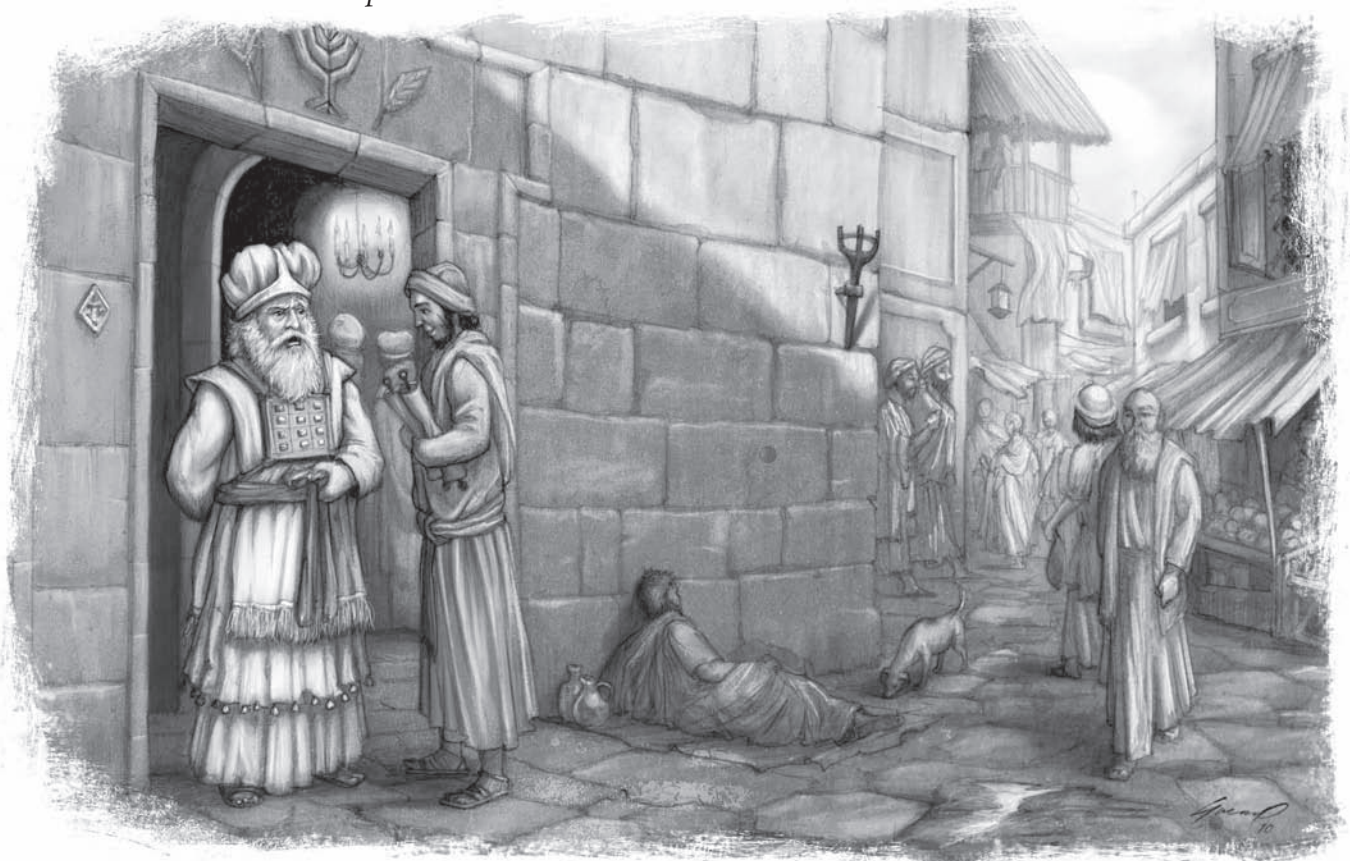
Before Moab arrives, Rabbi Yoel warns the investigators about him by saying, "Rabbi Moab is a good man, harmless really, but he gets confused sometimes. You should take most of what he says lightly. He remains here with us so we can look after him. This temple is his home, and we have great respect for all he has done over the years. I hope you understand what I am trying to say..." When Moab enters, Rabbi Yoel remains in the room, too nervous to leave the aged rabbi alone with strangers.

Meeting with Rabbi Moab

Rabbi Moab is about seventy years old. He is slow moving and deliberate, with milky eyes, a long beard and long hair, both of which are unkempt. Moab wears ancient robes and a large, ceremonial headdress. His Latin is very poor (20%), and unless the investigators speak Hebrew, conversation with him will be difficult. Keepers should portray Moab as aloof, unfocused, forgetful, and maybe even a little senile. His words race along excitedly sometimes, while at others he loses his train of thought completely. The aged rabbi might even forget what he was talking about, who he was conversing with, and why.

Unlike Damokles or Captain Avitus, Rabbi Moab is quite willing to speak with investigators about Arrius Lurco. His diminished mental faculties might make getting information out of him a slow process, but he does provide it. Rabbi Moab

Consiliator improbabilis



does not know the whole story of what Arrius Lurco is planning, only his small part in it. Some of what Lurco told him is also misleading, and Moab's general understanding of things these days is muddled. However, the information he shares is significant:

- A wealthy Roman man visited Moab recently and asked to be instructed in the more arcane arts of Kabbalah. ("Arrius Lurco? Was that his name? I suppose it must have been.")
- Kabbalah is the art of channeling the magical energies of the one true God, becoming one with the magic and shaping it to do good things in this world.
- Moab taught Lurco several rituals. Nothing too dangerous, just some things he could use against demons of the Underworld.
- Lurco said he needed such knowledge because he had sold his immortal soul to a demon and was trying to reclaim it.
- Lurco showed great interest in learning Kabbalah and proved a dutiful student. Most of the younger generation considers these teachings to be foolishness, so he was happy to have a serious pupil to instruct.
- Rabbi Moab learned Kabbalah from his elders back in Tyrus when he was a rabbinical student. They told him that Kabbalah was taught to God's chosen people by angels that visited them in the desert.
- Lurco paid Rabbi Moab well, giving him enough money to rebuild the temple roof that has been falling in for years.

Rabbi Moab of Tyrus, Practitioner of Kabbalah

STR 7 CON 6 SIZ 9 INT 16 POW 18
DEX 8 APP 7 EDU 20 SAN 30 HP 8

Damage Bonus: -1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 50%, 1D3-db

Staff 25%, 1D3-db

Armor: None.

Spells: Bless Blade, Exile Eihort, Fist of Yog-Sothoth, Heal, Impeccable Throw, and any others desired by the Keeper.

Skills: Cthulhu Mythos 18%, Insight 80%, Natural World 80%, Occult 90%, Other Language (Latin) 20%, Science (Astronomy) 80%.

The Payment

Upon overhearing that Arrius Lurco paid Rabbi Moab, Rabbi Yoel interrupts, surprised. He says to Moab, in Hebrew, "That much? Where is the money, Rabbi Moab?"

Moab replies, "I didn't give it to you?"

"No, you didn't, Rabbi Moab," Yoel says, using a tone one would address a child with.

"Oh," Rabbi Moab answers, rummaging around in the arm of his robe. "I must have forgotten. Here is it, little Yoel. Now we can fix the roof."

The older man hands Yoel a small bag filled with 200 aurei, the equivalent of 20,000 sestertii, and the precise amount needed to restore the dilapidated synagogue. Rabbi Yoel takes the money for safekeeping, thanking the elder rabbi. At this point, Rabbi Yoel tries to end the meeting. He now fears the investigators have come looking to recover the money given to Rabbi Moab, which the synagogue desperately needs to make critical repairs.

Asking to Learn Kabbalah

If the investigators try to hire Rabbi Moab to teach them Kabbalah, he explains that such a process takes a long time to learn. He says that even a good student could take nearly a year to grasp the subtlety. Moab explains that the path to this knowledge can be dangerous, so it is best to walk slowly upon it. But he will agree to take the investigators on as students if they are willing to learn.

At this point, Rabbi Yoel interjects, "As soon as the repairs to the temple are complete. Right, Rabbi Moab? We will be very busy overseeing the repairs. I will need your guidance on this. Yes?"

Rabbi Moab smiles. "Of course, little Yoel. I will be happy to help. I remember what this temple was like before, when it was newly built. After the temple is fixed, I can teach them Kabbalah."

Rabbi Yoel is aware Arrius Lurco was meeting with Rabbi Moab, but never imagined it was to learn Kabbalah. He does *not* want his counterpart teaching anyone Kabbalah for several reasons:

- He feels that magic does not exist and teaching Kabbalah puts his faith, his temple, and Rabbi Moab in a bad light.
- He does not want to be accused of lying, cheating, or any form of charlatantry.
- The final reason is more ominous: what if he's wrong? What if these powers are real? What would the Romans do with such powers?
- If the one true God did send angels to teach these powers to his chosen people, then it would be wrong to share it with others.

Lollius Pudens, A Red Herring

Investigators who noticed and pursued the cloaked figure lurking around the home of Arrius Lurco may have found one or more of the tabulae defixiones placed there. The investigators can attempt to track down this individual, although finding him will take a bit of legwork. The man they are looking for is Lollius Pudens, one of the best curse scroll makers in Rome. The scrolls were purchased at his shop and personally placed by him. Pudens has nothing to do with the horrors consuming Arrius Lurco and is nothing more than a red herring.

The scrolls discovered at the House of Arrius are high end, very well made, and likely expensive. Investigators who are natives or long-term residents of Rome will know of 1D4 shops where these scrolls are created and sold. Investigators who are visitors to Rome, or residents who have made their Know roll (see **Finding Your Way in Rome**), can ask any NPC where such an item might be purchased. The tabulae defixiones shops known to the investigators, and most NPCs, are listed in the boxed text on the following page.

The owners of the first three shops can identify who made a tabulae defixiones as soon as they see it. The community is not large, and each artisan knows the style of the others. Getting them to share this information, however, is another matter. While the shopkeepers do compete for business, they do not want to see anyone in their trade harmed by an angry customer or a victim of one of their scrolls. The

Owner	Location	Reputation
Ulpus Bradua	Aventine, regiones Aventinus	Common man, fair prices
Pompinius Hirrus	Aventine, regiones Circus Maximus	Fast work, good results
Helvia	Viminal, regiones Alta Semita	Woman, romance curses
Lollius Pudens	Caelian, regiones Caelimontium	Finest in Rome, best results

tablet makers protect their fellow craftsmen and only deny that they themselves made that particular tabulae defixiones.

They will not tell the investigators who made the tabulae defixiones, even with a successful Fast Talk or Persuade check. However, Ulpus Bradua hints that if the investigators purchase one of his scrolls, he might be able to direct them to the maker of the one in question. This is essentially a bribe. The scroll Bradua offers to sell them costs 250 sestertii. Either by direct bribery, logic (Pudens is known for producing high quality scrolls), luck, or process of elimination, the investigators should be able to determine who crafted the scroll.

The Shop of Lollius Pudens

The tabulae defixiones maker lives quite well, working out of a storefront of an *insula*, or apartment building, in the temple district. Pudens lives in a large apartment behind his shop and occupies the building's entire ground floor. The shop is clean, well lit, comfortable, and organized. A lovely Gothic slave named Gelvira welcomes customers and attempts to take their orders. Another slave, a large man named Euric, watches over both the shop and Gelvira, who happens to be his younger sister. A club is hidden under the counter in front of the stool where he sits. Close by, in the rear of the shop, two other large, Gothic slaves named Alewar and Gundislav also keep clubs within easy reach. They and Euric aggressively protect their master's business, his person, and one another if threatened or attacked.

Lollius Pudens is in the shop's work area where a dozen slaves create tabulae defixiones under his direction. He leaves Gelvira to deal with business and remains in the workshop unless she summons him. Investigators who want to meet personally with Lollius Pudens must make a successful Fast Talk or Persuade roll to convince Gelvira to call for her master.

Meeting with Lollius Pudens

The business owner is not a brave man, which is why he owns a trio of armed, Gothic slaves as bodyguards. If Pudens feels threatened, he will call upon them for support while sending Gelvira to fetch the local vigiles. Such a scene would be bad for business, so Pudens tries to genially converse with the investigators. He says, in a rehearsed voice, "My work is just that, my work. It's business. It's not personal." The merchant offers the investigators a counter tabulae defixiones, at the discount price of 100 sestertii, which would remove any curses previously placed.

If asked who hired him to curse the Arrius family, Pudens refuses to answer, explaining, "If I revealed who hired me to curse people, I wouldn't have much of a business. I will tell you that Arrius Lucro made a great many fans angry when he sold Macer and Corvinus to the Blues. Countless people in this city would like to see the man suffer for that. Me, I'm a fan of the Greens Faction, so it's really no concern of mine. The riot ruined an otherwise good day at the circus, that's all I know." Investigators

who make a successful Insight roll realize the man is being truthful and that there is little else to be learned from him.

Euric, Alewar, and Gundislav, Gothic Slaves of Lollius Pudens

STR 15 CON 14 SIZ 15 INT 10 POW 11
DEX 11 APP 11 EDU 13 SAN 55 HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 70%, 1D3+db

Grapple 45%, damage special

Kick 35%, 1D6+db

Club 65%, 1D6+db

Armor: None.

Skills: Dodge 50%, Listen 55%, Spot Hidden 50%.

Lollius Pudens, Rome's Finest Tabulae Defixiones Maker

STR 11 CON 12 SIZ 11 INT 16 POW 14
DEX 16 APP 14 EDU 13 SAN 70 HP 12

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapons: Fist/Punch 60%, 1D3

Armor: None.

Skills: Accounting 75%, Art (Create Tabulae Defixiones) 80%, Bargain 75%, Dodge 40%, Fast Talk 55%, Insight 60%, Occult 60%, Persuade 75%, Status 45%, Throw 55%.

Enter Decrius Neops

While many in Rome are upset at the recent changes within the Reds Racing Faction, none is more enraged than Decrius Neops. He lives for the races. He works as a carpenter, has no wife or family of his own, and spends all his free time at the races. The recent upturn in the Reds' fortunes have filled his lonely life with two things long missing to it, joy for the present and hope for the future. For once, he was a winner, part of something noble and powerful. Arrius Lurco's drastic and disastrous changes in the team's roster struck Decrius Neops as a personal betrayal, a vicious destruction of all he held dear in life. To Decrius Neops, trading Macer to the Blues Faction was equal to an attempt on his very life. His mind could not cope with this, and his obsession turned to madness. Now he will do anything he can to destroy the family of Arrius Lurco and those working for them.

Decrius Neops lurks outside the Arrius family residence, following people around and waiting for the right moment to achieve some measure of satisfaction. He would like nothing better than to murder a member of the Arrius family, especially Lurco himself. It was Decrius Neops who incited the crowd to riot outside the Circus Maximus and then attacked Arrius Lurco's procession. Decrius Neops also hired Lollius

Pudens to curse the House of Arrius with *tabulae defixiones*, which cost the crazed fan nearly all of his personal savings.

Although willing to give his life for his vengeance, Decrius Neops is not a fool. He knows the city quite well and will use this to his advantage if he needs to evade capture while on his quest for blood. Keepers should feel free to have the murderous fan turn up anywhere, shadowing investigators or watching various houses. He may even try to kill someone, anyone he believes might be connected to the House of Arrius. Decrius Neops can quickly gather a dozen other rabid sports fans and organize them into a mob to launch a sudden attack against the investigators, the Arrius family, or anyone else he feels might have played a part in ruining his life. However, Keepers must be careful to allow Decrius Neops to remain at large until “Attack at The Baths of Agrippa” in Part Five — The Death of Arrius Lurco. His statistics and that of his mob can be found in that section.

Part Five - The Death of Arrius Lurco

If the investigators have followed the leads provided and gathered the information available, they should have some idea of what Arrius Lurco is attempting. If they’re working for Arrius Melito, they will need to meet with him and report what they’ve learned. Once back at the House of Arrius, the investigators discover that the situation is spiraling out of control. However, the crisis the patrician’s actions caused will soon be the least of Lurco’s problems. The brood of Eihort is hours away from maturity. Their emergence from their host will bring him an agonizing and horrific death. Time is about to run out for Arrius Lurco.

A Crowd Gathers at the House of Arrius

As the investigators approach the House of Arrius, they notice dozens of slaves and numerous litters waiting just outside the main entrance. The vestibulum door is open, and the investigators can see a large group of people gathered in the atrium. As the investigators enter, they discover a bewildered Porculus is holding the crowd at bay. No one, the investigators included, is being allowed beyond this area. Even if the investigators tell Porculus that they are there to see Arrius Melito, he refuses them admittance. Porculus appears very nervous and apologizes profusely to those gathered.

The Partial Owners

Two groups congregate in the atrium are demanding to see

Arrius Lurco. The first group consists of a half dozen wealthy businessmen. Not used to being kept waiting, these men are uniformly outraged. Investigators who closely follow chariot racing or make a critical success on a Know roll recognize several of them as partial owners of the Reds Racing Faction. Arrius Lurco’s business partners are, in a manner of speaking, members of the faction’s board of directors. Although the Arrius family owns the controlling interest in the team, these men all have a great deal of money invested in the faction. There are other partial owners, but these men are the ones living in Rome, and they own the largest non-controlling shares of the faction:

1. Curtis Sulinus
2. Papius Bato
3. Accius Ovidis
4. Sidonius Carinus
5. Florius Zeno
6. Ullerius Abito

The businessmen keep to themselves, not talking to anyone other than Porculus — very loudly — and one another. If the investigators move to speak with any of these men, their bodyguards intercept them and prevent their employers from being disturbed in any way. The guards will scowl, gesture for the investigators to back away, and whisper that “now is not a good time” to approach their masters. The investigators can clearly hear the businessmen tell Porculus, “We are here to meet with our friend and partner to discuss business matters, and we will not leave until we do. We are not clientes here for a handout. We have significant investments to protect, and we are owed some answers. Go fetch your master this instant!”

The Emperor’s Emissary

The other men waiting to meet with Arrius Lurco are comprised of a pair of Praetorian guards flanking a man wearing a solid-colored dark blue Baetican wool tunic with silver trim; a black pallium (over cloak); and fine, spotlessly clean leather sandals. The guards both carry fasces, bundles of wooden rods bound together with red bands and having an axe blade emerging from their center. This show that they’re on official business. The guards scowl at anyone looking in their direction. Their manner makes it abundantly clear that the investigators should not approach and should probably look elsewhere. The man sits quietly in a corner, sipping wine, while a lovely slave girl from the Arrius household sits at his feet reading poetry aloud from a scroll. The man is middle-aged but handsome, and appears both amused and annoyed. Investigators who make a critical success on their Know roll recognize him as Ventor, personal slave to Emperor Hadrian. (*Keeper’s Note:* This places the scenario at about 130 CE. Keepers can change both the year and which emperor Ventor serves to fit the period of their personal campaign.) The emperor spends very little time in Rome itself and is currently abroad, so Ventor is here to “look into this matter with the Reds and the riots.”

The Isolation Deepens

Eventually another slave passes Porculus a note. All color drains from his face. Porculus announces, with a wavering voice, “I am sorry, but my master, Arrius Lurco, cannot see anyone at the moment. He is very ill and promises to send word to each and every one of you when he is feeling well enough to meet. I am terribly sorry for this inconvenience.”

The partial owners are very upset but slowly make an exit, grumbling the entire time. One of them calls out, “Tell your master he is not to make any other decisions regarding the faction without our approval. Inform him that meetings are being held about this matter. Make sure he understands this.” Investigators who make a Know roll will understand the man’s statement as a threat that the group might try to wrest control of the team away from the Arrius family. While the men don’t have the full power to do this outright, it could mean a lengthy — and ugly — legal struggle.

Making a Powerful Enemy

As Lurco’s business partners exit, the imperial slave Vantor rises and steps forward, waiting to be shown in. When Porculus says nothing, the man chuckles and asks, “You don’t mean me as well, do you?” Porculus visibly shudders, then nods, saying, “I’m afraid so, sir. My master said he couldn’t meet with anyone. I did inform him who you are and the reason for your visit.”

Vantor smiles, calls Porculus to his side, and says, “Come and talk with me, as one slave to another. I want to explain some things so that you can help your master understand the gravity of the situation.” The two slaves move to a corner of the room and share a whispered conversation. Investigators who make a successful Listen check with a -15% penalty can eavesdrop on them and overhear the following items:

Eavesdropping on Vantor and Porculus

The conversation is one sided; Vantor speaks, and Porculus listens. Occasionally Porculus tries to offer an apology, but Vantor motions him into silence. Vantor conveys the following facts:

- One does not simply turn away an imperial emissary.
- It is unwise for the House of Arrius to make an enemy of Vantor.

- Others have made this mistake when dealing with Vantor, and historically such men have come to regret their actions.
- Vantor asks, “Be honest with me — is your master unhinged? If he’s insane, then he needs help. If he isn’t mad, then he’ll soon wish he was, for turning me away.”
- In closing, Vantor says, “Tell Lurco I’ll be back soon, and if he doesn’t admit me then, I’ll have the papers I need to take him into custody. I’ll have him dragged out in chains, and he can answer my questions in a much less congenial environment. Oh, and you’ll be right next to him when that happens.”

The Investigators are Asked to Leave

After this conversation, Vantor puts on a long cloak and hood, which conceal his identity to prying eyes, and departs with his guards. Porculus is left shaking after this exchange and holds his stomach as if physically ill. He tells the investigators they must leave as well. If the investigators say they are here to see Arrius Melito, not his father, it changes little. Porculus informs them that, “The house is not receiving any visitors. These are my master’s orders. If he had me turn away the Emperor’s man, do you think he’s going to let you in? I’m sorry, but you’ll have to leave.” Porculus is willing to call on his master’s gladiators to escort the investigators out if necessary.

A Message from Melito

As the investigators leave the House of Arrius, a shawl-covered woman approaches them. She is the poetess who entertained Vantor earlier. The slave, named Micilla, calls the investigators over to an alleyway beside the house where they will not be seen. She then delivers a message from Arrius Melito, saying, “The young master Melito asks that you meet him at the Baths of Agrippa, around the first hour of night, just before the baths close.” After delivering the message, Micilla rushes back inside before anyone misses her.

Arrius Lurco’s Last Day

Arrius Lurco’s situation is deteriorating rapidly. The patrician feels dreadfully ill and is suffering incredible pain. He refuses all visitors and orders his servants to begin packing his things at once. Lurco has dispatched a messenger to Damokles asking the philosopher to join him at the sixth hour of night (midnight). Lurco’s plan is for both of them, along with the gladiators, to flee Rome under cover of night before Vantor can return with papers authorizing the patrician’s arrest. They will travel to Ostia and join Captain Avitus. Lurco hopes to be on his way to Crete before mid-day tomorrow. The mission, he thinks, is about to begin. However, Lurco’s time is nearly up. His pain and illness are caused by the expanding broodlings churning about inside his body. Before Damokles arrives, the brood of Eihort will erupt from Arrius Lurco.

Advocate / Jurisconsultus

Civilized people have laws to organize society. These laws need to be debated, defended and, at times, opposed. Like the Greeks before them, the Romans developed professionals, called advocates, and wealthy amateurs, known as jurisconsulti, whose focus was the law. Your job is to interpret the law, advise people on legal matters, and defend or prosecute cases before judges. You might offer legal counsel to a senator, write up a contract for a property purchase, or defend a criminal in open court. Your fees vary widely from gifts of art and books to thousands of sestertii for a single case.

Skills: Accounting, Civics, Empire, Fast Talk, Insight, Library Use, Persuade, Status.

Money: 1D4 x 100 sestertii

Yearly Income: 1700 sestertii

Attempted Meetings

The investigators may try to speak with the business partners Arrius Lurco had Porculus turn away. At best, the investigators can only manage to get messages to these people, since they are all quite busy and well insulated by slaves, servants, and bodyguards. Keepers can have these men contact the investigators later with questions of their own. None of these men, not the partial owners of the Reds Racing Faction nor Ventor, will have the time or patience for stories concerning magic or pacts with demons. They are interested only in seeing a profit on their investments, the good fortune of their racing team, and insuring that sports riots do not become a common occurrence.

The Word on the Street

Investigators who talk to people on the street will easily learn the latest rumors concerning the Arrius family and the Reds Racing Faction. It is the topic of conversation in taverns, marketplaces, and bathhouses all across the city. Listed below are some rumors investigators may pick up:

- The emperor himself is looking into the riots and was upset that profiteering took precedent over the spirit of the sport.
- A Praetorian commander from a family with connections died in the riots around the Circus Maximus. That's why the cohortes urbanae came down so hard on the troublemakers.
- "The elder Arrius has been seduced by the goddess Rabies. Been driven completely mad, I tell you!"
- "Casca is going to get control of the team back. Just you wait, all will be well once he's back in control."
- The other families who own the Reds are getting together to take control of the team away from the House of Arrius before they destroy the faction completely.

Meeting with Melito

Investigators who are at the Bathhouse of Agrippa at the requested time end up waiting a quarter hour for Arrius Melito to arrive. When he finally does get there, Melito is out of breath and looks terrible. He apologizes and says, "I'll explain everything when we get somewhere private..." Melito then pays for a private calidarium for himself and the investigators. Once they're relaxing in the heated pool, Melito asks the investigators to tell him what they have learned about his father. After hearing the investigators' report, Melito fills them in on the following developments:

- His father has turned away his business partners and the emissary of the emperor, refusing to meet with them.
- Arrius Lurco has denied anyone admittance into the house, including Melito's brother, Casca. Melito himself was forbidden from leaving, as well. "I had to sneak out, as if I was a runaway slave, just to meet with you. I couldn't risk taking a litter or even a torch bearer."
- Arrius Lurco is making ready to leave Rome. "My father's baggage is already in the hallway, and his litter stands ready. I think he means to flee Rome, even after the emperor's man said he'd be back to talk to him."

- Arrius Lurco has forbidden Melito from speaking with the investigators. By meeting with them now, he is disobeying the orders of his pater familias. Melito exclaims, in near panic, "But I had to talk to somebody. I don't know what else to do!"
- Arrius Melito makes an impassioned plea to the investigators. "Please, come back to the house with me. I'll sneak you in, and we can confront him, get him to listen to reason. If he has gone insane, we'll restrain him and call for my brother. Casca will know what to do. If my father should flee the city now, after his run-in with the emperor's emissary, he'll be considered a fugitive. The authorities could name us as criminals, seize all of our property, and reduce us to poverty. We'll be ruined, utterly ruined. You must help me save my family!"

The Attack at the Baths of Agrippa

If the investigators agree to help Melito, they leave the bathhouse together and try to return to the House of Arrius. If they refuse, the young patrician asks if the investigators will at least see him back home safely since it is after dark now and Melito is traveling alone. Even if the investigators refuse to escort Melito away from the bathhouse, they are caught up in an ambush by a mob of crazed sports fans led by Decrius Neops.

The sudden and brutal attack happens as Melito and the investigators exit the bathhouse, which closes for the night as the investigators leave, preventing them from retreating back inside. A group of men gathered nearby rush the investigators and the young patrician. The men move quickly and silently, hoping to commit these murders and escape into the night before an alarm can be raised.

The group will number two attackers per investigator in addition to the ringleader, Decrius Neops himself. Each investigator is attacked by 2 men, one of whom attempts to grapple the investigator while the other attempts to stab him with a dagger. The attackers continue this tactic as long as they maintain a numerical advantage. If the investigators manage to even the odds by killing or knocking out half of their assailants, the men break off the attack and flee. Otherwise, the melee lasts five rounds or until Arrius Melito and the investigators are dead, whichever comes first. After five rounds, area residents begin calling for the authorities, screaming out, "Someone's being murdered outside the Bathhouse of Agrippa!!"

After this encounter ends, the investigators discover that Arrius Melito received a serious knife wound in the attack. He lies in the street in a widening pool of his own blood. Even if the investigators make successful First Aid and Medicine rolls to tend to his injuries, Melito remains in serious condition. The young patrician begs the investigators, "Take me home, please! Don't let me die in the street. I don't want to embarrass my family by being questioned by the vigiles. I'm not supposed to be out, my father would be furious..." His legs give out; Melito will not be able to walk on his own. Investigators who make a successful Medicine roll understand this is caused by a combination of sudden blood loss and shock. The investigators can easily leave the area before the authorities arrive ten rounds after the end of combat.

At this point, Decrius Neops will either be killed, cap-

tured, or remain at large. Regardless, his part is now done. His vendetta against the Arrius family is finished. If alive and free, Decrius Neops must focus all his efforts on avoiding capture because the following day the House of Arrius offers a 1000 sestertii reward for the capture of anyone involved in the attack on Arrius Melito.

Decrius Neops, Murderously Insane Fan of the Reds Racing Faction

STR 15 CON 14 SIZ 14 INT 13 POW 14
DEX 12 APP 10 EDU 11 SAN 0 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 65%, 1D3+db

Grapple 50%, damage special

Kick 40%, 1D6+db

Knife 60%, 1D4+db

Armor: 1 point of Leather Jerkin.

Skills: Climb 55%, Conceal 50%, Hide 70%, Listen 45%, Persuade 65%, Sneak 55%.

Random Thugs under the Sway of Decrius Neops (Twice the number of investigators)

STR 14 CON 13 SIZ 14 INT 10 POW 10
DEX 10 APP 9 EDU 8 SAN 50 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 60%, 1D3+db

Grapple 45%, damage special

Kick 35%, 1D6+db

Knife 50%, 1D+db

Armor: None.

Skills: Conceal 45%, Hide 55%, Sneak 50%.

Returning Home with Melito

Arrius Melito is terribly wounded and in shock as the investigators rush him home. He mutters about his ruined tunic, his confusion over why the attack happened, and how angry his father will be. It should be clear to the investigators that the sheltered patrician is not thinking clearly. As the investigators near the House of Arrius, Melito directs them toward a side entrance that he left unlocked so he could return unnoticed. This grants the investigators easy access to the property.

Back at the House of Arrius

The instant they enter the house, the investigators run into the house slave Micilla, who summons help upon noticing the blood-splattered and gravely wounded Melito. Within moments, one of the gladiators arrives to carry Melito up to his room. Micilla hurries off to fetch a house slave who has some skill as a healer.

As all of this happens, the investigators hear a horrific scream of pain from the rear of the house. Those within earshot must make a Sanity check for 0/1 point. Everyone pauses and looks in that direction, paralyzed with fear and shock. Arrius Melito turns to the investigators and says, "That's coming from my father's room. Go to him, by Jove, I beg you. Help him!" Even bloody and in shock, Melito's first concern is for his father.

Agony and Insanity

Screams of agony and the smell of smoke come from Arrius Lurco's bedroom. Beyond the locked door (STR 12, the investigators must batter it down to gain entry), the man is dying. Throughout the day, Lurco has felt the newly matured brood moving inside his body as it prepared to emerge. His time is up. His mission of vengeance in Crete has failed, and he knows it. Arrius Lurco is burning his records about the Crete operation. For hours now he has been drinking strong wine and, when that failed to deaden the pain, vials of poppy juice. The man gave up trying to ease his pain but kept drinking the wine and poppy juice, hoping to end his own life. By the time the investigators break down his door, Arrius Lurco has consumed enough of both substances to kill a dozen men.

The Death of Arrius Lurco

Investigators entering Arrius Lurco's bedroom come upon a terrible scene. A fire has been set in a large washbasin in the center of the room. Dozens of scrolls, ledgers, and melting wax tablets smolder in the dying flames. Empty bottles of wine and vials of poppy juice litter the floor. Many of them have been smashed against the walls, and broken glass crunches underfoot as the investigators enter the room. Based on the number of empty vials and bottles, it is clear that Lurco has ingested lethal amounts of both. He should not be conscious or breathing, let alone screaming in pain.

The patriarch of the House of Arrius is on his knees in the center of the room. He is in a dreadful state. His body is bloated and swollen, his eyes bloodshot and crazed. His clothing and lips are stained with wine, poppy juice, vomit, and his own waste. As often as he can fill his lungs with air, Arrius Lurco screams. His hands tremble as he fumbles with a dagger.

Before the investigators can reach him, Arrius Lurco drives the dagger into his forearm, carving a deep furrow from his elbow to his wrist. However, no blood gushes from the wound. Instead, as soon as the horrible gash opens, the investigators see strange, whitish tissue moving under the man's skin. It seems to pull the flesh back together, closing the man's wound from the inside. Lurco screams out in pain, dropping the knife. He shouts, "They won't let me die! They won't let me die!" Investigators witnessing this must make a Sanity check for 1/1D3.

If the investigators approach him, Lurco lunges forward to clutch someone. Between screams, he gasps, "Get my sons and my advocate! I must speak with them... now... I must..." But these are Arrius Lurco's final moments. He can no longer move on his own, his body paralyzed as his muscles seize up. Lurco does his best to speak to the investigators through gnashed teeth. He barely notices when he bites his tongue and lips, opening the flesh. He doesn't answer questions, seeming to not even hear them as he utters the following:

- "There is a chest under my bed. Burn what's within! Burn it all, at once!"



Ista mori, ista mori me vetant

- “Tell Damokles that he must go on without me. He must follow the original plan. The mission cannot die with me. He can’t let that happen. Tell him I’m sorry.”
- “Tell Casca and Melito to make sure Damokles has the money he needs to finish what we started.”
- “Tell my sons that I love them. Tell them I was... I am... proud of them.”
- “Tell Hedeia I’m sorry I hit her, that I never married her. Tell her I love her.”
- “Don’t let this happen to anyone else. It has to die! It must die! It’s trying to make more, more like itself. I helped it, Hera damn me, I helped it. Mankind will never be safe so long as it still lives.”

A Horrible End

None of the people Arrius Lurco sends for arrive in time. After uttering his final words, the patrician issues a last, terrible scream that ends in a gurgle and a sound like tearing canvas. Blood seeps through his clothing, soaking the fabric from the inside. Arrius Lurco’s eyes roll back in his head, his scream ends, and his tunic rips apart.

Tiny, grub-like creatures pour out of Lurco’s body. They spill out from under his bloody clothing, crawl out of his mouth, nose, eyes, and ears. Numbering in the tens of thousands, they are round and pale with dozens of legs and no discernable head. The brood of Eihort rush about the room, then vanish through cracks in the walls, under doors, and out any open windows. They avoid the investigators as much as possible, fleeing to safety and darkness. Anyone witnessing this nightmarish sight must make a Sanity check for 1/1D6 points.

The investigators can try to attack the creatures but have almost no effect. While the investigators can kill dozens or even hundreds of the creatures, thousands more of the brood escape. Within three rounds, the creatures are gone. They eventually make their way into the sewer systems of Rome, where they are assisted by The Children of Eihort, a local cult (see **Mask of the Funeral Clown**).

Part Six - The Legacy of Arrius Lurco

With the sudden death of Arrius Lurco, things become uncertain. The investigators must somehow explain the dreadful condition of his body to his family. They must also decide what to do with the mysterious box, the contents of which Arrius Lurco asked them to destroy. This is the perfect opportunity to discover many details about what Lurco was planning and the secrets he had been keeping. The materials found within the chest form a Mythos tome, hereafter referred to as *Testamentum Arrii Lurconis*. The investigators will not have much time alone in the master bedroom as Arrius Casca arrives shortly after his father’s death.

The Corpse

The remains of Arrius Lurco are in a dreadful state. The patrician's torso is split open, his jaw is dislocated, and many of his internal organs are simply gone. More than half of his body's mass is missing, having been consumed by the emergent brood. Strangely, very few bloodstains surround the body. Anyone who sees the corpse in this condition must make a Sanity check for 0/1D3. The investigators can, and probably should, try to reposition or redress the body, or at least cover it with a shroud of some kind before others arrive. With a successful Spot Hidden roll, anyone who examines the body closely can find a key hanging from a cord around Lurco's neck, obscured by blood and gore. (see **The Chest**).

The Master Bedroom

The investigators have complete access and privacy for roughly ten to fifteen minutes before Arrius Casca arrives. Keepers may want to remind the investigators of the time constraints, as Lurco's eldest son and family lawyer are already on their way. This gives the investigators enough time to search the chamber for clues, but unfortunately few remain. Lurco was careful to burn most of his records, maps, research materials, and financial accounts to protect his secrets and prevent anyone from following him once he had left for Crete. He knew that leaving Rome before being formally questioned by Ventor would mark him a fugitive. The only clues remaining are in a single box, which Lurco intended to take along with him when he fled. This is the very chest he instructed the investigators to burn before his death.

Casca Takes Control

Shortly after Arrius Lurco's death, Arrius Casca and Duilius Hardalio, the family's advocate, join the investigators. A moment later Arrius Melito enters, supported by the slave Porculus who gingerly lowers the wounded man into a chair. Upon learning of their father's death, both sons are shocked and confused. Melito, still woozy from blood loss, weeps silently. His brother Casca becomes angry, balling up his fists, pacing about as he demands an explanation for how his father met his end. Investigators who have taken steps to redress, cover, or reposition the grisly remains spare these men from Sanity loss for viewing the macabre scene. Such efforts will be rewarded, as Keepers should allow investigators an easier time in both calming down and explaining things to Arrius Casca. Otherwise Keepers should portray Casca as being much more hostile toward the investigators and suspicious of their explanations.

If the investigators offer tales of demons curses, or describe what they witnessed, the others refuse to believe them. The story is too fantastical to be accepted, even in this period. A lie, even a poor one, will be quite welcome. If the investigators explain that some sort of accident, illness, or even suicide caused Lurco's death, the newcomers accept the story. Ample evidence exists to support the claim, with drained wine bottles and vials of poppy juice strewn about the room.

Porculus corroborates this as he begins cleaning up the mess, telling everyone that his master behaved erratically of late and imbibed enough poppy juice to kill a bull today.

Arrius Casca asks the investigators to leave. He instructs them, "You were never here, and you saw nothing. What's more, you will say nothing about this to anyone. Do you understand? Do not leave Rome until I have sent for you." Before the investigators depart, Melito calls them over. The young patrician thanks the investigators for trying to help his father and says that he too shall contact them soon.

Removing Evidence

Investigators attempting to remove the chest containing the *Testamentum Arrii Lurconis* are stopped by Arrius Casca. He asks them what's in the chest, and then checks its contents personally. Casca is suspicious that the investigators might take advantage of the situation and try to remove valuables from the house. Once he sees the chest's contents are maps and scrolls, he sighs, rubs his forehead, and asks, "Are these the ravings of my father?" As long as he finds nothing of obvious value, such as coins, art or jewelry, Casca allows the investigators to take the chest, telling them to "get rid of it."

Casca now focuses his attention on dealing with the serious issues his family faces. With their reputation tarnished, their finances in turmoil, and a possible scandal over the patriarch's death, much needs to be done. Casca has more to worry about than just his beloved Reds Racing Faction; he's just become the *pater familias* of the House of Arrius.

The Chest

This small box holds a collection of ten documents that Arrius Lurco intended to take with him to Crete. The chest is locked; investigators can open it by breaking the lock (12 HP), forcing it open by beating a STR of 12 on the Resistance Table, or using the key located on Arrius Lurco's body. The interior of the box is waterproof, lined with velvet, and constructed with compartments for each of the documents. Within are three maps and seven long scrolls, all of which are considered part of a single Mythos tome, *Testamentum Arrii Lurconis*.

Arrius Lurco wrote the scrolls with some help from his partner, Damokles. They are a compilation of Lurco's insights, discoveries, recovered memories — some of which are false — and the details of his ultimate intentions. What was meant to be a blueprint for his mission in Cyrenaica now stands as his legacy, a collection of his hopes for the future that he himself failed to realize.

TESTAMENTUM ARRII LURCONIS - in Latin. *Sanity Loss 1/1D4; Cthulhu Mythos: +8%; Study Time 4 weeks.* Spells: Bless Blade, Exile Eihort, Fist of Yog-Sothoth, Heal, and Impeccable Throw.

Maps

A. The island of Crete, in Cyrenaica, including the surrounding ocean charts with the shipping routes clearly marked.

- B. Map of Crete, showing the ruins of Knossos and the surrounding areas.
- C. A copy of an ancient partial map of the Labyrinth of Mes-sara.

Scrolls

1. The tale of Theseus and the Minotaur (see **Introduction**).
2. Latin translations of Hebrew texts that explain the power of Kabbalah and how to cast the spells included in the work.
3. A brief accounting of the money spent on the mission so far, including gifts to new clientes (e.g., Damokles, Sentius Bellator, and Rabbi Moab), the price of the gladiators, the cost of hiring The Lady of Athens, supplies, rare books, and maps. Arrius Lurco has spent roughly 120,000 denarii (480,000 sestertii) on this venture, which comes to nearly one-fourth of the family’s fortune.
4. Three scrolls giving a detailed account of everything Arrius Lurco remembered from his time in Crete, including the supposed missing time recalled through nightmares (see **Introduction — The Tragic Tale of Arrius Lurco**).
5. The specifics of Arrius Lurco’s plans (see **The Crete Operation**).

Reading Testamentum Arrii Lurconis

Investigators who spend the time to read and examine the chest’s contents gain +8% to Cthulhu Mythos, as well as the chance to learn the spells recorded within. Those investigators then have a clear view of what Arrius Lurco believes happened to him in Crete eight years ago, and will learn what his plans and preparations were during the time before his death. Throughout this text, Lurco routinely refers to Damokles as his partner and as being responsible for helping him organize his dreams and recover his lost memories.

The Crete Operation

This mission was formed with the purpose of destroying the alien entity dwelling in the Knossos labyrinth, the Great Old One Eihort; its minion, the Minotaur; and their human worshippers. The plan called for Arrius Lurco and Damokles to lead a party of men back to Crete. They would sail upon The Lady of Athens and journey to the area where Arrius Lurco believes he was abducted. Once there, Arrius Lurco hoped something would jar his memory so he could find the people

who drugged his original entourage.

After these people were located, Lurco planned to order his dimacherii, Ruga and Celer, to kill most of them while leaving at least one alive for questioning under duress. Once their prisoner revealed the location of the Labyrinth and its entrance, the team would commence with the second part of their plan.

Once within the Labyrinth, Lurco’s skilled bestiarii would slay the Minotaur. Then both Lurco and Damokles could explore the Labyrinth, using the maps they had obtained. However, the maps are fakes, a basic yet critical flaw in the mission.

Once they found the center of the Labyrinth, Lurco planned for his team to do battle with Eihort. The gladiators would protect Lurco and Damokles while the two men employed the Kabbalah spells they learned from Rabbi Moab. With luck and the favor of Jupiter, they would destroy or banish the entity, saving anyone else from ever being its victim.

While Arrius Lurco told his confidants this mission was meant to regain his lost soul and save his life, he knew that to be impossible. Even in the unlikely event they succeeded, the patrician’s life was forfeit. Lurco wrote this, along with his apologies to Damokles, in the scroll detailing the operation. The mission was always the final act of a dying man, a way for Arrius Lurco to gain some measure of vengeance and rid the world of a great evil before his end.

Sanity Awards

- For assisting the Arrius family during the riots+1 point
- For defeating Decrius Neops and his gang+1 point
- For rushing Arrius Melito home after the bathhouse attack.+1 point
- For trying, in vain, to destroy some of the escaping broodlings+1 point



MASK OF THE FUNERAL CLOWN

As horrific as the creatures were that I encountered in the Labyrinth, there is an evil far greater. These things, be they monsters or gods, do what they do because they are as they are. A shark, a lion, a wolf kills because that is its nature. These entities follow their nature. What's more evil are the men and women who worship them, serve them, forward their aims, and offer their fellow man to their masters as sacrifices and prey. Before one can reach these dark creatures, he must first confront their twisted and sinister human minions, and those monsters look just like the rest of us!

– Quintus Arrius Lurco

Keeper's Information

Much occurs after the death of Arrius Lurco. A new pater familias, the eldest son Casca, takes control of the House of Arrius. The Reds Racing Faction undergoes changes as well, with Casca inheriting his father's controlling interest in the team. The House of Arrius must also organize and hold a funeral befitting a man of Arrius Lurco's status.

Arrius Melito's wounds heal, and Hedeia comes to terms with the death of the man she loved. Soon the investigators must make an important choice — pick up where Arrius Lurco left off and undertake the mission he planned, or leave well enough alone and ignore the ancient horrors lurking in far off Cyrenaica.

Investigators who want to continue what Arrius Lurco started will face many challenges. Casca takes control of the house's finances and liquidates many of the assets his father acquired for the mission. Casca's focus is to restore his family's reputation and ensure the good fortunes of the Reds Racing Faction. However, financing Lurco's mission is the least of the investigators' problems.

The brood of Eihort, newly emerged from Arrius Lurco's body, begins a mission of its own. This collection of tiny alien organisms seeks to destroy those who are plotting against its parent. The brood coalesces into a human form and begins working with the local cult of Eihort known as The Children of Eihort. The brooding dons a disguise that enables it to move about Rome more easily. It dresses as a funeral clown wearing the mask of Pluto, god of the Underworld. It issues a divine order to the cult on behalf of the Great Old One Eihort, to kill those who were with Arrius Lurco at the time of his death and witnessed the brood emerging. The investigators, along with Lurco's partner Damokles of Gaios, soon find themselves marked for death by a dangerous and ruthless cult.

Part One - The Funeral

The following day, news of Arrius Lurco's death spreads across Rome. The passing of such a well-known public figure, the primary owner and former manager of the Reds Racing Faction, does not go unnoticed. The investigators hear the official announcement from newsreaders all over the city.

Across markets, squares, and public places echo the cries of, "Arrius Lurco has passed from this world in the night, as he slept, from an apparent failure of his heart. His family mourns him, as do all fans of racing."

The Day After

Arrius Casca spends the first day following the death of his father making arrangements for a lavish funeral. He also makes various business deals in an attempt to repair the damage done to the Reds Racing Faction and the family's reputation. It is an exhausting but productive day for the new head of the House of Arrius.

The investigators have this day to rest, recover, and examine the contents of Arrius Lurco's mysterious chest. If any are gravely wounded, Keepers can extend this peaceful period another day or two, giving the characters time to heal. Eventually a well-dressed messenger from the House of Arrius locates the investigators. The servant is working from a list on a wax tablet, crossing off names as he delivers his message. "My master Decimus Arrius Casca hopes that you will join the funeral procession of his beloved father, Quintus Arrius Lurco. He asks that you arrive at the House of Arrius tomorrow upon the fourth hour of day (about 10 a.m.)."

Newsreader

The citizens of the Empire need to be informed about the latest military victories, the results of recent senatorial elections, and how Accius Matho has the finest boots with selections for any budget. You make your living by traveling to the center of your community several times a day and shouting out the latest news, as supplied by local authorities, to those gathered there. It takes a powerful voice, as well as one skilled in speaking. Sometimes it isn't what's said, but how it's spoken and worded that counts. You also announce messages from local merchants, negotiating your fees with them directly. It's a good job, a respected one, but it does have its hazards. The crowd sometimes greets bad news with hurled fruit or rocks — thrown at you! A good newsreader knows how to read a crowd's mood and has quick reflexes in case that mood turns sour.

Skills: Bargain, Civics, Dodge, Empire, Fast Talk, Insight, Persuade, Status.
Money: 1D3 x 100 sestertii **Yearly Income:** 800 sestertii

The Funeral of Arrius Lurco

The funeral procession gathers at the House of Arrius before setting out through the streets of Rome to the family crypt (see **The Route**). The procession includes family friends; mourners, both actual and professional; musicians; and a troupe of funeral clowns (see **The Procession**). Upon arriving at the family crypt, Arrius Lurco's body will be cremated and his remains placed inside (see **The Ceremony**). During the funeral, several noteworthy things happen which the in-

investigators might notice. By nightfall, the investigators realize that although Arrius Lurco is dead, the threat is far from over.

Slowly Weakening Cries (Optional Scene)

As the investigators travel to the House of Arrius early on the morning of the funeral, they hear the shrill cries of an infant. Rounding a corner, they see a baby lying bundled in a blanket beside a public fountain. The infant is in a woven basket, crying. People travel to and from the fountain gathering water without even so much as giving the baby a glance. The child's cries sound weak, and there is no sign of its parents.

This child's family abandoned it. When a child is born in Rome, the pater familias decides whether the baby is accepted into the family or not. He has the legal right to commit infanticide, usually by public abandonment. This was often done if the child was deformed or if the family was too poor to provide for it. Anyone wanting to take such a child can do so, and many rescued infants become slaves. Romans are not proud of this, but it is an accepted part of life.

If the investigators stop to examine the child, they discover a considerable deformity, such as a cleft palate. If the investigators attempt to rescue the child, it dies within hours due to complications from its birth defect. If investigators ignore the child, Keepers may allow them to notice a woman pick up the basket, claiming the child as her own. She calms the baby and walks away with a grateful look upon her face. Investigators noticing this might later recognize the woman as Larcilla, a high-ranking member of The Children.

Roman Funerals

No one except the emperor, Vestal virgins, and members of the Valerian family may be buried within Rome — and the Valerian family declines the honor. Crypts and burial plots are located beyond city limits, with many lining main roads leading in and out of Rome. Both burial and cremation are options. Being memorialized after death is an important aspect of Roman life. Large funerals could be costly spectacles, complete with professionally hired mourners, musician, clowns, sacrifices, and parade-like processions.

The Route

The Arrius family owns a large and elaborate crypt just south of the city along Via Ardeatina. From the House of Arrius, the procession takes Via Sacra north, then turns south onto Via Triumphalis. It then travels along that street to the Circus Maximus, where many other mourners join the procession's ranks. The funeral procession then circles the arena once to honor Arrius Lurco's involvement with the Reds Racing Faction before turning west toward Via Ardeatina. From there

the procession exits the city through Porta Naevia, one of many gates in the wall surrounding Rome, and travels another mile to the crypt of the Arrius family.

The Procession

The funeral procession for Arrius Lurco is a large one, eventually numbering about 700 people. It begins with about 400 participants, the rest joining the procession once it reaches the Circus Maximus. Many of those marching are family members, friends, business partners, employees, clients, and slaves of the House of Arrius. Others are just loyal fans of the Reds Racing Faction or people specifically hired for the event.

Leading the procession is Arrius Casca, head of the household and new majority shareholder of the Reds Racing Faction. He is on foot and carries a portrait of his father. Behind him walk the immediate family, including the still-wounded Arrius Melito. Hedeia, former slave and lover of Arrius Lurco, walks in a place of honor among the close family, openly weeping. Damokles, cliens and close friend of the departed, is noticeably absent.

Two beautiful black horses draw a racing chariot with a driver and passenger behind the immediate family. The driver is none other than Albius Macer, his presence showing all that he is once again a member of the Reds Racing Faction. To the fans, this will seem a miracle (see **Noteworthy Events**). Standing beside Macer as passenger is the body of Arrius Lurco. The designator, or undertaker, has done a masterful job, especially considering the horrific condition of the remains. Behind the chariot stretches a long line of other mourners (see **The Professional Performers**).

The Professional Performers

Thirty of the mourners are professionals, local actors hired for the funeral. They weep and wail loudly, fall to the ground in fits of sorrow, and perform other shameless displays of grief. A dozen musicians march along blowing mournful tones upon enormous trumpets. A troop of mimes, dressed in costumes and wearing death masks from the House of Arrius, portray some of the family's most famous ancestors. These funeral clowns lampoon the people they portray in an effort to lighten the mood. The leader of the troop is dressed as Arrius Lurco himself. He gives away toy horses and charioteers to anyone along the route who claims to be a fan of a rival racing faction.

The Reds Racing Faction

Five other racing chariots take part in the procession, all driven by prominent charioteers from the Reds Racing Faction. Two begin with the procession at the House of Arrius, while the others join it at the Circus Maximus. A lone horse also joins the procession at the Circus Maximus. Race fans recognize the stallion as Trogus, a legendary champion long past breeding years. The animal is decorated with flowers and led in a place of honor during the procession by the faction's stable master.

Reds Fans

Three hundred mourners join the procession once it reaches the Circus Maximus. They are primarily die-hard fans of the faction. Many of them bear bruises from earlier fighting with rival fans who were trying to disrupt the funeral, from the recent riot, or both. After completing a lap around the Circus, the procession continues on its way toward Porta Naevia.

Security

Arrius Casca wants the funeral to go smoothly and be free of any disturbances. After the attack on his brother, Casca is not taking any chances with his family's safety. He has hired a small army of security personnel to protect the procession's participants. These men are well paid and professional, many being retired legionaries. Each wears a red and white tabard, a leather helmet, and a club hanging on his belt. A few carry poles adorned with banners that display rough likenesses of famous members of the House of Arrius. There is approximately one guard for every dozen mourners, bringing their total number to sixty.

Noteworthy Events

The investigators might notice several unusual things during the procession. They observe these without having a chance to alter them. A few are minor threats, and one is even an offer of help. Keepers should point these out and time them carefully through the long march from the House of Arrius to the family's crypt.

The Return of Albius Macer and Corvinis

The charioteer Albius Macer and the prize racing stallion Corvinis have rejoined the Reds Racing Faction. News of this spreads across Rome quickly. No one, not even Albius Macer himself, seems to know how this happened. Only Arrius Casca and the owners of the Blues Racing Faction know the full story (see **Part Three — Various Meetings**).

Friends and Lovers

The freed slave Hedeia, who was banished to Ostia, has been allowed to return to Rome for the funeral of her former master. Strangely, she is marching side-by-side with the members of the Arrius family, not with the slaves, servants, freedmen, or clientes. Damokles, widely recognized as Arrius Lurco's closest friend and confidant of late, does not attend the funeral or any of the feasts afterwards (see **Part Three — Various Meetings**).

Figures in the Crowd

Investigators who scan the crowd looking for suspicious

Death Masks and Funeral Clowns

At the time of death, Roman families would have masks made of their deceased relatives. Using wax, these masks would be highly detailed, near-perfect representations of the departed. During funerals, actors would wear the masks and take on the role of these deceased ancestors, trying to amuse the participants with humorous representations of the family's honored dead.

A well-known funeral clown named Favor had the honor of portraying the Emperor Vespasian at his funeral. Vespasian was a much loved ruler, but well known for his thriftiness. The funeral clown asked how much "his" funeral was costing. When told the funeral would cost ten million sestertii, Favor cried out, "Just give me a hundred thousand and throw me into the Tiber River!"

characters have plenty to choose from. Most are pickpockets or fans of other factions intent on making trouble. Some, however, are members of The Children of Eihort trying to observe the sons of Arrius and the investigators. With both a successful Spot Hidden and Luck roll, an investigator notices one of the following:

A Thief: A man or woman moves through the procession cutting purses from mourners. At the Keeper's discretion, a younger accomplice works with the thief, picking up fallen purses or items that spill out of ones slashed open. If confronted, the thieves try to flee. If the investigator informs any of the uniformed guards about these activities, the criminals are either captured and discreetly beaten, or chased off. If caught, such petty thieves surrender and beg for mercy, wise enough not to escalate things by fighting.

Rowdy, Drunken Fans: Some fans of a rival faction (Whites, Blues, or Greens) try to disrupt the procession. They might try to scrawl graffiti denigrating the House of Arrius or the Reds Racing Faction along the route, attempt to hurl garbage at the procession's participants, or even physically attack some of the mourners. While security will swoop in to deal with the hoodlums, the investigators spot them before anyone else does. A generic band of rowdy, drunken fans is included for use by Keepers.

Rowdy Fans of a Rival Faction (2D4)

STR 12 CON 13 SIZ 12 INT 8 POW 10
DEX 11 APP 9 HP 13

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapons: Fist/Punch/Punch 55%, 1D3

Grapple 45%, damage special

Kick 35%, 1D6

Club 50%, 1D6

Armor: None.

Skills: Conceal 45%, Hide 55%, Hurl Garbage 40%, Sneak 50%.

Cultist: While the procession passes through the residential area of regiones Piscina Publica, the investigators notice someone acting suspicious. A boy about eight years old is staring at one of the investigators and not paying attention

to the spectacle of the funeral procession. He will be watching the investigator who spotted him. Once the investigator makes eye contact, the child bolts, racing through the crowds to flee the area. The investigators must react instantly to catch the young observer.

Investigators opting to pursue the youth are in for a frantic chase. The boy runs either north toward regiones Palatium or west into the regiones Aventine riverfront, depending on the investigators' direction of pursuit. He's small (SIZ 5), quite fit, and has a gift for navigating the twisting streets and alleyways. The young cultist darts through the crowd, into shops and out their back doors, across marketplaces, or even up the stairs and across the roofs of multistory tenements. To catch the boy, the investigators must make a standard STR x5 check, if they're pushing through the crowd, or a DEX x5 check, if they're trying to snake their way around pedestrians. They must also make a standard CON x5 check to keep up with the nimble youngster. If the investigators fail either of these checks, the boy vanishes into the crowd and escapes. Investigators passing both checks manage to corner their quarry. Once trapped, the boy does one of two things. If he ran north into the center of the city, the chase ends on the roof of a five-story insula, or apartment building. The child turns to the investigators, smiles, and steps off the edge, falling to his death. If the boy ran west, into the Aventinus, the chase ends at a cattle pen beside the Tiber. The boy likewise smiles, hops over the fence, and rushes screaming into the mass of tightly packed animals. The cattle panic and trample him to death. Investigators witnessing the boy's suicide must make a Sanity check for 1/1D3 points. Keepers should not allow the boy to be captured alive.

Pluto at the Gate

As the procession passes through the Porta Naevia and out of the city (see **The Route**), a startling figure waits beside the gate. Set back from the crowd is a tall figure in an old and tattered robe. It stands silent and motionless, watching the procession, its face hidden behind a wax mask of the god Pluto, lord of the Underworld. Unlike the other clowns in the funeral procession, the solitary figure makes no attempt to spread joviality. The crowd gives him a wide berth, allowing the investigators a clear view.

Once the investigators take notice of the figure, it raises a hand to its mask. With a hand made from pale, fleshy, grub-like organisms that roil and writhe, it points to the investigators and raises its hand, signaling them to stop. The mysterious masked figure is comprised of tens of thousands of the same tiny creatures that erupted from the dying Arrius Lurco just days earlier. Its message should be clear as it wags a pseudo-finger at the investigators in a scolding motion: "I am watching you. You should stop. I do not approve."

The figure then collapses, leaving behind only the tattered robe and Pluto mask. Investigators searching the area discover the mysterious figure was standing directly over a drainage grate. The tiny creatures quickly scattered into the subterranean labyrinth of Rome's sewer system; no trace of them can be found. Investigators witnessing the figure, its

warning, and the dramatic exit should make a Sanity check for 1/1D3 points.

The Ceremony

The procession ends at the Arrius family crypt, an elaborate, multi-storied affair constructed to look like a stable. The body of Arrius Lurco is removed from the chariot, and the cremation ceremony begins. Outside the crypt, a pile of logs is tended by a designator, or undertaker, and his ustor, or assistant undertaker. They place the remains on the pyre and solemnly light it.

As the body begins to burn, the stallion Trogus is given a final honor. The once-prized stud animal is now getting on in years and can no longer perform those duties. A Reds Racing Faction charioteer named Jalal, a young Egyptian and rising star, ceremonially slits the animal's throat. As the horse lies dying, mourners come forward to dip their hands in the stallion's blood and wipe it on themselves for good fortune. After Trogus succumbs to the fatal wound, a group of the most loyal Reds Racing Faction fans lift him onto the pyre to be consumed alongside Arrius Lurco. Keepers may allow investigators participating in this ritual to recover 1D2 Sanity points and gain a +5 bonus to their next 1D3 Luck rolls.

After several hours, the fire burns down, and the last of the mourners depart. The embers are extinguished with wine. The ashes are carefully collected and put into an urn, which is then placed within the crypt. The sun begins to set and the ceremony ends. The House of Arrius then hosts a banquet with other high-ranking families who are partners in the Reds Racing Faction. Unless the investigators themselves are patricians with a Status of at least 40%, they are not invited to these private affairs. On the way back to the city, the investigators have an encounter (see **Morbid Comforts**).

Morbid Comforts

As the investigators are returning to Rome after the funeral ends, they are propositioned by a bustuaria. Literally meaning "grave watcher", this prostitute plies her trade in cemeteries and sometimes within the crypts themselves. The woman is beautiful in a raw and sensual way. She wears no shoes and is clad in a small, immodest tunic that leaves little to the imagination. The bustuaria has a head of tight, dark curls; cheeks brushed with red chalk; eyes painted with soot; and a scent of roses mixed with oil, a cheap perfume, hanging to her. As the investigators pass, she pushes herself against a random, preferably male, investigator.

She coos, "Looking for pleasure, my stallion? Come with me, and your body will be sated. Only a denarius, or a sesterce if you prefer a sample of my skills instead of their full measure." The woman rubs her hands up and down the investigator's body as she speaks, trying to kiss him. If the investigator resists, the bustuaria grips him powerfully and pulls him closer. Once close enough to do so, the woman whispers into his ear, "Pluto sees you, but I see you, too. I can help you for a price. Come see me tomorrow, when you aren't being followed. Now, go!"



Insidiatur Serpens

The prostitute then pushes the investigator away and rushes to greet one of her approaching regulars. She leads the man into an old crypt belonging to the Gratius family. The mysterious woman, named Caelia, was once a member of The Children of Eihort and is the serpent foretold of in Noctullia’s augury. She will avoid being seen with the investigators at this time for fear of being identified by the people following them.

Caelia, the Former Cultist

Caelia was born into terrible poverty and abandoned on the streets of Rome. She was lucky — or unlucky — enough to be picked up by The Children of Eihort and raised within the cult. For Caelia, worshipping Eihort was like any other religion people were raised with, something that felt perfectly normal. She learned spells, served the Great Old One, and assisted his brood when required. Caelia also rescued and raised abandoned children, training some to be common prostitutes or even courtesans like her. A beautiful young woman and successful courtesan, Caelia practiced her trade with wealthy men and enjoyed a high standard of living. Eventually she married her pimp, a fellow cultist named Nelius, and led a happy life. Three years ago, however, everything changed.

Nelius, who was many years Caelia’s senior, underwent the ritual of Becoming One with their god. As the cultists gathered in celebration deep in the Labyrinth of Messara,

Caelia watched the man she loved die, torn apart by the creatures emerging from his body. Her heart broke, and something deep within her snapped. What should have been a moment of religious ecstasy became one of utter horror. Caelia hid her true feelings from her fellow cultists, but could not put the matter behind her. She was haunted by the memory of her husband’s final moments. Shortly after returning to Rome, Caelia fled the cult, faking her death at the hands of a drunken customer. She had little money and no plan for making a life outside the cult.

Falling back on her courtesan background, Caelia ended up as a *bustuaria*, a low-class prostitute living and working out of a crypt on the outskirts of Rome. She curled her hair, dyed it from her natural blond to black, and avoided entering the city so she would not be detected by her former cult mates. Caelia lives in fear of being discovered by The Children. She knows that the penalty for abandoning the cult and its god is a slow, painful death as a womb for Eihort’s brood.

Caelia, Former Cultist

STR 11 CON 15 SIZ 10 INT 14 POW 15
 DEX 15 APP 15 EDU 14 SAN 0 HP 13

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapons: Fist/Punch 50%, 1D3
 Grapple 50%, damage special
 Kick 45%, 1D6
 Knife 45%, 1D4

Armor: None.

The Children of Eihort

The Children of Eihort is a small cult operating in the city of Rome comprised mostly of children led by a handful of adults. The adult cultists earn their livings as prostitutes, pimps, slave trainers, and plumbers. Their numbers fluctuate between 5 and 10 adult members and between 10 and 30 children.

Their Mission

The primary purpose of The Children is to assist broods of Eihort that spawn within Rome. This means maintaining the connections between the city's extensive sewer network and certain underground caverns, which enables the brood to join others of its kind in chambers hidden deep within the Earth. There, the gathered broods of Eihort wait for the stars to come right. On that day, their parent, the Great Old One Eihort, will come forth to rule over vast swaths of the Earth, and the broods will mature into creatures much like Eihort itself.

Occasionally, The Children are called upon to do more. Orders are delivered from the Great Old One through dreams or by the brood themselves, and the cultists obey without question. Currently, the cultists are following orders to thwart any mission organized to threaten the Great Old One Eihort, orders conveyed through a broodling formed from offspring of Eihort once carried by Arrius Lurco himself.

Their Beliefs

The cult believes that for serving Eihort, they will be spared its wrath when the stars come right and mankind is swept aside. They are Eihort's children and look upon Eihort's broodlings as wise, sacred elder siblings and prophets. The Great Old One is father, mother, god; it is by Eihort's will that they live at all. The cultists are raised with this belief, since the group regularly rescues and raises newborns left to die of exposure on city streets. Members of the cult are members from infancy and accept its teachings as fundamental truths.

Operation

Since most of its members are children, the cult operates as an extended family. Adults go into professions that enable the cult to operate undetected by society. Only about half of the children rescued from abandonment are indoctrinated into the cult. The other half are either sold, if they are boys or uncomely girls, or placed into a stable of prostitutes run by the cult. Girls owned by the cult are usually diobolariae who practice their trade under the arches of public buildings. Much revenue is made from the sale of such slaves and the earnings of cult-owned prostitutes.

Adult members of the cult become high-end courtesans or pimps who manage the courtesans and the stable of diobolariae. A few become plumbers, earning legitimate salaries as they ply their trade. They possess knowledge of and access to Rome's sewer system that enables the cult to guide Eihort's brood safely from the urban sprawl of the city into the subterranean caverns they naturally seek.

Cult members never reach old age. Starting at roughly the age of thirty-five, members of The Children undertake a pilgrimage to Cyrenaica. They travel to the city of Gortyn, on the isle of Crete, and enter the Labyrinth of Messara. Here the cultists come face to face with their god, the Great Old One Eihort, and willingly becomes hosts for its brood. They then return home to wait patiently for the day of their glorious death, when they will "become one" with their god by giving birth to its immortal offspring. If possible, the cultists return to the Labyrinth to experience this glorious final rite at the feet of Eihort itself, surrounded by their brothers and sisters within the cult.

Spells: Ariadne's Twine, Balk Brood, Bat Form, Contact Eihort, Create Amulet, Healing, Resurrection, Summon/Dispel Typhoon.

Skills: Art (Dance) 60%, Bargain 75%, Cthulhu Mythos 18%, Dodge 50%, Fast Talk 75%, First Aid 50%, Hide 80%, Insight 65%, Natural World 55%, Occult 60%, Other Language (Greek) 50%, Persuade 70%, Potions 40%, Sneak 55%, Spot Hidden 85%.

Working Girls in Ancient Rome

The city of Rome teems with prostitutes. The most common slang term for these women is *lupae*, or "she-wolves". They are a mix of free and enslaved, cultured and low class, professional sex trade workers and part-time girls looking to supplement their income. They pay taxes, use birth control, and even terminate unwanted pregnancies with a drug made from the sylphium plant. These women perform in public places and in proper brothels called *lupanaria* that are organized into "red light districts". They ply their trade in tiny bedroom cubicles in the back rooms of taverns or even outside graveyards and within crypts. The prostitute in Rome is an accepted part of daily life. Roman Working Girls details some of the many varieties of working girls in Roman society:

Roman Working Girls

Name	Description
Meretrices	High class call girls used by the wealthy
Lupae	Brothel girls
Scorta Erratica	"Wandering Sluts", girls who work the streets without a set territory
Diobolariae	"Two-bit Whores", poor, lower class women trying to earn an extra coin or two
Bustuariae	"Grave Watchers", girls who ply their trade in graveyards and in tombs

Meeting with Arrius Casca

A slave in the service of the House of Arrius contacts the investigators early in the morning after Arrius Lurco's funeral. The messenger says, "My master, Arrius Casca, wishes you to visit with him, at the House of Arrius, for lunch today. He hopes to see you there at the sixth hour." If the investigators reply that they are unable to meet with Casca at that time, the messenger explains, "My master has a very full schedule of meetings over the next few days. Today is the only day he can meet with you, and he deeply hopes you can join him for lunch." The message should be clear: Arrius Casca expects the investigators to be there at noon, period.

Even if the investigators arrive at the House of Arrius at noon, they are kept waiting in the atrium for about thirty minutes. A polite and well-dressed slave named Agorix apologizes for the delay, explaining that an earlier meeting is running longer than expected. Skilled and attentive slaves offer the investigators wine, pears, and grapes while Micilla, a lovely musician and poetess owned by the Arrius family, entertains them. Eventually, the investigators see a group of men leave Casca's study, all of whom they recognize as co-owners of the Reds Racing Faction. The men seem in good spirits as they depart. Once the racing team owners are shown out, Agorix leads the investigators into the triclinium, or formal dining room, for lunch.

Arrius Casca enters moments later, apologizes for the delay, and asks the investigators to sit, gesturing toward a number of couches arranged around a table. Lunch is already laid out, a rich delicacy of milk-fattened snails in a garlic wine sauce with bread, followed by sliced apples baked in honey and cloves. The meal is meant to impress and reward Casca's guests. After they eat, the patrician leads the investigators to the tablinum, or family office, for the formal meeting. Casca does most of the talking, of course, as he puts forth a few instructions, explanations, and offers for the investigators.

Reds Racing Faction

Casca explains that he paid the Blues dearly to buy back Albius Macer and Corvinis, more than what his father sold them for. However, Casca considered it important to the fans and the team's image. To fund this, he needed to liquidate some assets, as the house's coffers were seriously depleted. He explains, "My father recently purchased some valuable gladiators, which I sold to help cover the costs. They fetched a good price, too. I also sold my personal villa, a nice place I just had built in regiones Via Lata. I no longer need it as I've moved my family here." Casca explains that the Blues also demanded breeding rights to Corvinis. A provision of the agreement grants the Blues Faction stud rights to Corvinis. The champion Reds stallion must sire at least a dozen foals to Blues Faction mares over the next three years. "This will cost us in the long run. Tactically, the team still has problems. We lost other good horses that I can't afford to recover. The

Part Two - Various Meetings

After the funeral, the investigators receive invitations to meet with various people. They will have several discussions about all that has occurred and what is to happen from this point forward. Some of these conversations are aimed at putting the past to rest and allowing life to return to normal, even if that normalcy is an illusion. Other discussions convey a heartfelt intention to finish what Arrius Lurco started. One such meeting might fill the investigators with horror, grant them sanity-shattering insights, and quite possibly cost them their lives.

Reds have some rebuilding to do. It may take several years to return to where we were before, but at least the fans won't feel so betrayed."

These comments give the investigators information about the status of Lurco's gladiators. In short, they are gone. Investigators planning to continue Arrius Lurco's mission can no longer include these particular men in their plans.

The Will of Arrius Lurco

Casca informs the investigators that he is satisfied with the contents of his father's will, aside from a few minor provisions. He says, "It was written up long before the madness took hold of him, so everything seems in order." Casca tells the investigators that he now owns the controlling interest of the Reds Racing Faction and that the other owners have agreed to reinstate him as the team's manager.

He then says, "My father was generous to Hedeia, his former slave, in his will. He's made her a wealthy woman, granting her money, ownership of a small *garum* [fermented fish sauce and a wildly popular condiment] company, and shares in the faction, too. Quite generous ... but that's fine. My father loved her, and she him. Hedeia made Father happy for many years, so I'm not contesting her inheritance."

Concerning his younger brother, Casca says, "My father left Melito a good amount of money as well. It should be enough for him to spend the rest of his life writing poetry. He likely won't have to do an honest day's work, not that he ever has. Father was too indulgent of Melito by far since our mother died."

The Madness of Arrius Lurco

Arrius Casca explains that he believes his father went mad over the last year, eventually taking his own life. Investigators who make successful Insight rolls discern that Casca has some doubts about that statement, but is clinging to it as the only thing that makes sense. He tells the investigators, "I know you were witness to many things during my father's final days. Many unusual things. I hope you'll remain silent about what you saw or heard. My family's reputation is very important to me. I need to look to the future of this household. My father was a good man. I do not wish his memory to be tainted by his final, tragic days. Do I have your support in this matter? Can I depend upon your help?" If the investigators agree, they are given a gift as they leave the house (see **The Meeting with Casca Ends**).

An Offer for the Future

Along with managing the Reds Racing Faction, Casca is now pater familias of the Arrius family. He has much to do if he hopes to repair the damage caused to the team. Casca needs competent and loyal clientes to assist him. He explains, "I need good men, clientes I can trust. I hope you might be such men. The House of Arrius has a reputation of being a generous patron to those in our service." Arrius Casca then offers to make the investigators clientes of the House of Arrius.

At the Keeper's discretion, whatever the investigators' professions, Casca will find a place for them either within the

House of Arrius or in the Reds Racing Faction. Any investigator who accepts the offer to work for Arrius Casca full time receives a 50% increase to his profession's standard income and a +10% bonus to his Status score.

There are a few catches to becoming an official cliens of the House of Arrius. The investigator cannot be a cliens of another family. He cannot maintain his current employment; the investigator must work solely for the House of Arrius or the Reds Racing Faction. No investigator who accepts the offer will be allowed to continue the mission planned by Arrius Lurco. Agreeing to these terms effectively removes an investigator from the campaign, as Casca immediately sends him on errands to the provinces of Gallia, Hispania, and Raetia. Much needs to be done to rebuild the fortunes of the House of Arrius and Casca. If the investigators go to work for Casca, The Children of Eihort are quite willing to allow them to walk away with their lives.

If an investigator refuses Casca's offer, the patrician says, "I understand, but I hope you reconsider. Even if you aren't working for me directly, I hope that we can do business in the future and that you will look upon me as a friend. If you ever need tickets to the races or another favor of some sort, just leave word with my man Agorix, and he'll set up an appointment."

The Meeting with Casca Ends

After discussing the topics listed in Meeting with Arrius Casca, the new pater familias of the Arrius family bids the investigators a good day and apologizes for not being able to spend more time with them. "I've meetings set up through the rest of the day and into tonight," he says as Agorix shows the investigators out. "So much to do running a household as well as a team... and my wife wishes to redecorate the villa on top of everything else. She says my father lived too long as a bachelor. You know how these things go. Be well, my friends, be well."

As the investigators leave, Agorix hands a small pouch to each one who agreed to remain silent about the circumstances surrounding Arrius Lurco's death. "This is a gift from my master, Arrius Casca," he explains, "in gratitude for you helping to preserve the memory of his father, the late and much beloved Arrius Lurco." Each bag contains 20 gold aurei, the equivalent of 2000 sestertii. If an investigator who accepts this gift later breaks the agreement and Arrius Casca learns of it, the patrician's reaction will be severe, with appropriate repercussions at the Keeper's discretion.

Messages and Farewells Delivered

As the investigators leave, a well-dressed man who has been waiting outside approaches. It is Porculus, the former personal slave of Arrius Lurco. The man is newly freed and well off after receiving manumission and a legacy, or inheritance, at the reading of his master's will. Porculus awkwardly greets the investigators as any free man would and says, "Some friends asked me to deliver their messages. Lurca Hedeia desires that you visit with her. She'll be ready to receive you

at her home any time after tomorrow. She hopes you'll be her guest for several days."

Porculus also tells them, "Arrius Melito wishes to meet with you, too. He hopes you'll join him as his guest at the Baths of Trajan tomorrow. He will be in the library most of the afternoon. Melito told me to say that he hopes this trip to the baths goes better than the last one."

After delivering his messages, Porculus departs. He explains, "I'm leaving Rome. I've some family in Gaul that I haven't seen in years. It may be nice to live in the country after all this. The city just isn't the same after... everything." The freedman smiles, bids the investigators farewell, and wishes them luck. "May Jupiter watch over you all."

Meeting with Arrius Melito

The next day, Melito waits for the investigators to join him at the Baths of Trajan around midday. He still nurses wounds from the attack outside the Baths of Agrippa. Melito is reading and relaxing in the library at the massive public baths. The investigators are brought right to the young man. The patrician left word with the management that close friends were joining him and that he was covering their expenses.

Two large, imposing men are with Arrius Melito. They are Thalna Mus and Falto Celatus, retired soldiers working as bodyguards. The pair now shadow Melito wherever he goes, protecting him with their lives if necessary. Both are very loyal, but only to the man who actually pays them — Melito's older brother, Arrius Casca. The bodyguards report Melito's comings and goings to their employer, who intends to keep close tabs on his younger brother.

Melito's spirits are low, but he tries to put on a brave face. The usually soft-spoken man seems a little wiser and stronger, the brush with death and the loss of his father giving him a measure of maturity. He suspects much concerning his father's death and wants to know the full story. Melito hopes the investigators can tell him more and directly asks them, "What was in the box from under my father's bed?" (see **The Chest**). He says, "I know my father was planning to go somewhere, to do something he felt was important. The gladiators, the ship, his bags packed... There's much I suspect, but I wish to know for certain. Tell me what you've learned. I'm ready to hear it. Tell me the truth about what happened to my father."

Telling Melito the Truth

If the investigators tell Arrius Melito the truth, they see the man compose himself for a moment. As his resolve focuses, he stands and says, "My father was a great man. He worked hard, lived virtuously, and was well respected. He deserved a better death than that. He deserved a better son than me. I am not a great man. I'm a dreamer. I've done nothing with my life, but I swear that ends today. I'm going to finish what my father started. I'm going to make certain Arrius Lurco is properly avenged. Will you help me?"

If the investigators agree, Melito explains that he has been left some money in his father's will. "I can get more from

Casca if need be..." Investigators who make a successful Insight roll realize Melito is unsure whether his brother will give him more money. If pressed, Melito explains, "I need to be cautious with my brother. He won't want to hear about this. He doesn't want to talk about what happened to our father. Casca may want to bury the past, but our father's spirit needs to find peace. Tell me what you need from me to continue with his mission, and I'll find a way to make it happen."

If the investigators lie to Arrius Melito or refuse to discuss the details, the young man is very disappointed. He says, "I thought we were friends. I hired you to look into this, and now you've nothing to say? Fine, I can see Casca has bought and paid for your silence, but he can't buy everyone. There's not enough coin in the world to bury the truth. Someone must know something, and I intend to find them." With that, Arrius Melito storms out. In either case, his words are reported to his elder brother, who soon takes action to deal with the situation.

Lying to Melito

Investigators who attempt to lie to Arrius Melito discover that he knows more than they think. He will already have spoken with the old rabbi, Moab, and learned that Arrius Lurco had "sold his soul to a demon." Melito also knows his father hired a boat to take himself, Damokles, and the gladiators to Crete, and was trying to remember what happened in Crete during the gaps in his memory.

Melito grows frustrated with the investigators' denials and refuses to believe them even with successful Fast Talk or Persuade rolls. The man has simply learned too much. "If you don't wish to help me, then I ask you to return the contents of my father's chest. I can do this without you. For once in my life, I am not afraid."

A Much-Changed Arrius Melito

Arrius Melito has grown up. While not as strong willed as his brother, he has gained some strength. Melito feels his efforts to help his father were too little and too late. He believes if he had been a stronger person, his father would have confided in him about what was happening. The young man wants nothing more than to redeem himself by winning justice for his father.

Arrius Melito is in a dangerous place. He's ready to peel back the veil over mankind's eyes. He wants to confront the awesome powers and unspeakable evil of the Great Old Ones. Although Melito's spirit is willing, his sheltered life leaves him woefully unprepared for these perils. Luckily for him, his older brother has no intention of allowing Melito to delve too deeply into their father's fate.



Sic semper audacibus

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Meeting with (the Late) Damokles of Gaios

The investigators may seek out Damokles to deliver Lurco's dying message for the philosopher to go on without him. The investigators might want to learn why such a close friend would miss attending Lurco's funeral. Unfortunately, the philosopher won't be answering any questions.

Investigators who visit Damokles' apartment on Viminal Hill in the Alta Semita neighborhood find it dark and quiet. No one answers the door, but it's unlocked and slightly ajar. Upon entering, the investigators find the body of Agela, the older Greek slave woman owned by Damokles. She has been stabbed five times. Two slashes struck her arms, as if she was trying to shield herself. Two more plunged deeply into her stomach, and a final one pierced her heart. Agela's throat has been cut, and her corpse lays in a pool of drying blood. Investigators who view Agela's remains must make a Sanity check for 1/1D2 points.

Several packed bags line the hallway, as if someone was about to leave on a long trip. At the end of the hall, the investigators find Damokles' body in the master bedroom, on the floor, leaning against the foot of the bed. The philosopher is dressed in a theatrical costume representing "the hero" role common in many plays, complete with a mask. More than twenty stab wounds rend the bloodstained outfit. Investigators who view this grisly scene must make a Sanity check for

1/1D3 points. Garbed and masked this way, the investigators cannot be certain that the body is in fact Damokles.

Mask of the Hero

Investigators who examine the body closer notice the mask shift on the corpse's face. It is securely tied in the back and must be unfastened to remove. If a brave investigator does so, he's in for a shock. Roughly a hundred brood of Eihort are concealed under it! The creatures scuttle away, rushing for whatever cracks or crevices they can find. Some stick to the underside of the mask and race up the arm and down the back of whoever removed it. Investigators who see this must make a Sanity check for 1/1D2 while the investigator who removed the mask and experienced the brood crawling up his arm must make a Sanity check for 1/1D4.

The attacking brood wriggle under the investigator's clothes, pressing against his bare skin and delivering tiny bites until they are destroyed. The attack does little more than cause a rash and spread revulsion. The investigators can attack the fleeing or swarming creatures by making a successful DEX x5 check. In three rounds, the creatures are gone, either destroyed or escaped. No matter what investigators do, some of them escape and report to their fellow brood-mates. Soon this information is shared with members of The Children of Eihort cult.

A Gift of Fruit and Tears

The Children of Eihort attempt to assassinate the investigators in the days following Arrius Lurco's funeral. At some point, a comely woman wearing a red tunic and too much makeup on her eyes approaches the investigators while leading several children. The children all carry small baskets, while the woman carries a wax tablet with a list of names. She asks for the investigators by name, checking the tablet as if working from a list. If possible, the woman tries to approach the investigators when they have gathered for a meal somewhere.

The woman introduces herself as Amala, a slave in the service of the House of Arrius. She hands each investigator a basket, saying, "Please accept this small token of gratitude for your kind condolences to the House of Arrius on behalf of my mistress, Menia Tutella, wife of Arrius Casca." After distributing the baskets, Amala's group quickly departs, commenting, "We've many other deliveries to make." The baskets contain grapes, dates, and peaches.

The baskets are not from Menia Tutella or the House of Arrius, but come from The Children of Eihort cult. The children and the messenger, a whore named Helva Bellia, are slaves who belong to the cult. They were told what to say, given the clothing they wore, and instructed to deliver particular baskets to the investigators. After completing the task, both Bellia and the children are rewarded with the contents of the remaining, non-poisoned baskets and given time off. They all then lay low to avoid being located by any surviving — and vengeful — investigators.

The fruit in the baskets tastes delicious despite being laced with a poison called Hades Tears. An exotic toxin, Hades Tears consists of a mixture of several herbs and fungi. The poison has a POT 16 with an onset time of 4 hours. In the first hour, victims exhibit no symptoms. However, in the second and third hours, those poisoned suffer terrible diarrhea and stomach cramps, taking 4 points of damage each hour. In the final, dreadful hour, victims are crippled by abdominal cramps and severe dizziness, suffering the remaining 8 points of the poison's damage.

Hades Tears

Dose	2-4 drops
POT	16
Onset	1 hour
Duration	4 hours
Symptoms	Pain, diarrhea, death

Investigators who are poisoned must work fast to combat the toxin's effects. They must make a successful Medicine roll to identify the type of poison ingested. Hades Tears is rare, to the point of being nearly legendary. Its creation is thought to be lost to most, if not all, working apothecaries. Once the investigators identify the toxin, they can make a successful Natural World, Medicine, or Library Use check in a place where medical texts are available to discover an antidote.

At this point, the investigators must make a successful Natural World roll to locate the ingredients necessary for the antidote, followed by a successful Potions roll to create it.

Gathering the items and brewing the antidote takes at least an hour. With a successful Luck roll, investigators who are apothecaries or possess a Potions score of 50% or more will have all the items needed among their supplies. The investigators can also get the antidote from Caelia, the bustuaria (see **A Meeting with Caelia**).

Once the antidote is ingested, it halts the toxin's effects, and the victim slowly recovers over the next 4 hours. The damage already suffered can only be healed naturally; First Aid and Medicine checks are useless. Without the antidote, poisoned investigators die if they fail their POT resistance check and have fewer than 16 hit points. Those who survive the poisoning without taking the antidote endure terrible agony until the effects subside. They recover from the symptoms over the following 24 hours, but lost hit points must also be naturally healed, receiving no benefits from First Aid or Medicine checks.

Fleeing Rome with The Children in Place

The investigators have the option of fleeing Rome without having a final confrontation with The Children of Eihort. This will be a grave mistake, as the cultists then send wave after wave of attackers after them. These can be anything from highly skilled assassins hired by the cultists, animated corpses tirelessly lumbering after the investigators, or stealthy and highly mobile daemunculi. The Children have deep pockets, are highly motivated, and will be divinely directed in their actions by the broodling of Eihort until this crisis is ended. Unless the investigators want to be the subject of endless pursuits and the target of nearly constant attacks, they must destroy the cult.

Ostia

The investigators have received an invitation to visit with Hedeia in Ostia. This will likely be their second trip to see her, so the investigators will know how to find her villa. Unbeknownst to them, Ostia is a safe haven. While there, The Children of Eihort can take no action against the investigators. The area is unfamiliar territory for the cult, so it remains reluctant to operate there. Investigators who realize this can use it to their advantage.

A Much-Changed Hedeia

By the time the investigators arrive in Ostia, Hedeia has shed her last tear. Her heart broke when she was banished from Lurco's side, but with his death she has a measure of closure. In his will, Arrius Lurco expressed his love for Hedeia while leaving her considerable wealth. For political reasons, Hedeia could only be Lurco's slave as long as he lived. With his death, she has become truly free, strong, and determined. In this, she is much like Arrius Melito, the tragedy forging both into sterner stuff. Unlike Melito, however, no one holds Hedeia back from taking action against those responsible for Arrius Lurco's death.

The Children's Campaign

The cult of Eihort desires one of two things: to drive the investigators off or to kill them. The cult closely watches the investigators, eager to see if they heed The Children's warning or if they're actively pursuing the course laid out by Arrius Lurco. If the investigators leave Rome on new business, such as helping Casca rebuild the House of Arrius, the cult allows them to depart unmolested, considering the threat to their god to be over. However, if the investigators remain in Rome and take actions the cult consider provocative, such as meeting with Lurca Hedeia, visiting the area around Arrius Lurco's grave or leaving Italia in a southerly direction, they decide the threat is very much alive. The Great Old One Eihort itself may also inform its worshippers that the investigators need to be eliminated. If this happens, the cultists intensify their efforts to destroy the investigators. The following are options for Keepers to use to tailor The Children of Eihort's campaign against their investigators.

Surveillance

The Children employ various methods for keeping track of the investigators. They can assign young children to follow the investigators and report on what they see and hear. The investigators can spot these spies with a successful Spot Hidden roll, although the children stay far enough away to escape if detected. The cultists may also bribe or charm the slaves, servants, or bodyguards of people the investigators interact with while in Rome. Using comely lupae, charming courtesans, or ample coins, The Children can gather a great deal of information, passed on by unsuspecting people in innocent conversation. Lastly, the cultist Larcilla can create through alchemy and sorcery a creature ideally suited for gathering information, a Daemunculus Index (see Daemunculus).

Assault

Once the Children decide the investigators must die, they have several ways of accomplishing this. While they can create various poisons, they likely won't use this method a second time, especially if the assassination attempt by lupe Helvia failed. The cult may arrange for a group of common thugs to attack the investigators (see Random Thugs). The cultist Grumio knows a spell to create zombies, allowing The Children to send one or more animated corpses against the investigators. Finally, Larcilla can also create a more deadly variety of her minions, a venomous assassin called a Daemunculus Venenarius (see Daemunculus, Lesser Servitor).

Random Thugs (1D3+1)

STR 14 CON 14 SIZ 13 INT 9 POW 11
DEX 10 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist 65% 1D3+db

Grapple 40%, damage special

Puglio 40% 1D6+db

Armor: None.

Skills: Conceal 40%, Hide 25%, Sneak 35%.

Animated Zombies (1D2)

STR	15	16
CON	16	17
SIZ	13	12
INT	n/a	n/a
POW	1	1
DEX	7	7
HP	15	15
DB	+1D4	+1D4

Weapons: Bite 30%, 1D3.

Armor: None, but impaling weapons do 1 point of damage, and all others do half rolled damage.

Skills: Appear to Be Normal Living Human 40%, Obey Animator's Command 99%.

Sanity Loss: 1/1D8.

Daemunculus, Lesser Servitor

This creature, which comes in numerous varieties, appears as a tiny, bat-winged, bestial-looking humanoid. They are unnatural beings created through a combination of dark alchemy and Mythos magic. A daemunculus, or "little daemon", is completely obedient to its creator, able to send and receive telepathic messages with him or her. They are used in many ways, with individual types of daemunculi possessing specialized characteristics and abilities beneficial to their specific tasks.

Creation

Making a daemunculus is a long, costly, and complicated process. The creator must possess a potion score of at least 75% and knowledge of the spell Create Daemunculus. The ingredients vary from type to type but always include vile fluids, a living bat, and a human infant. These are placed in a specially prepared amphora, where the bat, human infant, and any other animals required are ritualistically drowned in the noxious creation mixture. The corpses of the living things first dissolve, then reform into the living daemunculus over a four-day period. This costs the caster 1D6 Sanity points, 12 MP points, and 500-750 sesterii in materials. A daemunculus instantly vanishes upon the death of its creator.

Daemunculus Index

This variety of daemunculus is specialized in surveillance and espionage. To create an Index, or informant, a cuttlefish and rat are added to the amphora daemunculus mixture. The results are a rat-like winged creature with natural camouflage ability, able to change not only its color but the texture of its skin as well. In combat, it's the most fragile of all the daemunculi, but that's not its role. As a spy, its abilities are extraordinary, granting its master a wealth of intelligence while remaining unseen by its targets. The Daemunculus Index has the unique feature of a long, rat-like snout with fleshy tentacles for whiskers.

Daemunculus Venenarius

Primarily used as an assassin, the Daemunculus Venenarius, or "poisoner", is made by adding a venomous spider and serpent to the creation process. The end result is a deadly creature with eight eyes and long, hollow fangs, able to deliver near fatal poisonous bites. Its venom, POT 12, is a neurotoxin that causes extreme, burning pain and can trigger cardiac arrest. If killed, the creature explodes in a cloud of noxious fumes with a 10-foot radius. Those exposed to this cloud, which lasts a single round, suffer from a POT 6 poison attack. The cloud causes watery eyes, dizziness, difficulty in breathing, and nausea. This creature's forked tongue and 360-degree vision also give it the uncanny ability to track its targets over long distances.

Daemunculus, diminutive created servitor

	Daemunculus Index	Daemunculus Venenarius
Char.	rolls / averages	rolls / averages
STR	2D3 / 4	2D4 / 6
CON	1D4 / 3	2D6 / 8
SIZ	1D3 / 2	1D3 / 2
INT	3D6 / 8	2D6 / 6
POW	2D6 / 6	2D6 / 6
DEX	4D6 / 11	4D6 / 11
Move	4 / 12 flying	6 / 10 flying
HP	3	5
Av. DB:	+0	+0
Bite	25%	50%
Damage	1 point	1D2+POT 12 poison
Armor:	None	None
Spells:	None	None
Skills:	Hide 80%, Listen 75%, Sneak 75%, Spot Hidden 65%	Hide 60%, Sneak 70%, Track 65%
Sanity Loss:	1/1D4 Sanity points to see a daemunculus	

Meeting with Lurca Hedeia

Servants warmly greet the investigators as they arrive at Hedeia's villa, showing the travelers to prepared guest rooms. After the investigators are settled, a servant comes to fetch them to meet with "my mistress, Lurca Hedeia." This is quite a change from the last time the investigators visited, when Hedeia treated her servants more like equals. Now she is mistress of the house, and her servants seem to stand prouder. They are happy with the strength their mistress now shows.

Upon seeing the investigators, Hedeia greets them with a kiss, as if they were her family. Her clothing is luxurious and more conservative. She now wears jewelry befitting her station, as well. Two bodyguards stand nearby, none other than Ruga and Celer, the dimacherii previously owned by Arrius Lurco (see **The Fate of the Gladiators**). Hedeia asks the investigators to sit and talk with her in the garden.

At first, she talks of simple things: the beautiful ceremony, her legacy in Lurco's will, the health of the investigators, Casca's generosity, Melito's injuries... It becomes clear that she views Lurco's sons as her own; after all, she had been a mother to them during their teen years. Hedeia asks what plans the investigators have for the future, saying, "I've some plans of my own I'd like to discuss."

Hedeia's Offer

At dinner, Hedeia treats the investigators to a small banquet. Fine food and excellent wine are served while the diners recline on comfortable couches. At the end of the dessert course, Hedeia tells the investigators her plans, which include:

- Hedeia spoke to Porculus in depth about what their master was doing. "We were close friends for many years, after all."
- Hedeia says she knows that Lurco was trying to reclaim his soul from a demon he encountered in Crete.
- She suspects the investigators know many details of this plan and that Lurco wanted Damokles to continue with the mission.
- Hedeia knows that Casca will not sponsor such an effort and that he may prevent his brother, Melito, from doing so.
- While Hedeia's legacy is not limitless, it is considerable. "More than a former slave like me would ever really require."
- She is willing to invest much of her legacy to fund the mission Arrius Lurco laid out in his final days.
- Hedeia hopes the investigators will undertake this mission on her behalf and offers to compensate them handsomely for doing so.
- Hedeia offers the investigators 30,000 sestertii for destroying the demon responsible for the death of her beloved Lurco.

Laborer

You are likely a freed slave or are among the Empire's poorest citizens. However, there's always need for a good worker with a strong back. You aren't fortunate enough to own a shop or have been taught a trade. You move from one job to the next, often traveling far and wide to wherever people are hiring workers. One day you could be unloading a shipment of wine from a river barge, the next hauling lumber into a construction site, carting stone from a field, bringing in a harvest, or digging ditches alongside a newly finished road. It doesn't matter what the work is; as long as you're paid coin at the end of the day, you'll do it. This gives you a wide array of skills, none of which you're that gifted in. It's not an easy life, but at least you're free to live it as you please.

Skills: Drive, Empire, Fast Talk, Hide, +6 skills of investigator's choice.

Special: +1 to STR, +2 to CON, -2 to EDU, no single skill can ever exceed 75%.

Money: 1D3 x 100 sestertii

Yearly Income: 800 sestertii

Hedeia tells the investigators, "Melito trusted you enough to ask you to help his father. Lurco himself trusted you with the contents of his personal locker, which not even Porculus was allowed to touch. I must trust someone, for I cannot go to Crete myself. I hope, nay, I beg that you might take on this task for me. In my name, in the memory of Arrius Lurco, for all that is good and noble and wholesome in this world, the unholy creature that cursed him must be destroyed! Will you do this?"

The Fate of the Gladiators

Hedeia informs the investigators that she purchased three of the six gladiators Arrius Lurco acquired for his mission. Casca was happy to sell them to her since he needed to raise money to buy back Albius Macer and Corvinis from the Blues. In addition to Celer and Ruga, Hedeia also owns Natta, one of the bestiarii.

"Natta's in Rome," she says. "He's fighting in a few days. No reason he shouldn't earn me a few coins, and the fans have missed him." If the investigators agree to continue with Lurco's mission, Hedeia adds, "When you're ready to leave for Crete, you can take Natta with you. You may also take either Ruga or Celer. Two is not as good as six, but it is better than none. I'll need one of the men to remain as my bodyguard, of course. I'm rather well off now and must worry about things like that. When the demon is destroyed, they'll all be freed, as that was what Lurco wanted."

Meeting with Captain Taccius Avitus

Although Taccius Avitus had begun laying in supplies for the trip to Crete before Lurco's death, if the investigators go to the docks in Ostia they find The Lady of Athens taking on a cargo of textiles. Captain Avitus explains, "I must do what I can to salvage something of this trading season."

Arrius Lurco had hired Captain Avitus and his ship for the entire trade season, so Arrius Casca has now tasked him with delivering cargo on behalf of the House of Arrius.

While The Lady of Athens usually carries high-risk cargo for considerable profit, Captain Avitus must fulfill his contract with the Arrius family for the season or return the generous retainer Arrius Lurco paid him. Captain Avitus considers hauling fabric to be beneath him, but comments, "Orders are orders, and a deal's a deal. We were hired for the season, so we do as we're told."

If the investigators ask if Captain Avitus could take them to Crete, he smiles and says, "That's easy enough to do. Just get permission from someone in the House of Arrius first. Charts have already been prepared, and it's along most routes we'll be taking. You'd have to pay us for the time we'd be delayed, but it'd be reasonable. Just check into port when you're ready to leave. If we're not here, the harbormaster will know when we're due back. I'll let him know we're business associates."

The Mission, As It Stands

By now, the investigators may have a Mythos tome with several spells, wealthy backers, a pair of well-trained gladiators at their disposal, and a vessel willing to take them to Cyrenaica. If they plan to carry out this mission, they are well on their way. However, the situation is more complicated than it seems.

The Children of Eihort will not allow the investigators to set out unopposed. The cult has received word from its god, the Great Old One Eihort, that the investigators are too dangerous to allow to remain alive. For the investigators, leaving the cult in place as they depart would invite reprisals from it against the members of the Arrius family, especially Lurca Hedeia. Unless the investigators want to fight a battle on two fronts, Eihort's followers in Rome must be eliminated.

Another problem is that the mission as Arrius Lurco laid it out has no hope of success. The spells gathered in *Testamentum Arrii Lurconis*, while potent, can do little harm against an entity of Eihort's power. The investigators also know very little about the cultists operating in Crete. Some parts of Arrius Lurco's plan depend upon parts of his lost memory being restored by the familiar surroundings while traveling in Crete. With Lurco dead, no real method of locating the cults in Cyrenaica remains. The investigators need better intelligence and more potent weapons if they are to succeed.

The answer to both lies with Caelia, the bustuaria and former member of The Children of Eihort. The former cultist has intimate knowledge of the investigators' adversary, including the cult's weaknesses, modes of operation, and the names and locations of leading members in its hierarchy. She also knows of someone who might possess a weapon that could tip the scales in the investigators' favor. The woman has a score to settle with the cult as well, and until it is eliminated her safety will always be an unsure thing. Caelia is willing to help the investigators, but hopes to negotiate favorable terms for her service.

Attempting to Meet with Caelia

Investigators who try to meet with Caelia may have trouble finding her. The bustuaria wants to negotiate from a position of strength, so, knowing The Children are trying to kill the investigators, Caelia observes them from hiding and waits to reveal herself until they appear anxious or desperate. This enables the Keeper to delay the investigators' meeting with Caelia until the tension has built to a suitable level. When the time is right, as judged by the Keeper, Caelia allows the investigators to meet with her.

Part Three - Strange Bedfellows

By now the investigators must realize dangerous enemies threaten them. The broodling has revealed itself, both at the funeral and possibly at Damokles' apartment. Soon after, a mysterious woman and some children posing as slaves from the House of Arrius tried to poison them. The Children of Eihort will not stop until the investigators are dead. Keepers should have the cult make other attacks and assassination attempts if the investigators ignore this threat. Before confronting the Great Old One Eihort lurking in far off Cyrenaica, the investigators must rid Rome of the entity's worshippers.

The investigators need better information about their adversaries. In addition, Lurco's plan cannot succeed; it must be altered and refined to have a real chance of success. To achieve both these goals, the investigators have the opportunity to deal with Caelia. However, earning her trust and meeting her price will not be easy.

Meanwhile, a conflict arises between Casca and Melito. Upon learning of Damokles' death and Melito's meetings with the investigators, Casca sits his brother down to talk about their deceased father's plans. The situation soon comes to a head, eliminating options the investigators may have relied upon. In the end, the investigators lose any financial support from Melito as Casca makes drastic decisions regarding his brother's future.

Casca and Melito

At some point, a slave delivers an urgent message for the investigators to visit Arrius Melito at the House of Arrius. The invitation states the investigators *must* come early in the day, just after breakfast if possible. When the investigators arrive, they are escorted into the gardens and served refreshments. Melito joins them there, looking very distressed.

Melito greets the investigators and thanks them for coming. He glares at his shadowing bodyguards and says, "I am in my own home. Your presence is hardly required. I owe these people my life; they are not here to harm me. Withdraw to the house." The men smirk, bow, and wander back inside. Melito breathes a sigh of relief, then turns to the investigators

and explains why he called for them.

“I’m sorry to have to meet with you so early,” he says. “Casca is with the Reds Faction trainers almost every morning, but he returns home for lunch. I didn’t want him here when I met with you. My brother and I had words. It did not go well.” Melito conveys the following information as he speaks with the investigators:

- The brothers spoke about the death of Damokles and how it might be connected with what their father was planning. Melito told Casca that maybe the people who killed Damokles were involved in their father’s death. Casca told Melito he must accept that their father killed himself with wine and poppy juice after he went insane.
- Melito told Casca he wanted to leave Rome for a while to visit Cyrenaica with some friends. Casca told Melito he knows their father was planning to go to Crete on some delusional notion brought on by his madness, and forbade Melito from making such a trip. Melito told Casca that he was not afraid to avenge their father’s death and asked if Casca was.
- When Casca visits Corduba in Hispania next month to meet with a well-known horse breeder, Melito is coming with him. The breeder has a daughter of marriageable age named Magnilla, and the House of Arrius would benefit from such an arrangement.
- If Magnilla and her father find Melito suitable, the pair will wed at the end of the racing season. Everything has been arranged without Melito’s consent.
- Melito protested, but Casca told him that he has no choice if he wants to remain part of the family.
- Casca warned Melito against fighting him on the marriage or being rude to their hosts in Hispania, promising that Melito would suffer dearly for it if he ruined Casca’s plans.
- Melito is currently a prisoner in his own home, his bodyguards tasked with confining him to the estate.
- Melito no longer has access to the family’s coffers or even the personal inheritance left to him by his father.

Melito is effectively trapped. “Casca was always a controlling bastard, but I never thought he’d go this far. Forcing me to marry? Me? I had an understanding with Father, but Casca will hear none of it. He says our father is dead and that he’s now in charge of the family. I’m being sold like a stallion so Magnilla’s family can be linked to the Reds Racing Faction and the House of Arrius!” Investigators who make a successful Insight or Idea roll realize that Melito has no interest in women.

Melito apologizes to the investigators and informs them that he will be unable to fund their activities for the time being. He asks them to continue as best they can. Melito doesn’t know that Hedeia might have already offered to finance this mission herself. If informed of this, Melito will be overjoyed at the news.

When Casca learns that Melito had visitors, he exiles his brother to the family estate on the island of Sardinia. Several weeks later, Casca picks up his brother there, on his way to Cordoba in Hispania. This ends the involvement of the House of Arrius with any mission against the Great Old One Eihort. Arrius Casca is putting this matter behind him for what he considers the good of his family. He finds it easier to believe his father went mad and killed himself than to accept the truth.

A Meeting with Caelia

The former member of The Children of Eihort meets with investigators when she judges the time to be right. She knows that if the cult has marked them for death, the investigators need her help to survive. Caelia herself requires assistance to make a better life for herself. As long as the The Children exist, Caelia knows her life is in danger. She plans to better her situation by helping the investigators against her former companions.

If the Investigators Arrive Poisoned

If the investigators arrive suffering the effects of Hades Tears poisoning, Caelia hurries them into the crypt that serves as her home. She retrieves a wax-sealed bottle that contains the antidote to Hades Tears from its hiding place within an urn of ashes. Caelia administers a dose of antitoxin to any poisoned investigator. The former cultist says, “I’m impressed. They used Hades Tears on you. They must want you dead very badly. This should stop the effects of the poison. You’ll be fine in a few hours, a day at most.” Keepers should continue the meeting as if the investigators arrived normally (see **If the Investigators Arrive Normally**).

If the Investigators Arrive Normally

The investigators arrive at the crypt of the Gratius family to find Caelia scantily clad and ready to entertain customers. She invites the investigators into her “home” to speak with them. Caelia knows The Children of Eihort are watching both the investigators and the Arrius family crypt, but is unsure why the investigators have run afoul of her former companions. Caelia tries to get the investigators to tell her exactly what’s going on and how they came to be involved in it.

The former cultist will not share too much information at once. She confirms the investigators are up against a dangerous secret society that serves an ancient and evil god. She says, “It is called Eihort, Master of the Maze, Lord of the Labyrinth. Eihort is a powerful god, more ancient and terrible than the Titans. The people who are after you are called The Children of Eihort.” If the investigators ask how Caelia knows this, she smiles coyly and says, “Because I was once one of them — once, but no longer.” These dark revelations grant the investigators +1% to their Cthulhu Mythos score, complete with the penalty of 1 point to their max SAN.

At this point, Caelia stops giving out information and tests the investigators’ abilities and resolve. She tells them, “I can help you. We can help one another. I’m likely the only real hope you have. But first I’ll give you something as a sign of good faith, to demonstrate what I have to offer you. It’s something you’ll need to deal with at once for your own safety. That is, if we’re to be working together?”

The Lurking Cultist

If the investigators agree to work with Caelia, she tells them, “The Children are watching the Arrius family crypt. Their best killer, Grumio, is there now, lurking in the shadows,

alone. He works best that way. I've never really liked him. He's a large, bald man, deceptively quiet, and knows how to move about unseen. Grumio favors the club and is good with it. You'll need to kill him as quickly as possible. If you fail, The Children will know you're onto them and will come down on you hard and fast. But if Grumio goes missing, it'll buy us some time to plan our next move. Hide the body somewhere, and I'll make certain it's never found. Good luck."

As Caelia says, Grumio lurks in the shadows watching the crypt, armed with a club. His plan is to ambush the investigators at the House of Arrius crypt, killing them if possible. Grumio has no idea that Caelia has spotted him or even that she is still alive. The cultist believes Caelia must have been murdered and disposed of by a client. The Children could never believe that she would choose to leave. The fact that Grumio is working so close to her hiding place has made the former cultist very nervous. His death will help ensure her security, as well as the investigators'.

Fighting Grumio

Investigators trying to kill or capture Grumio will have a fight on their hands. First they must find him, which requires a successful Spot Hidden roll against his Hide score. Grumio will be hiding in the deep shadows of a willow tree 30 feet from the Arrius family crypt. The investigators can attempt to Sneak up on him and attack, lure Grumio into an ambush, or simply rush him. The cultist moves very quietly, has a knack for navigating the confusing layout of the crypts, and is very aggressive. The investigators may find themselves in a deadly game of cat and mouse as both they and Grumio stalk one another between crypts and monuments. If obviously overmatched, Grumio tries to flee back to Rome. If cornered, he refuses to surrender, fighting until killed or knocked unconscious.

Grumio, Murderous Cultist

STR 17 CON 16 SIZ 16 INT 11 POW 11
DEX 15 APP 10 EDU 14 SAN 0 HP16

Damage Bonus: +1D6

Weapons: Fist/Punch 65%, 1D3+db

Grapple 55%, damage special

Kick 55%, 1D6+db

Club 80%, 1D6+db

Armor: 3 points of Hardened Leather.

Skills: Conceal 65%, Dodge 50%, Hide 80%, Insight 40%, Listen 55%, Sneak 80%, Spot Hidden 55%, Track 40%.

If captured, Grumio willingly dies before revealing information about the cult. He tries to kill himself, along with any investigators within reach. If the investigators take Grumio prisoner, Caelia tries to convince them to kill him at once, doing so herself if the opportunity presents itself. She believes he is far too dangerous to leave alive.

After Grumio is dealt with, Caelia becomes suitably impressed with the investigators. She begins to think that maybe, just maybe, The Children of Eihort can be eliminated. Caelia promises to get rid of the body and invites the investigators back the next day at midday. She says, "Bring

lunch. I am particularly fond of roast quail and Greek wine. Some olives would be nice, too. Don't get cheap on me. And bring some of those foldable camp chairs. We have a great deal to talk about. Tomorrow, I start teaching you what you need to know if you wish to live through this. I'll tell you all about The Children of Eihort and how we're going to destroy them." She won't talk further at this point, saying she has clients coming soon and needs to prepare.

A Lunch Meeting with Caelia

When the investigators return the next day to begin learning from Caelia, her hair is disheveled, her eyes red with tears and her plain tunic, a change from her "working" clothes, seems freshly torn. She informs the investigators, "I've been threatened and humiliated. I need your help. If you do me this favor, I will do you one in return. I can teach you an item of sorcery, something for healing wounds, perhaps? Or maybe an incantation for finding your way in a labyrinth would be more useful. It's my nature to bargain, not to cheat. Do this for me, and I will repay the favor in good faith." In truth, Caelia has neither been threatened nor humiliated. She simply has a long-standing feud with her neighbors and is trying to get the investigators to put an end to it, once and for all. If the investigators refuse, Caelia drops the matter and begins their education. However, if the investigators arrived without lunch she is annoyed and takes a bit of revenge while revealing dark secrets (see **A Conversation in the Crypt**).

Caelia's Neighbors

If the investigators agree to the bargain, Caelia tells them a "trio of creatures" lives in the crypt of the Gellius family, just across from this one. They're not human, at least not anymore. "I am not sure if they ever were," she says. "But that doesn't matter. They are filthy abominations that eat the dead. They've threatened me repeatedly and humiliated me in front of my clients. I want them destroyed. It shouldn't be much of a challenge for those who stood against Grumio and lived. Do this for me, and I will teach you either of the items of sorcery I mentioned before." Caelia's insights into ghouls grant the investigators +1% to their Cthulhu Mythos score.

The doorway to the Gellius crypt is open, but all appears normal inside. Investigators making a successful Spot Hidden check locate the entrance to the ghouls' lair hidden under a statue.

The investigators can move the statue aside by beating a STR vs. STR 20 check on the Resistance Table. The heavy statue partially covers a hole in the floor which leads to a chamber 15 feet below. The investigators must make a Climb check, lower one another, or set up a rope to move into and out of the ghouls' lair. Once they push the statue out of the way, the investigators will hear meeps, hisses, and muttered warnings from the ghouls below as the creatures try to scare them off. The ghouls are surprised anyone would invade their lair. With no escape tunnel, they are cornered and trapped. Still, in defense of their home, the ghouls viciously attack anyone descending into their lair, a 40-foot oval chamber

dug out of the earth below the crypt's foundation. It contains a few filthy cots and a scattering of mismatched possessions looted from the bodies of the dead.

The Ghouls of the Gellius Family Crypt

	#1	#2	#3
STR	13	14	18
CON	15	14	14
SIZ	15	12	15
INT	11	10	16
POW	13	9	10
DEX	15	11	9
HP	15	13	15
DB	+1D4	+1D4	+1D6

Weapons: Claws 30%, 1D6 + db

Bite 30%, 1D6 + automatic worry.

Armor: Projectiles do half damage.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6.

The creatures possess no arcane knowledge, so they rely upon their claws and teeth in combat. Two of the ghouls are large, terribly inhuman looking, and obviously male. One of the ghouls, the sole female, still looks somewhat human with a smaller muzzle and only partially formed hooves. The ghouls fight until killed; escape from the chamber is impossible. The human-seeming female ghoul screams as she dies, crying out, "Why? Why? We've done you no harm!" Investigators who hear this must make a Sanity check for 0/1D2. This is in addition to the Sanity check for seeing the ghouls in the first place.

After the deed is done, Caelia fulfills her promise. She teaches each investigator one of two possible spells, either Healing or Ariadne's Twine. Investigators so instructed must make a successful INT x 3 check after 2 hours of instruction to learn the spell. Investigators who successfully learn a spell are granted a +1% bonus to their Cthulhu Mythos scores.

A Conversation in the Crypt

If the investigators brought the food Caelia requested, she enjoys a good lunch with them after the business with the ghouls is concluded. She eats and sips several cups of wine while talking about The Children, magic, the Great Old One Eihort, and the hidden things most people do not or will not see. Her manner is nonchalant as she speaks of horrible, nightmarish things which mankind was not meant to know, while keeping a measured pace so the investigators' minds can process the dreadful realities she describes. Keepers should try to make her attitude unnerving to the investigators.

However, if the investigators did not bring lunch, Caelia is annoyed. She intentionally relays the information in as terrifying a manner as possible. This brutal rush of horrific knowledge causes the investigators to make a Sanity check for 1/1D3 points.

Caelia's Madness

The former cultist is not like normal people. She has seen and done things that would shatter the minds of most human

beings. It has, in fact, damaged her mind. Caelia continues functioning despite being completely insane. She suffers from antisocial personality disorder. In other words, she is a sociopath, someone with a pervasive disregard for and violation of the rights of others, and an inability or unwillingness to conform to what is considered the societal norm.

As long as the actions of the investigators further Caelia's own aims, she will work with them. She sees the value of allies, working with a group, and the principle of safety in numbers. Being a member of a cult modeled after an extended family dynamic has taught her that. Once Caelia feels comfortable with the investigators and believes trust is established, she'll view them as fellow members of a new cult.

Secrets of a Former Cultist

In addition to teaching the investigators a spell in exchange for slaying the ghouls, Caelia educates them about a number of things, ultimately granting them a +4% bonus to their Cthulhu Mythos score. She holds back much of what she knows at this point, retaining some information to avoid becoming expendable. Keepers should engage the investigators in a conversation with Caelia, where she casually tells them:

The Real and Terrible World

The world is filled with creatures other than those of the natural order. Some are like parasites, preying upon humanity at the edges of society. Others are nearly immortal with powers greater than the gods. Most of them care nothing for mankind. A few can be bargained with, so pacts can be forged and offerings made. These attract human worshippers who are sometimes granted dark knowledge and great power.

Magic

The power these gods bestow is usually arcane knowledge. Trying to comprehend it can drive a person mad. Magic comes in many forms. It can be wielded like a hammer, a spade, or even a sword. With such powers, a person could extend the span of his life indefinitely, leash fiends as pets, and travel beyond this sphere of time, space, and reality.

"The Day"

Most of these gods are waiting for "the day". The last day, the first day, the day when all will be remade and mankind swept aside. When the stars are right, the Great Old Ones will walk openly upon this world as they once did. The faithful will be rewarded and all others destroyed. Many who serve the Great Old Ones seek ways to hasten this day through magic, rituals, and sacrifices. So far these efforts have failed, but it is only a matter of time. Eventually the day will come, either by the hands of the faithful or the normal passage of time.

Cults

People gather in secret to worship these Great Old Ones, keeping their faith hidden or masking it beneath an accepted religion. The greater world must never learn the truth. If mankind knew of the powers that the cults serve or the goals

toward which they strive, these groups would be annihilated and their members crucified. Some cults seek to hasten the arrival of “the day”, believing they will be spared the wrath of the Great Old Ones by becoming their slaves in the blasted ruin of the world.

Insights into The Children of Eihort

Caelia tells the investigator about The Children of Eihort, or The Children as she calls them. She sticks to general information and avoids talking about her specific role in the group. The former cultist will not give her reason for leaving the group, saying only, “It’s personal and not something I’ll discuss. I’m sure they think me dead, or they’d have found me by now.” If the investigators make a successful Persuade roll, Caelia confesses that she lost someone close to her during the ritual of Becoming One. The information she shares at this point is:

Numbers

The Children of Eihort is small, as cults go, with only between four and six central members. They control another dozen adults who know nothing of the dark power the cult serves. Those people are merely pawns — prostitutes, courtesans, pimps, and thugs controlled by the hardcore cult members. A dozen or so children are also being raised within the cult. Of these children, only one or two will become worshippers of Eihort.

Recruitment

The Children gain new members by rescuing infants abandoned on city streets before they die of exposure. As each child grows older, the cult leaders decide his or her fate. Most are never indoctrinated into the worship of Eihort. Some are sold off as slaves while others simply serve the cult without ever knowing the truth. A very small number, maybe one in ten, become members of the cult’s inner circle. Caelia says, “I was picked up off the street as a baby and raised by The Children. When I was older, I helped raise other children, even brought one in off the street that I found.”

Slaves

Children who show deficiencies, such as being dimwitted, unattractive, weak, or lazy, are sold off in slave markets when they reach the age of eight. The cult earns enough money on these sales to triple the investment made in raising the child.

The Peripheral Members

Children who show good qualities are kept and enter the outer fringe of The Children. If a girl is comely, she becomes a prostitute, entering the cult’s stable of scorta erratica, or wandering whores. If a boy is strong or fights well, he becomes a pimp, helping to manage and protect the cult’s whores. These members generate the bulk of the cult’s income. Such people are loyal to The Children and obey the commands issued by the group’s leadership. They are raised to do so, the cult being the only family any of them have ever known. However, these

people know nothing of the cult’s worship or service to the Great Old One Eihort.

The Actual Cultists

Children the cult deems special, whose minds seem suitable to such blasphemous knowledge, are taught the worship of Eihort. About two-thirds of those selected go mad from the indoctrination and are sacrificed. The ones who do not go insane and who accept the faith become full members of The Children. These true believers become the next generation of leaders in the cult. Such individuals are trained in one of two professions. Girls become courtesans, and boys become plumbers. Caelia says with a measure of pride, “I was such a child, tested when I turned seven. I accepted the faith as a youth and trained as a courtesan before my fifteenth year.”

Ultimate Service to Eihort

Members of The Children make a pilgrimage to Cyrenaica sometime between the ages of 35 and 45. They travel into the Labyrinth of Messara to encounter the Great Old One Eihort face to face. The sacred ritual that happens next is one the cultist has looked forward to for most of his life. He accepts into his body a clutch of Eihort’s brood. They are the offspring of the Great Old One Eihort, miniature versions of the malevolent entity itself. The creatures live and grow within the host’s body for several years until they mature and emerge in a final ritual called Becoming One.

Becoming One

As the matured brood emerges, the host dies horribly, the creatures bursting from his body. If possible, the host returns to the Labyrinth of Messara for this final ritual. Occasionally a non-worshipper undergoes the ritual of Becoming One and births a brood of Eihort. When this happens in Rome, The Children assist the broods in finding their way into the subterranean brood chambers, which is why many cult members are plumbers. Caelia asks the investigators, “I suspect this is how Arrius Lurco died, yes? He vanished in Crete years ago, and now The Children are watching his tomb, probably in the hope of ambushing you. It’s the only thing that makes sense.”

Newly-emerged brood enter any passage that leads underground, seeking the deep places of the Earth to join countless others of their kind. In these underground chambers, the broods wait for The Day. When the stars come right and the Great Old Ones rule over the Earth, each brood will grow to the size and power of Eihort itself.

Keepers portraying Caelia should have her voice waver and her manner become skittish as she speaks of the ritual of Becoming One. Investigators who make a successful Insight roll detect horror and revulsion in the former cultist, as well as anger. Caelia, who until now has spoken calmly, is suddenly a jumble of emotions on the brink of losing her composure. She quickly regains control, becoming flirtatious and self-assured once again. If asked about her sudden shift in mood, Caelia denies anything is wrong and changes the subject.

Broodlings

Sometimes the brood coalesces into a single mass called a broodling, which can mimic a humanoid form. This happens if Eihort wants to communicate with the cult. Broodlings share a psychic link with their parent. What they know, Eihort knows. The cult considers this a sacred occurrence, a visit by proxy from their divine master. Broodlings are divine representatives of Eihort, and their instructions are obeyed without question.

The Solution

Caelia eventually asks the investigators how they plan to resolve their troubles with the cult. She says, “You’ve been marked for death by The Children of Eihort. That’s no small thing. People in that position only end up one way — dead. I’m certain that isn’t an outcome you desire, so I ask you, what do you want to do? How far are you willing to take this?” The former cultist already has a plan, of course. If the investigators have managed to avoid or survive the poisoning, eliminate Grumio, and defeat the ghouls, Caelia is convinced they might have the strength to destroy The Children of Eihort.

Caelia would rather help the investigators with their plan instead of suggesting one of her own, but if they don’t offer a course of action on their own, she suggests one. If asked to give her opinion, Caelia says, “I think the only way to resolve this is like any fight — put your opponent down before he puts you down. Up until now, The Children have had the advantage, but I can change that. I was one of them. I know who they are, where they live, and how they operate. So, would you like my help in taking them down?”

Caelia’s Price

The former cultist has her own agenda. Having the cult eliminated would give her security, but not restore her former lifestyle. When she was a member of The Children of Eihort, Caelia was a successful courtesan. She lived in a nice apartment, wore fine clothes and jewelry, and entertained wealthy men. Now she lives in a crypt as a common whore. She finds the change of fortunes unsatisfying. Caelia makes the investigators the following offer:

“I’ll give you all the information you need to take down the cult. With the leadership disposed, The Children will dissolve like mist. I’ll tell you who the leaders are and how to find them. I’ll even arrange an introduction with someone you’ll need to talk to before you move forward. However, my assistance doesn’t come cheap.” She smiles at the investigators and purrs, “Can you meet my price?” Her demands for the information and introduction are the following:

- Escorted transportation to Athens — “I want a fresh start, away from Rome.”
- 1000 sestertii, in advance — “I’ll need some new clothes, better cosmetics, and some proper jewelry before we leave.”
- 4000 sestertii, when The Children of Eihort are destroyed — “This way you know you can trust me. Why would I throw away 4000 sestertii by giving you bad information?”

- Six months paid rent on an apartment of her choosing, once they get to Athens — “Don’t worry; I won’t pick anyplace too expensive. Anything will be a step up from my current accommodations.” This would eventually cost the investigators another 1500 sestertii.

Caelia’s terms are semi-negotiable. Due to her training within the cult, she easily resists any attempts at coercion, even if restrained and tortured. Investigators making a successful a Bargain check against the bustuaria can reduce her fees by 20%. However, Caelia is as good as her word — this time. If the investigators agree to her terms, she tells them everything they need to know about The Children of Eihort. The bustuaria also directs them to meet with Maelius Primus, head of the plumbing collegium and one of the crime lords who control the Aventine neighborhood (see **A Meeting with the Collegium**).

Hired Killers

Two days after his disappearance, The Children of Eihort realize Grumio is missing. Suspecting their best killer has fallen to the investigators, they hire a pair of killers from the criminal collegium they already pay for protection.

Not content with mere thugs, the cultists hire the best men possible, happy to pay the extra coin for true artists. These men, named Gratian and Martius, are stone cold killers, professional assassins in every sense of the word. They begin hunting the investigators three days after Grumio goes missing. The investigators can avoid this confrontation if they meet with Maelius Primus before the assassins make their move (see **Part Five — Gala Offers A Deal**).

Gratian and Martus, Professional Assassins

STR 15 CON 16 SIZ 14 INT 12 POW 13
DEX 16 APP 11 EDU 13 SAN 35 HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 80%, 1D3+db

Grapple 65%, damage special

Kick 45%, 1D6+db

Knife 80%, 1D4+db

Gladius 75%, 1D6+1+db

Armor: 4 points of Hardened Leather Breastplate, Bracers, and Shin Guards.

Skills: Climb 45%, Conceal 65%, Dodge 65%, First Aid 50%, Insight 70%, Jump 50%, Hide 85%, Listen 65%, Sneak 85%, Spot Hidden 75%, Throw 60%, Track 55%.

Part Four - A Visit to the Collegium

By now, the investigators are ready to turn the tables on The Children of Eihort. However, this won’t be as simple as they think. They must first pay Caelia for the information, and then have a meeting with the crime lord Maelius Primus. Since the cult runs prostitutes in the area of Rome that Maelius Primus controls, they pay him for protection. Any

attack on a cultist would be considered a move against the plumbing collegium, which is a front for a powerful criminal organization. This doesn't mean such an attack is impossible, but certain protocols need to be followed and arrangements made with the collegium itself.

Caelia's Information

If the investigators agree to the bustuaria's terms and pay her the 1000 sestertii in advance (or 800 with a successful Bargain check), she gives them the following information. She will not enter Rome until The Children of Eihort are eliminated. Caelia is also willing to give the investigators three doses of antidote for the Hades Tears poison as a gift and sign of good will.

Membership

"There are five primary members of The Children of Eihort. At least, that was the case two years ago when I was a member. Pavo and Sarrius are a pair of plumbers living in the Aventine. Sarrius' wife is Larcilla, who is likely still keeping house and managing the cult's children. The last two are Dama and Apollina, a couple who should still be living together. Dama oversees the cult's pimps, manages the stable of whores, and is Apollina's agent. Apollina is likely still a very high-end courtesan."

Locations

"The Children all live in the Aventinus. Pavo lives alone on Vicus Armilustri, above the laundry. Sarrius and Larcilla live together near the Temple of Luna. Dama and Apollina have an apartment overlooking the Ara Maxima Herculis. There is an entrance into the sewers through Sarrius' home, leading down to a natural cavern. Make two lefts, and then take the first right. Once there, look for a hidden doorway that leads down to the cult's shrine. The brooding who's marked you for death is likely residing there."

The Collegium

"The stable of whores run by The Children is under the protection of the plumbing collegium. The collegium is a front. The organization's wealth and power come from its criminal enterprises. They lend money, fence goods, run a protection racket, operate the black market, that sort of thing. If you want to move against The Children, you'll need to come to an agreement with a man named Maelius Primus. He's in charge of the plumbing collegium. Go to its chapter house and ask for him. Tell him you're friends of Blandia, that she sends her love, and that you're looking to do business. Tell him she's doing well in Greece and hopes that he'll look for her in Athens soon.

"You'll need Maelius Primus' permission before you take action. If you attack The Children without it, you'll make enemies of Primus and his entire organization. Unless you have the V Legio at your side, I wouldn't suggest it. If you think The Children of Eihort are dangerous, you certainly don't want to take on a collegium. Be respectful and choose

your words with care, and you should be able to reach an accord with Maelius Primus."

Farewell for Now

Caelia wishes the investigators luck and asks them not to return until the deed is done. She says that she will find them, if need be, and will know if they succeed. After the investigators set out, Caelia gathers her meager belongings and leaves the crypt. She does not intend to wait for reprisals if the investigators fail. The bustuaria spends the next few days moving about, staying in various inns outside Rome, waiting for a sense that the threat to her is gone. As a former consecrated priestess to Eihort, Caelia still feels a link to the cult and her former god. When the cult is no more, she will sense that connection is finally broken.

A Meeting with the Collegium

The chapter house of the collegium of plumbers is located right off the emporium on Aventine Hill. The investigators can make a Know or Civics check to determine its location, or with a successful Luck roll someone will give them directions. When the investigators arrive at the chapter house, they find that it's the storefront to an insula. Inside, dozens of working-class men talk, drink, and joke with one another. A sharply dressed and neatly groomed man approaches the investigators.

"Welcome to the collegium of plumbers," he says. "My name is Gala. How can we help you? We've many fine, hard-working men ready to undertake any project. Do you need some pipes repaired, or something new installed? We can do it all." The man treats the investigators as prospective customers who are unaware of the collegium's criminal activities. If the investigators mention Maelius Primus or Blandia, or use the terms "friends of mine" or "looking to do business", Gala understands they have not come about plumbing work. He whispers to someone who then rushes upstairs to inform Primus that a meeting has been requested. Gala then tells the investigators, "Please follow me, and we can place your order."

Rough-looking men stand guard at the top of each staircase as the investigators are led upstairs. A dozen men lounge in the collegium's private brothel on the third floor, and lupae take a breath of air in their doorways between customers. The meeting room, located in the corner of the building's fourth floor, is a considerable distance from the entrance. Visitors tend to behave themselves when they know they would have a hard time fighting their way out of the building.

Running Afoul of the Collegium

Making enemies of the collegium is a colossally bad idea. If the investigators fail to comprehend this, Keepers can have them make an Idea roll. If successful, Keepers should advise the investigators against taking on a vast and powerful criminal organization. If the investigators still choose to follow such a suicidal course of action, statistics for an average collegium member are included below. Keepers can create even

more powerful members to represent collegium lieutenants, commanders, and professional assassins. At the Keeper's discretion, the investigators can be spared with only a severe beating as a warning to others against defying the collegium.

Average Collegium Foot Soldier (6D4 in chapter house at any time)

STR 15 CON 15 SIZ 14 INT 11 POW 11
DEX 14 APP 9 EDU 8 SAN 55 HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 75%, 1D3+db

Grapple 55%, damage special

Kick 40%, 1D6+db

Knife 65%, 1D4+db or Club 65%, 1D6+db

Armor: 2 points of Soft Leather or 3 points of Hardened Leather.

Skills: Dodge 45%, Hide 50%, Listen 45%, Sneak 65%, Spot Hidden 50%.

An Audience with Maelius Primus

The investigators are led to an office on the fourth floor. Two large men quietly play a boardgame in the corner. Gala points to an altar with a statue of a cloaked woman holding a bowl and asks, "Do you swear, under the watchful eye of Concord, to offer no violence during this meeting? Unless you do, these men will need to search and disarm you. This is a place of business, not an arena. Understand?" If the investigators swear to this before the statue of Concord, Goddess of Agreement, Understanding and Marital Harmony, the meeting with Maelius Primus begins.

Pavia and Proxia, stunningly beautiful identical twins (APP 15), enter to serve the investigators wine. The wine is magnificent, only the best for "new friends" of the collegium. A short time later, an elegantly dressed man of middle years enters. Maelius Primus looks very fit for his age and moves with confidence, a man of great power and wealth acquired through his own ruthlessness and determination. The crime lord cannot be easily intimidated or bargained with, but is reasonable and even-tempered.

If Primus finds the investigators drinking when he enters, it brightens his mood. He takes up a glass of wine himself and joins them, commenting, "I never trust people who won't drink with me. Now, you have a message from Blandia? Wonderful woman. I am so happy to hear she isn't dead. How is she doing?" If, however, the investigators refuse to drink the wine the serving girls offer them, it puts Primus in a guarded mood, making the meeting much more tense. He comments, "Wine not to your liking, then, or maybe it's the company?" Either way, Primus offers some small talk before he says, "So, Gala sent word you want to do some business with us... Let's hear it, then."

Reaching an Understanding

The investigators must explain to Maelius Primus that they need permission to attack people under the protection of the collegium. At first Primus reacts angrily, saying, "What? You think we have no loyalty or honor? If we accepted coin to protect these people, why would we allow you to harm them?

Why are you even telling me you plan to do so? Are you fools? Give me a good reason not to have my men beat you senseless and throw you out!" Investigators who make a successful Insight roll realize the outburst is just for show and Primus is not truly upset. He is merely testing the investigators.

If the investigators offer compensation for the collegium withdrawing its protection from the cultists, Maelius Primus relaxes and says, "Well, that is a different matter. Let's talk more on this." The crime lord asks who the investigators want to kill. When the investigators tell him the names, Primus turns to Gala with a questioning look. The lieutenant leans in close and whispers to Primus. The investigators must make a successful Listen roll to overhear. Gala tells his boss, "They run a stable of whores, maybe a dozen girls, and pay us a decent amount for protection. They have their own security, about a half dozen men. They've never been late with tribute or given us trouble. Two of the men on their list are members of the collegium, plumbers only. Not any of ours, Primus, but they're friends."

Primus smiles and answers, "But we can always make new friends, can't we? Tell me why you'd be good friends to have." The investigators must answer the crime lord and make a successful Fast Talk, Bargain, Persuade, or Status check. If successful, Primus nods and explains, "Removing the protection we extend to our friends isn't something we do. It's bad business. It lowers our reputation and makes others reluctant to pay for such services. What you're asking is no small thing... but... it can be done. There are details to work out. This could take some time. Why don't we let the twins fetch us some food? We'll sit down to a meal and discuss this."

If the investigators agree, a meal is brought in as Primus talks business. The food is outstanding, and the service by the twin slave girls attentive and flirtatious. Primus offers the investigators the following terms:

- **Price** — The investigators must pay the collegium a fee of 10,000 sesterii to have their target's protection suspended. However, if the investigators make a successful Bargain roll, they can reduce this amount to 7,500 sesterii.
- **Timetable** — The agreement is for the protection to be withdrawn for one night. Primus says, "From sunset to sunrise. You're buying yourself a single night to spill blood. One night only. Prolonged violence makes people nervous, which always hurts business."
- **Completion** — If anyone on the investigators' list survives the night and comes to the collegium for help, the organization will assist them. "You need to finish what you start. If you don't, I'll have to send some of my men to look for you. I'm willing to trade new friends for old, but only if they're the type who can accomplish what they set out to do. Failure in this, after making the agreement allowing you to try, won't sit well. After all, the people you want to harm are also our friends. Come dawn, they'll be under our protection again. Unless they're dead, in which case all of our lives can go on without them."
- **The Operation** — Once the targets on the investigators' list are dead, the collegium will move in to take control of the group's business interests. The crime lord says, "Life goes on. Those girls need protection, and their managers need to know business will continue as it always has. Nothing needs to change. Maybe I'll even allow them to keep a better percentage of their earnings as

a bonus for a smooth transition of management. You weren't planning on taking control of their territory, were you? I'm not interested in new partners."

If the investigators agree, Maelius Primus offers them his right hand while placing his left on the foot of the statue of Concord. Once the investigators take his hand and place their other hand on Concord's foot, the agreement is struck. Primus requires payment before midnight that night.

Funding

The investigators are unlikely to have access to that much money, but they know several people who do. However, investigators approaching either of the Arrius brothers find no help from that quarter. Casca is unwilling to give money to anyone at this time, and Melito's access to the family accounts is still restricted. The only remaining option is Hedeia, unless the investigators are themselves wealthy or already have a well-funded patron.

Hedeia agrees to give the investigators the money as long as they convince her it is somehow connected to avenging Arrius Lurco. She will happily fund any effort she believes punishes those responsible for the death of the man she loved. Hedeia says, "It's quite a sum of money, enough for someone to vanish with. I trust that won't happen here. Promise me when all this is over you'll return to tell me how things turned out. I only ask one thing more. If this is blood money, make sure the blood it pays for isn't your own — and show those who hurt my beloved Lurco no mercy."

Gala Offers a Deal

The investigators must give the payment to Gala. Maelius Primus' lieutenant handles most of the collegium's day-to-day business. After quickly counting the money, Gala comments, "You've bought yourself a night of blood. Make the most of it." If the assassins Gratian and Martius have not struck yet, the Keeper can have Gala offer an interesting proposition.

Gala asks the investigators, "I wonder if you'd be interested in making another deal. You see, there's a bit of a situation that you may want worked out as soon as possible. Now, you seem like good and reasonable sorts, so I'm trying to help you out. Why don't we take a short walk, and we can discuss this? If not, be on your merry way, and I wish you fortune's favor."

If the investigators agree to listen to Gala's proposal, he leads them on a meandering walk around the neighborhood as he talks. The lieutenant explains, "The people you're after don't like you very much, either. Something about cheating them out of money and killing a friend of theirs. I don't know the particulars, and I don't care. But they paid the collegium a visit just before you did and hired a pair of our best men to kill you." However, Gala makes the investigators an offer to resolve this.

Locations of the Children of Eihort

Member	Suggested Location (60%)
Pavo	Apartment building next to the laundry on Vicus Armilustri
Sarrius	Large house near the Temple of Luna
Larcilla	Large house near the Temple of Luna
Dama	Apartment overlooking the Ara Maxima
	Herculis monument
Apollina	Apartment overlooking the Ara Maxima
	Herculis monument

The lieutenant describes the killers for the investigators in an effort to convey the danger they are in. He says, "These men are professionals, tough, smart and experienced. They live for this sort of thing, you know? They aren't fellows you'd want to throw dice with, but when this sort of job needs doing, they get it done. Now, I'm sure you're tough, good in a fight, but these guys you won't see coming until it's too late. It's an art, and they're masters of it."

Gala then explains, "These boys took coin to make sure you die. Usually that would be the end of it. But, as your new friends, maybe it's not. New deals get made all the time." Investigators making a successful Idea or Insight roll realize that Gala's lying about this. With a smile, the crafty lieutenant says, "I could delay these men from getting started on this assignment for a day, maybe two . . . at least until after you've had your night of blood. You see, then their former employers would be dead, and there'd be no reason to fulfill the contract. No broken deals, no shattered oaths, just . . . bad timing, an unfortunate turn of events."

"I could take these guys out, get them drunk, and buy them some women . . . you know, keep them occupied for you until this matter's sorted out," he says, rubbing his chin in thought. "It would only cost, let's see, they're thirsty men . . . 5000 sestertii?" The investigators can reduce this amount to 3000 sestertii with a successful Bargain roll. If the investigators pay Gala the money, he lives up to his part of the bargain. He sends a message to Gratian and Martius to wait for his word before going after the investigators, giving each of the assassins a few hundred sestertii to pass the time with. The pair relaxes, throwing dice, visiting the baths and spending time with their favorite lupae within the collegium's private brothel. If Gala ever gives the word for them to resume their hunt for the investigators, they do so at once. This is a private arrangement that Maelius Primus knows nothing about. If the crime lord finds out about it, he is amused, commenting, "Clever bastard! I wish I'd thought of that one." He will, however, demand that Gala give him half the money earned on the deal.

Part Five - A Single Night of Blood

Once the deals are made, the investigators have a single night to eliminate The Children of Eihort. They have five targets and three locations where they might be found, all in the Aventine neighborhood. Suggested locations for the cultists are listed in the Locations of The Children of Eihort table. None of the cultists are moving around in public too much for fear of sharing Grumio's fate. They have paid good coin for the investigators to be killed and are content to lay low and wait for this to be done. As cultists go, they are not overly brave. The Children prefer to lurk in the darkness, much like the broods of Eihort that they shepherd into the Underworld.

The cultists also have a 61%–85% chance of being at the home of a fellow cultist and an 85%–100% chance of being in the shrine chamber of Eihort, located in the sewers below Rome. Cultists found in the shrine are meeting with the broodling of Eihort, either receiving instructions or delivering updates. The broodling is found in the shrine at all times, directing the cult's operation to kill the investigators, the last people to see Arrius Lurco alive.

The Man Above the Laundry

Pavo, a plumber and cultist, is a sturdy but plain-looking bachelor. He keeps a low profile and blends easily into most

crowds, a well-cultivated facade that serves him well in his cultist activities. His neighbors like him, but know very little about him. Pavo's apartment is on the third floor, one of three on that level. If there, the cultist is alone, relaxing after a long day at work.

If the investigators attack Pavo, he screams for help, alerting his neighbors. If his neighbors hear him, there is a 35% chance that one of them summons the local vigiles, who arrive in 3D6 minutes. The cultist flees if possible, fighting only if he must. Pavo may grovel, cry, and beg for his life, but only to buy time until the vigiles arrive. Pavo is a minor spell caster who is also good with a knife. If the investigators have encountered animated zombies, Keepers can have Pavo in possession of a fresh corpse awaiting animation. Keepers could also bolster the cultist's defenses with the addition of a newly created zombie concealed in a back room of his apartment.

Pavo, Plumber and Cowardly Cultist

STR 16 CON 15 SIZ 12 INT 13 POW 12
DEX 14 APP 9 EDU 14 SAN 0 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 60%, 1D3+db

Grapple 35%, damage special

Kick 40%, 1D6+db

Knife 80%, 1D4+db

Armor: None.

Spells: Ariadne's Twine, Contact Eihort, Create Zombie, Evil Eye, Healing, Voorish Sign.

Avocamentum Gratum

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THE LEGACY OF ARRIUS LURCO

Skills: Civics 45%, Climb 40%, Conceal 40%, Dodge 40%, Hide 60%, Insight 70%, Listen 40%, Natural World 65%, Repair/Devise 80%, Sneak 65%, Spot Hidden 50%, Swim 40%.

Average Roman Vigilis (1D3+1)

STR 14 CON 14 SIZ 13 INT 11 POW 12
DEX 15 APP 10 EDU 13 SAN 55 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 65%, 1D3+db
Grapple 40%, damage special
Club 50%, 1D6+db

Armor: 2 points of Soft Leather.

Skills: Civics 50%, Climb 60%, Insight 40%, Spot Hidden 50%.

The Courtesan's House

This beautiful apartment occupies the top floor of a four-story insula located near a monument to Hercules, an easy landmark to find. The balcony provides an excellent view of the neighborhood. Investigators striking at the cultists here will find the neighbors closer knit, sounding the alarm 50% of the time if alerted. The vigilis are also more attentive and arrive within 2D6 minutes if an alarm is raised.

Apollina's two servants, both of whom are in the apartment, present a further complication. Geminna, age 11, and Russella, age 10, are in training to become courtesans; they will soon face the trials of indoctrination into the worship of Eihort. But for now they are simply two pre-adolescent girls who consider Apollina an aunt and Dama an uncle. The girls scream at the first sign of danger, lock themselves in a back bedroom, and push furniture in front of the door (STR 12) before yelling out the window for the vigilis.

If Dama and Apollina are home, they will be unhappy about it. The pair hate being confined and welcome the distraction of killing the investigators personally. In combat, they charge the investigators while calling out prayers to Eihort so that anyone they kill serves as a sacrifice. Dama is a skilled fighter armed with a gladius and a pugio. Apollina is a nimble slayer armed with a pair of curved sicas.

Dama, Pimp and Deadly Cultist

STR 17 CON 15 SIZ 16 INT 10 POW 10
DEX 13 APP 14 EDU 12 SAN 0 HP 13

Damage Bonus: +1D6

Weapons: Fist/Punch 80%, 1D3+db
Grapple 50%, damage special
Kick 45%, 1D6+db
Gladius 80%, 1D6+1+db
Pugio 75%, 1D4+db, uses pugio to parry attacks

Armor: None.

Spells: Ariadne's Twine, Contact Eihort, Evil Eye.

Skills: Conceal 30%, Dodge 50%, Fast Talk 60%, Hide 50%, Insight 60%, Listen 35%, Persuade 60%, Sneak 60%, Spot Hidden 54%, Throw 75%, Track 40%.

Apollina, Beautiful Courtesan and Cunning Cultist

STR 14 CON 16 SIZ 13 INT 12 POW 13
DEX 16 APP 17 EDU 15 SAN 0 HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 55%, 1D3+db

Kick 60%, 1D6+db
Twin Sicas 75%, 1D4+db

Armor: None.

Spells: Ariadne's Twine, Contact Eihort, Evil Eye, Healing.

Skills: Accounting 45%, Art (Acrobatics) 60%, Art (Lyre) 60%, Conceal 50%, Dodge 60%, Fast Talk 65%, Hide 50%, Insight 60%, Listen 40%, Persuade 55%, Sneak 65%.

The Couple's Home

The investigators encounter both challenges and opportunities at Sarrius' house. The cultists dwelling here are not very powerful and are likely found together. However, the large house they live in is also home to a dozen children ranging in age from newborn to eleven. While the cultist couple is downstairs trying to enjoy a relaxing evening, these children are sleeping in a large, communal bedroom.

Sarrius is a decent fighter, and his wife Larcilla is a skilled apothecary with the knowledge of a single non-offensive spell. As senior members of the cult, they are charged with raising the next generation of The Children and guarding the private passageway into Rome's sewer system. Unlike Pavo, Sarrius and Larcilla dutifully defend their home, drawing concealed weapons and muttering prayers to Eihort as they enter melee. They make no effort to raise an alarm since they do not want the entrance to the sewers discovered by the authorities. The pair fights side by side, protecting one another, until defeated. As they lay dying, the couple tries to join hands or crawl into one another's arms. Their love is obvious to all who see this. Larcilla calls out to the investigators and begs with her last breath, "Don't harm the children... Please, we beg you, have mercy... They've done you no harm... They are only children..." Investigators viewing this must make a 0/1D2 Sanity check.

If combat was quick and quiet, the children remain sleeping. If combat was excessively noisy, there is a 40% chance the children will hide in an upstairs closet, cowering in fear. Investigators worried about leaving the children unattended notice several pre-teens among them. Investigators still uncomfortable with this can make an Idea roll. If successful, they realize the house is near the Temple of Luna and that the children can be safely left there.

Sarrius, Father to Many and Defender of the Faithful

STR 16 CON 16 SIZ 14 INT 12 POW 12
DEX 15 APP 12 EDU 14 SAN 0 HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 75%, 1D3+db
Grapple 65%, damage special
Kick 60%, 1D6+db
Gladius 80%, 1D6+1+db

Armor: None.

Skills: Civics 45%, Climb 40%, Conceal 30%, Dodge 50%, Hide 50%, Insight 60%, Listen 35%, Natural World 65%, Repair/Devise 80%, Sneak 60%, Spot Hidden 54%, Swim 40%.

Larcilla, Mother to Many and Brewer of Poisons

STR 13 CON 14 SIZ 11 INT 13 POW 13
DEX 15 APP 15 EDU 12 SAN 0 HP 13

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapons: Fist/Punch 50%, 1D3

Grapple 35%, damage special

Pugio 60% 1D6*

* Pugio is coated with thickened cobra venom POT 6, onset 2 minutes, coating lasts for 3 strikes

Armor: None.

Spells: Create Daemunculus.

Skills: Conceal 40%, Dodge 35%, Fast Talk 40%, First Aid 50%, Hide 60%, Insight 70%, Listen 40%, Natural World 65%, Potions 80%, Sneak 65%, Spot Hidden 50%.

Searching Sarrius and Larcilla's House

A search of Larcilla's body allows the investigators to discover a chain around her neck with a key hanging from it (see **The Shrine**). Investigators searching the house find a well-stocked apothecary workshop set up in a back room. With a successful Spot Hidden roll, six wax-sealed pottery vials can be found in a hidden compartment inside the worktable. The four black vials contain three doses each of Hades Tears poison, and the two white vials contain four doses each of its antidote.

If the investigators have encountered daemunculi already, Keepers should add cages with 2D6 small animals to the room's description. There are also three small, highly decorative amphorae here. Each one contains a slowly forming daemunculus. Once Larcilla dies, these creatures become inert and never complete their transformation. Keepers might want to have the lab guarded by a Daemunculus Venenarius with orders to kill any non-cultist entering the chamber. Any such guardian is dispelled once Larcilla dies, as she is their creator.

A successful Spot Hidden check in the kitchen reveals a concealed trap door to a well-maintained tunnel descending 20 feet to the city's sewer system. A sturdy ladder leads down to the bottom of the tunnel. Through this passage, the investigators can gain access to the Shrine of Eihort, the cult's secret temple below the streets of Rome, where the broodling of Eihort lurks.

Into the Sewers

Investigators who find and defeat the five cultists spread across the Aventine need not enter the sewers. Their work is done; the cult is destroyed. If any cultists evade the investigators, they will head into the sewers to make a final stand at the cult's underground shrine to Eihort. The investigators will also find the broodling of Eihort there. While destroying this creature is not necessary to defeat the cult, allowing it to remain poses a significant threat to the people of Rome.

Using the entrance in Sarrius and Larcilla's home, the investigators can follow the rough directions Caelia gave them to find their way through the Roman sewer system to the Shrine of Eihort. The sewer tunnels are low and narrow, filled with raw sewage being flushed into the Tiber. Home to countless rats, insects, and far darker things, the sewers smell terrible, with no lighting and footing that is tricky at best. One can easily become lost in the vast labyrinth of tunnels.

An investigator must make a successful Idea roll to avoid becoming lost. If the investigators lose their way, they spend 1D6 x 10 minutes wandering the sewers before they get their bearing again. Caelia's directions require the investigators to take the first two left turns, followed by a right turn before searching for a hidden door that leads to a downward passage.

The distance traveled is unimportant. Keepers should have the trip between the house and the shrine take as long as necessary to build tension among the investigators. During this time, the investigators stumble upon the body of a man who was robbed and dumped in the sewers by street thugs (0/1 SAN). Keepers can add additional encounters if they want.

The investigators must make a Spot Hidden roll to find the hidden door, which is disguised to match the sewer walls. It opens onto a spiral staircase hewn from solid rock. Leading down, the staircase leaves the sewers and enters tunnels carved into the bedrock foundation of Rome itself. The passage is masterfully constructed, lined with fine bricks and decorated with mosaic tile borders. The passage and chamber below were constructed by generations of cultists who were trained as plumbers for the task. The staircase leads down 150 feet before opening into the room that contains the cult's shrine to Eihort.

The Shrine

The chamber is a large, brick-lined oval, dimly lit with oil lamps. Stalactites hang from the ceiling of the heavily altered natural cavern. It is here that the ritual of Becoming One is conducted if a cultist cannot make the pilgrimage back to the Labyrinth of Messara. Numerous broods of Eihort have been birthed in this shrine, and others emerging in the city above have found their way here. It is a sacred place, the spiritual heart of The Children of Eihort and the most holy site to the Great Old One in Italia.

The walls are covered with a vast mosaic of Eihort (see **The Mosaic**) and a small altar is set up on the far end of the chamber. Around the main area of the shrine are a desk, six chairs, two couches, a cabinet, and a locked chest. A metal grate is cemented into place in the center of the floor, about three-foot square and covering the opening to a natural cavern system below the shrine. Eihort's brood can pass easily through the cover of crossed iron bars. The Children of Eihort exist to guard and maintain this passage for brood seeking passage into the vast cavern system below the surface of the Earth.

The Broodling

Made of thousands of tiny creatures that emerged from the dying Arrius Lurco, the broodling wears a long robe of regal purple and a mask depicting the god of the Underworld, Pluto. As the investigators enter the shrine, the broodling rises from its seat behind the chamber's desk. For a moment, the creature mistakes the approaching investigators for cultists and waits for the report that the hired assassins have slain



Guerra 10

the investigators. Once the broodling realizes outsiders have violated the shrine, it knows something has gone terribly wrong.

While broodlings of Eihort can wield weapons and cast spells, this particular one has other plans. It stands motionless in disbelief for a single round, then collapses and becomes a living carpet of thousands upon thousands of pale, insect-like grubs. Investigators who witness this must make a Sanity check for 1/1D8. The mass of squirming creatures scurries toward the grate in the floor, intent only on reaching the safety of the caverns below. The brood will all escape the shrine chamber within 3 combat rounds, giving the investigators very little time to act.

Investigators who physically attack the fleeing brood destroy scores of individual creatures, but most still make it to the grate. The only way to destroy the full mass of the brood is with an area effect spell, a corrosive fluid like acid, or flammable liquid like oil or Greek Fire. If the investigators inflict 15 points of damage to the fleeing brood before the end of the third round, the creature is completely destroyed. Whether the brood escapes or is destroyed, the investigators have seen the last of this particular adversary. They have won the battle. The war, however, continues.

The Mosaic

The walls of the chamber display a frightening mosaic of the Great Old One Eihort surrounded by arched doorways and passages. The hideous creature is enormous and round with elephantine legs and a long, trunk-like appendage. Eyes cover the surface of its waxy flesh. Treasure piles up behind the behemoth, and a hulking brute lurks in an arched doorway, armed with a club and a shield. It has the body of a powerfully built man, but its head is that of an enormous bull. This is, of course, the Minotaur. Investigators who study the mosaic gain +2% to their Cthulhu Mythos score and must make a Sanity check for 0/1D3.

The Altar

A beautiful marble gazebo with a stone dais covered in purple cloth set in its center stands in front of the mosaic. A small silver statue sits upon the dais, an idol depicting the same alien entity as the being from the mosaic. If melted down, it would be worth 1500 denarii. Investigators who carefully study the eldritch icon gain +1% to their Cthulhu Mythos score and must make a Sanity check for 0/1D3. Those who fail feel an unseen presence perusing the contents of their minds. The sensation lasts several minutes, then fades with a nearly inaudible whisper of, "You are now known to me."

The Cabinet and Chest

The massive cabinet, nearly the size of a shed, contains household items of little value used to clean and maintain the chamber. A large pile of bricks is also stored within, along with masonry tools and several buckets of water and concrete mixture. The cultists keep these items on hand to do minor repairs to the shrine, the altar, and the spiral staircase.

The locked chest contains the cult's treasury. If they

searched Larcilla's body, the investigators may have found the key. Failing this, the chest can be forced open by the investigators beating a STR 15 on the Resistance Table. The chest contains 600 sestertii, 600 denarii, and 50 aurei.

Sealing the Grate

After they battle the broodling, the investigators can attempt to seal the grate in the shrine's floor using the masonry supplies located in the cabinet. With a successful Repair roll, they block passage to the subterranean chambers for any other broodlings spawning in Rome. If the cult is destroyed, the passage will not be reopened. This will be a serious blow to the Great Old One Eihort and its offspring.

If the Investigators Fail

Investigators who fail to destroy The Children of Eihort on their allotted night can expect a visit from 5–8 (1D4+4) members of the collegium of plumbers. Primus' men (see **Running Afoul of the Collegium**) attempt to beat the investigators into unconsciousness once they find them. The enforcers are comfortable doing this in public or in full view of the vigiles as they have no fear of opposition or prosecution while on official collegium business. If successful, the thugs make certain to deliver either a broken bone, facial scar (-1 APP), or sever a finger from each investigator to deliver the proper message. Any agreement to delay the assassins, if previously made, will also no longer be in effect. Keepers may allow the collegium to offer the investigators a second attempt at their targets, at a +25% increase to the previous rate.

If the Investigators Succeed

Investigators who eliminate the five leaders of The Children of Eihort destroy the organized worship of Eihort in Rome. The Great Old One's influence is removed from the city, a considerable blow to its power and influence. Gala visits the cult's peripheral members, informing them that they now work directly for the collegium of plumbers. The stable of whores and their pimps realize they have no choice and accept this. The collegium also takes custody of the children who were being raised by Sarrius and Larcilla, making them slaves.

Celebrating Victory with the Collegium

Maelius Primus invites the investigators to celebrate their success. Guests of honor at the collegium's chapter house, they are treated to a night of wine, women — or men or boys, if they prefer — and song. At the party, the investigators can learn the fate of the remaining Children of Eihort and their criminal enterprises. Primus also tells the investigators to consider themselves official friends of the collegium. They are welcome to do further business with the organization if the need arises. "Business," he emphasizes. "Not favors, understand? You're not family, after all."

A Meeting with a Patron

After dealing with The Children of Eihort, the investigators should meet once more with their patron, Lurca Hedeia. If they don't visit her on their own, she sends them an invitation to do so. If Hedeia's money financed the hefty payoff to the collegium, she expects a report on the outcome of the operation.

On this visit to Hedeia's villa, her servants take the investigators to guest rooms that are for their personal use, permanently. Hedeia invites the investigators to stay with her for a few days, during which she has long talks with them about what is to happen next. She wants to know if the investigators plan to proceed with Arrius Lurco's plan. If they do, Hedeia is overjoyed and pledges to continue funding their efforts. She asks the investigators to keep a careful accounting of their expenditures while on this mission. If the investigators give her any of the wealth recovered from the cult's shrine to recoup the money she gave them to pay the collegium, Hedeia is grateful.

Adoption

Lurca Hedeia seeks to further cement her bond with the investigators. If they have treated her with kindness and respect, she offers the investigators a special honor, to become her adopted children. One morning during their stay, Hedeia asks the investigators to attend a meeting with her advocate, where she announces, "I'm now a wealthy woman, owner of business and property. But I am alone. Lurco and I never had any children. It would not have been proper. Now he is gone, and I am much older. I doubt my heart will be ready for a husband before my years of childbearing come to an end. However, I do not wish to be alone." Hedeia turns to the investigators and smiles. "If you consent, I would name you my legal heirs. I've never been a mother before, but I promise to love you as if you were my own."

If the investigators agree, Hedeia has her advocate draft papers naming them her legal heirs. The adopted investigators become more than Hedeia's clientes; they become her family. For the investigators, it means access to the funds needed to finance the expedition to the Labyrinth of Messara. For Hedeia, it means a great deal more. In her mind, her children will be fighting to avenge their fallen father. Deep down, she wishes that Casca and Melito were undertaking this task, but understands that the sons of Arrius have their own lives to lead. However, she feels the spirit of Quintus Arrius Lurco deserves justice, and she will make certain he gets it.

A Meeting with Caelia

When the bustuaria senses the cult's departure from Rome, she returns to the city, entering Rome for the first time since leaving The Children. In part, she seeks out the investigators to collect the remainder of her reward for assisting them against her former companions. But now that she knows they were strong enough to defeat the cult, Caelia sees fur-

ther possibilities. Maybe they're powerful enough to fulfill Arrius Lurco's quest. Maybe they *can* defeat the Great Old One Eihort.

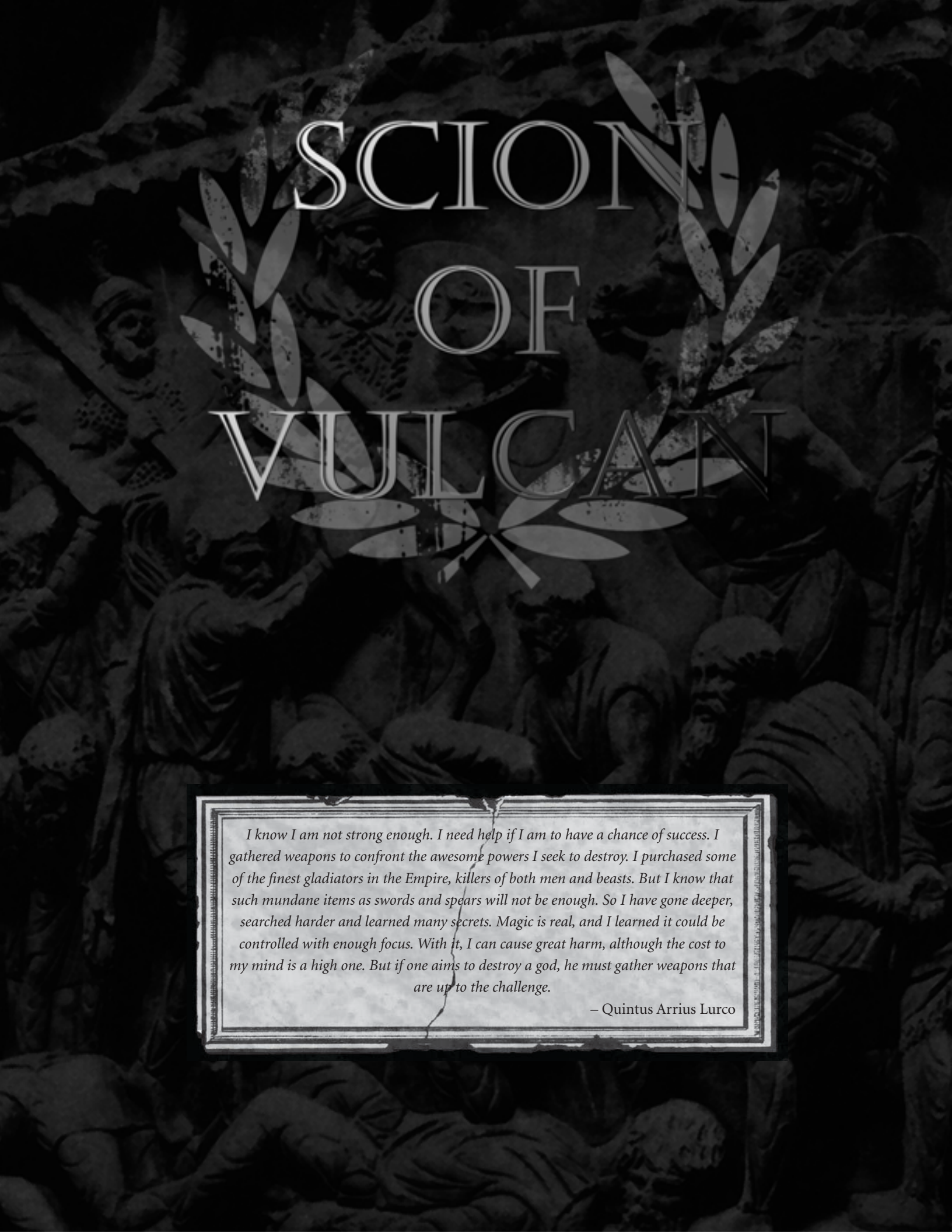
After collecting the agreed upon sum from the investigators, Caelia invites them to a picnic lunch on a grassy hilltop just west of the city in Trans Tiberim. The hill boasts an excellent view of the Circus Maximus, and the food and wine are excellent. The bustuaria spares no expense. As they dine, Caelia asks the investigators, "So, what's next for you? I can tell this isn't the end of the story. The cult wouldn't have moved against you so hard unless you posed a threat to more than just their operations in Rome. Tell me, what are you planning... and how can I help?" She smiles, sipping her wine, and says, "We've made good partners so far. There's more I can teach you. Other spells, perhaps one that would remove Eihort's brood from a person without killing him. And I know where Eihort's guardians operate from in Crete. We can work together."

A New Ally

If the investigators agree to work with her, Caelia asks them to tell her what their ultimate goals are. If the investigators explain their plan in detail, Caelia sees a critical flaw. With the weapons at their disposal, both physical and arcane, the investigators have no hope. As they are, they cannot win, let alone survive, a battle against Eihort. Caelia explains, "Your plan is a good one, but it cannot succeed. Your foe is simply too powerful. With what you have, you have no hope against Eihort. But I know of something that can change that. I know someone who might be able to help. But let's discuss this tomorrow. I don't wish to ruin a perfectly good afternoon with further dark topics. Tomorrow I'll tell you about someone I met who created a weapon of awesome power. It is a wonderful and terrifying machine, an Athenian Death Ray, powerful enough to destroy a god. Today we celebrate our victory, and tomorrow I'll tell you all about the Scion of Vulcan."

Sanity Awards

- For defeating a member of the Children of Eihort. +1 point each
- For defeating the ghouls +1D3 SAN
- For destroying the broodling +1D4 SAN
- For defeating Gratian and Martius +1D3 SAN
- For buying off Gratian and Martius through Gala +2 points



SCION OF VULCAN

I know I am not strong enough. I need help if I am to have a chance of success. I gathered weapons to confront the awesome powers I seek to destroy. I purchased some of the finest gladiators in the Empire, killers of both men and beasts. But I know that such mundane items as swords and spears will not be enough. So I have gone deeper, searched harder and learned many secrets. Magic is real, and I learned it could be controlled with enough focus. With it, I can cause great harm, although the cost to my mind is a high one. But if one aims to destroy a god, he must gather weapons that are up to the challenge.

– Quintus Arrius Lurco

Onward to Graecia

Keepers have several ways to bridge the gap between “Mask of the Funeral Clown” and “Scion of Vulcan”. They can allow the investigators to role play their trip from Rome to Athens, finding Caelia her apartment in Piraeus (see **Caelia’s Home**) and settling into the area before starting their search for the Scion of Vulcan and his Athenian Death Ray. They can also skip forward, informing the investigators of the events which took place during their time between adventures. This is a period of calm between the violent battles against The Children of Eihort in Rome and the investigative quest they face in Graecia. These options enable the investigators to begin the third act of the campaign at their own pace. The scenario begins once the investigators start actively searching for the Scion of Vulcan.

Once settled in Athens, the investigators have time to read the Mythos tome *Testamentum Arrii Lurconis* and learn the spells contained within it. The investigators also have time to be trained in any spells from Caelia’s personal arsenal which she agreed to teach them, including Healing, Ariadne’s Twine, and Balk Brood. This also offers the investigators a time to rest, recover, regroup and, if necessary, replace team members.

“Scion of Vulcan” begins with the investigators living in Athens after traveling there with the former cultist Caelia. Part of their agreement was to escort her to Athens and pay six months’ rent on housing of her choosing. Unless they

make other arrangements, this is where the investigators stay since she invites them to be guests in her new home (see **Caelia’s Home**).

Keepers’ Information

The investigators endeavor to locate a mysterious person known as the Scion of Vulcan. Caelia met him several years ago during her time with The Children of Eihort, when the Scion needed the cult’s assistance to gather components for a powerful weapon, which she calls “an Athenian Death Ray”. Caelia claims the device replicated the power of Jove, enabling a mortal to hurl bolts of lightning. With this weapon, or one like it, the investigators have a real chance of defeating the Great Old One Eihort. Unfortunately, the Scion of Vulcan has vanished.

As It Stands

After being captured by bandits and sold into slavery, Hesiod (see The Tale of the Scion of Vulcan, page XX) was purchased by one wealthy owner after another, each trying to force him to create technological wonders. But the crippled beekeeper no longer knew anything of science, engineering, or invention. He was tortured many times, but could never give his masters what they sought. Hesiod slipped further into insanity, until his owners gave up. Today the man is a simple slave who sells trinkets to tourists visiting Thermopylae.



Taras fared better. His education made him the perfect teacher, and he was sold to wealthy families as a tutor for their children. Over the years, he has earned almost enough money to purchase his freedom and currently lives quite well for a slave. He has his own apartment and when not teaching his owners' children is allowed to come and go as he pleases. While not a bad life, it is hardly the one he wants. Taras dreams of more.

Many Athenians are trying to forget the myth of the Scion of Vulcan. The followers of Vulcan who actually met Hesiod while he was controlled by the Yithian found him unnerving and decidedly blasphemous. They're happy that such a figure seems to have vanished from the face of the Earth. Dozens of rumors circulate about what actually happened to him, but no one knows for sure. Even Hesiod's current owners cannot be sure if the one-legged, half-mad slave actually was the Scion of Vulcan.

Current Mission

The investigators cannot directly locate the man once known as the Scion of Vulcan. Even if they could, he's unable to help them. Hesiod remembers nothing about a "machine that produced a ray of death" or any of the other inventions he's credited with. However, their inquiries will lead the investigators to someone who can help them, namely Taras.

The son of the Scion of Vulcan, Taras worked hand-in-hand with the Yithian for a decade. He not only helped construct the Athenian Death Ray, but also knows where it is located, how to operate it and, most importantly, how to repair it. If the investigators secure his freedom and pledge to do the same for his father, Taras agrees to help them. He will guide the investigators to the machine, repair it, and teach

them how to use it.

There are dangers on this quest. When fleeing the underground realm of the flying polyps, Taras and Hesiod left the gateway open and undefended. The powerful and invisible aliens were content to remain in their underground realm, but some of their livestock escaped. These creatures, half-human/half-pig beings known as swine folk, now haunt the mountainous area around the village of Kandros. The villagers blame the Scion of Vulcan for inflicting these creatures upon them since their appearance coincided with his visit. Recognizing Taras as the Scion's assistant, the villagers will capture and threaten to execute him unless the investigators exterminate the accursed of Circe roaming their pastures.

The flying polyps themselves present a more serious danger. The creatures were hurt, but not eliminated. The two that still dwell in the caverns will not take kindly to further intruders. They remember the damage the Scion's machine caused and will try to prevent anyone from obtaining it.

The final threat is one that Taras keeps secret as long as possible. He was warned by the Yithian agent sent to free him that if he attempted to free his father they would both be killed. Yithian agents have periodically checked on Taras' whereabouts. While a slave he poses no threat to the Great Race, but if Taras becomes free they'll decide he knows far too much to remain alive. By the time Taras and the investigators reach Hesiod, Yithian agents will be using him as bait. Their mission is to kill Taras, Hesiod, and anyone getting in their way.

As Once Was Shall Forever Be, Aforgommon's Curse on Athens

Athens is a city phased out of time, forever stuck in the year 88 BCE by a curse placed upon it by Aforgommon, the Time-

New Spell: Balk Brood

This spell calls forth Eihort's brood from a particular target. Learning this spell requires the investigator to make a successful INT x 3 check after 2 hours of instruction. The spell requires 3 rounds to cast and costs 1D3 SAN per participant. The caster and other people who know the spell can expend as many magic points as desired; additional participants who touch the caster as the spell is cast can add 1 MP per person, although the SAN cost per participant remains constant at 1D3.

On the Resistance Table, match the total MP spent against the number of days elapsed since the host was infected. If the spell succeeds, the half-formed brood erupt from the target's bodily orifices, causing great pain and embarrassment, and costing the victim 1D3 SAN.

The brood may already have injured the victim severely, with only their presence keeping it from being obvious. In that case, removing them might kill the victim since the target of the Balk Brood spell must absorb 1 HP in damage for each day that he has been infested with the brood. For example, Getia has 12 hit points, and the brood have infested her for 7 days. As they leave, she takes 7 HP in damage, leaving her 5. She'll survive and heal normally, while the displaced brood scuttle off to die in a few minutes to a few hours.

Casters gain 1D2 SAN for each bargainer saved, if the victim survives. However, the participants risk Eihort attacking each time they use the spell, a risk that increases by 10% each time the spell is cast. If he appears, Eihort's attack is always launched at the person who has cast the spell the most number of times or who has the highest POW. Therefore, after casting Balk Brood nine times, a particular caster has a 90% chance that Eihort will appear.

Range: Touch
Sanity Cost: 1D3

Duration: Instantaneous
Resistance: Yes

Cost: Variable

God, Avatar of the Outer God Yog-Sothoth. The curse begins to affect any investigator who spends more than a month in the city. For further details, see the section on Athens in *Cthulhu Invictus*.

Caelia is aware of the curse and tries to persuade the investigators to stay with her in Piraeus, just outside the city proper. While Piraeus is also under Aforgommon's curse, the effects are much weaker and allow the investigators to resist its effects with a successful POW check once per week. Caelia tries to avoid telling the investigators exactly what's going on unless they make a successful Persuade check. Caelia fears speaking out about Yog-Sothoth and hopes to spare the investigators further dark knowledge. Anyone who hears her explanation of the curse on Athens gains +1% to his Cthulhu Mythos score.

Part One - Athens

The scenario begins with the investigators safely settled in Athens. They will have been here for months, weeks, or mere days, depending on when they want to begin the search. The investigators can start looking for the Scion of Vulcan by gathering as much intelligence on the man as possible. However, much of the commonly known information about this elusive figure is false. The investigators soon discover the man they are looking for vanished from the face of the Earth several years ago. Finding a real lead requires a visit to Delphi and a meeting with the Pythia, Oracle of Apollo.

Learning the Legend of the Scion of Vulcan

The investigators can speak with many people in Athens about the Scion of Vulcan. If they make a successful Luck roll, the people they're speaking to will know 1D2 tales about him. The investigators can learn a dozen facts about the Scion by questioning the average Athenian or by asking Caelia, who met him personally. Whether such rumors are true or false is indicated with each entry:

- The Scion of Vulcan was born in the Demes of Icaria. (True)
- He was over 100 years in age, yet appeared no older than 40. (False. He is, and appears to be, 53.)
- He always traveled with a younger man who assisted him. (True)
- The Scion of Vulcan is the child of a Parthian princess and Vulcan. (False)
- He was born on the site where Icarus died and was trained by Daedalus himself. (False)
- He is a genius in the fields of architecture and engineering. (True)
- He traveled all over the Empire creating wonders. (True)
- The Scion of Vulcan has not been seen in years and is widely considered to be dead. (True)

- He was captured by a Parthian king and held prisoner, but died after refusing to create impenetrable armor for the king's armies. (False)
- He improved on Daedalus' design and created a machine that allowed him the power of flight. (False)
- The Scion of Vulcan created a machine that could cast a bolt of lightning like a javelin at enemies. (True)
- The priests and priestesses of Vulcan never acknowledged the divine ancestry of the Scion, due to jealousy. (True and False. The priesthood of Vulcan were jealous, but also considered the Scion a passionless blasphemer.)

Places to Search

When he wasn't traveling, the Scion of Vulcan stayed in Athens, in a specially prepared workshop (see **The Workshop**). He frequented a number of places the investigators can visit in an effort to pick up his trail. Caelia and most native Athenians can supply the investigators with the names of these locations. The investigators can search for clues elsewhere in Athens, but only these places offer more than just the rumors listed in Learning the Legend of the Scion of Vulcan:

- The Scion of Vulcan's former workshop — In the metal-worker's district
- The Hephaisteion — The temple of Hephaestus
- The Erechtheion — A temple on the Acropolis

Caelia's "Assistance"

Caelia is both a help and a hindrance to the investigators. She knows Athens well, having lived there in the past; speaks Greek well; and can be charming when she wants. She also has considerable arcane knowledge, is dangerous in a fight, and sincerely wants to help the investigators. She knows proving her value as an ally to the investigators will enhance her credibility with them.

On the other hand, Caelia is easily distracted and usually self-centered. She adores the culture, sophistication, and en-

Athens

Athens is more than just a city; it is a collection of territories and neighborhoods called demes. The three major demes are: Paralia, the coastal zone; Mesogia, the central zone; and Atsu, the city zone. Each is further divided into smaller demes with their own distinct personalities. Locals are so proud of their birthplace that people introduce themselves by their deme. For example, Abrax of Cropia or Spiros of Hermion.

In addition to the city of Athens, this scenario also takes place in:

Piraeus — A coastal suburb of Atsu which serves as the main port of Athens.

Delphi — A city about 100 miles north of Athens, home to the Pythia, Oracle of Apollo.

Kandros — A village on the slopes of Mount Pastra, in the Kithairon mountain range.

Thermopylae — A seaside town and the site of a famous battle between the Greeks and Persians. It is currently a popular tourist destination.

The Tale of the Scion of Vulcan, or The Shadow Out of Athens

Many years ago, a honey farmer named Hesiod of Icaria suddenly collapsed while having dinner with his family. When he awoke, he suffered from memory loss and could not control his body, moving and speaking in an awkward manner. Hesiod slowly recovered, but those who knew him found him quite a different man. His much-changed personality caused many to shun him; even Hesiod's family drove him away. Only Taras, his youngest son, remained by his side.

Together they traveled far and wide, visiting libraries and ruins, uncovering the secrets of a dozen lands. Hesiod lost his knowledge of beekeeping, yet gained a keen understanding of science, engineering, and the ability to craft wondrous machines. Taras was loyal to his father even as he began to realize Hesiod was not the same man. Eventually, Hesiod took the boy into his confidence.

Hesiod told Taras that he was a member of a time-traveling race, beings that projected their minds into the bodies of others to study their cultures and histories firsthand. Taras learned these "spirit scholars" called themselves The Great Race of Yith.

The pair required vast sums of money to cover their traveling expenses. Taras suggested to the Yithian controlling his father's body that it use its knowledge of science and engineering to create inventions for a fee. The being agreed, and Hesiod soon gained a reputation as an incredible inventor, one gifted with the divine spark of creation, the son of Hephaestos himself. The legend of the Scion of Vulcan was born.

For more than a decade, Taras and the man who had been his father traveled, creating incredible devices when they needed money. Their fame spread far and wide. Eventually, the Yithian learned of a colony of flying polyps living in the caverns of Mount Pastra. He explained to Taras that these creatures were invisible, had the power of flight, the ability to control the wind, and were his people's greatest enemy. They must be destroyed. With Taras' help, the Yithian built a weapon capable of firing bolts of electricity, what he called a Yithian Lightning Gun. They also created a helmet, which the Scion explained was for use in case something went wrong. To accomplish all this quickly, the pair enlisted the assistance of several unsavory cults to help them gather many of the rare components. The Children of Eihort were one such group.

When the weapon was ready, Taras and the Yithian controlling his father's body traveled to the flying polyps' lair on the slopes of Mount Pastra, not far from the village of Kandros. Enlarging the entrance to the underground lair with bolts of lightning, the pair entered the caverns. This allowed some of the creatures the flying polyps used as livestock, a large herd of swine folk, to escape. The invaders set up the lightning gun and did battle with the flying polyps. But things went very wrong.

The creatures were more numerous than the Scion of Vulcan anticipated. As the last couple of flying polyps closed in, they used their wind attacks to scour the flesh from one of the Scion's legs. When only bone remained, the scion lost consciousness. He fell backward, pulling the lightning gun with him, damaging the machine. Taras grabbed his father and fled; the two barely escaped with their lives. Once out of the caverns, Taras managed to stop the bleeding with a hastily built fire and the heated blade of his knife. The Scion of Vulcan regained consciousness with a scream, examined his injuries, and ordered Taras to help him place the helmet they had constructed on his head.

The helmet activated, with a loud whine, a bright flash, and the smell of ozone. Suddenly the man lying by Taras was no longer a great inventor or master of science and engineering. He was once again Hesiod, a simple honey farmer who had no idea where he was and did not recognize the grown man beside him, surely not as his son Taras. In his mind, Taras was only a ten-year-old.

The Scion of Vulcan was dead; all that remained was a confused, crippled Hesiod who had lost ten years of his life. Taras tried to keep his father calm, but the shock shattered the man's mind. Taras struggled off the mountain, carrying his crippled father. Before reaching safety, the two were captured by bandits. The father and son were separated and sold into slavery.

Some weeks later a person attempted to purchase Taras, explaining members of the Great Race of Yith had sent him. The man was like Taras, an agent in the service of the Great Race. He explained the Yithians wanted Taras to resume his duties as an aide to another Yithian explorer. When he asked if they would free his father as well, the agent explained that the Yithians had no use for a crippled human body and that Hesiod was to remain a slave. In a rage, Taras knocked the agent to the ground, where he suffered a fatal injury when his head struck a large stone.

tainment of Athens. Keepers should periodically have her attempt to persuade the investigators to “take a break”. Athens suffers from no shortage of diversions. Caelia enjoys watching men compete at sports at the Academy; shopping at the Agora, an open air market; attending musical performances at the Odeon; or seeing plays at the Theatre of Dionysus next to it. She will flirt, beg, whine, and cajole the investigators to accompany her on these excursions, as respectable women in Athens are seldom seen without a man escorting them.

The Workshop

Located just west of the Agora is the Athenian metalworker’s district. The Scion of Vulcan kept an apartment and workshop there for use when staying in Athens. It is unique in all of Athens, as it is the only building immune to the curse of Afor-gommon. This is because the Scion created roof tiles coated with a specific alloy, which disperses the time displacement effects. The curse over Athens is one of the reasons the Yithian chose the city as his base of operations, in order to study and better understand the unique temporal shift centered here. Gervasios, his family, slaves, and employees are currently protected from the curse. They do not speak of it and do their best to pretend that everything is perfectly normal.

Currently the workshop houses a smithy that produces helmets for the Roman Legions. The shop employs more than a dozen craftsmen. The place hums with activity from sunrise to well after sunset as the workers try to fulfill their large contract.

The shop’s owner and foreman is a bald, clean-shaven man named Gervasios. He is muscular and wears a leather apron, spending as much time at the forges as his workers. Gervasios greets any visitors politely but informs them that the shop cannot take new work orders at this time because they are working on a huge order for the II Gallica Legio.

Gervasios knows the shop well; he worked there as an assistant and caretaker under Taras and the Scion of Vulcan. If asked about the Scion, Gervasios becomes evasive but admits to having known the man. The foreman explains how he once worked with the Scion years ago. He helped with projects and watched the shop when the Scion and his assistant were traveling.

Gervasios does not elaborate to the investigators unless they make a successful Persuade roll. If so, Gervasios asks them to return after dark, when the shop closes, inviting them to join him and his family for dinner. He promises to tell the investigators all about his former master at that time.

Dinner with Gervasios of Colonus

Gervasios lives behind the smithy shop in a comfortable, middle-class Athenian home with his wife, Zoe; their daughters Hagne, age 13, and Antiope, age 9; and two aged Egyptian slaves, Aten and his wife Umm. The smith and his wife try to be good hosts, but the food they serve is overcooked and bland, mediocre at best. The wine they serve is quite good, with Zoe bragging of her brother being a local wine merchant.

Hagne has recently reached marriageable age, and at

the Keeper’s discretion Gervasios might consider one of the investigators as a suitor for her. Gervasios wants to see her married to someone of higher station than himself. The girl, however, has her eye on several of her father’s apprentices. When the discussion turns to the Scion of Vulcan, Gervasios has good memories of the man, even though he found him unnerving at times. The smith answers the investigators’ questions as best he can, relating the following facts if the investigators ask the right questions:

- Gervasios worked for the Scion as an assistant and also watched the shop when the inventor was traveling.
- The Scion of Vulcan was a genius when it came to creating things, from combinations of different metals to complex machines.
- The Scion was a strange man, but not a cruel or selfish one. There were far worse masters to work for. Gervasios considered his treatment quite fair.
- The Scion worked with a younger man called Taras who referred to him as “father”. The smith is uncertain of the pair’s actual relationship.
- The Scion of Vulcan spoke very little to people, even Taras. When he did, he was aloof, cold, and devoid of emotion.
- The Scion not only denied his father was the god Vulcan, but he also claimed that no such being existed.
- Taras was not like the Scion. He seemed a normal Athenian man. Taras was very protective of the Scion and constantly advised him on how to better deal with people. The Scion may have been skilled in creating things, but he struggled in social situations.
- The Scion’s last project was a large machine, like a box with three legs, which the inventor and Taras took with them when they departed two years ago.
- Gervasios has no idea where the Scion or Taras were going.
- The Scion and Taras had never been gone so long before. He fears they are dead.
- City officials named Gervasios owner of the shop so several outstanding civic contracts could be filled.
- The Scion had a vast collection of tablets and scrolls from all across the Empire, many of his own creation. Gervasios sold them to raise the capital he needed to turn the business into an armory instead of a machine shop. Most of the scrolls and tablets were sold to messengers and private libraries; Gervasios has no idea where they might be now. (Keeper’s Note — These materials cannot be located by the investigators.)
- Gervasios now fills contracts for helmets for the II Gallica Legio and is quite successful, employing more than twenty smiths.

The Hephaisteion

This modest temple in the heart of the metalworker’s district is dedicated to Hephaestus, who the Romans know as Vulcan, the god of metalworking. A prime example of Doric architecture, thirty-eight pillars line the outside of the building, thirteen on the left and right sides and six each on the front and back. Hephaestus shares this temple with his sister, Athena, and their statues are prominently displayed within. The investigators may notice two prominent features of this temple: a frieze depicting events in the life of Athen’s great-est hero, Theseus; and a magnificently crafted bas-relief of Theseus and the Minotaur.



Nikias, Priest of Vulcan

Investigators who visit the Hephaisteion seeking information about the Scion of Vulcan are directed to Nikias. A young priest serving at the temple, Nikias is robust and handsome, with keen eyes and a curt manner. If questioned about the Scion of Vulcan, the priest bristles, his manner becoming one of annoyance. He states that the man who called himself the Scion of Vulcan was nothing of the sort; he was a blasphemer, a charlatan, and a madman devoid of true passion for creation. Nikias admits that the man was brilliant and that the temple received him as an honored guest. However, the visit ended with much disappointment and offence to the priesthood of Hephaestus. Nikias informs the investigators that the man was ultimately barred from visiting the Hephaisteion after stating that Hephaestus was nothing more than “a silly human notion.”

Nikias has no idea where the Scion of Vulcan last traveled to or even if he still lives. “Nor do I care to find out,” he states. “Such a man is sure to be the target of the gods’ wrath.” If asked where they might look further, the priest suggests visiting the Erechtheion, which the Scion also frequented.

Those who make a successful Insight roll realize that Nikias is being completely truthful, but behind his words are jealousy, anger, embarrassment and, most of all, bitter disillusionment. Most followers of Hephaestus welcomed the Scion of Vulcan

with the greatest of hopes that he actually was the divine son of their god, only to have those hopes dashed after actually meeting the man.

Entering the Parthenon

Before entering the complex, the investigators must pass through the Propylaea, a massive gatehouse. Guards here prevent criminals, escaped slaves, or other unsavory types from entering the sacred site. Aside from being a temple complex, the Acropolis also houses the Athenian treasury. Any investigator considered a persona non grata by the guards must make a successful Fast Talk, Status, or Persuade roll or be turned away.

Athenian Temple Guards

STR 14 CON 15 SIZ 14 INT 12 POW 12
DEX 12 HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist 65%, 1D3+db

Grapple 55%, damage special

Sword 65%, 1D6+db

Armor: 4 points of Helmet and Hardened Leather with Bronze Greaves.

Skills: Dodge 40%, Insight 55%, Spot Hidden 45%.

At the Erechtheion

Investigators entering the temple find an altar to Vulcan in the east wing of the building. If they linger or make an offering, an older man approaches them and asks if he might be of assistance. He wears a soft linen chiton, a long, pleated, tunic-like garment of richly dyed violet. He introduces himself as Kepheus and explains that he spends most of his time in the Erechtheion.

Kepheus is a wealthy Athenian, a scholar and philosopher. He is about 60, but physically fit and mentally acute. The man is a member of a secret society called Societas Cryptaegidis. Keepers may allow Kepheus to have already discovered that the investigators are asking questions about the Scion of Vulcan through his numerous contacts and informants, if the investigators have made sufficient inquiries in the city before meeting him. Or he may simply approach the investigators after noticing them as strangers lingering at the altar of Vulcan. Either way, Kepheus wants to talk to the investigators as much as they need to speak with him.

Kepheus of Alopece, Philosopher and Societas Cryptaegidis Agent

STR 8 CON 10 SIZ 10 INT 17 POW 14
DEX 11 APP 11 EDU 22 SAN 40 HP 10

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapons: Fist/Punch 50%, 1D3

Armor: None.

Skills: Cthulhu Mythos 19%, Insight 75%, Library Use 85%, Listen 60%, Occult 80%, Other Language (Latin) 80%, Persuade 80%, Spot Hidden 55%, Status 50%.

A Conversation with Kepheus of Alopece

The philosopher enjoys conversation, debate, and philosophical arguments. He tries to engage the investigators in a discussion about the Scion of Vulcan, steering the conversation toward the nature of the gods, mankind's relation to them, the nobility of the quest for knowledge, and man's place in society. Through this, he attempts to ascertain just how much the investigators know about the Scion and the dark mysteries of the Cthulhu Mythos. Mostly Kepheus does this to test the investigators' intellect, patience, and resolve.

Investigators participating in a dialogue with Kepheus discover him to be a master of philosophy, debate, and rhetoric. The investigators must make 3 successful Persuade rolls, modified by the philosopher's skill, to prove a point to Kepheus. Kepheus has a Persuade of 80%. Investigators with a Persuade lower than this suffer a penalty to their rolls equal to the difference between their score and the philosopher's. For example, an investigator with a Persuade of 65% who is trying to prove a point to Kepheus suffers a -15% penalty (80% - 65% = 15%) and must roll under a 40%. If the investigator makes the roll, Kepheus concedes the point.

Kepheus rewards the investigators with a piece of information for every successful Persuade roll they make while

The Scion and the Society

Most people of authority in Athens found the Scion of Vulcan's manner strange and off-putting. The members of Societas Cryptaegidis, or The Hidden Shield Society, found it both fascinating and a cause for concern. The society is a secret fellowship dedicated to investigating, and if necessary combating, the forces of the Cthulhu Mythos. Upon meeting and speaking with the Scion of Vulcan, the society became suspicious and decided they needed to keep an eye on him.

Kepheus, the second-in-command of the society's chapter in Athens, attempted to cultivate a relationship with the Scion. A learned man and skilled conversationalist, he engaged the Scion in lengthy dialogues several times. The Scion wanted to learn about the world from Kepheus, while the agent tried to learn as much about the Scion as he possibly could.

Societas Cryptaegidis has no idea where the Scion of Vulcan is at this point, a fact that deeply concerns them. They've realized that the Scion is not a normal human being and is therefore someone who needs to be closely watched. They are unsure whether or not he poses a threat to mankind. Whatever the case, they would very much like to find out where the Scion is, and what he's doing now.

debating him. Each Persuade roll, successful or not, takes at least 30 minutes of debate. Kepheus offers the investigators wine, a walk around the Parthenon, or a seat with him on the caryatid porch, an outer area of the Erechtheion held up by six pillars carved in the likenesses of beautiful women.

Information from Kepheus

- "I spoke with the Scion of Vulcan many times and, aside from his assistant Taras, I likely know him better than anyone else."
- "The Scion of Vulcan was less an inventor and more a scholar. He only invented things to raise money for his travels. His true aim was to learn about our world, or rather this world at this moment."
- "I am convinced that the Scion of Vulcan was not a normal human being. His manner was that of a cold, uncaring researcher, unable to connect with people in a meaningful way. As a man looks at a fish in a pond and wonders what it must be thinking, this is how the Scion looked upon humanity."

If the investigators make a fourth successful Persuade check, Kepheus decides to take them to his commander within Societas Cryptaegidis. He smiles and says, "You seem of keen mind and sure purpose. I'd like you to meet a friend of mine. Please meet me at the feet of Athena Promachos in an hour." If they agree, Kepheus reports all that he has learned to his commander, Makarios of Scanbonidas, Priest of Athena.

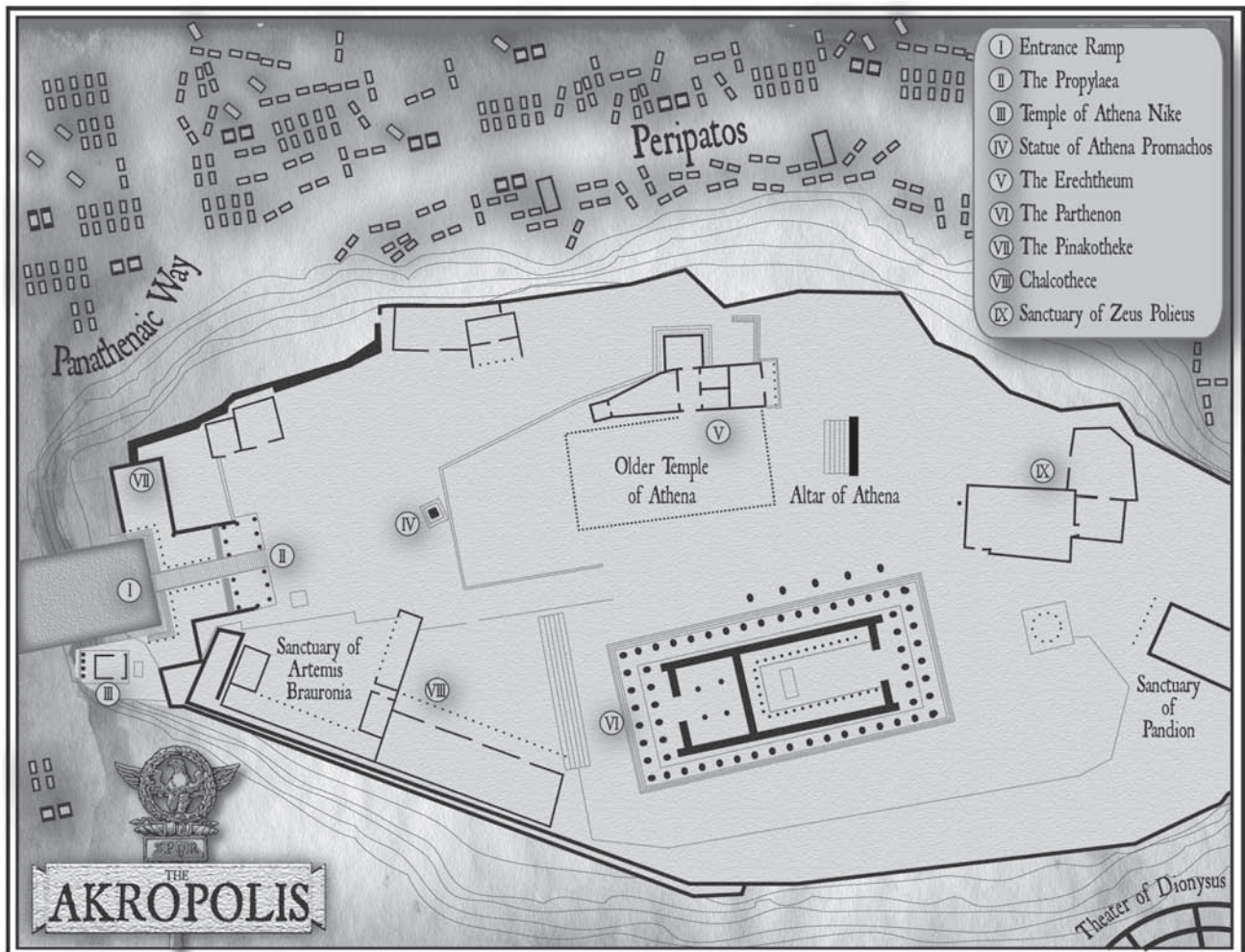
The Acropolis and the Parthenon

The Acropolis and the Parthenon are not the same thing. An acropolis refers to any large hill used by a city as a religious or civic center. Many cities throughout Graecia have acropoleis. The Parthenon is the name of a specific temple that is part of Athen's acropolis. The temple, dedicated to Athena, was widely considered to be the most beautiful building in the world, then and now.

- 1. Entrance Ramp:** A long, sloping stairway leading to the top of the Acropolis.
- 2. The Propylaea:** A massive gatehouse with two wings. The north wing contains the Pinakotheke, a picture gallery and ceremonial dining area. The south wing is smaller and serves as an anteroom for the temple of Athena Nike.
- 3. Temple of Athena Nike (Victory):** A small, beautiful temple celebrating the glories of Athens.
- 4. Statue of Athena Promachos:** A thirty-foot tall bronze statue of the goddess Athena holding a shield and spear.
- 5. Erechtheion:** A temple dedicated to numerous gods, goddesses, heroes, and heroines. It contains a sacred olive tree — the first of its kind, and a gift from the goddess Athena — and the Palladion, which is an ancient wooden statue of Athena said to have fallen from the stars.
- 6. Parthenon:** A colossal temple to the maiden goddess Athena. Eight massive columns line the front and rear, and seventeen columns run along both of its sides. The building is a riot of color with red and blue walls, massive shining brass doors, and a vast collection of statues and frescos painted in lifelike tones. The most prominent feature is the statue of Athena, called Athena Parthenos.

Athena Parthenos

This wooden statue, plated with ivory and gold, is the masterpiece of the sculptor Phidias. It depicts Athena wearing a helmet and breastplate with the head of Medusa carved into it: the aegis. The goddess holds an upright shield at her side, and the winged goddess Victory stands in her opposite hand. A serpent, representing the mythical Athenian king Erichthonius, is coiled behind Athena's shield.



At the Statue of Athena Promachos

After reporting to Makarios, Kepheus meets the investigators at the statue of Athena Promachos at the appointed time. He asks them to follow him into the Parthenon itself. If the investigators have not already visited the temple, Kepheus gives them a brief tour with obvious pride. Eventually he leads them to a young priest of Athena. Kepheus introduces them to the priest as new friends, then introduces the man to the investigators as “Makarios, priest of Athena, a dear friend of mine and a very good person to know.” The philosopher then departs, wishing the investigators fair fortunes and Athena’s protection.

Makarios of Scanbonidas, Priest of Athena, Societas Cryptaegidis Commander

STR 12 CON 14 SIZ 13 INT 13 POW 15
DEX 12 APP 13 EDU 18 SAN 60 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 50%, 1D3+db
Staff 50%, 1D6+db
Small Knife 40%, 1D4+db

Armor: 2 points of Soft Leather Breastplate, under clothing.

Skills: Cthulhu Mythos 15%, Dodge 45%, Insight 75%, Library Use 85%, Listen 60%, Occult 80%, Other Language (Latin) 80%, Persuade 50%, Spot Hidden 75%, Status 55%.

At the Parthenon, A Meeting with Makarios

Makarios, a twenty-eight-year-old, gray-eyed man, is a handsome and charismatic figure. He is sturdy of spirit and a good judge of character. Makarios possesses a fair amount of knowledge about the Mythos and sees this meeting as a great opportunity. He hopes the investigators and Societas Cryptaegidis will be able to help one another.

The priest tells the investigators, “You have impressed Kepheus, which is no small accomplishment. You want to find the Scion of Vulcan? Yes? Let us speak in truths, before Athena, in her house. Tell me why you seek him, and I may help you in your search. I, too, am curious as to his fate, and I feel the gods have set our paths to meet.” The priest then listens to the investigators, using Insight to detect any deceptions. If Makarios judges the investigators to be truthful and open, he shares the following with them:

- Makarios is part of society that looks into matters that are best left hidden from the common man. They try to protect people from certain threats and dark knowledge, protecting an unsuspecting mankind much like a hidden shield. The organization is called Societas Cryptaegidis, or The Hidden Shield Society.
- Societas Cryptaegidis closely watched the Scion when he was in Athens, and gathered what information they could about his whereabouts when he traveled. The society is unsure of his motives, which makes them wary.
- The Scion’s creations were often wondrous, sometimes dangerous, and often seemingly impossible machines that harnessed powers to rival that of the gods.

- Cryptaegidis is fairly certain the Scion was not divine. Many are convinced that what resided in that physical form was not human due to the Scion’s deep knowledge of various sciences and his great difficulty in relating to other people. They are uncertain if his human form was a disguise or some manner of possession. In their archives, Cryptaegidis has records of magi swapping bodies with younger people in an effort to achieve immortality, shan controlling human bodies, and serpent men using illusions to appear human. The society was unable to discover exactly who or what the Scion of Vulcan was before his disappearance.

Offer of Mutual Assistance

Makarios knows roughly where the Scion of Vulcan was heading when he vanished. He also claims he can arrange a meeting with someone who can help the investigators locate the Scion, as long as they agree to share what information they learn with him. He explains, “For years we kept a close eye on the Scion, unsure if we should intervene in his affairs. Now he’s missing. We cannot know what the Scion is doing, and that troubles us.”

If the investigators agree to his terms, Makarios says, “The Scion of Vulcan left Athens with his assistant, a man named Taras. He carried with him two inventions. One was about the size of a shipborne scorpion siege weapon. It looked like a metal box with a lever, a dial and crystal rods sticking out of it, mounted upon a three-legged stand. The other was an oversized tin helmet set with amber stones. The Scion and his assistant traveled north, toward Delphi, and we lost them after that. Go to Delphi and seek out a proxenos called Elpidios. Give him this ring.”

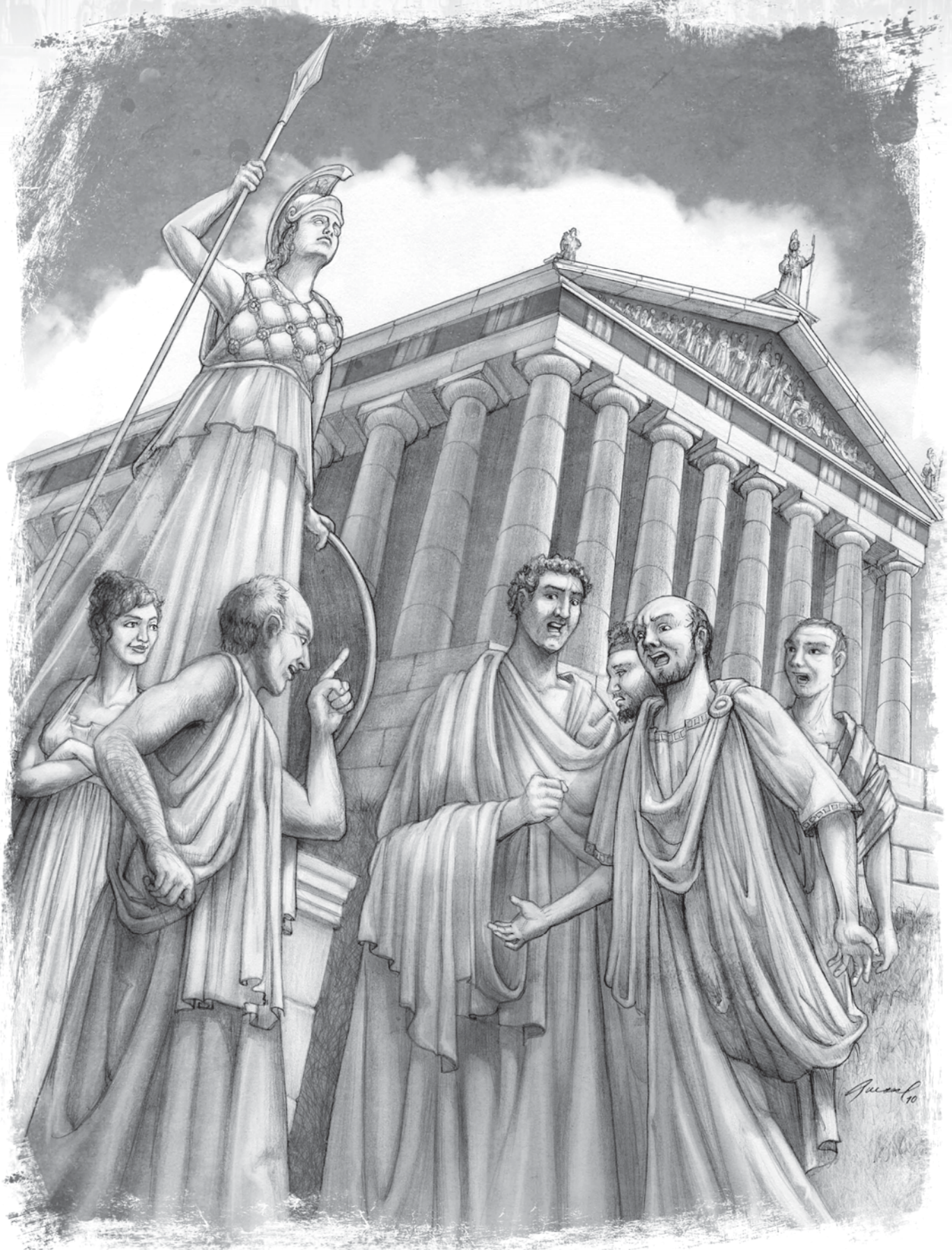
Makarios hands the investigators a signet ring bearing the image of a shield emblazoned with a laurel crown. Investigators who make a successful Spot Hidden roll notice that Makarios wears a similar ring, only with an owl’s head instead of a laurel crown. These rings are given to all agents of Societas Cryptaegidis; the owl denotes the Athenian branch, while the laurel signifies the group based in Delphi. Makarios instructs the investigators, “Tell Elpidios that I sent you and that he must arrange a meeting with the Pythia. If anyone can help you, she can, as hers is the voice of Apollo on Earth. You must meet with the Oracle at Delphi.”

Part Two = Delphi

The quest to locate the Scion of Vulcan now takes the investigators north. Their destination is the city of Delphi, where they will meet with the most famous oracle of them all, the Pythia. However, getting in to see her is not a simple matter; it requires purification rituals and multiple sacrifices. Her answers are also cryptic, intended to lead one to the truth. In Delphi, the investigators are much closer to their goal than they realize, as it is here that Taras is enslaved, serving as the teacher for a wealthy family’s children.

Bringing Caelia

The bustuaria enjoys Athens and is reluctant to leave the city.



She will go if the investigators ask her to and make a successful Persuade roll, but otherwise assumes they will travel north without her. However, it is not necessary that she go to Delphi. Caelia could prove helpful, but the investigators' success in locating the Scion is not dependent on her involvement at this point. Keepers should follow whichever option seems natural for their group.

Getting to Delphi

The city of Delphi lays roughly 67 leagues northeast of Athens (150 kilometers, or 95 miles). The roads to it are steep and rocky, so the investigators may want to bring a donkey or two for their supplies and equipment. The road takes the investigators through the cities of Thebes, Thesplae, Corenea and Chaeronea before they reach Delphi.

Staying in Delphi

Delphi is a city accustomed to visitors, tourists, and pilgrims. The investigators have their choice of places to stay. Inns and resorts cater to various levels of status and wealth, with rooms fit for foreign dignitaries, visiting merchants, or even poor pilgrims visiting the holy sites. Accommodations can run anywhere from 1 sesterce per night for a barebones room to 5–25 sestertii per night for a more comfortable one, or as much as 50–250 sestertii per night for a luxury suite.

Finding Elpidios

The investigators have little trouble locating their contact, Elpidios the Proxenos. The public figure is well known in the city. Investigators trying to determine his whereabouts need only ask someone in Delphi and make a POW x 4 check. If successful, they're told where to find his place of business. He keeps a spacious office just across the street from Delphi's gymnasium where he meets with the metics he sponsors (see **Proxenos and Metics**).

A Meeting with Elpidios, the Proxenos

A wealthy landowner who raises olives and wheat, Elpidios does not need to work. He performs the duties of a proxenos as a matter of prestige. He's a charismatic figure who seems to know nearly everyone in the city and is very knowledgeable in matters of business, law, and religion. He happily works with metics in Delphi, and his expert services are in high demand.

Until a year ago, Elpidios was commander of the Delphi

The City of Delphi

Considered by many to be the heart of the Hellenistic world, the city of Delphi sits high on the slopes of Mount Parnassus, a bustling center of economic, artistic, athletic, and religious activity. The Pythia is located in an underground chamber in the rear of the great temple of Apollo, near the center of the city (see Delphi Map).

Delphi also houses treasuries for every major city in Graecia, lavish buildings filled with fabulous wealth. These are offerings to the gods and places of national pride and nationalistic competition as cities try to outdo one another. Cities may borrow against these treasuries and are charged interest on such loans. In this way, Delphi serves as a banking hub.

Every four years, the city hosts the Pythian games, featuring artistic and athletic competitions. Delphi boasts both a spectacular theater as well as an ancient stadium with seating for 6500 spectators to accommodate the games. Because thousands of spectators crowd into the city at this time, Keepers would do best not to have the scenario coincide with them.

branch of Societas Cryptaeididis. His team is now inactive after a disastrous operation against a dark young of Shub-Niggurath that resulted in the death or insanity of every agent other than Elpidios. Cryptaeididis suspended Elpidios and forbade him from recruiting a new team. Since then, the man has felt lost, mourning his fallen comrades and blaming himself for their fates. He deeply misses his place within the secret society.

When meeting with the investigators, Elpidios is business-like and professional, at least until presented with the signet ring. Once he sees it and hears the investigators' explanation, Elpidios puts the ring on; his eyes fill with tears. He wipes them away, refusing to explain. If the investigators make a successful Persuade roll, Elpidios says, "I've been called back to service and forgiven for my failures. The society has reinstated me, probably because... You need my help with something, right? That's it, isn't it? Something challenging, I bet, so I can redeem myself. Tell me what you need, and it will be my pleasure to assist you." He makes the investigators his top priority and does everything in his power to get them in to see the Pythia on her next pronouncement day (see **The Oracle at Delphi**).

Elpidios, Proxenos, Commander of the Delphi Branch of Societas Cryptaeididis

STR 11 CON 11 SIZ 14 INT 14 POW 14
DEX 10 APP 12 EDU 17 SAN 55 HP 13

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 60%, 1D3+db

Large Knife 40%, 1D6+db

Armor: 2 points of Soft Leather Breastplate, under clothing.

Skills: Accounting 45%, Civics 85%, Cthulhu Mythos 11%, Empire 65%, Fast Talk 80%, Insight 55%, Occult 80%, Other Language (Latin) 80%, Persuade 70%, Spot Hidden 65%, Status 65%.

Meeting the Oracle / Enjoying a Vacation

Elpidios explains to the investigators that they must choose one of their own to meet with the Pythia, as she only holds audiences with individuals. For the investigators not chosen to meet with the Oracle, Elpidios calls in a favor from a metic

he sponsors who owns a resort villa that caters to wealthy visitors in Delphi. The metic offers the investigators who are not meeting with the Oracle a week's stay at this luxurious villa. Investigators who accept enjoy first-rate accommodations, complete with a bathhouse, scrumptious meals, and entertainment. Comely, attentive slaves who cater to their every whim wait them on. If the investigators are below their maximum Sanity, they regain 1D3 Sanity points during their relaxing, week-long vacation.

The Petitioner

The investigator chosen to meet with the Oracle has a very busy week. The Oracle only does pronouncements on the seventh day of the month — and not at all during the winter — and the investigator chosen to see her must work closely with Elpidios to complete the necessary preparations in time. To give these preparations a sense of urgency, Keepers should set the pronouncement a little over a week after the day the investigators arrived in Delphi. The first step is visiting the Temple of Apollo to present the pelanos.

The Pelanos

The priests of Apollo arrange meetings with the Pythia, and such appointments are in high demand. Those requesting a meeting are required to make a sacrifice at the temple of Apollo. This sacrifice, or pelanos, is traditionally bloodless; coin usually works best. Elpidios, the petitioning investigator, and several priests of Apollo meet to discuss arranging an audience with the Pythia.

Elpidios asks for the earliest possible date. The priests offer an audience three months from the next pronouncement. Negotiations go back and forth for several minutes. The matter is only settled when the initial pelanos, a small bag containing 250 aurei, is doubled. Elpidios says, "Where is that other bag? I know I had *two* bags. Oh, yes, here is the other half of the offering. I trust that demonstrates how urgent the matter is for my client." The petitioning investigator is then granted an audience with the Pythia in 7 days time.

Elpidios covers these expenses himself, saying with a smile, "I was told to get you in to see the Pythia, and that is exactly what I am doing." The petitioning investigator is then assigned a priest of Apollo, who will stay with him until the day of the pronouncements. Until then, the priest instructs and oversees the petitioner as he undertakes the next stage of the process, the ritual purification.

Purification Ritual

A young priest of Apollo named Aeton, a dark-haired lad with a serious nature, shadows the petitioning investigator. He guides the investigator through a series of rituals meant to

purify him before the meeting with the Pythia. These rituals focus on strengthening the mind while cleansing the body. They include a strict diet, abstention from all vices, meditation and prayer, reading and reciting of poetry, and religious instruction about the divine powers of Apollo. The rituals take between 10 and 12 hours per day to complete and last until the investigator's audience with the Oracle. During this time, the investigator stays in a special apartment next to the temple of Apollo and is allowed to see no one but Aeton, not even his fellow investigators. While undergoing this period of intense religious observance, the petitioning investigator regains 1D3 Sanity points, if necessary.

At the Altar of Apollo

On the day of the Oracle's pronouncements, the petitioning investigator is brought to the temple of Apollo amid much pomp and ceremony. He is taken to the altar, where Elpidios rejoins him, a large black ram in the prime of its life tethered beside him. The proxenos greets the petitioning investigator, and then ritually sacrifices the ram under the watchful eye of the priests of Apollo. The priests nod approvingly, accepting the sacrifice. The petitioning investigator is then led to the underground chamber at the back of the temple where the Pythia, the voice of Apollo on Earth, makes her pronouncements.

A Meeting with the Oracle at Delphi

The underground chamber where the Pythia resides is filled with a sweet-smelling vapor. Investiga-

tors with a CON lower than 10 begin feeling lightheaded and euphoric after breathing it for a few minutes. Upon entering the chamber, the petitioning investigator faces a screen behind which he can just make out the feminine silhouette of an adult woman. She takes a deep, slow breath, and then says, "I am the Pythia, voice of Apollo. Speak to me your question." Her voice is clear, but careworn. Her accent and manner of speaking identify her as from a merchant class family. The current Pythia is the daughter of common cheese makers. When she answers the investigator's question, her words are a jumble; they seem at times inconsequential and unrelated, yet everything she says is relevant. Some of her prophecy can aid the investigators in finding the Scion of Vulcan, while others concern the investigators' greater goal of destroying the Great Old One Eihort, its cult, and its minions.

At this point, a priest of Apollo comes in to escort the petitioning investigator back to the temple. He appears confused that the Oracle is still making pronouncements. She raises her hand for the priest to wait, then says, "Go, champion of Arrius, and face that from which mortals flee." The Pythia then nods to the priest, who leads the investigator out

Proxenos and Metics

Foreigners visiting and living in Graecia are called metics. A metic is not allowed to deal with the authorities, but instead must be sponsored by a local citizen. This person, called a proxenos, acts as an intermediary between the metic and the local authorities. A metic also has a special tax imposed on him for the privilege of living and working in Graecia. Failure to pay these fees constitutes grounds for enslavement.

as a new petitioner enters the chamber for his appointment. The meeting with the Oracle is over.

The Meaning of the Oracle's Pronouncements

The meaning of the Pythia's words may become clear to the investigators in time. Some are relevant to this scenario, while others concern events to come in the next, A Second Theseus. The Oracle's words may not make sense until after future events have occurred. They might help guide the investigators if they make the correct interpretations. See the boxed text on the next page to compare the pronouncements with the meanings.

Finding a Symposium

Investigators attempting to follow the Oracle's instructions should try to attend a symposium somewhere in Delphi. If Caelia has traveled to Delphi with the investigators and hears anyone mention a symposium, she immediately offers her assistance. Caelia has attended such gatherings as a hetaera in the past and can secure invitations to one in as little as an hour, simply by using her charm and forward manner. Elpidios also has good contacts in this area; he boasts about being on good terms with the best symposiarch in all of Delphi. After sending off a quick note, Elpidios gets a reply inviting him and the investigators to a symposium.

Without the assistance of Caelia or Elpidios, securing an invitation to a symposium is a little more difficult. Unless the investigators have high Status scores and know many people in the city, hosting their own symposium is extremely difficult. Instead, the investigators should socialize with the locals, trying to impress them enough to secure an invitation. The investigators can attempt to do this at restaurants, in shopping districts, while touring the treasuries or admiring the art of various temples, or while visiting any other place where people gather. Two prime locations are:

The Theater: Located near the temple of Apollo and able to seat 5,000 spectators. Performances include poetry readings, plays, and musical events.

The Stadium: Used primarily for the Pythian games, this stadium seats over 6,000 spectators. If the investigators make a successful Luck roll, with a critical success the Stadium will be hosting a day-long athletic competition that very day, or in the next 1D3 days with a non-critical success. The event draws a near-capacity crowd, allowing the investigators ample opportunity to meet and impress the locals.

Once out and about, the investigators need to be sociable with the locals to get invited to a symposium. An Other Language (Greek) score of 40% or higher is helpful. The investigators must also demonstrate intelligence (INT of greater than 11), possess either good looks (APP greater than 12), or seem wealthy (Status score of 40% or higher). Failing that, the investigators can demonstrate their wit and skill at

The Oracle at Delphi

The Oracle at Delphi, or the Pythia, was the most famous and important oracle in the ancient world. People from far and wide consulted her on everything from matters of war and diplomacy to issues of life and love. The Oracle's words were often unclear and dependent on interpretation. Her pronouncements were never answers, but rather put the petitioner on the path to the truth. The Roman emperors Nero, Hadrian, Diocletian, and Theodosius I all consulted the Pythia.

The Oracle issued her pronouncements at a site once sacred to Gaia, the goddess of the Earth, a site that was guarded by an immense serpent named Python. This beast was slain by Apollo and its body hurled into a gorge where sweet-smelling vapors drifted upwards. The story goes that when a shepherd took his herd there and the animals inhaled the vapors, they began to speak, proclaiming visions of the future. A great temple to Apollo was then built over the crevice. Three Delphic maxims were carved upon the temple's doors: "Know Thyself", "Nothing in Excess", and "Debt Leads to Ruin". A maiden was selected by the priesthood to inhale the vapors and bestow the knowledge of Apollo upon mankind. She became known as the Pythia, in honor of the great serpent.

Historians surmise that a woman was chosen for this role because a man in such a position would wield too much power. A woman, who had very little political power in the ancient world, could be better controlled — or trusted. It is further theorized by modern scientists that the vapors were a natural source of ethylene, a potential hallucinogen, present in the area's springs and geology.

conversation, requiring a successful Fast Talk or Persuade roll. However, flirtatious female investigators with an APP of 14 or greater who speak even a smattering of Greek (10% or higher) easily secure an invitation. Successful investigators are invited to attend the symposium of Balios and are informed that their companions are welcome to attend as well.

The Symposium of Balios of Hecale

The investigators eventually secure an invitation to a symposium held at the home of Balios of Hecale, a jovial, portly man with thick hair covering all but the top of his head. He owns several vineyards that produce outstanding wines, some of which are exported across the Empire. Balios is an exceedingly wealthy man. When he drinks, which he does as often as possible, he becomes philosophical. He has a reputation for being one of the best symposiarchs in Delphi and hosts a gathering at least twice a month.

Balios resides in a large, beautifully decorated home and greets guests as if they are close friends, even if he has never met them before. The symposium takes place in a spacious room that holds 10 couches, seating up to 30 people comfortably. Here Balios' guests enjoy some of the most delicious

The Pythia's Oracular Pronouncements

1. It sees you coming, but does not care. There are no surprises among gods or Titans.
2. That which you seek is gone, beyond reach, beyond time, yet closer than you realize.
3. A betrayer acts three times to close a circle. Wait for the final knife thrust.
4. Sons pay for the crimes of fathers, until pigs are brought to slaughter and goats return to their pastures.
5. The harder you seek the Scion, the harder he will be to find. Take wine, have conversation, enjoy life. Seek a symposium in Delphi, the best you can find. Look not for the Scion of Vulcan. Only then will your path be made clear.
6. Death comes to us all. Accept it as the price of entry. Only through death will you know life, and the dead know vengeance. Death need not be an ending, only a different beginning.

The Meaning of the Oracle's Pronouncements

1. This refers to the Great Old One Eihort, who knows that the investigators are coming.
2. This refers to the Yithian consciousness that once controlled Hesiod of Icaria.
3. Caelia will appear to betray the investigators to get them past the cult of Eihort and into the Labyrinth of Mes-sara. However, she leaves the investigators' weapons within reach and then leads one or more investigators in an attempt to poison the cult members (see "A Second Theseus").
4. Taras will be imprisoned in the village of Kandros until the swine folk released by the Scion of Vulcan are hunted down and destroyed.
5. To find Hesiod and, more importantly, the Athenian Death Ray, the investigators must find Taras, who is regularly invited to the better symposiums in Delphi.
6. Caelia will attempt to kill several investigators to win the trust of The Tenders, the cult of Eihort in Crete. She will then secretly resurrect the investigators and try to enlist their help in an attack which could cripple the cultists (see "A Second Theseus").

Consultatio cum Pythia



food and finest wines in all of Graecia. The conversation is lively and ever changing, and the strong wine gets stronger as the night progresses. Discussion is interposed by first a trio of musicians and later by a pair of beautiful female singers. If the investigators are rude, disruptive or overly forward, they are asked to leave.

Other than Balios, one other man in attendance stands out. Handsome and witty, he engages everyone in conversation that always turns to flattery. He flirts with the women, only to steer them to another man's arm. It quickly becomes clear that the man is shepherding the gathering, making sure that everyone in attendance has a good time. Investigators making an Insight roll realize one reason the symposium is going so well is because of this man's efforts. Balios is quite fond of the man and speaks highly of him, commenting, "It would hardly be a party if Taras weren't here!"

The man is none other than Taras of Icaria, once the assistant to the Scion of Vulcan. If Caelia is in attendance, she points him out to the investigators, saying, "That's the same man who was serving the Scion of Vulcan when I met him." Even if Caelia isn't there, the investigators can easily approach Taras or wait for him to speak with them. Taras makes it a point to talk to everyone at such gatherings.

Taras is a tall, handsome man with thick, curly hair and a beard. He seems to dress well, but investigators making a Spot Hidden roll can see places where his clothing is patched or folded to hide discoloration. When speaking, his words are measured and clear; he gives much thought to what he says. Taras has a muscular build and the rough hands of a laborer, both uncommon traits in a scholar.

If the investigators ask Taras if he is the same man who once traveled with the Scion of Vulcan, he is surprised and becomes nervous. He tries to pull the investigators aside, saying, "Yes, I am the same Taras. Who are you, and how did you find me?" He then raises his hand to stop the investigators from answering and whispers, "Let's not talk about this right now. I'll meet you tomorrow at dusk, anywhere in Delphi you like. Now I must focus on the party. Balios is a good benefactor, and I don't wish to offend him." Taras is working for Balios, being paid by the symposiarch to ensure that his parties are as successful as possible.

Taras of Icaria, Slave, Teacher, and Former Assistant to the Scion of Vulcan

STR 11 CON 14 SIZ 11 INT 17 POW 16
DEX 13 APP 15 EDU 20 SAN 60 HP 13

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapons: Fist/Punch 50%, 1D3

Grapple 50%, damage special

Kick 45%, 1D6

Knife 45%, 1D4

Spells: Contact Yithian.

Skills: Civics 45%, Climb 45%, Conceal 30%, Cthulhu Mythos 25%, Dodge 40%, First Aid 60%, Insight 65%, Library Use 80%, Medicine 45%, Natural World 50%, Occult 80%, Potions 50%, Repair/Devise 80%, Science (Architecture) 50%, Science (Engineering) 85%, Science (Geography) 45%, Science (Mathematics) 65%, Science (Metallurgy) 75%, Sneak 55%, Write Language (Latin) 70%, Write language (Greek) 70%.

A Symposium

At this festive gathering, attendees recline on low couches while eating, drinking, and engaging in conversation. The organizer of the symposium, or symposiarch, sometimes hires musicians as entertainment, too. The symposiarch also decides how strong or watered down the wine is, usually determined by the nature of the conversation. Wine is served by naked serving boys from a communal vessel called a krater. Symposiums begin and end with a libation, a ritual in which a portion of wine is poured out as an offering to the gods. This traditional Greek gathering was, like many Greek traditions, adopted by the Romans. The Roman term for such a party is a *comissatio*.

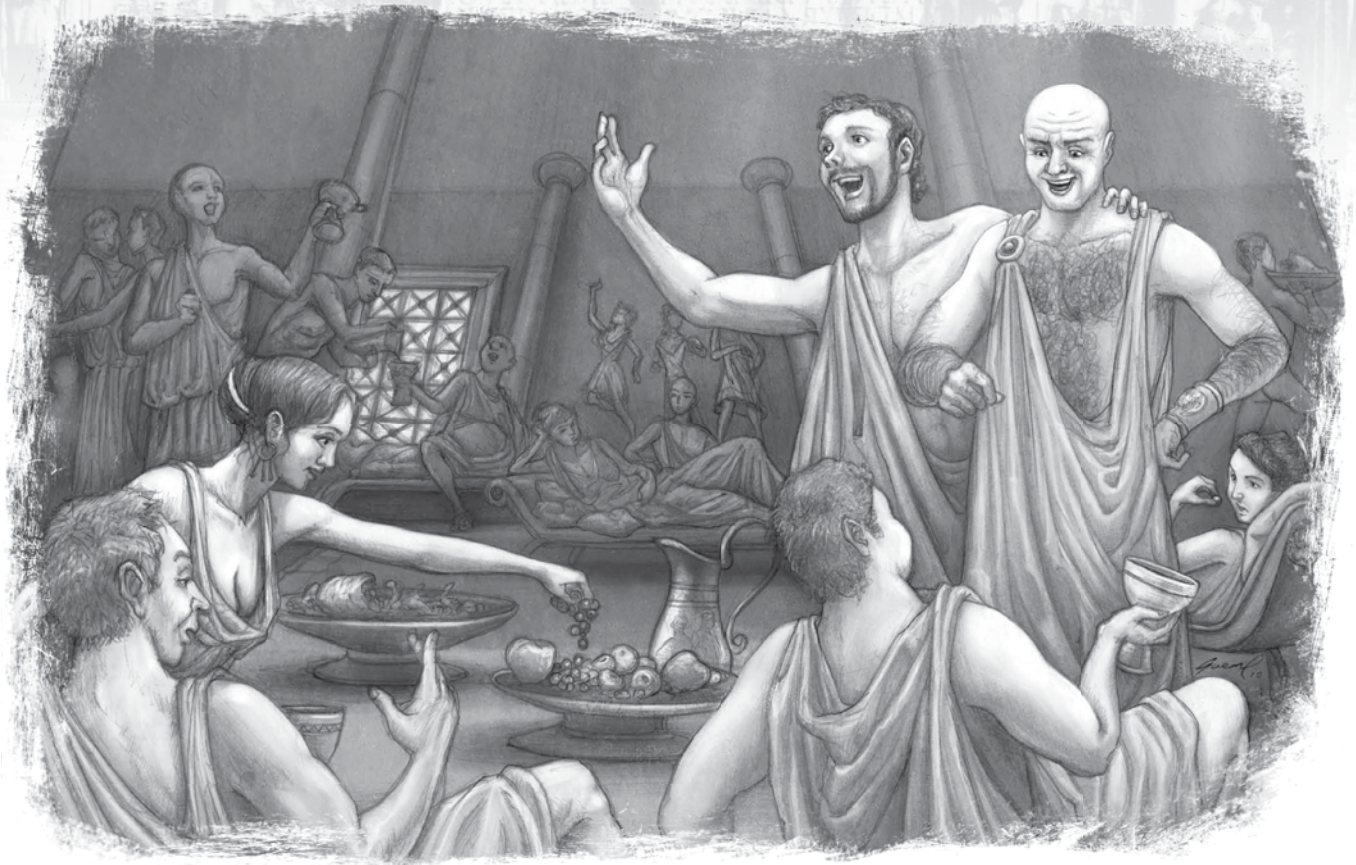
These events could become rather bawdy affairs. Women at symposiums were usually servants, slaves, or hired entertainment such as musicians, dancers, or courtesans. A woman attending a symposium knew that sex was often an activity at these parties. Freewomen sometimes attended symposiums, fully aware of what they entailed. Called *hetaeras*, or "female companions", these women lived by their own rules and considered themselves equal to men. Although many were witty, wealthy, and sophisticated, they were hardly considered respectable.

Taras' Current Situation

Taras has been a slave for two years. His owner, a man named Anatolios of Sunium, is generous and allows Taras much freedom as long as he fulfills his duties, namely educating Anatolios' four children. Taras works side jobs and saves his money, having earned nearly enough to purchase his freedom. When not working or teaching his master's children, Taras is a popular guest at local symposiums. His plan, until the investigators find him, is to save enough money to purchase not only his own freedom, but also that of his father. He wants to return with his father to their lives as honey farmers. He realizes this might take ten years or more, however, and doubts his father will survive that long. Taras, through careful inquiries, contacts and his intimate knowledge of the Scion's true identity, has discovered where Hesiod is, who owns him, and just what his living conditions are.

A Meeting with Taras of Icaria

Taras meets with the investigators the evening after Balios' symposium. He's very curious about the investigators and tries to learn as much as he can about them before he answers any questions. Taras says, "You have me at a disadvantage. You know who I am, but I don't know who any of you are." Taras is nervous about being located by Yithian agents who might assassinate him for knowing too much, leaving their



Nunc est vivendum . . . et bibendum!

service, or murdering one of their agents.

Once Taras is convinced the investigators pose no threat, he answers a few questions. However, because his knowledge gives him leverage, Taras does not tell the investigators everything. He also has trust issues after the bitter betrayal he and his father suffered at the hands of the Yithians. When Taras learns that the investigators need him to find and repair the weapon that the Scion built, he tries to use that to his advantage.

Taras shares the following information with the investigators, if they ask:

- The Scion of Vulcan is his father.
- Taras was the Scion's assistant.
- The Scion had knowledge no mortal man had ever possessed before.
- Taras and his father were separated several years ago after something went wrong on one of their expeditions.
- Both Taras and his father are now slaves.
- The machine, the Athenian Death Ray, is real and hurls bolts of lightning as if cast from the hand of Zeus.
- The machine was damaged and abandoned on their last expedition.
- Taras cannot, and will not, create another such machine. Even if he was able, he would refuse to do so, explaining that "one such item is bad enough."
- If they agree to his terms, Taras will lead the investigators to the Scion of Vulcan and help them recover the weapon.

Taras' Terms

Taras wants to be a free man and to secure his father's freedom. He dreams of owning a plot of land in the Parnis Mountains, building a house and enough beehives that he and his father can live as honey farmers again. Taras presents his terms to the investigators in three parts:

1. Taras agrees to lead the investigators to the Athenian Death Ray and turn it over to them if they purchase his freedom. He does not reveal how perilous recovering the machine will be until he has been emancipated.
2. Taras pledges to lead the investigators to the Scion of Vulcan after the machine has been recovered. If they free his father, Taras guarantees the damaged machine will be repaired. He tells the investigators, "I need the Scion at my side to repair the machine." Technically, this is not a lie; Taras can repair it since he worked closely with the Scion throughout the machine's construction. However, he has no intention of doing so until his father has been freed.
3. Taras will train the investigators in how to assemble, transport, and operate the weapon in exchange for them purchasing land in the Mesogaea, or central Attica, for his father and him. "Somewhere high, quiet, and green, where no one knows anything of my father or me."

Part Three – Kandros

The investigators' path now leads them from the civilized areas of Athens and Delphi into the northern wilds of the Kithairon mountain range. Before leaving Delphi, the investigators must arrange Taras' manumission. After that, Taras takes them to the village of Kandros at the foot of Mount Pastra. Here the investigators learn of the turmoil the Scion of Vulcan left behind and are forced to set things right before they can continue on their quest.

Freeing Taras

The investigators must meet with Anatolios, a wealthy Greek landowner, to negotiate Taras' freedom. Anatolios welcomes the assembly after Taras makes the introductions. An older man known for his generosity, Anatolios has already given Taras the opportunity to purchase his freedom, as his children are nearly grown. He will be happy to see Taras has found patrons willing to purchase his freedom. He did not expect to be freeing Taras for at least three more years.

However, Anatolios is a man of his word and will stick to the terms of the existing agreement. Anatolios grants Taras his freedom for 6,000 sestertii, double what he paid for the slave. Investigators who try to negotiate better terms must succeed at a Bargain check with a –20% modifier; if successful, they lower the price to 5,000 sestertii. If the investigators meet Anatolios' price, he transfers ownership of Taras to them.

Unless the investigators free Taras, he refuses to help them. The agreement was for his freedom, not merely to trade one master for another. He points out that the investigators agreed to free him in return for leading them to the Scion's machine. Taras asks, "If there is no trust between us, no honor to our words, then what is the point of this whole venture?" If the terms the investigators previously agreed to suddenly change, they will have a difficult time convincing Taras to accept them. They can do so with a successful halved Persuade check; otherwise, the man will completely refuse to cooperate. To Taras, this agreement is his father's last hope for freedom and a normal life. He is willing to die to secure that.

Gathering Proper Weapons

Once freed, Taras explains the problems with recovering the Athenian Death Ray. The Scion of Vulcan possessed great fear and hatred for the Anemoe Thyellae (see **About the Anemoe Thyellae**). When the Scion learned a group of such creatures dwelled in the caverns under Mount Pastra, he designed and constructed the Death Ray to destroy them. The creatures are impervious to nearly all weapons, but are vulnerable to fire and lightning.

The investigators should acquire torches, bottles, clay pots, wax, fat, cloth, and flammable oil to arm themselves

against these creatures. Taras offers to assist the investigators in making firepots if they cover the material costs (see **Firepots**). Keepers can point this out to investigators who fail to properly arm themselves by having them make an Idea roll. Failing this, Taras advises the investigators to do so. He tells the investigators, "Fire is the surest way to fight the Anemoe Thyellae. It won't be as potent as the Athenian Death Ray, but it's better than nothing. With luck, we can recover the machine from their lair without drawing their attention." Although Taras also knows how to create Greek fire, he explains that the difficulty of utilizing it safely makes it more trouble than it's worth. Taras also tells the investigators that the lair of the Anemoe Thyellae occupies a vast subterranean complex. The investigators should equip themselves with items like rope, spikes, hammers, and digging tools. Keepers may allow the investigators to realize the need for such items with a successful Idea roll, or have Taras to advise them about it if they fail their Idea roll.

Lastly, the scholar tells the investigators what little he knows about the creatures he calls the Anemoe Thyellae. These ancient and powerful entities will become known in later years as flying polyps, mortal enemies of the Great Race of Yith. The investigators receive +2% to Cthulhu Mythos after learning about these creatures (see **About the Anemoe Thyellae**).

About the Anemoe Thyellae

Taras explains the true nature of the flying polyps as best he can. In truth, his knowledge is limited. He knows the creatures can control the wind, are usually invisible, and emit nauseating, whistling cries. Taras explains how the Anemoe Thyellae possesses a natural immunity to most physical attacks. However, he is also aware that they are vulnerable to fire and to the lightning produced by the Scion's machine. Taras also knows their image haunted his nightmares for months after the attack. He is deeply concerned about the sanity-shattering effect seeing these creatures might cause the investigators and tries to warn them about it.

Taras fears these creatures and knows how dangerous they can be. However, his desire to free his father and put this part of his life to rest far outweighs that fear. He assists the investigators as best he can, trying to keep everyone as safe as possible on the mission to recover the Athenian Death Ray.

The Anemoe Thyellae since the Scion's Attack

Although the flying polyps have been hidden in their cavern city under Mount Pastra for millennia, the Scion of Vulcan's attack almost exterminated the colony. Now only one pair remains, constantly on guard for intruders. Using their powerful wind attacks to carve new passages in the rock and collapse others, they have physically altered the layout of the caverns. The creatures raise swine folk as livestock, keeping them penned in a large subterranean chamber with a freshwater lake and moss beds. The polyps are not imprisoned here, but are content to remain safely underground.

The flying polyps smashed the strange machine that killed

so many of their kind, breaking it into four pieces. They then carted off the pieces and placed them in an alcove carved into the wall of their central chamber by their powerful wind blasts. The flying polyps then filled the niche with hundreds of pounds of rock. The alcove is located in the same subterranean cavern as the Anemoe Thyellae's city so the creatures can keep a close watch over it.

Traveling to Kandros

The road to the village of Kandros is steep, seldom traveled, and poorly maintained. It is little more than a glorified trail leading up into the Kithairon mountain range from the main road that links Thebes and Phyle. The distance between Delphi to Kandros is 39 leagues (about 59 miles or 87 kilometers), and the distance from Kandros to Athens is roughly 28 leagues (about 42 miles or 62 km). Traveling up into the Kithairon mountains extends the trip by several days due to the difficult terrain dominated by steep slopes and plunging gorges. The investigators pass small farms here and there across the region. The further from Delphi the investigators travel, the more sparsely populated, rural, and remote the countryside becomes. Travelers see hares and partridges among stands of pines and oaks as they move through the region.

The Village of Kandros

Kandros is home to 6 large extended families with a total population of about 400 people. Here, high on the slopes of Mount Pastra, the villagers raise barley, herd goats, and keep to themselves. Taras suggests buying supplies and resting in Kandros for a day or so, commenting about how friendly the villagers are and the quality of their local cheese. Kandros has a common area with a central well, a communal market, and a tavern that doubles as a meeting hall.

The locals greet the investigators cordially — until some of them recognize Taras. After that, they give the investigators a wide berth as they quietly spread the news to everyone in the immediate area that the Scion of Vulcan's assistant has returned. The number of villagers slowly swells around Taras and the investigators, some of them carrying walking sticks and shepherd staves. They are intent on capturing Taras. The people of Kandros blame him for the troubles their village has suffered since his last visit, and rightly so.

For the last few years, a band of swine folk has haunted the lands surrounding Kandros. These filthy, degenerate humanoid creatures look like a cross between a man and a pig. The locals call them "the accursed of Circe". They were once part of a herd kept by the flying polyps for food, but escaped from their holding pens in the chaos of the Scion's attack. Since then, these swine folk have killed more than a dozen people, stolen livestock, and made many of the best pastures around the village too dangerous to use. One family has even been completely driven off their lands and forced to abandon their home. The villagers are understandably upset, not to mention shocked, to see that the Scion's assistant has dared to return.

A Sudden Attack

The mob makes its move while Taras and the investigators are purchasing supplies and replenishing their water supply in the center of Kandros. A villager moves up behind Taras and tries to knock him unconscious with a well-placed blow with his club. If an investigator manages to prevent this, the Keeper should have Taras rendered unconscious during the ensuing melee, possibly by a well-thrown rock. Dozens of angry men, armed with staves and clubs, rush the investigators. The villagers surround the investigators, ordering them to drop their weapons and surrender. They pledge not to harm the investigators, saying they only want to bring Taras to justice for his crimes.

If the investigators submit to the villagers' demands, they are disarmed, have their hands bound, and are placed on the ground under a shady tree. Here they sit, guarded by a half dozen men, while the village elders decide what to do. If the investigators seem threatening, they are closely watched and firmly bound. Investigators who peacefully submit to the villagers are treated well and left unharmed, possibly untied and even offered water and some cheese.

If the investigators hesitate to surrender, resist or try to draw weapons, the villagers immediately attack. The villagers try to avoid bloodshed, wanting only to capture Taras and the investigators, not kill them. Four villagers attack each investigator, attempting to grapple and parry aside his attacks. The investigators should quickly realize the villagers are not trying to hurt them. The combat lasts until the investigators surrender, are captured, or begin killing the villagers. The investigators are totally surrounded and face overwhelming odds; if the conflict turns deadly, the villagers will try to kill the investigators. This lasts until the investigators kill 2 villagers per investigator, at which time the mob disperses. However, the villagers will do everything in their power to kill Taras before they withdraw. If Taras dies in this attack, the investigators have little chance of finding the lair of the Anemoe Thyellae and no chance of repairing the Athenian Death Ray.

Angry Villagers of Kandros

STR 15 CON 14 SIZ 13 INT 10 POW 11

DEX 11 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 65%, 1D3+db

Grapple 45%, damage special

Kick 35%, 1D6+db

Club 50%, 1D6+db

Staff 50%, 1D6+db

Armor: None.

Skills: Conceal 45%, Hide 55%, Sneak 50%.

The Ultimatum

If Taras and the investigators are captured or peacefully surrender, the village elders gather to decide their fate. Taras is very confused about why the once-friendly people of Kandros attacked him. The elders, a group of 6 men who are heads of the local families, explain what has been going on in Kandros since the Scion of Vulcan's last visit:

- A few weeks after the Scion of Vulcan visited their village, strange creatures began appearing on the outskirts of Kandros.
- The monsters look like half-men, half-pigs. The villagers call them “the accursed of Circe”.
- The creatures started raiding the outer farms, stealing food and livestock. They then moved on to ambushing herders’ men, driving them from many of Kandros’ traditional pastures.
- Since the Scion’s visit, these creatures have killed 16 men, women, and children around Kandros.

Taras remains silent while the elders speak. Any investigator who makes a successful Insight roll detects a look of guilt and embarrassment on the scholar’s face. The elders decide that Taras will be put to death, by stoning, for bringing this tragedy to Kandros. The investigators, if they surrendered peacefully or were captured without killing any villagers, will be released. The investigators can negotiate for Taras’ release, which requires them to make a successful Persuade roll. If successful, the council of elders agrees to release Taras if — and only if — the investigators hunt down and destroy the monsters plaguing Kandros. In exchange for the creatures’ severed heads, the elders will set Taras free. Otherwise, the villagers will stone him to death at dawn.

The council estimates maybe a half dozen of the accursed of Circe prowl the outskirts of Kandros. They have a rough idea where their den is, somewhere among the gorges near the high eastern pastures. Most of the attacks have occurred there or on farms close to that area. The farm most often attacked was abandoned over a year ago.

A Hunting Trip

The swine folk, while cunning and stealthy, are not overly thoughtful creatures. They have a small settlement in the eastern gorges made up of two caves and some captured livestock. The investigators can attempt to pick up their trail at the abandoned farm or even set a trap for the creatures using livestock as bait. If the investigators set a baited trap for the creatures, 3 swine folk attempt to raid the farm just after midnight (see **Remaining Swine Folk** for statistics).

With a successful Tracking roll, the investigators find the strange, pig-like tracks of the swine folk leading from Kandros’ easternmost farm to a large pasture in a valley. This area, with abundant grass and a stream running through it, is prime grazing land. However, with the grasses growing knee high at this point, it’s clear that the pastures haven’t been used in quite some time. The swine folk keep a careful watch on this area and easily spot anyone moving across it unless each investigator makes a successful Sneak roll. The creatures’ trail leads to a gorge where a group of swine folk waits to ambush the investigators.

The Ambush

Five swine folk hide just inside the gorge. Two are perched above the trail on a cliff 20 feet up on the right. Each has 3 large stones which it hurls down at anyone in the gorge. These stones have a 25% chance to hit, inflict 2D8 points of

damage, and can only be parried with a medium-sized shield or larger.

The remaining 3 swine folk are hidden behind boulders and charge any intruders once the trap is sprung. The investigators can detect the ambush by making a successful Spot Hidden roll, opposed by the swine folk’s Hide score of 35%. The swine folk fight until 3 of them are killed, at which time they flee to their main lair.

Swine Folk Ambushers (5)

	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5
STR	16	14	16	15	14
CON	10	11	10	10	11
SIZ	15	14	13	15	14
INT	11	10	11	10	10
POW	10	10	11	9	10
DEX	12	11	9	11	11
HP	13	13	12	13	12
MOV	8	8	8	8	8
DB	+1D4	+1D4	+1D4	+1D4	+1D4

Weapons: Claw 30%, 1D6+db

Bite 25%, 1D4

Tusk Gore 20%, 1D8+db

Armor: None.

Skills: Climb 80%, Listen 60%, Scent 80%, Sense Time/Space Instability/Gate 75%, Track 65%.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points for seeing the swine folk.

Lair of the Swine Folk

The gorge branches off to a small clearing with 2 cave openings. The feral escaped swine folk use these chambers for shelter. The herd has a total of 12 swine folk. All surviving members of the herd, after the ambush and the possible farm raid, are cowering here. This can be as few as 4 or as many as 9 swine folk, depending on the actions of the investigators to this point.

When the investigators arrive, the creatures rush out of the caves, howling, growling, hopping up and down and gnashing their teeth in an attempt to scare off the intruders. If it does not work, the swine folk attack, fighting until all seems hopeless. The final 3 swine folk flee squealing from the investigators, rushing back into the caves and huddling in terror. Unless the investigators dispatch these creatures, too, they’ll reproduce and continue to threaten the region. Once the investigators kill all the swine folk, they can make a careful search of the lair.

Remaining Swine Folk

	#6*	#7*	#8*	#9	#10	#11	#12
STR	15	16	14	14	16	15	14
CON	10	10	11	12	10	10	11
SIZ	15	15	14	14	13	15	14
INT	10	10	10	11	11	9	10
POW	10	10	14	12	9	6	8
DEX	11	12	11	10	9	11	11
HP	13	13	13	13	12	13	13
MOV	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
DB	+1D4	+1D4	+1D4	+1D4	+1D4	+1D4	+1D4

Weapons: Claw 30%, 1D6+db

Bite 25%, 1D4

Tusk Gore 20%, 1D8+db

Armor: None.

Skills: Climb 80%, Listen 60%, Scent 80%, Sense Time/Space Instability/Gate 75%, Track 65%.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points for seeing the swine folk.

* Possible raiders, see **A Hunting Trip**

Investigators who enter the caves find a disgusting mess. Rags, garbage, and dung are all mixed together. The bones of several dozen animals and a dozen people are scattered throughout the twin lairs. A pen also holds 9 half-starved goats stolen from the villagers by the swine folk and kept here as food.

Back to Kandros

Investigators who return to Kandros with 6 or more swine folk heads are greeted warmly. Taras is freed, although begrudgingly. He appears tired and sports several ugly bruises, but they're superficial; he's not seriously injured. The village elders agree to sell the investigators whatever supplies they need to speed them on their way. If they transport the remains of the missing villagers back to their families, any supplies the investigators require are given to them free of charge. However, the villagers warn Taras never to return to Kandros, promising he will be stoned on sight if he does.

Part Four - Into the Dark

Provided all has gone well, Taras and the investigators are now permitted to leave the village of Kandros and head up the slopes of Mount Pastra where they must find the

entrance to the subterranean lair of the Anemoe Thyellae and recover the damaged Athenian Death Ray. However, the creatures have been busy. Not only have they hidden the dangerous machine, they've also blocked several passages and used their wind powers to carve new ones. The creatures have long memories and will not be surprised a second time. The remaining pair of flying polyps will react cautiously, yet decisively, to any further invasion of their settlement.

Finding the Entrance

Taras spends several hours trying to locate the entrance to the Anemoe Thyellae's underground tunnels. He asks the investigators to help him, describing the landmarks he's looking for. He searches the same area several times, appearing more and more confused. Eventually he sits down to rest and collect his thoughts. Investigators who make a successful Insight roll realize Taras is baffled and nervous. If questioned, he admits, "The entrance to the tunnels must be here, but the landmarks have changed, drastically so. I'm sure of it."

The flying polyps *have* altered the terrain surrounding their lair in an effort to prevent further intrusions. The investigators must search the area for the new entrance, making a successful Spot Hidden roll with a -20% penalty. This might take some time since each check takes about 40 minutes. The opening, once found, is cunningly hidden behind some rocky outcroppings. If the investigators don't locate the entrance and are in the area at dusk, with a successful Spot Hidden roll they might notice several thousand bats emerging from the concealed cavern entrance.

Making Ready

Once the entrance is located, Taras advises the investigators to make themselves ready. He explains the investigators might have to do some climbing since the creatures dwelling



within normally get around by flying. If rope and climbing tools have been purchased, the scholar helps distribute these supplies. Taras then helps prepare the investigators' firepots if they acquired the necessary materials beforehand (see **Firepots**). Lastly, Taras makes a sacrifice of a small bowl of honey to the Triae, a triad of winged, bee-like nymphs known for their gift of prophecy and for teaching beekeeping to mankind. Taras invites the investigators to join him or make similar offerings to their own gods.

Realm of the Anemoe Thyellae

The caverns containing the flying polyp colony are pitch black. Many of the passages are accessible only by climbing or flying. A herd of swine folk can also be found here, as well as a colony of bats and several million flesh-eating beetles. The polyps normally keep to their black towers unless their colony is under attack. They realize the danger of rushing headlong to attack intruders. They tried that during the Scion's attack, and it cost them dearly. The remaining polyps allow intruders to wander deep into the lair before launching an attack.

I. The Entrance: This downward-sloping passage ends in a cliff that plunges into darkness. The investigators can hear water lapping against stone 200 feet below. Those who succeed at a Listen check can also make out the squeals and bleats of imprisoned swine folk (see **The Larder**).

From here, investigators who make a successful Spot Hidden check detect a ledge encircling the chamber (see **The Ledge**). The investigators must make a successful Climb roll to reach the ledge. Investigators using climbing tools such as a hammer, spikes, and ropes gain a +40% bonus. However, the sound of securing a line echoes loudly throughout the caverns and alerts the Anemoe Thyellae of the investigators' presence. The investigators can lash themselves together to avoid falling.

II. The Ledge: Only 18 inches wide, this ledge travels around the edge of a vast pit to another passage leading further into the cavern system. After stepping onto the ledge, the investigators must make a DEX x5 check to maintain their balance while maneuvering along it to the passage opening.

III. The Larder: This mossy island in the middle of a freshwater lake is home to 50 swine folk. These miserable creatures grope about blindly in the dark, eating the mosses that grow here and an occasional dead bat or cave fish that washes up on the island. The herd was once three times this size and kept in a much larger chamber in the complex. Since the Scion's attack where a handful of these creatures escaped, the herd was culled to be more manageable and moved to this more secure location.

IV. The Side Tunnel: High above the island in the side of the

massive open pit, a tunnel links the entrance to the main chamber of the polyps' subterranean complex (see **The Black Towers**). This is the main route the polyps use to get to and from their larder, but is only easily accessible by flight. A pair of steep cliff faces, 100 and 120 feet high respectively, lead down to the main colony chamber. While aware of the other areas, the polyps are too large to use them (see **The Bat Colony** and **The Fallen Hoplite**).

V. The Bat Colony: The long, oval cavern reeks of ammonia and echoes with the cries of bats. The heat is stifling, a combination of body heat, decomposition, confinement, and poor ventilation. Insects tunnel through the knee-deep guano carpeting the floor, feeding on the occasional dead bat. Nearly 5,000 bats roost here, with 100 or so flying about in the darkness at any time. Unless the investigators attack the bats, they stay high above, mostly clinging to the roof, which is 40 feet high. The bats wait for nightfall to exit the caverns and feed on insects in the surrounding countryside. If the investigators entered the cavern after nightfall, only 10% of the bats are present.

The investigators suffer a POT 4 attack from gathered fumes for each round they spend here. They can reduce this to a POT 2 attack by covering their mouths and noses with cloth. Crossing the cavern to reach its exit, a distance of 150 feet, requires the investigators to make a 0/1 Sanity check.

VI. The Fallen Hoplite: This chamber, at the bottom of a 20-foot drop, contains a pool of fresh water that has dripped down from the ceiling to gather in a low area before running further below ground. The investigators can clean themselves here after wading through the filth of the bat colony chamber. Investigators searching the chamber easily locate another way out of it once they bring a light source to its far end.

Investigators who make a successful Spot Hidden roll find the remains of a hoplite, a citizen soldier from the age of the Greek city-states, nearly four centuries ago. Little more than a rusted helmet, breastplate, greaves, and a shield remain, with brittle bones scattered among them. However,

Firepots

These clay pots, filled with a combination of fat and oil, are wax-sealed closed and topped with an oil-soaked rag. They're fragile and cumbersome, making it difficult for an investigator to safely transport more than one or two. Each firepot costs 60 sestertii worth of materials and a successful Potion check to make. A firepot has a thrown range of 40 feet, and the oiled rag must be lit before hurling it. A successful hit inflicts burning damage for 3 rounds, doing 3D6 on the first round, 2D6 on the second, and 1D6 on the third. Keepers may allow investigators who fail their Throw rolls by less than 20% to make a Luck roll in order to inflict half damage (3D3, 2D3, and 1D3).



versation, he proves willing to talk, giving his name as Alexios of Decelea. He explains that he came to these caverns long ago with a brave band of warriors at his side to rid the land of the demons that dwelled here. Unfortunately, he and his companions were defeated. Alexios fled into this chamber to catch his breath and plan his next move. Instead, he succumbed to his injuries and died, alone and forgotten. He asks the investigators to take his remains to a temple of Apollo and sacrifice a ram in his name. In exchange, Alexios will allow the investigators to keep his sword, a family heirloom which he claims to be a thing of magic.

If the investigators threaten the ghost or attempt to take the falcata without his permission, Alexios attacks, matching his POW against a target's POW. If successful, the hoplite's ghost drains 1D6 points of POW. If the target resists this contest, Alexios loses 1D3 points of his own POW. If reduced to zero POW, the ghost is temporarily dispelled, unable to reform for a period of 16 days. Alexios can manifest anywhere within a 50-yard radius of his enchanted falcata. He's put to rest permanently if his remains are taken to a temple of Apollo and a ram sacrificed in his name.

The hoplite haunts the sword's new owner, tied to the falcata until put to rest. If Alexios feels the sword's new owner is not acting in good faith to lay his soul to rest, he will issue a warning that their bargain needs to be fulfilled, "or else." If Alexios is defeated and the sword taken without his permission, the ghost reforms in 16 days and attacks those within range. These attacks continue until the ghost's release conditions are met.

Alexios of Decelea

Type: Ghost

POW Score: 16

POW Drain / Loss: 1D6 / 1D3

Time Required to Reform if Dispelled: 16 days

Manifestation Focus: Family's hereditary sword.

Manifestation Range: 50-yard radius.

Release Conditions: Has his remains taken to a temple of Apollo and a ram sacrificed in his name.

Sanity Loss: 1/1D6 points to see Alexios of Decelea.

VII. The Black Towers: This vast chamber stretches 100 feet upward into darkness. A rough oval, the cavern is 100 yards at its widest and nearly a half mile long. Twenty massive black towers fill the subterranean chamber, each made of basalt and devoid of windows. Over a hundred flying polyps lived here, phasing in and out of view and filling the air with revolting, whistling calls. Fifty million years ago, it was a major military staging area for attacks against their hated enemy, the Great Race of Yith. Today, the city is mostly deserted and

the investigators also find a curved sword gleaming within a rotted leather sheath. It is a bronze falcata, a handsome weapon of exquisite workmanship far more ancient than the ruined bits of armor it rests beside. Its statistics differ from that of a standard falcata. It has 40 HP and a monetary value of several thousand sestertii, and it is an enchanted weapon.

Sword, Falcata

Base%	Dmg	Hnds	HP	Lng	Impale	Parry	Knockout	Min STR/DEX	Cost
15	1D6+1	1	15	Med.	Yes	Yes	No	8/9	175

If anyone touches the weapon, a spectral figure rises from the scattered bones and warns the "thieves" against stealing his property. The investigators must make a 1/1D6 Sanity check for seeing the ghost. Although it always remains translucent, the ghost's appearance shifts with its mood. At first it appears as a decomposed corpse with sunken features, retracted lips, and a death's head smile. When angered, the ghost's appearance changes to that of a skeleton with eyes glowing a cold, hateful blue. If the investigators back away while speaking calmly, the ghost appears as a handsome, sturdy man in the prime of his life.

If the investigators attempt to engage the ghost in con-

ANEMONE THYELLAE [Flying Polyps], Greater Independent Race

In Greek and Roman mythology, the Anemoe Thyellae are spirits of violent windstorms. They are sons of Typhoeus, the Father of All Monsters, who is held prisoner by the gods and only released to cause havoc. Scholars have given the flying polyps this name since their nature closely mirrors the myth of the Anemoe Thyellae. It's entirely possible that these creatures inspired the myth in the first place.

Anemoe Thyellae dwell underground, haunting their ancient cities of windowless, black basalt towers. Mercifully, they're sometimes invisible, for their appearance is hideous to behold. They appear as masses of diseased tissue forming eyes, mouths, and tentacles at will. The Anemoe Thyellae possess awesome powers, like the ability to control wind and summon storms. They also have formidable defenses, such as immunity from physical harm

POWERS OF THE ANEMOE THYELLAE

Invisibility: Anemoe Thyellae can become invisible by spending 1 MP point per round. They can still be detected as they continually emit nauseating piping sounds. Investigators can try to target an invisible Anemoe Thyellae by these sounds alone by making a successful Listen check. However, such attacks suffer a -50% penalty. Even when visible these creatures phase in and out of our reality making them difficult to locate. Attacks receive a penalty to hit equal to the Polyp's current POW score.

Armor: Anemoe Thyellae have 4 points of natural armor.

Extra-Terrene Matter: The physical composition of an Anemoe Thyellae makes it very resistant to physical harm. They take minimal possible damage from physical weapons. Enchanted weapons harm them normally, as do heat, cold, and electrical attacks. Arcane attacks (spells) also affect such creatures normally.

Windblast Attack: Anemoe Thyellae can attack by creating blasts of wind powerful enough to strip the flesh from a victim's bones. These attacks do 5D6 points of damage to targets within 20 yards, becoming 1D6 points weaker for every 10 additional yards. Victims of such attacks suffer severe dehydration and are knocked backward 1 yard per point of damage suffered.

Fixing Attack: Anemoe Thyellae use their control of winds to secure fleeing creatures in place, rendering them immobile. The range for this is 1,000 yards and need not be within line of sight, working very well around corners. Victims must make a STR check against half the polyp's POW on the Resistance Table or be fixed in place. If the Anemoe Thyellae is closer than 200 yards, the resistance roll is made against the polyp's full POW. This can be employed against multiple targets that are within 30 yards of one another, but each victim receives +5% per person attacked to resist the effect.

Windstorm Attacks: Anemoe Thyellae can create terrific windstorms, but it takes a number of the creatures to produce a storm of any significance. The creatures in this colony are a single pair, which drastically limits the power of such an attack, so they won't attempt it.

Flying Tentacles: These creatures continually shift in physical appearance, forming and dissolving tentacles each round. At the start of each round, the Keeper should roll 2D6 to determine the number of tentacles a Anemoe Thyellae has. Each tentacle does 1D10 points of damage. These attacks ignore the victim's armor protection since the damage is caused by windburn and dehydration.

Anemoe Thyellae [Flying Polyps] (2)

Char.	rolls	#1	#2
STR	4D6+36	50	44
CON	2D6+18	24	25
SIZ	4D6+36	50	48
INT	4D6	13	14
POW	3D6+6	16	17
DEX	2D6+6	13	11
Move	8/12		
HP		37	37
Dam. Bonus		+5D6	+5D6 (used only for Windblast)

Weapons: Tentacles 85% 1D10,

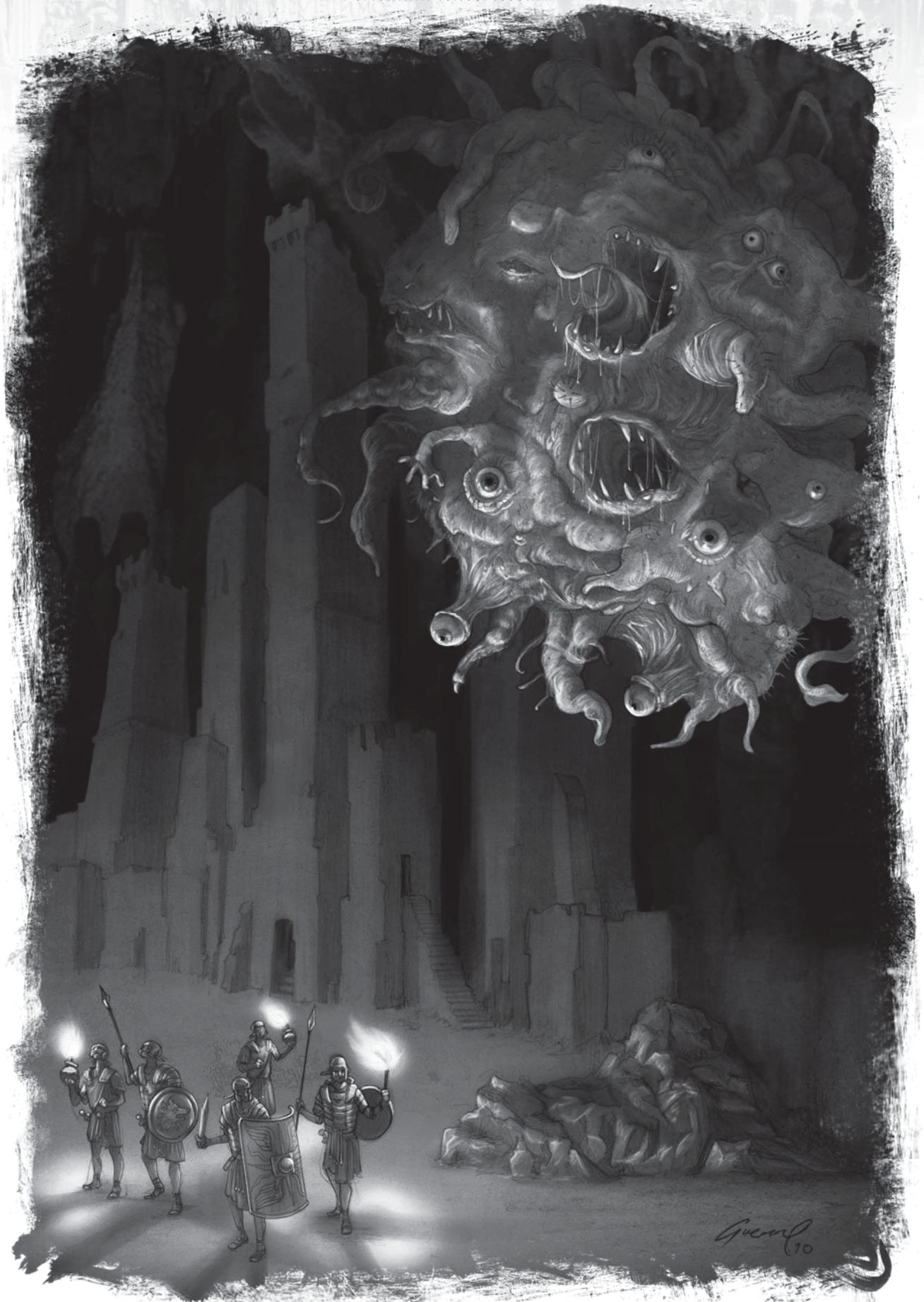
Windblast 70% db lowered by 1D6 per 20 yards distance.

Armor: 4 points, plus invisibility. The extra-terrene Anemoe Thyellae takes only minimum damage from physical weapons. Enchanted weapons do full normal damage, as do forces such as heat or electricity.

Spells: None.

Skills: Hide 30%, Track 35%.

Sanity Loss: 1D3/1D20 Sanity points to see an Anemos Thyella [flying polyp].



the towers nearly silent and empty, home to only a pair of flying polyps.

Soon after entering this area, the investigators hear a nauseating piping as the polyps move to attack. The creatures dart to and fro, using the towers and shadows for cover as they close in on the intruders. At least one flying polyp attacks before the investigators can make a careful search of the cavern. If one of the creatures is destroyed, the other flees. The retreating polyp rushes deeper into the caves, escaping through one of the many side passages high above the cavern floor.

After destroying or driving off the Anemoe Thyellae, the investigators can make a careful search of the area. The investigators cannot enter the towers since there are no doors. The Anemoe Thyellae can pass through the physical walls due to their partial non-material nature. Investigators making a successful Spot Hidden roll locate a pile of rubble blocking a tunnel which appears to be recently constructed in comparison to rest of the chamber.

VIII. The Vault: It will take a combined STR 40 to move the 4 large stones blocking the passage enough to enter this chamber. Keepers may allow bonuses if the investigators use digging tools, ropes, or a pulley system to move the boulders. Clearing the passage reveals an alcove containing the 4 broken components of the Athenian Death Ray.

Taras examines the pieces and says, "It's not as bad as I feared. Everything is here. It mostly just needs to be reassembled, but it's not seriously damaged. I expected worse. I'm sure it can be repaired once we free my father." He advises the investigators to take up the components and leave the caverns as quickly as possible.

Part Five - Thermopylae

After the investigators remove the pieces of the Athenian Death Ray from the cavern, Taras guides them to his father, Hesiod, who was once the Scion of Vulcan and is now a half-insane slave living in Thermopylae. He is not even a prized slave, having little value to anyone but his son. This includes the investigators because the man possesses none of his former knowledge. Unfortunately, the Great Race of Yith doesn't like loose ends, and although Hesiod is hardly a threat to them, Taras is. They have closely watched the father for some time, in hopes of locating his son and their former operative. As soon as Taras reunites with his father, several

The Athenian Death Ray's Components

This strange device is made of metals, alloys, glass, pottery, crystal, and other items the investigators cannot identify. When the investigators find it, the machine is in 4 large pieces. The device requires weeks of careful work to repair and reassemble. The individual components are oddly sized and unwieldy. One of them, a series of clear crystal rods, is delicate and must be handled with the utmost care. Taras explains that further damage to it might render it irreparable.

Component

1. Three-legged stand and pivot swivel mount
2. Metal box with dual handles and an aiming lens
3. Pottery cylinder reinforced with bands of copper
4. Series of long, tapering, crystal-tipped rods

Stats Required to Carry

- STR 9 / DEX 9
STR 14 / DEX 9
STR 12 / DEX 12
STR 9 / DEX 14

Yithian agents move to eliminate them once and for all.

Exiting the Caverns

The path out of the cave is perilous enough, but navigating it with the four pieces of the Scion's machine is a real challenge. The items are all heavy and cumbersome, but must be handled with care to avoid further damaging them. The investigators must haul them up slopes, lower them down drops, and possibly carry them across a field of guano. The final leg of this trip will have the investigators moving along a narrow ledge and scaling a sheer 20-foot rock wall before reaching the surface.

The investigators must come up with a strategy for how best to move the components of the death ray out of the caverns. They might use rope to construct handles for the pieces or fashion makeshift backpacks for them if an investigator is strong enough to carry one on his own. Investigators with at least 20% in Science (Engineering) can create a rope-and-pulley system to haul the components safely across the gap over the larder. Keepers should have investigators unable to come up with a suitable strategy make an Idea roll. Failing this, Taras can make helpful suggestions on the matter.

If both flying polyps have been destroyed, the investigators can transport the broken components out of the caverns at their leisure. However, if one of the creatures is still alive, the investigators should be on guard. Keepers have options for what happens next. If the creature attacks while the investigators are on the ledges, the rock wall, or hauling the components across the deep drop, the results could prove catastrophic. The creature might creep close enough to spy on the investigators without attacking, terrorizing them with glimpses of itself, gusts of wind, or its nauseating piping. Or the sole remaining Anemos Thyella might simply cower inside a stone tower and wait for the dreaded invaders to depart.

Transporting the Machine

After exiting the caverns with the components, the investigators must devise a strategy for transporting them cross country. Pack animals or a cart would be ideally suited for this.

Keepers may suggest this to the investigators with a successful Idea roll, if necessary. Failing this, Taras suggests the investigators might obtain a cart from Kandros for this purpose, although he himself is barred from entering the village.

The investigators notice a line of smoke now rises from the once-abandoned farm at the edge of the once abandoned pastures. Investigators approaching the area encounter a dozen joyous people returning to their home. They're willing to supply a cart, a young ox to pull it, and plenty of hay to cushion the Athenian Death Ray's components, if the investigators make a successful Persuade check. Taras does his best to stay far away from the farm and out of sight of the villagers. If the villagers notice Taras with the investigators, Keepers should apply a -15% penalty to the Persuade check. Their asking price is 3 days of moderate labor or 100 sestertii. This can be reduced to 2 days of labor or 60 sestertii if the investigators make a successful Bargain check. After obtaining the cart, the investigators should carefully pack the parts of the broken machine. Taras might assist or offer advice about how to do this since he hopes to limit further damage during transport. The scholar then reveals his father's location: Thermopylae.

The Road to Thermopylae

The ox-drawn cart moves slowly along the trails and roads linking the village of Kandros to Thermopylae. The most direct overland route leads through Thebes, Thesplae, Coronea, Chaeronea, and Elatea before reaching the city. Investigators choosing this route have a long, bumpy road ahead of them, with the trip taking roughly 9 days.

Alternately, the investigators can make for the Malian Gulf. This route leads from Kandros to Thebes before turning west through Tanagra and on to Oropos. This should take the investigators about 4 days. Once in Oropos, on the Malian Gulf, the investigators can hire a ship to transport them and their cargo to Thermopylae. This costs them 200 sestertii, or 150 sestertii if the investigators make a successful Bargain check. The voyage from Oropos to Thermopylae takes another 3 days. While this route is more expensive and nearly as long as the overland one, it is less taxing on the investigators and their cargo.

Either route leads the investigators to the city of Thermopylae, on the Bay of Malia. The city lies on a coastal floodplain of the Spercheios River, at the base of steep cliffs and the towering Mount Kallidromon. This was once the site of a famous battle between the Greeks and the Persians. Today it is a popular tourist attraction.

Purchasing Hesiod

Taras tells the investigators that his father is owned by a man named Kadmos. Investigators asking around, and making a successful Luck roll, are given directions to the home of Kadmos. The investigators also learn that Kadmos is a minor local businessman and not terribly well respected. The investigators easily locate the modest building, which also houses a pottery workshop. Taras stays outside, telling the

The Memorials at Thermopylae

Visitors to Thermopylae usually tour the site of the great battle of the Greco-Persian War of 480 BCE. Here the Spartan king Leonidas lead a coalition of 7,000 Greek soldiers in a holding action against the second Persian invasion of their homeland. This is also where Leonidas and 300 of his warriors are buried. A monument of a stone lion sits upon the hill where they met their final end. A short distance from this are the ruins of the wall where the Greeks initially made their stand against the overwhelming numbers of King Xerxes.

Lastly, three inscribed marble pillars stand near the east gate. The first inscription is a quote from the Seer Megistias: "You see here the great Megistias' tomb. Who slew the Medes, fresh from Sperchios' fords. The wise seer clearly foresaw his death. Yet would not forsake the Spartans' cause." The second pillar's inscription reads, "Four Thousand, who held back millions", to honor all the Greeks who fought here. The last pillar honors the men of King Leonidas alone and reads, "Go, Traveler, tell the Spartans that we died here, obeying our orders."

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investigators, "This is the home of the man who owns my father, Hesiod of Icaria. I'd rather not go in as I might lose my temper. I'll wait outside." Investigators who make a successful Insight roll realize this is a lie, but all Taras will say is, "I have my reasons. I'll explain after you've purchased my father from Kadmos and freed him."

Kadmos is a middle-aged man who owns many slaves and makes a living off their efforts. He is slovenly, cheap, and discourteous. Kadmos asks why the investigators have come. Once the investigators inquire about purchasing his slave Hesiod, Kadmos appears both surprised and confused. He asks the investigators, "I only own one slave by that name. He's an old man, from Icaria, right?" Ultimately, Kadmos is pleased to be rid of Hesiod, but still asks what he considers twice the man's value, 500 sestertii. If the investigators make a successful Bargain roll, Kadmos will accept 300 sestertii.

Kadmos has another slave fetch Hesiod's papers after the investigators pay him. He grins as he signs ownership of Hesiod over to the investigators, saying, "All sales are final, of course. You can find him at the battle site, at a booth near the stone lion monument. He's yours now. Tell him not to come back here or expect dinner from me."

Truth and Warning

After the investigators purchase Hesiod, Taras asks them to free him, as per their agreement. If they renege on this promise, Taras is furious. He will refuse to repair the machine, even

under pain of death, proclaiming, "I shall not work for such dishonest villains as you!" Investigators attempting to negotiate new terms must make a Fast Talk or Persuade check with a -50% penalty to convince Taras to accept them.

Once the paperwork is changed to free Hesiod, or new terms are worked out with Taras, the investigators can at last meet the man once known as the Scion of Vulcan. As Taras and the investigators travel toward Thermopylae's battle memorials, he warns them of a likely threat and reveals the last details about what happened after he and his father escaped from the Anemoe Thyellae. He relates the following information:

- The Scion of Vulcan was badly hurt in the battle against the Anemoe Thyellae.
- After Taras was enslaved, an agent of the spirit scholars tried to free him. The man was like Taras, a human assisting the Yithians in their research.
- The agent explained that Taras would be reassigned as a liaison to another spirit scholar researching the current period of history.
- When Taras asked if his father was also going to be freed, the agent said no. He explained that Hesiod was no longer suitable for serving the spirit scholars due to his injuries. Taras, however, was still very useful to their research, which is why the man was sent to free him and take him to his new assignment.
- Taras angrily refused, and the pair began arguing. Finally, the agent threatened Taras, saying if he ever tried to contact Hesiod again they would both be killed.
- The threat enraged Taras. The argument quickly became physical, ending in the accidental death of the agent sent to free Taras.
- Taras believes this threat is real and that other agents of the spirit scholars are watching his father.

Taras then asks the investigators for their help and offers to repay them in kind. He explains, "If they want us dead, now is when they'll strike. They could be anyone. I want to draw these attackers out and put a stop to this business once and for all. This will allow my father and I to elude the agents and vanish. I want to go to my father openly, as bait. Can the rest of you spread out and watch over us? If you help me end this now, I swear to repay this kindness in turn while making the repairs to the machine. The last time I helped operate it, I noticed certain design flaws. There are ways the machine could be altered to improve its accuracy. Help me with this now, and I swear to incorporate these improvements."

A Tearful Reunion

Hesiod is working at a booth near the stone lion monument, site of King Leonidas' fall. The booth sells small statues to tourists, cheap replicas of the stone lion monument, the three pillars, and fierce Spartan soldiers. Hesiod mans the booth with 3 other slaves, restocking the display table from a basket filled with the clay trinkets. He is thin and looks much older than he should, more like Taras' grandfather than father. Hesiod wears filthy clothes that have been patched too many times. Several of his teeth are missing, and his grey hair is unkempt. He moves about the booth, hopping pathetically

since his right leg is missing below the knee.

Taras has to call out to him several times before Hesiod turns to face him. The old man appears confused as Taras hugs him. Investigators close enough hear Taras say, "It's me, Father. It's Taras, your son. Don't you remember me? You're free now. See, here are your papers. We're going to have a home, Father, somewhere in the mountains, and some beehives. Just like before..."

Hesiod has a hard time understanding, saying, "Taras... little Taras? My son is a boy. You are a man. How can this be? Are you really Taras? A home? We're going home?" Taras then talks about his childhood, the name of their dog, their bees, their old home, details that prove he is Hesiod's son. It should be obvious that Hesiod is little more now than a confused, fragile cripple. As Hesiod finally understands what his son is saying, the men embrace again, shedding tears of joy. This is when the Yithian agents strike.

The Agents Make Their Move

As Taras suspected, Yithian agents are watching Hesiod. Both are young Roman men dressed in fine tunics and posing as wealthy tourists. Investigators watching the crowds for signs of trouble notice these men by making a successful Spot Hidden check. The investigators have two rounds to notice the attackers before they strike. As Taras talks with his father, the assassins move closer, reaching suspiciously into the folds of their cloaks.

Stopping 20 feet from Taras and Hesiod, the assassins pull out strange tubes which telescope with an audible click into short javelins (see **Captured Weapons**). The men hurl them at Taras and Hesiod on the following round. The javelins strike the table and one of the booth's other slaves. Both the booth and slave instantly blacken and crumble into dust. They have been completely disintegrated, and no longer exist. The Yithian agents then move to draw another pair of javelins for a second throw. The investigators must intervene to save Taras and Hesiod. If the investigators close in to melee range, the assassins draw thin, strange-looking, solid black gladii to defend themselves (see **Captured Weapons**).

Yithian Agents / Assassins (2)

STR 15 CON 15 SIZ 12 INT 12 POW 12
DEX 13 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 65% 1D3+db

Grapple 45%, damage special

Ceramic Gladius 65% 1D6+1+db*

Disintegration Javelin 70%, 2D8*

Armor: 2 points of Hardened Leather Armor, worn under clothing.

Skills: Conceal 45%, Dodge 40%, Hide 65%, Listen 55%, Sneak 70%, Spot Hidden 55%.

* see **Captured Weapons**

The assassins do not retreat or surrender, throwing themselves on their swords or stabbing themselves with a disintegration javelin if capture seems inevitable. If subdued by being grappled or knocked unconscious, both men begin vomiting, then die of respiratory failure within the hour.

The investigators can make a post-mortem examination of their corpses, and with a successful Medicine roll ascertain the assassins died from arsenic poisoning. Before moving to attack, the assassins placed slow-dissolving capsules containing arsenic between their checks and gums. If successful in their attack, the assassins simply spit the capsules out. Unless removed from their mouths within 10 minutes, the capsules dissolve, delivering a fatal dose of the toxin. Once the assassins are dispatched, the immediate danger is over. Taras and Hesiod are finally free, safe and reunited. The Yithians, after losing two more agents trying to deal with Taras, decide to cut their losses and take no further action against him or his father.

Captured Weapons

The assassins, agents of the Great Race of Yith, are well armed with weapons that exceed the current level of technology. Each carries 3 retractable javelins. These weapons shift from 1 foot in length to 4 feet by pressing a button located near the handle. The javelins can be used only once; they destroy both themselves and their target upon impact. Whatever the weapon strikes suffers 2D6 points of disintegration damage. The investigators may capture any remaining javelins not thrown by the agents. The assassins manage to throw 2 before the investigators can act, leaving them with at most 4 unused ones.

While less impressive, the blades employed by the assassins are also quite remarkable. The thin black gladii are made not of metal but of some sort of impossibly hard clay. The weapons are light, unbelievably sharp, and enable the wielder to ignore 4 points of a target's armor. However, these swords still count as normal weapons in regard to affecting creatures with special immunities.

Disintegration Javelin

Base%	Dmg	Hnds	HP	Lng	Impale	Parry	Knockout	Min STR/DEX	Cost
15	2D8	1	5	Med.	No	No	No	7/11	n/a

Ceramic Gladius

Base%	Dmg	Hnds	HP	Lng	Impale	Parry	Knockout	Min STR/DEX	Cost
15	1D6+1	1	50	Med.	Yes	Yes	Yes	5/5	n/a

An Agreement Fulfilled

All that remains for the investigators to fulfill the rest of their agreement with Taras is for them to purchase a parcel of land where the father and son can farm honey. This costs the investigators 5000 sestertii, or 4200 sestertii with a successful Bargain roll. Taras uses his personal savings to buy the rest of the items he and his father need to resume their lives as honey farmers. The investigators are invited to stay with them.

The Workshop

Taras turns one of the outer buildings of the farm into a workshop, complete with a working forge. He chooses a stone building, to limit the risk of fire. The building is also the furthest away from the main house, in case a dangerous accident occurs while the Athenian Death Ray is being re-

paired. Gathering the necessary tools and equipment takes several weeks since much of it needs to be imported from Athens and Delphi.

Hesiod's New and Old Life

After a much-needed trip to a barber and a bathhouse, Hesiod's appearance is greatly improved. Clean clothing coupled with a few weeks of rest, fresh air, and good food do even more to rejuvenate him. Taras' first project once the shop is operational is a jointed bronze prosthetic leg for his father. Once completed, Hesiod can walk with only the use of a cane.

Slowly the man's mind clears, and his memory returns. It's a difficult adjustment. Ten years of his life are simply gone. He's been an abused slave for three years and has lost all his family aside from Taras. He happily starts tending the farm and beehives, the work both familiar and comforting. The old man has no memory of engineering, strange languages, machines, or metalworking. The investigators soon realize Hesiod can be no help in repairing the Athenian Death Ray.

Hesiod might confide in the investigators that he sometimes has strange nightmares, but he refuses to give specific details. If the investigators make a Persuade check, he tells them he dreams about being in another body, a great cone-shaped thing with crab claws, a long neck like a giraffe, and trumpets for a mouth. While in this body, Hesiod lived with others like himself in a jungle, spending his days writing down everything he knows about his life and country. He dismisses these as just nightmares, but they are fragments of true memories. Hesiod's dreams are surprising recollections of the decade he spent living in the Devonian period, four hundred million years ago, in the body of a cone-shaped being a member of the Great Race of Yith inhabited at the time.

If Taras overhears the investigators questioning his father about these dreams, he quickly steps in to put a stop to it. He asks his father to do something elsewhere, and when alone with the investigators, confronts them. "The old man has been through enough," he explains. "Show him some kindness, and drop this. No good can come of it."

Repairing the Athenian Death Ray

After constructing his father's new prosthetic leg, Taras begins repairs to the Athenian Death Ray. The work is slow and exacting, taking Taras a month to complete. If the investigators assisted Taras in flushing out the Yithian agents sent to kill him, he spends an additional week making small structural improvements to the design. These changes center on improving the machine's swivel joint, making it easier to maneuver and aim. These alterations improve the accuracy of the Athenian Death Ray (see **The Athenian Death Ray**).

Training the Investigators

Once the machine is repaired Taras trains the investigators in its use. He instructs them on how to take apart, reassemble, and transport the weapon. He then shows them how to aim it, set its Units of Power (see **The Athenian Death Ray**), and how to cast a bolt of lightning with it. These instructions take

8 hours. The investigators must make an INT x4 to comprehend these instructions and be able to operate the weapon.

These instructions do not include actually casting a bolt of lightning. Taras explains that the Scion never entrusted him with the secrets of recharging the Units of Power within the weapon. He explains that the Death Ray currently holds 17 Units of Power. Once these units are expended, the weapon will be as useful as a catapult without any stones. He advises the investigators to use the Units sparingly.

Briefing Societas Cryptaegidis

If the investigators made an agreement with Makarios, commander of the Athenian chapter of Societas Cryptaegidis, he eagerly awaits their report. Makarios and his society enthusiastically welcome investigators who return to Athens to share what they've learned. Scribes take down their reports for inclusion in the society's archives.

Makarios asks the investigators for the current location of Taras and Hesiod. He explains that the society would like to question them personally and record their firsthand accounts of their experiences. Investigators trying to dissuade Makarios from this course of action must make a successful Fast Talk or Persuade roll. Taras has little desire to recount his time serving as liaison to a spirit scholar, and even less to have his father subjected to any sort of interrogation. He's afraid that the memories, which might surface from the questioning, could seriously harm Hesiod. Investigators attempting to convince Taras to meet with representatives of Societas Cryptaegidis must make a Persuade check with a -20% penalty. Hesiod, if asked by the investigators, explains that his son told him not to discuss their past with anyone, but if Taras says it's okay then he's willing to talk about it. He will not go against his son's wishes.

Makarios also tries to recruit the investigators into Societas Cryptaegidis, offering them positions in either his team in Athens or Elpidios' team in Delphi. If they refuse, he tells the investigators they could form their own traveling chapter of the society. They could go about their normal business, reporting on the things they learn in their travels to chapter commanders. As a traveling chapter, they might be asked to investigate something from time to time or lend assistance when necessary.

In Closing

The investigators have solved the mystery of the Scion of Vulcan. If they pledged to bring the remains of Alexios of Decelea to a temple of Apollo, they have ample time to do so. They should now possess a number of potent weapons

The Athenian Death Ray

This powerful weapon is a heavily modified version of the standard Yithian Lightning Gun. The device can be taken apart for easier transport and then reassembled, which takes about 10 minutes work. Once fully assembled, the machine is heavy and difficult to move, requiring a combined STR 20. If the weapon itself is attacked, it can take 30 HP of damage before becoming inoperable and requiring repairs. If the machine suffers 50 HP of damage, it is completely destroyed.

The weapon looks like a large box with a set of metal-lined crystal rods sticking out one side. On the other is a dial to select the number of Units of Power to be used, from 1 to 10. Next to this is an arrow pointing to a set of numbers, from 1 to 50, indicating how many Units of Power remain. On the side of the machine opposite the metal-lined crystal rods is a handle used to aim the weapon and a lever which when depressed causes it to cast a bolt of lightning from the crystal rods.

The box sits atop a tripod on a swiveling pivot hinge which must be cranked with gears to maneuver. This makes aiming a bit difficult, giving the weapon a base 30% chance to hit. Taras realized this and theorized a way to improve the design. If the investigators have secured his assistance in improving the design, the scholar spends a week removing the gear crank system and replacing it with one using a spring-loaded counterweight. This changes the weapons base chance to hit from 30% to the user's DEX x3. For example, an investigator with a DEX of 14 has a 42% chance to hit. This might actually be worse depending on the DEX score of the investigator using the weapon.

The arrow on the Athenian Death Ray currently points to the number 17. These are the number of Units of Power the machine currently holds. Unfortunately, Taras has no idea how the weapon's Units of Power might be increased, since the Scion of Vulcan kept such knowledge from him. The weapon can be set to discharge up to 10 charges per use, with each charge inflicting 1D10 points of damage on a successful hit.

to use against the Minotaur, The Tenders, and the Great Old One Eihort, God of the Labyrinth. The investigators can now prepare for the final phase of their journey, traveling to the island of Crete. The time has come to bring the legacy of Arrius Lurco to a close.

Sanity Awards

- Defeating the feral swine folk. +1D6 SAN
- Laying the ghost of Alexios of Decelea to rest . . . +1D6 SAN
- Defeating the flying polyps. +1D20 SAN
- Reuniting Taras and Hesiod +1D4 SAN



A SECOND THESEUS

I know that I am doomed. I may die trying to destroy this dark god, or be slain by its minions, or perhaps consumed by the creatures growing within me. For me, there is no salvation. My life ended the day I made my terrible choice in the center of the Labyrinth. I could have died then. Maybe I should have. This, all of this, was never about me. It is about what I can accomplish in my final days. I have a slim but real chance to ensure that what happened to me never happens to anyone else. Maybe I can leave this world a better place, for my sons, for the people I love, and for the rest of mankind.

– Quintus Arrius Lurco

The Fourth Book Begins

Keepers once again have several ways to begin this scenario. Their investigators can role play details of the time between Act Three and Act Four. The investigators can role play their stay with Taras and Hesiod, their briefings with Societas Cryptaegidis, transporting the Athenian Death Ray from the workshop to Athens, corresponding with their patron and possible adopted mother Lurca Hedeia, and gathering supplies for their journey from Athens to the isle of Crete in Cyrenaica. Keepers can also begin the scenario with the investigators purchasing a few final supplies with Caelia. However, a few important things happen between the two scenarios that Keepers should include in either role play or synopsis.

Messages from Lurca Hedeia

After returning to Athens from their adventures in the north, the investigators begin to receive regular letters. Their patron and possible adopted mother Lurca Hedeia sends missives to the investigators about twice a month. Thestor, a dependable Greek slave owned by Hedeia, carries these correspondences. He waits for the investigators to write replies before returning to Ostia, respectfully mentioning how much his mistress would enjoy hearing from them. Hedeia's letters carry general news, like the chariot racing scores, updates on her garum business, and family gossip about the House of Arrius. She is careful to avoid writing down anything directly mentioning the investigators' mission, referring to it as "that business venture in Cyrenaica".

Natta, the bestiarii owned by Hedeia, carries her last letter. He explains that Celer should arrive in 3 days with some money for their traveling expenses. Hedeia's letter states that both Natta and Celer have been told to obey the investigators. It also conveys her wish that both be freed as soon as the investigators' mission is complete. Lastly, the letter explains that Hedeia has hired a ship called the Fortuna to carry the investigators and their equipment to the port of Gortyn, on the island of Crete. Natta knows how to find the vessel since it carried him to Athens from Ostia.

However, Celer and the additional funding never arrive. The date of his arrival comes and goes, possibly delaying the investigators' departure. Captain Titus of the Fortuna, obviously wanting to get underway, might ask the investigators how long they plan to wait. The adventure begins after Celer is overdue, but before the investigators leave Athens.

The Gladiator

Natta, the bestiarii, joins the investigators at the start of this scenario. Keepers can allow him to be involved as much or as little as they like. Natta can come to the investigators' rescue, spot a critical clue, die in a dramatic fashion, go insane, or even survive to earn his freedom. His fate, as well as his particular personality, should be whatever individual Keepers feel best drives the story.

Natta, the Bestiarii

STR 16 CON 14 SIZ 15 INT 11 POW 14
DEX 13 APP 8 EDU 15 SAN 65 HP15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 70% 1D3+db

Hasta 75%, 1D10+db

Sica 65%, 1D6+db

Armor: 2 points of hardened leather cingulum (wide belt), manica (strips protecting the forearms and wrists), fascia (padded shin guards), and helmet.

Skills: Dodge 50%, Hide 75%, Listen 60%, Natural World 60%, Sneak 60%, Spot Hidden 60%, Status 35%.

Natta is a twenty-seven-year-old bestiarii, a beast-fighting gladiator. He is tall and muscular, with a shaved head and many scars. Natta knows how to use many weapons, but relies mostly on his skill with the long hunting spear. He was born in the city of Rome to a Germanic slave girl and an unknown father. Natta entered the Ludus Matutinus, a gladiator school for bestiarii, at the age of eight. He has been actively fighting in the arena for a decade now and has a fairly good reputation with the fans. Over the years, he has had four owners, the latest being Lurca Hedeia. Investigators who befriend him learn that Natta hopes to become a trainer with the Ludus Matutinus after earning his freedom. He also plans to save enough money to purchase a Syrian slave girl named Tabitha from the House of Arrius, claiming the two are in love.

Bugged!

Unbeknownst to Natta, he was permitted to escape an attack on Lurca Hedeia's villa in Ostia. Three brood of Eihort snuck into his luggage shortly before he set out for Athens. The psychic link these tiny creatures have with Eihort enables the Great Old One to know precisely where Natta travels. Eihort imparts this knowledge to its Emissaries, who follow after the gladiator as soon as they complete their attack on the villa. Keepers can choose whatever hiding place they want for these tiny spies, but at least one attempts to remain on Natta's person at all times, possibly under his belt buckle, at the bottom of his purse, or in the folds of his cloak. The creatures are tiny and do everything they can to remain hidden. Investigators specifically looking for such threats locate the brood on a successful Spot Hidden check with a -20% penalty. To totally remove this surveillance, the investigators must find and destroy all three brood.

Passage aboard the Fortuna

In her final letter, Lurca Hedeia informs the investigators that Arrius Casca ordered The Lady of Athens to Hispania on business. To replace this vessel, she has hired the investigators another ship to transport them from Athens to Crete. Called the Fortuna, it's currently docked in Athens and is at their disposal.

The merchant ship Fortuna is a sturdy, deep-hulled cargo vessel. The ship plies the Mediterranean between Italia, Graecia, Gaul, and Aegyptus, and currently hauls 150 tons of olive oil in amphorae. Arrangements have been made for the

investigators to use a small, cramped cabin below deck. The chamber contains a single table with two benches, a chest, and space to hang numerous hammocks for sleeping.

The Fortuna and her crew of 18 have a reputation for dependability. Her captain is an unmarried Roman citizen from Aegyptus named Titus. While young for his position at only 24, he is a skilled sailor and respected by his crew. Titus does not own the ship, but captains it for his uncle, who is now too old to do so himself. The Fortuna is her captain's pride and joy, the one thing he loves above all others.

Caelia's Insurance

At some point between the events of "Scion of Vulcan" and "A Second Theseu" Caelia meets privately with the investigator she most trusts, as judged by the Keeper. She offers to teach him a spell called Resurrection, and for once asks nothing in return. Caelia tells this investigator that it would be best for someone in addition to her to know this ritual. If questioned further, she says that she doesn't feel as if she's trusted by the investigators and hopes this helps her earn some trust, even if it is just with that single investigator. She states, "Trust is an odd thing. I taught you this spell and asked nothing in return. I hope one day you remember that."

Keeper's Information

The quest is coming to an end. The Great Old One Eihort feels the threat taking shape, nagging at its mind, demanding its attention. Eihort alerts its human worshippers in Crete that the investigators approach and warns the cultists of the fate they will suffer if they fail to protect their master. However, The Lord of the Labyrinth has little faith in its human slaves and calls on a trio of its most effective minions, its own children.

Three creatures in far off Britannia, where Eihort has had an active presence for millennia, receive a mission from the god. These once-human worshippers are called Emissaries of Eihort. While appearing no different from how they did in life, they are now nearly immortal servitors whose brains have been replaced with magically matured adolescent brood. These rat-sized individual brood, called Hatchlings of Eihort, absorb the memories and personalities of the human body they inhabit. These 3 Emissaries of Eihort have been on the investigators' trail for some time and are about to catch up to them.

While the investigators searched for the Athenian Death Ray, the Emissaries of Eihort visited Italia, specifically Rome and Ostia. Intelligent and well-funded, they followed the trail and the psychic urgings of their parent, Eihort. If the investigators defiled the shrine to Eihort beneath Rome, the Emissaries discover that grave insult to their progenitor. Eventually, the Emissaries located the source of the investigators' funding, their patron and possible adopted mother, Lurca Hedeia. They attacked her home, augmented by a band of hired thugs. All of her servants and bodyguards were killed, and Hedeia herself was taken prisoner. Keepers have the option of having the Emissaries also kidnap any other

NPCs important to the investigators. All of these prisoners are transported via summoned byakhee and handed over to The Tenders cult in Gortyn, Crete. The Emissaries arrive in Athens just after Natta does, hot on the investigators' trail.

However, Eihort's human worshippers in Crete, The Tenders Cult, are desperate to please their master. They have a plan of their own to stop the investigators. Sacrificing several of their own members, The Tenders cast a spell to summon a powerful storm while the investigators are at sea. Unless a counter-spell is cast to calm the wind and waves, the investigators' ship sinks. Caelia knows the counter-spell and is prepared to cast it, with the investigators' assistance.

If the investigators make it to shore alive, The Tenders are ready to intercept them when they arrive in the city of Gortyn. The cultists know when the investigators are due, where they travel from, and how best to capture them, thanks to none other than Caelia herself (see **Caelia's Stratagem**).

Part One - The Emissaries

The scenario begins in the Agora, Athen's open-air market. Both Natta and Caelia need to pick up a few last-minute items before they leave for Cyrenaica, and the investigators might need to do the same. Caelia also explains that she wants to make a sacrifice at the Erechtheion and invites the investigators to accompany her. Caelia is shopping for a suitable sacrifice to Invidia, as well as one to counter the Summon Typhoon spell, which she suspects she might need to cast during the voyage to Crete. However, the Emissaries of Eihort are closing in on the investigators and soon make their move. Several things might happen, depending on the actions of the investigators and the preferences of the Keeper.

Caelia Finds a Sacrifice (or Two)

While shopping, Caelia locates a perfect sacrifice, a young bull in its prime. She pays a great deal for the beast with her own money, and then adorns it with a flower garland. The investigators can also purchase a sacrificial animal here since a wide variety is offered at the Agora. Caelia visits the slave market, too, and purchases a boy with dark, curly hair whom no one else seems interested in. He is 8 years old, rude, and ungrateful. Before leaving the Agora, Caelia cleans him up, dresses him in fine clothing, and makes him her personal attendant. She calls him Krios, which means "ram" in Greek, and the investigators realize this if they possess a Language (Greek) score of 20% or higher. If the investigators ask why she names her slave this, Caelia explains, "Because the boy is hardheaded." Caelia admits the boy is a dreadful slave, yet does nothing to correct his behavior. She actively spoils him, even protecting the insolent boy from the investigators if they try to punish him.

Caelia leads the bull to the Acropolis and is met by Makarios. The priest of Apollo offers to make the sacrifices

for Caelia and the investigators if they want to make an offering to the gods. When Caelia's bull is presented, she asks Makarios to sacrifice the animal as an offering to Nemesis, the winged goddess of divine retribution. At this, Natta beams, explaining that in Rome she is known as Invidia and is the patron goddess of beast-fighting gladiators. Makarios consider this strange and comments, "Invidia? Not Athena?" However, he complies and performs any and all sacrifices personally, a high honor due to his standing within the temple. Keepers may allow investigators making a sacrifice to recover 1D2 Sanity points and gain a +5% bonus to their next 1D3 Luck rolls. During this visit, the Keeper should have the investigators catch Krios doing something incredibly offensive, such as stealing an offering or urinating on the statue of a god or goddess.

The Trio from Britannia

These creatures, while technically siblings, are not happy to be working together or comfortable traveling outside of Britannia. They want to accomplish their mission as quickly as possible so they can return to their regular routine. The Great Old One Eihort has marked their quarry as a threat and, as such, the investigators are high priority targets. As dutiful children seeking to please a beloved yet demanding parent, the Emissaries hunt the investigators with vigor.

Each Emissary is powerfully built, pale and attractive with long, blond hair. The two men and a woman are obviously native Britons, yet each has a slightly different mode of dress, appearance, and adornment. Those making a successful Empire roll with a -20% penalty, or who are familiar with Britannia, realize that the Emissaries are from three different

Emissary Of Eihort, Greater Servitor Race

Humans selected by Eihort to be Emissaries are normally the most faithful of the Great Old One's worshippers. They may have some other exceptional quality, such as political connections, great wealth or arcane abilities. The Great Old One rewards such people with a special honor when making its standard bargain to human victims. Instead of receiving thousands of immature brood into their bodies, these favored worshippers receive a single adolescent brood, called a Hatchling, into their skulls (see Hatchlings of Eihort).

This creates an Emissary of Eihort, an elite servant designed to serve the Great Old One. The Hatchling absorbs the contents of the person's mind, inheriting the skills, memories, and personality traits of the human worshipper whose body it now inhabits. His identity and consciousness no longer present, the person is effectively dead. What remains is a physically living body controlled by the Hatchling. The Emissary is not a copy of the person, but a composite of the Hatchling and the host's consciousness.

Anyone who knew the person before he became an Emissary of Eihort notices changes in his personality. His manner becomes cold and aloof, secretive and sinister, as he's lost all but an echo of his humanity. But much of his identity remains. The desires, preferences, and habits of the person become fundamental parts of the Emissary's personality. Emissaries share a psychic link with Eihort, conveying information to and receiving instruction from the Great Old One.

The Hatchling enhances the physical body it inhabits to improve its overall chances for survival. The human body of an Emissary of Eihort gains +1 to APP and +3 points to STR, DEX, and CON. Emissaries regenerate 1 HP of damage per hour, as long as it remains alive. The aging process is slowed to 20% the normal rate, giving Emissaries on average a 140-year lifespan, but these creatures are neither immortal nor invulnerable. The physical bodies die if they succumb to illness, are reduced to -3 HP, or reach the limit of their extended lifespans. When this happens, the Hatchling emerges from the host's skull (see Hatchlings of Eihort).

Emissary of Eihort, Children of the God of the Labyrinth

Char.	rolls	averages
STR	3D6+3	13-16
CON	3D6+3	13-16
SIZ	2D6+6	13
INT	2D6+6	13
POW	4D6+3	13-15
DEX	3D6+3	13-16
APP	4D6+1	13-14

Move 8

HP 15

Av. DB +1D4

Weapons: Fist 50%, any as determined by the Keeper.

Armor: Any as determined by the Keeper.

Spells: Contact Eihort and Emissaries of Eihort with POW greater than 14 may have 1D3+1 spells, as determined by the Keeper.

Skills: Any as determined by the Keeper.

Sanity Loss: None, but 0/1D3 points to witness a Hatchling of Eihort emerge from an Emissary of Eihort.

tribes, the Icenii, the Brigantes and the Silures, all native to a region that will one day become known as the Severn Valley. The Emissaries act subtly hostile toward one another, glaring at each other even as they work closely together. Emissaries of Eihort retain the memories of the humans whose minds they replace; since their hosts had inter-tribal rivalries and animosities, these three Emissaries do as well.



Aries protegendus

About the Emissaries of Eihort

The trio hunting the investigators are dangerous and unique adversaries. Eihort chose these humans to become Emissaries because each had established roots in different segments of society. This gives the Great Old One eyes and ears in varied places throughout Britannia. Each Emissary has skills and abilities which complement the others, giving them great versatility and resources. However, this also means that before becoming Emissaries, the cultists chosen would never have gotten along with each another. Much as rival siblings

did not choose to be related, these three Emissaries simply tolerate their fellows while begrudgingly working together to complete their mission.

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Jodoc of the Icenii

A lifelong opponent of Roman domination of Britannia, this Emissary gives Eihort an operative within the camps of those advocating resistance. While not openly a rebel or even accused of any crime, Jodoc funds such groups, helps organize their tactics, and has taken part in many armed raids against Roman forces without ever being caught. The authorities suspect much but can prove nothing, so Jodoc remains free to play this dangerous game. While his first loyalty is to the Great Old One Eihort and promoting its worship, his desire for a free Britannia remains strong. Jodoc is a large, muscular man, both a skilled fighter and a cunning spy. Investigators native to Britannia who make a successful Know roll at a -25% will recognize Jodoc's name as belonging to an Icenii noble long suspected by Rome of being a leader of insurrection.

Jodoc of the Icenii, Emissary of Eihort

STR 17	CON 16	SIZ 15	INT 13	POW 14
DEX 14	APP 13	EDU 15	SAN 0	HP16

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist 70%, 1D3+db

Grapple 45%, damage special

Knife 50%, 1D4+db

Long Sword 75%, 1D8+db

Armor: 2 points of Soft Leather.

Spells: Contact Eihort.

A Boy Called Ram

Keepers should portray Krios as a miserable, insolent brat. He lies, steals, talks back, breaks things, spits in people's food or drink when they aren't looking, and seldom passes up a chance to be troublesome or disrespectful. When Caelia defends him, he peeks out from behind her skirts to stick out his tongue and make rude gestures at the investigators. He's a newly enslaved Parthian, claims to be descended from nobility, and announces that "one day my family will find me, and then everyone will be sorry!" Keepers are encouraged to make Krios as abrasive as possible. Caelia adores, spoils, and protects him, calling him perfect. Her reasons for this become clear during the investigators' ocean voyage to Crete (see Part Two — The Voyage).

Skills: Conceal 50%, Dodge 40%, Fast Talk 55%, Hide 70%, Insight 50%, Listen 45%, Other Language (Latin) 35%, Sneak 75%, Spot Hidden 55%, Status 35%, Tactics 30%, Throw 60%.

Morcant of the Brigantes

The son of a Brigantes nobleman and a Roman soldier's daughter, Morcant is a retired twenty-five-year military officer. He is former commander of the XXI Arcus auxiliary cohort, scouts attached to Legio II Augusta. Proud of his mixed heritage and Roman citizenship, Morcant considers his path of loyal service and integration into Roman society to be what's best for all Britons. Well respected for a distinguished military career, he continues his service to Rome as an Aedile overseeing public works projects. His unique position continues to prove quite valuable to Eihort, and Morcant's efforts were instrumental in spreading the worship of the Great Old One beyond the province's borders. He's a skilled diplomat and administrator, as well as an outstanding military officer. Investigators native to Britannia who make a successful Know roll at a -15% will recognize Morcant's name as the retired commander of the XXI Arcus auxiliary, famous for their deadly archery skills.

Morcant of the Brigantes, Emissary of Eihort

STR 15 CON 19 SIZ 14 INT 15 POW 14
DEX 13 APP 14 EDU 16 SAN 0 HP 17

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 60%, 1D3+db

Bow 75%, 1D8

Knife 60%, 1D4+db

Long Sword 70%, 1D8+db

Armor: 2 points of Soft Leather concealed under clothing, or 7/4 points of Chainmail and a small shield (40%, 20 HP) if expecting trouble.

Spells: Contact Eihort.

Skills: Bargain 50%, Civics 80%, Climb 50%, Empire 60%, Insight 50%, Persuade 65%, Other Language (Celtic) 60%, Sneak 75%, Spot Hidden 80%, Status 60%, Tactics 45%, Write Language (Latin) 55%.

Tallulah of the Silures

The eldest of the three Emissaries, Tallulah remembers well the days of Boudicca's glorious revolt. What little humanity remained in the former druid was destroyed as she watched Britannia's best chance for freedom die. Why couldn't the Britons unite against Rome? The problem, she decided, was that people — all people — were weak, and the sooner endtimes came the better. From that day on, she took up a new occupation. Through various representatives, Tallulah secretly controls about 20% of Britannia's incredibly lucrative slave trade. She's a formidable spell caster, charming, beautiful and ruthless. Tallulah looks forward to when her human body finally fails and she can be free of it to join her fellow brood deep within the Earth.

Tallulah of the Silures, Emissary of Eihort

STR 13 CON 14 SIZ 12 INT 16 POW 17
DEX 15 APP 15 EDU 20 SAN 0 HP13

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist 60%, 1D3+db

Sling 85%, 1D4

Net, 85%

Small Knife 80%, 1D4+db

Armor: None.

Spells: Alter Weather, Blight/Bless Crop, Cause/Cure Blindness, Cloud Memory, Contact Eihort, Dominate, Evil Eye, Summon/Bind Byakhee, Wrack.

Skills: Bargain 80%, Civics 60%, Dodge 75%, Empire 60%, Fast Talk 75%, Hide 60%, Insight 65%, Occult 55%, Other Language (Latin) 65%, Persuade 70%, Sneak 60%, Status 35%.

The Emissaries' Plan

These minions of Eihort arrive in Athens shortly after the gladiator Natta does. They quickly locate the investigators through the spies placed on Natta (see **Bugged!**). If all three of the brood have already been discovered and destroyed, the Emissaries still manage to locate the investigators, although it takes them a bit longer to do so. Natta is a popular performer, and by now they have the investigators' names and descriptions. The Emissaries can question the locals, one of whom will surely have spotted the people in question and give directions for a handful of coins. From the letters discovered at Lurca Hedeas's home, the Emissaries might also have other clues to the investigators' whereabouts.

After locating their targets, the Emissaries observe them for a time and formulate two ways to move against them. Keepers can use either of the following tactics, or create one of their own, depending on the style of play and flow of the story.

Plan One, The Direct Approach

The Emissaries hire a group of robust men to assault the investigators. These men can be dockworkers, athletes like boxers and wrestlers, or elements of a local street gang. The creatures will not participate in this attack, which remains bloodless unless the investigators escalate the violence to bladed weapons. The aim of the attack is to beat the investigators unconscious before turning them over to the three Britons who hired the men. Any investigators captured are handed over to the Emissaries of Eihort (see **Captured**). If the investigators escape, the Emissaries slip away and attempt Plan Two. If the local authorities arrive to sort out the melee, the Emissaries slide smoothly into their back-up plan (see **Plan Two, The Indirect Approach**).

Local Brawlers, hired by the Emissaries of Eihort

STR 14 CON 15 SIZ 12 INT 8 POW 10
DEX 10 APP 9 EDU 10 SAN 50 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 65%, 1D3+db

Grapple 55%, damage special

Club 65%, 1D6+db

Armor: None.

Skills: Dodge 40%, Hide 35%, Sneak 25%.

Plan Two, The Indirect Approach

The Emissaries of Eihort go to the local authorities equipped with skillfully forged paperwork supplemented by generous bribes. The forgeries are of arrest warrants for the investigators, accusing them of numerous murders. The papers also charge the investigators with the kidnapping and possible murder of the freedwoman Lurca Hedeia. This is a crime of which the Emissaries themselves are guilty. The warrants state that the suspects are to be taken alive.

A party of local vigiles, augmented by a few soldiers, approaches the investigators intent on taking them into custody. The investigators must either surrender or escape. They cannot talk their way out of this since the vigiles have very specific orders from the arrest warrants. Investigators attempting to escape must resort to violence or flee and evade capture. Those defying the authorities or resisting arrest become wanted fugitives. Investigators who surrender themselves are handed over to the Emissaries of Eihort, whose forged paperwork identifies them as legal officers appointed by Trebius Germanus, the governor of Britannia.

Vigilis (1D3+2)

STR 14 CON 15 SIZ 14 INT 12 POW 12
DEX 14 APP 11 EDU 14 SAN 60 HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist 65%, 1D3+db

Grapple 55%, damage special

Club 65%, 1D6+db

Armor: 2 points of Soft Leather.

Skills: Civics 45%, Dodge 40%, Insight 40%, Spot Hidden 40%, Track 30%.

Soldier (1D2)

STR 14 CON 15 SIZ 14 INT 11 POW 13
DEX 12 APP 12 EDU 13 SAN 65 HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist 65%, 1D3+db,

Hasta 45%, 1D6+db

Spatha 45%, 1D8+db

Armor: 7/4 points of Chainmail and Helmet.

Skills: Empire 40%, Spot Hidden 45%, Tactics 30%.

Assistance from Societas Cryptaegidis

If the investigators have established good relations with Societas Cryptaegidis, Makarios tries to help them as much as possible. The investigators receive two bits of assistance: a warning about their pursuers and a contact in Crete.

A Warning

Societas Cryptaegidis offers the investigators assistance against the Emissaries of Eihort. Makarios and his chapter learn that a delegation from Britannia, with arrest warrants, is seeking out the investigators. While Societas Cryptaegidis cannot reach the investigators fast enough to warn them about the Emissary's first attempt (see **Plan One, The Direct Approach**), they do warn them about the Emissary's second plan (see **Plan Two, The Indirect Approach**). Makarios

tells the investigators, "Two men and a woman, wealthy, well-connected Britons by the looks of them, have come to Athens with papers authorizing your arrest. You are all being accused of multiple murders and a kidnapping in connection with the disappearance of a freedwoman named Lurca Hedeia. We'll do what we can to sort this out and clear you. But, for now, you should all leave Athens as quickly as possible."

A Contact

If the investigators have told Makarios that they're heading to Crete, the commander gives them the name of the Societas Cryptaegidis commander in Gortyn. Makarios says, "Socius Cotta is a good man, the leader of the fishmongers' collegium. He's in charge of our group's chapter on Crete and has been with the organization for five years now. You may need someone you can trust in Gortyn. Look him up and tell him The Owl sends friends. He'll know what it means."

Fleeing

Investigators attempting to escape either of the Emissary's traps without resorting to violence must flee. How successful they are is dependent on several factors. The investigators must make both a successful POW x 2 and a DEX x 2 check to evade capture. If 3 or more investigators run in different directions at the same time, the POW and DEX checks are made at x 3. For each investigator or NPC fleeing together, these checks are made at a -5% penalty. Investigators failing any of these checks find themselves cornered by 1D4+2 vigiles and 1D3+1 soldiers who demand their surrender. Investigators who refuse are attacked. The vigiles and soldiers attempt to beat the investigators unconscious.

If all the investigators make their POW and DEX checks, the Emissaries still come away with some prisoners. The investigator with the lowest Luck score is eventually run down and cornered. Keepers should inform this investigator that he drew the bulk of the pursuers and because of his efforts the other members of the party escaped. Captured investigators will soon discover that Natta, Caelia, and Krios failed to escape, as well (see **Captured**).

Fugitives

If the investigators resisted being taken into custody by the vigiles of Athens, and especially if this resulted in violence, they are considered fugitives. In short order, patrols of vigiles, augmented with groups of soldiers, begin tracking them down. Places where the investigators were known to frequent are put under surveillance. Local informants receive descriptions of the investigators and are offered generous rewards for information leading to their arrest.

The investigators would be well advised to don disguises, get off the streets, and find a good place to hide. They may also have a difficult time finding one another if they were forced to flee in different directions. Within 2 hours of escaping the authorities, vigiles all over Athens will be on the lookout for the investigators (see **Plan Two, The Indirect Approach**). The investigators must make successful Luck checks

to avoid being spotted in public, with Keepers applying any modifiers they see fit.

If found, the investigators are confronted by an augmented group of city guards intent on capturing them and willing to use more force this time. If captured, the investigators are turned over to the trio of Britons, who have provided the vigiles with forged papers for their arrest (see **Captured**).

Augmented Vigiles Patrol (1D6+1)

STR 14 CON 15 SIZ 14 INT 12 POW 12
DEX 14 APP 11 EDU 14 SAN 60 HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist 65%, 1D3+db

Grapple 55%, damage special

Club 65%, 1D6+db

Armor: 3 points of Hardened Leather, Small Shield 30%.

Skills: Civics 45%, Dodge 40%, Insight 40%, Spot Hidden 40%, Track 30%.

Augmented Soldier (1D4+1)

STR 14 CON 15 SIZ 14 INT 11 POW 13
DEX 12 APP 12 EDU 13 SAN 65 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist 65%, 1D3+db

Hasta 45%, 1D6+db

Spatha 45%, 1D8+db

Armor: 7/4 points of Chainmail and Helmet, Medium Shield 35%.

Skills: Empire 40%, Spot Hidden 45%, Tactics 50%.

Harboring Fugitives

Only one group will help the investigators at this point, Societas Cryptaegidis. To secure this help, the investigators must somehow make contact with either Makarios or Kepheus, both of whom are well-known figures in Athens. The authorities could be watching them both, however, suspecting that the investigators might try to contact them. Keepers should have the investigators make Spot Hidden

and Sneakrolls to both locate and remain unnoticed by any vigiles on surveillance duty.

The society hides the investigators in an empty apartment just off the Agora, which Makarios' team specifically uses to hide people safely. He sends operatives to fetch any equipment the investigators have gathered, including the Athenian Death Ray. If the investigators ask, Makarios can pass a message to Captain Titus aboard the Fortuna, using his influence to make certain the captain honors his contract to transport the investigators from Athens to Crete. By now the young captain realizes the investigators are wanted and that his ship is being watched by the local vigiles. Captain Titus has a good reputation and doesn't want to be involved in anything which might damage that. If sent to deal with the reluctant captain, Makarios explains the situation to the investigators, advising them to board the Fortuna and leave Athens before the man loses his nerve.

Captured

Any investigators captured by the Emissaries of Eihort are searched, disarmed, and bound. They are then taken to a rented warehouse in Piraeus, Athens' port suburb. The warehouse is run down and remote, chosen so no one will hear the sounds of torture or notice the arrival of the summoned byakhee. Once in the warehouse, the investigators are chained to a wall and tortured until nightfall.

The Emissaries fill a brazier with burning coals to heat a branding iron until it is white hot. The iron's brand depicts an elaborate Celtic knot of a labyrinth. The Emissaries press it into each investigator's bare chest, one by one. Investigators so branded suffer 1 HP of damage and must make a Sanity check for 0/1 and a CON check to resist crying out or losing consciousness. The air fills with the stench of scorched flesh. The investigators will bear this mark for the rest of their days. The Emissaries take turns with the branding iron. To pass the time while heating the iron, they recline on chairs, drinking,

Vigiles

Fire has always been a danger in large urban areas, costing countless lives and untold loss of property. Emperor Augustus took this threat so seriously that he created the Corps of Vigiles, regiments of men whose primary duty was fighting fires. As a *vigilis*, you are stationed in richly appointed barracks complete with shrines, baths, and mosaics. You are armed with ropes, picks, saws, axes, and buckets, as well as large, syringe-like devices called squirts that project a blast of water. When not fighting fires, you have a secondary role as a policeman. You have the authority to issue punishments, like a beating with a rod or cat-of-nine-tails, for minor offenses. This makes you unpopular with most common citizens, who call those of your professions *sparteoli*, or "tarred bucket men". They can call you whatever they like, but who else are they going to come running to for help when a fire breaks out or their slave runs off?

Skills: Civics, Climb, First Aid, Insight, Natural World, Spot Hidden, Axe or Pick, Club or Whip
Special: +1 to STR and +1 to DEX, +15 points to Climb.
Money: 1D3 x 100 sestertii **Yearly Income:** 600 sestertii

Note: Housing in the form of a Corps of Vigiles barracks is provided by the state.

refilling their mugs from a small barrel of beer. The trio cannot help but prattle on to the investigators during the torture.

Monologuing

The Emissaries gloat while performing the brandings. They boast, confident that their mission is about to end in success. As Jodoc and Morcant hint at details, Tallulah scolds them like children, saying “Hold your tongues, brothers! Sheep don’t need to know the butcher’s plans.” The two men scowl at her, but obey and fall silent. The investigators can attempt to get the Emissaries talking again by making a successful Fast Talk or Persuade roll.

If the investigators are successful, all three emissaries begin speaking, laying out their actions up until now along with their further plans. They succumb to a classic impulse of villains who suddenly have their adversaries at their mercy — “monologuing”. The trio conveys the following information:

- They are the children of the Great Old One Eihort, his most elite servants, his Emissaries.
- They were sent from Britannia and are not happy to be away from their homeland.
- They refer to the investigators disdainfully as “humans”, implying that they aren’t.
- They tracked the investigators to Rome, then down to Ostia, and on to Athens.
- The gladiator Natta unknowingly carried a number of brood with him.
- The Emissaries captured Lurca Hedeia and any other NPCs close to the investigators, the latter as chosen by the Keeper.
- Did the investigators actually think they could kill Eihort’s servants, defile his shrine, and murder his children without suffering the consequences?
- The investigators will be joining Lurca Hedeia (and any other captive NPCs) tomorrow, at the feet of the Great Old One Eihort.
- When night falls, winged steeds will arrive to carry the investigators to “Eihort’s secondary lair”, where they will be handed over for judgment.

Rescue

Captured investigators can be rescued in several ways. If all the investigators were captured, the Keeper can have any number of NPCs break into the warehouse to free them. Caelia could escape sometime between being arrested and being handed over to the Emissaries. Keepers could have Societas Cryptaegidis mount a rescue led by Makarios and Kepheus. If the rescue party is comprised completely of NPCs, they make their move just after dark (see **The Battle of Piraeus**).

If some of the investigators are still at large, they can mount the rescue. They need to follow the Emissaries to their warehouse or discover its location in some other manner, such as contacting Makarios or questioning a friendly local. Investigators making both a successful Luck and a successful Persuade check when questioning someone about where the three rich Britons are staying can learn the warehouse’s location. Keepers can augment the investigators’ rescue team with any allied NPCs still at large.

Escape

The Emissaries closely watch the captured investigators until nightfall. At that time, they travel up to the roof of the warehouse, where Tallulah summons the group’s mounts. The Emissaries use summoned and bound byakhee when traveling long distances. They currently have 3 of the star-steeds under their control, but might need to summon additional byakhee to transport their prisoners to the Labyrinth of Messara. Once the necessary byakhee are waiting on the roof, Tallulah sends Jodoc and Morcant back into the warehouse to fetch the investigators. This lapse in direct observation by their captors lasts 15 minutes, a window of opportunity for the investigators to free themselves and escape. Investigators attempting to escape while the Emissaries are in the room are quickly and savagely beaten unconscious.

The investigators are shackled to the wall. Anyone attempting to break the chains or pull them free from the wall must beat a STR vs. STR 30 on the Resistance Table. Alternately, the investigators can attempt to pull their arms free of the shackles. By spitting upward onto their wrists, they can pull them out, albeit with much difficulty and a great deal of pain. To do this requires a successful DEX and CON x 1 check for each hand, with investigators suffering 1 point of damage in the process if successful. Keepers should impose a –10% from having fractured wrists to any appropriate skills or checks. This penalty is removed once the fractured bones knit since the damage is healed either normally or magically. Keepers can have Caelia, if captured, demonstrate this escape tactic if the investigators don’t think of it themselves.

The Battle of Piraeus

Once any captured investigators and NPCs are freed from their chains (see **Escape**), they can recover whatever items they had when captured. Their personal property is in a chest in the corner of the room where they’re being held. However, whether a rescue attempt is launched or the investigators free themselves on their own, the Emissaries of Eihort won’t let their quarry escape without a fight. The Emissaries return quickly, or spot anyone fleeing the warehouse from the roof, and the Battle of Piraeus begins.

Depending on the number of assisting NPCs and the number of investigators, Keepers should vary the number of summoned byakhee. The battle should be challenging, not hopeless or anti-climactic. Keepers should run the combat with the Emissaries commanding between 3 and 5 byakhee, complete with the investigators forced to make the appropriate Sanity check for viewing the creatures. The Emissaries use the byakhee as mounts if necessary.

Jodoc and Morcant are both skilled fighters. They charge into combat confident in their abilities. Tallulah assists them with her sling and her spells, avoiding direct melee if possible. If reduced to fewer than 4 hit points, individual Emissaries withdraw from combat. If an Emissary is reduced to 0 hit points, any surviving byakhee try to spirit him off into the night, where they safely regenerate. If the investigators kill any of the Emissaries, something horrific occurs (see **The**

Hatchlings). The battle ends when the investigators defeat the Emissaries and at least 2 of the byakhee and reach the Fortuna.

Byakhee (3-5)

STR 17 CON 10 SIZ 17 INT 11 POW 10
DEX 13 HP 14

Move: 5 / 20 flying

Damage Bonus: +1D6

Weapons: Claw 35%, 1D6+db
Bite 35% 1D6 + 1D6 STR drain.

Armor: 2 points of fur and tough hide.

Sanity Loss: 1/1D6 Sanity points to see a byakhee.

The Hatchlings

If the physical body of an Emissary of Eihort is killed, that is not the end of it. On the following round, a rat-sized brood of Eihort cracks open the corpse's skull from within. Investigators seeing this must make a Sanity check for 0/1D3. The Hatchling scuttles out of its former body and takes stock of the situation. Investigators clearly seeing any of the adolescent brood must make an additional Sanity check for 1/1D4. Keepers can have these Hatchlings attack or flee, depending on what the creatures feel to be their best tactical option. If they flee, the creatures rush toward the darkest place within reach, preferably one leading underground.

The Open Seas

However the situation with the Emissaries of Eihort resolves itself, the investigators must eventually leave Athens. To continue their mission, they must board the ship hired to take them to Crete, which by now is provisioned and has the Athenian Death Ray safely stowed aboard. If the investigators have already defeated the Emissaries, they can board the Fortuna and sail off unmolested. Otherwise, this is where the Battle of Piraeus takes place (see **The Battle of Piraeus**). If

the battle is inconclusive and any of the Emissaries remain at large, Keepers can resolve the conflict as the investigators attempt to board the Fortuna. The Emissaries will not allow the investigators to leave Athens and will attempt to stop them at all costs. Keepers should make certain that the investigators leave Athens knowing two things:

1. The Great Old One Eihort is now actively working against them.
2. Their patron, Lurca Hedeia, and possibly other NPCs are now prisoners of the cult of Eihort.

Hatchling Of Eihort, Greater Servitor Race

When the Great Old One Eihort makes its bargain with humans to have its brood implanted into their bodies or die, on rare occasions something different happens. If the prospective victim is a faithful and influential worshipper, sometimes Eihort considers them more useful as an agent than as an incubator for its young. The Great Old One implants these people not with thousands of its brood, but with a single adolescent one called a Hatchling.

A Hatchling is a magically matured brood, developed to about the size of a rat. Such creatures are usually unable to grow, trapped in their most immature form until the stars come right. The Great Old One has the power to violate this restriction, but it's taxing. Eihort can only create a Hatchling once every decade and can only have a half dozen of them active at any time.

Hatchlings are implanted not into the host's abdomen, but directly into his skull. There the creature absorbs the contents of its host's mind, replacing the human's brain and taking full command of the body. The pairing of a Hatchling of Eihort and a human worshipper of Eihort creates an entity called an Emissary of Eihort (see Emissary of Eihort).

When the human body of an Emissary expires, the Hatchling within it remains alive unless the Emissary suffered massive trauma to the head. The Hatchling has several sharp, fang-like spikes that it uses to extricate itself from its host body by cracking open the skull and scuttling out of the corpse. Anyone viewing this grisly emergence must make a Sanity check for 0/1D3 points.

If cornered, Hatchlings can and will fight, although they are loath to do so. They can jump 10 feet once every 4 rounds, stabbing with their spikes. Hatchlings attack twice per round, with each fang inflicting a single point of damage. Such attacks are usually done only when the creatures have no other options.

Usually Hatchlings try to flee, rushing toward the nearest passage underground. Upon reaching the caverns where Eihort's brood lurk, they join their less mature brethren in their wait for the stars to come right. Upon that day, the Hatchlings and brood will transform into creatures equal to the Great Old One Eihort.

Hatchling of Eihort, Adolescent Offspring of the God of the Labyrinth

Char.	rolls	averages
STR	2D6	7
CON	2D6+3	10
SIZ	1D2	1
INT	2D6+3	9
POW	4D6	12
DEX	4D6	12

Move 12

HP 5

Av. DB n/a

Weapons: Two Fang-like Spikes, 25% damage 1 point each

Armor: None

Spells: None

Sanity Loss: 0/1D3 points to witness a Hatchling emerge from an Emissary of Eihort. 1/1D4 Sanity points to see a Hatchling of Eihort.

Part Two - The Voyage

Once the investigators board the ship, they slip out of port and reach the open seas. The threat from the Emissaries of Eihort is over, but the investigators soon face a new menace. Before they reach Crete, Eihort's worshippers there launch a major attack. The cult, called The Tenders, unleashes a powerful spell that is more than capable of sinking the investigators' ship and killing everyone on board. The investigators then face a difficult choice which tests their resolve and humanity.

The Course

The Fortuna leaves the port of Piraeus, in the province of Graecia, heading for Alexandria, in the province of Aegyptus. Along the way, the ship stops at the port town of Matalon on the island of Crete, in the province of Cyrenaica. Matalon is one of two ports of entry to the city of Gortyn, the Roman capital on Crete; the other is Leben. At Matalon, the ship will take on supplies, trade some of its cargo, and drop off its passengers, the investigators. The trip from Piraeus to Matalon normally takes 4 days.

Ram on the Ship

Once Caelia's slave Krios gets aboard the Fortuna, his bad behavior intensifies. To amuse himself, Krios antagonizes the investigators and the crew. He unties knots, cuts ropes, and hides equipment. Soon members of the crew are ready to beat the boy, but Caelia protects him. She is forced to use all her considerable skills at persuasion, as well as pay Captain Titus a bonus and pledge that her slave will be no further trouble. Caelia pulls Krios aside and has a long, whispered conversation with him. Investigators who succeed at a Listen check overhear the conversation.

Caelia tells the boy that she understands his anger, but asks him to behave while they are at sea and stay out of the crew's way. She cannot protect him from the sailors if he damages their ship. Caelia then tells Krios that she will free him before they reach the shores of Crete. She also promises to give him a coin to send him on his way after freeing him. Investigators making a successful Insight roll realize that this incredible promise she makes is true. The boy's behavior immediately improves. Investigators making a successful Idea roll realize that Caelia's handling of Krios is incredibly permissive; she treats him more like her son than her slave.

The Storm

On the third morning of the voyage, the skies to the south are painted a reddish hue. The crew is uneasy, muttering prayers under their breath and kissing their protective charms. They check and re-check the ship's lines, ropes, and sails. Captain Titus personally inspects the cargo, instructing the crew to add additional lines to better secure the amphorae. If asked what's happening, the sailors answer, "A storm's blowing up." One old and well-respected sailor named Cato proclaims, "Evil eye's upon this ship!" Within hours, the wind and waves

start to build.

By afternoon, the seas pick up, and heavy rain begins to fall. The Fortuna is tossed about and blown off course. The captain and crew abandon their efforts to maintain their heading and instead focus on riding out the storm. By dusk, thunder roars, lightning splits the sky, wind howls, and waves batter the ship's hull. The crew works desperately to keep the ship afloat, securing loose lines, patching leaks and bailing out seawater as it pours into the cargo hold. The sailors' prayers grow louder and more persistent. As a particularly bad wave nearly capsizes the Fortuna, old Cato calls out, "This is more than just the evil eye. We have been forsaken by Neptune!" The investigators must make a CON vs. POT 10 check to avoid becoming violently seasick. Affected investigators suffer -10% to all skill checks for 1D3 hours.

As night falls, Captain Titus meets with the investigators and tells them, "We are in serious jeopardy. I have never seen seas this rough. Nor has old Cato, and he's plied these waters for forty years. We're taking on water. Fortuna's a good ship, but there's only so much more she can take. If the storm persists, the hull won't hold. And it doesn't seem to be dying down. I'm sorry. If you have gods you owe prayers to, now would be the time to settle up. This storm is not natural. We've been bewitched." Investigators making a successful Natural World check confirm that the storm's intensity and behavior is abnormal.

After he leaves, Caelia gathers the investigators together, saying, "He's right. We have been cursed. I prepared for this, but I cannot do it alone. I need your help, and it looks like we're running out of time."

Caelia's Contingency Plan

The former cultist has long suspected that The Tenders might cast this spell, Summon Typhoon, once the investigators took to the sea. While she tried to prevent this by secretly contacting The Tenders (see **Part Three — Caelia's Stratagem**), Caelia is prepared to deal with it. She explains the following to the investigators:

- The storm is, in fact, a potent curse.
- Eihort's cult in Crete cast the spell causing the storm.
- It is a very powerful spell, one cast by a group, some of whom likely died in the ritual.
- The spell lasts a full day and night, so the storm will last past dawn — more time than the ship has left.
- She learned this spell during her time as a member of The Children of Eihort.
- Caelia has all the items needed to cast a counter-spell. While she cannot end the storm, the counter-spell should calm it enough for the Fortuna to survive.

The Counter-spell

Caelia explains that the counter-spell is a group ritual. It takes 30 minutes to cast and requires a minimum of 5 participants. (Keepers with fewer than 4 investigators can modify this.) She says, "We'll need some privacy. Our cabin should do. The counter-spell, like the spell itself, requires a heavy price be paid. It is not for the faint of heart. It takes a very powerful



Discrimina marina

will, and even then will likely leave the participants drained and exhausted. That's just to cast it. The magic also demands fuel, like a fire. I have that covered as well..."

A Choice

Caelia explains the spell requires a sacrifice of life energy, the equivalent of 14 points of POW. These POW points are permanently lost. This can be infused into the counter-spell in two ways:

"Sacrifice Other"

One or more sentient, conscious human beings must be sacrificed. The total POW of those sacrificed must equal 14. Caelia states, "Krios will do. It's why I purchased him and spoiled him, my vile little ram. It may seem harsh, but he's only a slave, and an exceedingly poor one at that. I knew some of you might be squeamish, so I selected a wretch no one is likely to miss." If the investigators balk at the human sacrifice, Caelia explains there is another option (see **Sacrifice Self**).

If the investigators agree, Caelia leads 4 of them in the ritual. She instructs the investigators to hold the conscious boy down. Krios is gagged so the crew of the *Fortuna* is not alerted. The ritual involves a great deal of chanting, burning a lock of the slave's hair, and ceremonially drawing magical symbols on his chest. The ritual concludes with Caelia slitting the boy's throat in a single well-practiced stroke. Everyone participating in the spell feels Krios' life energy flowing through them, like a wave of euphoric warmth, before feeling

it drawn outward into the spell. Investigators who witness this must make a Sanity check for 1/1D3. Investigators who participate in the ritual must make a Sanity check for 1/1D4 and are drained of 10 Magic Points.

The intensity of the storm rapidly subsides, and although it lasts until after dawn, the worst is over. The *Fortuna* is saved. Caelia places a denarius under the boy's tongue, whispering, "A coin to send you on your way, as promised, little ram." This is for Charon the ferryman, a tradition of funerals during this time. Caelia wraps Krios' body in a cloth, asks an investigator to help her sneak on deck with it, and dumps the corpse overboard.

"Sacrifice Self"

Caelia explains that unless they perform a human sacrifice, participants in the ritual must contribute part of their own life energy. The spell requires a total 14 points of POW, which is drained from the casters equally. The greater the number of participants, the fewer POW points each will lose. POW loss is rounded up; for example, 7 participants would each be drained of 2 points of POW, while 4 participants would each be drained of 4 points. In addition to the permanent POW loss, participants must make a 1/1D3 Sanity check, are drained of 10 MP, and age 5 years, with any attribute penalties immediately applied. (see *Age & Aging* in the Character Creation section of the *Cthulhu Invictus* rulebook)

Caelia strongly objects to this option since she herself is a participant and would be affected by the aging and permanent loss of POW. She tries to persuade the investigators

against this course of action. Caelia explains that the cost to them all is too great, as they will be permanently weakened before facing The Tenders cult, the Minotaur, and the Great Old One Eihort itself. She reminds the investigators that Krios is only a slave. He is her property, and pitiful property at that. Caelia tells the investigators, "I shall do as you ask of me. I am trying to be a member of this team, but now is not the time to be weak." If the investigators refuse to take part in the sacrifice of Krios, Caelia performs the ritual using the self-sacrifice option instead.

The Fortuna Sinks

If the investigators refuse to perform either version of the counter-spell, the Fortuna is doomed. While the crew makes a heroic attempt to save the ship, their efforts are all for naught. At midnight, the vessel rolls over, splinters in half, and sinks. The Athenian Death Ray soon settles to the bottom of the Aegean Sea.

Keepers may allow the investigators to swim to shore or cling to the Fortuna's wreckage and survive the remainder of the storm. Investigators cast into the ocean must make a successful Swim check or be lost. The investigators can reach floating wreckage by making a successful Luck check. To maintain their hold through the rest of the storm, these investigators must then make successful STR and CON checks. Those failing to maintain their hold are swept into the sea and, unless they make a successful Swim check, are lost.

Investigators forced into the Aegean Sea who survive the storm can either be washed up on shore or rescued by other vessels traveling to Crete. Will the quest survive this disastrous setback? Just how the investigators proceed from that point is up to them. Can they locate and recover the Athenian Death Ray from the bottom of the sea? Can they continue on without it and still achieve victory in Crete? That is up to them and their respective Keepers.

The Fortuna Reaches Port

If the Fortuna survives the storm, the crew greets the dawn exhausted, battered, and thankful to be alive. Captain Titus leads the crew in a sacrifice. "Neptune," he calls out as he

draws forth a finely made short sword, "This blade was a gift from my father, and aside from my ship and my life it is my most prized possession. It is now yours. The crew of this humble ship thanks you for your mercy." Keepers may allow investigators to participate in this ritual by making a similar sacrifice. Doing so allows them to recover 1D2 Sanity points and gain a +5 bonus to their next 1D3 Luck rolls.

The ship is in serious need of repairs and was blown far off course. The sailors begin patching up the damage to the Fortuna and getting her headed back toward Crete. The ship takes 3 more days to reach Matalon, arriving there 7 days after leaving Piraeus. Some of the damage cannot be repaired at sea, so the Fortuna lumbers along clumsily for the remainder of the voyage.

If Krios still lives, Caelia loses all patience with him. She punishes him with great cruelty for any and all offences, both real and imagined. She encourages everyone to likewise correct the slave's behavior. If asked about her sudden change of attitude toward Krios, she simply comments, "The boy has no value to me any longer, and I'll stand for no further disrespect." Krios, terrorized by his owner's wrath, quickly falls into line.

The Fortuna lands at the port town of Matalon, just south of Gortyn. Captain Titus bids the investigators farewell, getting them and their gear off his ship as quickly as possible. He is far behind schedule for making his deliveries in Alexandria by now. With the Fortuna damaged, he has no hope of making up the time. Worse still, seawater seeped into 30% of the amphorae during the storm, ruining their contents. Captain Titus wants to be on his way and have his life return to normal.

New Spell: Summon/Dispel Typhoon

This ancient and terrible spell, practiced by secret cults of Neptune and the Followers of Dagon, summons a colossal storm upon the seas or along the coast. The typhoon covers an area 50 leagues square (about 75 square miles). The storm lasts a full day and night. Few ships could survive such a storm, and if cast upon a coastal settlement the magical storm would cause massive devastation and loss of life through flooding, tidal surges, and winds fearsome enough to collapse buildings. Such powerful magic comes at a high price, though. The spell requires a total of 100 MP and the permanent loss of 28 points of POW. The POW can either come from the casters or from the sacrifice of a sentient being. If life force is not offered during the ritual, the spell draws it from the casters. Those who perform this spell without a living sacrifice suffer the additional penalty of being aged 10 years. The reverse of this spell, Dispel Typhoon, can be cast to end the terrible storm. Alternately, a minor version of the counter-spell diminishes the storm's effects without ending it. This costs half the required MP, POW, and aging as the full version (50 MP, 14 POW, and 5 years of aging).

Range: 100 miles **Duration:** 24 hours **Cost:** 100 MP + 28 points of POW
Sanity Cost: 1/1D4 (for sacrificing others' POW) or 1/1D3 (for sacrificing personal POW)
Resistance: Yes

Part Three - The Betrayal

As the investigators reach the shores of Crete and enter the city of Gortyn, they come to the final stage of their quest. But events take some unexpected turns in this ancient city. Things the investigators assumed to be true soon prove to be false. Allies betray them, and the cult of Eihort springs a cunning trap. However, like Theseus before them, the investigators can turn their captivity into victory.

Welcome to Gortyn

The site of this city on the southern coast of Crete has been inhabited for 7,000 years. Now the island's Roman capital, Gortyn has grown in wealth and population. One hundred thousand people live in this walled metropolis. A modern Roman city, it boasts aqueducts, fountains, baths, an open-air marketplace and temples, including a fair number dedicated to members of the Egyptian pantheon.

Caelia suggests the investigators spend a few days sampling what the city has to offer. She explains that it may be the last time they can relax, possibly ever. "I for one do not intend to face death with more than a single coin in my purse," she comments fatalistically.

Accommodations, The Garden

Upon arriving in town, the investigators may want to purchase supplies, maps, or hire a guide to lead them to Knossos. They may also want to speak with Sosius Cotta, leader of the Societas Cryptaegidis chapter in Crete. They will need to find somewhere to stay while finishing these preparations, and Caelia knows just the place.

She tells the investigators about a rental villa she stayed in during her only other visit to Gortyn. The rooms are large and private, giving the group both space and solitude to store the Athenian Death Ray. Caelia offers to pay for the investigators' rooms from her own purse. If asked about this, she smiles and says, "In a few weeks, I'll either have more wealth than I know what to do with or won't require a single coin ever again." While Caelia doesn't push the issue, where the investigators stay is important to her plan (see **Caelia's Stratagem**). If the investigators stay elsewhere, Caelia has a contingency plan ready. The villa, called The Garden, features an inner courtyard of olive trees and herb gardens. It caters to wealthy travelers with its luxurious accommodations. The Garden has an

attentive staff of comely slaves, a fine chef, and a charismatic owner named Agathais, who is a native of Cyrenaica born in Gortyn. Agathais is about 50, slim, and gray-haired. He dresses in the latest fashions popular in Rome; his Latin is formal and free of any provincial accent. His gift for knowing just what guests need and providing it moments before they ask makes him the ideal host and grants him near-perfect camouflage. Agathais is the leader of The Tenders, Eihort's cult in Crete.

Agathais, Leader of The Tenders

STR 10 CON 11 SIZ 12 INT 17 POW 20
DEX 12 APP 10 EDU 15 SAN 0 HP 12

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapons: Fist 50%, 1D3

Staff 50%, 1D6

Knife 65%, 1D4

Armor: None.

Skills: Conceal 35%, Cthulhu Mythos 26%, Dodge 20%, Fast Talk 80%, First Aid 40%, Hide 70%, Insight 80%, Listen 50%, Occult 50%, Persuade 60%, Potions 70%, Sneak 55%, Spot Hidden 50%.

Spells: Ariadne's Twine, Augury, Bat Form, Cause Blindness, Contact Eihort, Dominate, Food of Life, Resurrection, Summon Typhoon, Telepathic Sending.

The Fate of Krios

If the investigators did not sacrifice Krios during the ritual to cast Dispel Typhoon, Caelia rids herself of him as quickly as possible. Her promise to free him and give him a coin was made when she thought he would be sacrificed. With her plan thwarted and still upset over sacrificing her own life energy, Caelia turns a profit with her revenge on Krios. She has the boy washed, dresses him in a new white tunic, skillfully sets his hair, and applies cosmetics to him. Caelia then puts him up for auction at the local slave market, where a brothel purchases him for an outrageous sum.

Faulty Information

From what the investigators read in the mythos tome *Testamentum Arrii Lurconis*, the cultists abducted Arrius Lurco

New Spell: Telepathic Sending

This spell enables the caster to telepathically communicate with a chosen individual. The target gets the sense that someone wants to communicate with him and may either reject or accept the telepathic link. There is no loss of sanity, and no control over others can be accomplished with this spell; it's solely used as a form of communication. The caster must sit motionless, as if in a trance, to maintain the spell. If the caster's concentration is broken, the spell ends; otherwise, it can be maintained for up to 1 hour. During this time, the caster and recipient can communicate normally via the telepathic link. The recipient does not need to maintain concentration and can communicate even while performing complex tasks.

Range: 500 miles
Sanity Cost: 1D3

Duration: 1 hour
Resistance: Yes

Cost: 5 MP

somewhere in the mountains near Knossos. Arrius Lurco planned to retrace his steps, hoping to recognize the inn where he and his companions were captured. Then he would order his gladiators to overpower the cultists and force them to reveal the entrance to the Labyrinth of Messara. All of this was carefully laid out in the patrician's notes, but his memories were incorrect and his plan doomed to fail.

Arrius Lurco did plan to visit the mountains near Knossos to trade for horses, but in fact never made it out of Gortyn. He, along with his entire entourage, was abducted inside the city and taken to the Labyrinth of Messara. The actual entrance to the Labyrinth is just outside Gortyn and not in the mountains near Knossos where most myths place it. The Tenders released the patrician near Knossos to divert attention away from their operations in Gortyn.

Upon arriving in the city, the investigators are much closer to their ultimate goal than they realize. However, they also enter the stronghold of their enemy, The Tenders. If the investigators followed Caelia's lead and rented rooms in The Garden, they're walking into the very same trap Arrius Lurco fell into. This is precisely why Caelia suggested that particular villa in the first place.

Caelia's Stratagem

Caelia has been aware of the faulty information in the *Testamentum Arrii Lurconis* for some time, but kept the information to herself. She also knows The Tenders are far too powerful and well organized to confront directly. Caelia has a plan to get the investigators past the cultists' defenses, allowing them to enter not only The Tenders' hidden base, but the Labyrinth of Messara as well.

For weeks, Caelia has been in contact with Agathias, leader of The Tenders. He contacted her via the Telepathic Sending spell to see if she would betray the investigators for a price. Caelia agreed to do so in return for great wealth and a position as high priestess within The Tenders. Neither Caelia nor Agathias has any intention of upholding the bargain. Agathias leads The Tenders in casting the Summon Typhoon spell as soon as he learns from Caelia that the investigators have reached the open sea. Caelia suspected this betrayal and made preparations to counter it.

In return for her weight in silver and the title of high priestess within The Tenders, Caelia agreed to lead the investigators to The Garden, where they would then be captured. Her real plan requires the investigators to be split into two groups, a sacrificial team and a strike team. The sacrificial team will be placed in the Labyrinth of Messara, where Caelia plans to re-arm them. She will have their weapons, armor, and equipment hidden not far from where they regain consciousness. The other half of her plan requires the strike team to regroup with her inside The Tenders' temple. Caelia knows the cult will hold a feast after making a sacrifice and plans to use this against them. With the investigators' help, she will attempt to poison the food and drink at the celebration. If successful, her plan could deliver a near-fatal strike to the heart of The Tenders.

Caelia's plan is risky. She doesn't tell the investigators

about it so their reactions to her betrayal will be honest. If Agathias suspects she's attempting to double-cross him, all will be lost. Also, Caelia knows The Tenders will demand that all living investigators be put into the Labyrinth as sacrifices. She has a solution to both problems: murder the members of the strike team. This will earn her some trust with The Tenders and will keep those investigators from being sacrificed. Caelia then hopes to recover the dead investigators' bodies, cast Resurrection upon them within the temple, and convince them she's still on their side.

Visiting Sosius Cotta

Investigators who want to meet Sosius Cotta, the Societas Cryptaegidis commander in Crete, have no trouble locating his office. Publicly, he is a high-ranking member of the collegium of fishermen and fishmongers, and the investigators only need to make a successful Luck roll to get directions to his office. The collegium owns a meeting hall in southern Gortyn, along the main road entering the city from the town of Matalon. Every business in the area deals with fishing. The neighborhood hums with activity as people buy and sell fish, haggle over prices, and make lewd jokes. Most here seem to know and be friendly with one another, asking after their families and the quality of their day's catch. It is obviously a tight-knit community.

The investigators are met with suspicion when they enter the collegium's hall and ask to see Sosius Cotta. The tension level instantly rises, and a hush falls over the room. The collegium members ask the investigators who they are and why they're looking for Sosius Cotta. After the investigators answer a few questions, they're told that Sosius Cotta vanished a week ago, and no one knows where he is. His friends and associates in the collegium are very concerned about his disappearance. As strangers asking for him so soon after his disappearance, the investigators peak everyone's curiosity.

Investigators scanning the room for anything out of the ordinary should attempt a Spot Hidden roll. If successful, they notice an odd pair of people, a wealthy-looking woman and a freedman Briton who obviously aren't merchants, fishermen, or fishmongers. They're watching the investigators, trying to be subtle about it, but failing. Both are obviously nervous, looking over their shoulders and staying close together.

If the pair realizes they have been noticed, they maintain eye contact for a moment before walking slowly outside. They then go sit beside a public fountain and wait for up to an hour for the investigators to come talk to them. If approached and questioned, they claim to be friends of Cotta and eagerly speak with the investigators.

Lost Shields

The pair are Andrea, an unmarried merchant's daughter, and Ceadda, a freedman who works as a scribe for her father. They dance around specifics with the investigators until convinced they can trust them. If the investigators let on that they know of, or are connected with, Societas Cryptaegidis, the pair breathe a sigh of relief, show their membership in-

signias, and explain that Sosius Cotta is their commander. They ask if the investigators know where Cotta is or if they've been sent by the society to help them find him. The pair know and relate the following information about Cotta's disappearance:

- Sosius Cotta vanished, along with the other 3 members of their team, a week ago.
- These other members were a bodyguard named Vellius, a dockworker named Hostilius, and an Egyptian priestess named Kesi.
- Andrea and Ceadda have tried, unsuccessfully, to find their missing team members since then.
- Andrea and Ceadda have only been with the group a year and are unsure what to do next.
- Cotta and the others were following a man they suspected of being involved with kidnappings and an ancient cult. That man is Sergius Messalla, a wealthy merchant who owns a marble quarry just north of Gortyn.
- Their chapter has tried to learn more about this cult for years, but they've learned very little. The cultists seem to venerate the Minotaur and have often been seen wearing masks in the likeness of a bull's head.

Unfortunately, this is all Andrea and Ceadda know. The pair served as clerks and support personnel for the other members of their team. Andrea and Ceadda are not field agents; they simply do research and sometimes act as decoys or look-outs. While brave and eager to help, they are ill equipped to do so. Neither has much free time since Andrea's father keeps close tabs on his daughter and the freedman, making sure both are busy with duties of home and business.

The pair offers to compile a full report for the investigators when they return home. It will detail all the information they have gathered on this mysterious cult and their suspect, Sergius Messalla. Andrea and Ceadda ask the investigators to meet them the next day at the same fountain, between the 7th and 8th hours (about 5pm). Unfortunately, this meeting will never take place.

A Person of Interest

Sosius Cotta long suspected Sergius Messalla of being involved with an enigmatic cult, and his instincts were correct. Messalla, who owns and operates a marble quarry outside Gortyn, seems to be little more than an average businessman. While Cotta was investigating a mysterious cult in Gortyn over the last few years, however, Messalla's name and marble quarry kept turning up. The cult seemed obsessed with the myth of the Minotaur and was suspected of being involved with kidnappings.

A few weeks ago, one of Cotta's informants told him a wild story. He spoke of seeing a gruesome winged monster

The Tenders, an Eihort Cult

In the time of King Minos, when the Minotaur was first imprisoned in the Labyrinth of Messara, a group of his most loyal servants received a sacred duty — to become the caretakers of the Minotaur. These men and women fed the beast, kept the location of the labyrinth secret, and guarded its entrances and exits. In time, they came to call themselves The Tenders.

When Theseus killed the Minotaur, The Tenders were saddened and ashamed at their failure. They recovered a powerful scroll hidden in a tomb of the Theban Necropolis, in Aegyptus. The scroll contained a mystical rite, a way to bridge the gap between life and death. Armed with the Resurrection spell, The Tenders restored the Minotaur to life and resumed their duty of caring for the creature.

Eventually King Minos died, his kingdom passed into ruin, and the Minoans' history became little more than myth, but still The Tenders and their Minotaur remained. Their sacred duties passed down their family lines, and over the centuries The Tenders have resurrected the Minotaur many times. About a century ago, a new entity took up residence in the Labyrinth. This being, which arrived via a mystical gate from far off Britannia, was godlike in its power. The Great Old One Eihort quickly became master of both the Minotaur and its caretakers. The Tenders adapted many of their practices and traditions to include Eihort and accommodate its needs.

The Tenders enjoy a large membership and good finances. Through trade with various Egyptian sources over the years, they have knowledge of a fair number of spells and have a knack for brewing exotic poisons. The keys to The Tenders' success are the cult's secretive nature and the stability of its leadership. Key members of the cult remain in place for several hundred years, undying and unchanged. One spell leaders within The Tenders routinely practice is Food of Life, which grants them a greatly extended lifespan. This also allows the cultists to emulate the Minotaur, since the spell requires them to consume human flesh. Over the centuries, what began as a royal mandate from King Minos became a cult that venerates the Minotaur. Today, The Tenders ultimately serve the Great Old One Eihort.

flying out of the night and landing near the marble quarry north of the city. The creature carried an unconscious woman, whom it handed over to a group of robed people wearing bull masks. Unbeknownst to the witness, this woman was Lurca Hedeia, sent here from Ostia by the Emissaries of Eihort shortly after the attack on her villa. Keepers who had other NPCs taken captive during this attack should include them in the informant's story. Andrea and Ceadda tell the investigators this story and promise to include the witness' full statement in their report.

The Going Away Party

If the investigators stay at the villa recommended by Caelia, they return to find a celebration being prepared. Decorations are being hung, food is being prepared, amphorae of wines are being delivered, and musicians are arriving. The Garden's staff is dressed in colorful tunics and seems to have doubled in number for the coming festivities. Keepers should time

this to be the night before the investigators are supposed to obtain the report from the Societas Cryptaegidis agents, Andrea and Ceadda.

Agathias informs the investigators that they are not only welcome to join in the celebration, he insists they do so, explaining that it is included in their rental fees. The reason Agathias gives for the party can be anything from his birthday to one of the many Roman holidays listed in Cthulhu Invictus. “Any excuse to have a celebration is always a good one!” Agathias exclaims.

Caelia, as always, is happy to attend a party and encourages the investigators to accept the invitation. Guests arrive as the festivities begin, all well-dressed and in high spirits. The food is wonderful, the drink strong, and the music entertaining. Everything seems well organized; The Tenders have done this many times before. It was at such a party that Arrius Lurco and his entourage were taken captive. Everyone at the gathering — slaves, servants, entertainers, and guests — are members of The Tenders.

The Trap is Sprung

The cultists serve the investigators food and beverages laced with a powerful, slow-acting poison. If necessary, several of the servers also carry doses of the poison on them. They can drop these into an investigator’s food or drink with a successful Conceal roll. Attractive cultists, posing as slaves, sip from cups and nibble tidbits of food before passing it to investigators, doing so in a flirtatious manner. The toxin is non-lethal, so they have nothing to fear. Called Kiss of Twilight, it is tasteless, colorless, and has a slightly sweet scent. It is an extremely expensive and powerful sedative.

Kiss of Twilight

Dose	1oz
POT	14
Onset	30-60 minutes
Duration	12-24 hours
Symptoms	Reduced to semi-conscious state

The investigators may not notice the toxin’s effects for some time. When the Kiss of Twilight finally affects them, their perception becomes slowed and their vision blurred; they feel dizzy and lethargic, finally becoming totally helpless while remaining semi-conscious. If any investigators avoid eating or drinking, the cultists try to overpower them with Grapple checks once the toxin begins to affect the other investigators.

Keepers should ensure that the cultists have sufficient numbers to successfully capture the investigators. The Tenders are well organized and prepared with detailed information about the investigators, supplied by Caelia. When The Tenders make their move, they have at least a 5-1 numerical advantage over the investigators. The capture team contains a mix of both stealthy cultists posing as servers and physically powerful ones posing as guests and bodyguards. If necessary, both Agathias and Caelia take part in the efforts to drug and subdue the investigators.

Average Tender Cultist, Server

STR 11	CON 12	SIZ 11	INT 11	POW 14
DEX 14	APP 14	EDU 13	SAN 0	HP 12

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapons: Fist 60%, 1D3

Grapple 30%, damage special

Kick 35%, 1D6

Armor: None.

Skills: Conceal 70%, Dodge 40%, Fast Talk 60%, Insight 60%, Persuade 55%.

Average Tender Cultist, Guest or Guard

STR 14	CON 15	SIZ 14	INT 10	POW 11
DEX 12	APP 11	EDU 11	SAN 0	HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist 80%, 1D3+db

Grapple 60%, damage special

Head Butt 40%, 1D4+db

Kick 60%, 1D6+db

Knife 50%, 1D4+db*

Club 50%, 1D6+db*

Armor: None.

Skills: Conceal 40%, Dodge 30%, Fast Talk 35%, Insight 45%, Sneak 50%.

* These weapons are not carried, but can be obtained or improvised at the time.

Once the investigators are incapacitated, either by Grapple checks or poisoning, a final guest arrives with an entourage of bodyguards. They all wear dark blue robes and bull masks. Their leader removes his mask, showing a dark-featured, bearded face of about 40. He smiles and introduces himself as Sergius Messalla. The investigators may have already learned about him from Andrea and Ceadda (see **Lost Shields**). A number of things then happen:

- Sergius Messalla’s men begin passing out robes and bull masks to everyone, which the assembled cultists don.
- Agathias welcomes Messalla. Messalla greets the older man in a respectful, deferential manner.
- Agathias and Messalla embrace Caelia, kissing her on both cheeks before placing a bull mask upon her face.
- Messalla gloats, calls the investigators fools, and says they will soon join Lurca Hedeia, those meddlers from the fishmongers’ collegium, and any other captive NPCs, at Eihort’s feet.
- Agathias smirks and says, “Did you really think you could just walk in here like a second Theseus? Slay the Minotaur *and* the Lord of the Labyrinth, Great Eihort? Look at you now, great heroes — helpless, betrayed, and pitiful.”
- Agathias calls for the investigators to be stripped, bound, and taken to the labyrinth.
- Caelia comes forward, points to the investigators she’s chosen to make up the assault team, and says, “Not these. I have unfinished business with them.” (see **Caelia’s Stratagem**)
- Caelia draws her dagger and cuts the helpless investigators’ throats, drawing the blade cleanly through their windpipes. The investigators die within moments. Investigators who witness the murder must make a Sanity check for 1/1D3.
- Messalla chuckles, and Agathias comments, “Less to offer the Minotaur and the Dread Master, but no matter. There remain enough of them to still make this a proper offering. Take them away.”

Caelia's Choice

Caelia's actions break the investigators into two groups for a short time. She carefully selects which investigators are captured by The Tenders and which become members of the strike team. For the strike team, she selects investigators who are skilled fighters, stealthy, and possessing the mental fortitude to retain their sanity after the trauma of resurrection. Caelia may also select the investigators she feels she has the best chance of convincing to trust her again, a task even she realizes might be impossible.

Alternate Plan

If the investigators chose not to stay at The Garden, Caelia and The Tenders organize a separate ambush. Keepers can have the cultists infiltrate wherever the investigators are staying, poisoning their food and drink. If the cultists are unable to accomplish this, Caelia will do it, drugging the investigators somewhere The Tenders are lying in wait. Caelia supplies The Tenders with whatever information is required to facilitate the investigators' successful capture.

Part Four - The Minotaur

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The investigators are now temporarily split up. Half of them are prisoners of The Tenders, facing days of brutal captivity before being placed into the Labyrinth of Messara as prey for both the Minotaur and its master, the Great Old One Eihort. The other investigators have avoided this fate by being murdered by Caelia. However, death is not always the end. As the Pythia foretold, "Death comes to us all. Accept it as the price of entry. Only through death will you know life, and the dead know vengeance." The slain investigators are soon resurrected and in the perfect position to strike at the very heart of The Tenders. Both groups of investigators can then reunite and together face a fearsome adversary, the legendary Minotaur.

The Sacrificial Team

The investigators captured by The Tenders feel the lingering effects of the Kiss of Twilight for some time. If they avoided poisoning and were captured by physical force, the investigators are knocked unconscious after Agathias gives the order to take them away. Either way, the investigators are strip-searched, disarmed, and securely bound. They are then placed in a straw-filled wagon, covered with a tarp, and taken out of the city.

The cultists drive the wagon north of Gortyn. After roughly an hour, the investigators are unloaded from the wagon and carried through a secret tunnel into a marble quarry. They are placed in a single small chamber and chained to the floor in a sitting position. There the investigators remain for the next three days.

Tortured

The investigators suffer miserably during their captivity. Their cell is pitch dark, and their movements greatly restricted. In the darkness, they can feel rats and insects crawling over them. The investigators' muscles cramp painfully from being forced to remain in the same position for hours on end. There are no provisions for sanitation, and after a short time imprisoned here the conditions worsen. Time soon loses meaning.

The endless dark is interrupted once daily during the three days the investigators are imprisoned here. The cultists enter the cell with a lamp, a bucket of broth, and a ladle. They answer no questions as they go about their duty. The investigators are fed broth from the ladle, with chunks of foul-tasting, nearly spoiled meat alive with half-drowned maggots. The investigators must make a standard CON check to stomach the disgusting food, or else vomit it up violently. Investigators who refuse to eat, or who try to do so and fail, lose 1 point of CON per day.

Once this feeding is complete, the cultists savagely beat the investigators unconscious. The masked cultists punch and kick at the investigators while they are helplessly chained to the floor. Later, the investigators awaken slowly in the darkened cell with vermin crawling over them, likely in reeking puddles of their own waste. Investigators enduring these conditions lose 1/1D3 points of Sanity.

On the third and final feeding, the broth is laced with another dose of Kiss of Twilight, rendering the investigators helpless once more. Those who refuse to eat are beaten unconscious. Once all the investigators are either drugged or unconscious, they're removed from the cell, bathed, dressed in clean clothing, and placed into the Labyrinth of Messara (see **Into the Labyrinth**).

Escape Attempts

The investigators may try to free themselves from the cell. They can attempt to break the chains holding them or pull them free from the floor. Doing so requires a STR vs. 30 STR check on the Resistance Table. They can attempt to pull their ankles free from the shackles, which requires them to make a successful DEX and CON x1 check. Investigators pulling their feet free of the shackles suffer 2 points of damage and have their movement reduced to 3 until the damage is recovered.

However, the investigators are unarmed, and the cell totally bare. When the cultists open the cell to feed the investigators, only 2 enter at any time, while another 8 remain in the hallway outside in case of trouble. At the first sign of danger, all ten cultists attack, shouting an alert which summons another twelve to the area within moments. The investigators have caused Eihort a great deal of trouble, and the cultists have no intention of underestimating them or allowing them to escape.

Investigators who do manage to free themselves and attempt escape are dealt with harshly. They are beaten unconscious and awaken with a deep gash carved into their face and missing their left ear. These investigators are left with a deep facial scar once the wound heals. This combined with their

missing ear permanently reduces their APP by 2. Keepers can have the missing ear turn up during the investigators' next feeding as an addition to the disgusting broth. Investigators discovering this must make a Sanity check for 0/1D2 points.

Into the Labyrinth

When the investigators regain consciousness, they're no longer in a prison cell. They find themselves unchained, lying on the cold stone floor of a round chamber beside a small, lit oil lamp. The investigators have been bathed and dressed in clean white tunics and simple sandals. All of their wounds have been tended to as well since The Tenders don't want their sacrifices to be found unsuitable to either the Minotaur or the Great Old One Eihort. The investigators have no weapons, armor, or equipment of any kind. The dim light from the lamp illuminates a dozen passages heading out of the chamber that lead to hallways, chambers, arched doorways, twists, turns, and dead ends. The investigators are now in the Labyrinth of Messara.

Caelia's Preparations

While the investigators are held prisoner and The Tenders prepare a celebratory feast, Caelia keeps busy laying the groundwork for a strike against the cult. She is closely watched, forcing her to trick a pair of naive cultists into helping her. By the time everything is ready, Caelia's time is running out. Soon The Tenders will discover evidence of her plot, leaving the strike team a very narrow window to execute her plan. That is, if she can convince the investigators to help her, considering that the last time they saw Caelia she was murdering them.

Resurrecting the Strike Team

The dead investigators are abruptly and distressingly returned to life. Keepers can either role play the investigators being torn away from whatever afterlife they believed in or simply portray the investigators as being nowhere before they're yanked back into their physical bodies, suffering excruciating pain and confusion. Either way, as the investigators draw their first breaths, they suffer the loss of 1D20 points of Sanity.

Caelia has the investigators tied down and gagged as she performs the Resurrection spell. She stands over each one as they awaken, trying to soothe him, telling him to be calm, to breathe and that everything is going to be all right. If the investigator seems calm, she removes his gag, explaining that she must "wake the others". One by one, Caelia resurrects up to 4 investigators, the most her POW will allow. The investigators find themselves in a dimly lit stone room with a thick oaken door. A rug is on the floor, and chests and crates boxes are piled against the walls.

Briefing the Team

Caelia explains that the investigators are in an underground temple complex, the headquarters of The Tenders. She explains, "Above us is a marble quarry just north of Gortyn. Below us lies the Labyrinth of Messara, and within it the rest of our companions. Beyond that door," she says, pointing to the oaken door, "are more than a hundred cultists who'll do anything to stop us. I know I have some explaining to do, but we don't have much time." She then explains the following points to the bound investigators:

- She has just performed a Resurrection spell on the investigators, restoring them to life.
- She apologizes for killing them and begs them to trust her now.
- Caelia has all of the group's weapons, armor, and equipment in one of the chests in this room, which she is willing to hand over to them.
- She felt The Tenders were too strong to overpower and the direct approach would have proven disastrous.
- Caelia pretended to work with The Tenders so she could get the investigators past the cult and into the labyrinth alive.
- She says she has a plan to destroy The Tenders here and now, but she needs the investigators' help to do so.

Trust

After Caelia has explained those points, she opens a chest and shows the investigators weapons, armor, and equipment. She then opens several boxes, revealing the dismantled components of the Athenian Death Ray. Caelia then draws her knife, cuts the investigators free, and backs up against a wall.

She holds the knife in front of her defensively as she says, "I've betrayed you. I've murdered you, but what I did was done to get us to this point. We have a chance to destroy them now, and then to go below and face the Minotaur and Eihort. You have two choices. You can trust me, and together we can destroy The Tenders and enter the Labyrinth. A passage in is below this very rug. Or you can kill me now. I won't resist." Tossing her knife aside, Caelia bears her breast, closes her eyes, and spreads her arms wide. She waits for the investigators to decide.

If the investigators agree to work with Caelia, she breathes a sigh of relief, takes up her knife, and explains what they need to do next (see **The Quickest Way**). The investigators may also kill Caelia and enter The Tenders' temple complex without her (see **The Mission Fails or is Rejected**). Finally, the investigators can kill Caelia, enter the Labyrinth of Messara, and attempt to rejoin their companions (see **Rejoining the Others**).

The Quickest Way

Investigators who agree to assist Caelia are told the particulars of her plan as she hands each of them a dark blue robe and bull's head mask. She explains that The Tenders are having a feast to celebrate their victory over the investigators and a successful sacrifice. Nearly every member of the cult is here, eating, drinking and indulging in other pleasures. "Completely vulnerable," Caelia says with a smile. She tells

the investigators she knows where The Tenders keep their supplies of poisons and where their kitchens are. Her plan to destroy the cult has four phases:

1. Take control of The Tenders' apothecary chamber and get large doses of poison.
2. Take control of the cult's kitchen and pose as cultists while poisoning as much food and wine as possible.
3. Continue posing as the cult's cooks until most if not all of The Tenders are poisoned.
4. Return to the storeroom and enter the Labyrinth of Messara as soon as the cultists show signs of being affected by the poison.

The Temple of The Tenders

This massive subterranean complex covers nearly a square mile of tunnels sprawling in every direction. However, the investigators only need to operate in a small section of these tunnels. If Keepers want to allow their investigators to further explore the complex, they are welcome to expand the map and do so. This section of the complex has 9 major locations, 2 of which are vital to Caelia's plan to destroy The Tenders.

Keepers are advised to portray the cultists as remaining a very potent threat. Even as they are celebrating their victory, secure in their hidden stronghold, many remain armed and few are inebriated to the point of helplessness. About 20% of the cultists are on duty, performing necessary tasks, standing guard or patrolling the area. As the investigators roam the temple complex, they pass robed and masked cultists who greet them with silent nods.

The Storeroom

This unassuming storeroom is where Caelia resurrects the investigators. It is remarkable only because it conceals an entrance into the Labyrinth of Messara. Many such entrances are hidden throughout The Tenders temple complex, this being the only one in this area. The door opens inward, enabling the investigators to barricade or spike it shut. Those attempting to open the blocked or spiked door must beat a STR vs. STR 20 check or inflict 20 points of damage to the door itself.

The Apothecary Workshop

This large chamber is filled with shelves, cabinets, and worktables. Ingredients to make dozens of different poisons in large quantities are stored here, as are plentiful supplies of finished poisons. The investigators will find 2 cultists here, a woman who is a junior apothecary and a man who is on guard duty. The two are flirting with one another and seem annoyed by any interruptions.

Mission Objective #1, The Poison

The investigators must take control of the apothecary workshop and secure the poison needed to accomplish their mission. The cultists refuse to allow the investigators to handle any poisons or ingredients in the room. The guard asks the investigators who sent them there, since this is a restricted

section. The guard takes his duty very seriously, and the investigators cannot talk their way past these two cultists. Unless they strike quickly, the guard sounds an alert, summoning assistance. Once this room is secure, the investigators should hide the bodies as best they can.

Caelia grabs 3 jars of Hades Tears poison and a jar of its antidote and hands them to the investigators. Unless the investigators think of it first, she takes the entire supply of one of the antidote's key ingredients. This will prevent the cultists from easily brewing another batch of antidote before succumbing to the poison's effects. The investigators can then proceed to their mission's next objective, securing the kitchen.

Assistant Tender Apothecary

STR 10 CON 13 SIZ 11 INT 14 POW 11
DEX 14 APP 15 EDU 14 SAN 0 HP 12

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapons: Fist 50%, 1D3

Grapple 25%, damage special

Kick 25%, 1D6

Armor: None.

Skills: Dodge 40%, Insight 40%, Potions 55%.

Tender Cultist Guard

STR 14 CON 15 SIZ 14 INT 10 POW 11
DEX 12 APP 11 EDU 11 SAN 0 HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist 65%, 1D3+db

Grapple 40%, damage special

Kick 60%, 1D6+db

Knife 50%, 1D4+db

Club 50%, 1D6+db

Armor: 3 points of Hardened Leather, Small Shield 20%.

Skills: Dodge 30%, Insight 45%, Spot Hidden 45%.

The Kitchen

This room has 2 deep ovens, several cauldrons over fire pits, and the standard items found in any kitchen that services a large, wealthy estate. The 4 cooks wear simple dark masks of leather instead of the bulkier full face ones, which would get in the way of preparing food. The men are quite busy here, putting the final touches on the third course of the celebratory feast. Long tables are covered with trays of food, nearly ready to be served. Six three-foot tall amphorae of wine stand ready to be carried out to the revelers throughout the complex as well. As the investigators enter, the cooks shout at them that the next course is not yet ready and to return in 10 minutes. That is when the cult's servers are due to arrive.

Tender Cultist, Cooks (4)

STR 12 CON 10 SIZ 12 INT 14 POW 12
DEX 13 APP 10 EDU 13 SAN 0 HP 11

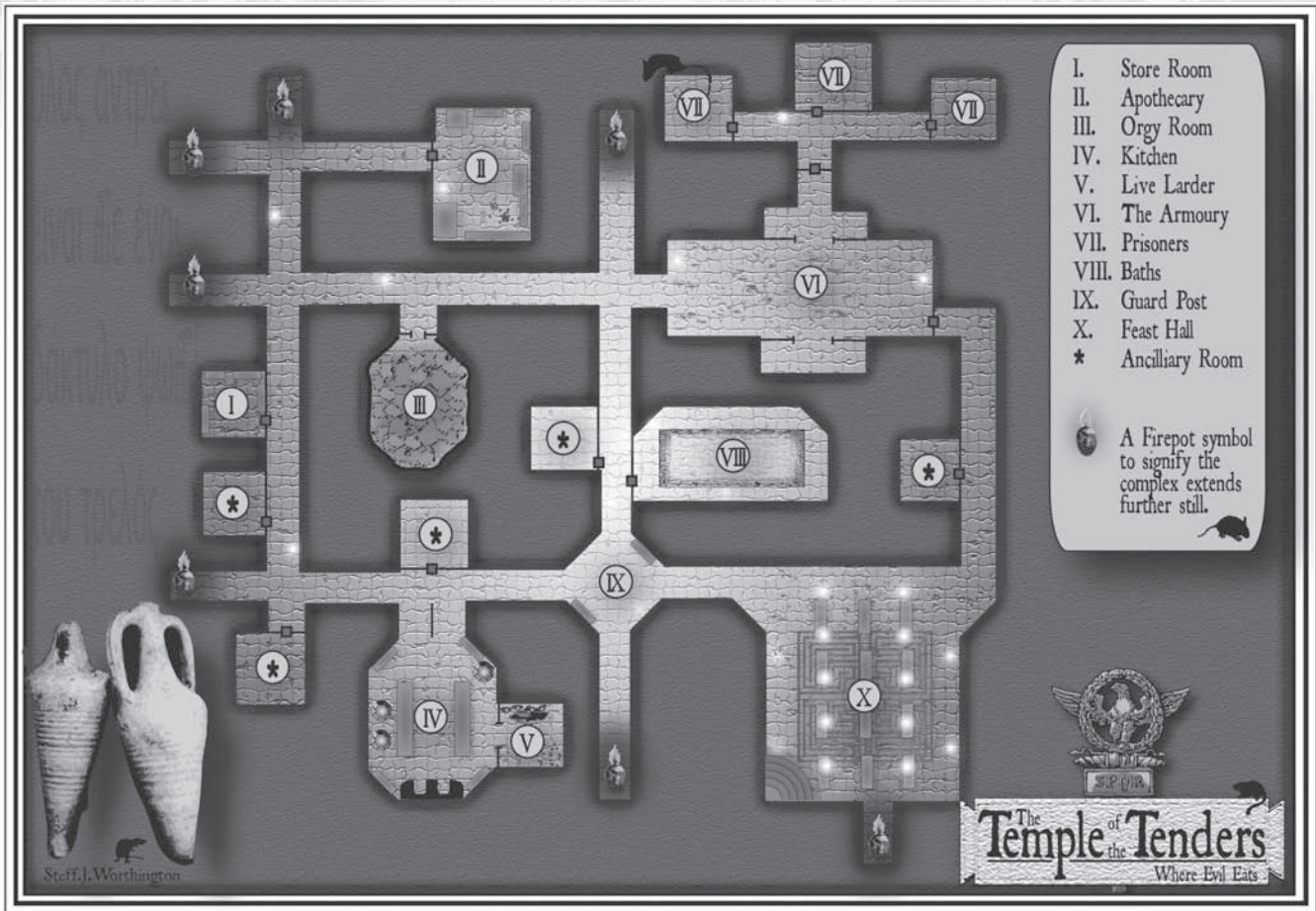
Damage Bonus: None.

Weapons: Fist 60%, 1D3

Knife 50%, 1D4

Armor: None.

Skills: Art (Cooking) 70%, Dodge 30%.



The pantry here has plentiful stores of fresh food and water, enough to sustain The Tenders for many weeks if necessary. However, a special item has been added for the celebration. Four plump, human corpses hang upside down here, the still-warm blood dripping into pots. Two of the bodies have already been butchered of most of their flesh, the meat used in the earlier courses. Investigators viewing this must make a Sanity check for 0/1D3 points.

Mission Objective #2, The Third Course

The cooks' shouted instructions alert the investigators that they only have 10 minutes to secure the kitchen. The investigators must defeat the 4 cooks, hide their bodies, and replace them. The investigators must then finish preparing and plating the third course. Investigators who don't have Art (Cooking) must make a successful Idea roll to finish the cooks' preparations well enough to avoid suspicion (see **Mission Objective #3, The Servers**). As the investigators finish the third course, they will also need to lace it with the proper dosage of poison. Too much, and it will be noticeable immediately. Too little, and it will not be effective. Investigators who have a Potion score above 40% or who make a successful Potions check will be able to get the dosage right. Keepers can allow investigators without these skills to be guided in the proper dosage by Caelia.

Mission Objective #3, The Servers

Once the investigators have the third course properly prepared, they come to the final mission objective. Ten adolescent cultists arrive, wearing robes stained with food and wine. These are the servers, ready to carry the third course into the feast hall and wine to everyone throughout the complex. They all seem very busy and harried as they place 10 short tables in the room. The oldest of the servers organizes their efforts, assigning his fellows various tasks. He asks the investigators if the third course is ready.

The investigator answering the head server must make a Fast Talk roll. If successful, the servers take up the food and place platters on their tables. Some lift amphorae of wine, ready to refill any empty goblet they find. Investigators failing this roll raise the servers' suspicions. If the food was not properly prepared by the investigators, this also raises the servers' suspicions, and the leader of the servers questions the investigators further. He asks them what's wrong with the food, who they are, or both. With the plan on the verge of collapse, the investigators must make a successful Fast Talk roll at a -15% penalty. If successful, the servers are reassured and go about their assigned duties.

Unless the investigators fool the servers, their mission to poison the cultists fails. The servers alert the guards, who are just down the hall, that something is wrong. The investigators must flee back to the storeroom and enter the labyrinth with all haste or risk being cut off (see **The Strike Team Enters**

the Labyrinth).

Keeper's Note: Although the investigators don't need to visit any other locations in the temple complex to execute their mission, they might end up doing so. The investigators might get lost or separated, attempt to scout out the area, or become captured. In case this happens, a number of important locations in the immediate area are detailed in the following sections.

The Orgy Chamber

This chamber is filled with bodies intertwined and writhing. The floor is lined with pillows and fur rugs, the walls decorated with erotic frescos. The painting depicts dozens of acts of bestiality, with Queen Pasiphae and the white bull sent by Poseidon the piece's focus (see **The Minotaur**). Twenty-five people are in the room.

The Armory

This is where the cultists store the bulk of their weapons. At least 8 guards are here at all times, ready to respond to any situation, although 3 remain here no matter what the emergency. The men here also guard the entrance to the temple's prison wing, where captives are kept before being sacrificed.

The Cell Block

This area holds 3 stone cells where prisoners are typically chained to the floor. They are dark, dank places teeming with vermin and without any manner of sanitation. Captivity here is nightmarish, but usually brief. Prisoners seldom stay more than a week before being drugged, cleaned, and placed in the Labyrinth of Messara as sacrifices. This is where the sacrificed investigators were briefly held after their capture.

The Baths

This chamber has a single heated sunken pool, tended to by a staff of slaves toiling below it. Although only able to serve 15 bathers at a time, it's beautifully decorated, easily rivaling most public baths outside the province of Italia. During the time of The Tenders' celebration, the heated pool is filled to capacity with cultists laughing, swimming, and splashing one another playfully.

Guard Post

This intersection leads to the primary entrance to The Tenders' main hall, where the feast is being held. As such, 4 fully armed guards are posted here. The men aren't pleased to have drawn guard duty during the celebration and are in a sour mood.

The Feast Hall

This massive chamber is well lit and beautifully decorated. The walls are smooth and brightly adorned with both frescos and mosaics. The floor is tiled in a decorative pattern depicting a maze. Lamps hang from the ceiling. Musicians play in a corner, and roughly 70 cultists are dining here. A dozen small tables are placed in the room, with three low couches around

each. A pair of feasters reclines on each couch, eating and drinking as they carry on pleasant conversation. The servers are very busy, darting about refilling glasses or removing and replacing tables as the next course is served. About half The Tenders, including their leaders Agathias and Sergius Messalla, are in attendance.

The Mission Succeeds

Investigators who have successfully achieved all their mission objectives realize their success an hour into the third course. The servers, who travel to and from the kitchen constantly, become violently ill. They are only the first of many who will succumb to the poison's effects. The investigators should swiftly return to the storeroom and make their escape into the Labyrinth of Messara.

Within two hours, more than two-thirds of the cultists are dead, and most of the survivors are so debilitated they can hardly stand. Only a few are completely unaffected by the attack. Although The Tenders make a final attempt to stop the investigators, it's a suicide charge and an elaborate bluff with little chance of success (see **The Cult Closes In**).

The Mission is Rejected or Fails

Investigators who kill Caelia, refusing to take part in her plan, or those who fail while attempting to execute it enter the Labyrinth of Messara with The Tenders at full strength. Evidence of Caelia's plot is soon discovered since she killed several cultists when recovering the investigators' corpses for the Resurrection spell. The Tenders send forces, personally overseen by Agathias and Sergius Messalla, into the Labyrinth. The cultists take up a position between the investigators and the central chamber of the Labyrinth where the Great Old One Eihort dwells. Unlike the deception the poisoned cultists make in The Mission Succeeds, this force is both completely healthy and quite formidable.

The Strike Team Enters the Labyrinth

If the mission was attempted, whether it was successful or not, the investigators must make a speedy retreat into the Labyrinth of Messara. Before entering the storeroom, the investigators can hear a general alarm being raised and people rushing toward them. The investigators can clearly make out some of the shouts as, "Find Caelia!"

If Caelia is no longer with the investigators, they can bar the door, open the trap door, and escape into the tunnels below. As they depart, they hear pounding on the door and Sergius Messalla calling for axes. If Caelia is with the investigators, she buys them some time and covers their escape (see **The Death of Caelia**).

The Death of Caelia

Caelia looks to the investigators and smiles. She says, "Go. I'll close and cover the trap door behind you. They probably still think you're dead. I'll buy you some time, but this is as far as I go for now. Explain things to the others. Tell them I'm sorry.

Look for the chest bearing the insignia of Capricorn, and exit the labyrinth through the arched doorway below the emblem of the hare. Look for me, my dearest friends, and remember, death is not always the end.” Caelia then draws a small tube, pulls the cork stopper, and swallows a thick, black fluid. She makes a pained expression, then nearly swoons, catching herself on the wall. Caelia sputters and coughs, dark clumps of blood on her lips and chin. She chuckles, “I robbed a god of its sacrifice, in Crete no less. How else could this end?” As an axe blade bites into the door, Caelia falls to her knees in pain, vomiting blood as she crawls towards the rug. Investigators witnessing this should make a Sanity check for 0/1D2. “Go!” she cries. “May Nemesis favor you!”

Rejoining the Others

The members of the strike team must travel down the trap door to enter the labyrinth. The investigators vertically descend 50 feet on an iron-rung ladder to reach a tunnel sloping steeply downward and leading east. After traveling a quarter mile, the investigators reach an apparent dead end. The investigator can locate a concealed door here with a successful Spot Hidden roll. To open the door, the investigator must puzzle out the right bricks to press in the correct order. This requires a successful Idea roll, with each check taking 30 minutes.

The door is a masterwork of engineering. When the opening mechanism is triggered, a wall drops down from the ceiling, blocking the passage 20 feet from the dead end. A moment later, the door opens. This forms an airlock of sorts, preventing those entering the labyrinth from leaving the same way. The door automatically locks when closing, and there is no way to open it from the other side. Once the investigators enter the Labyrinth of Messara, they cannot exit through this door.

The Labyrinth of Messara

All the investigators are now in the Labyrinth of Messara. Designed and constructed by Daedalus on the orders of King Minos, this maze is an immense prison. Here the king imprisoned his wife’s son by the Cretan bull, the Minotaur (see **The Minotaur**). The labyrinth is made of stone and cunningly designed, a collection of chambers and passages, pitfalls and dead ends, doorways, secret chambers, and hopelessness. One could spend a lifetime wandering its corridors and not see every corner of it. Mercifully, one seldom remains imprisoned here for long; the creature the Labyrinth holds hungers for human flesh.

Navigating the Labyrinth

Hopefully one or more of the investigators has learned the Ariadne’s Twine spell from Caelia (see *Cthulhu Invictus*, “The Grimoire”). With it, the investigators cannot become lost in the Labyrinth’s twists and turns. Otherwise, they must puzzle their way through the maze, making an INT check once every 4 hours of travel. Investigators who attempt to reach the center of the labyrinth this way must make 5 successful

checks. However, the investigators have an easier way to reach the center of the maze; they can simply allow the Minotaur to herd them to it (see **The Minotaur**).

Grisly Discovery

The captured investigators notice a buzzing cloud of flies not far from where they were dumped in the labyrinth. Anyone who takes a closer look finds the partially consumed body of a large man and must make a Sanity check for 1/1D2. With a successful Spot Hidden roll, the investigators discover a ring on the corpse bearing the emblem of the Gortyn chapter of Societas Cryptaegidis.

Keeper’s Note: The body belongs to Vellius, bodyguard of Sosius Cotta. He chose to fight the Minotaur when it attempted to drive the captured agents to the center of the labyrinth. This is where he met his end.

Back Together Again

The separated investigators have several ways of finding one another. Members of the strike team can cast Ariadne’s Twine, which allows them to easily locate their companions. Alternatively, Caelia included a map with the investigators’ equipment showing approximately where their captured companions were placed in the labyrinth. The investigators can travel there by making a successful INT x 4 check. From there, the separated investigators can hear one another’s calls or follow each other’s tracks.

Re-arming the Sacrificed Investigators

By using Ariadne’s Twine or the map given to them by Caelia, the investigators should eventually reunite. The members of the strike team were given all the investigators’ weapons, armor, and equipment along with the disassembled Athenian Death Ray. Caelia has bundled each investigator’s possessions into individual sacks.

Additionally, Keepers may place 1 mefkat amulet in each bundle. These talismans were enchanted with the Create Amulet spell by Caelia and included as a peace offering to the sacrificed investigators. The talismans enable the wearer to mitigate 5 points of damage for 1 hour once per day (see *Cthulhu Invictus*, “The Grimoire”). Each amulet is inscribed with the investigator’s name and a short note reading, “These will protect you — Love, Caelia.” With a successful Occult roll, the investigators realize that mefkat, which is Egyptian for turquoise, offers protection from a violent death.

The Minotaur

This creature is the son of the Queen Pasiphae, but was not fathered by her husband, King Minos. The child was a monster, product of an unholy union between Pasiphae and the magnificent white bull sent to King Minos by Poseidon. Minos had promised to sacrifice the bull to Poseidon, but denied the God of the Sea, sacrificing a lesser bull instead. Poseidon punished Minos by making his queen fall in love with the Cretan bull. From their coupling a child was pro-

duced, an abomination that grew to become a hulking brute with the head of a bull and an insatiable hunger for human flesh.

The Minotaur has dwelled in the Labyrinth of Messara for centuries. It has lived dozens of lifetimes, granted youth and resurrected by The Tenders when it dies. For the past century, both the Minotaur and its cult have found a new purpose and new guidance. The Great Old One Eihort found its way into the Labyrinth of Messara and claimed it as its own. The denizens of the Labyrinth welcomed their new master Eihort, who replaced King Minos as both their father and their sovereign.

A Fearsome Foe

The Minotaur is a legendary foe and more dangerous now than when first encountered by Theseus. Gone is the day when all it carried was a single dagger. The Tenders have equipped the creature with custom-made weapons, a shield, and an enchanted torc. The Minotaur now wields a mighty club, banded with metal and fixed with iron spikes. On its back hangs a quiver of oversized javelins, 4 in number with the same statistics as pila.

In its off-hand, the creature wields a thick, bronze shield emblazoned with a bull's head. With this, the Minotaur can attempt to parry 2 attacks, including missile attacks, every combat round. Lastly, the creature wears a Celtic torc as a nose ring, an enchanted adornment that surrounds the Minotaur in a cloak of shadows and grants it a +50% bonus to Hide and Sneak. However, the enchantment does not function when the wearer moves normally, such as when they are in combat, so the Minotaur must move slowly and carefully for the torc to work.

The Minotaur, Bull-headed Cretan

STR 22 CON 26 SIZ 20 INT 10 POW 10
DEX 14 Move 10 HP 23

Damage Bonus: +2D6

Weapons: Bite 60% 1D10
Spiked Club 50% 3D4+db
Gore 35% 2D6+db
Javelins (4) 35% 1D8+db

Skills: Hide 60%, Sneak 60%.

Armor: 8 points of hide, sinew, and muscle; Shield (30 HP).

Sanity Loss: 1/1D6 Sanity points to see the Minotaur.

Encountering the Minotaur

The Minotaur is under orders from Eihort not to kill anyone unless it must, to instead drive sacrifices to the center of the labyrinth. There Eihort delivers its ultimatum — become a host for its brood or be destroyed. The Minotaur is allowed to slay and devour any who refuse. The Minotaur agrees to this arrangement because it satisfies an urge deeper than hunger, family. The Minotaur sees the Great Old One as a loving, accepting father.

The investigators can allow the Minotaur to drive them to the center of the Labyrinth rather than offer resistance. The creature follows the investigators, blocking passages, howling

and threatening, driving them in the direction of its choosing. With its knowledge of the Labyrinth's twists and turns, coupled with the power of its magical torc, the Minotaur can easily evade the investigators. It enjoys toying with its victims, appearing suddenly, then rushing away and vanishing only to reappear from another direction. However, this lasts only until the humans arm themselves.

As soon as the Minotaur sees a prisoner wielding anything resembling a weapon, it bellows a terrifying roar which echoes throughout the Labyrinth. This means the hunt is about to begin. Eihort considers any armed sacrifices to be a threat, which it allows the Minotaur to eliminate.

Fighting the Minotaur

Once the investigators appear armed, the Minotaur stops at nothing to destroy them. It hurls javelins at them, then closes in for melee and parries the investigators' attacks with its shield. The creature tries to pick off its opponents one by one, isolating stragglers if possible. However, true to its nature as half-bull, once the Minotaur enters combat it never retreats, fighting to the death. The Minotaur has died many times, and The Tenders have always resurrected it, so the creature no longer fears death.

If the Minotaur is defeated, it cries out loudly as it dies. Its mournful braying grows weaker and weaker until silenced by its final breaths. These calls carry throughout the Labyrinth, signaling to The Tenders and Eihort that the Minotaur has fallen. The Tenders make the final, desperate preparations to protect their dark sovereign and recover the Minotaur's remains.

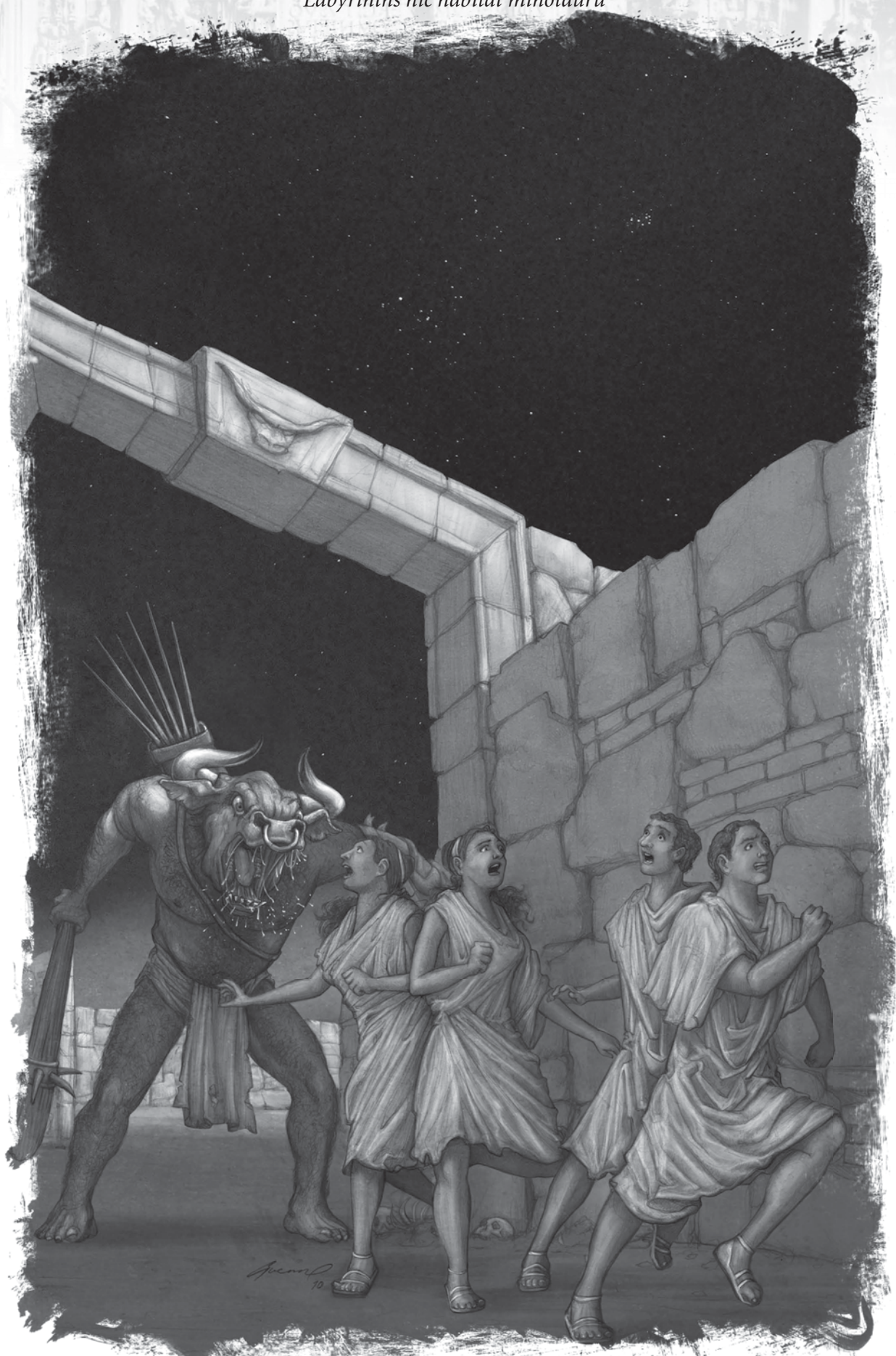
Part Five - Master of the Labyrinth

The Tenders, or what is left of them, make ready to defend their god. The strength of this defense varies drastically, depending on the success or failure of the strike team's mission. The investigators will be reunited with their patron, Lurca Hedeia, and possibly any other NPCs the Emissaries of Eihort abducted during their attack in Ostia. The Great Old One Eihort simply waits, confident that if the investigators reach it, they will either become new hosts for its brood or die a quick death.

The Tenders Betrayed

If the strike team's mission was a success, then the cult has been dealt a near-fatal blow. Only a handful of cultists would have avoided the attack. Most of the members are dead, succumbing to violent cramps, vomiting, and diarrhea. Nearly all the surviving cultists are so weakened they can barely stand. They attempt to conceal this by hiding behind their robes and masks, but in truth they are in no condition to battle anyone. Keepers should use the poisoned set of stats

Labyrinths hic habitat minotauru



for the following encounters against the cult (see **The Cult Closes In** and **The Tenders' Last Stand**).

The Tenders Whole

If the investigators in the strike team did not undertake the mission to poison the cult, or failed in their attempt to do so, The Tenders remain at full strength. Two groups of cultists take up position to block the investigators' advance toward the Great Old One Eihort (see **The Cult Closes In** and **Ultimatum**). The cult will strike with its best warriors, the ambush personally commanded by The Tenders' two leaders, Agathias and Sergius Messalla. In this case, Keepers should use the unaffected set of stats for the following encounters against the cult (see **The Cult Closes In** and **The Tenders' Last Stand**).

The Minotaur's Body

Without the Minotaur, The Tenders have lost their primary purpose. Although they also now serve Eihort, caring for the Minotaur remains their first priority. The cult's leaders can resurrect the creature, but they need its body to do so. Most of the remaining cultists launch a mission to recover the Minotaur's corpse. This action benefits the investigators since the cult diverts personnel away from them to focus instead on securing the Minotaur's remains. To the cult, the actions of the investigators are simply setbacks. As long as the Minotaur is restored, the Cult of The Tenders shall continue.

The Cult Closes In

As the investigators near the center of the Labyrinth, they enter a chamber with 4 exits. Suddenly, a ram's horn sounds, followed by a battle cry and the thundering footsteps of charging attackers. Robed cultists pour from each passage wearing bull masks and wielding khopesh swords. With their intimate knowledge of the Labyrinth, The Tenders have managed to surround the investigators. The cultists should outnumber the investigators by at least 3-1 and seem to be an overwhelming force.

If the cult has been successfully poisoned, all of these attackers are terribly ill, suffering the debilitating effects of Hades Tears poisoning. Their blows are weak, and their stamina poor. The cultists do little more than throw themselves at the investigators without regard for their own survival. The battle is likely to be brief since each cultist has only 4 HP. If the slain cultists are examined after the battle, their skin appears grayish and sweaty, their eyes watery and bloodshot. Investigators making a successful Natural World, Medicine, or Potions roll realize the cultists were in a gravely weakened condition due to near-fatal poisoning.

Poisoned Tender Cultist (3 or more per investigator)

STR 7	CON 7	SIZ 11	INT 12	POW 12
DEX 6	APP 6	EDU 11	SAN 0	HP 4

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapons: Fist/Punch 35%, 1D3
Khopesh 35%, 1D8

Armor: None.

Skills: Conceal 10%, Dodge 12%.

If the cultists have not been poisoned, they rush forward howling a battle cry. They give no quarter, fighting on until either they or the investigators are killed or rendered unconscious. Any investigators captured by The Tenders are dragged before Agathias, who orders his men to behead them.

Unpoisoned Tender Cultist (3 or more per investigator)

STR 14	CON 15	SIZ 14	INT 10	POW 11
DEX 12	APP 11	EDU 11	SAN 0	HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist 80% 1D3+db

Grapple 60%, damage special

Head Butt 40% ,1D4+db

Khopesh 60%, 1D8+db

Armor: 5 points of Leather and Rings.

Skills: Dodge 30%.

The Tenders' Last Stand

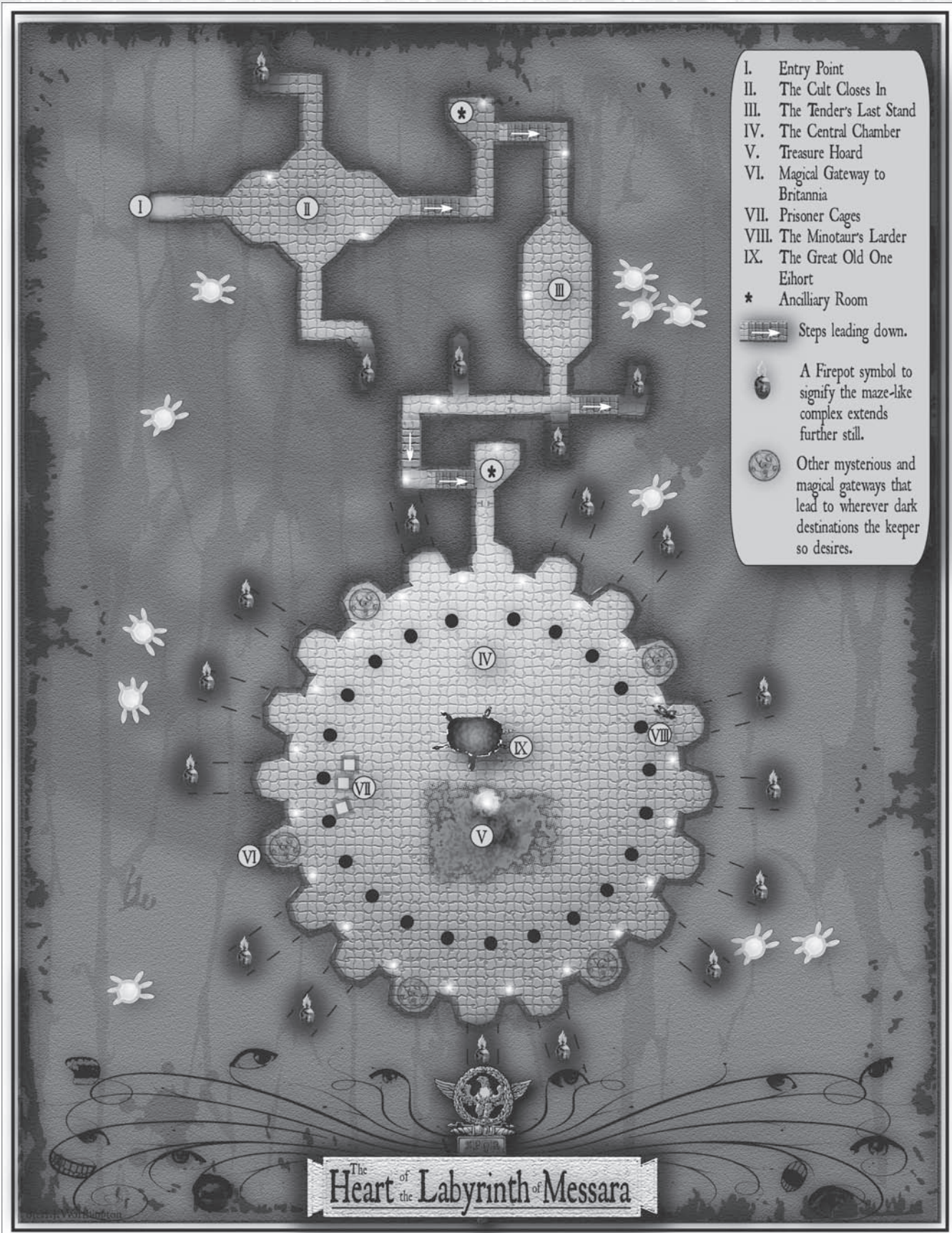
Just before the entrance to the center of the Labyrinth, the investigators come to a chamber brightly lit by torches. Turning a corner, they see Lurca Hedeia and any other captured NPCs about 20 yards ahead, securely tied to wooden planks shaped like an X. The captives are filthy, look exhausted, and wear ragged clothing, but they are alive. The prisoners are soaked from head to toe in oil, glistening in the torchlight.

Before the investigators and the prisoners stand 4 burly cultists dressed in robes and masks. They wield khopesh blades and are in perfect health, even if The Tenders were poisoned. These four cultists were on guard duty during the feast and were unaffected by the attack. Behind the men are 2 other masked and robed figures, the cult's leaders, Sergius Messalla and Agathias. They stay near their hostages, Agathias holding a lit torch just above a puddle of oil pooled below the oil-soaked prisoners. The threat is obvious; if Agathias drops the torch, the oil will catch fire, and the prisoners will be immolated. If the cult has been poisoned, Agathias is sitting on a stool, and Sergius Messalla is leaning heavily upon a staff. If the cult has not been poisoned, each man is armed with a staff and a khopesh, ready to defend himself if necessary.

Ultimatum

Agathias orders the investigators to surrender, telling them to toss their weapons aside and fall to their knees. He threatens to drop the torch and set all the prisoners on fire if the investigators do not obey. He says, "It's a horrible way to die. I've seen it happen. Would you like to?"

Lurca Hedeia faces death with stoic resolve. She calls out for the investigators to attack, telling them her death will be an honorable end and she welcomes joining Lurco in Elysium. "Do not give in to these cowardly dogs!" she cries out before Messalla knocks her unconscious with a blow from his staff. If there are other NPC prisoners, the Keeper can take whatever actions seem most in character for them or best maintains the tension. They might beg for the investigators



to save them, urge the investigators to give in to Agathias' demands, or cry out tearful professions of love, prayers, and farewells. Keepers should have some of the captives' cries conflict, forcing the investigators to make their own choice.

Agathias promises to release the prisoners unharmed if the investigators surrender. Investigators who make a successful Insight roll judge this to be a truthful statement. If the investigators comply with these demands the 4 armed cultists charge, raising their blades with murderous intent. The investigators must make DEX x 5 checks to stand and re-arm themselves before being attacked. Investigators who have surrendered and take no action to defend themselves are killed, beheaded by the cultists. If the investigators refuse to surrender, Agathias waves the torch menacingly, repeating his demands. At the end of 3 rounds, he orders his guards to attack, provided the investigators have not already done so.

The Bluff

Unbeknownst to the investigators and even the hostages themselves, no one is in any danger of being burned alive. The oil soaking them is olive oil, nearly impossible to ignite with a torch. The entire scene is an elaborately staged hoax, a hastily implemented bluff to trick the investigators into surrendering. That's the good news; the bad news is the reason why. The Great Old One Eihort expressly forbids its worshippers from harming its brood in any way. Lurca Hedeia and any other prisoner here are already hosts, implanted with Eihort's brood.

Combat

The four guards fight savagely to the death. Once combat begins, Agathias and Messalla shout threats and orders, staying safely out of the fray. They may support the cult's warriors with their magic, since each knows several spells. However, this is only if they haven't been poisoned. If they have been poisoned, they are too weak to attempt casting spells.

If half their guards are defeated, Messalla and Agathias try to escape, fleeing as quickly as they can down a random corridor into the labyrinth. Determined investigators might catch up to them, especially if the pair is suffering from the lingering effects of poisoning. If attacked in such a state, they offer what meager resistance they can manage.

Unpoisoned Tender Cultist (4)

STR 14 CON 15 SIZ 14 INT 10 POW 11
DEX 12 APP 11 EDU 11 SAN 0 HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist 80% 1D3+db

Grapple 60%, damage special

Head Butt 40%, 1D4+db

Khopesh 60%, 1D8+db

Armor: 5 points of Leather and Rings.

Skills: Dodge 30%.

Sergius Messalla (Poisoned / Unpoisoned), Businessman and second-in-command of The Tenders

STR 6/12 CON 5/11 SIZ 14/14 INT 14/14 POW 16/16

DEX 8/13 APP 6/11 EDU 14/14 SAN 0/0 HP 10/13

Damage Bonus: None/+1D4

Weapons (Poisoned): Fist/Punch 40%, 1D3

Staff 40%, 1D6

Knife 45%, 1D4

Weapons (Unpoisoned): Fist/Punch 60% 1D3+db

Khopesh 65%, 1D8+db

Knife 65%, 1D4+db

Armor: None/5 points of Leather and Rings.

Skills: Accounting 65%, Bargain 70%, Cthulhu Mythos 16%, Fast

Talk 50%, Hide 50%, Insight 65%, Listen 50%, Occult 40%,

Persuade 40%, Sneak 55%, Spot Hidden 50%.

Spells: Ariadne's Twine, Cause Blindness, Contact Eihort, Dominate, Food of Life, Resurrection.

Agathais (Poisoned / Unpoisoned), Leader of The Tenders

STR 4/10 CON 5/11 SIZ 11/11 INT 17/17 POW 20/20

DEX 7/12 APP 5/10 EDU 15/15 SAN 0/0 HP 8/11

Damage Bonus: -1D4/None.

Weapons (Poisoned): Fist/Punch 30% 1D3+db

Staff 30%, 1D6+db

Knife 45%, 1D4+db

Weapons (Unpoisoned): Fist 50% 1D3+db

Staff 50%, 1D6+db

Knife 65%, 1D4+db

Armor: None/None.

Skills: Conceal 35%, Dodge 20%, Fast Talk 80%, First Aid 40%,

Hide 70%, Insight 80%, Listen 50%, Occult 50%, Persuade 60%,

Potions 70%, Sneak 55%, Spot Hidden 50%, Cthulhu Mythos

26%.

Spells: Ariadne's Twine, Augury, Bat Form, Cause Blindness, Contact Eihort, Dominate, Food of Life, Resurrection, Summon Typhoon, Telepathic Sending.

The Center of the Maze

The investigators have traveled far, fought hard, weathered storms, faced death countless times, and overcome tremendous challenges to reach this point. They now stand at the doorway to the center of the Labyrinth of Messara. Lurca Hedeia and any other rescued NPCs will remain hidden just outside this chamber during the investigators' final confrontation with Eihort. They are far too weak to move quickly or very far without assistance. The investigators, if they survive the coming encounter, will have an opportunity to tend to them later (see **Lurca Hedeia and Other NPCs**).

The central chamber is roughly octagonal with a domed ceiling nearly 100 feet high. An eerie light emanates from a ball of magical luminescence hovering high above the center of the room. Many large pillars support the ceiling here, and 20 arched doorways lead into the chamber, each topped with a carved animal.

This hall contains wonders and horrors, great rewards and even greater evil. This is where the Great Old One Eihort has established its lair in the Mediterranean, giving it considerable access and influence within the Roman Empire. The investigators have the chance to drive off the malevolent entity and win justice for Arrius Lurco.

Treasure

The chamber's most prominent feature is an enormous pile of treasure. Over the centuries, the Minotaur has hoarded items from its victims. The Tenders also made tributes to the creature, and then to the Great Old One Eihort. Coins, jewelry, statues, paintings, delicate works of pottery, and glass pile high here. It's a king's ransom, an unimaginable sum of wealth. Unfortunately, Eihort, who is by now expecting the investigators, guards it.

Prisoners

Eight cages stand in a corner here with two holding prisoners, a man and a woman. The cages can be forced open by inflicting 10 points of damage to the lock or 20 points of damage to the cage itself. The prisoners are too weak to stand, nearly dead from starvation. Both are insane from the traumatic events of the past few weeks since their capture by The Tenders. They are the two remaining members of Societas Cryptaegidis in Crete, Sosius Cotta and Kesi. Like Hedeia and the other NPCs, Eihort has implanted them with its brood.

The Minotaur's Larder

Two corpses hang head down in separate doorways. Their ankles have been tied together, and they've been hoisted up like slaughtered livestock. That's what they are, placed here as food for the Minotaur.

One body is Hostilius, the fourth member of the missing Societas Cryptaegidis team. His body is flattened and crushed, damage that happened in combat with Eihort. Caelia also hangs here, her body covered with dried vomit and blood if she took poison. If the investigators killed her themselves, Caelia's body instead shows the wounds they inflicted. She and Hostilius can easily be untied or cut down.

The Great Old One Eihort

After a moment or two, the investigators hear the approach of something heavy, the ground under their feet vibrating with its every footfall. The steps have a disturbing, unnatural rhythm, as if they're produced by a single entity with multiple legs placed haphazardly under its massive bulk. A mammoth figure lumbers into the investigators' view.

The creature is somewhere between the size of a rhino and an elephant. Pale white and oval, its mass shifts and drips like fat or melted wax. The creature moves on multiple legs that protrude and retract from its body as it travels. The number of legs constantly changes as the abomination travels, anywhere between five and nine. Eyes rise to the surface of its form, opening to peer out at its surroundings before they sink back down and are replaced by others. The investigators must make a 1D6/1D20 Sanity check for seeing the Great Old One Eihort.

The Offer

Before the investigators can react, they feel searing pain like a hot needle driven through their skulls. It causes no dam-

age, but stuns them for 1 round. A voice invades their minds, booming, "HUMANS". Eihort has no real language; it merely establishes a psychic link with the investigators and conveys information in the way their minds can best comprehend it. The entity then delivers its message:

"You stand before me, Eihort, God of the Labyrinth. You have no hope. You cannot resist my power. You have two choices. Accept my children into your bodies, become hosts for my brood, and live. Or refuse and be destroyed. Choose."

If any investigator agrees to become a host for Eihort's brood, a pseudopod forms from the Great Old One's body, tipped with a dozen tiny, sharp needles dripping with POT 15 paralytic poison. Eihort taps the investigator's neck with this appendage, injecting the poison and paralyzing him for 2D6 hours. If an investigator refuses the bargain or attacks the Great Old One, the final battle begins (see **The Final Battle**). The Great Old One waits to implant his brood until all the investigators are either safely paralyzed or dead.

If this happens, Eihort's spiked, needle-tipped pseudopod changes subtly. The needles retract, and the end of the pseudopod swells into a nipple-tipped, gourd-like organ that's pressed against the paralyzed victim's mouth, pumping thousands of brood into his body. The investigator feels incredible pain as the brood travel down his throat and into his abdomen. Soon the twisting, rolling sensation subsides as the brood settle in for their gestation period. Before the poison wears off, Eihort casts the Cloud Memory spell on the subject, causing him to forget the terrible bargain he's made.

The Final Battle

The Great Old One Eihort has two formidable physical attacks: crushing its opponents and delivering a fearsome bite. It can make a single crushing attack that hits every investigator within a 10-foot radius. Eihort can also form a set of horrific jaws that telescope forward on a thick, trunk-like pseudopod. The jagged teeth within this maw drip with a POT 15 paralytic poison.

The investigators have three things in their favor. First, Eihort made its offer at a distance and cannot close quickly, so they have 1 round of action before the Great Old One can make a physical attack. Next, Eihort is neither quick nor nimble. Possessing a DEX of only 12, the investigators likely make their attacks before the Great Old One does in the combat round. Last, in dealing with humans the Great Old One is incredibly overconfident. Few have dared oppose Eihort, and none have presented any serious threat. Therefore, the Great Old One Eihort does not retreat once combat begins.

Eihort, God of the Labyrinth

STR 44 CON 80 SIZ 50 INT 25 POW 30
DEX 12 Move 8 (surfacing)/1 (burrowing) HP 65

Damage Bonus: +5D6

Weapons: Bite 70% 5D3 + paralytic poison POT 15

Crush 85% 5D6 to all in 10-foot radius

Armor: None. All physical attacks do minimum damage. Additionally, Eihort regenerates 3 HP per combat round. Brought to 0 hit points, it remains ooze into the ground, and it regenerates somewhere far within the Earth.



Tyrannus Labyrinthi

Spells: Cloud Memory, all Contact Deity spells, Create Gate, Summon/Bind Chthonian, Summon/Bind Ghoul.

Sanity Loss: 1D6/1D20 Sanity points to see Eihort.

The Death of a God

Investigators who defeat Eihort witness the Great Old One dissolve into a puddle of living ooze. The puddle separates into individual drops that seek any cracks or crevasses in the stone floor. In 3 rounds, the last of these vanish from view, seeping into hidden places deep within the Earth where Eihort can slowly regenerate. To fully re-form, the Great Old One requires a thousand moons, or a little more than 83 years. Eihort informs the investigators of this as its psychic link slowly ends, “I cannot die. I will return and destroy you all. In one thousand of your moon’s passings, you will suffer my wrath and vengeance.” The Great Old One does not comprehend that in a thousand moons, the investigators will likely be dead already. The investigators have rid the world of the Great Old One, for a while at least, and can enjoy a few rounds of calm before the tremors begin.

The Earthquake

Although overconfident, Eihort did make preparations in case it should be driven from the Labyrinth of Messara — not that it ever imagined humans could be the cause. The Great Old One summoned and bound a group of adult chthonians in the regions below the labyrinth. Once defeated, Eihort commands these minions to use their powers to destroy everything above them. What begins as tremors quickly

becomes a devastating earthquake. The massive treasure chamber at the center of the labyrinth starts to collapse. The investigators must act quickly or be buried alive.

Escape

In 12 rounds, the chamber collapses, crushing the investigators or trapping them beneath thousands of tons of rubble if they do not escape in time. The key lies in Caelia’s final words, if the investigators worked with her in striking against The Tenders. She knew one-fourth of the arched doorways leading out of the center of the labyrinth are actually magical gates. The archway adorned with the emblem of the hare leads to safety (see **Reaching Safety**). The other 4 magical gates lead anywhere the Keeper wants, such as Antarctica, Leng, Yuggoth, or Carcosa. The 15 remaining archways are non-magical and lead back into the labyrinth.

Rescue, Recovery, and Looting

Unless the investigators help them to safety, Lurca Hedeia, Sosius Cotta, Kesi, and any other NPCs kidnapped by the cultists are killed when the earthquake collapses this section of the labyrinth.

There is also the matter of the two dead bodies, the Societas Cryptaegidis agent Hostilius and Caelia. Caelia taught the Resurrection spell to at least one of the investigators in the hope that if she died, he would recover her body and resurrect her. Unless the investigators recover the bodies and transport them to safety, both Hostilius and Caelia will be lost.

The investigators might also want to take some of the treasure. There is much to choose from and too little time to make careful selections. Any investigators simply grabbing what looks to be valuable come away with 1D100 x 50 sestertii worth of treasure. However, those who follow the instructions in Caelia's message find a massive chest bearing the mark of the Capricorn. It is locked and heavy, requiring STR 20 to break open and STR 28 to transport. This was once part of the treasury of the luckless IV Scythica Legio. This chest was lost when the Parthians defeated the legion in 62 CE. Just how The Tenders came to possess it is a mystery. The chest contains 25,000 aurei.

Reaching Safety

Those passing through the archway marked with the hare are drained of 2 MP. They experience a spinning feeling, like falling weightless, before suddenly appearing elsewhere. The investigators and any NPCs who escape with them are now in a different underground area. However, the smell of fresh air and the sound of birds easily lead them to a nearby exit.

Outside, the investigators see green, rolling fields in a valley stretching below them, with misty forests in the distance. The air hangs heavy with moisture, and the temperature is much cooler than it was on the island of Crete. With a successful Spot Hidden roll, the investigators see a Roman-style road about 2 miles away.

Britannia

The road runs east, and the investigators can travel upon it either east or west. Those going west eventually come upon a detachment of Roman legionaries, hard at work extending the road. This is a construction detail of the XX Valeria Victrix Legio, under the command of a centurion named Vibius Cinna. The soldiers direct all questions to their commanding officer. Cinna speaks with the investigators, explaining that they are in the province of Britannia. He gives the investigators directions to the nearby settlement of Viroconium.

Investigators who head east begin to see scattered farms after several miles. Soon, a Roman-style town comes into view. The investigators can stop at any of the farms or go directly to the town, Viroconium, in the province of Britannia. The investigators are safe. Their quest to defeat the Great Old One Eihort is complete. The adventure is over.

In Closing

Although the campaign is over, much remains unresolved. The rescued NPCs must be nursed back to health, or even resurrected, and the investigators must tend to their own wounds, both physical and mental. Any looted treasure taken from the Labyrinth, especially the lost treasury of the IV Scythica Legio, must be divided. Finally, the investigators must decide what to do next.

Lurca Hedeia and Other NPCs

Any NPCs rescued from The Tenders are in urgent need of

attention. Luckily, they have no recollection of the encounter with Eihort, their memories erased by the Great Old One's Cloud Memory spell, so they remain sane. They are physically weakened from the abuse and mistreatment they suffered, but that heals in time.

However, the NPC's are now hosts for Eihort's Brood, having been implanted 1D4 days earlier. Unless the investigators cast Balk Brood on the NPC's, they do not survive. Within days, the hosts begin to have horrible nightmares, dread glimpses and insights, which inflicts 1D3 Cthulhu Mythos points while costing the NPC's 1D4 Sanity points. In 1D100 months, the brood burst from their bodies, and the NPC's die agonizing deaths.

Once healed and purged of Eihort's brood, the NPC's resume their lives. Lurca Hedeia travels back to her home and business in Ostia. She invites the investigators, especially any who are her adopted children, to return with her. She hopes the investigators begin living with her and assisting her in running her garum business. Once home in Ostia, with access to her coffers, Hedeia pays the investigators the agreed 30,000 sestertii for avenging the death of her beloved Quintus Arrius Lurco.

Sosius Cotta and Kesi

The two agents of Societas Cryptaegidis are in very bad shape. They've been beaten, starved, and implanted with Eihort's brood. It takes a month of healing before Cotta and Kesi fully restore their strength. They must also be purged of the brood by the Balk Brood spell. The agents express their deepest gratitude to the investigators for their rescue and assistance in their recovery.

The pair does not plan to return to Gortyn or Crete. Being transported to the province of Britannia gives them a rare opportunity. Societas Cryptaegidis has long wanted to establish a presence here. Cotta sends word back to Ceadda and Andrea that they are now in charge of the society's operations in Gortyn — whether they like it or not. Sosius Cotta asks the investigators to join him and Kesi in establishing a new Societas Cryptaegidis chapter in Britannia. If the investigators aren't already members, he formally invites them into the organization. If the investigators do not want to remain in Britannia, Cotta still invites them to join the society and be stationed elsewhere, or become a travelling chapter of the society.

Hostilius

If the investigators recovered the body of Hostilius, the slain Societas Cryptaegidis agent, the investigators have two choices. They can lay his body to rest or use the Resurrection spell to restore him to life. If the investigators consult Kesi and Cotta, the agents urge them to resurrect their companion Hostilius. Kesi explains, "We need him now more than ever before." If resurrection is not offered, Cotta and Kesi bury or cremate their fallen friend with as much dignity as possible.

Caelia

If the investigators recovered Caelia's body from the Laby-

rinth of Messara, they face the same choice as with Hostilius. She clearly hoped to be resurrected by the investigators and is eternally grateful to them if they do so. Keepers can have her attempt to remain close to the investigators, join Cotta's team, or simply take her leave and vanish into the vast stretches of the Empire. Her actions hinge on the investigators' reactions to and opinions of her at this time. Whatever happens, Caelia now knows peace for the first time since her husband's death.

The Loot

The investigators have a fair amount of wealth, both from Lurca Hedeia's reward and any treasures taken from the Labyrinth of Messara. However, care must be taken. Roman authorities might have some questions about how the investigators acquired so much wealth so quickly. If the authorities ever realize part of the lost treasury of the IV Scythica Legio was recovered, it could spark a formal investigation. However, with as much as a quarter of a million sestertii in their possession, careful investigators can easily retire to lives of comfort.

The Heroes

The investigators can move on to other adventures; travel home, wherever that may be; or settle somewhere with their wealth. They can also join Societas Cryptaegidis. With the investigators' vast experience, they would likely be made commanders and tasked with setting up their own teams somewhere in the Empire. Or the investigators can retire, comfortable in the knowledge that they have freed mankind

from a great evil for the rest of their natural lives.

The Villains

A god is dead, but it will not always be so. In less than a century, the Great Old One Eihort will return to once again plague humanity. The Tenders also survive to repair and rebuild the Labyrinth of Messara. They will resurrect the Minotaur, the focus of their cult since its earliest days. The investigators' victories are fleeting. The forces of evil may suffer setbacks, but they never know real defeat. The best mankind can hope for is time.

Sanity Awards

- For defeating the Emissaries of Eihort +1D6 SAN
- For destroying the Minotaur +1D6 SAN
- For defeating Agathias and/or Messalla. +1 point each
- For destroying the Great Old One Eihort +1D20 SAN
- For saving Lurca Hedeia. +1D3 SAN
- For saving any other NPC
from the Labyrinth +1 point each

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THE LEGACY OF ARRIUS LURCO

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- Quintus Arrius Lurco

A wealthy patrician, who owns a controlling interest in the Reds Chariot Racing faction, vanished in Crete. Weeks later, he was found wandering, without a memory of where he had been or what had happened to him. Arrius Lurco went home and tried to resume his normal life, but soon the nightmares and erratic behavior began. Investigators are thus drawn into an epic struggle against sinister cults, horrific creatures and the awesome powers of a Great Old One.

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