



DEGENESIS

IN THY BLOOD



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MARKO DJURDJEVIC & ALEXANDER MALIK

BORCA

THE REAPER'S BLOW
(UNDERGROUND)

HELLVETIKA

THE HARD PATH

TERRITORIAL REGION
III

BORCAN BORDER

TIRANO
OUTPOST

BERGAMO

ROPPE
CUSTOMS STATION

TRADE ROUTE TO OSMAN

TRADE ROUTE TO OSMAN

MORENO
OUTPOST

CLAN MARCH

OLD
IMAGE WALL X

LOMBARD
BOG



PURGARE

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CHAPTER

OIL AND FIRE





DEATH OF A BAPTIST

The Baptist Altair is dead, killed in Lucatore, an Anabaptist stronghold in the Purgan Alps. Yet this mountain village is much more than a crime scene, it was his seat of power: The man who guided the fate of the Anabaptists together with seven brethren was born in Lucatore. Here in the mountains, his stellar rise through the ranks of his Cult began. For decades, he guided its fate, made history by leading the Anabaptists onto the Adriatic battlefields, only to negotiate the long-desired peace with his former enemies, the Jehammedans, in the end. His efforts united his family, the Benesato Clan, like a noose that ties together a bundle of twigs until they finally fully merged with the Anabaptist Cult. Finally, his Cloister came up with the recipe for the Elysian oils.

But now, everything has changed within a day — a cowardly killer's hand has struck down the powerful Neognostic in his own hometown.

While Lucatore is stunned, Scrapper broadcasts, outriders and courier pigeons spread the word of the crime. From all corners of the known world, a cry of outrage rings out.

The Anabaptists are deeply terrified—they have lost a man who was almost a messiah to them. But the other Cults are shocked, as well. Someone dared to attack a leader of a Cult. The fragile balance between the various factions is threatened; false accusations might lead to new wars.

Lucatore itself is unique to the followers of the Broken Cross. Its Oil Mills produce the Elysian oils – core element of their rites and war implement of the Anabaptists. But Altair's death makes the mountain village the center of attention for various factions. The Spitalians want to find out who killed the dignitary. The Cult has fought the Jehammedans in the Adriatic Basin together with the Anabaptists. They need to know if this murder threatens their alliance. But the widow of the deceased man opposes an investigation and insists on keeping up the time of mourning, no matter what the cost. The Chroniclers insist on seeing things for themselves. Secretly, they activate an undercover agent in the mountains. While the Fragment Modus and the Council of Emanations calculate the potential effects

of the murder in Cathedral City, the spy tries to get a first-hand impression of the events that occurred. The Hellvetics whose nearest bases are only a few kilometers from the site of the events are worried. They have pacified the area around Lucatore. Important trade routes run close to the village. Major changes are unwanted, just as political firebrands are.

In the West, Vespaccio, the White Wolf of Bergamo, rears his head and gazes at Lucatore as if it was a wounded doe he can swallow whole. For too long, he has been waiting for a chance to retaliate against the Anabaptists for what they did to his family, Clan Lombardi. He sends his daughter, the viper called Gala Lombardi, to Lucatore to help him reconquer regions he traditionally considers his.

Altair's death is not only relevant for the Cults that are immediately involved. He needs a successor, a new Baptist must be elected. Altair was a bright star; he cannot simply be replaced by an inexperienced newcomer. Who will be chosen? What direction will the Cult take under the "new management"?

Ascetic or Orgiastic – what doctrine will he belong to and will he try to make the Cult focus more on "his" morality? Will this change in leadership be felt with regards to the Cult's relationship to the Chroniclers and Jehammedans?

Then there is the question of the murderer. The search for the perpetrator will weigh heavily not only on Lucatore; it will soon threaten to tear all of Purgare apart. It will poison the relationship between Cults, Clans and the followers of the Broken Cross. The questions keep getting more pressing, but all of the answers are wrong.

Neither political intrigues nor power games are behind the Baptist's death, but a primeval human force: the love of a mother who will stop at nothing to save her child.

The events leading up to Altair's death have started a long time ago. Altair's wife Neva, the Iron Emissary, is the key — alienation, treason and danger threatening their child are the incentives of the crime. She did not strike him dead; she only commanded another to do so and thus unleashed a powerful vortex that pulls everybody into this hotbed of violence and secrets.



HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The situation is desperate. As long as Altair's wife opposes an investigation, rumors run rampant: Has the Baptist's brother, Ennio Benesato, killed him? Or are the Lombardi involved? Was it the Jehammedans' vengeance for the sack of the Adria? Were the Chroniclers behind the deed?

Someone has to shoulder the inhuman task of unraveling this coil of guilt, hatred and upheaval that Lucatore has become tangled in.

Ignoring the time of grief, the Cults send an independent commission of investigators across the Alps. There, they are being welcomed the Purgan way. Unfriendly looks, locked doors, faces gazing

into emptiness without saying a word. The members of the commission have to quickly find a way to stay afloat. Otherwise, they will drown in this flood of conspiracy and resentment. Welcome to Lucatore!

This book leads new players and seasoned veterans alike deeper into the world of DEGENESIS.

"OIL & FIRE" describes Northern Purgare and the city of Lucatore — the starting point of the campaign.

"SINS OF THE FATHERS" details the events leading to the murder and introduces the various factions and antagonists. The Adventure "IN THY NAME" is designed to help you become more familiar

with the world of DEGENESIS as the players try to find the killer.

The last chapter, "BLOOD LEGACY", contains material that will help you continue the campaign on your own.

The contents of this book will supply you with ideas for many evenings of gaming. If you want to play the Adventure as written, page 21 offers you two story hooks with different Character motivations.

You and your players may also freely explore Lucatore and its surroundings or introduce the events of IN THY BLOOD as side notes in your own campaign.



THE SHORTCUT

The steep slope is the last obstacle for Remiggio. He kicks loose a stone, it tumbles down, hits a rock and rolls between the treetops way below. With his last remnants of energy, he pushes against his donkey. The cargo on the animal's back creaks and dangerously sways from one side to the other. There is a crash, and the donkey croaks like a drowning bird. Only a few more steps, and it will be done.

Remiggio gasps loudly, raises his eyes and recoils. A bleached skull on a bleached border marker grins at him. Someone has painted a broken cross onto its forehead. A way marker. Borderland. Beyond is the Anabaptists' territory.

The way up here has been exhausting. He has left Bergamo four days ago and took the Clan March: the old way that once led here from the west. He looks down into the valley and cannot decide what he needs less – the sticky swamp he had to wade through the day before or the steep crag he has just climbed. Ceaseless torture.

Massaging his calves, he looks east. Mountains everywhere. He knows their names. On the horizon, Remiggio sees the three peaks called Andring, Borreo and Vargas.

His destination lies in the valley they surround: Lucatore.

His parents have taught him that the old Clans originated up here and that the mountains are named after their ancestors. How he hated travelling to goddamn Lucatore with them. Month after month, always the same martyrdom. Now they have finally died so he can at least make some profit with the business he inherited from them.

With a vengeance, Remiggio kicks the skull down the slope. Damn Anabaptists. He grabs the bridle of his donkey and walks on, wants to reach Lucatore before noon to be able to sell his goods on the market: crockery. Remiggio knows that crockery is always in demand at Lucatore.

Like every month he comes here, he takes the forest shortcut. The terrain is easy, and if he doesn't lose his way, it will save him three hours. In his head, he adds up the dinars he will make by selling the goods he brings, subtracts twenty percent – some of the containers will be broken – and tries to think of what he needs to buy for his journey back to Bergamo.

His legs are heavy, the muscles ache. In a few years, he will not be able to make this journey anymore. The under-



growth is still damp from the rain of a few days ago. Remiggio has problems leading the animal. He is sweating; his nose is dry from the cold mountain air. Break. He needs water. He wipes his brow with his cap. Nobody on the road, not even birds are singing in the trees. He stares into the forest. The trees stare back. What was that?

Remiggio listens, narrowing his eyes. There is the sound again, floating on the wind — a jingling from afar. The hairs on the back of his neck rise. It sounds eerie and strange. He takes two steps away from his donkey; his gaze searches the tree trunks. Then he sees them. Chords with shards tied to their ends, hanging from the trees and turning in the wind. They sway back and forth, hitting each other with a clinking sound.

What nonsense, Remiggio thinks, who would bother to build something like this for nothing? The wind blows harder now. A shard swings like a pendulum and meets a ray of light falling through the tree in a weird angle. The ray abruptly fractures and fans out, creating bizarre patterns and shapes in the air. The aura scintillates in front of Remiggio's eyes, his heart starts pounding. He has never

seen anything like this! With mouth and eyes wide open he stumbles backwards, watching other shards become part of the phenomenon. Black, lackluster beads form in the air, wavering as if frozen, swallowing more rays of light. Reflections flash, blinding him.

He runs to his donkey, pulls on the bridle with both hands. Then, there is a crack in his ear. Pain as if someone pushed a searing hot blade into it. His knees buckle. He can barely breathe, gasps for air, every breath is torture. The animal balks, whinnies and throws its head. Remiggio puts all his weight to the rope, barely manages three steps, and then everything is suddenly over. As quickly as it all began, the forest is silent again.

From the trees, he hears birds singing. Remiggio is deathly pale; he rubs his eyes and his forehead, poking one finger into his itching ear. What in the world was that? He straightens, takes his stick and hits the donkey's side. Remiggio's legs are still trembling. Skeptically, he searches for his pulse, shaking his head and huffing. He needs sugar, needs to get away from here. Damn forest. This was the last time he took this shortcut.

NORTHERN PURGARE

In comparison to the war-torn battlefields of the Adriatic Lowlands, the area around Lucatore is a place of unity and wealth. The immediate vicinity of the foothills of Territorial Region III offers an enormous amount of protection to the area, as the Hellvetics do not tolerate any turmoil in front of their gates. There is peace here, at least on the surface.

The last of the wild Clans have been driven away decades ago or carried to the Adriatic Lowlands by the Anabaptists' missionary efforts, and the region's ancient families have all converted to the Neognostic faith. The Benesato who have always been one of the most powerful families and are based in Lucatore have even gone one step further: almost all of the family joined the Anabaptists – a glorious example for all those who hesitate, if not for the Lombardi Clan.

Bergamo's ruling family so far has withstood all missionary efforts. Even worse, they turned Bergamo into a haven for the Jehammedans. A shadow reaching east, but not powerful enough to darken the beacons of the Neognosis.

LUCATORE FACTSHEET

CITY: Lucatore, Tech-Level III

PROVINCE: Northern Purgare/Dolomite Alps

INHABITANTS: 3.000 in the city, roughly 10.000 within the province

POPULATION OF THE PROVINCE: Clan Benesato/ dominant, Clan Lombardi/scattered, Anabaptists/ dominant, Hellvetics/scattered, Spitalians/scattered, small Clans/reclusive

RULER: Ennio Benesato, governor of Lucatore

REPRESENTATIVE: Neva, the Iron Emissary

SPECIAL: Fortified walls, Cloister, Elysian Gardens

TRADE / GOODS: Ores and smithery, wheat, cattle, pottery, grease, timber products, distillate, medicinal herbs, peat moss, Adriatic peat and Elysian oils

CITY GUARD: 50 Orgiastics, led by Lucio Bastardo (can increase tenfold within a week in times of danger. When necessary, Orgiastics from the surrounding villages within the province are mustered.)

ARTIFACT TRADE: almost none

COMMUNICATION: Scrapper radio network connection to Cathedral City, shortwave network connection to Roppen Alpine passage, outrider to Vivaco (once a week)

TRADE ROUTE TO OSMAN: Most of the trade between Eastern Borca and Northern Purgare takes place via the trade route to Osman. The passage is safe, well fortified, but expensive. The custom fees for the trade route are relatively high, but on the other hand, the Hellvetics offer their escort duties on this route for a reasonable price. Losing the goods would be far more expensive.

ROPPEN CUSTOMS STATION: The heavily fortified customs station is a handling place for goods for Eastern Borca, and Hellvetic mercenaries can also be hired as escort for the continuation of one's journey north. The customs station is guarded by a full battalion of 40 Grenadiers and four Fortress Sentinels in heavy-duty harnesses at all times. Two operational artillery batteries have been installed in the rock faces above the heavy gates, strong enough to withstand a Surge Tank. No one gets through without a pass.

TIRANO OUTPOST: Tirano outpost, situated roughly one day's ride from Bergamo, seals off Val Brembana. While the Hellvetics and the Lombardi both profit from the lively trade passing through Bergamo, the relationship between the two parties is an uneasy one. The city is full of Chroniclers and is said to be a haven for Hellvetic deserters – the back wall of the commando room of Tirano, completely covered in wanted posters, is legendary.

The safety measures are pretty rigid – two Grenadier squads are on guard duty at all times. As a rule, they have some irregulars as reinforcements, traveling the Hard Path at the behest of the High Command and taking over additional guard duty. The gate to the Hard Path is guarded by two Fortress Sentinels in heavy-duty harnesses. The tunnel section beyond the gate can easily be turned into a towering inferno.

THE HARD PATH: At irregular intervals, unloaded goods and customs revenues from Roppen are transported towards the Alpine Fortress via the Hard Path. The irregular intervals serve as additional security measure against deserter attacks. At the same time, the Hard Path is one of the few safe crossing places across the Reaper's Blow to Western Borca, and it is aptly named. Gas masks, active filters, water tubes and protective goggles are required to cross safely.

MORENO OUTPOST: As incidents on the Eden Route are rare, the staff of command of Territorial Region III usually employs inexperienced recruits in Moreno. A Grenadier squad consisting of six Hellvetics is constantly on guard here, but they are a little overzealous. They form the first line of defense, which is why they take samples from the goods very thoroughly when handling passages and keep a good eye out for troublemakers and stowaways. The farmers and traders from the area know the proceedings and have learned to factor in some extra time.

OCTUS LISTENING POST: In 2587, a squad of Hellvetics was killed at the Octus listening post. The soldiers were found hanging headlong from masts they were tied to with their own intestines. The Hellvetics keep this incident under wraps. Officially, the listening post was shut down due to non-locatable sources of interference. Those who officially gain access to the file will be unable to ignore the endorsement saying "Triglaw".

BRENTANO LISTENING POST: Here, four Radio Beam Units intercept Chronicler and Spitalian radio broadcasts and pass the information on to the Alpine Fortress. Only recently, this helped in foiling some attempts of Chroniclers based in Bergamo to plant agents within the Alpine Fortress using the Hard Path

VIVACO SICKBAY: For many war-disabled and heavily wounded people, Vivaco is a name promising hope. Carmino Ferro, the head surgeon of the sickbay city, is said to be able to treat even the most severe injuries successfully. A handful of assistant doctors, two dozen of Famulancers, many trained medics and a host of young Recruits tend to the sick and the wounded here. They reduce complicated fractures, treat sepsis and perform complex surgery. Of course, all this comes at a price. Not long ago, Vivaco's extraordinary access to resources brought Northern Purgare's newly appointed Registrar to the area whom the sickbay city is officially subordinate to. From his quarters in Cruces, he sent some of his Famulancers to check Vivaco's storage lists for irregularities. The only thing he got in return was a message brought to him by an outrider stating that everything was all right. The Famulancers stayed and learned.

EDEN ROUTE: The old Anabaptist pilgrimage starts right in front of the gates of Moreno outpost where the first missionary from Cathedral City is said to have rested when he crossed the Alps. Many fighters on their way to the Adriatic Basin choose this place as a starting point for their journey. From here, the way leads to Lucatore, Santiago, Cruces and too many other Anabaptist settlements along the Adriatic Lowlands. Generations of broken wooden crosses built in the simplest of fashions by the pilgrims line the various resting places along the way.

CLAN MARCH: The ancient trading route connecting the Benesato to the Lombardi family is almost impassable, barely fortified and leads through difficult terrain in the Lombard Bog. Footpads and other nefarious folk count among the dangers that travelers potentially have to face when trying to surround the regions controlled by the Hellvetics because they want to transport their goods toll free.

LOMBARD BOG: The impassable hollow collects Alpine melt water, getting soggier every year. The terrain is boggy,

the footing unsafe. Trees crippled by the acidulous water and sprawling weeds mark the passable areas, a muffled squelching marks the rest. The only thing the Lombard Bog yields is peat that is cut there by some small Clans. As fuel, it is important for the whole region.

OLD IMAGE WALL: A few years ago, a Chronicler named Memo discovered a bygone Image Wall in the middle of the swamp. He hired Scrappers to build a generator at the foot of the Image Wall and bought Petro from the Neoliberians in Bergamo to spark the bygone relic. When his day's work was done, the Image Wall fired off a staccato of news in a foreign language for a few seconds before dying down again. Since that day, Memo has vanished from the face of the earth, and until now, the Scrappers have not managed to get any further signs of life from the Image Wall.

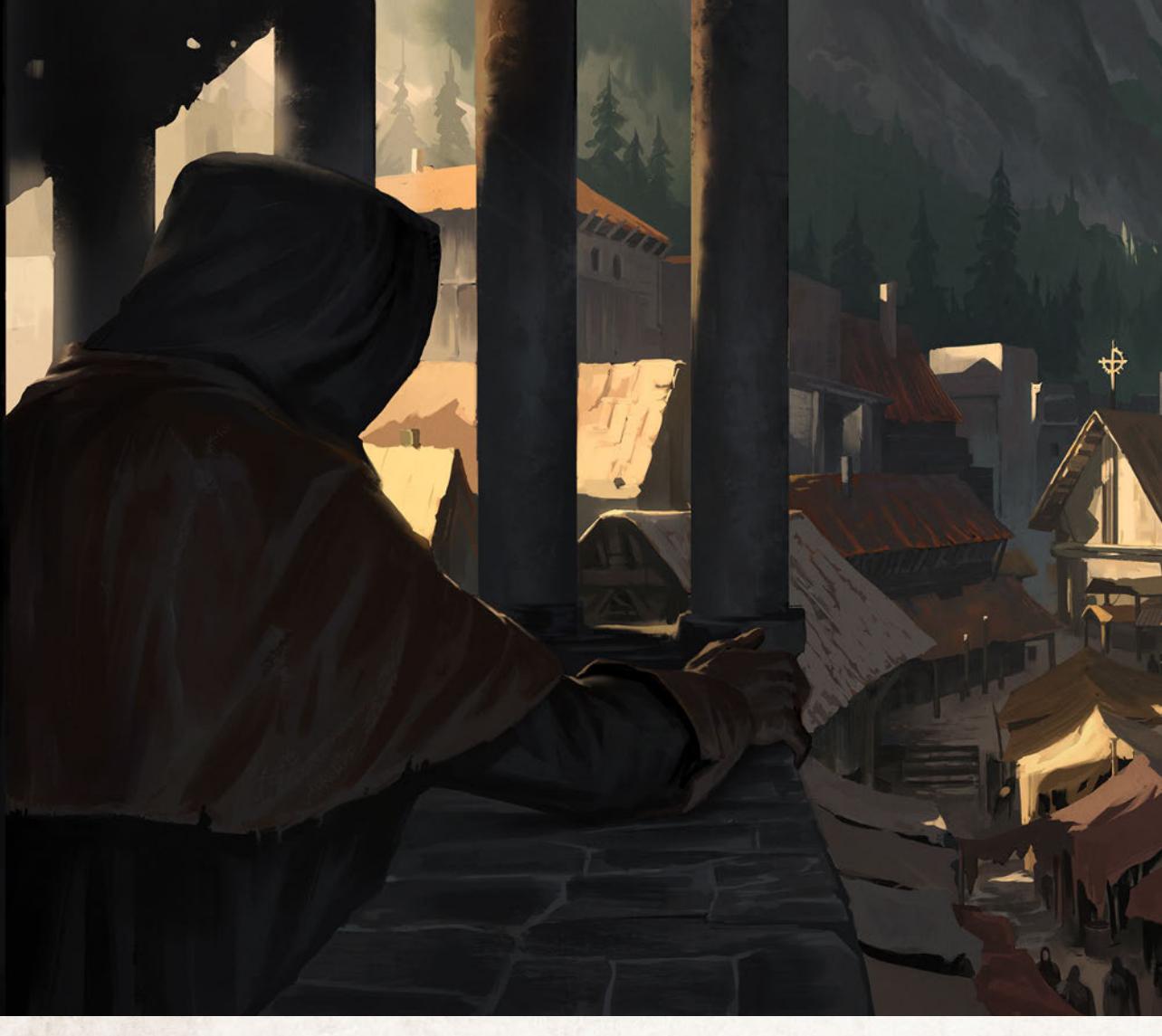
BERGAMO: Bergamo is the largest city in the region. The township itself has about 20.000 inhabitants, but when lots of goods come in during the summer, this number can easily be doubled.

It has always been the seat of power for the Lombardi family. In the last years, Hellvetic deserters have joined its ranks. The city's defense is organized accordingly: the roughly 500 Lombardi warriors under arms are considered exceptionally trained and highly disciplined sword fighters. There is a good reason for this troop strength - the Lombardi despise the Anabaptists' influence and have been withstanding their missionary attempts successfully for decades. Instead, Vespaicio, the White Wolf of Bergamo and head of the family, maintains commercial relationships with the Chroniclers, Jehammedans and Neoliberians.

Nowhere in Northern Purgare are the markets more diversely stocked than in Bergamo. The wealth the city gains from this fact keeps it independent and strengthens the population's common spirit against the Neognosis. But wherever there are commodity flows, crime thrives. Some dinars are enough to find out what a certain trade caravan transports. For a little more gold, one can also get to know the exact route and the guards' capability.

THE SMALL CLANS: Several families, Clans and communities have settled between Bergamo and Lucatore. Almost none of them consist of more than a few hundred people. They supply Bergamo, Lucatore and other cities with everyday goods: glassware, masonry and peat guarantee a meager living for them.

Cavalese, Feltre, Pordene and Apis are situated in Lucatore's direct area of influence. These four villages are led by Anabaptists who collect taxes, maintain order and marry into the local families. Here, the Benesato family mingles its blood with that of the smaller Clans and families. The blood has become thin, the actual origin and kinship are now hard to prove.



LUCATORE

The Hellvetics were the first to mention Lucatore in their logbooks. One has to dig deep in the records and go back for centuries to find the old references. The mountains east of Moreno were forbidden territory back then. Wild tribes lived there, and sometimes, the Corps Commander's office handed out ammunition to shoot down the painted and pierced ones when they got too close to Hellvetica's borders. The savages disappeared, but one Clan remained: Clan Benesato. The first settlers prayed to the mountains, built simple huts and stables and later palisades as a defense against other Clans that came back from the South plundering. But the Benesato knew how to defend themselves against such attacks. They trained men as spear fighters, pacified nearby villages and enclaves, forced good harvests from the earth and traded with the Hellvetics. In return, Territorial Region III sent troops to help in building watchtowers and defenses. Lucatore grew, became a local power — but Clan Benesato avoided any struggle to expand its borders. The ancestors were aware of the fact that they were no match for the white harnesses. They rather tried to form alliances with neighboring cities and focused on neat pacts with the Hellvetics and internal consensus.

Then, the Anabaptists came across the Reaper's Blow. Their banners flew in the wind, and they carried a giant cross. They spoke about the Demiurge on whose decaying corpse the Garden of Eden was rotting. They preached about water with which to bless the Garden and about fire with which to baptize the infidels. The Hellvetics rolled their eyes — more of this religious bullshit.

However, Clan Benesato saw its destiny in the Anabaptists' promises. Men who had been tilling the fields until a day ago, planting wine on the slopes and rapeseed on the fields dropped their hoes and forks, joining the fever of the Broken Cross and marched eastward. Ascetics took care of the abandoned fields, tilled them, married into the families and baptized their children in the name of the Lord. After less than 10 years, what remained of Clan Benesato wasn't much more than a surname that some Anabaptists carried with pride because it meant home to them. New rituals had replaced the old ones: instead of praying to the mountains, people prayed to rivers, instead of wine, they drank distillate, and together, they went to fight wars that no one understood.

The rest is history.



HOUSE BENESATO: The three-story building is the center of Lucatore. Once the fortified camp of the original Benesato settlers, the settlement actually grew around the building. Gardens in the patio, a sprawling atrium and heavy gates speak of ancient glory and splendor. Ennio Benesato and Gala Lombardi reside here.

THE MARKET SQUARE: A wide courtyard stretches in front of House Benesato. The stalls are crammed into the arcades and alcoves and into the mouths of the streets leading from the courtyard – here, inhabitants can buy regional goods and commodities, and travelers can buy supplies. Once a day, Lucio's city guard patrols the area and drinks its morning booze at the distillate bar.

THE BLEEDING RAM: The convoluted inn is situated at the end of the market square. Upon entering, patrons find the rooms filled with relics from the Adriatic wars. Icons taken from the Jehammedans adorn the walls, hanging next to broken sabers, tattered leather armor and the skins, skulls and horns of rams. The showpiece of this ghoulish exhibition is a large vial hanging from the ceiling that is supposed to be filled with an Isaaki's blood. People returning from the

wars like to leave relics from their time on the front line in the Bleeding Ram and tell each other stories of position warfare, footslogs, blaring trumpets and the heat of battle.

THE EXCHANGE: The Exchange is situated beyond the city walls; here, those who cannot afford a stall or have only a limited amount of goods do business. Drafts and dinars are not accepted here, people exchange items for services or scrap for better scrap.

CUSTUS' FORGE: On the Western border of Lucatore, the Scrapper Custus has erected a small forge where he repairs generators and simple machines. A cold cathode fluorescent tube sheds blue light above the entrance that opens to the roofed south. Within, two small furnaces that Custus fuels with peat give off clouds of smoke.

THE DISTILLERY: The Ascetics Caspar and Morvin had the idea to start a new distillery a few years ago because goods destined for Lucatore often disappeared on their way from Cathedral City into the Alps. Meanwhile, the distillery has become part of the Cloister, and Lucatore cannot be imagined without its small bottles with their potent contents.

THE MANURE HILL: Trash, refuse and dung are collected on the Manure Hill, waiting to be cut and brought to the fields by Ascetics. When the wind blows from the wrong direction, its stink covers the city, sometimes for days in a row.

THE CATTLE LAIRAGE: Beyond the Manure Hill, there are the cattle mews and the butchery of the Cloister. Every day, the cattle is herded across the hills to graze and penned again at night. A low fence stretches across the terrain to keep away stray predators.

THE CHAPELS: Viscotti and Ambrio are two chapels for Anabaptists on their way to the Adriatic Lowlands. The windowless, flat buildings are easily recognizable by the cast-iron broken crosses adorning their roofs. On the inside, the buildings are pleasantly cool and contain a brazier each to burn prayer formulas and an oil bowl for the visitors to grease their hair. For a few extra coins, Anabaptists entering here can get a massage with Elysian oils by a chapel master.

THE ALMS HOUSE: The one-story wooden abode with the drafty windows once was an improvised grain shed. Nowadays, the Alms House is only used by poor transients who need a dry place to sleep for a few nights. At the moment, the Flayers are staying at the Alms House, and the inhabitants of Lucatore bring them alms every day.

THE COLD STORES: Three Cold Stores are situated right beyond the city walls. Huge chunks of ice are brought here from the Alps, hewn into rough cubes and sold. Stored in basements and vaults, they keep meat and perishable goods fresh for days.

THE COMMISSION HOUSE: This two-story building once was an inn for emissaries and dignitaries from the area. Years ago, it was refurbished and can now house up to a dozen guests of the Cloister. The bedrooms are secured, the windows barred, the water is clean and the pantry is stocked with food.

THE PEAT CUTTERS: The Peat Cutters are the ones to turn to if you're in need of material for expanding your farm or of fuel. They have firewood, cut peat and flint stones for sale. The open building with the long bar and the four separate stalls is right next to the city's West Gate. In large kilns in the unit courtyard, bricks are baked, and next to them, peat is dried.

THE PEOPLE'S PLAZA: An elongated plaza in the east part of town. Here, the Cloister passes out food in summer, and people toast to the friendship with the Anabaptists. Sometimes in the evening, adolescents role-play the Adriatic wars on a circular grandstand or play some music on instruments from Franka that Altair brought back from his journeys and donated to the city.

THE CEMETERY: Through a small gate in the woods, the cemetery can be reached. Here, the ancestors of House Benesato lie buried next to the Anabaptists who died in the war or of old age. The Benesato family tree is engraved into a stone stele next to the main path – it dates back seven generations.

Small crypts line the way, directing the visitor's gaze to roughly hewn sarcophagi in which Furors and other great fighters are laid to rest. The cast-iron broken cross is ubiquitous here.

CARAVAN STABLES: The Northern wall is lined by the Caravan Stables. Here, the hooves of the draft animals are shod, the carts are loaded with oil and goods, and the route is determined. The Elysian Abacus monitors the weekly dispatch, keeps track of the customs fees and slips the caravan leaders a hand full of dinars, just in case they need to bribe someone on their passage.

THE HUNTING HOUSE: Fernex' hut is not so much a house but a very long tent covered in hides standing close to the edge of the forest. Two female workers eviscerate the game that Fernex has hunted. They wash and cure the hides, boil and dry the meat and wind the sinews to a coil for later use. Here, the ascetics buy bones and marrow for their elixirs.

THE WATER TOWERS: The water towers of Lucatore are both a sacred site and a treasure. They can be seen from afar, circular behemoths on stilts made of metal, higher than any other building in town. The so-called Arcade Wall surrounds the reservoirs that are guarded by the city guard at all times. Using a system of pumps, an old aqueduct diverts fresh water from the Vargas into the towers where it is collected. Below the towers, there are large basins from which people can get water using buckets. One of the basins is blessed. It is refilled every morning and used to cleanse the mind and body.

THE BATTLE TOWER: At the Eastern border of the city, a scantly maintained battle tower juts from the woods like a needle. The building, a gift from the Hellvetics, has crumbled more and more over the years. The Anabaptists only use it as a lookout.

THE THREE PEAKS: Lucatore is surrounded by three mountain masses, the Andring, the Borreo and the Vargas. Each of the three peaks is higher than 3.000 m.

In the morning and in the evening, they cast long shadows over the town, and if the weather is bad, they disappear in a low layer of clouds. On long summer evenings though, the peaks glow red in the sunset. The mountains are named after the progenitors of Clan Benesato and form an insurmountable protective wall against the north and the south. For the Benesato, the three mountains are a symbol of their origin and at the same time, their patrons.

THE CLOISTER

On a ridge of the Borreo stretching southwards, the Cloister of Lucatore towers alone. It guards the Valley. Once, there was a castle here, the stony foundation of which was laid by the first settlers from Clan Benesato – a tenacious cube the inhabitants of Lucatore could hole up in when the raiders came from the South. The cube up there was impregnable, withstanding any siege efforts and completely hiding behind a veil when the clouds hung deeply.

But the times changed, and the raiders came less and less often. The castle was never finished and clung to the ridge like a scab. Without the need for self-defense, the way up became an exhausting nuisance, and thus, the Benesato elders chose a sturdy compound in the valley as home for the chieftains. The fortress started crumbling. Many years went by before it found new inhabitants.

When the Anabaptists came to Lucatore, they took over farms, stables and fields and erected recusant chapels close to the city. But they were lacking fitting headquarters where they could indulge their rituals. They left House Benesato to the family elders whose traditions they did not want to challenge. Instead, they declared the old castle on the mountain their new sanctuary.

For decades, they expanded the Cloister, most recently during the leadership of the Baptist Altair, but it had become important for the Ascetics and Elysians of the Cult even before. Far removed from Cathedral City's stern looks, the Emanation Council's interpretations of the Neognosis and the turmoil of war against the hell spawn in Franka, Lucatore's isolation made it the perfect place to fathom the will of the Lord. The Elysians planted a garden where they experimented with substrates from faraway lands, and cultivated flowers and plants that grew nowhere else. In the Cloister, they indulged the rapture of Emanations, forced the Pneuma into their bodies through reckless experiments. In the dark of the large vaults, they chained themselves to the walls with their nose rings, ceaselessly praying, letting the Lord flash through them and sweating out the Demiurge's ugly thoughts. The abbey became a haven for Ascetics who were ready to cross borders on their way to complete austerity. To further their visions, they bought Burn from the Apocalyptics in the West. However, the Ascetics were in constant danger of discovery. The sickbay city of Vavaco was too close to Lucatore, and its damn Mollusks would raise the alarm if the Spitalians were to ever enter the Cloister. They needed a solution, something that would not bog down the Ascetics' experiments but would still stop them from being discovered...

REVELATION

One day Abacus, the Elysian, gathered his Ascetics in the vault, his voice hoarse from excitement, his hair tangled and shaggy.

Feverishly he unrolled parchments with scribbled notes, his shaking hands put vials with differently colored,

completely new mixtures of oil and Burn on top of them, created according to a formula he had devised. Finally, he revealed a Mollusk he had bought from a disloyal Famulancer passing through. The muscle tissue swam in its nutrient solution, jerking lazily.

The Ascetics scratched their beards without understanding. Abacus admonished them to keep their distance with a raised finger and wide eyes. He told them to step back until the Mollusk stopped twitching. They did as they were told, only Abacus remained close to the table. The jerking of the Mollusk died down and finally stopped. He opened up his robes to reveal the stigma on his chest. The fine hairs were withered, the rosy bulges scarred and pale. He took the Mollusk from the table, brought it closer and closer to the stigma. Nothing. Nothing happened. Abacus chuckled with excitement. The new derivate was obscuring a person's spore affliction to the Mollusk, Abacus smugly explained to his disciples. From now on, they would be safe from discovery by the Spitalians. The next day, they would reorganize their production. When the Ascetics started to understand, their eyes became shiny one by one, and they peppered Abacus with questions. However, the Elysian told no one where he got the recipe from.

GOLDEN AGE

The oil was worth its weight in gold. He sent the first samples to Cathedral City, to the Adriatic Lowlands and to Briton. Every single bottle was protected by ten Orgiastics.

The reaction was swift. A rider who had ridden from Cathedral City for three weeks without rest charged into the Cloister's vault to hand a sealed letter to Abacus. The Elysian opened it carefully. It said that the Council of Emanations was allocating any resources necessary to maximize production to Lucatore. The Council wanted to see the oil at every front line the Anabaptists had dug into.

The giant Cloister vault was the perfect production site. Abacus ordered the construction of Oil Mills as high as a house in the basement, whose weight would be able to apply the pressure necessary for the process. He ordered wagons full of rapeseed from the Adriatic Lowlands to distill the oils and organized their export.

The demand never wavered. Every month, he had to ship many crates full of vials and recruit dispatch riders, pay drivers and guards to make sure they arrived at their destination safely. It wasn't fast enough for Cathedral City. Again, they sent a rider bearing a message demanding that the Elysian hand over the recipes so the mills could be re-created in the North. Never!

Abacus sent a variant formula back to Cathedral City that did not contain Burn but was instead laced with exotic herbs and extracts from the Elysian gardens. The Emanation Council had the mills re-created, but the oils did not have the desired results. While they relieved tensions, cured hay fever and alleviated other medical problems, they did



not have the desired effect. Bitter letters from exasperated pack leaders reached the Council demanding they let the Cloister do its job and send the better variant of the relieving substance to the front lines again.

For a third time, Cathedral City sent a rider to Lucatore, this time bearing the question if the recipes had been the right ones. Angrily, Abacus answered that the Council had better refrain from distilling and focus on marching orders and troop movements. He called the Elysians of Cathedral City "incredibly stupid" and threatened to cease production completely if he had to deal with anymore useless questions.

The North remained silent and sent no more riders.

THE ELYSIAN OILS

While it is true that Rebus, the First Baptist, anointed his faithful with oils from his deathbed, it was Abacus who laid bare their essence and refined them: the Elysian oils.

The Elysian had always tried to preserve the effects of Burn that stimulate Emanations and make them usable for the Cult. But the detrimental effect of the drug discouraged him just as much as the danger of discovery by the Spitalians. In Altair's notes on the Marduk oil, Abacus then found the key in some short remarks on various ingredients that massively enhanced the inhibiting effect of the Duat extract. He started experimenting, grew surrogates for the missing African ingredients in the Elysian gardens and finally made a breakthrough: a compound of the traditional recipes for Perat, Hiddekel, Gehon and Pischon with especially pure Burn ground to fine particles and his specifically cultivated inhibitors, indefinitely exponentiated in cold-pressed rape-seed oil. At the behest of Altair, he also invented to oils he called Acheron and Styx after the forbidden rivers.

Abacus's oils have changed Lucatore. Where the Cloister sent out monthly shipments before, today Lucatore delivers everywhere around the world on a daily basis. Cathedral City orders, Abacus delivers. The invisible, undetectable refreshment from Lucatore has found its way into the Anabaptists' ranks and taken effect. The oils you can buy in other enclaves? Imitations. They lack that little extra something. Only here in Lucatore, the true formula is used and refined.

The Cloister and its environment profit a lot from the oils. The Elysian oils have made the city the place of pilgrimage for the Touched Ones as well as a marketplace for goods and trade. The sales brought hard dinars into the remote mountain village, its Cloister became wealthy, famous and powerful.

Amongst other reasons, this is why Cathedral City wants to make sure that the murder of Altair does not endanger the Cloister. The oil has become the essence of the Cult. Using it has become a fundamental part of the Anabaptist rituals. There is no Orgiastic who has not used it

to slick back his hair and grease his sword, no Ascetic who has not anointed his forehead with it. Cathedral City can replace a Baptist, but not a Cult drug.

EFFECT

The oil from Lucatore covers the skin like a greasy protective coating. Rubbed into the muscles, the inhibitors enter deeper into the skin cells with every use. The Burn ground to fine particles reaches the lungs via the blood vessels. There, it clots in the bronchia, just as if the Burn had been used the regular way. The spores sprout their mycelium that covers the alveoles yet cannot enter them – it is unable to vibrate on the frequency of the Collective. The Collective does not broadcast.

The reason for this are the inhibitors Abacus has added to the mix. The frequency blockers seep to the deeper layers of skin and stop the frequency noise from spreading within the body. This protective patina stops the Sepsis in the body from contacting the Mother Spore fields. While the Burner's spore infestation grows continually worse, the ether call remains unheard, and the Sepsis is lodged deep within the host without being able to control him. It is alone. Blind, deaf and dumb.

Still the Sepsis starts influencing the hosts cellular structure and attacking his genome. However, the spore infestation remains temporary as no channel to the Earth Chakras will open up. Repelled by the great mother consciousness, it withers in the foreign host body without ever fully reaching its potential.

RULES: basically, the effects of the Elysian oils are the same as those found in the core rules (Katharsys, p. 179), yet there are two differences. The users of all six oils recover additional Ego Points equaling the oil level and get the same spore infestation score. They enter an intoxication phase only happening in the Burner's nervous system that can never open a channel to the Chakra Collective. The Burner is ostracized and isolated, yet still he feels the spores' psychic influence. His visions often take hours without him feeling like he was losing control which would certainly happen if he had been inhaling Burn. Yet the addiction never fades.

Intoxication phase: oil level in hours

Also, Mollusks don't react in the presence of such a seed carrier, just as Noumenon Vocalizers never peak. There is a sort of protective film on the skin of the user that lasts for the oil's level in weeks. Water and soap cannot dissolve the protective film, the inhibitors can only be rubbed off and fall off the user with old flakes of skin.

While under the protection of the oil, the Character cannot gain permanent spore infestation, and the stigma cannot blossom. To the contrary – the temporary spore infestation is lowered by one point per week. If the user of the

oil additionally inhales Burn, the protective effect remains. The spore infestation grows more rapidly, yet there will be no communication with the Earth Chakra. The temporary spore infestation can grow to twice the Characters spore infestation maximum, but the surplus has no effect. However, if twice the maximum is reached, the spore saturation in the blood is so high that the vital organs fail. As long as the user keeps applying the oil, the Sepsis has no way of bringing its host to heel. Should the protective layer dissolve permanently, it is quite possible that an Anabaptist will suffocate from the Sepsis suddenly blooming or becomes a true carrier of the Seed.

FOLLOWING THE OIL

When the first vials of the oils produced in Lucatore reached Cathedral City, the Baptists started by anointing a chosen few with Perat, Hiddekel, Gehon and Pischor before testing the miraculous discovery themselves.

The Emanations that overcame them were overwhelming, the visions were so clear and pure that even the Ascetics amongst the leaders of the Cult could not contain their excitement. But they were afraid of Acheron and Styx, for Altair had told his seven brethren about the secret of the Burn used to make them. So they limited the circle even further, appointed war invalids to face the rivers of the dead on behalf of the Cult. They would see them soon anyway.

The results were at once terrifying and fascinating. The festering wounds of some of the invalids closed, others could look straight into the Demiurge's ether world which blew their minds. Altair had given a weapon to Cathedral City, yet the Baptists understood that only the best and purest warriors of the Cult would be able to wield it. The Acherons were born.

While Perat, Hiddekel, Gehon and Pischor from Lucatore were distributed freely amongst the Orgiastics and Ascetics, Acheron and Styx remained a secret of the Baptists. All havens were equipped with a strategic stock of the forbidden oils, yet access to them remained radically restricted. Even Abacus can only guess what happens to his oils, and he asks no questions. Let the Cult use the oils. As long as the Spitalians know nothing about the recipes, the Elysian doesn't care. He doesn't see the danger that imitations of Acheron and Styx that are not protected against detection pose, despite a certain skepticism that grows amongst the Splayer wielders.

The Spitalians know nothing about Styx and Acheron, but they know the other oils and wonder how their anti-progressive brothers in arms got their hands on such highly effective combat drugs. So far, the Burn is not detectable, but the Spitalians have noticed a certain similarity to V. The Spital has long since known its effects, although it has not been able to re-create its recipe yet, and the Anubians are not willing to part with their medical formula.

CLOISTER FACTSHEET

CITY: Lucatore, Tech-Level III

FATHER SUPERIOR: Abacus, the Elysian

PATRON: Neva, the Iron Emissary

WEAPONS MASTER: Lucio Bastardo

INHABITANTS: 60 Ascetics & 20 Touched / regularly, 50 Orgiastics of the city guard / sometimes, 80 beds for pilgrims and Touched / rarely used

SPECIAL: Fortified walls, chapel, the Oil Mills

TRADE / GOODS: Elysian oil, medical herbs & barks, rare earths & plants, soaps, simple drugs, lamp oils, grease

WEAPONRY: large armory

COMMUNICATION: Flare gun. Fired from the West Gate, the flare is visible in the sky from Moreno outpost. The armory contains an old Morse apparatus.

CLOISTER VICINITY

Abacus' house and the Ascetics' Elysian gardens belong to the Cloister although they are not physically part of it.

ABACUS' HOUSE: In addition to his lab at the Cloister, Abacus owns a modest house next to the cemetery. Here, his Ascetics sell medical herbs, sprouts, ointments and other light drugs made from the surplus harvest from the Elysian gardens. Those who need something against fever, light poisoning or burns can find some helpful extemporaneous products offering quick relief here.

THE ELYSIAN GARDENS: The Elysian gardens are nestled against the Borreo Ridge on the Northern flank of the Cloister. A wall as high as a man topped with pointed spearheads keeps intruders away. Within, there is quiet, only broken by the occasional birdsong. Weeds, exotic herbs and rare trees can be found here, tended to and grown by the Ascetics. Benches for contemplation stand in the shadows of the trees, there is a smell of exotic spices and wildflowers. The soil here is the best in all of Purgare. Brought to Lucatore from the most fertile fields on the Adriatic Sea, it offers the substrate for growing the Elysian plants. Every spring, butterflies come to drink the nectar of the rare plants. It's a peaceful place that the Ascetics guard like gold.

STRUCTURE

THE WEST GATE: The huge main portal can be locked from within by two heavy valves any besieger would have great difficulty opening. From the bridge, enemies can be showered with boiling oil and shot at with bursts of flame from the Spifires.

THE VESTIBULE: This is how far untouched people may enter to utter their wishes or ask for an audience. The narrow vestibule is a death trap for any attacker. From the battlements above, enemies of the abbey can be shot at from all angles. Beyond the vestibule, there is the door to the great chapel. Next to it, the horses of the city guard are stabled in roofed mews where they are shod and prepared for rides.

THE CHAPEL: This monolithic room is the heart of the abbey. Every breath echoes from its bare walls. Almost no light filters in through the ironclad windows from the vestibule; the chapel lies in eternal darkness. In the center, a giant cast-iron cross rises to the ceiling of this stone sarcophagus. Braziers for the ritual burning of the prayer formulas are arranged around the cross, the embers glowing within only sparsely lighting the room. In a basin hewn from quartz, Elysian oil for the ceremonial anointment shimmers. Simple wooden prayer pews are arranged around the center.

THE BATTLEMENTS: Only two flights of stairs lead from the vestibule to the battlements. They surround the vestibule completely like a gallery from which all other buildings of the Cloister can be reached. A gate with a portcullis seals off a small inner courtyard leading to Lucio's rooms and the barracks of the Orgiastics.

THE ARMORY: Lucio Bastardo has access to an extraordinary arsenal. With the leftovers from the Adriatic wars, he can arm up to 400 men with military equipment on short notice. In addition to Bidenhanders, spears, flails and axes, there are eight operative Spifires here, more than a dozen old land mines and a rusty anti-tank rocket launcher including three kinetic energy penetrators. A steel door with geared door frame seals off the armory. Lucio has the only key.

THE REFECTIONY: The refectory is the largest contiguous building on the battlements. Here, Ascetics and Orgiastics eat together, sitting on long benches. In the spacious kitchen unit, the meals are prepared. A quarter of the food is brought into the city to nourish the faithful. A broad flight of stairs leads from the refectory to the storey below that contains the Ascetics' quarters and prayer rooms.

THE CLOISTER OF LUCATORE

2595A.D.



- 1. THE WEST GATE
- 2. THE VESTIBULE
- 3. THE ARMORY
- 4. THE CHAPEL
- A. LUCIOS' CHAMBERS

- 5. THE BATTLEMENTS
- 6. THE REFECTORY
- 7. THE TOWER
- 8. THE ARCADES
- B. NEVAS' CHAMBERS

- 9. THE STORAGE
- 10. THE BOILER ROOM
- 11. THE OIL MILLS
- 12. THE OLD TUNNEL
- C. ABACUS' CHAMBERS

THE ARCADES: A slanting canopy covers the arcades. Their balustrade offers a good view of the complete courtyard of the abbey. Under it, there are benches for contemplation and prayer. Sometimes, the Touched kneel here all night long, pressing their head against the cold wall and waiting for the Pneuma to enter and course through their bodies. A small flight of stairs leads up to Neva's rooms.

THE TOWER: The tower rises over 40 m, keeping solitary watch over the Cloister. Once, it is said to have served as a lookout to watch the more remote areas of the valley, but these days, the inhabitants of the Cloister are not allowed to enter this part of the facility. The only access to the tower is through Neva's chambers.

THE STORAGE: Here, the Ascetics temporarily store various goods waiting for their transport to Lucatore where they will be sold to the inhabitants of the village on the market square. Soaps, barrels of grease, crates of medical herbs and rare healing earths from the Elysian gardens can be found here.

THE BOILER ROOM: The boiler room is the gear box of the whole Cloister. From here, the giant Oil Mills on the level below are operated. It is hot and noisy in here. The Ascetics collect grease and filtrates from the incinerators to process them further.

THE OIL MILLS: They are Lucatore's biggest secret. Below the Cloister, there is a monumental vault housing Abacus' greatest invention: cogwheels as high as houses, pneumatic

compression springs and lathes to distill the Elysian oils. This is Abacus's sanctum where only a chosen few of the Ascetics have permission to enter. Down here, there is also his lab where he tests new formulas.

THE VAULT: Behind a sealed portal in the side wing of the Oil Mills, there is Altair's vault that was once filled to the ceiling with the spoils of the Adriatic wars: gold, icons, ritual titles, bejeweled vessels — the Anabaptists had simply grabbed everything they were able to take from their Jehammedan enemies and packed it up into storage crates.

As a sign of goodwill, Altair sometimes sent shipments from the chamber to Cathedral City and Briton to appease the council. However, not even Altair himself knew about the true extent of the treasures that had accumulated over the decades in the vault. There are still incredibly precious relics down here. The Jehammedans believe these treasures to be lost forever. The return of these holy objects would bring the respect and the gratefulness of the whole Cult.

THE OLD TUNNEL: If you open the latches in the floor of the West wing of the Oil Mills, you will find a shaft leading down to an old, unused tunnel.

No one knows who bore the tunnel into the mountain or where it once led. The only thing known is that it runs to the northwest for several kilometers. In the end, it opens up into a bygone cave system the ceilings of which are riddled with fresh excavation holes. If you climb to the surface through one of these holes, you will find yourself on the other side of the Borreo, in a hidden Romano camp close to the mountain ridge.

NEOGNOSTIC FAITH

The Neognosis is practiced much more intensely in Purgare and is embedded much deeper into the minds of the faithful than in the opportunistic north and West. It is enormously important for the local Anabaptists and is actively cultivated through daily rituals, customs and the handing down of legends.

The people of the area live in accordance to their religion — they watch infidels with distrust and keep their distance from strangers. Supernatural, powerful artifacts and bizarre behavior are met with fear, revulsion and distance by the common people. Superstition is strong in Lucatore. Travelers should watch their behavior, their manners and their weapons.

FOR GAME MASTERS: Make your players understand that Lucatore is holy ground. Certain behavioral patterns will not be tolerated by the population. Cockiness or blaspheming against the Neognosis will sooner or later cause trouble. If your players want to win over the populace, they have to return to the codices for doors to open for them. If the players like to wave around their weapons or threaten and/or harass the populace, it is not only the city guard that will react badly. Their Renown could suffer as well. If you use the Cult cards as an optional rule, you can place a black die on the Anabaptist and Clanner cards and punish aggressive behavior with a higher score.



PLAYER HOOKS

THE PLOT

The Adventure “In Thy Name” has been conceived to include a pre-generated plot and story to make it easier for inexperienced Game Masters to find their way through the world of DEGENESIS. Experienced Game Masters will recognize the plot within the various scenes that they can transform and adapt to their players actions at will. Characters acting on their own authority can get ahead of the plot, you can play scenes at different points of time within the indenture, and the end can be very different from the one scripted.

As a Game Master, you can use the events as a rough guideline or pick out scenes you want to use. It's your game, and your group is paramount.

ONE MURDER, TWO COMMISSIONS

There are two different ways to involve the Characters in “In Thy Name”:

They either are caught in the middle by accident or are sent into the field by the Cults to investigate the events that take place. Depending on the way they become involved, the Characters start the Adventure at different points in time.

STRANGERS IN TOWN

Maybe the Characters have been in the area for a while or are just passing through? This way they become involved gives the Game Master an opportunity to lead an existing group to the scene.

If the Characters have arrived a long time before the events of “In Thy Blood” unfold, the Game Master can let them experience peaceful times in Lucatore. Maybe the group has just crossed the Alps and needs some rest? Or they have to deliver the message to one of the sick bay cities in the Adriatic Lowlands and are now heading back. There are countless possibilities; the description of the surroundings of Lucatore offers some Adventure hooks for the Game Master to build upon.

Anyway, the latest date for the group to enter the city is the day before the murder, looking for a place to stay for the night. The next morning starts with Altair's murder (s. Timeline, Chapter 4).

In the days after the murder, the players can and should primarily investigate the scene: the imposed period of mourning decelerates the investigations so the Characters

can become intensely familiar with the places, the customs and the power structure of Lucatore. Especially the latter makes investigations difficult – the Characters will soon notice that they need allies to back them up with the necessary status and support to keep the investigation going. Without such help, neither the gates of the Cloister nor the hearts of the populace will open up to them.

With each passing day, they will become more involved in the vortex of events until they finally have to take matters in their own hands and act.

AT THE CULTS BEHEST

The news of Altair's death spread like wildfire. The Cults are especially interested in the murder: they mobilize their scouts, align interception antennae towards Purgare and gather any information they can get.

This gives the Game Master an opportunity to assemble a whole new group and send them to Lucatore as the investigative commission of the Cults. Here, time is of the essence – the Characters shouldn't have to be called from some remote corner of the world. The Spitalians will not send anyone from the Spore Front to Lucatore. However, if a Famulancer on his way to the Spore Front is just resting in the Alpine Fortress, the Cult could redirect him to Lucatore. Here, the Game Master must develop an appropriate background story with the players. The section “The Cults” contains various reasons for the Cults to send one of their members to Lucatore. As emissaries of the Cults, the Characters start the Adventure on day 6 (s. Timeline, Chapter 4).

ENNIO'S INNOCENCE

No matter how the Characters are getting drawn into the Adventure in the end: the mood in Lucatore is riven. Many Anabaptists consider Ennio the only potential suspect because he is in love with a Lombardi and they would like to see him hang.

The governor of Lucatore is mortified by these accusations and denies them vehemently. Only his family that wants to protect its head believes him. He needs independent allies who investigate the murder, find the perpetrator and prove his innocence to redeem himself in the eyes of the Anabaptists and the other inhabitants of the city: The Characters.

Ennio orders them to investigate the murder in his name as his officially appointed commission. After all, he's still the governor.

THE CULTS



SPITALIANS

The Spitalians east of Lucatore are the first to hear about Altair's murder. Vivaco sickbay has gained notoriety by the static warfare in the Adriatic Lowlands. Here, many of the devastating campaigns of the Anabaptists and Spitalians against the Jehammedans started. Today, the sickbay serves as an outpost for operations throughout Northeastern Purgare. The leading surgeon, Carmino Ferro, once Altair's personal doctor, at once offers his help in their search for the killer. Yet the Anabaptists refuse. The Spital is confused. Who could solve the murder better than the Spitalians? Instead, the Anabaptists refuse to surrender the body, wanting to bury the Baptist before he can be autopsied. A unit needs to have a closer look at Lucatore and investigate the Anabaptists behavior. Carmino is said to ignore the Anabaptists' orders and personally heads for Lucatore.



CHRONICLERS

The Council of Emanations immediately meets with Fragment Modus in Cathedral City. The Council members ask for help, the murder needs to be investigated at once. The Chroniclers' willingness to help is supposed to strengthen the fledgling alliance between the two Cults. Yet the Chroniclers have already reacted and sent out the Shutter Decoy 5. Instead of putting faith in a supervised investigative commission, the Chroniclers prefer to trust in a secret agent on location who can mingle with the population inconspicuously in cases like this. However, to appease the Council, the Chroniclers will take part in the official investigation when asked to do so. It cannot be bad for the collective intelligence, and the helpfulness of the Tech-Cult will probably substantiate the peace treaty. This way, the Cult buys time for the Fragment Modus to keep moving throughout Cathedral City freely...



HELLVETICS

The borders of Territorial Region III are just a few kilometers away. Beyond, there are the Purgan axis across the Reaper's Blow and the trade routes to Borca. Anabaptists and Hellvetics know each other well, and even if they don't have a lot in common, the missionary movement of the Anabaptists across the Alpine passage has brought a nice income in customs fees to the Alpine Fortress in recent decades. Hellvetics need supplies. Always and at all times. Anabaptists supply them with food, grease, ointments, medical herbs, honey from Franka and everyday kitsch that

saves the Hellvetics from bunker fever. In exchange, the Council of Emanations often relies on armed mercenary groups from Hellvetica to safeguard the terrestrial route through southern Borca. Verhoest and Bianchi, the Corps Commanders of Territorial Regions III and IV agree that at least one soldier should be part of the investigations in Lucatore. As a gesture of goodwill of course...



JUDGES

The Judges know the concept of murder and investigation, it is daily fare in the Protectorate to expose killers and investigate their motives. Yet beyond the Protectorate, hammer, hat and coat do not mean a thing. Purgare is not the country of the Judges — and still the Chroniclers try to influence the Senate to help with the investigation. The Protectorate is too dependent on the water that the Anabaptists in Liqua control. The long-standing tradition of trade and brotherhood in arms should not be endangered.



CLANNERS

Benesato, Lombardi, Romano, Flayers. Many Clans are active in and around Lucatore. Some are rooted in the history of the city, others have strong ties to the Anabaptist Cult. Some Clans make no secret of the conflict between them and the broken cross and silently rejoice in Altair's death because they want to seize the moment. The power vacuum could lead to major changes, and the Clans see a chance. If they find out who is responsible for the murder they will know with whom to side with to expand their strength. For too long, the Neognosis has covered the faith of the old Clans like viscous mud. It's time to breathe the wind of resistance.



SCRAPPERS

Lucatore is grazed, nothing of use has been found there for 200 years. Every Scraper from the land of the Crow has passed through the region or the city on his way to Bedain at least once, was waved through with a nod and quickly sent on. In Lucatore, there is not a lot for Scrapers to do. Sometimes one of them is hired to repair a cooking kettle or to help build the water towers, but these Scrapers never stay for long. The West is much more enticing. The things still buried there are much more valuable than the meager spoils that might be found in the land of the Anabaptists.



NEOLIBYANS

The Sheikhs of Bedain have offered their help to the Anabaptists, but they refused. They do not want the Africans to meddle with their interior affairs. Generally, Neolibyans are rarely seen in or around Lucatore. However, a few weeks ago, a caravan passed the town on its way to Borca. A Neolibyan left the caravan and settled down. He is supposed to have built a small cabin somewhere beyond the city walls where he repairs and overhauls rifles in complete isolation. What he needs for his trade he buys from passing Scrappers. He only visits the market in the city for groceries. The inhabitants know and avoid him.



SCOURGERS

Scourgers continually pass the city in the baggage train of their masters. They have no comprehension of the meager life in the mountains, the myths of the Anabaptists mean nothing to them. There communities seems too incestuous to Scourgers, their reclusiveness too bizarre. Where are the battles, the contention and the trials of strength that the Anabaptists brag about? If their leader was killed, he was too weak to live. The Scourgers shake their heads and travel on to the Alpine fortress. They are much closer to the Helletics.



ANUBIANS

The Anubians have been following the reports from Franka for a while now — the Anabaptists' Elysian oils bear a strong resemblance to Marduk oil. How can this secret have fallen into the wrong hands? Reason enough to send one of their own northwards from Bedain to help the Cults new allies, the Spitalians, with their investigation.



JEHAMMEDANS

The Jehammedans have heard of Altair's murder. Some shepherds think that the Cult shouldn't celebrate too loudly. Otherwise, grief could quickly turn into hurt pride and anger and bring the old enemy to whet the blades of war again. The Jehammedans prefer to be a helping hand instead of adding fuel to the flames. They will send emissaries carrying a peace banner to Lucatore to offer their help with the investigation. However, they cannot expect hospitality — the Anabaptists will meet any Jehammedan with utter suspicion and generally ascribe clandestine glee to him.



APOCALYPTICS

The slag deserts of Western Purgare are the home of the Flocks. The east is not their land, the Anabaptists are too stubborn and too recalcitrant to deal with them for any amount of time. However, there is still covert trade between the two Cults. The Ascetics of Lucatore need lots of potent Burn from the Spore Fields in the West, and the Apocalyptics get good money for their goods. However, since Altair's death, business has come to a halt. A considerable shipment went unpaid, and the Flock of the Rust Falcons feels duped. Especially since the intern cannot pay the debts to the Albatrosses from Western Purgare. Someone needs to check if everything's in order in Lucatore. As a group, the Apocalyptics will not show up there. However, a single one could mingle with the populace and follow the trail of the Burn shipment.



ANABAPTISTS

Since Altair's death, there has been resentment within the Cult. Everybody's nerves are stretched to breaking point. Everyone in Lucatore could be responsible. Cathedral City rages and sends emissaries to quickly solve the murder. Yet Neva, Lucatore's Iron Emissary, balks at any intrusion. She informs Cathedral City by Scrapper radio that she does not want to be besieged. She desires to be left alone in her grief and expects the Council of Emanations and the other Baptists to respect it.



PALERS

There are many reasons for a Paler to be in the Alps: the Alpine fortress, intercepted Triglaw broadcasts, a broken navigation tracker or simply the Demagogue's order to look for the lost bunkers. However, the Anabaptists themselves are not interesting. The surface dwellers praying to false gods are a misguided lot. But wait a minute — maybe it's just that? All this secrecy, a murder and this religious fuss. Who knows what's behind it? Reason enough for a Paler to pry into it and have a look around. Covertly, of course.



RUMOR MILL

What's true for the Protectorate or Tripol also applies to the Lucatore region: Every area has its own rumor mill.

Different people tell different stories. Some of them outright wrong, made up out of pure boast. Some contain a kernel of truth. The latter are very dangerous and they are only passed on in whispers. They spread by word-of-mouth, through networks and secret codes, are intercepted in radio broadcasts or sold. What leaks of these truths becomes part of the mix of rumors, hearsay and red herrings.

The Characters have heard unrelated stories. To find out what they know about the area and the town before the game begins, your players can use the following rumor table. You should pass some of these rumors secretly to every player before the first game session. Thus, the Characters become part of the Adventure in advance and have their personal background knowledge that they can share with other people around the playing table if they want — maybe they have even heard the same rumors.

To find out the truth behind this information during the upcoming gaming sessions, the players must check

their secret knowledge against actual events in the Adventure. Maybe they can also use it to further follow up on a clue so far unexamined.

RULES: to find out how many rumors the Character knows when the game begins, have every player roll on INT+Legends (2). Characters from Purgare get +1D to the roll. Scrappers may add their background "Network" to the roll, Anabaptists and Apocalyptics may add extra dice from their background "Secrets".

Each successful Action roll is rewarded with one piece of information per player from the Success table and Triggers with one piece of Information per player from the respective Trigger table.

Certain rumors are only relevant to the investigative commission of the Cults as they relate to events that happened before the immersion point on day 6. These are marked with a (C) and make no sense for Characters that are in Lucatore when the murder occurs and become witness to the events that unfold afterwards.

SUCCESS

- ◊ The Anabaptists have lost control over their demesne. The Clans of Northern Purgare are preparing a large-scale escalation.
- ◊ The Baptist Altair was a victim of the political chaos in the area. Soon, the Clans will try to rise to power. (C)
- ◊ The Hellvetics are involved with the murder. They want higher custom fees for the region and do not want to tolerate the Anabaptists any longer. (C)
- ◊ The area is grazed; there are no more Artifacts to be found in the ground. But there is lots of bygone mammon: coins, gold, jewelry.
- ◊ An African is said to have gone into hiding in the area a few weeks ago.
- ◊ The Hellvetics and Anabaptists are pacifying the country. Hosts of Apocalyptics are rarely to be found here.
- ◊ Altair was poisoned. (C)
- ◊ The Cloister is only a false front for the Anabaptists. In reality, it's an indoctrination camp for Orgiastics.
- ◊ The Jehammedans have killed Altair – belated revenge for the Adriatic wars. (C)
- ◊ Packs of Orgiastics reached the Adriatic Sea via the Eden Route. The road is only a warpath for fast troop deployments.
- ◊ The monks of Lucatore are an ascetic persuasion of the Anabaptists. They live the Neognosis more strictly than the Anabaptists in the North who are closer to other Cults.
- ◊ Clan Benesato has been completely absorbed into the Anabaptist Cult during the great missionary movement. Nowadays, the Clan is only a puppet of Cathedral City; its former power in the area has long since been lost.
- ◊ Altair was stabbed to death. (C)
- ◊ Custus, the Scrapper, has a small smithy outside the town where he repairs things in almost no time.
- ◊ In the brushwood of the forests around Lucatore, strange talismans and mirror shards have been found time and again.

1 TRIGGER

- ◊ A shipment of Burn from the West seems to have gone unpaid. Its destination was Lucatore.
- ◊ The Lombardi of Bergamo have an ongoing feud with the Anabaptists.
- ◊ Every week, a caravan with goods from the Cloister leaves for Cathedral City. The customs books in Roppen could tell what kind of goods they are.
- ◊ On the morning of the murder, the city guard was called away from the water towers. (C)
- ◊ Deep in the swamp of the Lombard Bog, there are ancient mysteries.
- ◊ The Baptist Altair had a Spitalian medical attendant he was going to visit on the morning of his death. (C)
- ◊ The Emissary Neva is the wife of the murdered Baptist Altair. (C)

2 TRIGGERS OR MORE

- ◊ There is a high-ranking Chronicler agent in town.
- ◊ The goods coming from the Cloister must be enormously important to the Anabaptists. The customs fees paid in Roppen and the number of fighters escorting the goods to the North are both three times as high as the ones for a usual shipment.
- ◊ The Iron Emissary Neva and the Elysian Abacus resisted the idea of a commission of investigators for fear of violating Altair's peace of death.
- ◊ Several years ago, there was an incident at one of the Hellvetic listening posts in the area. The Hellvetics yield no information at all on this, but rumor has it that Scrappers found the place completely wrecked.
- ◊ Ennio Benesato might be the ruler of Lucatore, but Emissary Neva and the Anabaptists hold the true power.
- ◊ Lucio Bastardo, commander of the city guard, was Altair's adopted son.
- ◊ For years now, Burn from the West has been smuggled past the Hellvetics by the Clan March.



2

CHAPTER

SINS OF
THE FATHERS

ALTAIR'S LEGACY

The Baptist Altair has left his mark not only on Lucatore, but on his Cult in general. In spite of his ignoble death, his ministry continues to be felt in northern Purgare. His legacy lives on.

He had barely turned 14 when the Anabaptists came to his home village. Their zeal in fighting the Demiurge inspired him; their codices sorted out his own thoughts and gave him a destiny. As a standard bearer of the Broken Cross, he traveled to the Adriatic Lowlands: The Cult had found the most fertile soil on earth; the Garden of Eden was within reach. War after war followed. Altair exchanged the banner for the Bidenhander and later the blade for the Spitfire. At the age of 23, the Sublime Grenzell made him a pack leader. A few months later, Altair and his pack forced back a vastly superior Jehammedan vanguard in a well aimed pincer maneuver. This victory carried the young Furo's name to Cathedral City.

The Baptist Marcellus called Altair to Borca and taught him diplomacy and negotiation for two years. The tuition made him a fascinating speaker and missionary. Afterwards, the Cult sent him to Franka as an Emissary and representative of Cathedral City.

On his journeys through the Neolibyan coastal cities, the Marduk oil raised his interest. In tough negotiations, he got the secret recipes from the Anubians and started experimenting – the hour of birth of the Elysian oils. Altair tested the varied mixtures on himself, and his emanations kept getting stronger. His visions became the substrate for numerous successful campaigns against the Pheromancers and the political developments in Bassham. He worked for the Baptist Amos and later helped Vincent, the Crusher of Bassham, taking over the city and making it part of the Protectorate. Soon afterwards, the Council of Emanations called him back to Cathedral City. Marcellus was dying, and the Adriatic Basin drowned in violence. The static warfare in the Basin had deteriorated to a series of exhausting massacres. Altair was told to become heir to the Baptist and to bring about the final decision in this conflict.

Less than 12 hours after Marcellus' death Altair was made his successor and rode back towards Purgare. As one of the eight Baptists he returned to his family stronghold which he chose as his temporary quarters. On the day of his arrival, he sent outriders to all units in the Basin, demanding they send status reports back to Lucatore. When he was able to see the bigger picture, he frowned deeply: the situation was devastating, the fighters were demoralized, and the bloodshed was much too high. He racked his brain – how could he turn the tide?

In Franka, he had seen people use Burn – could something similar bring success on the Adriatic front? In the cellars under the Cloister, Altair discussed with Abacus, the Elysian of Lucatore, showed him his notes on the Marduk oil and gave them free reign to continue his experiments. The next day, he made his younger brother Ennio governor to be able to return to the Adriatic Lowlands himself. His fighters needed hope and leadership.

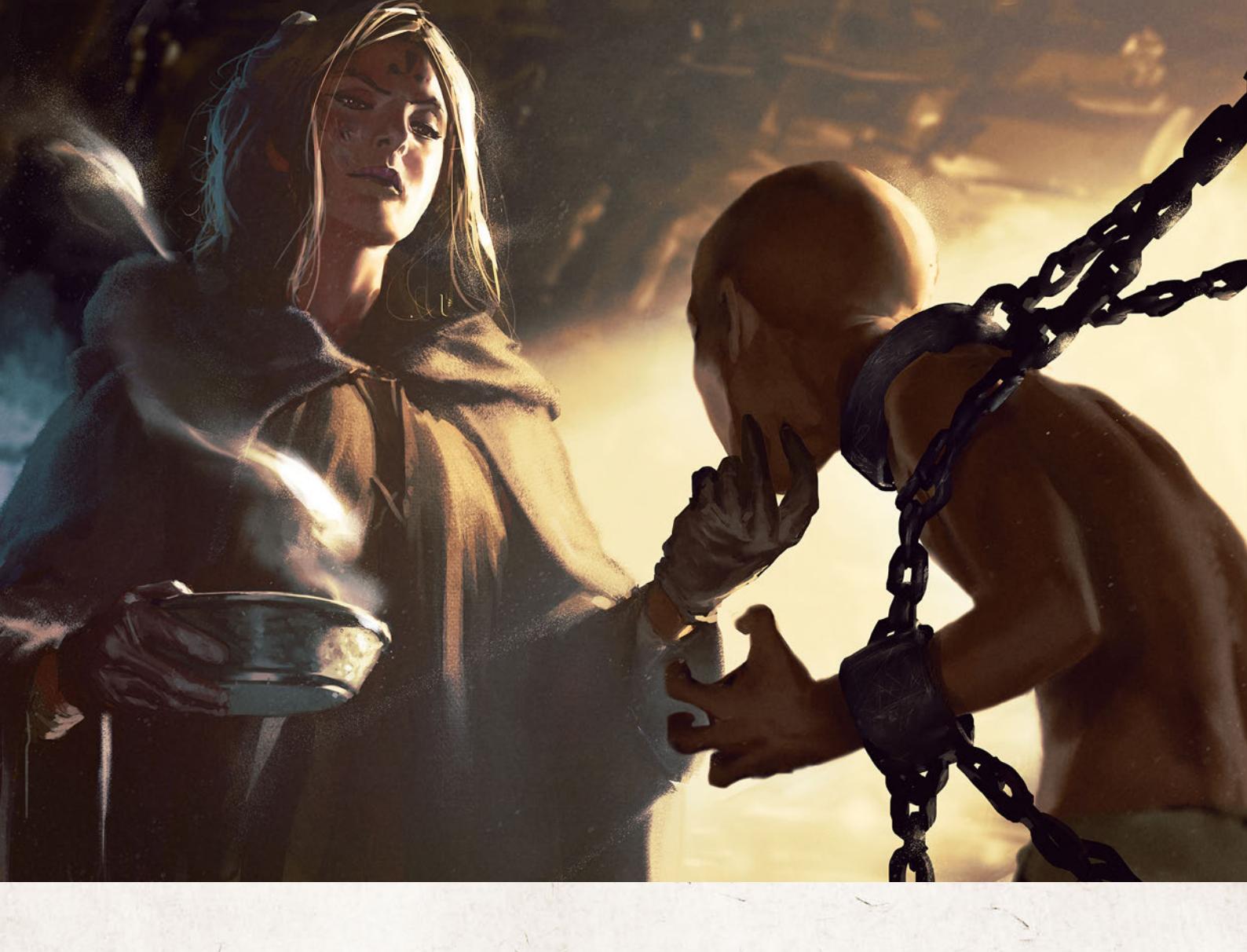
Amidst the Adriatic wars, Altair noticed a young Origiastic called Neva who held the whole area against the hated Jehammedans with a massively decimated pack. Her boundless dedication was like a beacon to him, fascinated him and almost drove him crazy.

Although she was 20 years his junior, Neva became his companion whose dedication was as burning as his own. He married her and made her his Emissary. When the first successfully distilled oils from Lucatore finally reached him a few weeks later, she was the first he passed this new hope in the battle against the Jehammedans on to.

RETREAT

For five years, Neva fights side by side with Altair in the name of the Broken Cross. Then there is a turning point: After three devastating battles in which the enemies took massive losses, both Cults force each other to sit down at the table of negotiation. The opponents are bled dry, the meaning of the war has become unclear, and at the end of the day, the borderlines are drawn. The Baptist and the Emissary realize what little sense it makes to continue fighting. They become the architects of the first peace treaty between Anabaptists and Jehammedans – after a century of slaughter.

Completely unexpected, the agreements had just been signed, and Cathedral City had sent a new wave of settlers from way up north, Neva and Altair disappear from the Adriatic basin's wheat fields. Forever. For days, carts ship their belongings from their fort to Lucatore. The reason for this retreat: Neva is pregnant. In the mornings, she vomits blood, by day, she is so weak that she can only pray on her knees. For weeks, the world revolves around her. Neva loses any sense of time, the hours are endless and painful. Emanations fill her mind while she is tied to the bed. She hears the cries of her unborn baby. By day. At night. Always. Madness clouds her senses, settles in her mind like rancid fat. Altair looks down at her worriedly, putting his hand on her forehead, giving her consolation, yet she only pleads to finally tear the child from her womb. Then, there is silence.



CERTAINTY

Nothing is as good as before anymore. Her newborn son Vikal has been ill from day one. High fever, often for weeks; only for a few days per year, Neva hopes that he might survive. She walks the empty corridors of the Cloister, breast-feeding the child, caring for it, but it doesn't get any better. It never gets any better.

She looks to Altair for help, but in his face, there's only disappointment. He never comments on Vikal, but instead takes over representative duties for Cathedral City in far-away Pollen. The Emissary lingers in the corners of her rooms, looking for solutions, desperate, finding new courage only to lose it again the next day.

Vikal doesn't react to her, never laughs, never speaks. Years pile up, time loses its meaning, and Neva drowns in worry for her child. The Baptist only rarely visits the Cloister, sharing her bed only for a few nights at a time. Does he feel she is responsible for Vikal's condition? She feels betrayed. In every conversation, she snaps at Altair, baring her teeth, growling her answers like a rabid Gendo. She tries everything to save the child, drowns him with her love, sedates him, pokes his skin with needles, burns prayer formulas and has Vikal inhale the smoke, shakes him, but it's all in vain. A bubble of grief threatens to suffocate her heart. She

drifts through the days in hollow exhaustion, has Apocalypitics do card readings for her and has them chased from the cloister, if the tarot doesn't promise her happiness. She enters her son's chamber and cries at his bed. Suddenly, stones and dust start floating around Vikal's head. Blinking lights fill the room, circling the boy. Neva finally understands what she didn't dare saying out loud all this time: she has lost Vikal to the Demiurge.

She grabs the boy, drags him to the tower. Tears are running down her cheeks while she presses him to the floor and hammers iron nails through his wrists, chains him down to keep him from running away. She cries as she sees him howl soundlessly, runs from the tower, banging her head against the walls and tearing out wisps of her hair. Madness has crept into her, has engulfed her mind like oil. The only thing she can think of is saving Vikal.

She tells Altair the truth, begs him to leave Lucatore with her and Vikal to search for a cure for their child. Altair stares at her as if she was a stranger and finally lowers his gaze - he cannot bear to look at her anymore. He says the oil was more important than Vikal. But he will confide in the Spitalians. They will surely find a solution for the child. The solution? Neva almost blacks out, breath catches in her throat: it was the oil! Altair had poisoned her!

VIKAL, THE SECRET OF THE CLOISTER

The inhabitants of the Cloister remember well the hour of birth. The cries of the mistress could be heard as far down as the chapel, it was almost unbearable. Afterwards, the anticipation of the event changed to a strange sort of devoutness. Only a few got to see the child, the inhabitants of Lucatore were not allowed to see the boy at all, the festivities were postponed. In the corridors, the Touched Ones who took care of mother and child whispered quietly that he was very weak and sickly. When Altair heard of these rumors, they stopped. Completely. No one dared asking questions. Even the midwife left the

Cloister and returned to her parents' farm in Apis, carrying lots of gold from the vault.

Summers and winters came and went. When Ascetics met mother and child in the cloister, Mistress Neva wrapped her son in her cape with an icy look, forbidding any form of curiosity. Vikal's affliction had hit the Emissary hard. "Emaciated like a ghost, aggressive like a rabid bitch," the Ascetics murmured behind her back. Neva caught a young Touched One listening at her son's door and cut her ear off during the morning prayer before Altair could stop her. It was better not to cross the "Iron Emissary's" path, as the Ascetics took to calling her. In

the end, she moved to the tower with the boy. It was said his affliction had worsened again. Even a simple cold could mean his death.

When Altair appeared in the Elysian gardens one day accompanied by Lucio and Abacus to speak to the Ascetics, most of them suspected that Vikal had died before he had spoken his first word. Pneumonia. They'd already buried him. By the Broken Cross – never again was anyone to say his name or desecrate his memory by entering the rooms in the tower, the Baptists announced. Lucio and Abacus nodded in silent assent. The rest is silence.



THE PACT

Neva's boots sank into the humid underbrush. Just a few more steps through the thicket, and she'd be there. Right in front of her, the Romano camp spread, nestled into a mountain slope at the flank of the Borreo. The crackling of wet cones in campfires told her the way. She stepped from the shadow of the trees out in the sleet that rained down on the dirty tents of the camp. Deep holes were dug in the ground everywhere, slowly filling with rainwater. Chains and pulleys hung down into the holes, digging material and tools were strewn in the mud next to them. Countless men and women crouched under the awnings of the tents, seeking shelter from the rain and eating steaming innards and tubers from pots. The rabble leered at her, taking her in from head to toe.

She noticed something from the corner of her eye. A crippled figure with the simpleton's gaze was limping toward her, trying to touch her. Neva whirled around, grab the Romano's wrist and pulled his outstretched arm towards her. She jerked back, leaned into his elbow and broke the bastard's forearm.

With a loud thud, he hit the mud face down. Her hand encircled the hilt of a sword to keep the Romano from try-

ing anything dumb. He seemed to understand. The other toothless figures laughed. Behind them, someone was clapping extendedly. Neva gazed at the tent the noise was coming from. An ugly, squat guy whose hair seemed to be plastered to his head showed her a golden toothed grin and beckoned her closer. He was the one she had been looking for: Papa Chicco, the leader of this rabble.

She entered his den with its sour air. Overhead, meat and roots were hanging from the rafters to dry. In front of the opposite wall of the tent, Goldtooth was burbling wine from a dirty wooden bowl, sitting at a small table. She strode towards him and explained to him in no uncertain terms and in a clear voice what she wanted. He spat. Gave her a complacent nod while he absentmindedly re-stacked the coins strewn across the table. He answered that for an appropriate price, the work could be done. Slowly he drew the long knife from the scabbard at his belt. Neva stared into his eyes, watching him lick the blade appreciatively and afterwards swooped down his hair with the flat side of it.

The pact with this madman would cost her everything that had once been the focus of her life. But she had no choice.

FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS TIME MARCHES ON FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

[METALLICA]

WHEN BAPTISTS DIE

March 28th, 2595. Altair's horse restlessly pawed the pavement next to the great basin. The sunlight had not risen above the Arcade Wall yet, and the water towers lay in shadows.

Ambroggio and Siphon had tiredly crept from the chambers this morning to saddle the Baptist's horse. The young Orgiastics tightened the straps, attached the saddle-bags and stroked the stallion's muzzle to calm him down. With a brief look at their master Altair they made sure that everything was to his satisfaction. Altair thanked them with a favorable nod, and then he gazed at the sky. Clouds rushed past in fast motion. It would take him two days to reach Vivaco, maybe three in bad weather. Still it was worth taking the journey, his personal doctor Carmino was the only one he could confide in. He girded his sword, oiled his hair and blessed the water in the decanter at his feet. A deep gulp to shake off the tiredness, a look back to the two Orgiastics – good boys, both of them.

There were three short blasts of the morning horn from the watchtower. "Much too early", Altair thought and shook his head. Ambroggio and Siphon new the command, they had to get up to the bridge to stand guard. They looked at their master, and again the Baptist nodded, allowing them to leave. They ran out of the courtyard.

Altair knelt down. It was time for his morning contemplation. His prayer formula smoldered in the brazier, and he closed his eyes, inhaling the smoke. Pneuma. He heard the rusty angles of the great gate creak. Surely the boys had forgotten their swords again, the Baptist thought, smiling benevolently.

Then a sudden jerking from behind. An iron grip in his hair, pulling back his head, exposing his throat. A knee in his back. His hands rushed to his throat, but the blade was already touching the vein, sliding left to right in a merciless move. Altair fell forward, the clasp of his cape clinked as it rolled across the pavement, and his legs jerked and kicked the empty air while the light slowly faded from his eyes. A few steps away, his horse kept pawing the ground restlessly.

FAREWELL

The horn of sorrow droned across Lucatore, echoing from the mountains. The deep, endless sound roused the people from their sleep. They ran to their windows and gables to see what had happened. In night garments, the inhabitants came running from their houses, racing through the streets, meeting at the water towers. A boy with a crew cut shoved past the adults to see what had happened. So much blood. Men stared at the pool in shock, the women cried. Their leader lay slain. He had held the hopes of all in his hands. Who had dared to do this to Lucatore?

Ascetics shoved through the crowd of onlookers. They covered the body with a white blanket. Then they lifted the dead man to a gurney they shouldered to carry Altair back to the Cloister. The crowds tried to touch the body in awe to say farewell to their master. Torches were lit, and a procession followed the Ascetics through the city up to the Cloister. In a low voice, some hummed old war tunes they had once sung with the man on the battlefields in the Adriatic Basin. Others marched in reverent silence.

Over the next days, riots kept arising throughout the city. In the alleys, on the market square, in the taverns – the question of the murderer and his motive dominated the talk of the town. Lucio Bastardo and his city guard patrolled the streets, trying to calm down the people. If the cowardly killer was still amongst them, they would surely catch him and slowly flay him on the village cross. In time, a black blanket covered the flared tempers. Grief replaced the feeling of impuissance.

The Baptist Altair was dead, murdered in cold blood on holy ground. The news spread to the most remote nooks and crannies of the world in no time. An immaculate chapter of the history of the Anabaptists and of Purgare as a whole had ended with his death.



AN AGGRAVATING GRAVE

The cold of spring crept into the chapel of the Cloister, candles were burning.

Neva and her two co-conspirators Lucio and Abacus stood in front of Altair's outlaid body. He had left his mark on all of their lives. In the past hours, they had quietly prepared the deceased and adorned him for the last anointment.

The Furor Lucio and the Elysian Abacus knew that they shared a secret with their Emissary that could never be revealed. Otherwise, they would share the fate of the Baptist on his bier who had been like a father to one of them and like a brother to the other.

Neva bowed down to kiss her dead husband farewell on his forehead. Then she commanded Lucio and Abacus to bury the Baptist at the nearby cemetery under a heavy boulder. The grave should not attract attention, so they were to cover it and the boulder with loose stones and put an iron cross at the head in the Anabaptist tradition. That's all. The three of them had agreed that under no circumstances was the body to be examined thoroughly. If the Spitalians were to cut Altair open they'd run the risk of them drawing

conclusions about the Elysian oils. In the same night, they buried the Baptist.

The next morning, Abacus commanded a dozen Ascetics to draw a boulder on top of the grave with the help of a horse and cart, to cover it with rocks afterwards and finally raise a simple iron cross. The Elysian told the workers it had been Altair's wish to be buried like a common man. Also, it would keep the grave robbers away.

FAMILY HONOR

A silver chalice flew through the room in a wide arc, hitting the wall and dropping to the stone floor. For a little while, it kept rolling back and forth before the room was silent again. Ennio's gaze followed the droplets of wine that slowly slid down the curtains. Then he buried his face in his calloused hands.

A week had passed since his brother had been killed, and still he could not leave his estate. He could neither eat nor sleep. Something grueling had shattered his life. Altair, whom he had revered extremely, who had made him head of the family and who was part of all the best memories of

PAPA CHICCO'S GOLD

Abacus's heart skipped a beat: Neva – down here in his Oil Mills! One side step and the Elysian disappeared in the darkness behind the giant cogwheels. The Emissary quickly strode to the back of the store room. Good – she was not looking for him. There was a groaning noise, followed by a low creaking. He risked a furtive glance and saw that Neva had pried open the door to the supply tunnel. In the flickering light of a lamp, he saw the silhouette of this fat trader from Roma in the doorway. Neva beckoned the man to follow her to the vault where the crates with the loot from the Adriatic campaigns were stored: gilt framed icons, ornate scroll tubes, bejeweled ceremonial

items. Altair's legacy. Abacus watched the fat pig raise one of the sealed chests to his shoulder without any help and carry it back to the tunnel. She couldn't know exactly what was in the crate. It was just as dubious if this trader was able to gauge the value of these items. Shaking his head he assumed that the woman had finally gone stark raving mad. Then he returned to his last extract – a little too cloudy. He wondered if it would clear in time. No. Not even in the nights to come, in which the henchmen of the trader carried chest after chest into the supply tunnel, opening them and hastily rummaging through them. He would have to alter the mixture.

his life was dead. They had buried him clandestinely according to Anabaptist rituals. They hadn't even let Ennio visit the grave.

Through calloused fingers he watched the silver chalice lying in front of him, his gaze followed the engravings on the metal. His eyes wandered along the relief. The Benesato arms were etched there: three mountaintops framed by two horses and a wreath of rapeseed flowers.

The Anabaptists had defiled the Benesato family with their undignified burial of Altair. A leader always had to be buried according to Clan rituals, with his horse in a bed of rapeseed. A stone stele had to adorn his grave. It had to be engraved with his name hovering over three mountaintops. This is how his beloved parents had taught him since he'd been a child. What a shambles his life now was! His face

reddened in shame. People who treated his family legacy so carelessly knew no respect and no honor. Ennio heaved himself from his armchair, scooped up the chalice and went into the next room. There, his nephews Domingo and Pace stood guard next to the main door. As he entered, they stood at attention, pike in hand. Absentmindedly, he kissed their cheeks, a sign for them to move.

He held the silver chalice in front of their eyes, turning from one side to the other so they could clearly see the coat of arms.

He wasn't sure if the Anabaptists wanted to solve Altair's murder. Domingo and Pace would be Ennio's eyes and ears in the city. Tell him every rumor they heard, so that he as his brother's keeper could find the killer and make him pay. His nephews nodded vigorously.

TWO UNEVEN BROTHERS

Altair and Ennio couldn't be more different. Altair was a great speaker who inspired the hearts of his followers, while Ennio never converted to the Anabaptist faith. He held up the traditions of Clan Benesato, stood true to the family roots and inherited their parents' farm.

When Altair, his older brother, came back gloriously from the Adriatic battlefields for the first time and brought increasing influence and wealth to Lucatore, he made Ennio the governor of the Cloister city. The

younger man was not made for this job, but it was important to Altair to know that the city was controlled by the family. Yet there was more: in Ennio, he saw unquestioning loyalty and only very little ambition to pull the strings himself.

When Altair and Neva finally made the Cloister their power base, the Baptist made his wife leader of the city. At that time, he trusted her decisions blindly, not like those of his reluctant brother who had never fought for anything in his life. Ennio

accepted his new job and became the perfect representative for Lucatore – a simple bureaucrat with ties to the Anabaptists and rooted in the Benesato family, but without his own agenda. Neva however ruled the village undisputedly. The city guard is as loyal to her as the Ascetics. She has no time for her brother in law Ennio. Let him play the flag bearer – he has no idea how to make real decisions anyway.



CARMINO FERRO

When Carmino came to Vivaco 10 years ago, he found the sickbay in a shambles. The Famulancers were malnourished, the neoprene hung from the shoulders, and the way they patched up the wounded was unacceptable and showed how poorly they were trained. He knew that the Spital did not care much for this outpost as it was focused mainly on the campaigns in Pollen. The status was unbearable and a waste of potential. Carmino took the lead, cut through the ties of the management of the outpost to the locals, organized resources and started reshaping Vivaco according to his ideas. He also started teaching the Famulancers. Some he turned into Field Medics and sent them to the Adriatic Basin, others had to help him in Vivaco. Carmino was a dynamic man, his discipline, willpower and inquiring mind inspired his subordinates. The sickbay soon became more important, Carmino gained renown far beyond the Cult and was respected for his relentless energy. He was even offered the vacant position of Registrar for northern Purgare, but he rejected.

He wanted to stay at the surgical table and heal wounds that other Surgeons would have deemed beyond hope: mending torn organs, removing jammed splinters of bone from open fractures, replacing shattered joints by prostheses. His specialty was head surgery. Then he was appointed personal doctor of Altair the Baptist.

ROLE PLAYING

Ferro's greatest forte is his ability to focus on a job and get it done. He watches the world with the cool, appraising gaze of the Surgeon: remediable tissue or irremediable flesh? Under pressure, he's a quick decider and rarely needs to reconsider his decisions. At the same time, he's a taciturn man – he speaks in short, precise sentences, he is a scientist, not a man of God.

At this time, his most important aim is to find out what happened to his high-ranking patient – preferably by performing an autopsy. If his attempts to get the Anabaptists' permission to do so is met with resistance, he makes clear that he's not fully ready to bow to their authority. Yes, he will respect the time of grief, but no, he will not tolerate further delays.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Purgare, The Ruler, Spitalian, Rank 4: Surgeon

ATTRIBUTES: BOD 3, AGI 4, CHA 3, INT 5, PSY 5, INS 2

SKILLS: Athletics 5D, Force 6D, Melee 6D, Stamina 6D, Toughness 6D, Dexterity 7D, Mobility 6D, Projectiles 7D, Conduct 6D, Leadership 7D, Negotiation 6D, Focus 8D, Medicine 9D, Science 7D, Domination 8D, Reaction 7D, Willpower 8D, Perception 5D

BACKGROUND: Allies 3, Authority 2, Network 2, Renown 4, Resources 3, Secrets 2

SPECIAL: Bonus +1D to all Action rolls against illnesses

POTENTIALS: Brainwave 3, Last Bastion 2, Tunnel Vision 2

INITIATIVE: 7D / 16 Ego Points (Focus)

ATTACK: Surgical instruments, 6D, Distance 1 m, Damage 5; Revolver, 7D, Distance (10/40), Damage 10

DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Dodge), Mobility 6D; Ranged Combat active (Look for Cover), Mobility 6D; Mental (Willpower) 10D

MOVEMENT: 5D

ARMOR: Spitalian Suit, Armor 2, Sealed (+4S), Respected (Patients +1D)

CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0 / 16, Fleshwounds 12, Trauma 8

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Bygone surgical instruments (Level 2); notebook bound in red leather (detailed notes on the investigation in Carmino's personal stenography; INT+Science (4) to decrypt)

INVENTORY

SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS

In Carmino's doctor's bag, there are by-gone scalpels, clamps and forceps as well as saws, raspatories, rib retractors, many wires, sheets and screws. With his instruments, Ferro can perform surgeries and autopsies basically anywhere. This is also the reason why he carries pure distillate and various narcotics.

NOTEBOOK

The surgeon's notebook contains notes on patients he has treated during his time in Vivaco. References and names indicate illnesses, fractures and treatments. Notes on Altair are clearly framed. Ferro keeps remarking on the enormous stamina of the Baptist and his will to live. His killer must have surprised Altair and must have known his weaknesses. There's no doubt about that for Ferro. He will find the killer and judge him himself, no matter the cost.

POTENTIALS

TUNNEL VISION

PREREQUISITE:

Spitalian, at least Surgeon, Focus

Emotions lead to mistakes. A true Surgeon dumps his hands into the chest cavity of a beloved person without hesitation if there is a life to be saved. Nothing can break his concentration, he is callous. The Spitalian gets +1D per Potential level to his Mental Defense against any efforts of psychic manipulation.

DECOY 5

Decoy is a Shutter working for the Chroniclers. He has committed acts of sabotage all over Europe, has started a revolt against the Neolibyan Atuma in Montpellier and killed an aspiring Scrap Prince in Aquitaine. His hands were made for work that no one must be able to link to the Chroniclers, and Decoy doesn't mind getting them dirty.

He always works alone. Decoy has many potential cover identities: He knows every last bit of the Scrapper rituals, can effortlessly turn into an Apocalyptic and is well versed in the Anabaptist codices. Only at night, he dons his Chronicler suit and acts as an assassin in the shadows or spies for his Cult. He knows how to hide the burnt out barcode on his forehead with bandages or bandanas. The 5 in his codename signifies the languages he is fluent in and the actions of which he can imitate perfectly.

In Lucatore, Decoy poses as Custus, a talented Scrapper and mechanic. In this personality, he has gained the trust of the Anabaptists and has even been to their sanctuary, the Oil Mills, to make some repairs there.

ROLE PLAYING

For Decoy, only the job matters. People are tools to be manipulated and sacrificed as necessary. He is ruthless and calculating, the mission is only successful to him if he has reached the best possible result for the Cluster.

On the job, he uses cover identities that he customizes to perfection. All his personalities have behavioral patterns, histories and motives that Decoy has learned by heart. This ruse is basically undetectable for outsiders and helps him move between the front lines without being noticed. Yet only the Shutter himself knows the inner rhythm of his soul.



CUSTUS

As Custus, the Scrapper, Decoy has settled down in Lucatore, acts all talkative and helpful and is constantly trying to support others. People like him because he can repair everything. They invite him to their homes, drink with him and tell him everything they know after a few hours. Decoy combines the extracted information into a sinister picture of the situation: Altair's murder has not been the climax of a crisis, but its starting point.

INVENTORY

STREAM DRONE

Eico is a spy drone recoded by Decoy. He has added rudimentary language functions, and it can learn to a certain degree. The drone is palm-sized and can record images and sounds with its micro sensors. Decoy reads them out using his Opticalizer. Eico is Decoy's eye in the sky, his early warning system and his only companion.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Conqueror, Chroniclers, Rank 3: Shutter

ATTRIBUTES: BOD 4, AGI 4, CHA 3, INT 4, PSY 4, INS 3

SKILLS: Athletics 8D, Force 8D, Melee 7D, Stamina 6D, Toughness 6D, Crafting 7D, Dexterity 7D, Mobility 8D, Projectiles 8D, Stealth 8D, Conduct 6D, Artifact Lore 7D, Engineering 7D, Focus 6D, Cunning 8D, Deception 8D, Domination 7D, Reaction 7D, Willpower 6D, Empathy 6D, Orienteering 5D, Perception 7D

BACKGROUND: Allies 1, Network 4, Resources 3, Secrets 2

SPECIAL: Access to sanctioned technology

POTENTIALS: Dead End 2, Download 2, Multiply 2

INITIATIVE: 7D / 12 Ego Points (Focus)

ATTACK: Combat Knife, 8D, Distance 1 m, Damage 5, Smooth-running (2T); Sniper Rifle, 8D, Distance (50/400), Damage 11, Sensitive

DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Block), Melee 8D;

Ranged Combat actives (Look for Cover), Mobility 8D; Mental (Willpower) 6D

MOVEMENT: 8D

ARMOR: Chronicler suit, Armor 2, first impression +1D, Source (Level 3), Fumor (Level 2), Discharge (Level 2)

CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0 / 12, Fleshwounds 12, Trauma 8

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Opticalizer (Mask with special optics; negates all vision penalties caused by environmental factors); Stream drone with recording-function and display; lock picks; camo paint; Scrapper clothing

POTENTIALS

MULTIPLY

PREREQUISITE:

Chroniclers, PSY+Deception 6

I am many. Some Shutters wear a different identity until it becomes like a second skin to them. With this Potential, a Chronicler can acquire a number of established cover identities according to his Potential level. He switches roles so fluently that he gets +1D per Potential level to PSY+Deception in conjunction with the respective cover identities.



ENNIO BENESATO

Ennio is surrounded by hounds, feels the hot breath of accusation down his neck. They want to frame him for the murder of his brother whom he adored all his life. He's on edge, paces the room, his nervous gaze wanders to the loud street outside beyond the window. He never wanted to be governor, only did it to please Altair – and now?

Altair is dead, and Ennio has become the target for all accusations. He hears them whisper in the arcades around his estate. “House Benesato has washed its hands with blood,” they say. Ennio is deeply shocked. He clings to the corners of his rooms, his gaze searches for Gala. She gives him a little peace. A good woman. She came to him when he was already old to bring him solace and stay at his side until his death. Her mild face does his heart good, her warmth gives him the strength to face the lies and untenable accusations against him. They have no proof. Or do they? The followers of the Broken Cross really want to pin this on him? He needs help, benevolent, independent thinkers who can find his brother's killer and prove Ennio's innocence. Who are these newcomers Gala pointed out to him? He wants to welcome them on his estate, break bread with them and gain their support.

ROLE PLAYING

His allies are dwindling, the hypocrisies of his followers are unbearable, House Benesato has become a prison for him. The lean old man in the expensive garment trembles. All his life, he wanted to suit everybody, wanted to honor his exalted brother, tried not to defame the family legacy. Now all of a sudden, the eyes of the world are upon him. Every word he says is picked apart, his every action dissected. The Cults are all over the city, and surely he's their only topic. He thinks of his poor parents. If they knew what was happening to him, they'd be turning in their graves from shame.

For the very first time, the governor has to step out of his brother's shadow and find the courage to take back his life. He must wash the name of his family clean of the shame that is threatening to defile it.

SEED OF DOUBT

Ennio doesn't believe that his nephew is dead. No grave, no wake, only Altair's leaden silence. He has seen Vikal, this sickly worm who wasn't much of a Benesato and even less of a Baptist's child a few times. Yet Ennio knows who was Altair's personal doctor and that the son of a Baptist doesn't simply die of pneumonia. The noose around his neck gets tighter day by day. If he is stalemated any further, he will voice his doubts and let Ferro know about the boy's affliction.

ESCORT

Domingo and Pace, two nephews in the third degree, are Ennio's pike bearers and guard him whenever he goes on in the city. They are trained in the traditional pike fighting style of Clan Benesato, bodyguard their old master and run errands for him throughout the province.

POTENTIALS

UNTO DEATH

PREREQUISITE:

Common, CHA+Leadership 10
Those who rule wisely and justly earned the unerring respect of their followers. This aura of dignity makes others willingly catch a bullet for them. Followers who go to battle for a Character with this Potential while the Character is present recover 1 Ego Point per combat round. Additionally, they get +1 per Potential level to their initiative in the first combat round.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Purgare, The Disciple, Clanners: Benesato, Rank 5: Ancestor

ATTRIBUTES: BOD 3, AGI 3, CHA 6, INT 4, PSY 4, INS 4

SKILLS: Athletics 5D, Toughness 5D, Mobility 5D, Stealth 7D, Arts 8D, Conduct 10D, Expression 9D, Leadership 10D, Negotiation 9D, Seduction 8D, Legends 8D, Cunning 7D, Faith 8D, Reaction 6D, Empathy 8D, Orienteering 6D, Perception 6D, Primal 7D

BACKGROUND: Allies 5, Authority 6, Network 3, Renown 3, Resources 5, Secrets 3

SPECIAL: Bodyguards: 2 pike bearers of Clan Benesato (Domingo and Pace, Ennio's nephews in the third degree)

POTENTIALS: Unto Death 3, Unyielding 3

INITIATIVE: 6D / 14 Ego Points (Primal)

ATTACK: Make Peace, CHA+Negotiation 9D

DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Retreat), Mobility 5D; Ranged Combat active (Look for Cover), Mobility 5D; Mental (Faith) 8D

MOVEMENT: 5D

ARMOR: Ancestral robe, Armor 0

CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0 / 16, Fleshwounds 10, Trauma 7

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Heavy, golden chain of office with the town seal of Lucatore; golden seal ring with the Benesato coat of arms; map of the emergency tunnel to the Oil Mills (a greasy parchment that Altair has given him for cases of emergency – whatever his older brother meant by that)

GALA LOMBARDI

Gala detests the Anabaptists, hates their foolishness, their bad teeth and stinking hair. Anabaptists are scum. Like snakes they coiled before the gates of Bergamo, hissing their false promises. Her family, the Lombardi, have resisted the missionary efforts and spit into the face of the emissaries. In Bergamo, an alliance with the Jehammedans grows instead. Vespacchio, Gala's father and head of the Lombardi family, has told his daughter about his plan: she is to visit Ennio Benesato and settle down in Lucatore. With her charms, she is to seduce the old Benesato and join both families in marriage.

The Lombardi especially would profit from such a marriage. Vespacchio and Gala would inherit the fortune for lack of suitable children, the few bereaved of Clan Benesato would merge with Clan Lombardi. Lucatore will then be in the area of influence of Bergamo, and the Anabaptists would have no say at all. Vespacchio would accept them as interim administrative authority and slowly disown them. It would be a triumphant coup for Bergamo, and before Cathedral City would be able to raise an army, everything would be over. Gala goes for broke: She resides in old Ennio's loggia, takes him for walks in the gardens, embroiders his robe with Benesato symbols. She reads to him from history books, flatters him with her knowledge about his family's genealogy. She wants to win his heart so he will marry her. Then all of a sudden, Altair is murdered. This is Gala's hour: if she can convince Ennio that Lucatore is not safe under the Anabaptist banner anymore, Vespacchio's ploy will succeed.

ROLE PLAYING

Vespacchio's daughter is a cold, calculating viper. With the help of informers, she keeps her father in Bergamo up to speed about the progress of her mission. Gala watches Ennio die. The old man decays a little more every day, wilts with every new accusation raised against him. His lifetime is running out, she only waits for her cue to end this ignoble game. She swallows her distaste in large lumps, lets Ennio kiss and touch her, smells his sweat through his wet nightshirt. Soon he'll be dead, and she'll take revenge on him by crapping on his noble grave.



GUARDS

Vespacchio has sent four of his most loyal Lombard warriors to Lucatore. They watch House Benesato from strategic crossroads, arcades or gables. Whenever Gala moves to the city, they follow her like shadows. Always at distance, never noticed — the only communication with her happens through secret hand signs and short whistles. She must suffer no harm. The four men have sworn it by their lives and their honor as Lombardi.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Purgare, The Traditionalist, Clanners: Lombardi, Rank 3; Herald

ATTRIBUTES: BOD 3, AGI 4, CHA 6, INT 4, PSY 4, INS 4

SKILLS: Athletics 5D, Melee 5D, Toughness 4D, Mobility 6D, Stealth 7D, Arts 7D, Conduct 7D, Expression 7D, Leadership 8D, Negotiation 7D, Seduction 10D, Focus 6D, Legends 8D, Cunning 8D, Deception 8D, Reaction 6D, Willpower 8D, Empathy 8D, Orienteering 6D, Perception 6D

BACKGROUND: Allies 3, Authority 3, Network 3, Renown 3, Resources 4, Secrets 2

SPECIAL: Bodyguards: 4 heavily armored Lombardi warriors

POTENTIALS: Lombardi Blood 2, Viper's tongue 3

INITIATIVE: 6D / 12 Ego Points (Focus)

ATTACK: Stiletto, 5D, Distance 1 m, Damage 3, Smooth-running (2T)

DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Dodge), Mobility 6D; Ranged Combat active (Look for Cover), Mobility 6D; Mental (Willpower) 8D

MOVEMENT: 6D

ARMOR: Noble dress, Armor 0

CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0 / 16, Fleshwounds 8, Trauma 7

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Silver bracelet with three little charms (Gala is on hostile terrain and too precious to be caught alive; one of the charms contains a poison capsule that will kill her within a few heartbeats after she has swallowed it)

POTENTIALS

LOMBARDI BLOOD

PREREQUISITE: Lombardi

Clan Lombardi is old, much older than the Anabaptist Cult. From an early age, the children of the Clan learn who the original rulers of the land were. A Lombardi gets +1D per Potential level to his Mental Defense against Anabaptist influencing. This bonus even rises to +2D per Potential level against missionary efforts.

VIPER'S TONGUE

PREREQUISITE:

Common, CHA+Seduction 9

Once the viper's venom has reached the heart of its target, it's too late. Characters with this Potential are masters of Seduction who use their magnetism on all levels to reach their goals. Once a Character has successfully seduced a victim, the victim's mind gets more and more clouded. The victim's Mental Defense against the influence of the Character is lowered by 1D per Potential level.



ATILLA

Fernex found Attila as a cub. Someone had abandoned the puppy amidst the deep woods. Fernex took care of the dog, raised him and made him strong. Attila is Fernex's most loyal guard and best nose.

SHARD TALISMANS

Fernex has attached mirror shards on strings to trees in the forest and variable heights, a thing he has learned from the Vigilantes. They protect them from all evil. The underbrush around Lucatore is full of such talismans that clink eerily from afar when the wind blows. They are his early warning system against the Incarnates: if they fracture the light in an unnatural way, produce distorted mirror images or none at all, Fernex knows that the time of reckoning has come.

POTENTIALS

HAWKEYE

PREREQUISITE:

Common, AGI+Projectiles 8,
INS+Perception 8

The projectile flies towards its target between two breaths and squarely hits it. Characters with Hawkeye are good shooters who instinctively factor in downwind, weapon qualities and target movement when firing from greater distances. When shooting at a target beyond his effective distance, the Character gets +1D per Potential level to AGI+Projectiles.

FERNEX, THE VIGILANTES

His father had always told him about the Incarnates: Creatures with powers straight from hell, mighty and almost untamable in their fury. He said only Vigilantes could fight them, confuse them with booby-traps and feints, distract them only to fire salvo after salvo from the Lupara into their massive bodies.

Then, 20 years ago, Fernex had to learn that his father's words were not worth a thing. The Vigilantes had found the nest of a Psychokinetic and ambushed it. The beast tore through the group of hunters, caught bullets from the air, made eardrums rupture and innards explode. Fernex crouched into a chasm and watched the creature chew the meat off his father's bones. When everything was quiet again, he crept from his hiding place, took his old man's Lupara and went north. For months. As far away as possible from this nightmare to a place where he'd be safe. But the nightmare didn't end. He roamed around for years and studied everything remotely connected to the Aberrants. On his errantry, he talked to Spitalians, Anabaptists and Apocalypticists and collected every scrap of wisdom in a little book: a hunting lexicon for killing a demon.

ROLE PLAYING

The area around Lucatore is peaceful. Fernex has settled down, for the first time after many years of wandering. He sees the village as his Haven and gazes down at the roofs of his herd from the mountain ridges. He's their keeper. It was ages ago that he met the beast. Sometimes he doesn't know anymore what parts of his story are true and what he has made up over time. The same is true for his records – much of it doesn't make sense, even to him. Fernex doesn't talk about his former life, and anyway, not many people would believe what he has seen with his own eyes.

However, some nights, out there in the forest, he listens, stares into the darkness hanging between the trees and feels that something is watching him from there. Fernex knows that the beast is coming to get him. The Lupara is loaded. He's ready.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Purgare, The Hermit, Clanners: Vigilantes, Rank 3: Cacciatore

ATTRIBUTES: BOD 4, AGI 5, CHA 2, INT 3, PSY 4, INS 4

SKILLS: Athletics 7D, Brawl 6D, Force 6D, Melee 8D, Stamina 7D, Toughness 7D, Crafting 7D, Dexterity 7D, Mobility 8D, Projectiles 8D, Stealth 8D, Focus 7D, Legends 7D, Faith 7D, Reaction 7D, Orienteering 7D, Perception 8D, Survival 7D, Taming 8D

BACKGROUND: Renown 3, Secrets 1

SPECIAL: Bonus +2D to finding game; Bonus +2D to AGI+Stealth in the forests around Lucatore; Hunting dog: Atilla

POTENTIALS: Hawkeye 2, Danger sense 2, Marathon 2

INITIATIVE: 7D / 14 Ego Points (Focus)

ATTACK: Machete, 8D, Distance 1 m, Damage 8;

Lupara, 9D, Distance (30/120), Damage 6

DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Block), Melee 8D;

Ranged Combat active (Look for Cover), Mobility 8D; Mental (Faith) 7D

MOVEMENT: 7D

ARMOR: Leather coat, Armor 2

CONDITION: Spore Infestation 4 / 14, Fleshwounds 14, Trauma 7

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Mirror shard talisman (the only other souvenir of his father apart from the Lupara – hours after his escape he noticed that a mirror shard was stuck in his calf; he wrapped it in leather and has been carrying it as a ward against all evil ever since); Fernex' notebook (hunting lexicon)

SCIROCCO, THE SINNER

Once, the Burn blazed in Scirocco's body, fueled him, took hold of him. Then he heard the calling from afar, felt a lance of light rising within him and bisecting him. He was part of the Collective, registered the voices and emotions in the ether, saw himself hover above his future grave and was at the same time engulfed by earth and burning in fire. Scirocco knew that his time had come. He tore free from death's grasp. He wanted to live.

The Sinner abjured the Burn, cut the complete mandala from his own chest, scourged himself for his addiction and did penance. He bled himself to flush everything alien from it his body, resisted the temptation of the spores time after time and thus overcame his addiction. From now on, he dedicated his life to penance. He would warn others against the temptations, tell them about his vision of hell. He found other Burners, his disciples, gathered them around himself and traveled the land with them, preaching, making his audience better people who wouldn't do the Demiurge's work anymore. At some point, he heard rumors of Lucatore. People trusted Scirocco, confessed that the Anabaptists bought Burn from the Apocalyptics to stockpile it in their Cloister.

Scirocco went north with his disciples. He would save this village, confront the Demiurge and convert the people so they would rise against their corrupt masters. When he arrived, he and his disciples were received with open arms. The inhabitants of Lucatore were ready for his words, his shining example on the way to purity and redemption. Now they feed him, have given a home and a hearth to his poor Flayers. Soon, Scirocco will have gathered enough followers to cleanse the Anabaptists of their sins – with their own blood.

ROLE PLAYING

Scirocco, the Sinner, has come to Lucatore as a redeemer. His word is truth, his voice promises mercy, his scourge forgiveness. More and more villagers listen to the Flayer's open air sermons, believing every word he says and starting to doubt the Anabaptists. Scirocco knows about the Burn in the Cloister, and many of his speeches end in an explosion of admonishing yet plaintive cries. The fanatic doesn't shy away from any confrontation and knows no pain. He will purge the corrupt ones – and punish them if necessary so they can find mercy.



P E N A N C E

In his sermons, the expiatory master shoulders the sins of his audience. He has succumbed to the seduction of the Demiurge and went through the deepest of valleys. He has sacrificed himself and has risen again. Scirocco is whipping himself for the sins of the inhabitants of Lucatore because he cannot stand that they should suffer like him. The inhabitants of Lucatore feel an increasing urge to stop the worst from happening, born out of sympathy and fear of becoming like the Flayer. After all, they are only victims of circumstance or to be more specific: of the Anabaptists. His charisma and his followers are a threat to the rulers of the city. The Furor Lucio Bastardo already works on an emergency plan, just in case. The Sinner needs to be stopped.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Purgare, The Fanatic, Clanners: Flayers, Rank 3: Expiatory Master

ATTRIBUTES: BOD 2, AGI 2, CHA 4, INT 3, PSY 4, INS 4

SKILLS: Force 4D, Melee 4D, Stamina 6D, Toughness 7D, Mobility 5D, Conduct 7D, Negotiation 7D, Legends 8D, Domination 7D, Faith 8D, Reaction 6D, Empathy 7D, Orienteering 6D, Perception 6D, Primal 6D, Survival 6D

BACKGROUND: Renown 3, Secrets 3

SPECIAL: Can bless after penance, +1D on PSY+Faith (1 day)

POTENTIALS: Could be worse 1, Martyrdom 3

INITIATIVE: 6D / 12 Ego Points (Primal)

ATTACK: Penitent Scourge, 2D, Distance 2 m, Damage 4, out of control (3)

DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Dodge), Mobility 5D;

Ranged Combat active (Look for Cover), Mobility 5D; Mental (Faith) 8D

MOVEMENT: 2D

ARMOR: Penitential Garb, Armor 0

CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0 / 16, Fleshwounds 14, Trauma 6

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Cilices (loose leather bands with iron thorns that Scirocco wears around the ankles to do penance with every step even without using the scourge continually), a crown of thorns made of rusty steel wire (Scirocco wears it on his head when preaching on the streets so that blood runs from his temples to his shoulders), an empty tube of sheep's guts (formerly his Burn container, now a symbol for his redemption and purity), and alleged bone splinter of the "Penitent" from Bergamo (said to have broken off the sinner's paragon while doing penance)

POTENTIALS

MARTYRDOM

PREREQUISITE: Flayer

Physically, most Flayers are no match for their enemies, yet their aura, dedication and capacity for suffering inspire the people. Should the Flayer be attacked or beaten, he gets +1D per Potential level to a Mental Attack with INS+Empathy. If he succeeds, he projects his suffering onto the onlookers and enrages them. Women throw chamber pots against the attackers, men grab their pitchforks. The worse the Flayer's wounds and the more Triggers he rolls, the more violent is the reaction of the populace.



INVENTORY

GOLDEN POCKET WATCH

The Romano camp is now laden with spoils. The Emissary is true to her word. Papa Chicco likes that because he has a weak spot for his treasures. A Golden pocket watch he carries plainly visible on his colorful waistcoat is the best proof. He has bought it with his first “self-made” money, the scavenger’s dinars. Every morning he ritually winds it up, caresses the engravings and giggles. The motto engraved there is to be his destiny.

PAPA CHICCO

Chicco spent years in a quarry in Bedain. As an adolescent, Scrappers took him prisoner and tortured him because he was untamable. He detested them, their dirtiness, their uselessness. Instead, he looked up to the Neolibyans who strode like kings. Chicco wanted to be like them. He would be like them. When he was released from the prison camp, he had spent more time inside than outside. He killed the Scavenger who had had him thrown into the quarry, took his stuff and his dinars. Three months later he went to Roma. He kidnapped the son of a Neolibyan trader, collected a ransom for him and bit two fingers off the boy’s right hand before letting him go. He quickly made good use of the money: In Roma, he rallied a group of bandits and vultures and became a Baron of the streets. He hid his mercilessness behind sleazy friendliness. But when he avenged himself upon his enemies, his cruelty knew no bounds: he let pigs chew off the face of an opponent, had another killed and turned into soup that he passed out to hungry orphans in the streets of Roma himself. Chicco rallied the lost, the down-trodden and the orphaned and bought their loyalty with his fatherly ways. He is Papa Chicco, his people love him, but he has yet to reach his final goal. Chicco wants gold and jewels. He has fallen in love with bygone kitsch. He wants to be like the Neolibyans he watched from the quarry, wants to rule and be aloof like them. In Lucatore, so his informers said, such treasures are buried. Time for an expedition.

ROLE PLAY

A year ago, Papa reached Lucatore leading a vanguard to salvage treasures. His camp is outside the city and more than 30 adventurers, all armed to the teeth, have followed him here. However, he does not want his family to raise unnecessary attention. Therefore, he plays a wealthy trader from the West and flatters the nobility of Lucatore. So far, this trip north is very much to Chicco’s liking: the spoils from the excavations are acceptable, and this hysterical Emissary has rained gold down on him. A quick knife at the break of dawn, there and back again, that’s the way he likes it. Not that Chicco hates Anabaptists, but on the other hand, this Baptist surely wasn’t much of a loss. Still, this damn village has been crawling with a damn lot of snoops in the last days.

POTENTIALS

UNDEFEATABLE

PREREQUISITE:

Common, Primal, BOD+Brawl 10 or BOD+Melee 10, AGI+Mobility 10
If you think, you lose. People with this Potential are born fighters. They have been in countless brawls and know the answer to every attack. In close combat, they intuitively foresee their opponents’ moves which raises their Passive Defense by 1 Ego Point per combat round by +1D per Potential level.

FORGOTTEN BY DEATH

PREREQUISITE:

Blessed by luck or detested by hell. If the Character is in danger of getting trauma he could have avoided with a (more) successful Action roll, he gets a second chance. Once per day he can reroll such an Action roll for 1 Ego Point – with a bonus of +1D per Potential level.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Purgare, The Destroyer, Clanners: Romanos, Rank 4: Baron

ATTRIBUTES: BOD 4, AGI 6, CHA 4, INT 3, PSY 4, INS 3

SKILLS: Athletics 8D, Brawl 8D, Force 8D, Melee 10D, Stamina 8D, Toughness 8D, Mobility 10D, Projectiles 8D, Stealth 8D, Conduct 7D, Leadership 9D, Negotiation 8D, Seduction 7D, Legends 6D, Cunning 8D, Deception 6D, Domination 7D, Reaction 9D, Willpower 8D, Empathy 7D, Perception 7D, Primal 8D, Survival 6D

BACKGROUND: Allies 5, Authority 5, Network 3, Renown 3, Resources 4

SPECIAL: +2D to INT+Legends to find bygone kitsch

POTENTIALS: Could be worse 2, Undefeatable 2, Forgotten by Death 2

INITIATIVE: 9D / 16 Ego Points (Primal)

ATTACK: Chicco’s Knife, 11D, Distance 1 m, Damage 7, Smooth-running (2T); Sawed off Shotgun, 8D, Distance (5/10), Damage 10, Scatter, Double Barreled

DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Block), Melee 11D; Ranged Combat active (Look for Cover), Mobility 10D; Mental (Willpower) 8D

MOVEMENT: 8D

ARMOR: Leather Armor, Armor 3

CONDITION: Spore Infestation 3 / 16, Fleshwounds 16, Trauma 8

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Chicco’s Knife (two custom-made Damascene blades with mammoth bone hilts and gold inlay); Golden pocket watch (bygone with engraving: Di denaro non si parla, lo si ha); Leather Necklace with two mummified fingers of a dark skinned adolescent – a souvenir from his past.



BLACK TOM

Tomero will never forget the face of his kidnapper: the foul teeth, the grin, the jewelry, the stench. For three months the madman everyone called "Papa" kept Tomero as a trophy in a cage. In the beginning, Papa beat Tomero himself, after two weeks, he let his children have a go at him. Tomero was broken and didn't know how long he would survive the torture. He cried out one last time when the madman bit off two fingers of his right hand. Then he lost consciousness.

When he woke up again he was back in Bedain. He was barely able to speak, saw only the Anubians who took care of him and the worried look of his father Atos who stood guard in a corner of the room. Tomero didn't understand. Who was the madman who had kidnapped him, and what did all of this have to do with his father? Atos walked through the atrium with his head bowed. Three weeks later, two envoys of the Bank of Commerce and a Sheikh appeared. Tomero's father had a loud quarrel with the guests. They took away his concession, canceled his loans and seized his estate. The Anubians did not come anymore to look after Tomero, and the Scourger Chigwa who had taught Tomero to shoot had gone, too. His father was only a shadow of the man he used to be. The ransom had ruined the family. Atos died miserably, Tomero couldn't even find enough dinars for the burial rites, and so the foul Mediterranean became his father's grave.

Tomero signed on for the Scrappers of Bedain. They called him Black Tom and didn't care for his high birth. They showed him how to work, how to make the best from the scrap and be happy with only a few possessions. In return, Tomero showed them how to deal with dinars, lend money with interest and get better quotes by negotiating cleverly. Years went by. Black Tom had made a career amongst the Scrappers, had become their confident, and they offered him protection until one of them returned from Roma and spoke of a failed business transaction with a guy called "Papa". That had to be the man responsible for his father's death. The next morning, Black Tom set sail. He bought information from tipsters, looked for clues and joined caravan after caravan. First to Roma, then across the Apennines, finally to the North. A year has passed since he has left Bedain, and the trace leads to Lucatore. He will find the madman who has ruined his life.



DESERVED REVENGE

Three weeks have passed since Black Tom has arrived in Lucatore. He has already scouted the area and discovered the Romano camp – too many for him to face alone. He lives in ambush, waiting for the right moment to kill their leader with his rifle like a dirty animal. Until then, he polishes his bullets. The first one is for "Papa's" knee, the second for his right hand, the third for his fat belly and the last one will hit his head.

BLACK TOM'S CABIN

Black Tom's cabin contains a small Scraper workshop (Level 1). Also, it is protected by various traps. Right in front of the entry, Black Tom has dug a pitfall he can open from within. Additionally, there are leg hold traps to both sides of the cabin and behind, as well as various tripwires (that make pieces of metal sheets clang) which makes it almost impossible to approach the cabin without him noticing.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Africa, The Wanderer, Neolibyan, Rank 3; Trader

ATTRIBUTES: BOD 3, AGI 5, CHA 3, INT 3, PSY 3, INS 3

SKILLS: Athletics 5D, Brawl 5D, Stamina 5D, Toughness 5D, Crafting 8D, Navigation 7D, Mobility 7D, Projectiles 8D, Stealth 8D, Expression 5D, Negotiation 6D, Engineering 5D, Focus 5D, Legends 6D, Science 5D, Cunning 6D, Deception 6D, Reaction 5D, Willpower 5D, Empathy 5D, Orienteering 5D, Perception 6D, Survival 5D

BACKGROUND: Network 2, Resources 2

SPECIAL: Secured cabin

POTENTIALS: Marksman 2, Nine Lives 2

INITIATIVE: 5D / 10 Ego Points (Focus)

ATTACK: Neolibyan rifle, 8 d, Distance (30/120), Damage 6

DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Dodge), Mobility 7D;

Ranged Combat active (Look for Cover), Mobility 7D; Mental (Willpower) 6D

MOVEMENT: 5D

ARMOR: Leather Coat, Armor 2

CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0 / 10, Fleshwounds 10, Trauma 6

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Seal of the Libyan; blessed bullets Tomero found in the crates that Chigwa had left on his father's estate (the day that he will use them has yet to come; they need to hit the right target, for only then will he be able to bury the memory of his father; 4 bullets; +1D to AGI+Projectiles when attacking Papa Chicco)



ROLE PLAY

Grief surrounds Neva's heart like a heavy band of iron. Her face is hardened, the cheekbones protrude. She has no choice but to watch all happiness fade away from her life. She's powerless, cannot stop Vikal's metamorphosis, can only wait, pray and hope. She has a sharp blade in hand and would love to have the strength to end her son's suffering. Her love is stronger, though. All around her, things are falling apart. There are investigators in town looking into her husband's death. They want to talk to her, but she stares through them absentmindedly and tells the strangers with a dull voice that there is nothing to investigate. Neva has the newcomers watched, they cannot make a single step without her knowing. Why couldn't Cathedral City listen to her orders and refrain from investigating? No she will have to have everybody killed who threatens to expose her secret.

POTENTIALS

MOTHERLY LOVE

PREREQUISITE: Special

Neva will defend her son to her last breath. Her child's life is more important than her own. In combat, Neva ignores all Trauma penalties when Vikal is in danger.

NEVA, THE IRON EMISSARY

She met Altair on the battlefield, saw his prominent cheekbones and his gray hair. Fascinated she watched him commanding men, determine formations, demand obedience and bless fighters. He was unique. She loved him before she even knew his name, fell for him, became his student, his lover and finally his wife. Together, they created an Anabaptist bastion: Lucatore.

Altair told her about the Cult's biggest secret: the Elysian oils. A golden age for both began, and Neva felt inner peace and deep happiness like never before. She became pregnant, watched her belly swell and felt the blessing of a new life grow within her. From day one, she never doubted that she would give birth to a son. He would be strong and charismatic like the man she loved so much, an heir, a triumph over the trials and tribulations of this world. With every day, her love for this child grew.

Vikal was born, and a black veil fell over Neva's face. Her son never cried, never laughed and never looked at his mother. Vikal was ailing, his skin pale and mottled, the eyes a deep black, not like his parents' blue ones. Every night she lay next to her child, wide awake and in fear the boy could stop breathing. Vikal seemed so weak. The years went by, and it didn't get any better. In the beginning, it had only to be a vague notion, deeply buried under Neva's motherly care, but finally the verdict became clear to see: Vikal was an Aberrant.

Why had this misery befallen her? Again, she lay awake for many nights while the search for an answer gnawed at her: it must've been the oil. Altair had used her, had toyed with her life and the life of their child. Had he been unaware of the side effects? Had he simply closed his eyes? Could he have been so blind?

The hatred for the man she had once loved so much poisoned her heart. She had to save her son, no matter the price. Neva would care for him, would delay his metamorphosis as long as she could, until she found a cure. But his condition was hard to conceal. She had no choice – she locked him in the tower of the Cloister.

Altair intervened, spoke of solutions, wanted to confide in the Spitalians. Neva's emotions spun out of control. Vikal's father had to die before he could inform Ferro.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Purgare, The Healer, Anabaptist, Rank 4: Emissary

ATTRIBUTES: BOD 4, AGI 4, CHA 4, INT 3, PSY 4, INS 3

SKILLS: Athletics 8D, Brawl 6D, Force 8D, Melee 8D, Toughness 8D, Mobility 8D, Projectiles 9D, Stealth 6D, Conduct 8D, Leadership 8D, Negotiation 8D, Legends 8D, Cunning 6D, Deception 6D, Domination 8D, Faith 10D, Reaction 8D, Perception 6D, Primal 8D

BACKGROUND: Allies 1, Authority 4, Renown 4, Resources 4, Secrets 4

SPECIAL: +2D to CHA+Negotiation when dealing with Chroniclers;

+1D Mental Defense

POTENTIALS: Killing Blow 3, Motherly Love

INITIATIVE: 8D / 16 Ego Points (Primal)

ATTACK: Neva's sword, 9D, Distance 1 m, Damage 10

DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Block), Melee 9D;

Ranged Combat active (Look for Cover), Mobility 8D; Mental (Faith) 11D

MOVEMENT: 8D

ARMOR: Chain mail, Armor 4

CONDITION: Spore Infestation 16 / 20, Fleshwounds 16, Trauma 8

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Seal ring of the cloister at Lucatore; prayer formulas on small parchment scrolls. According to the Neognostic ritual, she burns the formulas in the braziers in the chapel of the Cloister; Vikal's hair (a braid made from the few hairs that grew on Vikal's head over the years and fell out again. His only "gift" to his mother).



LUCIO BASTARDO

Lucio saw his parents die when he was just 14. The Jehammedans had mounted a large-scale attack across the river and burnt down the farms of the Anabaptists. Everywhere, Ascetics jumped to certain death from the windows. Lucio heard their bodies hit the pavement, saw their imploring looks of agony. He grabbed a spear to push an approaching rider from his horse, but then the flat of a mace hit his head, and everything went dark.

When he woke up he saw the surviving Anabaptists gather. A Baptist had come with his packs and repelled the Jehammedans. He and his wife brought courage to the people, promised them protection and a new era. People would be able to take revenge for the attack, to chase the enemy far into the hinterland and regain ground. Without hesitating and with a bleeding skull wound, Lucio joined the Baptist and his wife. He served Altair and Neva for years, grew up next to them and became their most loyal fighter and pack leader. They thanked him by making him the Furor of Lucatore and commander of the city guard. His anger became known far beyond the province borders, and his men considered Lucio a hero.

Then, however, Neva approached him. She confessed to him her hatred for Altair, her fears for her son and implored Lucio to do the unthinkable: to kill his adopted father as a measure to protect Vikal. He was supposed to attack the man who had raised him like a son? Never. Deeply stricken with Neva's agony, he granted her one thing: when the time came, he would call back his guards. However, it would fall to her to seize the moment.

ROLE PLAY

The Baptist's adopted son leads the city guard of Lucatore with a firm hand. He's considered a no-nonsense Furor who will rather pacify people with clear words than use force. As a rule, Lucio tries to be polite even if the rugged man doesn't look the part. But these moments of politeness have become a rare thing, he's confused and has more important things to do than look after these foreign investigators: The Flayers spell trouble.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Purgare, The Protector, Anabaptist, Rank 3: Furor

ATTRIBUTES: BOD 5, AGI 3, CHA 4, INT 3, PSY 2, INS 3

SKILLS: Athletics 6D, Brawl 8D, Force 7D, Melee 8D, Stamina 6D, Toughness 9D, Mobility 6D, Conduct 6D, Leadership 8D, Legends 6D, Faith 5D,

Reaction 6D, Empathy 6D, Perception 6D, Primal 8D

BACKGROUND: Allies 1, Authority 3, Renown 4, Resources 3, Secrets 1

SPECIAL: +1D Mental Defense

POTENTIALS: Unleashed 2, Blood of the Fisherman 1

INITIATIVE: 6D / 16 Ego Points (Primal)

ATTACK: Bidenhander, 8D, Distance 2 m, Damage 11, Impact (2T), Special

DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Block), Melee 8D;

Ranged Combat active (Look for Cover), Mobility 6D; Mental (Faith) 6D

MOVEMENT: 6D

ARMOR: Chain mail, Armor 4

CONDITION: Spore Infestation 4 / 10, Fleshwounds 18, Trauma 7

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Bag of sand (leather pouch containing sand from his parents grave from the Adriatic Basin); ALTAIR'S iron cross (his adopted father's praying cross; a souvenir of the good days and a reminder of a day of weakness); Jehammedan mace (he went to great lengths to recover the weapon he was hit with that fateful day. It is pretty ordinary, but he carries it as a reminder that he's not invincible, either on his belt or hanging in his chamber in the Cloister).



BY A THREAD

Lucio has long since fallen for Neva. There is nothing he wouldn't do for her. She has complete control over his actions. Deep within he knows that she uses him, but he cannot do anything against it. As much as he has looked up to Altair, the nagging jealousy kept finding places to fester in his heart. He wasn't able to hate the old man, but neither could he confront his adoptive mother.

INVENTORY

ALTAIR'S IRON CROSS

Under his robes he wears the cast iron, broken cross of office that belonged to the Baptist. The symbol Altair wore during every sermon is supposed to remind Lucio of the man who was like a father to him – who once gave his life purpose. When it is cold against his chest, he feels the repulsion for his own lack of willpower rise within him. At other times, it hints at his future as Altair's rightful successor at Neva's side.

POTENTIALS

UNLEASHED

PREREQUISITE:

Primal, at least Furor

One single, well aimed blow can decide a combat. If a Furor puts his anger in the balance, he can for 3 Ego Points double the amount of Triggers rolled in an attack with BOD+Melee. The Anabaptist can use Unleashed only a number of times per day equaling his Potential level.



TIME OF GRIEF

The time of grief chafes Abacus. He wants to go back to the Oil Mills, set the huge cog wheels in motion and refine his recipes, but Neva has forbidden all work in the Cloister. This is why Abacus spends the week after Altair's funeral dealing with Cult issues, acts as a contact person in Lucatore and consoles the congregation. He seems erratic, stressed and impatient. The Ascetics wonder why he is so irascible. They ascribe it to his sorrow and hopelessness, while actually Abacus's addiction starts to show.

INVENTORY

BOOK OF RECIPES

The hackneyed notebook seems nondescript, but its contents are pure dynamite. Besides hectically scribbled visions and chemical formulas, the oily parchments contain the largest structured experimental manuscript on Burn outside the Spital. Whoever can decipher the scribblings holds enormous power. Using the book of recipes, the distillation of all Anabaptist combat drugs can be reproduced, which is why Abacus always carries the book close to his body in a large, locked belt bag.

SELF EXPERIMENTS

Abacus tries all oil prototypes on himself first. Many of the self experiments have left the traces. His left eye is milky white. On his chest, he carries the stigma of a Leperos. The Spore Infestation of his body is well advanced, he's completely addicted to his oil.

ABACUS

A vial shimmers in the light. Abacus stairs through it, into his own past. It's not honor and glory that fueled his experiments, it's the thirst for knowledge. Altair was like a brother to Abacus. Many years ago, the Baptist handed him the first recipes for the Elysian oils he had gotten from the Anubians. Together, they tested the effects, refined the mixtures and thus led Lucatore to wealth and glory within the Cult. Abacus went to work feverishly, expanded the subterranean Oil Mills and took care of the shipping and the caravans. The oil became his destiny. The right recipe was able to free the divine Pneuma and lend superhuman courage to the user. Altair helped him wherever he could until Neva gave birth to a child: Vikal, a hairless, pale thing. A brat without honor and strength.

Years went by, and the older the boy got, the darker Altair's soul turned. He visited Abacus in the Oil Mills, shouted at him, strangled him, reproached him. The Elysian had promised him that the oil would have no side effects and that there would be no danger. Altair was outraged, his child showed aberrant powers as if the Demiurge himself had possessed Vikal. Abacus couldn't understand Altair's rage. Why didn't he simply get rid of the child? The mills must not be stopped! The oil from Lucatore gave Anabaptists all over the world support and strength, it was pure manna for the Cult. Did Altair really want to risk all of this for his crippled son? The former alliance shattered. While Altair railed against his fate, Abacus retreated to the gardens and his Oil Mills to dedicate himself fully to his life's work.

ROLE PLAY

Some days ago, Neva visited the Elysian in the middle of the night. He remembers: she puts a sharp knife to his throat and vows to destroy his work if he chooses the wrong side; she does not tell him what she's planning, but Abacus knows that it's better to keep silent if he wants to finish his work. A few days later, the Baptist is dead. Abacus suspects that Altair wanted to go to the Spitalians because he hoped that Ferro would have a solution for his brat. But that would have been the downfall of Lucatore. Should the Spitalians find out what happened in the cloister, the repercussions would be devastating, and so Abacus remains grimly silent and plays along with Neva's game. The oil must continue to flow!

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Purgare, The Visionary, Anabaptist, Rank 3: Elysian

ATTRIBUTES: BOD 2, AGI 3, CHA 3, INT 5, PSY 3, INS 2

SKILLS: Melee 4D, Stamina 6D, Toughness 6D, Crafting 6D, Dexterity 6D, Stealth 6D, Conduct 6D, Expression 6D, Leadership 6D, Engineering 7D, Focus 8D, Legends 8D, Medicine 8D, Science 8D, Cunning 6D, Domination 6D, Willpower 8D, Perception 6D

BACKGROUND: Renown 3, Resources 3, Secrets 5

SPECIAL: +1D Mental defense; +2D defense against sepsis

POTENTIALS: Asceticism 2, Unyielding 2

INITIATIVE: 3D / 16 Ego Points (Focus)

ATTACK: Knife, 5D, Distance 1 m, Damage 3, Smooth-running (2T)

DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 5D;

Ranged Combat active (dive to the ground), Mobility 3D; Mental (Willpower) 9D

MOVEMENT: 2D

ARMOR: Elysian robes, Armor 1

CONDITION: Spore Infestation 30 / 16, Fleshwounds 12, Trauma 5

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Elysian oils (1 vial of Styx (Level 3) plus 3 vials with Elysian oils of different strengths should the tremor or the emptiness overwhelm him); keys for the Oil Mills; book of recipes (leather bound book with records of his experiments and the various Elysian oils he has tested over the years, first together with Altair and later alone; many of the entries are confusing, incoherent and only make sense to him).



VERENA

Verena remembers Vikal. The boy had pale skin and sat in the shadow in the courtyard. He was only allowed to be outside when the Ascetics tended to the Elysian gardens. He didn't speak, and when he tried, it was garbled and sounded as if it was coming from behind a cloud. Sometimes she was allowed to play with him. Even if the Mistress Neva was hovering in the courtyard at a certain distance whenever she did so, these moments seemed enraptured to Verena. As if she was very close to an Emanation. The Mistress Neva always had this worried look, however. After less than an hour, Vikal had to return to his rooms. Verena started worrying for the boy. One morning in spring, a whole host of butterflies landed on Vikal. It was the only time she heard him laugh. Afterwards she sometimes dreamed of him, wondered how it would be to run away with him. He was so fragile. When she asked the older Ascetics about Vikal, they scolded Verena, told her to shut up and work. She didn't understand. Why wasn't she allowed to talk about the boy? The question followed her into her dreams.

At night she moved silently through the Cloister, and then she saw and heard it: Mistress Neva cried in the courtyard. Vikal sat in the straw next to his mother, stones were circling his body in an invisible orbit. Mistress Neva prayed and begged in desperation. But why? Six months ago, the courtyard became quiet. Vikal does not come anymore. The older Ascetics say he died of pneumonia. Mistress Neva looks sick and sad. Often, she sits in the courtyard at night, all alone, and Verena watches her from the arcades. Why the tears? Vikal isn't dead. Verena can feel it. When the last spring came, she saw a host of butterflies fly through the tower windows. Vikal must be up there in the tower. Master Abacus has the key.

ROLE PLAY

She is shy, modest and watches events from a distance. A lot of things that she doesn't understand are happening in the Cloister. The connections between them are far too complex for her mind. Verena is a simple girl, easily impressed, but also easily cowed into silence. She doesn't see Vikal as a threat, but as a divine sign. To her, his powers are a blessing, not a primal psychonautic force.

If only she could find someone to help her free the boy! But such thoughts confuse her even more.



INVENTORY

THE SEED

Altair only spoke to Verena once when she was polishing his boots. He thanked her and gave her a small amulet from Franka as a reward for her work. It contains a seed sealed in amber that glows when held against the light. She didn't understand its meaning.

If someone were to break the stone open and put the seed into fertile soil, a Fractal Forest would start growing there. The Baptist has taken the secret of how he got that amulet and why he passed it on to Verena to his grave.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Purgare, The Martyr, Anabaptist, Rank 1: Touched

ATTRIBUTES: BOD 2, AGI 2, CHA 2, INT 2, PSY 3, INS 2

SKILLS: Athletics 4D, Stamina 4D, Crafting 4D, Mobility 4D, Stealth 4D, Conduct 4D, Legends 4D, Faith 5D, Empathy 4D, Perception 4D, Primal 3D

BACKGROUND: Allies 1, Secrets 1

SPECIAL: +1D to Mental Defense

POTENTIALS: Innocence 1

INITIATIVE: 3D / 6 Ego Points (Primal)

ATTACK: Knife, 3D, Distance 1 m, Damage 5, Smooth-running (2T)

DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Retreat), Mobility 4D;

Ranged Combat active (Look for Cover), Mobility 4D; Mental (Faith) 6D

MOVEMENT: 4D

ARMOR: Simple linen dress, Armor 0

CONDITION: Spore Infestation 3 / 10, Fleshwounds 4, Trauma 5

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Necklace with an Anabaptist cross carved from pinewood (at its center, Verena's amulet is set), small notebook (coal drawings of herbs, bushes and trees from the garden, a copy of the Cloister rules that seems rather painted than written, the sketch of a boy surrounded by a whole host of butterflies and the drawing of a crying woman), and old collapsible telescope with which she looks up to the tower from the Elysian gardens, hoping for a sign from Vikal.

POTENTIALS

INNOCENCE

PREREQUISITE:

People who are pure of heart are rare and pose no threat. With lowered gaze and hands raised in defense they wield their innocence like a protective shield. Damnation to all who still raise their hand against them in anger! Innocence is a mental attack. The Character rolls INS+Empathy and gets +1D per Potential level. The opponent counters with PSY+Willpower/Faith. If the Character wins, his opponent gets a penalty equaling the Triggers rolled +1 to all physical combat actions against the Character until the end of the scene as long as the Character doesn't start a fight.



PHENOMENA

CHAOS

PHENOMENON STRENGTH: 6

The Psychokinetic's powers swirl up matter from tiny grains of dust to fist-sized stones that start rotating around the Psychonaut at continuously increasing speed. Glass shatters, wood splinters, the swirling matter tears swaths into space and dissects energy lines. The result are finest filament shards that fracture the light and keep flashing brightly.

RULES: The area of effect has a diameter of overload + 5 m around the Psychokinetic who may leave the area effect whenever he decides to do so. Those in the area effect get -3 d to all Action rolls because of swirling objects and spontaneous flashes of light. This phenomenon uncontrollably manifests even at a low degree of Spore Infestation and gradually becomes stronger during the development of the Psychokinetic. At full power, the Psychokinetic can trigger the phenomenon at will and thus plunge a whole area into chaos. He cannot direct the stones or use them as a protective wall, though.

VIKAL

A ray of sunlight caresses Vikal's skin. It is fractured in the air, dissolves into all colors, surrounds his body. That strange woman talks to him, cocks her head and looks at him. He doesn't understand, cannot make sense of her facial expression. What does she want? He smells danger emanating from her. But he also feels a relationship. There's more. He can read the force fields surrounding her, they fracture into thousands of shards, raining down around her. She has trapped him here.

These walls of stone are not his home. The other place calls for him, tugs at his thoughts. When he closes his eyes he sees them, the force fields everywhere, the symmetry of the world, interlaced structures, a network of energy. Vikal feels that he's a part of it. He doesn't know the world that his eyes show him, it's as alien to him as a faraway star.

A butterfly. New spores. Vikal feels the burning within him intensify. The woman feeds him, but she doesn't satisfy his hunger. She touches him, he opened his eyes, stares back at her. He wants her to go away! The chains she put on him are still strong. He only knows that he has to concentrate on the heat within, the fireball at the center of his body. The waves of force swirl through him and converge his hands. Soon, the chains will melt. Soon, he will have his revenge on the woman who has incarcerated him here.

ROLE PLAY

Something seems to approach. Something powerful that is like him and understands his language. It's still far away, but it's approaching every time the sky darkens. He puts butterflies into his mouth, feels the tender wings on his tongue, chews, looks outside through the high window and relentlessly sways back and forth. He stretches himself, fights against the chains, his fingers grab for the ray of light falling in across the windowsill. Energy. Excitement. There is foam at the corners of his mouth, dribbling over his cheeks, he breathes rapidly, he screams, but there's no sound. He's mute, cannot call the other creature. His anger throws him back into his chains, he curls up, chewing at his fingers, his gaze darts around. The other one has to find him up here.

VIKAL'S BLOSSOMING

Vikal's powers are not fully developed yet, he has not completely turned into a Psychokinetic. Feverishly he meanders between Focus and Primal phase, cannot control any of his phenomena. They manifest spontaneously: heat eruptions, stones that start levitating or light avoiding his body are passive reactions, not controlled powers. Should he reach the point of total spore infestation during the Adventure, though, the final transformation happens, accompanied by a spontaneous discharge. A giant fireball melts the iron chains and blows up the top floor of the tower. Freedom.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Purgare, The Aberrant, Psychokinetic, Larva

ATTRIBUTES: BOD 2, AGI 2, CHA 2, INT 2, PSY 3, INS 2

SKILLS: Athletics 4D, Brawl 4D, Force 4D, Stamina 4D, Toughness 4D, Mobility 5D, Stealth 4D, Domination 6D, Reaction 5D, Willpower 4D, Perception 4D, Primal 5D

SPECIAL: Vikal's Blossoming; Swarm Strength 6

PHENOMENA: Lord of the Fifth Plague, Free Flow, Chaos

INITIATIVE: 5D / 10 Ego Points (Primal)

ATTACK: Head butt, 4D, Damage 3 (1+F/3)

DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Dodge), Mobility 5D; Ranged Combat active (Look for Cover), Mobility 5D; Mental (Willpower) 4D

MOVEMENT: 4D

ARMOR: Naked skin, Armor 0

CONDITION: Spore Infestation 10 / 10, Fleshwounds 8, Trauma 5

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Heavy iron chains; countless butterflies



BARGHEST

Barghest does not remember his life as a man; he doesn't know which Clan he once belonged to or where he once came from. But he does not forget his hatred for humanity. The humans have attacked him over and over, with fire, swords, a hail of flashes and bullets that melt in the air before hitting him. They have destroyed his fields, chased him away when he was weak. Barghest found new fields, however. Flies showed him the way, moths brought him spores to recover his strength, and Barghest grew. Force fields piled up, rising skyward. He saw the world from above, people scurrying past below him. He drifted from field to field, spreading his seed, leaving the trace of his Chakra. Then he heard the cry – it sounded forever. Barghest's hair rose, and he sniffed the air. These dumb humans had imprisoned one like him. Kept him trapped, surrounded by iron and stone. The air in the north shimmered with heat, the ether broadcast the new one's frequency. Barghest got going. He has allowed the humans to rise up for the last time. He's powerful. His heart is burning. This time, he will let stars rain down on their houses. Burn and destroy them. They have challenged him once too often. Barghest will grind them all to dust.



PHENOMENA

BARGHEST'S CALL

PHENOMENON STRENGTH: 6

A crackle in the ears, followed by nausea. The guts rebel, acid burns in the throat. The air pressure suddenly falls, compressing the lungs. Every breath is an incredible effort, until cold sweat covers the forehead and runs down the neck. Then the vertigo comes. In the end, the horizon seems skewed.

RULES: Barghest's Call bends space and announces the Archon's approach to other Psychokinetics. All Psychokinetics within a radius of overload x 50 m around the Archon know about his presence and his plans at once. People subjected to Barghest's Call lose Ego Points equaling the overload.

FIERY BARRAGE

PHENOMENON STRENGTH: 9

The Archon's willpower splits atoms. From his Sternum, sparks flare up and light the air. Once lit, a Fiery Barrage spreads everywhere from the Psychokinetic within seconds.

RULES: The Fiery Barrage spreads in a circle around the Psychokinetic, burning a Chakra symbol into the floor. At the center, its Damage is 1D + Overload [FIRE HAZARDOUS]. Over the distance, the Fiery Barrage loses power – Damage decreases by 1 per m.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Purgare, The Protector, Psychokinetics, Archon

ATTRIBUTES: BOD 6, AGI 5, CHA 2, INT 1, PSY 6, INS 5

SKILLS: Athletics 9D, Brawl 10D, Force 10D, Stamina 10D, Toughness 10D, Mobility 10D, Stealth 9D, Domination 10D, Reaction 10D, Willpower 12D, Orienteering 8D, Perception 9D, Primal 11D, Survival 9D

SPECIAL: Swarm strength 66

PHENOMENA: Lord of the Fifth Plague, Fiery Barrage, Filament Ring, Lance of Light, Levitation, Barghest's Call, Free Flow, Rage Equilibrium

INITIATIVE: 10D / 22 Ego Points (Primal)

ATTACK: Hammer fist, 12D, Damage 6, Blunt

DEFENSE: Passive 4 (Spatial dissonance); Mental (Willpower) 12D

MOVEMENT: 9D

ARMOR: Layers of fat, Armor 22

CONDITION: Spore Infestation 22 / 22, Fleshwounds 20, Trauma 12

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Greased leather hood

PHENOMENA

LANCE OF LIGHT

PHENOMENON STRENGTH: 10

The Psychokinetic uses his willpower to create a void sphere over his palm that swallows and focuses all environmental light. If the Psychokinetic closes his fist afterwards, rays of light break from it and form a focused beam that will even cut through steel.

RULES: If the activation roll succeeds, the Psychokinetic can direct a focused ray of light towards the target within a distance of overload x 20 m using PSY+Willpower. The Lance of Light does 16 Damage [Fatal, Frightening (4)].

FILAMENT RING

PHENOMENON STRENGTH: 12

The Psychokinetic's blazing mind fractures time and space. A tight but fleeting network of Filaments vibrates around the Archon. The swarm of the Psychokinetic alone can anticipate its regular pulsing. To everyone else, it's a fatal shimmer that cuts the air with a soft hiss.

RULES: The Filament Ring is 3 m in diameter. Those who touch it are thrown back and take Damage equaling the overload. Armor protects.

For the Psychokinetic, the ring counts as armor against all forms of Ranged Attacks; it uses the overload as armor rating. The Psychokinetic can keep up the ring by sacrificing 1 point of Spore Infestation per combat round in his Primal phase.



3

CHAPTER

IN THY NAME

RED SPRING

STRANGERS IN TOWN

Spring has come, and the Alps are easier to cross again. Maybe the Characters are just passing through. Or they are chasing a Hellvetic deserter who is said to have gone to ground in Lucatore. Maybe they are hunting a Romano crime overlord with a hefty bounty in Bedain.

There are countless possibilities to get the Characters to Lucatore; some of them are discussed at length in chapter 1. Seize the moment that the Characters discover the city and get to know Purgan hospitality. The Bleeding Ram has no vacancies, the only possible place to crash is the Alms House. Not the nicest place, but it's cheap and protects from the ceaseless drizzle hanging between the three peaks for days now. Some Touched Ones are also residing in the draughty rooms, they pray together around the brazier.

Just as the Characters want to settle down for the night, the door of their quarters opens. A servant of House Benesato is standing in the doorway and announces that the Alms House is desperately needed for an itinerant preacher who is supposed to arrive during the night. Who might that be? "Flayers from the South," the messenger answers. For the Touched Ones, there are chambers at the Cloister. He apologizes profusely and tells the Characters that they will have to make do with the Commission House. Outside the city walls. The Benesato are to express their gratitude in the form of food and good bedding.

THE COMMISSION HOUSE

After a short march through the drizzle and the city gate, the Characters reach the Commission House. They are already expected. A young maid-servant from the Balkhan opens the door, introduces herself as "Dana" and asks the Characters in.

A low fire is burning in the fireplace in the hall. A barrel of fresh water, a flask of wine, roasted bread and Frankan honey are standing on the kitchen counter. Dana leads her guests to the upper floor where there are several rooms with decent beds. Through barred windows, the Characters have a good view of the area to the west, the Eden Route and the farms of the Ascetics. To the east, the Exchange and the main gate can be seen.

How did they earn so much goodwill? "The governor doesn't want travelers in Lucatore to sleep on the streets. It's against tradition," Dana explains to the Characters before taking her leave. She sleeps downstairs in a chamber off the hall. She tells the Characters to call for her if they need anything. The next day, she'll do grocery shopping on the market and replenish the larder. The Characters were lucky – they spend the night in dry, warm beds.

DANA

The maid-servant is a quiet Balkhan girl. She came across the Adriatic Basin a year ago to work in Lucatore and forget the atrocities of war. She takes care of the guests at the Commission House, cooks, fills the water barrels and cleans. A servant of House Benesato looks after her and the guests daily to check if everything is alright at the Commission House. Dana helps the guests at the house with everyday work as far as she can. She can buy provisions, wash clothing and run some minor errands.

DAY 1: BREAK OF DAY

The horn of sorrow sounds across the city, waking the Characters from their dreams on the morning of the murder. A look out of the windows shows that Lucatore is in complete disarray – what has happened?

“The Baptist is dead!” The cries ring through every street. If the Characters go to the crime scene, they have a hard time pushing through the dense crowd of people. Women fall to their knees and cry in desperation while men stare into empty air uncomprehendingly. The body has already been covered and laid out. Ascetics carry the corpse towards the Cloister, followed by a torch light procession of grieving people who ascend the steep slope in the wake of the Anabaptists.

Guardsmen ask onlookers to return to their houses and get out of the way. The mood is tense. Xenophobia rules the streets: “Killers!” a woman screams at the Characters, but the Orgiastics shove the woman back into the crowd with the flats of their Bidenhanders. A child with a piercing gaze follows the Characters, watching them from a short distance until his father gathers the kid up protectively and stares at the Characters with a look of accusation.

Time and again, the Orgiastics call: “Go home, people, move. Don’t soil a great man’s renown with your staring.” And armored Anabaptist on a horse lends the necessary weight to the order. The Characters should understand that they have no business anymore on the wet pavement of the streets.

DISMAL NOON

On the nearby Exchange, rumors circulate – a drunken Orgiastic loudly rants against governor Ennio Benesato: “The horny old man has had his brains fucked out and wants to hand over Lucatore to the White Wolf of Bergamo.”

The Characters can hear the argument taking place between the stalls on the Plaza from the Commission House. Loyalists of House Benesato defend Ennio – an outraged woman throws her shoes at the Orgiastic and fumes: “Good that he is still here at least. Or should we let ourselves be led by the Iron Emissary? Altair’s wife is married to the cross rather than to the village. This fury prefers cutting girls ears off to ruling.” Two guardsmen come running, but they have a difficult time separating the agitated squabblers and sending them away in different directions. It seems as if this was going to be a long day in Lucatore.

DAY 2: THE DAY AFTER

On the next day, the news of the murder has spread all over the region. Pilgrims, Touched Ones and Orgiastics arrive from surrounding villages to pay their last respects to the Baptist. The guards have to reopen the city gates to cope with the press of people. The city is full of strangers, the inns are overcrowded. Families take in visitors and let them sleep in their houses. Lucatore is bursting from the seams.

There is a rumor going around that Altair has already been buried. Lots of people go to the cemetery to leave candles, notched stones and broken crosses at his grave. Abacus, the Elysian, is amongst the grievers, consoling them, shaking hands, resting his hands on many shoulders. However, Ascetics take care that only Anabaptists enter the cemetery. Strangers are turned away.

Abacus announces a grieving period of seven days. The inhabitants and guests of Lucatore are asked to respect the peace of death, lay down their work and only do the most necessary things. The Cloister, too, will close its gates for that time.

BAD MOOD

The mood in Lucatore oscillates somewhere between misery, grief and outright testiness. The Characters realize this. Strangers like them who don’t belong in the sur-

UNDER SUSPICION

On the morning of the murder, Lucio has the city locked down for a day. No one comes in, no one gets out. All day long, the Furor and his Orgiastics question newcomers and strangers in the inns. In the evening, his squad rides to the Commission House to take the Characters to task. Six heavily armed men demand access and storm into the building. “Why are you here?” and “Where were you at the break of day?” Dana can testify that the Characters spent the night in the Commission House and haven’t left it until well after daybreak. Lucio forbids the Characters to leave Lucatore before the investigation is over. Even if they seem innocent he advises them to better not raise any suspicion.

This is the Character’s first chance to get to know Lucio. A successful roll on INS+Empathy (3) tells the players that Lucio questions them rather absentmindedly. Triggers indicate a certain callousness and strong, suppressed emotions.

ABACUS’S ORDERS:

- ◊ No one may enter the cloister or pray in the great chapel
- ◊ No one may leave Lucatore without permission from the city guard
- ◊ No audience with the governor or the Emissary
- ◊ The water towers are off-limits; Ascetics will dispense water until the basins have been cleaned and ritually consecrated
- ◊ Only the most necessary transactions may be made
- ◊ No sermons on the streets

SUSPICIOUS FACTS

- ◊ **PAGGO, THE VETERAN OF WAR:** "Neva and Altair were so happy together. I was on the Adriatic battlefields when they lit the giant wedding fires. Those were better times. Yeah, yeah."
- ◊ **LUCA, THE PEAT CUTTER:** "Don't talk to me about the Ascetics. They only mean trouble. Always the same questions. Have you prayed today? No! All his praying did Altair no good, either!"
- ◊ **HECTOR FROM CAVALESE:** "Once there were many Apocalyptic visitors to the Cloister, but they haven't been to Lucatore for many years now. Instead, they are now hanging around in Cavalese. Useless scumbags!"
- ◊ **MIRANDA BENESATO, THE OLD WEAVER:** "Before the Broken Cross came, my Clan was decent and honorable. Only Ennio can restore our dignity."
- ◊ **RICO, THE STABLE BOY:** "When I grow up, I want to be like Altair. In a few days, we re-enact the Adriatic wars at the People's Plaza. You comin'?"
- ◊ **IOLA, THE HUNTRESS:** "Fernex rarely comes home these days. Often, he spends whole weeks in the woods. But on the evening before Altair's death, my lord was in Lucatore. The dog seemed to be ill, and my lord wanted to get medicine. Up at Master Abacus's house."
- ◊ **BERNAT, THE GLASSBLOWER FROM APIS:** "The Orgiastics of the city guard are tough guys. I have no clue how someone would be able to get past them."
- ◊ **LEVANA, THE TOUCHED FROM POLLEN:** "Came here two years ago with man and child. Better land, fertile soil. No, don't understand murder. Good people here. Thanks."
- ◊ **MERCOI, THE ICE WARDEN:** "I don't know why they didn't lay out Altair in my cold store. The Spitalians from Vivaco surely would have been able to find out more about the killer by examining the body. It's what they're best at."
- ◊ **WERMUT, THE ASCETIC:** "A week ago, I saw an African in town. No idea what he's doing around here. He's surely up to no good."

rounding villages and communities are publicly insulted and accosted or find no place to eat in the taprooms and at the stalls in the market. The mood threatens to change suddenly: some citizens start investigations of their own, they walk the streets and the surrounding forests at night, armed with torches and pitchforks.

The players can join these search parties, but they'll soon realize that they are random and chaotic. They are too wrought up, arguments about possible culprits keep flaring up. All the while, the city guard tries to keep control and threatens to impose a curfew if the people don't calm down. "We are working in all conscience," Lucio has his towns crier proclaim, "if someone can ferret out this murderous vermin, it's us."

DAY 3-5: GRIEVING TIME

It's still the time of grief, but slowly, even the saddest ones calm down, and daily routine settles in again. Altair remains the most important topic at the market stands and the tables in the inns. In an alleyway near the market Custus, the Scrapper, negotiates with some inhabitants. The boiler is broken, and he loudly thinks about various ways to replace a pipe full of holes.

If he notices the Characters, he sniffs a chance for help and calls: "Hey, you there, give me a hand here!" If the Characters help, the boiler is quickly repaired. Custus has dexterous hands and tinkers away at the boiler while making conversation with the Characters.

"No, I haven't been around that long either, just one year" and "no, not many strangers passed through here recently." He lists the Characters, the Flayers and some settlers from the area. "Oh, and an African from Bedain." Custus says he has seen this guy on the market twice already.

He inquires where the Characters are from: "Ah, yes I have been there. Calm there." They know Ennio, don't they? No? Ah, well. Good man, keeps the city together, now that everybody has lost their heads. "If you need something, my smithy is over there, close to the Manure Hill. I have good distillate. From Borca. If you should get homesick."

IN MOTION

The sudden life on the streets of Lucatore is the best opportunity to investigate the region, the people and their thoughts. A slipped dinar here, a glass of distillate paid for there, and the villagers start talking.

Some of them answer uncommunicatively, others start crying in their grief. Give the Characters the chance to hear various theories and talk to different people who want to tell them their personal opinions.

Let the players roll PSY+Cunning (2) or CHA+Conduct (2) to either finagle knowledge or be informed voluntarily. If the rolls succeed, you can give the players any information from the list of suspicious facts you see fit.



ON THE SIXTH DAY

If the group is traveling to Lucatore at the behest of the Cults, the Characters only reach the city on the sixth day after the murder of Altair. This late arrival has no consequences for the development of the Adventure. The Characters will be accommodated at the Commission House because there is no other accommodation available. It's easy to adapt the relevant scenes. Dana assists them, and Lucio will greet them as

investigators and wish them success for their work – they will have to dine in the Bleeding Ram this first night because Dana will not be able to go shopping anymore. Like the Characters, the maid servant has to respect the time of grief.

From now on, the players have to make up for the time "lost" through their late arrival. As Game Master, you can condense what has happened before and depict it to

them in excerpts. For example, the Characters could overhear fragments of conversations when they arrive to get to know some of the suspicious facts. The following scenes remain relevant, regardless of whether your players become part of the action by accident or if their Cults have ordered them to become involved with the Adventure.

DAY 6: AT THE BLEEDING RAM

The inn hasn't been aired for days, and the air is filled with an obscene mix of sweat and distillate. The taproom is contorted and hard to oversee. Wooden struts and alcoves divide the room into small parcels; nets, pelts and pennants hanging from the ceiling obstruct the view of the room. There is junk and relics of old battles everywhere, and tarnished medals of honor and distinctions, broken blades and armor adorn the walls.

Two dozen of patrons are sitting in the alcoves, and a handful more stand at the bar in a circle around two whining Orgiastics. Ambroggio and Siphon are drowning their pain there, and everyone is buying them drinks. They do not mind telling their story.

"Lucio ordered to sound the horn. A muster out of sequence because we had forgotten to gird our swords once. If we hadn't been so careless, Lucio wouldn't have had cause for this muster, and these damn killers would have gotten past us."

They blame themselves. Who could be the killers? Of course: "Ennio's people! The old man never got over the fact that Altair made Neva the true governor instead of him!" Siphon calls.

"He hasn't converted either like the rest of the Benesato", one of the other Orgiastics confirms.

"Now he is working with the Lombardi who give shelter to the Jehammedans. He's the true bastard, not Lucio," Remko, the tenant of the Bleeding Ram, confirms. Shortly thereafter, two young men armed with pikes enter the Bleeding Ram and try to find some space at the bar. They are Domingo and Pace, Ennio Benesato's nephews and the governors personal bodyguards.

Ambroggio who is obviously drunk spits in front of Domingo's feet. "Speaking of the Demiurge ...!" Domingo thrusts his pike into the ground in front of Ambroggio who tipsily rises to his feet. Tosco, an older Orgiastic, turns towards them from the bar. "The guy's drunk, leave him alone or I'll ram your spear into your Benesato arse". With these words, he steps in front of Domingo, forehead to forehead. The Characters must intervene before this escalates.

IF THE CHARACTERS DO NOT REACT

Should the Characters stay calm in this situation and remain sitting at their table, Domingo and Pace are in trouble. Before it can come to blows, however, the Characters hear a loud growling. A huge hunting dog has come out from under a table and barks at the Orgiastics. Fernex steps out of the shadows of an alcove. He aims his Lupara at Tosco's forehead and chambers a round. "You don't want a fourth dot, do you, Tosco?" At once, everybody calms down, and Fernex orders his dog Atilla back under the table.



REMKO THE TENANT

Remko is the quintessential war loser. The Adriatic wars have cost him his left hand. His square face is crisscrossed with scars, the dot tattoo on his forehead has faded, and all that is left from his former heroic courage are hateful words. He considers the peace treaty with the Jehammedans political bullshit and prefers stirring up hatred against the old enemy when talking to his regular patrons. This can get him frightfully angered, but the years have turned Remko into a toothless Gendo. He loves his remaining hand too much to risk it in an outburst of violence. If it comes to fisticuffs in the Bleeding Ram, he prefers calling for the city guard.

THE DUST SETTLES

Once things have calmed, Domingo and Pace put some dinars on the bar and say their goodbyes. Even if the players have not helped them, they will tell their master about the events.

If the players have gotten to know Fernex during the conflict, he will talk to them noncommittally. "The Anabaptists are a bunch of headless chickens. Someone has shut down their rooster, and they don't know if the roost is still safe," the hunter says. Atilla sniffs that the Characters and becomes trustful, even allows them to pet him. "If they don't manage to crucify a culprit soon," Fernex continues, "the conflict we've just witnessed was only a foretaste of the days to come." With this, he quaffs his distillate, nods to the Characters and leaves the Bleeding Ram together with his dog.

IF THE CHARACTERS

PUT OIL ON TROUBLED WATERS

The Characters can avoid the impending brawl by stepping between the opponents and intimidate them or negotiate with them. To stare down the Orgiastics, they need a PSY+Domination roll that the Orgiastics can counter with a conflicting PSY+Faith/Willpower roll. If the players try to calm down the infuriated Orgiastics through diplomacy, they need a successful CHA+Negotiation roll. The Orgiastics counter this attempt at influencing them with PSY+Cunning.

IF THE CHARACTERS INTERVENE

Two against six doesn't look like a fair fight. The Orgiastics have the two pike bearers surrounded, waiting for one false move that can provoke a fight. The Characters can join the impending brawl to help the two pike bearers. The Anabaptists fight with fists and feet.

If the Characters draw their weapons, the Orgiastics scatter immediately. The other guests jump up and take cover behind overturned tables, benches and curtains. No one wants to risk their lives here. Remko however will run out to get the city guard and have the Characters arrested. Weapon use is forbidden in Lucatore, Lucio's men will do everything to disarm the Characters, by force if necessary.

Fernex watches the situation. If the city guard arrives, he'll calm them down. He explains that the Characters might be hotheads, but only wanted to help. Lucio and his men respect the old Hunter and leave the Characters alone after a short verbal dispute. Lucio however warns them sternly: "No weapons in my city. One more false move, and you can cut peat in the Lombard Bog for the next few years!"

DAY 7: THE MESSAGE

If the Characters have helped the two pike bearers the evening before, Pace arrives at the doorstep the next morning as a messenger: "Governor Ennio Benesato wants to welcome you in his home to sincerely thank you," the young Benesato announces. He will wait outside the door and then escort the Characters to the estate. On the way there, inhabitants and passersby on the market square watch the Characters. In passing, the Characters hear the whispered sentences "Who might that be?" and "What do they want with old Benesato?"

HOUSE BENESATO

A servant is washing away a cross that somebody has painted in blood on the portal of House Benesato. He humbly steps aside to let Pace and the Characters pass. It's dark inside, the curtains in front of the high windows are almost drawn. Dust hangs in the air and shimmers in the pale rays of light. The Characters are escorted into the great hall, the center of the house.

Ennio and his fiancé Gala Lombardi are sitting at a long, cast iron table. The table is lavishly set, meat and wine have been served. Ennio comes towards the Characters, thanks each of them in turn by taking their hands into both of his, intently gazing into their faces before talking to them. "Righteous men are a rare commodity these days. I am deeply grateful for your saving my two boys – they mean the world to me." Ennio introduces Gala who bows to the Characters and then stands behind Ennio's arm chair to assist him. Her eyes study every Character in detail in turn.

THE OFFER

Ennio breaks the bread, drinks steeply from a silver chalice and keenly looks at the Characters: "Neva had Altair buried without me. I couldn't even say goodbye to my brother." In a leaden voice, he describes the political situation. He doesn't think the old Clans capable of this murder, they are too scattered and too weak to seize the oppor-



HOUSE BENESATO
CREST AND SEAL

NEUTRALITY

Even if the Characters haven't helped the two pike bearers the evening before, Ennio will invite them to his home.

He sees their restraint as incorruptible neutrality. Only if they're independent, they can really help him investigate the murder.

tunity of the chaos of an upheaval. "Most people believe it was the Jehammedans, but I don't think so. After all, you wouldn't give shelter to murderers in Bergamo, would you now, Gala?" The Lombardi smiles at the old man: "No way."

"At the moment however," Ennio continues, "the Anabaptists and their rumors are out to get me. Someone tries to pin my brother's murder on me." Gala supports the old ruler who slumps in grief. "They say I had Altair killed to replace him. But I could never have done that. Nor could one of my men. My brother was a leader, his word was as weighty as that of the elders the peaks are named after."

He turns to the Characters again and implores them to hunt down the killer. Ennio will have their names cast in silver and forever praise them. Should they help him, he will grant them safe passage in the whole region, pay them with dinars and put in a good word for them with the Hellvetics.

If the Characters keep asking Ennio for potential perpetrators, he only whispers: "Actually there was no reason to murder Altair. His wife loved him, his adopted son owed him his life. The Ascetics look up to him, and he was respected in the city like a righteous Benesato."

AT THE WATER TOWER

Finally, the time of grief nears its end. On the market square in front of House Benesato, people claim that the water towers are no longer off-limits. Also, the Ascetics are supposed to have left the cemetery.

If the Characters visit the water towers, they noticed that the gate is open. They hear a loud argument from the patio – with a successful AGI+Stealth (3) roll, the Characters can approach without being noticed and watch the events. In front of the great basins, a Spitalian bellows at the Furor Lucio as if he was a mere recruit: Already buried? What does that mean, no room at the cloister? Time of grief? What a waste of time. No traces without an examination and no killer without traces! The Spitalian's bald head shines a deep purple. He wants Lucio to tell Emissary Neva that he, Carmino Ferro, will find the killer, no matter how.

A signal from the Arcade Wall saves Lucio from any further discussion. If the players succeed in a INS+Perception (4) roll, the Characters can recognize Abacus up on the battlements of the Arcade Wall. He has watched the argument, too, and blown the horn. Lucio races past the Characters without noticing them. Carmino remains and starts investigating the ground around the water basins, taking samples. If the Characters approach him, the wiry man gets up and adjusts his glasses to be able to see them all in detail. "Ferro. Carmino Ferro. Altair's personal doctor," he introduces himself. "You?" he asks. The Characters can talk to Ferro. He has severe doubts concerning the investigation of the murder. Too much neglect – or someone trying to cover something up. Even at his age, his patient was a great fighter, strong of will and hard to surprise. The killer must have known that Altair would be vulnerable in the moment he struck.

If the Characters intensify the discussion, Ferro explains that Altair was on his way to Vivaco on the morning of his death. The Baptist wanted to talk to him, wanted something from him. Now Carmino wants to find out what. The Spitalians have so far been excluded, and the investigation so far has been hampered by religious mumbo-jumbo. Now it's time to find the real hints and stop the frippery.

Ferro wants to win the Characters over to ease his search for clues. He will investigate the area around the water towers – and he wants the Characters to go to Altair's grave to look for anything conspicuous there.

The surgeon will find accommodation with his relatives in town, the Danesci, and wait for the Characters' feedback there. He describes the way there and immediately returns to work.

THE SEAL RING

If the players accept Ennio's offer, the old governor gives them his seal ring as a sign that they are protected by House Benesato. The ring allows them to move freely around Lucatore. Also, they may ask for an audience in the Cloister with it. They should guard the ring like gold. It once belonged to his parents whose name he doesn't want to see soiled.

GALA'S GAZE

Throughout the discussion, Gala is remarkably quiet. She watches the Characters attentively and nods at Ennio's words from time to time.

A successful INS+Perception (3) roll tells the Characters that Gala is completely focused on their behavior. She watches every move, every gesture and is so focused on their guests that it seems as if she wanted to remember their facial features well.

If Gala's father Vespaçcio is mentioned as a potential culprit, the Lombardi loses control: "Vespaçcio is a wolf who hunts his prey, not a cowardly killer. Furthermore, Altair never was his prey."

She will let the Characters know that she considers innuendo and insults against her Clan unforgivable. Ennio will take her hand to calm her down and ask the Characters to be more careful with the words. "Too many false accusations have been spewed into the world. Let us not repeat the mistakes of others."



EICO
DECOY'S DRONE

IN THE WOODS

Chasing Decoy 5 leads the Characters deeper and deeper into the Northern woods. As soon as the Characters lose sight of the Shutter and start looking for a way back, the woods have some smaller surprises in store for them. The group has come very close to Black Tom's cabin, and the terrain is laced with traps. Most of them are harmless, others aren't.

With INS+Perception (5), the Characters can discover several tripwires right above the ground. If they follow such a wire, they discover a coiled spring with a package of bullet casings wrapped in wire. If this trip is sprung, the spring snaps upright and makes a loud noise.

A successful activation roll on INT+Engineering (2) makes clear that no Chronicler and no Scrapper has constructed these traps – too primitive. There are no hints as to who has constructed them. Weird.

THE BAPTIST'S GRAVE

Dusk settles in when the Characters reach the cemetery. A gust of wind rustles through the canopy of leaves. The gate with the iron fittings is open and creaks in the wind. Further in, candles are burning on some of the graves, protected by small glasses. It looks as if the people hadn't only paid homage to Altair in these past days but remembered all the heroes buried here. If the Characters haven't been to the cemetery before, a successful INS+Orienteering (1) or INS+Survival (1) roll reveals the grave.

As opposed to the other stone mounds, there is no lichen yet on Altair's grave. The stones are loose. If the Characters start taking away the topmost layer of stones, they uncover a giant boulder that actually seems to cover all of the grave.

With INT+Legends (4) the Characters know that boulders are not usually used in Anabaptist burial rites. The bodies are only buried with loose rocks and stones, even a deep grave is rather rare.

A successful INT+Engineering (2) roll enables the Characters also to know that at least 10 oxen were necessary to bring the stone here. The weight of this boulder has probably crushed everything beneath completely.

All in all, that's amazing and very extraordinary. Someone went to great lengths here, maybe to protect the grave from robbers ...

WHAT THE HELL?

Suddenly, a loud, weary noise above their heads captures the Characters' attention. Looking up they see a palm-sized drone that has to compensate for a gust of wind roughly 10 meters above them. Its engines are whirring at full power before it crashes behind the cemetery wall in a wide arc.

With a successful combo of PSY+Reaction (2) and INS+Perception (2), the Characters can make out a silhouette behind the wall. With at least 3 Triggers, the Character can detect a pair of amber eyes looking towards the group for a heartbeat. Then the person flees, running into the woods.

THE CHASE

Decoy 5 has watched the Characters, trying to find out their agenda. Now he's in danger of being found out himself. Carrying his crashed drone Eico under one arm, he runs away, using his small head start and his knowledge of the terrain to get rid of his pursuers.

Between the trees and in full sprint, it's almost impossible to hit Decoy with guns – bullets split branches and tear down bark, but the Shutter keeps getting further ahead. Additionally, the Characters have -3D to Action rolls to shoot at him in the gloomy woods due to the bad vision.

To move through the unknown terrain relatively quick, they must succeed at an AGI+Mobility (3) roll. If the roll succeeds, the Characters can pursue Decoy 5, entering a conflict BOD+Athletics against his BOD+Stamina.

If the Characters get too close, Decoy 5 uses his full repertoire to avoid getting caught. He throws a smoke grenade to blind his pursuers. A successful INS+Orienteering (6) roll is necessary to stay on his tracks. The fugitive hides in the underbrush and will escape at the first opportunity.

If he cannot get rid of them by camouflaging himself, he uses Eico to confuse the Characters. The small drone whizzes through the branches, breaking off twigs and leading the pursuers on a wild goose chase to enable Decoy's escape. Offer an exciting chase to the Characters – Decoy 5 has the advantage that the bad vision is not a problem for him. It's more than improbable that the Characters can get a hold of him, but at least the players know now that they're being watched. One more useful piece of information in this spider web of lies.





ARRIVAL OF THE ARCHON

DAY 8: THE PROCESSION

Westing, a bald Ascetic with a broken front tooth and a goatee, visits the Characters in the Commission House in the morning. "The Emissary is receiving guests today. Just in case you have any open questions." He's obviously in a bad mood, points towards the Borreo while standing in the doorway, where dense clouds hang over the Cloister. "It's gonna be nasty weather today. You better hurry if you want to climb the slope with dry feet." If the Characters set out for the Cloister, they inevitably pass by the market square. From afar, they hear a murmuring crowd and a throaty, bellowing voice talking to the audience.

"The Demiurge haunts you! He resides in your hearts. The Anabaptists have tainted the waters of life and invited the harbinger of hell to dine at your tables."

A skinny, half naked man stands on the dais on the market square preaching, two bloody scourges in his hands. Six disciples are kneeling next to him, mimicking him: they are continually whipping their backs and arms, scourging the skin from their bodies in bloody stripes. They're all caught up in a craze – the eyes of the preacher shimmer with excitement. The audience listens and gapes.

"The Baptist was the first sign. The hellhound has spit its spittle at the unbelievers. You will all perish from its tainted breath, just like your leader, if you don't repent." He raises the scourges, and again, the tails hit his bloody back. Then he turns towards the Cloister, looks up to the mountain and shouts: "Come on out, you abomination! Face the sin you have smitten your people with so we may cast you into the dust and flay you! Show yourself, so that we can take out your eyes and strap you to hot iron!" Another murmur from the crowd. Some fold their hands to pray with pious faces. If the Characters ask around what's happening here, the whispered answer is: "That's Scirocco, the sinner, and itinerant preacher from the South." Or: "These are the Flayers" and "They have come to challenge the Anabaptists and their faith."

Suddenly, there is movement among the crowd. Obviously, the Ascetics have had enough of Scirocco's show and demand the crowd to get back to work and stop listening to the Flayers. The city guard supports them. When an Orgiastic drags Scirocco from the dais by the arm, the preacher screams: "See the serpent try and hide the septic pus! Look how they're ashamed in their garment of false skin! They have to put our jaws in irons to avoid drowning in the truth pouring from our throats!" The Anabaptists are visibly shocked, these religious fanatics worsen the mood in town. At a respectful distance, they escort the Flayers back to the Alms House.

THE CLOISTER

The Characters reach the Cloister by noon. It's cold up here. The West Gate towers above them, four guards patrol the battlements against the backdrop of a steel gray sky. Lucio approaches the Characters through the gate, flanked by two city guards: Ambroggio and Siphon from the Bleeding Ram. They lower their gaze in shame when they recognize the Characters.

Lucio greets the group coolly and has the guards take their weapons and technology away. The Characters are patted down and treated like enemies for the time being. When they ask the Furor why, he lets them know that the killer is still on the loose and that he doesn't want to risk anything. "You can get your stuff back later." Then he leads them into the Cloister.

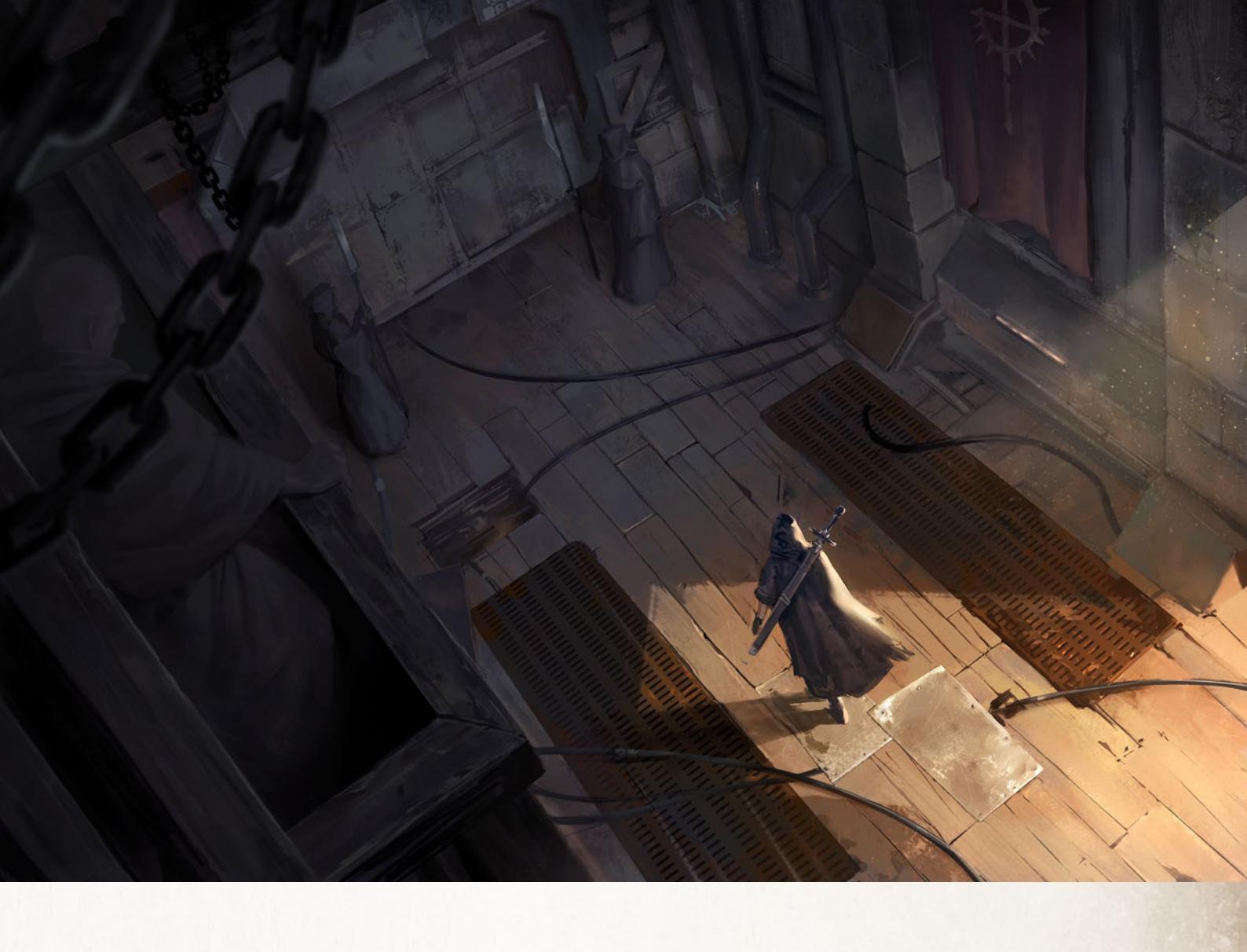
THE FIRST SIGN

Scirocco's fervent sermon will most likely impress and confuse the Characters just like most of the other listeners. Every Character can roll INT+Legends (3) to guess the meaning of his words. Anabaptists and Apocalyptics with the background Secrets get +1D to this roll. The more Triggers, the greater the insight:

SUCCESS, NO TRIGGER: The waters of life? A figurative phrase for the Elysian oils the Anabaptists owed their combat prowess to.

1+ TRIGGER: The first sign? It is said that the Flayers bleed themselves until the visions come. The first sign probably marks such a prophecy.

3+ TRIGGER: The waters of life, tainted? There is a rumor that the Anabaptists have created six Elysian oils — and some of them are said to be as intoxicating as Burn.



NEVAS CHAMBERS

The participants of the audience are led to Neva's rooms. An austere antechamber hewn from crude stone blocks serves as a waiting room. Carmino is here too and greets the Characters – which astonishes Lucio. With a wink, the Spitalian asks the newcomers not to say a word on the state of the investigation.

With a crash, Lucio opens the door to the rooms of the emissary. Neva sits on a simple wooden throne, oil lamps shed a dim light into the darkened room. Incense and coriander burn in bronze braziers, the exotic scents waft through the air of the room with the high ceiling. Two Orgiastics stand guard, watching the Characters' every move. Neva greets Carmino coolly. With the Characters, the emissary exchanges looks and formalities. "So you've come to ask me about my husband's death?"

The Surgeon gets to the point at once, he even interrupts the Characters if they try to speak before him:

- ◊ "Why was my equipment taken from me? My time and my work are too valuable to be wasted on protocol." Lucio answers: "You are on holy ground, Spitalian. We don't question your rules in Vivaco, either."
- ◊ "Why was Altair buried so quickly and without an autopsy?" Neva quietly says: "According to tradition, he

should have been laid out. The cut, however, was too deep. It would've been undignified to display a great man like a butchered animal. This way, his glory is enhanced – his end was just as memorable as his life."

◊ "Why is his grave hidden, without a plaque or a name and covered with a boulder?" Obviously unnerved and with a raised brow, Lucio answers: "Flayers are grave robbers. I do not want to see my father's corpse turned into a relic at the hands of a madman. Understood?"

◊ "Why did Altair want to come to me on this fateful morning?" Neva shrugs and cocks her head: "You want me to speak of my husband's ailments in front of strangers? All right. The last months have been hard on him. Since his return from Franka last winter, his strength failed him. He suffered from fevers and restlessness."

With INS+Perception (3) the Characters realize that the Orgiastic guards look at each other uncomprehendingly after Neva's answer.

THE AUDIENCE

Carmino approaches Neva with his index finger raised: "I don't believe a word you say. Whatever happened here, I'll find it out!" With these words he marches from the room, and Lucio sends the two Orgiastics after him.

"Well, we're alone." Neva turns to the Characters. Icily, she stares into their faces, looking for emotions. The behavior of the Emissary leaves no room for doubt. Even if she seems emaciated and the previous days have left their mark: this woman rules Lucatore, no one else.

"Where is the seal ring that permits your presence here?"

She looks the Character wearing Ennio's ring deeply into the eyes, puts a hand on his shoulder and says: "The old git has already lulled you with his cock-and-bull stories? All his life, he wanted to be like my husband. But he never had what it takes. Look at him decaying down there in his family vault." She turns to Lucio: "How many years separate him from the bitch from Bergamo?"

"Thirty," the Furor answers in a muffled voice.

Then Neva addresses the Characters again: "Ennio tries to flee from death, to erect a memorial for himself that he's not entitled to have. The old man forges alliances with all types of scum just to garner a few advantages. Only Ennio's men could have surprised Altair." Wordlessly she looks the Characters in the eyes to let her words sink in. Lucio adds: "To cover up his deed, he offers sanctuary to the Flayers. To create confusion."

"So if you are looking for the culprits, you are in the wrong place here in the Cloister, just like the Spitalian," Neva adds. "The real trail leads right into House Benesato and to that Lombardi serpent writhing in his bed there."

Neva and Lucio watch the Characters to check if the words have sunken in. Finally, Lucio announces: "I don't care who killed my father. Whether it was Ennio himself or one of his men, I will make all culprits pay, and you'd be better off helping us."

BACK TO THE GATE

Lucio escorts the Characters back across the battlements. There, he charges two Orgiastics with the job to lead the guests back to the gate while he himself returns to his rooms. Halfway across the patio, they hear a crash followed by something splintering. Two young Touched Ones have dropped one of the crates from the warehouse. The Characters recognize Abacus who storms towards the broken shipment. The Elysian loses his temper, drags one of the Touched away from the spilled oil by the hair and hits the other squarely in the face with the back of his hand without breaking stride. The girl staggers, turns around and flees. "I don't know what Neva likes about you, you clumsy cow!" he shouts after her. Curious onlookers gather on the battlements to watch him rage in the patio. Abacus calls for the Orgiastics escorting the Characters:

"You there, get over here at once!" The two men obey right away, run towards him and almost crash into the Touched girl he has just slapped. The girl has to dodge out of their way, staggers and crashes into one of the Characters. She struggles to her feet from the mud, tears burning in her eyes, and ask for forgiveness for her carelessness. Then she runs away. The Characters stand in the courtyard forgotten.

FAMILIAR FACES

To get their equipment back, the Characters have to return to Ambroggio and Siphon, the guards at the West Gate. The two young Orgiastics are talkative, give them back their weapons and gear and apologize for their stupid behavior at the Bleeding Ram: "We drank too much" and "The Baptist was always nice to us." The Characters can try to get more information from them. A successful PSY+Cunning (2) roll lets the Orgiastics see their conversation as an invitation for reconciliation: "Yes, that's the way to the chapel, no, the tower is unused. Be careful, hot steam! Beneath the Cloister is the boiler room, no one may go down there, much too dangerous. The contents of the broken crates? Goods for Cathedral City from the Elysian gardens. The girl? Ah, Verena, only a Touched One from the gardens. She trims the hedges and weeds. The dumb creature cannot even count to 30 and keeps dropping things." The two Orgiastics laugh loudly. "Yes, you can pray in the Elysian gardens in the morning, before the sun rises too high. But only Anabaptists!" Then Siphon bends close and whispers: "There's a small gate





behind the cemetery. It's usually unguarded. If you climb in there during matins, no one will notice.“ Ambroggio hits the back of his comrade's skull with his open hand: “What are you talking?“. Then he says to the Characters: “Forget what the moron said. There is no gate there.“



DAY 9: THE ELYSIAN GARDENS

The Characters have to rise early to find the gate to the Elysian gardens before the end of matins. Dana doesn't mind waking them. A short trip through the underbrush behind the cemetery, and they quickly find the back wall of the cemetery. A successful INS+Orienteering (2) roll reveals the gate that is hidden between ivy tendrils.

Inside, the Characters get a whole new perspective on the Anabaptist Cult. Modest men and women focused on their work. The patches, the ground, everything smells overwhelmingly – no withered leaves, no wild herbs and no dried flowers can diminish the dedication they invest in this soil. It's a mirror image of the Garden of Eden. The Characters can move between the hedges furtively and familiarize themselves with the garden. Not all Ascetics seem to be at matins. Some rest in the shadows of the trees, praying on their knees or deep in meditation. Others are sowing at the slope where the garden climbs the flank of the Borreo.

DESTINY

If one of the Characters is an Anabaptist believer, he recovers two Ego Points when entering the garden for the first time. This is a divine assertion of his destiny and fills him with strength.

Here, the roots of the Neognosis shine in all their glory.

ON THE ROADSIDE

The Elysian gardens offer not only quiet contemplation but also the chance to replenish one's drug supply. With a successful Action roll on INT+Medicine (1), the Characters spot various medical herbs in the gardens (one dose per Success). "Harvesting" them needs a successful AGI+Stealth (3) roll. If the roll does not succeed, the Ascetics will chase the impious thieves from the gardens. For every Success, the medical herbs bring +2D per dose to INT+Medicine when patching someone up.

There are butterflies everywhere – the garden teems with them. A few more steps, and they see Verena. The girl is completely focused on her work.

If the Characters sneak up on her, she gasps for breath and is so nervous that she cannot speak. "What have I done?" She finally croaks from a sore throat, raising her arms protectively over her head. Under her left eye, there's a deep red bruise.

The Characters have to calm her down to get some answers from her at all, otherwise she'll only stutter unintelligibly. A successful combo of INS+Empathy (2) and CHA+Conduct (3) calms Verena and takes away her fear. If the Characters question her, she answers cryptically, derailed and ambiguously. How old she is? "12. Or 13", she adds. What was in the broken crates? A shipment for faraway lands. Why did Abacus hit her? Her own fault, Abacus is infallible. She avoids the Characters' gaze and tries to hide her fear of the Elysian.

"Everyone is very lenient with me. I make a lot of mistakes. But they forgive me. The Mistress Neva has forgiven me. She's not made of iron as they all say. She's broken." If the Characters ask why Neva is broken they only get another cryptic answer: "Because the Mistress doesn't understand butterflies. They contain life. The Mistress only sees ruin in them."

An Ascetic in a robe with a basket on his back suddenly interrupts Verena's words. He has spotted the Characters and comes running: "Verena, who are these people?" His skin is deeply furrowed like bark from a tree surrounding countless annual rings. Protectively he steps between the Touched girl and the Characters. "Father Darius, please don't be angry at me! It's my fault, I let these people into the garden because I wanted to show them its beauty." The man blinks and narrows his eyes.

"You better leave our garden the way you came." Other Ascetics listen up, watching the scene attentively from afar.

"Or I'll get the guards." Verena bites her lower lip and asks the Characters with an imploring gaze to follow Darius's orders.

A VISIT FROM STRANGERS

A storm brews. It has just started to rain when the Characters get back to the Commission House. At the door they hear loud, happy laughter from within. One step into the hall, shocked faces, Dana's cheeks are bright red. Two Ascetics are sitting at the table in the hall, a small barrel and three empty glasses are on the table. Outside, the wind freshens, and thunder roars. Inside, it reeks of alcoholic perspiration.

Dana jumps up coyly. "Oh! I didn't expect you back so soon." She points at her two guests. "Caspar and Morvin, they only wanted to deliver a shipment of distillate for the Commission House."

"Caspar and Morvin. The master distillers," the two drunkards introduce themselves, almost bursting with laughter. Caspar and Morvin are everything the Ascetics from the gardens are not. Their noses show a drunkards' little red veins, their robes are grey and stiff, their cheeks unshaven and their eyes puffy.

"Distant relatives," Dana stammers by way of explanation while trying to move the small barrel from the table to the kitchen counter. Caspar and Morvin try to stand upright, then Caspar clears his throat. "Cousins," he nods solemnly.

"Just cousins," Morvin adds.

NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH

The two Ascetics are cordial and open. Maybe a little too open. If the Characters start talking to them and refill their glasses from the small barrel, they can find out quite a few things about Lucatore. Life at the Cloister? Dull and miserable. The relationship between Lucio and Neva? The Furor is at her beck and call. The marriage of Altair and the Emissary? Bah, marriage, the Baptist was almost never in town. Always travelling. Abacus? The greatest slave-driver of them all! It was because of him that they left the Cloister. Altair's death? A shame to die this way (here, they become quiet and reverent for a moment). Flayers? They have beaten the last bit of a divine spark from their bodies. Burn at the Cloister? Nonsense.

PURGAN DISTILLATE
SEAL OF THE
MASTERDISTILLERS





DAY 10: TO HONOR THE BAPTIST

The thunderstorm of the day before has chased away the clouds, the sun is shining brightly onto the People's Plaza. In the middle of the plaza, a wooden stage has been erected, and hundreds of villagers have gathered to watch the show.

Seven children dressed in white nightshirts, the broken cross painted on their chests, follow an eighth boy. "My faithful brethren, my warriors – you have fought for days, are tired and hungry. Keep fighting by my side, and we'll turn the bloody Adriatic fields into the Garden of Eden!" the boy calls and raises a wooden sword in his right hand while his left rests on his chest on armor sewn together out of simple leather plates. The crowd applauds. Then a loud murmur and booing as a ragged child conspicuously creeps around in the wings. The kid drags a bloody rag goat, wears an oversized false beard and keeps poking awkwardly at the other children with a wooden scimitar. If the Characters scan the crowd they recognize many faces from Lucatore. Lucio has a place of honor from which he watches the show raptly with eyes wide open. He seems to be moved by the children's play to honor Altair. The Scrapper Custus stands in the shadows, joking with a Touched One. Caspar and Morvin push through the crowd, serving distillate from a barrel on a wheel cart. Behind them are Westing, the chippy Ascetic, Mercoi, the ice warden, and many others. Emissary Neva is nowhere to be seen.

When the Characters try to get an overview of who is present, they see Carmino Ferro in a nearby alley. The Surgeon looks at them and beckons them over.

ATILLA'S DEATH

A crowd forms at the edge of the People's Plaza, surrounding Fernex and Atilla. A red-haired girl cries in agony, her father presses her against his chest in desperation and tries to bandage a gaping bite wound. The Characters hear angry shouts: "Fernex, get that damned cur away from here!" and "Take off its rabid head!"

The massive dog growls, jumps forward and tries to bite at the crowd. Fernex grabs Atilla's neck fur and jerks him back. An onlooker jumps from the semi-circle to beat the dog with a stick. Fernex shouts "Stop!" and intervenes, getting hit himself a few times, but the dog is hurt, staggers and shakes itself. Then Atilla howls, presses his muzzle to the ground and rubs his nose.

The Characters have managed to get through the crowd and have barely enough time to stand protectively in front of Fernex and his hunting dog before more blows with the stick hit the two. They see the dog bare his teeth – Fernex does not seem to comprehend what is happening.

Atilla's maw is wide open; he wants to tear his master's throat out. A gasp, a dry cough like brittle iron rubbing across stone. The dog gets ready to jump, but falls to the ground whining and rolls around. Atilla's side is distorted; the veins under his skin are in full motion. A bursting sound as if a sail was torn apart abruptly ends his agony. The dog's belly has split, worms and maggots spill from his innards. Helplessly Fernex tries to aid his loyal companion, but there is foam at Atilla's mouth, and he vomits more slime and worms. Then he is dead. The breathless crowd has backed away.

"My dear friend. My dear, good friend ..." Fernex stammers in shock.

RAPPORT

Here in the alley they can talk, and Ferro gets to it right away. He points at his Splayer, knocks against the Mollusk's glass pane and looks around frowning. "Not a single twitch. Not for three days. I expect that in the Spital or in a sickbay. Not in a settlement with workers, traders and travelers." His expression is determined, giving no room for doubt that the whole story is rotten at the core.

"How do your investigations go?" He listens to the Characters' observations, nods omnisciently and asks for their theories. If the Characters tell him about their encounter with the hooded person at the cemetery, Ferro is obviously astonished. If the Characters have not come up with it themselves, the surgeon will utter an assumption: "Chroniclers? Here? There are no alcoves for trading here." Suddenly, the Mollusk twitches. Ferro watches the twitching muscle with irritation, but the loud cry of a child interrupts their conversation.

WHY ATILLA?

Fernex is speechless, completely shocked. He does not know what has happened. He returned from the woods where he has been hunting with Atilla for two weeks ten days ago. Maybe the dog has eaten something that was afflicted. He had already bought herbs because he considered Atilla's behavior strange, but the medicine did not help. The danger of it being an ailment infecting other animals or even people is much too high. Fernex has to do something – he points to the west where he has been hunting. He wants to go back there. Follow his own tracks to try and find something suspicious.



SCIROCCO'S HOUR

Carmino kneels over the dead dog, worriedly examining its wounds and dissecting worms and maggots with his scalpel: "Get the body away from here before it infects someone!"

Lucio arrives: "What the hell ..." The he whirls around and addresses the onlookers. "Let the hunter catch his breath, you're crowding us. Get away, go away, there's nothing to be seen here!" He puts his armored right hand on the shoulder of the shocked Fernex: "Come on, old man, we need to burn the body." Fernex nods wordlessly. His grief knows no bounds. Lucio gestures at the Characters to form an espalier to carry the dead dog through the crowd.

A throaty, well-known voice creates new turmoil, though. "Behold! The second sign. The Baptists have opened the gates to the Demiurge and invited its spawn to Luccatore. Now it crawls through the guts of the infidels and rummages around there until the stomach bursts and spills its evil into the world." Scirocco bathes in the crowd with arms wide open, a crown of thorns adorns his scalp, and bloody rivulets run down his temples.

"Those who taste the cusp of evil are doomed. Infidels, your masters have consecrated your life to a false god."

"I'll make you shut up!" Before the Characters can react, Lucio pushes past them, shouldering people aside and running towards the Flayer. More and more people step in front of the preacher like a protective wall, though and will not let the Furor pass.

"The sinner is right!" people call, "Furor, let the preacher be!" and "He speaks with our voice! His questions are our questions, too!" The commander barely understands the disobedience, his gaze darts over the crowd, he is looking for his men. "Guards! Bring this madman back to the Alms House!"

BLUE EYES

The intervention of the Orgiastics has created chaos on the market square. Everyone is running around aimlessly, people scream bloody murder, children are crying. Except for one. If one of the Characters makes an Action roll on INS+Perception (4), he will notice a blue-eyed boy amidst the turmoil crawling around on the floor between the legs of the crowd. A heavy boot lands on his hand, the boy grimaces painfully, presses his lips together tightly. Then his bright blue eyes shine – his fingers pull something from the cracks of the pavement. Scirocco's earlobe. Excited, the boy closes his fist around his find. Then he is out of sight of the Characters.



THE SKINLESS MAN
ICON OF THE FLAYERS

A loud shout runs through the crowd, the Characters are right at the center of events. They are shoved around when a group surrounds Scirocco, trying to defend him against the approaching guardsmen. The Flayer's voice washes over the crowd.

"Don't worry, I am not in danger. They have no power over me, no pain can break me!" Having said this, he pulls out a small knife and cuts off his left earlobe in a quick movement. He takes the bloody chunk into his mouth, chews on it, laughs and taunts the Anabaptists. Suddenly a fist hits his chin, his jaw flies aside, and the chewed-on piece of meat falls to the ground. The Orgiastics have arrived, parting the crowd and dragging the unconscious preacher away.

Lucio's forehead is bathed in sweat as he approaches the Characters and says: "I need you. Go to the Alms House and guard that lunatic until I can draw in more men! Arrest him!"

AT THE ALMS HOUSE

The alley next to the Alms House close to the city wall is empty. Inside are the arrested Flayers, the Orgiastics who have taken Scirocco into custody are standing guard in front. They seem exhausted; take deep draughts from their canteens. A little water on the bandanas to wash the stress from their faces.

"Are you our relief?" one of them asks. "Take good care of this rabble, we need to get back and report." They say farewell briefly, relief in their expressions. "Damn Benesato! Only a madman invites other madmen into his house," the Orgiastics mumble as they walk towards the Northern part of the city.

The Characters are alone in front of the door. Silence. One of Scirocco's disciples looks at them through the cracks of a boarded-up window, trying to meet their gaze. His eyes are bloodshot, he breathes heavily. "Come in if you are free of sin. The master won't hurt you," he rasps through the cracks in the wooden planks. The Characters can easily push back the heavy bar at the door if they want to enter.

Braziers glowing within paint the room a hellish red. The disciples throw long shadows against the walls. They surround their master Scirocco who lies face down and with eyes closed on a stretcher. With glowing wires, they cauterize his wounds and sew flaps of skin that are hanging from his body back on. One of the Flayers has pierced his cheeks with a long needle, another mixes his own blood with the sinner's and passes around a bowl that they all drink from – except for the last one; he is cutting into his lower lip with a sharp piece of flint.

The sinner opens his eyes and grins like a skull. "Has fear slowly crept into you that you finally seek out my wisdom?"

The clearer the Characters' answers, the more cryptic the sinner's words will be. "You are strangers. I can see that. Your origin will not save you, though, on the day of reckoning." He laughs and coughs up blood. He rolls his sunken eyes, and then he focuses on the Characters again.

"The third sign will come. It will split the herd; rivers of blood will drench the people. Lucatore will wade through its own entrails." A successful INS+Empathy (2) roll clearly shows that no matter what the lunatic on the stretcher says, he is dead serious with every sentence of his sermon. The Characters can ask one last question before an Orgiastic interrupts the conversation by poking his head through the door. "Get out here at once!" he shouts at the Characters. Lucio has sent a relief for the guards. Six men wait in front of the Alms House, ready to stand guard.

As soon as the Characters step out into the alley, the heavy bar falls back in place. Scirocco's mad laughter sounds muffled through the cracks. Night has fallen. Time for the Characters to go to the Commission House and grab a bite. It has been a long day.

DISCOVERIES

While everyone's attention is fixed at the master of penitence, one of the Characters can keep in the background and look more closely at the Alms House. A combo roll on AGI+Stealth (3) and INS+Perception (3) is necessary to do so and stay undetected. If the roll fails, one of the disciples will block his way with a grin and push him back to his group.

SUCCESS, NO TRIGGER: The Flayers own an impressive arsenal of archaic tools that are remotely related to treating wounds and in any case to pain.

1 TRIGGER: Several barrels of alms are covered with cloth. Alms might be the wrong word, however. The inhabitants of Lucatore have brought ham, fresh bread, wine, olive oil and much more to the Alms House. The Flayers really seem to be popular.

2+ TRIGGERS: Behind a pile of bloody rags, there is an open wooden casket. It contains body parts. A mummified hand, something that looks like an ear, a toe. Repulsive relics.

THE DEAD CHAPEL MASTER

Dana is preparing a quick meal for the Characters from the leftovers of the day before. With a pan, she swats at a gadfly buzzing through the kitchen. "Goddamn beasts! I hate flies!" There is a crashing sound. Then there is a high-pitched scream. It does not come from Dana, but from outside.

If the Characters go check, they see a lantern light. Three girls come running along the Eden Route towards the Commission House from the east. They gasp, are completely out of breath, the youngest one is in tears. "Quick, we need help! Our father. He is sick!" The girls are hysterical and completely confused. "Over there at the chapel, quick! Please hurry!" The oldest one keeps running towards the town.

WOODEN CASKET

If the Characters want to inspect the chapel more closely, a successful Action roll on INS+Perception (2) helps them find a small box made of pinewood containing three vials. The stoppered glass containers hold a viscous liquid: Elysian oil.

If they show the vials to Carmino, he opens one of the little bottles, sniffs and puts a finger into it to smear some of the oily liquid on the floor. "Grease for the Anabaptists' dirty hair. Put it away. We need to focus."

If the Characters use it on themselves, they first feel a cold, refreshing tickling on the skin. Their hackles rise, blood accumulates in the hands. It feels good, invigorating, as if the weariness was pushed from the body. After a little more than half an hour, the feeling reaches its peak. The Character starts seeing flickering lights from the corner of his eyes. Whenever he tries to see it more closely, they fade from sight. The growing grass crackles in his ears, he hears a fat cat breathe behind a wall. He smells wet pines, the odor wafting over from the forest in the distance.

He has just used Perat, Perat made according to Abacus's recipe. For the next four hours, all of his senses are heightened to the extreme (INS+Perception +3D), he feels a heightened inner strength (PSY+Faith/Willpower +3). If the Character does not succeed at an Action roll on INT+Focus (5) or PSY+Willpower (5), this gift he is not used to, will cost him his slumber. Even the monotonous scratching of the woodworms in the Commission House sounds like howling saw blades to the Character's eardrums.

The Character gets 3 points of spore infestation which you can let the player know through a secret note. At the same time, he recovers the same amount of Ego points.

VISCOTTI CHAPEL

If the Characters follow the two younger girls cross-country, they reach Viscotti chapel in no time. The spherical building with the broken cross on its roof lies on the meadow like an oversized cannon ball.

A woman stands silhouetted in the doorway of the chapel in a rectangle of light. Her hair is wild, and she cries bitter tears. When she notices her daughters and the Characters, she falls to her knees and pulls her children into her arms. "No, don't go in there, children! It's terrible ..." A deep sob racks her body.

If the Characters chance to look into the windowless chapel, they see a disturbing sight. In the glowing light of candles, a dead Anabaptist lies on a bed at the edge of the room. He is naked, his robe is draped across a chair in an orderly fashion, and only a blanket covers him partly. The corpse is completely withered. Dry skin stretches across all ribs and every bone, the corpse resembles a skeleton rather than a human body. The nose has withered, revealing a bronze nose ring, his eyes are black raisins, and the teeth are bared to show a macabre grin.

Two Ascetics come running, probably from nearby farms, and look into the chapel: "Almighty! The chapel master? I have never seen anything like this!"

A CLOSER LOOK

In front of the chapel, the mother of the girls reports in short sentences what happened during the evening: "Viscotti's joints ached ... He wanted to go back to the chapel to anoint himself ... After three hours, he still hadn't come back ... and then ..."

A dozen Ascetics and farmers, roused by the clamor, gather to support the woman. "The third sign. Like Scirocco said," a voice whispers from the crowd. Silence. "Harken, the Flayer is right! Altair's death has doomed us all."

"Nonsense! Your itinerant preacher has spat into your brains and given the result a good stirring," a voice says from the dark. Carmino Ferro comes running, accompanied by the oldest girl, recognizes the Characters in the torchlight and barks at the Characters: "You there! Assist me!"

In the chapel, he immediately goes to work. His hands move over the withered corpse. "Tumors. Right under the epidermis. You there, I need the light of your candle here." The Characters see Ferro's fingers touch the leathery skin in the weak light, then he stops and stares right into the eyes of the Character closest to him. "What do you see?"

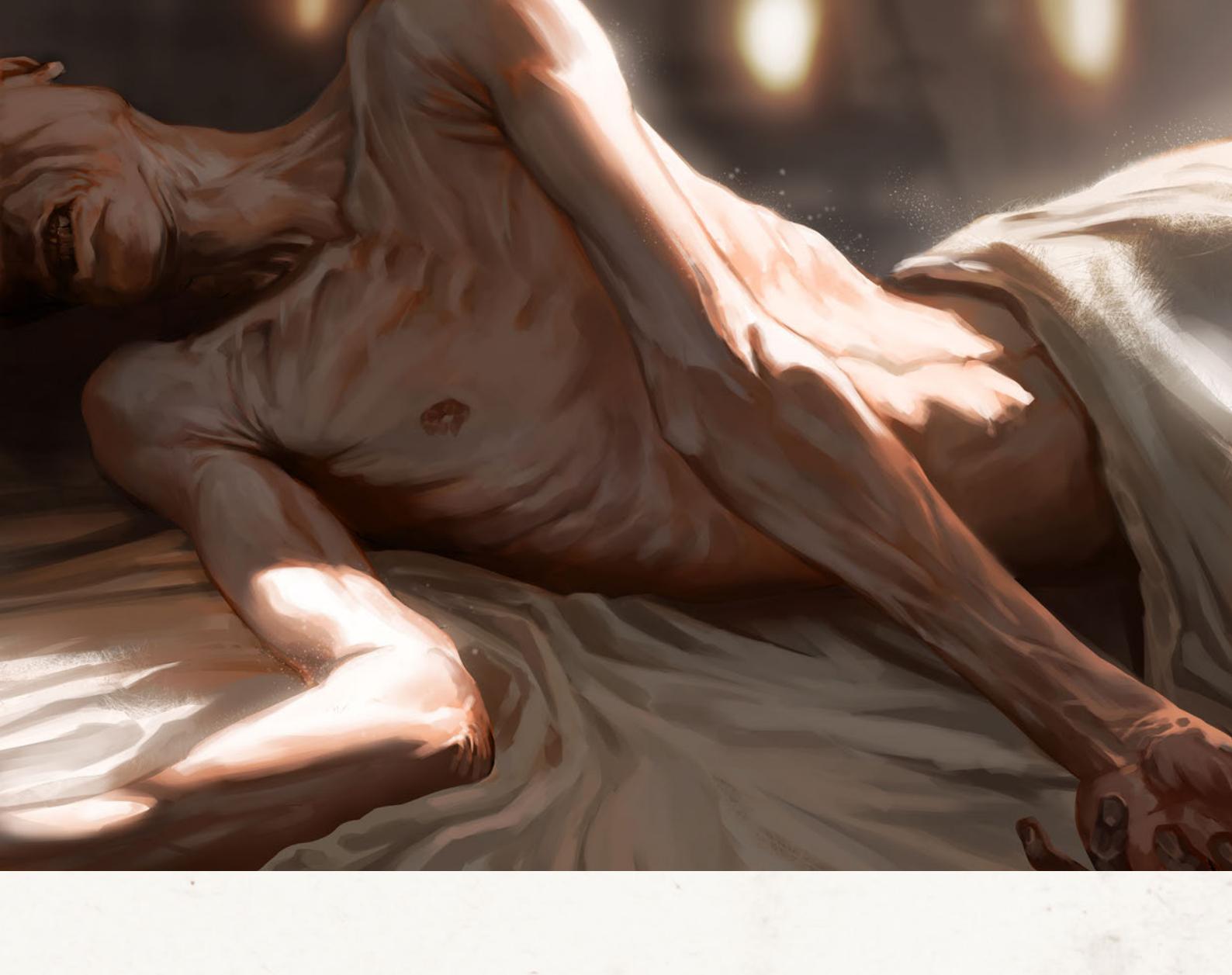
Pinpricks. Hundreds, no thousands of them.

"The chapel master was sucked dry," he says in his best instructor's voice, "to the last drop." Then he scrambles to his feet and leans very close to the Characters. "Something's lurking out in the woods. I am sure of it. Fernex has answers for us. Find the man!"

The Surgeon leaves the chapel again and berates the Ascetics without hesitation.

"Don't just stand around! Help me. Get the body into the Cold Stores, I need to cut him open." Viscotti's wife is shaking with rage. "No! Are you crazy? No one cuts open my husband!" The girls protectively step in front of their mother.

"Another woman has already stolen a body from me this week", the Spitalian answers coldly and pushes the woman aside, "I will not let that happen a second time."



AT THE HUNTING LODGE

If the Characters look for Fernex at the hunting lodge, they meet Iola and Kirija, the two huntresses who process the hunter's prey there.

No, their master has left at noon. He took provisions for a week and took the Eden Route westwards. He was agitated.

"We have heard of Atilla's death," Kirija says, "he was very fond of the dog." That is all the two women know, they do not go hunting with him.

Iola muses how to help the Characters, then she suddenly remembers something and disappears in the darkness of the large tent. A moment later, she reappears, carrying a strange necklace. A simple leather cord with small mirror shards. In the bright moonlight, they almost shimmer like the small metal plates on a Chronicler cape. "Our master made these necklaces. He calls them talismans – they are supposed to be wards against evil." She tries to put the necklace around the nearest Character's neck. "Fernex would have wanted you to carry on when you go into the woods."

A FRIENDLY WORD

The two huntresses are worried for Fernex. The more considerate the Characters are in explaining their motives, the more helpful the two women try to be. If one of the Characters succeeds in an Action roll on CHA+Conduct (2), Iola and Kirija will look for more useful equipment to supply the group with. The Characters receive a rope (20 m), flint stones, a palm-sized sundial and a telescope. A crack detriments the vision, but on long distances, the Character looking through gets +1D to INS+Perception to see something. A parting gift. Maybe it will help.



DAY 11-13: CLUES IN THE UNDERBRUSH

The Characters are at a turning point in the story. All clues seem to point to the forests around Lucatore, and the links are buried somewhere in the underbrush there. The following scenes constitute the end of Act 2. You can play them in any order, expand them as you see fit and thus adapt the Adventure to your group's decisions. It is important to get the Characters out of Lucatore for a few days. This way, the embers glowing in the alleys of the city can turn into a true inferno. The absence of the Characters will start a chain reaction. No matter if they enter the woods on their own volition or ask the city guard for permission, the result is the same. Lucio informs Neva. The Emissary assumes that the investigators have found the trail of the Romanos. She alarms Papa Chicco. The Characters have turned her demesne upside down for far too long, so the Iron Emissary sentences the investigators to their deaths. Publicly, she cannot confront them, but the Romanos can take care of the group silently. No one will find a few corpses buried deep in the woods any time soon. If someone searches for them at all.



TRACKING FERNEX

If the players try to follow the trail of the hunter, they have to go west into the woods and travel towards the Lombard Bog. According to his huntresses, that's where Fernex went last with Atilla.

Half a day away from Lucatore, an unusual humidity hangs between the trees. The rain of the last days has macerated the underbrush, the boots sink into the mud. The rotten, overgrown ground makes any advance difficult but simplifies tracking. A successful combo of INS+Perception (2) and INS+Survival (3) shows more than one trail. Fresh. Maybe half a day's head start. Let the Characters roll several times to stay on the track.

THE FIRST NIGHT

Until dusk, the Characters can gain ground, but the hunter is still nowhere to be seen. The trees cast long shadows on the forest floor, a drizzle starts – it is getting uncomfortable outdoors. The Characters will not be able to march on much longer; they have to take a break. Dana has packed provisions for them so they will not starve. They need a place to camp for the night though, to remain more or less dry when it really starts to rain.

Later. The wet firewood crackles, spitting sparks into the night. Even if the group is alone in the woods – Characters with a high INS+Primal score feel as if someone is watching them. It is way past midnight when there is a crackle between the trees. With INS+Perception (2), it is easy to detect which direction the crackling sound comes from – or is it a hiss? If the Characters take burning logs or torches (it is very dark) and follow the sound, it lures them deeper into the woods. The going gets tough. Long roots jut from the ground, crossing at knee height before disappearing in the ground again. The pace is slow. Every step causes a loud, wet sound (-2 on AGI+Stealth), the terrain is hard to oversee.

If a Character is under the influence of Elysian oil or Burn, he sees black smudges waft between the trees. They are furtive, visible for just a moment, before they fade to nothingness again. If the Character tries to touch one of the smudges, his fingertips freeze for the length of a heartbeat. Then the black stuff vanishes.

Without stimulants, it is much harder to find the source of the sound. A successful INS+Orienteering (3) is necessary to keep following it to its source. If the roll succeeds, the group finds a small clearing amidst all the roots. A slippery slope leads into a humid, dirty hollow. In the torchlight, the Characters see a strange circular symbol: 10 steps in diameter, imprinted into the soil a forearm's length deep. Spitalians or Apocalypticists recognize its meaning at once with a successful INT+Legends (2): the Chakra symbol of

THE BIVOUAC

A fire would be nice, but the damn wood doesn't want to burn. The night is cold, so if the Characters do not find shelter, they lose their natural regeneration and start the next day completely exhausted (-1D to all Action rolls). With INS+Survival (3), the Characters can pluck a few sponges from the surrounding trees, break them open and light a crackling fire with their dry interior. Some branches, hacked off and bound together with ivy, form a framework that can be covered with pinewood branches and keeps off the rain at least a little. Better than nothing.

Now a few stones in a circle around the fire to store the warmth – yikes, what is that? A rubbery millipede. Well, an insect for some, dinner for others.



a Psychokinetic. The youngest and most dangerous rapture. If the Characters investigate the clearing, they find various forms of that symbol with INS+Perception (2): As naturally grown spirals in the bark, as mossy cushions on stones and even complete – the branches of a knee-high brush form the jagged tips of the Chakra, while the jutting roots form a triangle. If the Characters enter the circle of the symbol, they sink into the forest ground to their ankles. White maggots as thick as their thumbs tumble into the Characters' footsteps as if they had stepped onto a giant corpse. All of a sudden, the floor of the clearing expands as if the land were taking a deep breath (AGI+Mobility (4) to avoid falling). With a loud hiss, it deflates again, accompanied by a repulsive stench of decay.

MOLLUSKS AND VOCALIZERS

If the Characters dig into the humid soil with tools or weapons, they uncover thousands of maggots as thick as a finger eating through dozens of half-decayed animal carcasses. The stench is abysmal.

No matter what, the Characters start to feel uneasy. Have the players make an Action roll on PSY+Faith/Will-power (3) to control their growing fear of the unknown. If a

Character does not succeed, he loses 1 Ego point. If there is a Spitalic in the group carrying a Mollusk, he registers no twitching at all. The group neither is in a Spore Field nor is a Psychokinetic in the area. If he is carrying a Noumenon Vocalizer, the Character can try to gauge the reaction. A combo of INS+Perception (4) and INT+Science (4) is necessary to do so:

SUCCESS, NO TRIGGER: The reaction results in a distinctive curve, but the Homo Degensis is not around anymore.

1 TRIGGER: The wave is exceptionally strong for the fact that the target object is not in the reception area anymore. The afterglow of powerful force fields leads to a steep amplitude.

2 TRIGGERS: Psychokinetic. Definitely. The force fields are the most powerful in the northeast. He probably went that way.

3+ TRIGGERS: The trail is at least 2 days old. Yet the Psychokinetic has a distinctive and very powerful signature. An Archon. No doubt.

DEEP IN THE WOODS

The night is over; the Characters have left the terror of the eerie hollow behind. As soon as they break camp, they can continue looking for Fernex. A successful combo of INS+Orienteering (3) and INS+Survival (3) shows the way: broken branches, flattened grass – this way. The hunter does not seem to be careful, he moves with a purpose, is looking for something. The Characters can feel that they are close. There is a loud, buzzing sound between the trees not 20 paces away. If the Characters carefully approach its source, the buzzing turns into a droning. A swarm of flies buzzes about a dead deer. The animal's belly is split open, its chest exposed. The body was pulled up, and the head with the great antlers hangs wedged between two heavy branches. The animal's entrails were torn out and spread on the floor in a wide arc. Countless fly larvae are milling about on them, feeding on the entrails. An INS+Survival (2) or INT+Medicine (2) roll shows that the deer has not been dead longer than half a day. Mollusks the group carries start twitching slightly.

Something is moving within the carcass – an Action roll on INS+Perception (2) makes clear that it is Aerial Leeches! The creatures rummage through the chest of the deer, looking for some remaining drops of blood. One of the meaty worms seems to have found a new source of blood. Greedily, it wobbles from the carcass, can barely fly two paces above ground on its tiny wings. Then it approaches the Characters. The other hermaphrodites follow.

BREEDING CHAMBERS

When the Characters see the dead deer, have them make an Action roll on INT+Legends (4) or INT+Science (3). Spatialians get +1D:

SUCCESS, NO TRIGGER: The Character has a vague idea of what is happening here. It seems as if the Psychokinetic was creating nests and breeding chambers to grow a swarm. The animal corpses are a great source of food. The swarm size potentiates with every source of food he leaves behind.

1 TRIGGER: It is all connected. The first feeding pits were marked and over a day old. They were closer to Lucatore, though. This spot is far more recent and lies further north. If there are any more carcasses to the north, there is only one possible conclusion: The Psychokinetic is creating a circle around Lucatore.

2+ TRIGGERS: The amount of insects is already enormous. Should the Psychokinetic leave more of these pits, the swarm will dangerously multiply in no time.

AERIAL LEECH ATTACK

The black, oily, shimmering worms buzz through the air. Their aerial maneuvers are uncoordinated. They fall to the ground, hit branches and try to catch up with the Characters while tumbling through the air. Their small, jagged maws are wide open. They bite for the Characters, bite into capes and leather armor. Their way through the air is almost unpredictable; their weight pulls them down without them intending to sink. They hit the mud, crawl on and beat their wings shakily to get into the air again.

The swarm attack lasts several rounds. It starts at maximum strength (6) then decreases by 1 per round. Flamethrower or pesticide bursts lower the strength by 1 each. The Characters must roll PSY+Reaction (swarm strength) every round. If the roll succeeds, the defender was able to swat aside all Leeches. If not, one of the Leeches bites. They harmlessly bounce off full armor like a harness, for example.

An Aerial Leech can be torn out of the flesh after the combat. This causes 1 point of damage. If it clings to the host, it feeds and finally falls off. This causes 1 point of spore infestation – but at least, it does not cause a flesh wound.

The Characters get rid of the first swarm without breaking a sweat, but there are more to come. In addition, the rush of wings mixes with the buzzing of the fly and gnat swarms. It seems as if the whole forest was alive and was now throwing its entire vermin arsenal at the Characters. Every step on the soggy ground uncovers new breeding holes. Tapeworms writhe around the Characters' ankles, looking for patches of bare skin to bite and pump their eggs into a new host's body. Have the group roll PSY+Faith/Willpower (3). If the roll does not succeed, the first Character runs away from the group to find shelter. Increase the difficulty by (+1) every 2 combat rounds until the last resistance is broken.

MIRROR SHARDS

The Characters can try to get to safety. In total confusion, they run around between the trees until they have gotten rid of the last waves of vermin. The forest gets more and more alien. After a short burst, they barely recognize their surroundings.

Suddenly, there is a flash between the low-hanging branches. There – another one and another back there. Mirror shards. The same workmanship as the necklaces they got from the huntresses. If the Characters crawl under a fallen tree to look at the shards, they find a small, well-camouflaged hunting pit.

They have found Fernex. He crouches in the ditch with his back to the Characters, the Lupara at the ready. He targets the empty forest. Above the group, the mirror shards



move in the wind chiming. It's an alien, horrific sight. If the Characters approach, Fernex turns around and raises a finger to his lips to make them stay silent. He gestures to a Character to grab a stick and climb down into the ditch with him.

Wordlessly, he points at a spot between the trees barely 20 steps away where he is supposed to throw the stick. If the Character succeeds in hitting his target with the piece of wood by a BOD+Athletics (2) roll, there is a hiss as if a bucket of water had been poured onto a glowing iron plate. For a second, a shimmering, bluish, crackling web of energy threads becomes visible hanging between the tree trunks in a wide semi-circle. Filaments. The stick dissolves into tiny, glowing pieces falling to the forest floor.

"An Incarnate," Fernex says, pressing his fist to his mouth to muffle his words. "See for yourselves." He pushes the back of one Character's head towards his scope, positioning the rifle's barrel and adjusting the targeting device. The image is blurred. A slope about 300 meters away, maybe more. Something is moving there. The Character must completely focus on the spot by rolling INS+Perception (3) to notice something at all. The silhouette becomes colossal. A giant humanoid creature emerges from the thicket in the distance. It has grabbed the legs of an animal, a deer maybe, and pulls the bones from its body with its bare hands. Suddenly, the creature stops, turning the hooded head toward the observing Character. It focuses on him as if the colossus

was staring right into the lens of the scope. If a Noumenon Vocalizer is at hand, it reacts with extreme amplitudes now. Mollusks spasm in their glass tubes. The mirror shards turn in the wind faster and faster, rotating on circular orbits and hitting each other. "He has noticed us!"

THE INCARNATE

Should the Characters want to attack the creature in the distance, Fernex says with eyes wide open: "Suicide!" If they try to run instead, the hunter drags the closest Character back into the ditch and holds him down with all his weight. "Never run from an Incarnate! Their eyesight is bad, as is their hearing, but if your blood starts pumping, you will catch their attention." The old hunter seems to know more than the Characters. He burrows deeply into the rustling leaves, covers himself with twigs and branches and points at the mirror shards above them. "We have to wait for their dance to stop." With this, he closes his eyes and breathes shallowly, almost as if he were feigning death.

If the Characters follow Fernex's orders, almost an hour passes until the mirror shards calm down. "He's gone," Fernex whispers drily. "You have to return to Lucatore to warn the doctor. As fast as possible. The demon wants the town. He is breeding a swarm, bigger than anything I have seen in all of my life." If the Characters ask the hunter what he will do, he laconically answers: "Hold him up. As long as it is still possible ..."



CABIN IN THE WOODS

If the Characters decide to investigate the Northern woods and follow the trail of the trap in the woods (Day 7), one of them must first succeed in an Action roll on INS+Orienteering (3) to find the spot in the thicket again. They will be surprised to find that someone has repaired the traps.

Let the Characters roll INS+Orienteering (3) several times to find more traps and thus follow the trail to Black Tom's cabin. Some traps should also force the Characters to successfully roll INS+Perception (3) or INT+Engineering (3) to avoid setting off the traps by accident or to disarm them. If the Characters fail, they get either a bad shock or damage (1) (armor does not protect).

After three hours of careful advance, the Characters spot a stone ledge that has fallen into a hollow at the ridge of the Andring and now leans against the mountain flank where it has probably formed a sort of cave. Right in front of it, there are footprints in the mud. A low scraping, reminding the Characters of a grinding wheel comes from the cavity. If they move around the stone flank from the west, they see an entrance camouflaged with intertwined twigs, leaves and reed. In the space beyond, they can see wooden planks, tarpaulins and a dark room. Maybe a Scrapper cave?

BLACK TOM

An African steps from the shack, armed with a long rifle. He looks like a Scrapper, his clothes are worn, he carries a tool pack on his belt, and his skin is covered in grease. He raises his rifle, targets the sky briefly and then polishes the barrel.

INT+Legends (2) shows that the rifle is of Neolibyan origin without a doubt. Ivory and gold inlays and feathers adorn the weapon. It must be worth a fortune. The young man does not notice the Characters, seems focused on his work and obviously thinks himself safe.

If the Characters let him know that they are there, he raises the rifle and presses the stock against his shoulder. Click, click, and the gun targets them. Lightning-quick.

"Who are you and what do you want with me?" The voice sounds distrustful. The African takes a step backwards to his hideaway. "I have ten bullets for each one of you!"

A difficult situation that needs a quick response. The group can try to calm the stranger down. To do so, one of the Characters must make a successful Action roll on CHA+Conduct (3) or CHA+Expression (3). If negotiation is not one of the group's fortés, the players can try guile. If the Characters lie to the stranger, there is a conflict: PSY+Deception versus INS+Empathy (5W).

Note: If the Character's guile should fail, there is a prompt reaction. The African fires, the bullet whizzes past the Character's ear, and there's a rain of bark fragments and shredded leaves. "Don't lie to me!" The shooter knows how to handle his rifle, there will be no more warnings.

If the Characters calm the man down and manage to persuade him that they mean no harm, he will lower the rifle. He's willing to talk to the Characters. Suddenly, he listens up, turns east and furrows his brow. INS+Perception (3) if the Characters try to listen. They hear an approaching conversation:

"With that gold, I will buy a handful of men. Have them kidnap a Saraeli for me. I'll fuck her until she has given birth to eleven of my children!" says a muffled voice from the woods. "You idiot, why don't you steal children from the streets, they break less easily?" A third voice agrees: "You can chain them in the stable with the pigs. No expenses."

The expression of the African shows his enraged. "Romanos! They've never been so far up," he grinds through gritted teeth. "In here! They mustn't find my hiding place!"

ALTERNATIVES

If a chance arises, you can place Black Tom's scene earlier in the Adventure. Should your players not come up with the idea of investigating the source of the trap or fail due to the difficulty, introduce Black Tom as follows.

Noon. Black Tom appears in the market square, hooded and in concealing clothing, trying to shop. He does not want to raise any attention, but he needs provisions. At one stall, he is being berated. The merchant spits at him. "Am not selling nothing to Africans!" Other men join them, trying to intimidate him. A fist flies, the Neolibyan dodges, remains passive, wants to appease the stallholder to avoid any further pairs of eyes looking at him. "Fucking son of a bitch! Your kind has bled Purgare dry."

If the players intervene, they can disperse the crowd with a few courageous words or decisive blows. Black Tom is grateful, gives one of the Characters a few dinars and two rifle bullets. Then he tries to escape into an alley before more locals arrive. If the Characters lose him in the crowd, the rifle bullets tell them more. The same workmanship as the casings in the trap in the woods.



A STORY

“... they called me Black Tom. They taught me how to live like a Scrapper. A year ago, one of them told me about a botched deal in Roma. That had to be him. I never forgot his face. His trail of blood brought me to Lucatore.“ Tomero raises his right hand. Two nodular finger stumps are visible in the place where his index and middle finger should be.

His hideaway’s dark and made from simple planks. A workbench is visible in the tiny room. Black Tom uses it to modify his ammo.

“I’ll kill Papa Chicco!“ He holds up four bullets, showing them to the Characters. They are engraved with African letters. “The names of my father,“ he quietly whispers.

Black Tom does not know if the Romano leader could have killed Altair. He sees no connections between the Romanos and the Anabaptists. “No idea what they’re looking for here, but they are digging holes. I found some in the woods close to their camp.“ He has charted the area around Lucatore on a greasy piece of parchment. Holding a piece of charcoal between his fingers, he explains the way markers to the Characters and shows them how to find the camp.

“You have to be careful, the camp is continually guarded. 30, maybe 40 of those abominations live there.“ He offers to the Characters to lead them there when the night

comes. “You have to promise me, though, that the fat pig belongs to me!“

If the Characters carry guns, the Neolibyan checks the barrels and rummages around in his crates for fitting ammo. He does not have everything in stock – have every player make a role. On a result of 5 or 6, Black Tom finds a few usable bullets. Another roll indicates how many bullets he can spare for the respective weapon. “We’ll need every bullet.“

If the Characters need more equipment, he can give them a six shooter, a canister of Petro, whetstones, torches and a flashlight. “I only want the gun back.“

If the Characters talk to Black Tom about the shadowy Chronicler figure they saw at the cemetery days ago, he incredulously asks, “You, too?“ He leans close to the Characters and whispers: “He’s been setting off my traps in the woods and destroying them for weeks. I caught him in the act once, but my bullet missed him, and he disappeared in the thick mist. He is great at camouflaging himself and seems to know the terrain by heart.“ Tom presses his back against the wall. “Whatever he is doing here, one thing is for sure. He watches what goes on in the woods – and he works alone.“



BYWAYS

The Characters do not have to meet Black Tom to find the Romano camp. You could also place this scene elsewhere. The plot development will be similar, but the Characters will not be able to rely on Black Tom's knowledge, help and gear. Also, there will be one less rifle to save the Characters life in case of a lethal conflict.

Still you decide how you would like to link this scene to the plot so far and the decisions your players have made up to this point. There are many plot hooks in the Adventure than can be used to lead the Characters to the East flank of the mountains. Maybe the Characters notice some ragged folks on the market square they want to follow or they notice some weird goings-on close to the battle tower that lead them northeastward into the forest. There are many ways to direct their attention towards the Romans.

BLACK PATHS

Rain is pounding on the canopy of leaves. The Characters have moved in a long curve past the battle tower towards the East flank of the Borreo. They are far away from Lucatore, there is only dense forest this side of the mountain. Firs are stretching skywards threateningly, their branches almost hanging to the ground, their needles scratching and pricking as the Characters pass. There are puddles at their roots where the water that runs down the trunks coalesce.

Black Tom creeps along from a 30 steps distance to cover the Characters' flank. He is almost invisible in the dusk. Have your Characters roll INS+Perception (3). A successful roll makes them notice the noise in the forest. If the Characters track it, they stumble across a horse tethered to a tree amidst the thicket. Triggers remind the Characters of the first day after the murder of Altair. They recognize the black mount with the russet patches standing tethered in the rain here: It is Lucio's horse! The commander rode it to the Commission House, and it was in the stables when the Characters visited the Cloister on Day 8 and crossed the patio. If the Characters approach the horse, one of them must make a successful INS+Taming (3) roll to calm the stallion down. If the roll fails, the animal prances nervously, starts to chomp at the bit and whinnies, rears up and kicks the first Character coming too close. If the Characters tame the stallion, however, they can rummage through the saddlebags. They contain two vials of oil and a knife.

If the Characters keep looking around, they see footprints in the mud all around the horse. INS+Survial (3) tells them that the rider was picked up here by around seven or eight different people. Black Tom approaches and waves at the Characters. "This way!"

DARK HOLES

They're lead down into a low hollow. It is so dark the Characters can barely see their hands in front of their own eyes. To advance, an Action roll on INS+Perception (3) is necessary. Characters who succeed notice the holes in the forest floor and can walk around them. If the roll fails, the respective Character falls several meters deep into one of the dark shafts. As a reaction, he can make an Action roll on BOD+Athletics (6) to avoid falling. If successful, the Character is wedged in the shaft, if not, he falls into darkness and takes falling damage (6) that armor doesn't protect against. The other Characters now have to drag the fallen one from the hole.

This part of the forest is full of these pits. The Characters have to be careful, otherwise they will fall into another hole. Some of the shafts are covered with twigs and leaves which makes them even harder to detect.

THE ROMANO CAMP

Black Tom points at a camo net hanging between the trees. It is covered in loose brambles.

If the Characters sneak close to a nearby rocky outcropping, they can see the camp below. Two dozen tents are spread in a wide, treeless hollow. The camp is closed on three sides by the giant ravines of the Borreo. A hip high wall of sacks full of earth, stones, rubble and simple wooden planks marks the border on the fourth side. There is only one entrance directly from the spot where the Characters are crouching. The tents that are made of massive tarpaulins and primitive struts flank a muddy trail leading to the center of the camp. Tunnels lead down into the soggy ground just like the holes in the woods.

There is movement between the tents, men and women patrolling together, some walk in a crouch or drag behind a leg, others are tall and strong. Like draft oxen, they drag sacks full of soil from the holes behind them or sift through them. Others wash out the muddy ground with rainwater, carefully digging in the dirt with their fingers. Diggers! This ragtag crowd is digging for treasure.



GUARDS

Suddenly, seven Romanos leave a big tent. In their midst is a woman with wet, blonde hair. Neva, the Emissary. Next to her is a stocky, big bellied man wearing gold and jewelry. They talk to each other. The conversation cannot be overheard, but a successful CHA+Expression (2) roll shows that the iron Emissary and the guy with the gold chains have reached an agreement. The group marches towards the woods. Not towards the Characters, but pass them in about 60 steps distance, out of the valley and up the slope.

Caught! Four Romano guards sneak up to the Characters under cover of the drumming rain. Now they attack, want to get rid of the enemy scouts. Have the Characters enter a conflict with them: INS+Perception against AGI+Stealth (4W). The Characters have a penalty of -2D due to the weather. If the Romanos remain undetected, they ambushed them.

A pickaxe arcs through the rain towards the head of a Character under attack who has one last chance. With a successful AGI+Mobility (4) roll he can dodge the blow. The pickaxe hits the bark, wood chips are flying around. A giant of a man appears out of the rain, the lethal weapon in hands, head covered by a sack in which he has cut a small vision slit. “UNNNNGGGHHH!!!” he shouts as if in agony when he sees that he has missed. Meanwhile, a fat guard

has jumped Black Tom and presses his own rifle against the African’s throat, trying to strangle him.

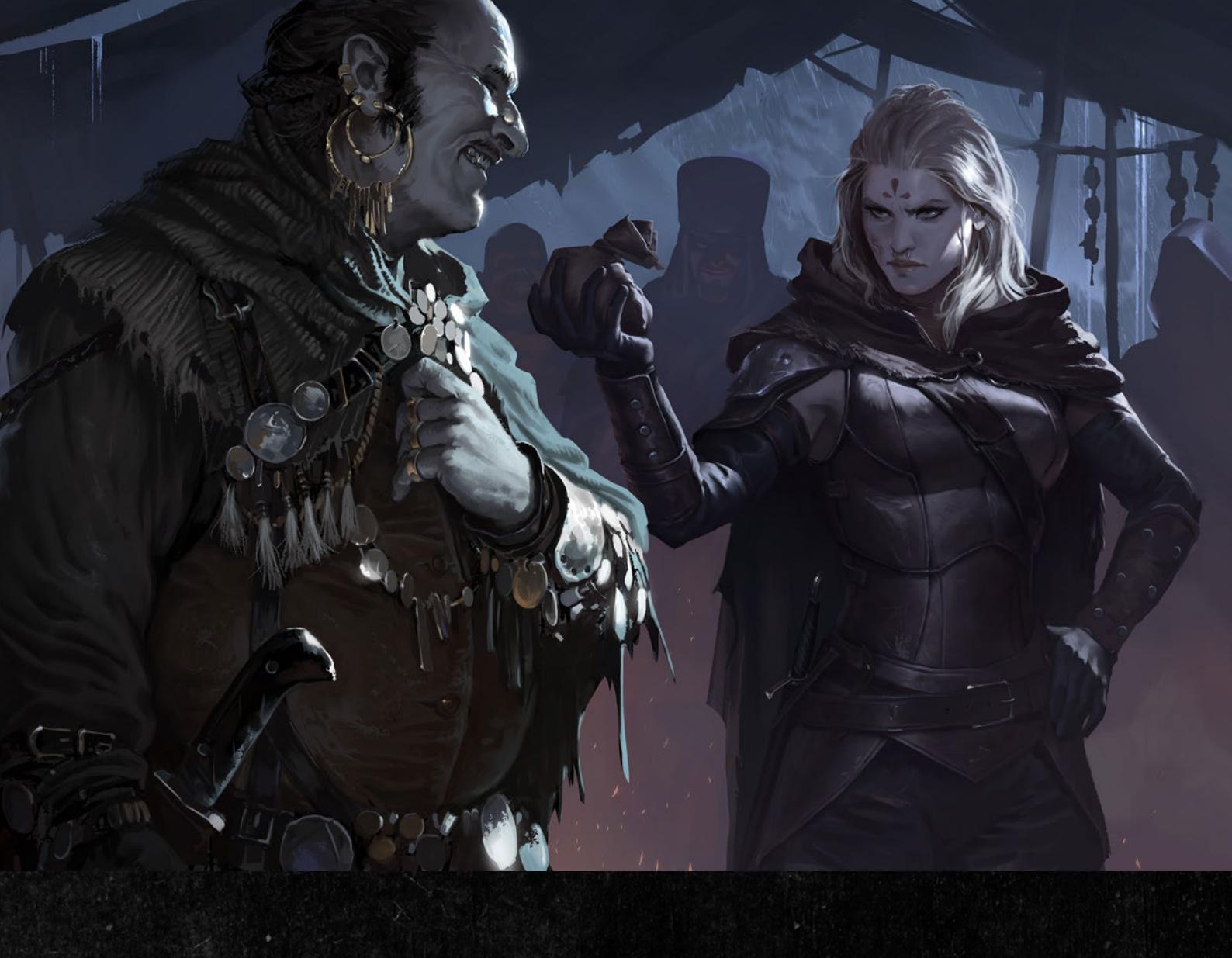
“Take them alive, Vicco, so they’ll still be screaming when we fuck them!” an ugly, toothless guy cries from the right. He attacks with his knife at once, stabbing the air with quick movements. Greedily, he licks his bare gums with his tongue. A fourth man steps out of the shadow, armed with a club with scissors blades attached. His gray hair clings to his face, and madness shimmers in his eyes. “I’ll turn you into spit roast, you cute little thingies!” The situation is turning serious. Dead serious.

FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

If the Characters have gotten rid of the attackers without a shot being fired, they still have the advantage. The heavy rain in the distance to the camp have saved them from discovery. If the weapons were fired, however, there is sudden movement in the camp. Romanos step out of the tents and look around, gazing up the slope. Suddenly, there’s angry shouting from the woods:

“Agip! Tell these idiots to stop shooting or I’ll tear out their last teeth!”

That must be Neva’s escort, 90, maybe 100 paces to the southeast. The shouting definitely comes from where the



Characters found Lucio's horse in the woods. Black Tom kneels down next to the Characters and chambers a round: "Go! Our only chance."

The Characters storm through the underbrush, jump pitfalls and run through the rain to catch up with the squad. "There. Torches." Black Tom points ahead. 40 meters to go. Now, there is muffled shouting behind them. Someone has discovered the corpses. 20 meters to go. There's a loud gong from the camp. 10 meters. There is Neva astride Lucio's stallion. The Romanos form a protective circle around her and draw their weapons by way of saying hello.

"Our dinner comes to see us," drones the guy with the golden necklaces and applauds sarcastically. The horse rears up, Neva throws the Characters an icy look and gallops away, right into the dark woods. At the same time, Papa Chicco's six bodyguards rush the Characters, weapons raised.

TAKING THE BULL BY THE HORN S

The Characters are out of breath, the six Romanos are all dead in the mud. Papa Chicco has fled during the fight, Black Tom is following the fat man. Neva rides in the opposite direction. From the camp, another gong is ringing through the woods. In a few minutes, the place will be teeming with

Romanos. The abominations will avenge their brothers' murder; if the Characters face them in a fight, an inglorious end awaits them. If they try to help Black Tom, Neva escapes. If they follow Neva instead, Black Tom is on his own which would mean his death. If the Characters split up, they lower their chances by dividing their forces. Whatever the players decide to do – they'll have to make a sacrifice.

KING OF SCUM

If the Characters follow Chicco, there'll be a showdown. The fat Romano has ambushed Black Tom who has lost his rifle in the ensuing fight. Now he is continually attacking him: knife wounds and deep cuts make Black Tom stagger, the African is severely wounded.

"You fucking kid. I should have fed your heart to my pigs!" Chicco rants while trying to stab the young man in the chest with his blade. Tomero fights back with the last of his strength.

A mortal combat ensues.

The Romano fights with all the guile of a pit fighter, his knives jab and hack at every piece of flesh that comes into his reach. He uses every trick to get an advantage over the Characters. Feinting, spitting, making branches whip back, escaping, feigning death and suddenly attacking again – he wants to drag as many as possible to hell with him. His



The Shutter has watched the Characters' investigations, and Eico, his drone, has secretly recorded their conversations – he knows what they know. He suspects that Neva is hiding something. It has to do with Altair's death, yet the murder was not the climax of the conflict, but the start of a much bigger storm brewing over Lucatore. The Romanos under Papa Chicco's lead are irrelevant to Decoy. He considers them puppets of the Emissary. He doesn't care for Black Tom's thirst for revenge either. The Shutter has only one goal: he wants to reveal the secret that Neva is hiding from the whole world and thus not only solve the mystery of Altair's death but also transmit

DECOY'S DAWN

the knowledge she has found to his Cult.

Not to help the Anabaptists but to make them vulnerable to blackmail. Whatever it is, Neva may not die or fall into the Characters' hands before Decoy has gathered all fragments of information.

If the Characters threaten to overwhelm, catch or even kill Neva, Decoy has no choice but to intervene. He will use his whole arsenal against the Characters to stop them from following Neva. He does not want to hurt the Characters more than necessary, according to his calculations, they can continue to be helpful to him with their investigation. This is why he will only fire warning shots at the beginning. If that

doesn't help, he uses his modules to confuse the Characters. Or he distracts them by using his drone, firing grenades and smoke bombs to terrify them or make their orienteering harder. If the Characters are not deterred, he will use lethal force.

Decoy has no qualms about firing lead and electro shocks at all of them until they are only a miserably, spasming cluster of cells.

Under no circumstances will he let himself get captured. His secret identity is his most important advantage; if his mask falls, his operation is over, and everybody who knows his true face must die.

fighting spirit will only die when he is dead. Papa Chicco is scum of the worst kind – unleash the rag king's full dirty potential against the Characters. Give them a fight they'll never forget.

If the Characters want to restore Black Tom's honor, they can leave the deathblow to the severely wounded African: the shot tears through the night, bathing the combat area in stark white for a heartbeat. Viscous brain matter flows from Papa Chicco's broken skull, mixing with the rain and mud. The fat body twitches two more times, then it is finally over.

THE KNIFE AT THE THROAT

If Neva is the target, the Characters have to run. The Emis-sary has a head start, but it is hard to steer Lucio's stallion in the rain and in the rotten underbrush. One or two more breaths, then they catch up with her.

If one of the Characters manages to drag her from her horse, Neva and her attacker land in the mud. She fights with all she's got. She will not risk her life, however. She wants to escape back to the Cloister to protect her child. She tries to keep the Characters at bay at all costs, to trick them: "Leave me be! Who has blown the morning horn?" she barks at the Characters. "Lucio!" She gasps, falls, slides across the wet ground, gets up again, runs on. "He wanted

to be like Altair. Wanted to share my bed. Jealousy gnawed at him.“

Neva is fighting a rearguard battle, only confronting the Characters briefly if there is no other way. She runs, dodges, sidesteps and looks for cover in the under-brush – her passive defense rises by 1 if she succeeds in an AGI+Mobility (2) roll. Every Trigger means an additional +1. She is still a warrior through and through.

"I paid the Romanos a bounty for Lucio's death. They were to get rid of him. You fools ruined it all. Now he'll escape!"

Suddenly shots ring out amidst the chaos. Someone's firing at the Characters. Bullets come flying, throwing up angry fountains of mud. Grenade fire blinds them. A drone is whirring through the branches above the Characters, shooting a beam of red light right into the eye of one of the pursuers. Confusion. The Characters look around, hopelessly lost. Where is Neva? There – an amber pair of eyes. Just like at the cemetery. There is a barrage of flashing lights and smoke bombs. The fireworks turn the night into day, explosion after explosion tears through the woods. In the center of it all, a distorted vocoder screams at full volume, mercilessly blasting the Characters' auditory canals. Then it is over. Neva has gotten away. The Vocoder, tied to a tree trunk, crackles softly.



BARGHEST'S TERROR

THE OUTRIDER

Dana is startled when the Characters enter the Commission House again. "I did not expect you to come back," she says worriedly. "The Spitalian was here every day to check if you've returned. He's at the Cold Stores, waiting for you."

If the Characters walk down the slope towards the Cold Stores, they see Carmino waving at them with outstretched arms from a distance. He opens the large barn door. If they enter, dry cold greets them. A young Recruit in a child's uniform, not yet 14 winters old, stands in front of the ice slabs. On the ice is Viscotti's corpse, torso open. "Just as I assumed!" Carmino greets them.

He points to Viscotti's lungs. Thick white growth surrounds the organ, following the exposed windpipe and growing into the pharynx. "Eaten by Burn, but there is no trace of a stigma on his chest. Why?" He looks at the Characters as if they know the answer. If they tell him about Fernex and what happened in the woods, his expression turns horrified. "It's worse than I thought." He whirls around and bellows at the boy: "Outrider! Saddle your horse, back to Vivaco - no! Straight to the west, Moreno, to the Hellvetics. Have them contact all sick bay cities. We need a hundred men and Hygienists. Have them find a Preservist Corps. At once!" The boy follows his superior's command as if electrified and hastily scrambles to get his gear. Carmino says full of disgust: "This city is eaten by lies. Warn the governor! Have him put his troops on standby. I do not trust the Anabaptists for one more minute."

With this, he pries open the barn door and helps the boy saddle the horse waiting in front of the Cold Stores. The boy salutes and gallops up the slope. Carmino turns to the Characters. If they tell the surgeon about their encounter with Neva at the Romano camp, he answers: "Romanos? This emissary has more to answer for than just her husband's murder."

He points at the Cloister. "The truth is up there. We must not waste any time. Everything we do must be ..."

An ear-splitting hiss comes down the hill and slashes through Carmino's sentence. At the same time, a bright, bluish light blinds the Characters. Hysterical screaming bellows from the farms close to the Viscotti chapel. The air is crackling like plastic being crumpled, hackles rise. Then a red cloud of blood rises in the sky above the chapel.

"Filaments! The outrider ..."

DECAY

Briefing. Carmino wants to make sure that the Eden Route to Vivaco is still open. He wants the Characters to ask Ennio Benesato for help. "We need every man fit for action, and also the women!" The Surgeon nods his goodbyes and runs away along the lower path past the water towers.

The quickest way to House Benesato is through Luccatore, following the main road to the market square. The guard tower at the main gate seems unoccupied, and the streets are uncommonly quiet for this time of day. An oxen cart blocks a crossroads, the hubbub of voices and muffled sounds of blows sound from an alley nearby. Suddenly, shouts and cries of pain can be heard.

If the Characters check, they see Ambroggio and Siphon beating up the pike bearer Domingo together with their Orgiastic friend Tosco. The attackers are armed with heavy iron bars, their blows throw the young Benesato to the ground. His face is swollen, blood trickles down his chin, his right arm hangs limply at his side. With his left hand, he tries to defend against the blows hitting him. "Doesn't look good for you at all, Domingo. Without your stupid brother, you're only half a man," Ambroggio taunts Domingo who lies on the ground in front of him and spits into his face. "Let's see what you're made of without any help, Benesato asshole," Tosco spouts and kicks Domingo in the face. Suddenly, all the windows and doors in the alley close. It looks as if nobody was going to help Domingo.

If the Characters intervene to save the young pike bearer, Siphon sees them entering the alley. He drags his iron bar across the pavement, beating a rhythm on the stones. "Look, Ennio's friends! Didn't we tell you not to enter the Elysian gardens? You dirty traitors!" Ambroggio and Tosco step away from their victim and join Siphon.

"We'll beat you to a pulp!" Tosco shouts and raises his bone breaker.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

If the Characters have survived the fight, they can try to help the severely wounded Domingo. With an Action roll on INT+Medicine (1) they can stabilize him so he can breathe. The Orgiastics have broken several of his ribs and smashed his right arm. His cheekbone is splintered and his face unrecognizably swollen. "Hhhelp mimmy unncle ..." he mumbles through split lips.

It makes no sense questioning the pike bearer as he is unable to utter a clear sentence. They can only hide him behind loose wooden planks, barrels and tarpaulins lying around and hope that no one will find and kill the helpless man. A combo of INT+Medicine and AGI+Stealth must be

successful to get Domingo to safety and camouflage him there. It's up to the players to decide what they'd do with the wounded or dead Orgiastics.

Strange – the alley's still empty. Where are the guards? The villagers? Nobody's on the streets, many houses seem deserted. What's going on? If the group moves on towards the market square, they see the same thing everywhere: open doors, roaming livestock, toppled barrels and every now and then, barricaded houses. The stalls on the market square are empty, too.

House Benesato. The entrance portal is open, the twisted body of the doorkeeper lies between the valves. Muffled noise can be heard from the upper floor. If the Characters run up to the upper rooms, the noise dies down when they reach the door to Ennio's chambers. With a successful BOD+Force (4) roll, the Characters can batter down the massive oaken door. It falls inwards. At once, four sword fighters in black cloaks take up a combat stance inside. "No!" orders a sharp, high-pitched woman's voice. "Not them! Allies."

The sword bearers step aside, and the Characters see Gala Lombardi. She supports Ennio Benesato who clutches his silver chalice, bleeding and flabbergasted. His robe is torn, his high leather cap is askew. Now the Characters realize for the first time what the room around them looks like: six dead Orgiastics lie in the corners and strewn across the floor like shattered dolls. There's blood everywhere, it's running down the walls and curtains. From next door, Pace comes limping in, weakly leaning against the wall. A broken spear juts from his side. "They have stormed the house ... wanted to kill our ancestor!" he wheezes. "They left us no choice ..." one of the sword fighters says and wipes his bloody blade on his cloak which is embroidered with a golden cross surrounded by a corona. The same symbol Gala Lombardi wears under her left eye in makeup. "My guards," Gala says flatly.

THE TRUTH

The four guards take care of Pace, quickly addressing his wounds. Ennio crumbles into an armchair. He straightens his leather cap, fighting for a dignified posture, and pulls up the sleeves of his torn robe. Bleary-eyed, he meets the gaze of the Characters.

"The Anabaptists have lost their minds. They'll destroy us all ..." He lowers his face, his brows cast deep shadows across his facial features, and he whispers: "Altair had a son. My brother and his whore kept the brat hidden in the Cloister for 12 years." Ennio's breath is labored. "He was a frail,



ugly worm. Not a successor but something to be ashamed of.“ The old Benesato kisses his silver chalice, his gray fingers caress the etchings. “I saw my nephew only three times. They kept him away from Lucatore, didn't want anybody to talk about the boy. Six months ago, my brother told me a lie. The boy had died, he said. Pneumonia.“ Ennio laughs weakly to himself, suppressing his bloody cough. From afar, the Characters hear a low, rhythmic noise. “Ridiculous! The child of a Baptist dies a weakling's death although the Surgeon of Vivaco was my brother's personal doctor.“ His laughter becomes more absurd, the noise more intense. Singing can be heard.

“I am old and withered. My days grow shorter. My bloodline is dying. But I am not dumb. The Baptist's child lives! Upon my word! And just as I suspect that my beloved parents' bones rest in peace together with our ancestors I suspect that the boy is still in the Cloister.“ There are footsteps outside, drums, maracas and loud singing, while hundreds of feet march in lockstep.

Ennio takes a rattling breath, lift his eyebrows and whispers: “His name is Vikal.“

One of Gala's guards pulls aside the curtain and looks out the window. “My lady, we must leave Lucatore. At once!“

HOURS OF DESTINY

The first sword fighter supports the wounded Pace, the second grabs Ennio and drags him out of his armchair, the other two protect Gala. Together they run through the atrium of the house, trying to leave the estate through the back door in the garden.

If the Characters look out the window, they see a terrifying sight. Two torchlight processions consisting of hundreds of people each march towards the market square. One procession comes from the south, the other reaches the market square from the east.

The southern group fills the square first, led by Flayers who are followed by villagers armed with pikes, pitchforks and torches. Scirocco, the sinner, practically hovers above the people - he's being carried on a wooden throne adorned with barbed wire. On his lap, there's the blue-eyed boy (Scirocco's Hour, Day 10) who balances a relic on a gold embroidered cushion with his little arms. The earlobe!?

From the east, the other pack of people rushes on, Ascetics and Orgiastics mixed with the population of the village. The crowd carries swords and flails. Westing leads this second mob, with an angry face, he leads his men directly towards Scirocco's procession. The Flayers answer with rattling bones and the clanking of manacles. Over 600

people have gathered. The noise rising up between the rows of houses is so enormous that no one understands a word of what's being said down there. If the Characters want to know what happens on the market square, they have to go out. One step through the portal, and the stream of people drags the Characters right into the middle of events.

UNHOLY ZEAL

Westing storms towards the enemy camp, shouting: "Are you out of your mind? Folks, these Flayers are under arrest! Turn around, bring them back to the Alms House, and we will not punish anybody!"

"You stupid Ascetic! Don't you see that the Demiurge is dancing through your lines and confusing your soul with his music?", Scirocco replies dryly. With a grin, he lifts the boy from his lap and hands him over to his followers. Then he snaps his fingers complacently, his followers part, and a handful of henchmen step up. They drag a half naked, bound woman between them whom they throw to the floor in front of Westing.

The Characters must somehow get through the crowd with BOD+Athletics (4) or AGI+Mobility (4) and a total of 10 Successes to get a look at what's going on.

"Look here, brothers and sisters! This wretched woman is possessed by the Demiurge. She has suckled her baby with blood instead of divine milk." With his scourge, Scirocco points at the completely confused woman who desperately tries to cover her breasts and private parts. The sinner addresses Westing who is flanked by Ascetics and Orgiastics:

"The same will happen to you! Only the most ugly of creatures will spring forth from your loins. The worm of evil lurks in your entrails. Eats you from the inside out. Turn away from the Anabaptists! Drive them back! It's only their doing that rekindles hell here!" The Characters are very close now. With PSY+Deception (3) they can get into the third row of onlookers without being noticed.

WESTING'S RUSE

The bald Ascetic realizes that he is losing control of the situation. Scirocco's followers are incited by the sinner's sermon, basically eat from the palm of his hand. If Westing doesn't regain the prerogative of interpretation at once, the Flayer's rabble-rousing will infect even more people with his madness. Westing orders two other Ascetics to drag the woman to the dais on the market square, right under the Anabaptists' village cross, and follows them hastily.

On the dais, he addresses the people with a raised index finger. "The Broken Cross judges all that is evil. Yes, you are RIGHT! This woman has fornicated with the Demiurge. We show such abominable sinners the way to the hell they so desperately crave to reach. It is us, the Anabaptists, who destroy evil. We don't side with it!"

Have the Characters roll INS+Empathy (3) or CHA+Expression (3) to notice that Westing makes secret hand signs for his followers. Triggers add certainty that the Ascetic tries to buy time and lull the people with his show.

With INS+Perception (2), the Characters see a few city guards take up position to encircle Scirocco's followers. Westing grins nastily. His two fellow brethren chained the woman to the cross rising threateningly on the dais. With an imperious gesture, he tells a hollow-cheeked Ascetic to step forward with a torch. The woman looks around in fear and shouts: "No! No! Please let me ..." A loud murmur runs through the crowd like a wave, there is a hubbub. Everything seems as if the Ascetics want to burn the woman publicly.

Westing walks over to the woman, turns to his audience and shouts accusingly down at the crowd as if he was standing on a pulpit: "She is infected by the worm BECAUSE she's not baptized!" He jerks her head around by the hair, exposing her blank forehead while touching his own forehead with the three tattooed dots with his finger at the same time.

"ONLY THE BAPTISM purifies the sinful body, washes out the worm, cleanses the blood. WE, THE ANABAPTISTS, rule the water. OURS IS THE BAPTISM!"

He beckons more ascetics over who approach rolling a large barrel. One of them hands Westing a bronze baptismal bowl that the angry speaker raises high.

"I WILL BAPTIZE THIS WOMAN!"

THE LAST SIGN

The crowd watches the Ascetics with transfixed gazes. Westing dips the bronze bowl into the barrel, fixes the crowd with his gaze, making sure he has got their full attention. Suddenly he howls, his eyes become wide with disgust, and he yanks his arm back out of the barrel. The round container starts shaking due to Westing's hectic movement, teeters and finally tips over. With a loud splash, its contents hit the dais and rains down over its edge. The gathered Ascetics jump backwards. Tapeworms!

Hundreds of tapeworms are washed into the crowd with the water flowing from the barrel, flopping around in puddles and writhing towards the onlookers. The shocked crowd jerks back. The bodies of the onlookers suddenly moving backwards are crowding the Characters from all sides, pushing and shoving. BOD+Force (5) or AGI+Mobility (5) are necessary to swim against the crowd. The situation becomes incalculable; all people in the front row try to escape the worms.

Mad laughter sounds over the people's disgusted moan. Scirocco is shaking like a madman on his throne, his legs are shivering with excitement, his head is thrown back. "BEHOLD THE LAST SIGN! THE WORM WILL BE IN ALL WATERS!" he spits against the sky with laughter.

BLOOD BAPTISM

"The sinner spoke the truth!" and "Disarm the damn Orgiastics!" the crowd roars. People are infuriated. With pitchforks and torches, they surround the Anabaptists. The eastern crowd that was formerly on Westing's side is completely confused. People do not understand their own teachings anymore. Some change sides into the enemy camp. "Sciocco! Sciocco! Sciocco!" calls sound from everywhere.

The Characters realize that the situation is explosive. Such is the excitement of the followers of the Flayer that one false move of the city guard will guarantee that there will be blood - and the Characters are right in the middle of everything. Angry villagers roam the alleys, drumming on the pavement with the shafts of their flails and pitchforks. Above all that noise wafts the eerie sound of bells, hand bells and maracas that the Flayers and their followers beat in a frantic rhythm. Angry citizens drag Westing from the dais towards Sciocco. Others try to stop the writhing tapeworms by pouring burning peat and oil onto the huge puddle of water. A roaring flame starts to consume the entire dais. The broken cross is aflame!

"STOP!" Sciocco's voice is louder than the din all around.

"We have not yet enlightened the Anabaptists. Let them try and save their souls from the Demiurge. They have to repent, and we have to show them the way of the Lord. No baptism by water will cleanse the soul. Only blood will purge us!"

Suddenly, the murmurs and the music stop. The Flayers lift Sciocco from his throne and put him down gently. They put the crown of thorns on his head and give him a long, jagged flint stone with a serrated blade. A sacrificial dagger.

The sinner stands in front of Westing, leans towards him and presses his crown of thorns against the Ascetic's forehead. Slowly, the thorns pierce Westing's and Sciocco's skin, and blood droplets run across the faces of both men. While Westing grimaces in pain and stares into Sciocco's eyes in shock, unable to free himself from the sinner's embrace, Sciocco only grins, baring his yellow teeth.

"Bring me the other harlot!" Sciocco demands and whirls around. The jerky movement leaves a bloody gouge in Westing's three dot tattoo. The crowd behind the itinerant preacher parts again, two farmers drag a girlish figure into the circle of onlookers. A sack of linen hides her face, she breathes in gasps, sucking in the linen covering her facial features and blowing it out again.

The sinner grabs the bottom of the sack and tears it away with one swift movement.

Verena! She's shivering with fear. Her eyes are wide open, she doesn't understand what's going on, her helpless gaze searches the crowd.

"Look at this stupid child! She has tasted the cusp of

evil. Has lain in the lap of lie and carried the decaying water for the Anabaptists. The worm is already in her heart. We have to exorcise it together with her blood."

Breathlessly, the crowd stares at the sinner and the girl, following the sermon with bated breath. "How old are you, my child?"

Verena doesn't understand, is unable to say a word.

"ANSWER ME!"

"Twelve or thirteen," she stammers full of fear. Disgustingly, Sciocco turns his face to the heavens.

"ALMIGHTY GOD! RULER OVER SPACE AND TIME!" His voice cracks. The crowd stands dead still.

"IN THY NAME WE WILL RISE ABOVE THE UNBELIEVERS AND JUDGE THEM!" The sinner is in ecstasy. He raises the sacrificial dagger, the crowd follows his gaze to the heavens.

"IN THY BLOOD WE WILL WASH THE SINS FROM OUR SOULS AND CONSECRATE THE INNOCENT!" There is a droning. It sounds as if Sciocco's followers had started a disturbing chant. But it is not coming from the market square. An INS+Perception (3) roll shows it's coming from the West.

"THY KINGDOM IS THE PO..." Sciocco's words are drowned out by the droning, it's getting louder and louder and rushes towards the market square like a crashing ocean wave.

THE SWARM

A giant cloud of millions and millions of insects attacks the market square. The rush of their wings drones so loudly that it completely drowns out the cries of the frenzied crowd. Gadflies the size of an adult man's palm buzz around greedily, searching for fresh blood. Between them, there are swarms of mosquitoes so tightly packed that there would scarcely be room for a razor blade between.

There is panic all over the market square, the frenzied crowd tries to flee into the alleys. Others grab locks and torches in their horror, swatting at the insects to keep the flying pests away. A dark cloud washes over Westing, dragging him to the ground. Black, fluttery bodies cover the Ascetic, obscuring his silhouette. His trembling hand spasmodically clutches at the empty air - but it, too, is covered by the vermin within seconds.

"Theeee sssacrificce mmusst beeee brooought!" a voice sounds from the right. The Characters see Sciocco, he has grabbed Verena by the throat, ready to slit it with his sacrificial dagger. This is the last chance to save the girl. If the Characters make any attempt to do so, the sinner lets go of her and turns towards the Characters. Only the white is visible in his eyes.

"YOU WILL NEVER FORGET MY SALVATION!" His last laugh sounds like a snarl.



SPORE INFESTATION

In the eye of the maelstrom, the Characters are bitten and stung. Flies crawl into their vests, ticks jump onto their heads and burrow into the flesh. The swarm carries the Archon's spores, his largest source of power outside a Spore Field. Even if the Characters wear armor and keep moving, more and more vermin get through and inject tiny loads of spores into their bodies. To determine the amount of spore infestation the Characters suffer at the center of the swarm, have all players roll a die at the beginning of each new round. If they score a 1, the spore infestation rises by 1, and the player of the infested Character doesn't have to roll again. All other results have no effect.



IN THE EYE OF THE MAELSTROM

The Characters are fighting in the epicenter of the raging swarm under the worst conditions possible. The droning confuses their senses, they're almost blinded by the black, heaving masses of insects that it nearly make them lose their minds. All Action rolls are at a (-6D) penalty.

To make up for the (-6D) penalty, all Characters have to roll INT+Focus or INS+Primal at the beginning of each new combat round. Every Success negates 1 point of penalty, every Trigger negates another one.

To be able to fight Scirocco unaffectedly, each Character must succeed in a PSY+Faith/Willpower (3) roll. If the roll fails, all the Character wants, is to flee in panic with arms flailing out of the maelstrom. If he doesn't, he can fight Scirocco but loses 1 Ego point per combat round. Once his Ego points drop to 1, the Character flees head over heels.

HOWLING MADNESS

Scirocco lies on the floor, his face a rigid mask. Even in death, he grins like a skull. Wave after wave of flies get stuck in his sticky blood, covering him like a black cowl that slowly drags him to hell.

Verena is helpless, she wraps herself in one of the Character's cloaks as if seeking shelter and shouts through the droning beating of the insect wings: "Into the Cloister. The butterflies will save us."

Again this ranting. Have the group roll PSY+Cunning (3). A Success brings the idea that the Touched girl may be right in a metaphorical sense. Up on the peak, it is far colder and windier than down the valley, so maybe the swarm will be unable to follow them up there?

First, though, they have to leave the market square and find a way through the swarm. There are dead people everywhere. Blood sucking vermin covers countless bodies. With every step, the Characters grind chitin under their boots, but still the swarm seems to keep growing. Sliding and staggering, the Characters have to carve their way through this dark wall of vibrating wings and carapaces, hack the vermin apart only to gain a few meters of ground.

FREE DOM

Air. Air, at last. The sun paints the sky a liberating red. The Characters have fought through four rows of houses, the black cloud is behind them, the worst seems to be over. Close behind, a team of horses break free from their cart. Hooves pound the pavement. The horses are covered in ticks and gadflies, galloping blindly along the road, straight towards the Characters. The group has to dodge with AGI+Mobility (2) and somehow get to safety up the facades of the narrow alleyway or into a doorway. Otherwise, the horses ram the Characters at full speed (6 damage, armor doesn't protect). The horses keep galloping down the street. In the background, cries can be heard. The buzzing of the swarm approaches the alley where the Characters wait.

There is a shout: "Over here!" It is Carmino. He beckons the Characters to come to a small passage between two houses. "In here, fast!" If the Characters follow his order, the small path leads to a narrow alleyway beyond connecting two backyards. They don't have time to look around. "Shortcut! Follow me!" Carmino runs ahead, jumping from courtyard to courtyard.

After 200 meters of breathless flight, he stops at the end of the street, fighting for breath and holding his abdominal wall with a painful expression. Casually, he dusts insect carapaces from his neoprene suit.

"Stitch ..." he manages to gasp. "The east, behind the battle tower, locked ..." Gasp.

"The Aberrant ... has created a Rift ... between Borreo and Vargas ... There is no getting through ... We are trapped." Then he grabs a vial from his belt. Pills. He swallows two without water and hits his chest while doing so. "That damn Homo Degenes has us surrounded ... What a precise scheme ..."

"There is another entrance to the Cloister. Through the gardens," Verena says all at once. "It leads directly to the refectory. From there, we can reach the West Gate via the battlements." Carmino looks at her in surprise, furrowing his brow as if trying to make sense of what she said. She rolls her eyes, feels misunderstood.

"There's a rifle. A flare rifle. We can fire a warning signal for the Hellvetics. Every Ascetic in the Cloister knows that."

The Surgeon looks around speechless, his mouth is pressed tight. Then he looks back to Verena. "Good girl!"

DRIVEN

The group reaches the cemetery via the North Gate. They pass the Caravan Stables. No one here. Only the horses are still in the paddock. One look back shows the sun sinking in the west. From the city, bursts of flames are visible; they make the upcoming night bright as day. The people desperately try to fight the swarm.

"Let's take the horses!" Carmino says, doubling over with the stinging pain in his side. The Characters must roll INS+Taming (2) to approach the unknown animals peacefully. A sensitive Character can calm several horses at once. Every Trigger completely tames another animal. Saddle up. Verena and Carmino share one mount. The hooves eat up meter by meter, digging into the soggy ground at full speed as the Characters gallop up to the Elysian gardens.

THE RIDE

Even if the horses have been calmed, they are not used to riders, and the terrain around the Elysian gardens is treacherous. Have the Characters roll AGI+Navigation (2) to ride up the slope successfully without any delays or injuries caused by falling from horseback. A broken neck so close to the final target would be a shame. Do not overdo it, though, if the Characters are tired and need a break.

AT THE GATE

Verena leads the group. Together, they silently follow a small footpath. The wind whips through their hair, makes their cloaks billow. It is freezing cold on the peak, the surrounding region is cloaked in the blackest night. Not even the moon is visible. Below, Lucatore is burning. Whole streets are aflame.

They reach the heavy, cast-iron gate at the North wing of the Cloister. Torches are burning on top of the guard towers; there is full-out agitation inside. Verena carefully puts her key in the lock, tries to open it. There is a crack. The gate opens, creaking and squealing as it opens. Beyond, a narrow staircase leads up to the refectory. Verena and Carmino slip through, the Characters can follow. An INS+Perception (2) roll is in order. If the roll is successful, the Characters hear running footsteps and low noises from above: turmoil in the refectory.

At the stairs, the Characters must make a combo roll on INS+Perception (3) and AGI+Stealth (2). If the roll is successful, the Characters discover a chamber full of nooks and crannies with enough room for them all – just in time, before four Ascetics come running up the stairs into the refectory behind them.

"Every one of you grab some weapons at the armory. Bastardo is already there and will explain the Spitfires to you. Half of you takes position in front of the gate. Once the swarm is within arm's reach, you shoot. Not earlier, or you'll be wasting too much Petro!" It's Abacus. Through a crack in the shack, they see the Elysian giving instruction to his Ascetics. It looks like 40 Anabaptists are in the hall. At least.

"The other half's with me. Protect the mills! Nothing and no one goes down there. If I find so much as a dirty gnat in my lab, I will cook the meat from your bones. Is that clear?"



Then he turns to two Ascetics: "Wermut, Laspinger, you go up to the West Gate. If you see anything, sound the horn. Under no circumstances are you to use the flare rifle! The last thing I need is those self-righteous Hellvetics sending a battalion to the Cloister." The Ascetics answer Abacus's orders with a military "Yes, sir!" and follow him out.

"I hate him. He is a bad man!" Verena says.

CLOSER TO HEAVEN

The Characters can slowly creep out of the refectory. Verena shows them the way with hand signs. When they jump to a ledge on the battlements, they see the Ascetics run across the patio in full panoply to take up their positions, accompanied by some Orgiastics. Someone bellows commands. Abacus is not around.

The Characters crawl to a small protrusion leading on top of the West Gate. Verena hides behind some barrels and points around the corner. With INS+Perception (3), the Characters notice Wermut and Laspinger on top of the gate. Both stand with their backs to the Characters looking down into the valley, both are holding a horn at the ready. They can sound the alarm as soon as they see any danger.

Carmino squats next to the Characters, unwrapping his scalpel from a leather wrapping and readying his tranquilizers. He swallows two white pills, makes a face and beckons

to one of the Characters to sneak up to Wermut. He will take care of Laspinger.

"We need to take them both down at once. Cut the jugular on the count of three. One cut," he whispers as softly as possible.

With INS+Survial (2), the Characters notice that the wind blows into the faces of the Ascetics from the front, which is good for them. Verena waves from her hiding place, indicating a flat metal box in front of Wermut's feet with one finger. The flare rifle.

Carmino crawls on. He is ready. One. Two. Three: a successful combo of AGL+Stealth (3) and BOD+Melee (2) is necessary to grab the Ascetic and accurately silence him before he can react.

The two Ascetics hit the floor floundering, kicking around in spasms and wheezing in vain.

When their agony is over, Verena and the other Characters jump on top of the gate. With shaking hands, she fumbles around with the lock of the box, pushing a small key into the tight recess. The lock clicks open. A flare rifle and eight bulgy projectiles become visible.

The Characters must roll INT+Artifact Lore (3) to understand how the rifle works in the darkness of the night and get it loaded. If the Characters fail, Verena and Carmino help them. If no one else wants to shoot, Carmino grabs



the rifle, points at the sky and fires. With a loud bang, the projectile hisses from the barrel, dragging a glowing tail as it shoots upwards towards the cloud cover. Then the propellant explodes in a blinding flash painting the surrounding clouds deep red and hanging in the sky like a flaring star above the Alps. A hectic buzz sounds from the patio.

“Who the hell fired the flare rifle?” A dozen of Ascetics runs in blind panic through the patio of the cloister, trying to get a look at the West Gate, but it is in the blind spot of their field of vision. The men are infuriated. “WERMUT! LASPINGER!” someone shouts from below. A sudden bang from the other side of the Cloister tears through the shouting of the Ascetics.

The Characters have heard the howling gunshot too that echoes from the walls of the Cloister. Right next to them, something metallic hits the floor, a short moan, a soft gasping. Carmino!

The Surgeon has dropped his scalpel and staggers backwards. His legs are shaking. The neoprene on his chest shimmers with humidity. He adjusts his glasses in disbelief, looks the Characters in the eyes uncomprehendingly.

“Heart shot”, he says drily. Then his upper body falls backwards across the battlements. Verena screams. Her mouth is wide open, and her eyes mirror her fear. Who fired the shot? The Characters barely have time to dive for cover.

They are caught up here. From below, Ascetics come running up the stairs to the battlements. In a wide arc, Lucio comes rushing from the armory to the battlements, trying to figure out who has fired, to get a view on the situation. “Who shoots here?” he shouts from a full throat and angered at the Ascetics.

Far to the west, a second star suddenly rises to the sky. There is a blue glow above the nearby Alps. The Hellvetics have answered.

Verena, however, does not look west but intently stares at the yellow and black dot at the feet of the Characters. A butterfly is crawling across the floor there. With its little legs, it clings to the stone, fighting the wind and fluttering with its wings.

REVENGE

He was the Characters’ ally, has helped and supported them, was loyal to them from the beginning. Now Carmino is dead. This cowardly murder shocks the Characters. Purifying anger courses through their veins, makes their hearts beat in the same rhythm. Every Character may roll INT+Focus/INS+Primal – he regenerates the Successes accumulated by all as Ego Points, Triggers count as additional Successes. The Characters will have to be strong to avenge the Surgeon.



A

CHAPTER

BLOOD LEGACY



BURNING LIES

THE TOWER

“Butterflies,” Verena said.

The Characters barely have time to see what the Touched girl is pointing at when Ascetics storm the battlements. The four in the lead are carrying swords and flails. They are followed by two men with heavy tanks on their backs – Spitfire carriers. Soon, they will have reached their goal – a fight seems inevitable!

Then, an incredulous bellowing sounds from the side of the battlements: “Verena! You goddamn traitor! I’ll tear you to pieces!” Lucio Bastardo. He has recognized the Characters and grabs his Bidenhander from his back.

The Characters are surprised. A flail is hurtling towards them. Dodge. AGI+Mobility (3). From the left, a sword pierces the air. Block. BOD+Melee (4). A searing flame hisses towards the Characters. Jump for cover. Combined roll on BOD+Athletics (3) and AGI+Mobility (2). Something sizzles, oil barrels and awnings catch fire. Orgiastics run up the stairs.

Suddenly, a loud boom stops the fighting: another shot! With INS+Perception (3), the Characters can see the firing burst in time – it originates from Neva’s rooms. An agonized cry breaks the short silence, someone hits the floor with a thud.

“Bastardo’ been hit!” one of the Ascetics mumbles incredulously and lowers his weapon. The Furor cringes in pain. With his right hand, he tries to pull himself upright on the battlements, slides down again and gasps: “I cannot FEEL them! My legs!”

On the other side of the Cloister, Neva comes running down the stairs in front of her rooms, rifle at the ready. She dives between the arcades, taking up position. Confusion. The Anabaptists are looking around uncomprehendingly. No one understands what’s happening.

“NEVA! Why?” Lucio screams like a banshee. The lens of a gun sight blinks in the dark of the arcades, and a third shot cracks across the battlements. CLUNK! The Night becomes as bright as a day.

An exploding Spitfire tank tears his carrier apart, and a

searing wall of fire cuts through the front of the refectory. AGI+Mobility (3) to jump for cover or take explosive damage (14). Tongues of flame ignite the oil that has leaked from the barrels and cut the Characters off from the rest of the battlements. Chunks of meat are raining down. Two Ascetics have caught fire and fall down into the vestibule like human torches. Shouting and a foul stench are everywhere.

Flames burst into the night sky – if the Characters look up, they see something unbelievable: a giant swarm of butterflies, lit by the glow of the fire, approaches the tower. “Vikal,” Verena whispers in a terrified voice.

THE BLOSSOMING

A wall of fire cuts the Characters off from the battlements, the refectory is burning. They have nowhere to go. The only way out borders on the suicidal – jumping to the vestibule 20 steps below. Vaguely, they see Neva run over to Lucio through the smoke and the air that is shimmering from the heat. She crouches behind the protection of the battlement, her gun sight is looking for the Characters.

“WHY?” Lucio cries.

“Oh, shut up, you pathetic Furor. What a disgraceful warrior you are,” Neva spits back, her voice full of revulsion. “I had warned you. Eliminate those fools! Don’t let them come back to the Cloister! I guess I have to do everything on my own.”

Bullets hit the wall above the Characters, dust and small pieces of debris are raining down on them. The heat is searing, they are sweating profusely. The shouting from the vestibule continues. Panic-stricken Anabaptists are running to and fro, trying to extinguish their burning comrades with mud and water.

“NEVA! Please! Don’t let it end this way!”

“I hate you, Lucio. You were supposed to protect Vikal. It was your only job. Go to hell!” Neva chambers a round, pulls the trigger, but the weapon jams. Angrily, she casts it aside, drawing her sword and walks towards the helpless Furor. “You couldn’t even summon up the courage to kill Altair. I had to hire rag pickers to do it. What a pitiful coward you



are.“ She raises the blade for the killing blow. Beams of light break from the tower windows, and the Emissary stops, raising her eyes. The masonry cracks, glowing red fissures become visible along the mortises, branching out, growing. The walls bulge dangerously, pressed outwards by a giant – bubble!?

“NO!”, Neva screams. With the thunder as if mountains were collapsing, the tower shatters into a cloud of debris. Big blocks of stone howl through the air, sailing out across the Characters’ heads or hitting the ground next to them and throwing them to the ground. Pieces of bricks and wooden beams are raining down. A colossal stone tears apart the battlements, the burning wall of the refectory crumbles into the vestibule with a moan. The whole Cloister trembles.

Nothing but a blackened skeleton remains from the upper storey of the tower. Bare wooden beams jut into the sky, their splintered ends are still smoldering ominously. Below is the backlit silhouette of a boy standing amidst the debris. His eyes are burning like red stars, melting chains hang down from his arms, his chest is heaving. His gaze falls upon the battlements.

“VIKAL!“ Verena screams.

“VIKAL!“ Neva screams.

Then, the boy collapses.

THE CALL OF BARGHEST

It starts with a shrill whistling as if a giant kettle was boiling over. A lull ensues, the flames die down, the air tastes dry, static energy crackles across the courtyard of the Cloister. Blue flashes dance across the stone and up the walls until they reach the gables. The whistling becomes a droning, as if a giant wave of impounded air was pierced. Then there is an earsplitting crack, loud as thunder.

Something has hit the vestibule like a meteor.

The blast throws everything and everyone to the floor. AGI+Mobility (4) to dive down, otherwise the Characters are thrown against the next best wall (Damage: 3, armor offers no protection).

“BARGHEST!“ a voice from the courtyard shouts. Below, the Characters see the silhouette of a colossus rising from a crater in the ground. The Chakra symbol of a Psy-chokinetic is burned into the stones around the crater. Orgiastics and Ascetics press against the walls, sheer terror in their eyes. The naked mountain of flesh takes a step forward, bluish flashes dance across its white, maggoty skin.

“BARGHEST LEARNS FROM HUMANS!“ the Archon rumbles below its hood.

“BARGHEST FIGHTS COWARDLY LIKE THEM!“ With two quick steps, the creature blurs in front of the eyes of the Characters, then he suddenly towers over an Ascetic

who raises his arms protectively. In a heartbeat, the Psychokinetic tears him in two.

"BARGHEST SCATTERS THEM!" The colossus whirls around, makes a meter long step through the air and lands in front of an Orgiastic. With a hail of furious blows of his fists, he smashes every bone in the man's body.

"THEN THEY ARE WEAK, AND BARGHEST CRUSHES THEM!"

A black sphere appears on the beasts open palm, bending space and inflecting the light.

The sphere starts wildly rotating around its own axis, pulling rays of light inside. Then, the Archon closes his fist around the sphere. A ray of concentrated energy bursts from between his rubbery fingers. His arm lashes out, finding a target. The lance of light melts an Anabaptist into bubbling grease like a candle.

The ray continues tearing through the wall behind the Orgiastic, melting it, pulverizing everything it hits into stardust. Then, the lance dies down. Barghest is already looking for its next victim.

A burst of fire from the armory casts light across the dark battlements. A bullet tears towards Barghest and splinters into a glowing cloud of metal files immediately before hitting it. Without a sound, they fall onto the invisible ring of filaments surrounding the Archon like a protective wall. Neva!

The Emissary holds a heavy anti-tank rifle and chambers another impact bullet. Barghest sees her, crouches down and jumps up to the battlements in a giant leap.

"WOMAN HAS BARGHEST'S SON!" the titan screams at the Anabaptist.

It's now or never. The vestibule is empty, the floor to the boiler room has burst open. Barghest stands with his back to the Characters, not seeing them, and is completely focused on Neva. The left side of the battlements has collapsed – a stairway made of debris. The Characters have to succeed in a combined roll on BOD+Athletics (1) and AGI+Stealth (2) to reach the boiler room safely and unseen. It would be madness to fight the Psychokinetic.

Behind them, the anti-tank rifle fires once more. They don't see what's happening. But they hear Verena following them quickly. The West Gate has collapsed. No way out. Only one chance. Down.

"GIVE HIM TO ME!" Barghest is droning from the battlements.

"Never!"

IN THE OIL MILLS

No time to look around. The Characters enter the boiler room, a wildly chattering and hissing coppery labyrinth. The boilers are running on excess, spitting fountains of steam that could cook your face from the skull. If the Characters fail their dodge roll on AGI+Mobility (3), they are

scalded (Damage: 2, armor offers no protection).

Verena points to a door at the other set of the basement. A joint physical effort is enough to tear it from its hinges. As soon as the door is torn from its hinges, a disgruntled Anabaptist comes running, his axe raised ready to strike, with a second one following him.

Behind the two, a steep flight of stairs leads down, so that the Characters could push the first attacker into the second one. A combo of AGI+Mobility (3) and BOD+Force (3) is necessary to duck the axe blow and shove the Orgiastic down the stairs. If it succeeds, the axe wielder tumbles down the stairs with his comrade, both breaking their necks. If not, the only way is to fight.

Below the stairs, the Characters enter a cellar vault of cathedral size: the sanctuary of the Cloister, the Oil Mills of Lucatore. Cogwheels as high as a house hang from the ceiling. In between, on the floor of the mill, Abacus is ordering his Ascetics running around.

"Pack the Burn into the padded crates. Take the iron locks. There – the vials must be packed in straw!" There is an almighty uproar, the Elysian has job after job for the Ascetics. If the Characters watch from a gallery, they see bulgy brass stills and oil tanks containing a golden liquid. The Elysian oil.

A clap of thunder shakes the ceiling of the room, makes the cogwheels creak in their mountings. Barghest? The gallery on which the Characters are standing tilts forward. With BOD+Athletics (2), they can reach railings to hold onto, otherwise they slide down and fall 3 meters. One last set of stairs, then the group reaches the floor.

A second clap of thunder makes the ceiling of the vault crack, and dust percolates down.

"That can't be a thunderstorm!" Abacus cries with outrage, looking upwards along the cogwheels. The Characters remain undiscovered with a successful roll on AGI+Stealth (1). A third clap of thunder, stones fall from the ceiling and hit the floor like projectiles, burying Ascetics and smashing a brass still. Oil is covering parts of the floor of the room.

"Almighty!" Abacus calls with eyes wide open. Through the hole in the ceiling of the vault, the colossal silhouette of the Archon descends, slowly hovering towards the floor. In his arms, he carefully holds an unconscious, hairless boy. Vikal?

"GIVE TO BARGHEST WHAT YOU HAVE STOLEN FROM HIM!" his order bellows through the room. Behind him, a thick, black cloud buzzes. His swarm!

TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Trapped. The Archon is mad with fury, his swarm races through the vault, deafening the group's ears with its din. Is there a way out? It does not look as if there was one.

"This goddamn boy! If Altair had only done him in!" Abacus mumbles into his beard and runs away.

Barghest lands. Carefully, he takes the boy into his left



DEADLY TERROR

Barghest's appearance triggers primal survival instincts in humans. His roaring is deafening, his movement patterns are preternaturally quick and unforeseeable. Once he gazes at a new victim from under his hood, the person will probably be dead within seconds.

The Characters have to succeed at an Action roll on PSY+Faith/Willpower (4) to be able to face Barghest at all. If they fail, they are paralyzed with fear or will flee in panic.



BARGHEST'S WEAKNESSES:

THE MIRROR IMAGE

Barghest cannot stand his mirror image. Something that's hidden deep inside of him breaks his concentration whenever he sees himself in a reflecting surface. Whether it's self-knowledge or a buried memory of what he once was – it completely transfixes Barghest. In these moments, Barghest is vulnerable, cannot keep up his filament force field and loses the initiative.

ELYSIAN OIL

If Barghest is doused with Elysian oil, something strange happens. The Archon is forced into a focus phase at once as if he was completely de-spored. The honey-like oil coating disrupts his communication with the Earth Chakra. He can still trigger phenomena, but loses control over his swarm. Flies, gadflies and gnats rage through the Oil Mills erratically, not supplying any spores to the Psychokinetic anymore. Barghest is confused. His inner emptiness torches the Archon. He will decide to flee. Cradling Vikal in his arms and uttering agonized cries, Barghest levitates through the ceiling of the vault. His filament ring massively disrupts the structure of the building – stones come loose, arches break with a snap. Soon, the whole ceiling will collapse.

THE SEED

Barghest does not spare Verena's life due to the oil as Fernex believes. The seed, Altair's strange gift, saves her from destruction. The Archon recognizes the Fractal Forest encased in the amber at once, feels the tremendous power of the amulet and retreats like a wounded animal. Only days later, Verena will discover a crack in the amber.

arm, then his hooded skull turns back and fro. An Ascetic who is trembling in fear, shaking like a leaf which makes him appear as tough he was constantly being electrocuted becomes the Archon's next victim. The Psychokinetic stomps the floor, his lower chest glows unnaturally, then the air burst into flame. A barrage of fire encircles him. The Ascetic catches fire, goes up in flames, then the barrage continues as a greedy tongue of fire, igniting the oil leaks. The Oil Mills burn fiercely. Suddenly, Verena jumps up. She rashly races towards the beast from the spot where she has hiding together with the Characters.

"VIKAL!" Her cry resonates from the walls. The creature cocks its head, looks at the approaching person. With three long strides, the Archon stands in front of the Touched girl and draws back his arm. Soon, the girl will be dead. Barghest's fist closes in on Verena like shadow. She screams in desperation, wants to retreat, loses her footing. Suddenly, the demon stops.

He screams, a long, agonized sound, then turns away. Baffled, Verena lies in the oil. The beast turns towards another victim, chases an Orgiastic who has tried to block the Archon's path. The colossus plucks the Anabaptist apart like a doll. Thick, black clouds made of flies and gadflies start surrounding it. The Psychokinetic opens its maw, greedily inhaling its plagues.

Suddenly, a shot rings through the room. It is not aimed at Barghest, but at the high oil vats. There is a hole in one of the copper containers, and golden liquid keeps leaking out. Fernex is standing on the gallery.

The hunter is back.

RECKONING

Fernex shoots salvo after salvo from his Lupara, shooting holes into oil vat after oil vat. The Characters have no time to think about what the hunter tries to do. When he sees them from his hideaway, he grabs a sack he has been carrying over his shoulder and throws it over the railing towards them. It lands with a chink. If the Characters go to check, they discover mirror shards. The whole sack is full of them.

"Distract him!" Fernex shouts. The Characters cannot ask any questions, they can only act. "Throw them towards that Incarnate!" With AGI+Dexterity (2), and necklace of mirror talismans flies through the air and lands right in front of Barghest's feet. Silence. The creature doesn't move. The tiny head on the massive body stares down at the shards. Still, it doesn't move. To the right, Fernex comes running down the stairs, sliding across the oil-slick floor and towards the Characters. "Another one!" he hisses and takes aim, waiting for another necklace to come flying.

Barghest stares at the second bundle of shards that slides towards its feet. Slowly, it bows down to look into the mirror surface. It seems to be at peace. If one of the Characters wears a mirror necklace, spheric flashes crackle across its surface, and light drips down from it in streaks. Fernex turns to the Characters.

"The shards will buy us time, but they will not stop

him.“ He grabs a Character at the shoulder and pulls him or her close. With an outstretched arm, he points to the place where Verena is rising from a puddle of oil.

“He cannot stand the oil. Look! He walks around it!” Fernex looks around, searching for the right place in the giant vault. “We have to distract it to pour oil over him! Back there. The vat. You have to tilt it!” Then he looks intently at the weakest group member. “You will stay here and keep throwing shards! Whenever I say so.” Then he turns to the others: “I will distract the Incarnate.” He flanks across the crate he has been hiding behind and runs towards the Archon.

One look back. There is no trace of Verena.

THE END

The Psychokinetic wails in agony: “GIVE TO BARGHEST WHAT’S HIS!” His trance is broken. Like a feral animal, the Psychokinetic throws its head side to side while marching towards a stack of crates with long strides. With one blow, it smashes one of the iron-bound crates and pulls out a fistful of Burn cusps. It crushes them between its fingers and lets the spores rain down on Vikal as if trying to resurrect him.

“Now!” commands Fernex. The Character with the sack of shards must accomplish a wide throw with AGI+Dexterity (3) to throw another talisman into the Archon’s field of vision. If the roll fails, Barghest notices the Characters creeping towards the oil vat. If that is the case, Fernex at once yells “Again!” If the second roll fails too, the other Characters can only tremble and hope – and hide with AGI+Stealth (4). Otherwise, the Psychokinetic focuses its light lance onto the first available Character who is thus doomed.

If the shards again land in front of Barghest’s stubby feet, the Archon slowly advances towards its tiny mirror images. Fernex is in position. His Lupara is aimed squarely at the massive chest. He shoots, and the bullet whistles through the filament shield and causes ripples in the Archon’s fat flesh. Bull’s-eye. Blood streams from Barghest’s chest, the beast stumbles backwards, looking for the shooter. Buzzing loudly, the swarm rises towards Fernex.

“Come on!” the hunter screams at the top of his lungs. The Characters are in position, only the struts of the vat separate them from the Archon.

“BARGHEST DESTROYS YOU ALL!”

The group must collect all of its remaining strength to lift the big copper vat out of its moorings.

A cooperative BOD+Force roll with a total of 20 Successes within 3 rounds is necessary to tear the struts from the floorboards. Every hitch pulls the embedded iron screws a little further from their rusty threads.

“Again!” Fernex’s command is barely audible above the enraged swarm. The Character with the talismans must aim exactly for the swarm blocks its vision. After a successful combo roll on INS+Perception (2) and AGI+Dexterity (3), the mirror shard flies through the cloud of vermin. The

clinking when it hits the floor is drowned out by the buzzing background noise.

Finally! The last screw breaks from its threads. An elongated moaning echoes through the Oil Mills. The vat creaks, the front struts buckle, and the wooden boards splinter when the giant vat tilts forward. Hundreds of gallons of Elysian oils hit the Archon, flooding him like a tidal wave. Instantly, the swarm dissipates chaotically and amorously. Flies collide with wood and metal struts shambolically, clouds of gnats dissipate into myriads of tiny clots, gadflies land in the sticky liquid and drown. Large parts of the swarm escape through the hole in the ceiling of the vault.

“BARGHEST HATES HUMANS!” the Archon rages. With trembling movements, he tries to get rid of the viscous oil. His legs stomp the ground, his waves of flesh shudder, but the golden veil only spreads further with every movement. The creature’s body starts levitating, it presses Vikal close to its chest. He lowers his head, bows the shoulders. Like a cannonball bursting from the tube, his body shoots through the ceiling of the cellar vault.

ABACUS

The floor of the Oil Mills is rolling like a ship out on the ocean. Columns and vaulted arches are bursting under the weight. Stone blocks weighing tons come loose, falling down and smashing the wooden cogwheels. The stairs at the wall are torn away, dragging down the whole gallery and destroying the only way out.

Fernex sprints towards the Characters in a crouch, they see fear in his eyes. “There is no way out anymore!” A scream calls the Characters back to the current events. Verena!

“You stupid peabrain, you have ruined everything! I’ll cut you up, you useless whore!” Abacus. The Elysian has Verena.

If the Characters run towards him, they see the wiry As- cetic holding a knife to Verena’s throat. He drags the girl by the hair to a shaft in the floor in a hidden corner of the giant vault. His torso has a golden shine, Elysian oil shimmers on his skin. When he notices the Characters, he throws them a bloodshot glance full of revulsion while pressing the blade deeper into the soft skin of Verena’s throat. A whole wall of stone blocks comes crashing down behind the Characters. Any moment now, the whole abbey will collapse above their heads and bury them all a life.

“You have destroyed my life’s work!” the Elysian spits out in an enraptured voice.

He stares at the Characters as if he could burn them with his gaze. Abacus retreats one step down into the shaft, the complete stigma of a Leperos blooms on his naked chest. With crazy, glittering eyes, he waits for one false move of the Characters to kill the child he’s holding.

Suddenly the Elysian gags and chokes forth white flakes. This is the right moment. It is time for one last action.

EPILOGUE

After what seems like an eternity, the Characters crawl through a low, seemingly never-ending supply tunnel in a northeasterly direction. Verena and Fernex are with them. From a small bowl and the last bottle of oil, the hunter cobbles together a little lamp that lights up the deep blackness of the tunnel.

"The Incarnate has probably been living somewhere close to Lucatore for months. His swarm was enormous. He must've bred it for a long time." The hunter speaks of the beast with reverence and respect.

"I have follow..." He stops in midsentence. Not 50 paces ahead of the group, pale daylight filters into the tunnel. A way out. At last.

Fernex lifts Verena out so she can fasten a rope somewhere at the edge of the hollow they can all use to climb out. One last, brief effort, and it will be over.

The air tastes like rain. The hazy, leaden sky hangs deep, but still the daylight blinds the Characters. This place seems familiar. The Romano camp. Deserted. Collapsed, partly dismantled tents. Looks like the ragmen have made a hasty retreat.

Suddenly there's a clanging and banging like pots crash-

ing together from one of the tents. The Characters approach, Fernex covers them with his Lupara at the ready. Verena clings to the strongest of them.

Through the gap of the tent opening, the Characters see a figure obscured by a floor-length cape. The man has his back to the group and rummages around in some dirt and cooking implements. A drone the size of a child's fist hovers above the shoulder of the gray figure, assisting him with a red searchlight. The damn Chronicler!

His head jerks up, the figure listens as if having heard something. Almost like in slow motion, he turns his head towards the tent flap. His naked face becomes visible under the hood, his mask dangling in front of his chest. The Chronicler looks the Characters in the eye. They return his gaze. Custus. Custus, the Scrapper!

He turns around fully, making no attempt at resistance. In his hands, he holds a golden disk the size of a plate embossed with the Jehammedan symbol. He looks as if caught in the act. A smile tugs at the left corner of his mouth as if he was ashamed for a second for his recklessness and lack of caution. His mouth forms some careful words: "My life. My identity. In exchange for this golden disk."

FIN

- ◊ Lucio's spine is shattered. The Furor is rescued from the ruins of the Cloister and brought to Cathedral City. The Tribunal of the Council sentences him to Severinus as punishment, where he will spend the rest of his days in prison as a cripple.
- ◊ The Hellvetics help rebuilding Lucatore. They assist the inhabitants to recover the dead and install a field hospital to treat the wounded.
- ◊ For three days, Preservists comb the ruins of the Cloister for Carmino Ferro's mortal remains. They stop searching when pieces of debris break away from the ridge and tumble to the valley. The mission is terminated because it's considered too dangerous for the Preservists.
- ◊ The area around Lucatore falls to Vespaicio. The city and the neighboring villages are now under his control. In the next two years, he deploys 1.000 mercenaries and soldiers along the Eden Route and Lucatore to fortify the region against concentrations of Anabaptist troops. He raises high customs taxes on Anabaptist goods and cuts the Cult's connections to the Adriatic Lowlands. It is the most massive humiliation possible for Cathedral City.
- ◊ Decoy 5 escapes to Franka. Now that his true identity is revealed he cannot work in Purgare anymore. He's looking for new territory. His next destination is Toulon where he hears about and joins "Operation Mirage".
- ◊ Ennio Benesato marries Gala Lombardi in Bergamo. Their marriage is celebrated for days.
- ◊ Gala Lombardi becomes governor of Lucatore. In the winter of 2596, her husband Ennio Benesato dies a lonely death. Pneumonia. A silver chalice is embedded in his tombstone. Without an heir to the line, Clan Benesato becomes extinct.
- ◊ Black Tom has had his revenge. His wounds heal, and he goes back to Bedain to live with the Scrappers he has spent his youth with. If the Characters have helped him taking revenge on Papa Chicco, he will remain their loyal ally forever.



- ◊ Domingo and Pace survive. They go to Franka and teach Resistance fighters along the Southern coast the traditional pike fighting style of the extinct Clan Benesato.
- ◊ Caspar and Morvin chance it way up north with their Purgan distillate. With Dana, they open up an inn, complete with a distillery, in faraway Bassham. It is called, "Three Cousins".
- ◊ Apocalyptic do not like lose ends. For weeks, the Rust Falcons chase scattered Ascetics who have fled Lucatore, taking everything from them or killing them in cold blood. Months later, a group of Peat Cutters on the Clan March finds a mass grave in the Lombard Bog.
- ◊ The fugitive Romanos try hiding in the mud ruins of Venice, but they are completely wiped out. A death squad of Arianoi and Hellvetic infiltrators called "The Horned Nine" has been following them. They retrieve Jehammed's treasure and try getting it to safety, across the Alps to Osman.
- ◊ There is still no trace of Jehammed's disk.
- ◊ Barghest and Vikal are somewhere out there Growing. Becoming more powerful. In spring of 2596, a tapeworm plague attacks the Southern village of Mistral. A track?
- ◊ Verena joins Fernex. Together, they want to unravel the secret of the seed. They are last seen by Hellvetics close to the Chasm in February of year 2596. Afterwards, there is no trace of them.
- ◊ After years of disappearance, the Chronicler Memo suddenly reappears in Bergamo. If the tales are to be believed, he has solved the mystery of the old Image Wall in the Lombard Bog. There are rumors going around of it being connected to Triglaw via a special stream frequency and of it forming a communication portal to Laibach. The Hellvetics are on full alert, and for several weeks, the Bog is teeming with Palers ...
- ◊ Neva's corpse is never found.



JEHAMMED'S TREASURE

For decades, Altair's campaigns have filled the Cloister of Lucatore with treasures from the Adriatic Lowlands. Whenever a Jehammedan outpost went down in flames or an Iconide was beheaded in the field, the Anabaptists grabbed everything shiny and valuable and transported it to safety. Some items these raids brought to the Cloister were just useless trinkets, but there were also relics of immeasurable value for the Jehammedan Cult. Scrolls, funeral objects, holy meteor stones, icons and the bones of a Fatum, plus the golden teeth of an Oracle and ram figurines, bejeweled chalices and crates full of gold.

Neva handed this treasure to Papa Chicco. She had no use anymore for these souvenirs. However, for the Romano, they were exactly what he had been looking for all this time. After his death, his rabble quickly left the camp at the Borreo. They grabbed everything they could carry and fled

before they were discovered. They had enough plunder to live in luxury for the rest of their lives.

Yet they left behind a nondescript golden disk they had no use for and that did not seem as a valuable as the mountains of gold.

JEHAMMED'S DISK

The golden plate that Decoy 5 finds in the deserted Romano camp and offers to the Characters in exchange for his life is far more than just a shiny bauble. A successful roll on INT+Artifact Lore (5) reveals its true meaning: it's a receiver. For what? The Characters don't really know. Yet the highly sensitive electronics hidden under the layer of gold has something to do with the strange code etched into the border of the plate. More about the disk's secret and its history can be found at www.degenesis.com

EXPERIENCE AND REWARDS

“IN THY BLOOD” should be treated as a mini campaign consisting of four large Adventures: acts 1 through 3 and the showdown. You can grant XP at the end of each Adventure, no matter how many sessions it took, and at the end of the campaign. For every scene played during the Adventure, the players get 1 XP. Grant +1 XP if something extraordinary happened during the scene (the Characters fought for their lives, had an especially impressive or exciting experience etc.) Single players can earn another bonus point through extraordinary individual achievements. Grant +1 XP to any Character whose actions or skill use had a determining influence on the game.

At the end of every Adventure and of the campaign, the Characters get additional XP - the following partial goals and events determine how many:

ACT 1

Successfully questioning the inhabitants of Lucatore +1XP
Saving Domingo and Pace +2XP
Gaining Ennio's trust +1XP
Helping Carmino +1XP
Discovering the secret of the grave +1XP
Following Decoy 5 +2XP
Finding Black Tom's trap +1XP

ACT 2

Questioning Neva +2 XP
Getting information from Ambroggio and Siphon +3XP
Saving Fernex from the crowd at the People's Plaza +2XP
Discovering Barghest's feeding pits +2XP
Fighting aerial leeches +1XP
Vanquishing Papa Chicco +5XP
Letting Black Tom deliver the killing blow +2XP

ACT 3

Vetting Domingo +2XP
Discovering the Lombardi guards +1XP
Vanquishing Scirocco +5XP
Saving Verena +3XP
Fighting through the swarm +3XP
Firing the flare rifle +2XP
Witnessing Carmino's death +4XP

SHOWDOWN

Surviving Barghest's rage +7XP
Discovering the secret of the Oil Mills +3XP
Helping Fernex duing the Archon+6XP
Realizing Barghest's weaknesses +3XP
Killing Abacus +5XP
Retrieving Jehammed's disk +3XP
Sparing Decoy 5 +6XP

CULTCARDS AND BACKGROUNDS

SPITALIANS: If the Characters let the Spitalians in on the secret of the oils, the score of the white die increases by 1. Additionally, they get one permanent point on their Network background whenever dealing with Spitalians in the future.

CHRONICLERS: If they sell Jehammed's disk to the Chroniclers, they are showered with drafts: +1 Network Chroniclers, +2 Resources (permanently) per player. The score on the Chronicler Cult Card increases by 2, the one on the Anabaptist Cult Card decreases by 1. The black die on the Jehammedan Cult Card gets a fat penalty of -4 points. The Shepherds will never forgive the Characters for this betrayal.

HELLVETICS: If the Characters have fired the flare rifle, Territorial Region III considers them useful allies. They get free passage across the Alps for a year, and their Network is +1 when dealing with Hellvetics.

CLANNERS: If the Characters save Ennio's reputation and prove that the Anabaptists have murdered Altair, they get +2 and one white die on the Clanner Cult Card. In the Bergamo area, they have Resources +1.

JEHAMMEDANS: If the Characters have handed over Jehammed's disk, the whole Cult is grateful. The players can put a white die with a score of 4 on the Jehammedan Cult Card. Their Allies score permanently rises by 1. They are now considered emissaries of Jehammed. In the enclaves and settlements of the Cult, people will remember their names, offer them food and a place to sleep.

The Anabaptists will begrudge the Characters the return of the treasure – they get a score of 2 on the black die of the Anabaptist Cult Card.

ANABAPTISTS: If the Characters have confronted the Anabaptists at the end of the Adventure, not much about them and their investigations can be found out due to all the bodies. Still the Broken Cross is very hard to deal with for the Characters in the future. A certain lack of trust can be felt. The score on the black die rises by 1. However, if the Characters reveal the secret of the Elysian oils to the Spitalians, the black die score rises by 4. Cathedral City is now their mortal enemy. Acherons will start tracking them down and wait for the right moment.

GUARDS, ENEMIES AND HENCHMEN

DOMINGO AND PACE

COMBAT STATS

INITIATIVE: 7D / 10 Ego Points

ATTACK: Pike, Distance 2 m, Damage 6

DEFENSE: Passive 1; Close Combat active (Block), Close Combat 6D; Ranged Combat active (seek cover), Mobility 7D; Mental 4D

MOVEMENT: 6D

ARMOR: Leather armor, Armor 3

CONDITION: 10 (Trauma: 8)

TACTICS: Pike fighting / Team fighting

Domingo and Pace are Masters of Clan Benesato's traditional Pike fighting style. They will always try to fight as a team, for only then, this fighting style reaches its full potential. One of them will play the role of protector only parrying, feinting and trying to irritate the opponent with his pike. The other fights as pikeman, looking for weak spots in the opponent's defense and hitting them with the tip of his spear. The protector gives himself and the pikeman partial cover against close combat attacks, both combatants' passive defense gets +1. The two Benesato can change roles every combat round to irritate the opponent. If one of them is hurt or even killed, the survivor keeps fighting without the special rules.

LOMBARDI GUARDS

COMBAT STATS

INITIATIVE: 7D / 12 Ego Points

ATTACK: Sword, 8D, Distance 1 m, Damage 9

DEFENSE: Passive 1; Close Combat active (Parry), Close Combat 8D; Ranged Combat active (walk in a crouch), Mobility 8D; Mental 6D

SPECIAL: AGI+Stealth 7D

MOVEMENT: 7D

ARMOR: Leather armor, Armor 3

CONDITION: 14 (Trauma: 8)

TACTICS: Sword fighting / Surrounding

Gala Lombardi's four guards are extremely well trained sword fighters and loyal allies of Bergamo. They are sworn to Vespaçcio and only loyal to the White Wolf. In combat, they surround their enemy, forcing him into a defensive stance by feinting. Once the enemy is distracted, one of the four blindsides him and tries to land a killing blow (Aimed Attack).

With their black cloaks and cowls, they prefer to act at night, using a secret language consisting of signs and sounds, whistling and gestures. It helps them to be in constant contact without having to say a word.

ROMANOS

The Romanos are an incoherent lot of cripples, beggars, cutthroats and vagabonds. They follow Papa Chicco because they hope to get rich and famous through his leadership which they would never manage on their own. They are disorganized, chaotic and cunning. In combat, they will use any tactic, no matter how dirty and dishonorable, to distract the Characters, scatter and then beat them by sheer strength of numbers.

You can use three different varieties of Romanos to surprise and ambush your players. On their own, these opponents are easily vanquished. But as a group, they are a tough lot.

ABOMINATION

COMBAT STATS

INITIATIVE: 5D / 8 Ego Points

ATTACK: Club, 4D, Distance 1m, Damage 4, blunt

DEFENSE: Passive 1; Close Combat active (Block), Close Combat 4D; Ranged Combat active (dive into the dirt), Mobility 3D; Mental 4D

SPECIAL: PSY+Cunning 5D

MOVEMENT: 3D

ARMOR: Dirty rags, Armor 0

CONDITION: 6 (Trauma: 5)

TACTICS: Confuse / Scatter

Abominations confuse their opponents with feints. They act as if they were about to attack, but actually they retreat. They spit, throw dirt, whirl around their clubs aimlessly and constantly try to break down the enemy's reserve. They flinch from no trick to make the opponent think he is superior and lull him into a false sense of security.

RIPPER

COMBAT STATS

INITIATIVE: 6D / 8 Ego Points

ATTACK: Knife, 6D, Distance 1 m, Damage 4, Effortless (2 T); Throwing Knife, 6D, Distance (3/10), Damage 5

DEFENSE: Passive 1; Close Combat active (Prancing), Close Combat 6D; Ranged Combat active (dive into the dirt), Mobility 6D; Mental 6D

SPECIAL: AGI+Stealth 4D

MOVEMENT: 5D

ARMOR: Filthy rags, Armor 0

CONDITION: 8 (Trauma: 5)

TACTICS: Force into cover

Rippers use unfair methods and are constantly moving.

A stab into the flank or a well-aimed throwing knife to force the enemy into cover, then they quickly retreat. Rippers try to bleed their enemy dry by causing as many minor wounds as possible. When he's worn out, they surround him to bring him down like a wounded animal.

CLEAVER

COMBAT STATS

INITIATIVE: 3D / 12 Ego Points

ATTACK: Pickax, 5D, Distance 1 m, Damage 9, Impact (3 T)

DEFENSE: Passive 1, Close Combat active (Block), Close Combat 5D; Ranged Combat active (fall down), Mobility 4D, Mental 3D

MOVEMENT: 7D

ARMOR: Rags and capuchin, Armor 0

CONDITION: 16 (Trauma: 6)

TACTICS: Heavy attack that cannot be parried

When abominations have confused the enemy and rippers have cornered him, the cleavers attack with their pickaxes and try to beat him to pieces with brutal blows. Their only tactic is waiting for the right moment to toll the death bell with a devastating blow.

FLAYERS

COMBAT STATS

INITIATIVE: 6D / 10 Ego Points

ATTACK: Scourge, 3D, Distance 3 m, Damage 5, out of control (3)

DEFENSE: Passive 1; Close Combat active (Dodge), Mobility 7D; Ranged Combat active (look for cover), Mobility 7D; Mental 8D

SPECIAL: INS+Empathy 5D, CHA+Expression 4D, BOD+Stamina 7D

MOVEMENT: 4D

ARMOR: Penitential garb (if any), Armor 0

CONDITION: 12 (Trauma: 6)

TACTICS: Inflame / disarm

Flayers are no warriors. They are agitators. They read the emotions of the audience, know how to involve others into their battles by appealing to human sympathy. They often act weaker than they are, yet some of them are tough dogs who can take much more than their wiry frames let on. Once they have set the crowd against an enemy, they wait until he's disarmed. Or they disarm him themselves, using their scourges.

ASCETICS

COMBAT STATS

INITIATIVE: 5W / 12 Ego Points

ATTACK: Pitchfork, 6D, Distance 2 m, Damage 4, Talisman (+1D); (or) War flail, 5D, Distance 2 m, Damage 5, blunt, Talisman (+1D)

DEFENSE: Passive 1; Close Combat active (Parry), Close Combat 6D/5D; Ranged Combat active (dive down), Mobility 4D; Mental 7D

SPECIAL: INT+Medicine 4D, INT+Science 4D, BOD+Stamina 6D

MOVEMENT: 6D

ARMOR: Ascetic robes, Armor 1

CONDITION: 12 (Trauma: 6)

TACTICS: Keep at a distance / Peasant warrior

Ascetics are not particularly dangerous, there are just so many. In combat they use their strength of numbers to keep enemies at a distance. Their long pikes and flails seem to be made for just this tactic. They hate close combat and always try to avoid getting too close to their enemies. In single combat, they are cowards and will flee. Their life and their soil are too important to them. Yet once they have formed a larger combat group, things look different.

LUCIO'S ORGIASTICS

COMBAT STATS

INITIATIVE: 6D / 14 Ego Points

ATTACK: Bidenhander, 6D, Distance 2 m, Damage 11, Impact (2 T)

DEFENSE: Passive 1; Close Combat active (Parry), Close Combat 6D; Ranged Combat active (advance in a crouch), Mobility 6D; Mental 6D

SPECIAL: CHA+Leadership 5D, PSY+Domination 6D, BOD+Stamina 6D

MOVEMENT: 7D

ARMOR: Chain mail, Armor 4

CONDITION: 16 (Trauma: 7)

TACTICS: Demoralize / Intimidate

Lucio's packs of Orgiastics are Lucatore's village militia. They are coarse warriors who have not come far within their Cult and in the meantime prefer spending their days being the strongest ones in a small village to dying out there on the battlefield. They are beyond that. They use the power of their special status as city guards to intimidate enemies, arrest them, shout warnings at them and demoralize them. Even if they're not the sharpest knives in the drawer, their camaraderie makes them loyal, and their combat experience even makes them dangerous. If you hurt one of them, you hurt them all.

TIMELINE

A YEAR AGO: Vikal's phenomenons keep getting stronger. Neva cannot cover them up anymore. Altair notices Vikal's powers. Growing alienation.

A YEAR AGO: Papa Chicco and his Romanos make camp on the northeastern flank of the Borreo. They start digging.

A YEAR AGO: Decoy 5 starts his mission on behalf of the Central Cluster. As Custus, the Scrapper, he mingles with the population and collects information on local events.

SIX MONTHS AGO: Neva feels that Vikal will blossom soon. She locks him in the tower to stay in control. Frantically, she searches for a means to stop his transformation.

THREE MONTHS AGO: Barghest hears Vikal's cries on the Ether. He follows his call to Lucatore. In the Lombard Bog, he starts breeding his plagues. In spring, his spawn will have grown to the appropriate size and form a dangerous host of tapeworms, ticks, mosquitoes and aerial leeches. Barghest bides his time. The Archon is bracing himself.

THREE WEEKS AGO: Black Tom jumps from a caravan passing through and builds a little hideaway in the vicinity of Lucatore. Hidden deep in the woods, he plots his revenge.

TWO DAYS AGO: Climax of the altercations between Altair and Neva. Altair wants to travel to the Spitalians to ask Carmino Ferro to save his son. He sends a young outrider to Vivaco to announce his coming to the surgeon.

◊ Neva seethes with a rage and hires the Romanos to kill her husband.

ONE DAY AGO: A group of travelers arrives. They are accommodated in the Commission House. The Alms House is occupied by a group of Flayers from the South.

DAY 1: Before sunrise, Altair rides to the Water Towers where his killer lies in wait. He cuts Altair's throat from behinds while the guards are elsewhere. Altair was ready to travel, his horse was saddled, and his saddlebags contain provisions for four days. In the same night, Abacus anoints Altair's body.

DAY 2: Early in the morning, Altair is privately buried at the express request of Lucio and Neva. At the behest of Neva, Abacus conducts the burial rites before the body can be examined. It is buried under a giant boulder on the nearby cemetery together with his sword and burial objects. The news of Altair's death quickly spreads. Lucatore goes into shock. Angry militias roam the streets at night, looking for Altair's killers. Cathedral City is notified, a new Baptist must be elected.

DAY 3: The situation is still desperate, but the outrage calms down a little. Everyone in Lucatore keeps talking about Altair. Orgiastics spread rumors in the inns that governor Ennio Benesato was guilty of having his own brother killed.

DAY 4: Carmino Ferro hears about the death of his high-ranking patient and immediately has his horse saddled to travel to Lucatore.

DAY 5: A group of travelers staying at the Commission House repeatedly raises the attention of the villagers by conducting unauthorized investigations into the death of Altair.

DAY 6: The investigative commission of the Cults arrives. There is a loud altercation between Anabaptists and Ennio Benesato's nephews in the Bleeding Ram Inn.

DAY 7: Carmino Ferro arrives in Lucatore. He starts to investigate at once. The surgeon is looking for independent investigators to help him find the killer.

DAY 8: During a procession on the market square, Flayers rile up their audience with their sermon.

◊ After a seven day grieving period, Neva grants an audience at the abbey to a handful of investigators. Abacus reprimands Verena in the court of the abbey and hits her.

DAY 9: The investigators visit Verena in the Elysian gardens.

◊ Meanwhile, the master distillers Caspar and Morvin go to the Commission House to bring a gift.

DAY 10: There is a grand celebration on the People's Plaza in honor of the Baptist. Half of Lucatore attends the children's play. Fernex returns from the woods. His

hunting dog Attila dies a wretched death from a terrible worm attack. The villagers are shocked. The Flayers use the opportunity to rile up the terrified population against their masters, the Anabaptists.

- ◊ After the Flayers, including their leader Scirocco have been arrested, the group of investigators finds a dead chapel master next to the Viscotti chapel. All blood has been drained from his body.

DAY 11 - 13: The investigators are looking for clues in the underbrush. More than meets the eye seems to be buried in the woods surrounding Lucatore. Their absence makes Neva think that the investigators might be onto the Romanos. She alerts Papa Chicco.

- I The investigators discover giant feeding pits and breeding chambers for insect plagues in the neighboring woods. A Psychokinetic breeds an enormous swarm.
- II The investigators discover Black Tom's forest hideaway. He explains to them how they can find and beat the Romanos together.
- III The investigators enter a reckless fight with the Romanos. Papa Chicco, the leader of the scoundrel gang, is killed by the investigators. Decoy 5 helps Neva who seems to be in cahoots with the Romanos escape.

DAY 14: The investigators reach Lucatore after having discovered the secrets of the forest. They inform Carmino Ferro about the discoveries. The surgeon tries to send an outrider to the Hellvetics, but he dies in a trap that the Psychokinetic has laid all around the village.

- ◊ Desperately, the surgeon tries to find a way west while the investigators hasten to the governor's house to alert him of the events.
- ◊ The investigators find the city empty, only here and there, some Anabaptists commit acts of revenge against the Benesato.
- ◊ Orgiastics charge the governor's house.
- ◊ Lombardi guards try to escort the governor and his wife Gala from the city.

◊ The people of Lucatore have charged the Alms House and freed the Flayers the Anabaptists had imprisoned there. Led by Scirocco the sinner they march towards the market square.

◊ Here, there is a volatile altercation with a second procession. The Anabaptists do not want to hand over the reins. The situation threatens to escalate and turn violent any moment.

◊ The Psychokinetic's swarm arrives and tears through the city. The gathering at the market square is torn to pieces when the giant black cloud of vermin comes down on the city.

◊ The Psychokinetic has also trapped the Western way out of town. The investigators have only one option to call for help: A flare must be fired from the abbey for the nearby Hellvetic fortresses in the Alps to see.

◊ The investigators manage to enter the abbey and fire the flare rifle. The abbey is outraged by the intrusion and confronts the investigators. Utter chaos ensues when an unknown shooter starts firing at the investigators and at the inhabitants of the abbey. Lucio Bastardo is badly wounded in the barrage. Emissary Neva is identified as the assassin.

◊ A swarm of butterflies reaches the tower. They bring spores for the imprisoned Vikal. They are the power source the boy has been waiting for to break his chains. In a giant explosion, the tower bursts apart.

◊ Barghest, charged by the power of his swarm, lands in the vestibule of the abbey and carnage ensues. The Archon wants to free Vikal and crushes everything that gets in his way.

◊ The investigators fight a rearguard battle down to the Oil Mills. In the sanctum of the abbey, the showdown takes place. Barghest wants to resurrect Vikal using the Burn stored in the abbey. The investigators and everybody else are in his way.



BLACK TOMS HIDEOUT

X

FOREST

ANDRING

THE CATTLE LAIRAGE

THE MANURE HILL

CITY WALL

10

CITY WALL

B

DEFENSE TOWERS

CLAN HOUSES

ASCETIC FARMSTEADS

1

THE COLD STORES

2

A

D

5

6

THE EDEN ROUTE

TO MORENO

ASCETIC FARMSTEADS

AQUEDUCT

11



X THE ROMANO CAMP

THE CEMETARY

THE ELYSIAN
GARDENS

BORREO

CARAVAN STABLES

THE CLOISTER
OF LUCATORE

FOREST

7

8

C

THE WATERTOWERS

ARCADE WALL

THE EDEN ROUTE

TO VIVACO

THE BATTLE TOWER

FOREST

INFORMATION

1. THE COMISSION HOUSE
2. THE EXCHANGE
3. THE PEAT CUTTERS
4. THE ALMS HOUSE
5. THE BLEEDING RAM
6. THE MARKET SQUARE
7. THE PEOPLE'S PLAZA
8. THE DISTILLERY
9. ABACUS' HOUSE
10. CUSTUS' FORGE
11. THE HUNTING HOUSE

A. HOUSE BENESATO
B. HOUSE DANESCI
C. AMBARIO CHAPEL
D. VISCOTTI CHAPEL

LUCATORE
2595 A.D.



0 300 1500m

VARGAS

WHEN BAPTISTS DIE

