



ANTHROPOMORPHIC FANTASY ROLE-PLAY

IRONCLAW

The Book of
Adventures



INTRODUCTION

What's in this book?

This book contains a variety of adventures for use in your *Ironclaw* game. The page numbers in this book pick up where the last book left off.

The Lost Heir of the Rinaldi page 587

It started as just a simple job to collect some money ... and it became the fate of the Free City of Triskellian. Our heroes become embroiled in the politics of merchants, scholars, bandits, and nobles, as they become involved in the recovery of the next King of Rinaldi.

Martyr of the Catacombs page 604

What did Lord Pascaline discover, and why was he killed? In the misty shadows of the Doloreaux capital, a great mystery threatens all who live and breathe ... but will the Blessed Hierarchs of Lutara confide the ultimate secret with our heroes, before it's too late?

The Rescue of Miranda Devoisier . page 622

The folk of the south are quick to dismiss the Wildenlands as untamed, savage, or even uncivilized. The truth is far more complex, as our heroes discover when they are sent on a mission that takes them deep into the domain of the Phelan.

A Crisis of Faith page 643

What is to happen to a meddlesome priest? The loyalties of our heroes are tested when they must choose between the Lords of Avoirdupois and the Priests of s'Allumer, before tensions tear the land apart.

The Wolves in Winter page 664

The greatest enemy to a Bisclavret ... is another Bisclavret. The cold winter is harsh enough, but our heroes find themselves caught in a war where they have nothing to gain ... and everything to lose!

The Wages of Envy page 684

What do the wealthy commoners and nobles do in Triskellian? They go to the opera, an innocent pastime that is threatened by envy and vanity. Will Marchesa di Bombolona put on her show with the help of our heroes? Or will the masked villain bring the curtains down early?

Unearthed Alchemy page 701

Return with us to Omigre-Haudie, for an expedition under the mystery of Mont Arlotte, unlike anything anyone has seen before.

Further Adventures page 720

Short adventure ideas to inspire the Game Host.

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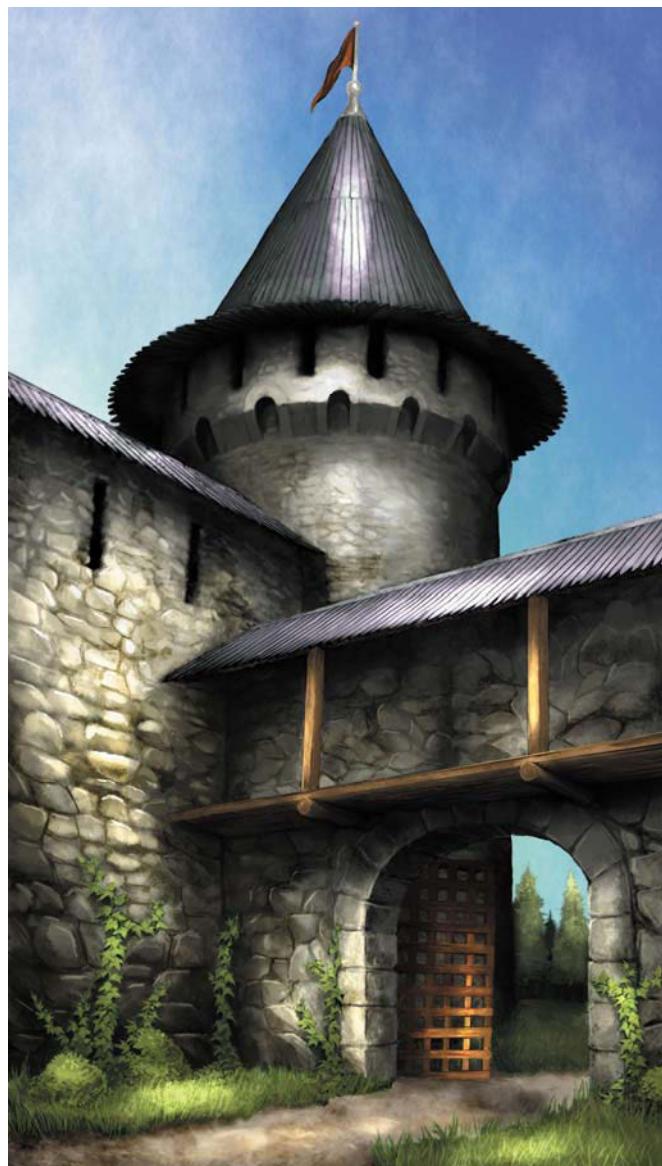
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Dedication

To Jack Vance.
"Alive ... dead ... these are imprecise terms."



THE LOST HEIR OF THE RINALDI

Being a Tragic Tale of Betrayal and Madness

What Has Gone On Before

Master Rinaldi, patriarch of the Rinaldi clan, marries Amalsand Jakoba, a widow of some repute from the mainland. She is joined by her son and daughter. The marriage is pretty much one of convenience – Master Rinaldi needs the dowry, and Amalsand needs a new place to live, although the reasons are not discussed in polite society.

Amalsand is a practicing Necromancer, something that's made her unpopular in her homeland. She thinks only of herself first, her children second. She was hoping to use the remote, quiet estate to pursue her studies.

Unfortunately, she hadn't counted upon the high level of gossip that surrounds the Rinaldi estate, nor the tense infighting of the surrounding houses. Master Rinaldi became worried. Tensions rose. He demanded that she stop her "diabolic practices". She refused. He threatened to evict her. She threatened to expose his "parties". They were at a stalemate.

In the course of her studies, Amalsand used a forbidden necromantic spell to raise the corpses of three warriors. Unfortunately, something in the ritual must have gone wrong, for these undead horrors had thoughts only of slaying all that lives. In a desperate move, Amalsand had the basement boarded up.

This atrocity was too much for the Master Rinaldi. He issued a proclamation for divorce, with his first-born son as witness. Things went downhill from there.

Shortly before she left, she staged a final display of her ire. Their last night together, Amalsand and her children staged a brutal attack, slaying the Master Rinaldi and his first-born son. The second son, Fabrizio, barely escaped with his life ... only to suffer a guttural curse from the wrathful Amalsand – "May the vision of your family's folly haunt you for the rest of your days!"

Fabrizio was struck mad by a Curse. He now can no longer speak coherently, and he is in a constant state of tremulous fear. He fled the manor into the night, and he lived in the woods as a wild-man.

Knowing that she was an unpopular figure, Amalsand and her family fled the manor for the dangerous Paludestris swamps. There she continues her research in the forbidden arts of Necromancy.

Two months ago, the weasel Recondite came to Triskellian, looking for opportunities. She heard the rumors of the missing heir, and decided she could use this to her advantage. In secret, she has contacted the three major houses of Triskellian (Avoirdupois, Bisclavret, and Doloreaux) and asked each one for their bid to the heir of the Rinaldi throne. Her plan is to capture the heir and ransom him to whoever will pay the most.

Unfortunately for her, the otter Lystragones the Athanasian has other plans. Rather than search all over for a missing heir who is presumed mad and perhaps dead, he has instead found another grey fox to pose as the heir!

The reason for this search for the heir is that the estate of the Rinaldi is in great debt. In particular, Tamurello the money-lender would like to "foreclose" upon the estate. Unfortunately, to do that he would need someone to sign over the estate to him ... and that requires the heir! Without concrete proof of Fabrizio's demise, there's no legal way for the estate to be released.

As our adventure begins, Recondite is following up on a lead to Fabrizio's whereabouts, Lystragones is coaching his pretender, Salmalin the slaver has custody of Fabrizio, and Tamurello is sorely vexed.

Getting the Players Involved

Every gaming group is different. Some parties concentrate on militancy and combat, while others prefer to solve their problems through reason and other methods. Most groups are somewhere in between. You, as Game Host, know your Players and Characters better than we do, and it's up to you to find a way to get them involved in this escapade.

THE LOST HEIR OF THE RINALDI

Hooks

In order to hook your Player-Characters into this plot, there has to be something that would involve the players in the upcoming events. Get to know your players' Characters, and their motivations. Here are some suggested hooks:

- ↔ Do any of your PCs have Legal Authority? They will probably be charged with the apprehension of Salmalin, to end his slaving practices.
- ↔ Are any of your PCs members of the Nobility? They will probably have heard the gossip of the decline of the Rinaldi.
- ↔ Are any of your PCs of a criminal bent? The news that the Rinaldi manor is currently abandoned would be of interest.
- ↔ Wizard PCs (and Witch-Hunter PCs) might take interest that there are two strange spell-casters in town. They are more likely to notice the ostentatious Lystragones than the secretive Recondite.
- ↔ Some of your PCs may have done business with Tamurello the money-lender, and may be curious about his current predicament. Or perhaps Tamurello may hire the PCs to find this missing heir, once and for all.

If your players are the typical “itinerant adventurers”, one possible hook is to have them deliver a package to the Malthus Shipping Company.

The PCs start somewhere outside of the city, and are hired to deliver a cedar box to the Malthus Shipping Company. The PCs should be promised some exorbitant sum of money upon delivery, such as 4 aureals apiece.

This adventure hook works best if the players start outside of town, such as in the port of Epinian.

You can stretch this introductory part of the adventure out, mostly by adding stops along the way. Some suggestions:

- ↔ The PCs are stopped by a “toll-scam” – some ruffians refuse to let the players pass over a bridge unless they pay a “toll”. Depending on your Players, they may hand over the money, try to talk their way out of it, or they may get into a fight.
- ↔ A wagon pulled by two drays has thrown a wheel. The PCs could offer to help repair the wagon (needs a total of 3 successes, one try per hour of Body & Craft.)

- ↔ The PCs stop to rest at the same point as two pilgrim Ascetics, Ameth the female badger and Cadolf the male black fox, who are travelling in the opposite direction. They will be talkative and eager for news.

The players will deliver their box to Malthus himself, whose offices are in the southern shipyards. Malthus the old cat will be happy to receive them, to pour them some tea, and generally to be a very gracious host.

Unfortunately, when it comes time to pay the PCs, Malthus will try to sign over a “promissory note” – basically an IOU until Malthus obtains the lucre he needs to pay the PCs. He’ll explain patiently that he’d love to hand over “honest coin”, but that he can’t until Tamurello the money-lender pays him the money he’s owed. No, Malthus doesn’t know why Tamurello hasn’t paid yet, but Malthus is an easy-going patient type and is “in no rush.”

The PCs can threaten, cajole, or otherwise haggle with Malthus all they want – the fact is he simply doesn’t have the money. The PCs will likely want to ask Tamurello what the hold-up is.

How to Run this Adventure

As Game Host, your job is to make sure the adventure runs smoothly, that all the PCs are getting “screen time” and contributing to the game experience.

- ↔ Episodes in the game should be tailored to your group. Many of the episodes in this game won’t happen until the Player-Characters actually “show up” at the places where they take place. The trick is to encourage your Players to want to solve whatever dilemma the episode causes, and then to be eager to move on to the next one.
- ↔ Choose the episodes that you think your Players will enjoy — skip the ones they don’t. For example, if your Players don’t like combat and other such dire situations, then don’t use the encounter with Recondite at the mill. You should also feel free to improvise new episodes or make major changes.
- ↔ Let the Players exercise their free will. Never force your PCs to participate in encounters — your best bet is to be familiar with your PC’s Mottos, Goals, and Gifts. It will make the Players feel more involved and it will make for a more satisfying game.
- ↔ Watch for the portraits in circles. When you see these, this means there’s a write-up for the NPC.

- The game host should note this adventure is not a traditional “treasure and glory” scenario. Instead it is intended to clearly show the players the cost of political infighting and blood feuds on the part of the Bisclavret. The Baron and his household will scheme and plot, even as the enemy batters the gates and supplies grow short. The players will, at best, be able to achieve a hollow victory simply by staying alive and learning a few valuable lessons.

Tamurello the Money-Lender, and the Liens on the Estate

Tamurello owns an office near the shipping yards, not far from the Malthus Shipping Company. He is a business-like shrew, and in the booming economy of Triskellian, he is doing quite well.

Tamurello dresses in custom-tailored clothes, although he doesn't wear jewelry or anything showy, preferring to carry himself with an air of dignity that “befits the gentleman of today.”

He will gladly entertain the PCs when they arrive. As to the matter of the Rinaldi, Tamurello will bite his lip, and will give the soliloquy duplicated in Ironclaw, p.137.

If the players came from Malthus, Tamurello will add: “And only then will I have the coin to pay out to those to whom I have made promissory notes.”

Questions the Player-Characters may ask Tamurello

Tamurello knows more of the story, but he won't think to mention it unless the PCs make direct inquiries. Here are some of the more common responses.



“Why haven't you hired someone to look for the heir?”

“I am in no rush. I have standing in this community, and I am confident that the House of Lords will pass a waiver, allowing me to fore-close.”

(Tamurello won't admit this, but he expects that the other noble houses, eager to buy the Rinaldi land, will fix this through legal action.)

“What happened to the Master Rinaldi and his first born son?”

“There was ... unpleasantness. These matters are certainly not for light conversation.”

(Tamurello, like everyone else, is spooked by Amalsand and doesn't want to talk about her out loud.)

“Can you loan me some money?”

He will be very happy to offer them loans, at some “usury” rate of “one-third compounded monthly” (33.3%) or the like. Most PCs will decline. Any who accept will be treated to a battery of legal forms that will be incomprehensible to those without Literacy and Law skill. Tamurello has standing in the community and is an old hand at this sort of thing, so he's not one to be trifled with in financial matters. Those who are a flight risk or generally look like bad investments will probably be turned down.

“Who could tell us more about the Rinaldi?”

“At present, the estate is unoccupied. The former help have been dismissed, but since they were born and raised here all their lives, I can't think they've traveled far. You may be able to find them in the city. No, I'm afraid I don't have references or other information to help you find them.”

The Constabulary and the Town Guard

At some point, the Player-Characters may want to ask the Constabulary what they are doing about the grisly murder. If they visit the Don's Palace in the city, they will find it filled with bureaucrats and town watchmen. If the Characters have anyone of note with them, they may gain audience with someone of importance, like Magistrate Umberto. Otherwise, they're more likely to chat with a captain.

Questions the Player-Characters may ask the Town Guard

“What are you doing to find the missing heir?”

“You can be assured that we are doing everything we can to restore the good patriarch of our glorious free city.”

(In truth, the Constabulary runs things just fine without royal interference.)

“Some people think that some of the Constabulary have hidden the heir away, or worse. Is it true?”

“Such charges are, at best, baseless and in poor taste. You are fortunate that I have a generous nature; someone less friendly than I might accuse you of calumny.”

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(Constables will threaten the PCs with all sorts of minor charges if they try to spread rumors that they are responsible for the heir's disappearance.)

"Have you seen any suspicious characters?"

"This is Triskellian. Strangers are everywhere, folk who speak a dozen different languages and who hail from a hundred lands. It is our duty to maintain the peace over such a motley crowd."

(PCs may be able to use Gossip Tests to get more information. Once on "friendly terms," some Constables will admit they're watching out for "a mysterious weasel dressed in red and black robes, who does not speak much and then only in whispers.")

The Abandoned Manor House

The Rinaldi manor is outside the city, surrounded by unkempt farmland. The house is an old villa, surrounded on all sides by a stone wall.

The house is guarded day and night by Tamurello's six cousins, with three of them around at any one time. They're all armed with maces and a single musket. Their job is to keep anyone from looting the manor or from going inside without a writ, warrant, or other such charge.

None of them go into the house. They're all convinced it's haunted, because at night, strange sounds come from inside.

The Inside

The house has been abandoned for a while. There are no drop-sheets over anything, so all furniture is covered in dust. There are signs of a scuffle or a fight, as some things are in disarray. However, obviously portable and valuable items, such as silver candlesticks and silverware, still remain.

Except for the cellar (as detailed below), the house isn't very interesting. Feel free to improvise details of the creepy rooms.

The Wine Cellar, and something beyond it

Those who trespass downstairs may find a gruesome secret. Those with Keen Ears (or who can make two successes on a Mind & Observation (Listen) roll, or the like) will hear scratching noises coming from behind the rack of fermenting wines. If the rack is removed, a secret door will be revealed! It is a small wooden door, about 12 hands high, and it has been boarded up on this side. The scratching sounds come from behind the door.

The Secret Workroom

If the boards are removed, the three Skeletons waiting within will attack! They ask no quarter and give none. They are the botched result of a magic spell Amalsand cast long ago, and are possessed with mindless, evil spirits that think of nothing but smiting the living.

Inside is a medical lab. Jars have been smashed, lamps have been destroyed, notes are shredded and scattered. The only thing intact is a podium with an open book on it, entitled *Ye Book of Black Magick* by Frater Perphredo, dusty but remarkably free of damage in a devastated room.

This book is one of the items required as a prerequisite to learning Black Magic.

Salmalin the Slaver

In the mountains of the north lurks Salmalin the slaver, who has been patrolling the woods looking for squatters, outlaws, and the like whom he could seize and enslave. The current state of skirmishes and lawlessness in border territories has proved a boon to slave-takers.



Salmalin will camp in his box canyon hideaway for a week before moving on again. He will try to pass through the Chevernaise mountains – usually he has good luck at that, as the Chevernaise have little use for slaves, preferring material wealth or rare goods, and Salmalin's fighters have good morale and considerable ability.

One of Salmalin's raids has turned up a surprising find: the lost Fabrizio di Rinaldi, heir to the Rinaldi throne. Poor Fabrizio has been living in the woods, foraging and scrabbling about in a furtive, mad existence, constantly menaced by imagined horrors. Salmalin has no idea that Fabrizio is the heir, but he hopes to fetch a good price in a foreign market for him.

However, Salmalin's opinions of Fabrizio will change once Recondite shows up. The tiger, deciding Recondite was a person of means and education, quoted her a price of two dozen aureals ... and when Recondite agreed to pay it in a week's time, Salmalin's suspicions were aroused. He sent emissaries into town to ask around. In the meantime, he's in no hurry.

Ambushing Salmalin

The PCs may try to sneak up on Salmalin's camp. Those with Tracking or Local Area Knowledge may find out about the box canyon. Those with Streetwise may have heard rumors about "some large, foreign cat who hires bravoes for dirty work – it's dangerous but the money's good – and he hides out in the mountains."

The box canyon camp can only be sieged from the front. The sides slope so as to be seen from below, and all the good rocks have already been felled. In addition, Salmalin has an escape route – a rubble-covered "chimney" passage that leads into the cave complex below. (Only Salmalin knows about this escape route; he will use it if he becomes desperate.)

If attacked outright, Salmalin will put up a fierce battle. If the PCs look formidable, Salmalin will seize Fabrizio from the cage and escape through the tunnel. Fabrizio, in his frightened state of mind, will follow anyone who holds his wrist tightly enough.

Negotiating with Salmalin

Some PCs may try to negotiate with Salmalin for Fabrizio's release. If asked, Salmalin will say that he's already had an offer made for "this little fox, here." He will attempt to "stretch the truth" and say that the offer was 3 dozen aureals (not 2); two-successes of Mind, Inquiry, & Negotiation vs. 3 should get him to admit the truth. If the PCs are unable (or unwilling) to turn over such money, they'll have to try another angle, such as combat (see Ambushing, above) or a challenge (see Challenging, below).

Appealing to Salmalin's "civilized nature" will fail. To him, these slaves are property, and attempts to convince him to release Fabrizio on "humanitarian" grounds will not work.

The first threat of violence or capture against Salmalin will be met with a hearty laugh of disbelief. The second threat will be met with an icy stare, and a growling rebuttal. The third threat will be met with a fight.

Any hostile magicks cast in Salmalin's presence will start a fight instantly.

Challenging Salmalin

Salmalin is a proud tiger. He is a formidable combatant, and can't resist showing that off at a good opportunity. Should any PCs challenge him, he will accept. "My terms are simple: if you win, I will surrender the fox. If I win, then you must go in the cage with the others, a spoil of war for the invincible tiger from another shore."

As the challenged party, Salmalin will be able to choose the arms and armor – and as an Atavist, Salmalin will choose "no arms or armor at all." (He will smile when he says that, too.)

Salmalin will fight until he exhausts his Combat Save, at which point he'll surrender, mumbling "This little one isn't worth it."

If Salmalin is somehow incapacitated, a free-for-all will break out as all his followers suddenly take up arms. Each of Salmalin's slaves will fight until they become Afraid, then they will flee as fast as their legs will carry them. If he thinks he can get away with it, he'll try to invoke the Atavist Gift of "Reserves of Vitality"; otherwise, he'll surrender, muttering that "this little one is not worth my life."

Resolving the Encounter

If Salmalin yields Fabrizio to the PCs, for one reason or another, and he's able to leave, he will do so. Recondite, who has been thwarted, will be quite angry and will seek revenge! Salmalin will flee to the north, to the port of Epinian where a ship is waiting for him and his slaves.

If Salmalin was attacked, and he was forced to flee, but he fled with Fabrizio, he will attempt to leave to the north. The PCs can chase him through the caves (say, as a roll of Body, Speed, Endurance, and Observation vs. 3, but you'd need at least 3 successes to catch him; do you have gifts like Shadowing, Spelunking, Tracking, etc.?). Without his retinue, Salmalin will have a harder time passing through the Chevernaise mountains.

Recondite the Wizard, and the Old Mill

If the players are early and deal with Salmalin before Recondite comes back, Recondite will hire mercenaries to deal with the players and to take the heir away from them.

If the players are late in finding Salmalin, Recondite will have already bought Fabrizio from him, and taken him to her secret hideaway, the Old Mill near the Paludestris, which is a popular thieves' hangout. There are also a few other hangers-on, mostly burglars and the like waiting for the trails on them to run cold.

If she obtains Fabrizio, Recondite's plan is to store the heir here, in the subterranean caves. She has prepared letters to the masters of all three houses, which she will send out and await their replies, using messengers that she's threatened into silence upon fear of "their flesh boiling from the inside out by means of a geis." (Recondite knows no such spell, but the three

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messengers she chooses will be too gullible to know that.)

There is a lookout posted to watch the mill; he will hang around the front gate, and he will use Stealth to sneak away and warn those inside if strangers approach.

Attacking Recondite

Seiging the Mill is probably a bad idea. There is only one entrance, from the front, and people can try to flee out the windows. Recondite may have a quick temper, but she has little reason to fight the PCs. She will order her minions to attack while she herself falls back.

If she has the heir, she will flee if the PCs seige the tower and it looks like they are winning. See "The Old Mill" later in this text for details on such a fight.

Negotiating with Recondite

PCs may send one of their own to the Mill to ask for audience with Recondite. Or they may find some other means.

Recondite will not reveal herself to PCs if she can help it. She will prefer to shout through the high mill window, shrouded in darkness. (Or, better yet, to whisper her orders to one of her minions and have that minion shout for her.)

Recondite won't release the heir for anything less than an absurd sum of money, or some priceless artifact or magic book. She knows the other noble houses will pay a lot to obtain him.

A pragmatist to her very core, Recondite won't stand up to any formal challenges, and in fact won't "fight fair" for any reason.

Questions the Player-Characters may ask Recondite

"Who are you?"

"My name is not important. If you must have some label, you may use 'Recondite'. It is as good as any other."



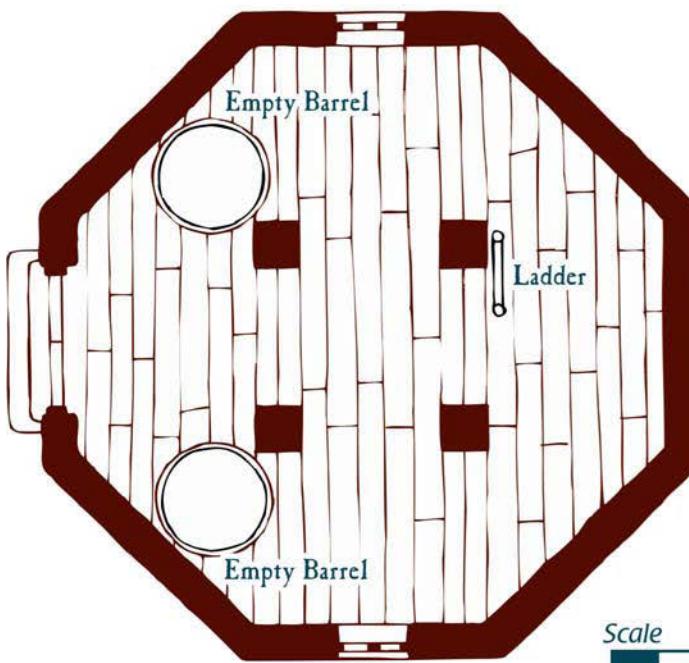
"What do you want with that fox?"

"My issues are my own affair. Unless you are blooded nobility, it is not your concern."

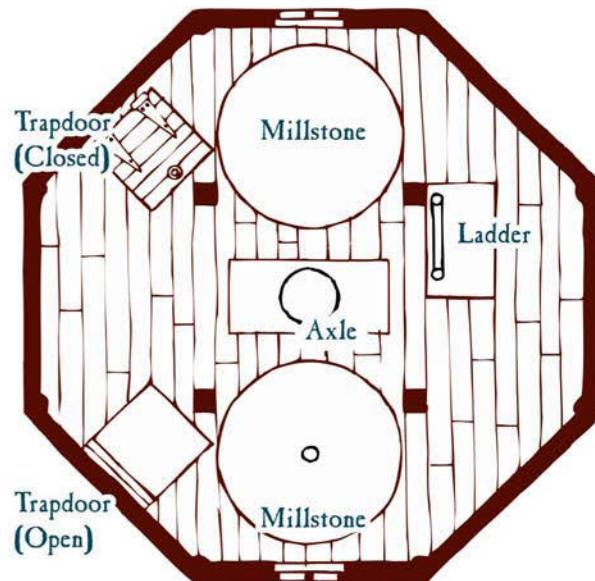
"I am of noble blood, and I can prove it. Now, tell me what you want with that fox."

"He is the heir to the throne of Rinaldi, the last of many generations. I am to ransom him to the noble houses, who are eager for his favor."

Old Windmill, First Floor



Second Floor



"I demand that you turn that fox over to us.

What are your terms?"

"I am one of few words. Five dozen aureals is my ransom, and no less."

(Recondite, however, is open to haggling. She respects high-class individuals, literate people, and dabblers in the arcane arts. Roll Mind, Will, Academics, Negotiation & Supernatural vs. 3 – and don't forget, players can assist each other! Two successes or less, and she refuses to budge. Three successes, she'll drop to three aureals. Four successes, she'll drop to twenty-four denarii.)

"We will take the fox from you by force, if you don't hand him over. How could you stop us?"

"I have means."

(Recondite does not like showy displays of power. She finds them in bad taste.)

Fight at the Old Mill

As Game Host, you should try to make conflict exciting and risky, without either overwhelming your Players with "unfair odds" or losing their interest with a "cake-walk" combat that they finish almost without effort.

For this dramatic purpose, the number of mercenaries Recondite has hired will be proportional to how many you think will give your PCs a "good fight". Sample combatants can be found in your Ironclaw rulebook on p. 254.

- ↔ If your PCs tend to be combat-weak, then there should be one Thug per PC.
- ↔ If your PCs are more dangerous and combative, we recommend two Thugs per PC, or one Minion per PC.
- ↔ If there's one PC in your group who lives for nothing but combat, add a Hero: "Xing Ho" the Monkey Mercenary from a foreign shore, armed with a "Mau Chan" spear that "only an expert can use". Have him on the Third Floor, with Recondite, and he will wait until a "worthy" opponent appears, whom he will challenge to single combat.

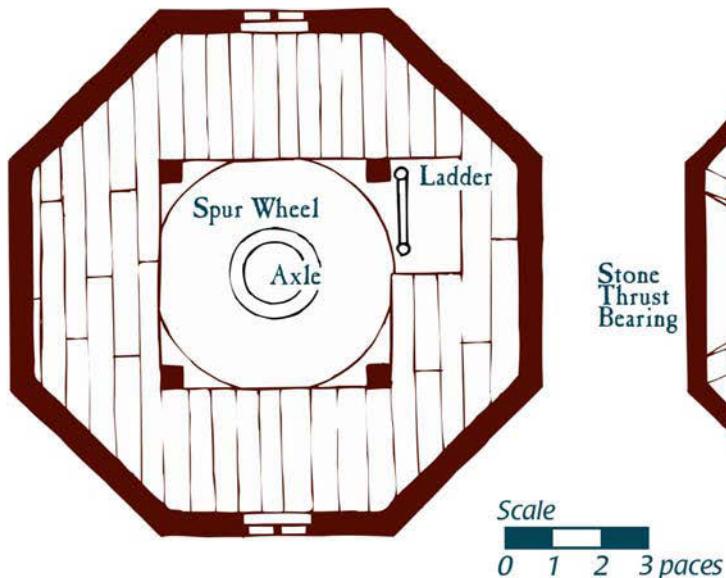
The Windmill

The mill faces the southern shore, looking lonely and forlorn. The road that leads up to it is in ruin. Each story is four paces tall, and the mill stands 18 paces high. Recondite will have at least two lookouts on watch, looking at the approaches both from land and from sky.

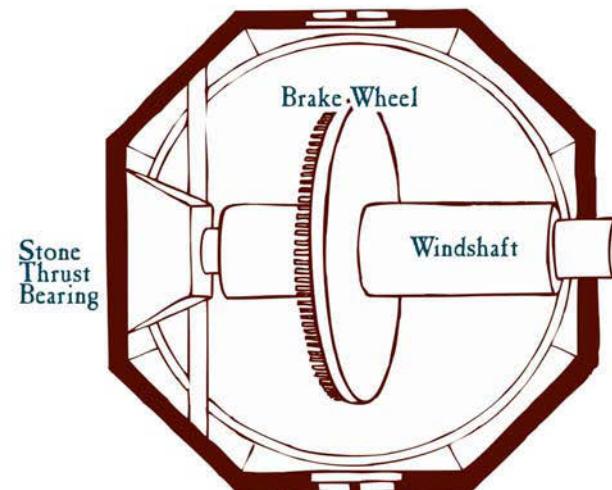
First Floor

Once filled with sacks of grain and other goods, this floor is now empty except for two large barrels, 2 paces wide and 3 paces tall, with trap doors in the ceiling above. (If the Game Host thinks it's appropriate, he could hide a combatant or two in the barrels, to have them jump out at a dramatic moment.) The only way up to the next floor is via the ladder.

Old Windmill, Third Floor



Fourth Floor



Second Floor

The axle from the windmill is in the middle of the room, with two millstones on either side. Currently, the axle is held in place by wooden blocks, though those could become dislodged during combat (or they could be deliberately pulled). Someone who falls through and open trapdoor will fall 4 paces into an empty barrel.

If the axle is freed, the sail will begin to turn the grindstones. They turn so slowly, only someone helpless and lying on the stone is in any danger. (This would include the unconscious, those grappled and pinned there, those Paralyzed by magic, etc.) The grindstone does a flat 6 points of Damage, Penetrating.

Third Floor

A large square hole, five paces wide on each side, overlooks the grindstones below. If anyone is unfortunate enough to be knocked off the edge (from Reeling, perhaps?) or pushed, they will fall 1 pace onto the large wooden “spur wheel”. The spur wheel won’t spin unless the pegs on the floor below are removed, and when it does, it moves any combatant one pace counter-clockwise at the end of the Round, and is bat footing ($\frac{1}{2}$ move, Retreats make you fall Down).

This is where Recondite would make her stand. Recondite will prefer to fight using a Staff, so she can counter-attack at Near range. She will use Ignite Fire to harass lightly-armored types (like rival wizards). For armored types, she will use Pilum of Fire. Recondite won’t use a Fireball if her own mercenaries would get caught in the blast. In the ocean air, the damp wood won’t ignite easily.

Fourth Floor

This “attic” of sorts is not reachable from the lower floor – the only way in is through the windows in the roof, or just behind the sails on the big “propeller” outside. The room is very dark even with the windows open (d8 concealment).

A large stone-work fills up the far side of the room – a “thrust bearing” to hold the windshaft in place. Close inspection will reveal that one of the stones in the bearing isn’t cemented in, and can be removed with some kind of lever or crowbar. Inside is a hollow space with the original mill-owner’s heirlooms: a set of Chain Mail fthat has gone rusty, a well-oiled Badelaire in its scabbard, and a letter detailing the mill owner’s honorable discharge from the Rinaldi army. All these items must be sixty years old or more.

Players may want to hide in here, or try to sneak in for ambush. The only ways to the third floor from here is to either smash through the floor (which would take several Rounds with an axe or the like) or to climb

outside onto the sail and into the third-floor window. (Which would take, say, Body, Speed, Climbing, & Stealth vs. 3 – three or more successes gets you in, two get you in but they hear you.)

A Surprise Upon Return

Whether the PCs fail to recover the heir or not, if the PCs return to Tamurello’s place they will be witness to a strange scene.

The apprentice will ask them to wait in the foyer while “the master Tamurello finishes his business with his appointment.” From behind the curtain there will be murmurs, followed by brief stints of cheerful laughter. (Those with Keen Ears or good Observation Rolls can make out at least three voices, one of them Tamurello’s, speaking in amiable terms.)

After a time, the voices will die down, and the curtain will be brushed aside by the head of a curious staff, and Lystragones the Athanasian will step through. He will glance briefly at the PCs, with a veiled look of disdain. (If the PCs have the heir with them, he will try to conceal his surprise and anger.)

Right on his heels will be the Pretender. He will bow at the PCs but will otherwise attempt to leave without saying anything to them. (After all, in his own mind, he’s nobility and the PCs are commoners.) If the PCs have the real Fabrizio with them, the Pretender will stare at him briefly, then blink and go on his way, a bit shaken but otherwise in denial.

They will both leave in haste. Tamurello will come out to greet the PCs, a smile on his face. If they are here to collect Malthus’ check, then he will tell them, “Good news, my friends, good news! Please, if you would produce your paperwork, I will render unto you the moneys of which you are so rightfully deserving!”

What has happened?

Shortly before the PCs arrived, Lystragones and his Pretender have used their stolen signet ring to sign over the lien on the estate over to Tamurello. They have, in effect, become his tenants on land that Tamurello now owns. This makes the money-lender the owner of the richest parcel of land outside of Triskellian – and he’s a commoner, to boot! Tamurello will be riding on a wave of glee that he can barely contain.

New Questions the Player-Characters may have for Tamurello

“Do you think (or do you know) that wasn’t the real Fabrizio di Rinaldi?”

“Pardon me? You must speak in jest. I have no doubt that was he – he spoke truly on noble matters, and produced the signet ring without delay. I have met forgers and charlatans before, and I know what tricks they play. The lord who just left here was without art or shame, and you would be wise to hold your tongue rather than speak such calumny.”

(In truth, Tamurello doesn’t care if that was the real heir or not. Their credentials were good enough, and if they prove false, he can just say he was duped. His goal is to sell off as much of the land as he can for as much as he can.)

“Who was that otter?”

“Hmm? Oh, the curious vizier.... I suspect he is a law-yer or solicitor of some kind. That was ‘Lystragones the Athanasian.’ I surmise he acts as advisor to the heir – their family has had difficult times, you know.”

“No, I’m afraid I don’t know where he hails from, or what an ‘Athanasian’ is.”

(Tamurello doesn’t know anything about Lystragones, really ... and since he looks like a wizardly type, he won’t offer any opinions, either, since wizards are subtle and quick to anger.)

“Do you know who this grey fox that we found is?”

“I’m afraid I’ve no idea. I’ve never seen him before in my life. Frankly, he appears to be some sort of indigent. You would be best served to remand him to a poor-house.”

(Tamurello has no idea who that guy is, and frankly isn’t really concerned at the moment. The contract he has is strong enough to be valid in court, and he has an estate to sell.)

Lystragones and his Pretender

Lystragones has been using repeated applications of the Mesmerism spell to brain-wash this grey fox into thinking that he’s really Fabrizio di Rinaldi. In reality, he’s a ne’er-do-well scoundrel, who knows enough of fast-talk and busking to get by.

The Pretender has gaps in his memory, but he will bluster over those with a show of self-confidence. (Have you ever been challenged on something you don’t know, only to make up some excuse and stand by it? That’s how the Pretender behaves all the time.)

Lystragones himself is always cool and confident. He never loses his temper. He will smile politely at the

PCs, and he will speak with a cultured accent.

Lystragones thinks nothing is nobler than the pursuit of magic, and he will be eager to talk with other wizards. “Brutes” such as warriors hold little interest for him.

Questions the Player-Characters may have for Lystragones

“Who are you?”

“I am Lystragones the Athanasian. I am the advisor to Don Rinaldi. He is eager to once more dispense his wise rule throughout the land.”



“Where did you find this fox?”

“He is not a ‘fox’, he is none other than Don di Rinaldi, ruler of Triskellian. You would be wise to conceal your uncouthness by remaining silent in his presence.”

“What is an Athanasian?”

“If only I had time to make up for the lack of years worth of schooling on your part... In the interest of brevity, I will sum up: the Athanasians are a hoary and mostly forgotten order of magicians who knew the secrets of everlasting life. What has become of them is a mystery that I will unravel.”

“Yes, Don Rinaldi is my patron in my quest for this knowledge.”

Dénouement

So ... the estate got signed over, the PCs got paid, and every-one’s happy. Right? Well, there will probably be numerous “loose ends”. We discuss some of those below.

Curing Fabrizio of his madness?

If the PCs wound up with Fabrizio in their custody, they have an incoherent fox who is spooked by his own shadow on their hands. Only the most callous of characters would just dump him in the street.

The PCs might try taking him to the Church of S’allumer. Only PCs of unusually high status and standing with the Church would be able to gain audience with a Master Cleric.

Given enough time and care, Fabrizio might recover from his madness. He may “calm down” and become a skittish mute, eager to help his friends but still too spooked by inner demons to be too useful. Perhaps some “great event” that requires him to be brave to save one of his friends might drive the curse away.



Lystragones – Friend or foe?

The mysterious otter has set himself up as a puppet-master to rule the manor house, with the Pretender as his puppet. Lystragones' first goal is to sign off enough loans and property to stave away creditors. His second goal is to gain wealth enough so that he can seek out the forgotten lore of the Athanasians, who he is convinced were some of the Autarchs of the Age of High Magic.

Lystragones knows that keeping the Avoirdupois, Bisclavret, and Doloreaux arguing with one another will keep them any one of them from seizing the land (and the throne) by force. He will ingratiate himself into their social circles, only hinting but never outright saying that he is the power behind the throne. This thread may never come up again during play, if the PCs aren't very politically active ... but if they are, they will meet Lystragones again.

If the PCs try to "expose" Lystragones' Pretender as a fake, he will have them silenced. First, he'll try to buy them off with money – at most, six aureals. Failing that, he'll have them killed by hired mercenaries.

It is worth noting that the former chamberlain of the House Rinaldi is a Wild Dog bloodhound with a Keen Nose; he could certainly identify who is the true heir and who is not. If the plot direction calls for finding him, he is currently drowning his sorrows in alcohol at some bar. Lystragones will be interested in finding this person, to either bribe him or permanently silence him.

Amalsand's Revenge?

The necromancer of the swamps will not take kindly to the restoration of the house that she sought to destroy. Her vengeance will most likely manifest in the form of nasty Undead minions made with the spell Vessel of Unlife.

Recondite?

Recondite will attempt to disappear when all this is over. If she got paid, great! If she didn't make any money, then she'll be miffed and will only leave that much sooner.

Dramatis Personae

What follows is a list of the relevant gaming information for the prominent NPCs in this adventure. Each write-up includes a brief description of the character, their rules and statistics, and their personal "list" of priorities, ranked in order of importance. As Game Host, when you are playing the role of an NPC, check the NPC's List of Motivations to see what their priorities are, to better help you decide how the character would behave.

Tamurello the Money-Lender



A studious shrew, Tamurello looks pleasant enough and approachable, but his conversation will quickly reveal his "to the point", no-nonsense attitude. He is "upper-middle class" and does well for himself, dressing in custom-tailored clothes, although he doesn't wear jewelry or anything showy, preferring to carry himself with an air of dignity that "befits the gentleman of today."



THE LOST HEIR OF THE RINALDI

<i>Good Tamurello of Triskellian</i>	<i>Elite Shrew Money-Lender</i>
Goals	1. Survive. 2. Make money. 3. Maintain good status in the community of Triskellian.
Traits	Body d8, Speed d8, Mind d8, Will d8 Shrew d8 (Shore, Omnivore, Night) Merchant d8
Skills	Digging d8 Gossip d8 Inquiry d8 Negotiation d8 Stealth d8 Swimming d8
Gifts	Administration (bonus d12 to run a business) Forgery (bonus d12 to deal with fakes) Insider with the Merchants Guild (for bonus d12) Haggling (bonus d12 for money talk) Keen Ears (can hear faint sounds) Literacy (can read and write) Mathematics (bonus d12 when working with math) Streetwise (bonus d12 to deal with criminals) Venom (X after biting to make a Hurt target Sick) Wealth (X to assert wealthy influence)
Initiative	2d8
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 4, Sprint d8, Run 20
Attack	Teeth @ Close 2d8 – Damage +1, Grapple Venom = X after biting to make a Hurt target Sick Longsword @ Close d8 – Damage +2 Pistol @ Short d8 – Damage +2 Slaying
Counter	Longsword @ Close d8 – Damage +2
Parry	Longsword @ Close d8
Dodge	d8
Soak	d8
Loot	Longsword, Pistol, fancy outfit, 8 aureals, membership pin for Merchant's Guild

Fabrizio di Rinaldi, True Heir to the Rinaldi Throne



A poor young fox consumed by madness, Fabrizio shares the sharp features of his father. His eyes are largely white, and he constantly shivers no matter how warm it is in the room. He wears only rags, the remnants of the clothes he had on when he first fled. He will probably latch on to the Player Character who scares him the least.

THE LOST HEIR OF THE RINALDI



Fabrizio di Rinaldi

Elite Fox Beggar

Goals	1. Survive. 2. Run away from scary things. 3. Struggle against the madness that torments him.
Traits	Body d8, Speed d8, Mind d8, Will d8 Fox d8 (Forest, Omnivore, Night) Beggar d8
Skills	Climbing d8 Jumping d8 Negotiation d8 Observation d8 Stealth 2d8
Gifts	Coward (bonus dodge & move when afraid) Danger Sense (bonus d12 to sense danger) Keen Ears (can hear faint sounds) Low Profile (bonus d12 to not stick out in a crowd) Night Vision (poor lighting is good lighting) Streetwise (bonus d12 to deal with criminals) Survival (bonus d12 to survive in the wilderness)
Initiative	d12, 2d8
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 4, Sprint d8, Run 20 <i>Coward = Afraid? Stride 2, Dash 6, Sprint d8, Run 28</i>
Attack	Teeth @ Close 2d8 – Damage +1, Grapple Claws @ Close 2d8 – Damage +1, Critical
Dodge	d8 <i>Coward = Afraid? Bonus d12 to Dodge</i>
Soak	d8
Loot	Hair of an heir to the Rinaldi throne

Recondite, the Mysterious Wizard



When drawn up, her dark red cloak conceals her features. Rarely does she draw the hood back and reveal her surprisingly short and delicate face. Before speaking, she will often take deep breaths like a trained speaker would, arching her shoulders for correct posture so that her voice goes farther.

Recondite fights by loading spells into her Treble-Best Rod, a staff made of blackened metal. She prefers to get up close and personal.



THE LOST HEIR OF THE RINALDI

Recondite		Elite Weasel Warlock (Major)
Goals	1. Survive. 2. Learn the secrets of the universe. 3. Make money.	
Traits	Body d8, Speed d8, Mind d8, Will d8 Weasel d8 (Forest, Carnivore, Twilight) Warlock d8	
Skills	Digging d8 Dodge 2d8 Melee Combat 2d8 Presence d8 (Favorite Use: with Ignite Fire) Supernatural d8 Stealth d8	
Gifts	Anonymous (bonus d12 to resist magic while not X'd) Contortionist (bonus d12 to escape or squeeze through) Disarming Save (Melee fail? Killed? X to remove killing effects, but lose your Thrice-Best Rod) Elementalist Trappings: Red (Fire Wizard!) Elemental Apprentice (May ready fire spells) Favor Bonus: Presence (Using Favor? Bonus d12!) Literacy (can read and write) Resolve (include Will with Soak) Secrets of Red Robes (extra magic refresh action) Springing Strike (Melee attack, then bounce back) Veteran (Aim and Guard bonus are d12)	
Initiative	d12, 2d8	
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 4, Sprint d8, Run 20	
Ready	Elementalism – X to use Ready action to load a spell into hand or into Thrice-Best Rod	
Refresh	Secrets of Red Robes = extra "Refresh" action each round, but only to refresh Elemental Apprentice	
Guard	Use "Guard" action for bonus d12 to all defenses	
Aim	Use "Aim" action for bonus d12 to attack one target	
Attack	Thrice-Best Rod @ Close 2d8 – Damage +1, Critical Spring Attack = after attack, move d8 paces away Ignite Fire @ Medium 2d8 – Damage +1, Critical, On Fire Create Earth @ Medium 2d8 – Damage +2	
Counter	Thrice-Best Rod @ Close 2d8 – Damage +1, Critical ... or as spell loaded into Rod	
Parry	Thrice-Best Rod @ Close d12, 2d8	
Dodge	2d8	
Soak	2d8	
Loot	Treble-Best Rod, Hawthorn Wand, Book on Elementalism, Red Robes, Obsidian Talisman, 13 denarii	

Recondite's Crew

For simplicity, we've only listed the Career of Recondite's hired thugs. If you desire greater complexity, you can assign Species Gifts, Traits, and Skills.

Recondite's Crew (Alice, Bowers, Castro, Evans, Marco, Kerri, Tami, etc.)	Typical Mercenary
Goals	1. Survive. 2. Trip over their own grandmother to make money.
Traits	Body d6, Speed d6, Mind d6, Will d6 Mercenary d6
Skills	Digging d6 Melee Combat d6 Ranged Combat d8
Gifts	Haggling (bonus d12 for money talk) Resolve (include Will with Soak) Veteran (Aim and Guard bonus are d12)
Initiative	2d6
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 3, Sprint d6, Run 15
Reload	It takes two "Reload" actions to reload Crossbow
Guard	Use "Guard" action for bonus d12 to all defenses
Aim	Use "Aim" action for bonus d12 to attack one target
Attack	Shortsword @ Close 2d6 – Damage +1 Impaling Lever Crossbow @ Long 2d6 – Damage +2
Counter	Shortsword @ Close 2d6 – Damage +1 Impaling
Parry	Shortsword @ Close 2d6 & Cover d8
Dodge	2d6
Soak	3d6
Loot	Shortsword, Crossbow, Leather Armor, d8 denarii

THE LOST HEIR OF THE RINALDI

Salmalin the Slaver



Preferring to wear only a loincloth in all but the most extreme weather, Salmalin stands tall, shoulders back, with one of two expressions: calculated scrutiny of a foe, or a self-satisfied, toothy smile. His thick coat of fur is marred by old battle wounds, almost all caused by claws or teeth. Salmalin carries no weapons or other items, preferring those duties to his henchmen. He thinks little of the Calabrese, most of whom have been made soft by the trappings of “civilization”, and he has no qualms of selling captured folks to a life of hardship and misery.

Salmalin

Elite Tiger Bounty Hunter (Major)

Goals 1. Survive.
2. Show everyone how much better a fighter he is than them.
3. Make money.

Traits Body d12, Speed d10, Mind d4, Will d6
Tiger d12 (Forest, Carnivore, Night)
Bounty Hunter d12

Skills Brawling 2d8
Dodge 2d8
Jumping d8
Negotiation d8 (Favorite use: Slave Prices)
Presence d8
Stealth d8

Gifts Combat Save (X to negate Unconscious, Dying, or Dead)
Increased Trait: Body (Trait up!)
Night Vision (poor lighting is good lighting)
Resolve (include Will with Soak)
Reserves of Vitality (Recover to negate harmful status)
Shadowing (bonus d12 to follow people)
Strength (bonus d8 with Melee, Brawl, Thrown Attacks)
Tracking (bonus d12 to follow trails)
Veteran (Aim and Guard bonus are d12)

Initiative d10, d4

Movement Stride 1, Dash 6, Sprint d10, Run 28

Guard Use “Guard” action for bonus d12 to all defenses

Aim Use “Aim” action for bonus d12 to attack one target

Attack Claws @ Close 2d12, 3d8 – Damage +1, Critical
Teeth @ Close 2d12, 3d8 – Damage +1, Grapple

Counter Claws @ Close 2d12, 2d8 – Damage +1, Critical

Parry Claws @ Close 2d12, 2d8

Dodge d10, 2d8

Soak 2d8, d6

Loot Loincloth, 15 denarii

Lystragones the Athanasian



Tall and lanky, dressed in a hat and cloak, Lystragones peers out from under the wide brim of his hat with suspicious eyes. His fur is sleek and short, and he keeps his claws trimmed and clean. When silent, he remains very still; when he speaks, he gestures with exaggerated emotion. His voice is deep and sure. He may make sarcastic comments, but he never jokes or smiles. His staff bears the Athanasian symbol.

Lystragones

Elite Otter Spellbinder (Major)

Goals	1. Survive. 2. Divine the secrets of the Athanasians. 3. Maintain control over the Rinaldi estate, most likely by controlling the Pretender.
Traits	Body d8, Speed d8, Mind d12, Will d10 Otter d8 (Shore, Carnivore, Twilight) Almoner d6 Spellbinder d10

Lystragones

Elite Otter Spellbinder (Major)

Skills	Academics d12 Craft d10 Melee Combat d8 (Favorite use: with "Aeigenès") Negotiation d8 Supernatural d12 Swimming d8
Gifts	Blindness (X and Aim to upgrade from Eyebite) Cleric's Trappings (Cleric Stuff!) Cognoscente's Trappings (Cognoscente Stuff!) Contortionist (bonus d12 to escape or squeeze through) Deep Diving (can hold breath for a long time) Diplomacy (bonus d12 for long negotiations) Etiquette (bonus d12 for manners) Fast Swimming (swimming is an action, not a stunt) Fast-Talk (bonus d12 for quick negotiations) Flesh Ward (X and Rally to give ally Flesh Ward) Forgery (bonus d12 to deal with fakes) Green & Purple Magic Apprentice (may ready Psychic spells) Healing (X and successful Rally to heal target) Lazarus Heart (X to use stunt: Apply Lazarus Heart) Literacy (can read and write) Luck (X to re-roll one die three times) Mesmerism (X and Aim to upgrade from Perplex) Thought-Reading (X to use Stunt: Read a Group of Minds) White Magic Apprentice (may ready Holy spells)
Initiative	d12, d8
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 4, Sprint d8, Run 20
Guard	Use "Guard" action for bonus d8 to all defenses
Aim	Use "Aim" action for bonus d8 to attack one target
Attack	Rod "Aeigenès" @ Close 2d8 – Damage +2 Mesmerism @ Medium d12, d10 - Mesmerized
Counter	Rod "Aeigenès" @ Close 2d8 – Damage +2
Parry	Rod "Aeigenès" @ Close d12, 2d8
Dodge	d8
Soak	2d8
Loot	Rod "Aeigenès"

The Pretender ("Fabrizio di Rinaldi," née Fast Jack)

Carefully groomed (and a little brain-washed) for his role as "Fabrizio di Rinaldi", the Pretender dresses in the most expensive, ostentatious clothes he can afford and have fitted. Previous to his role, he was known as Fast Jack, working the dockyards of the Bisclavret ports as a gambler and a cut-throat; the memories of this life have been blotted from his mind by frequent uses of Mesmerism. When challenged by questions he cannot answer, the Pretender will become annoyed and angry; he may jabber angrily, or he may even challenge the object of his ire to a duel.

THE LOST HEIR OF THE RINALDI

The Pretender

Elite Grey Fox Charlatan (Major)

Goals

1. Survive.
2. Maintain that he is the true Fabrizio di Rinaldi, to the point of delusion.
3. Make money.

Traits Body d8, Speed d8, Mind d8, Will d4
Grey Fox d6 (Forest, Omnivore, Night)
Charlatan d10
Dilettante d4

Skills Academics d8
Climbing d8
Dodge d8
Melee Combat d8
Negotiation d8

Gifts Danger Sense (bonus d12 to sense danger)
Disguise (bonus d12 to impersonate)
Etiquette (bonus d12 for manners)
Fast-Talk (bonus d12 for quick negotiations)
Forgery (bonus d12 to falsify)
Keen Ears (can hear faint sounds)
Literacy (can read and write)
Night Vision (poor lighting is good lighting)
Streetwise (bonus d12 to deal with criminals)

Initiative 2d8

Movement Stride 1, Dash 4, Sprint d8, Run 20

Guard Use "Guard" action for bonus d8 to all defenses
Aim Use "Aim" action for bonus d8 to attack one target

Attack Badelaire "Veloce" @ Close 2d8 – Damage +2, Sweep
Close, Tilting

Counter Badelaire "Veloce" @ Close 2d8 – Damage +2, Sweep
Close, Tilting

Parry Badelaire "Veloce" @ Close d12, 2d8

Dodge d8, d4

Soak d8, d6

Loot Badelaire, Cloak, Leather Armor

The Skeletons at the Rinaldi Manse

A former cat, rat, and shrew, these are former servants dug up by Lady Jakoba for her dark conjuring. Rather than become instruments of her will, however, the malevolent spirits that inhabit these bodies think of nothing but killing and destroying.

Skeletons

Typical Horde

Goals 1. Smite all that lives.

Traits Body d4, Speed d10, Mind none, Will d6
Undead d6

Skills Brawling d6
Dodge d6

Gifts Brawling Fighter (can counter with brawling)
Vengeful Fighter (bonus d12 to counter when Hurt, Injured or Afraid)
Fast Mover (move faster)
Pack Tactics (d8 when threatening with ally, d12 if ally is Guarding)
Resolve (include Will with soak)

Initiative d6

Movement Stride 2, Dash 7, Sprint d10, Run 21

Guard Use "Guard" action for bonus d8 to all defenses

Aim Use "Aim" action for bonus d8 to attack one target

Attack Punch 2d6, d4 – Damage +1, Critical
Wrestle 2d6, d4 – Damage +1, Grapple
Pack Tactics = bonus d8 Tactics to hit target for each ally
... or bonus d12 to Tactics for each threatening, Guarding ally

Counter Punch @ Close 2d6, d4 – Damage +1, Critical
Wrestle @ Close 2d6, d4 – Damage +1, Grapple
Vengeful Fighter = bonus d12, always on, since always Hurt

Parry Punch @ Close 2d6, d4

Dodge d10, d6

Soak d6, d4

Always Hurt = +1 Damage

Immune to Afraid, Critical, Fatigued, Impaling, Sick, Slaying, Terrified, healing, starvation, suffocation, sleep deprivation

Loot Bonemeal, upturned earth

Amalsand Jakoba (Formerly Rinaldi)



Perhaps, in her younger days, she was the model of the young princess waiting for her fairy-tale escort to take her away. Today, the mysterious Lady Jakoba is in her autumn years, her features lean and angular. Her smile is no longer pleasant and disarming, it always has hints of malice and guile. Now that her marriage is dissolved, the Lady Jakoba prefers spare clothing that does not hinder her movements. To those who are not foxes, she often appears mad; to her own brethren, they recognize a certain kind of cleverness behind those wild eyes.

Amalsand Jakoba

Goals

1. Survive.
2. Wreak terrible revenge on those who incite her fury.
3. Learn and gather terrible magicks.
4. Protect the children of her own blood.

Traits

Body d4, Speed d8, Mind d12, Will d12
 Grey Fox d8 (Forest, Omnivore, Night)
 Elementalist d8
 Thaumaturge d8
 Dabbler d12

Grey Fox Necromancer (Villain)

Amalsand Jakoba

Skills

Academics d12
 Brawling d12
 Climbing d12
 Leadership d12
 Negotiation d12
 Presence d12
 Search d12
 Stealth d12
 Supernatural d12

Gifts

Animation (X to Rally a corpse into a Marionette)
 Apprentice Necromancy (may ready Unholy spells)
 Curse (X and aim to upgrade from Illness)
 Brawling Fighter (can counter with brawling)
 Danger Sense (bonus d12 to sense danger)
 Elemental Apprentice (may ready elemental spells)
 Elementalist's Trappings: Blue (Water Wizard!)
 Freeze Arrow (X and Aim to upgrade from Create Water)
 Keen Ears (can hear faint sounds)
 Literacy (can read and write)
 Local Knowledge: the Paludestrus Swamps (for bonus d12)
 Locating (X to locate a target using synecdoche)
 Luck (X to re-roll one die three times)
 Maelstrom (X to ready Maelstrom)
 Mass Agony (X and Aim to upgrade from Torment)
 Mass Animation (X to animate en masse!)
 Mystic: Black Magic (bonus d12 to understand magic)
 Necromancer's Trappings (black magic stuff!)
 Night Vision (poor lighting is good lighting)
 Nobility (X to assert noble influence)
 Research (bonus d12 to look things up)
 Resolve (included Will with soak)
 Speak with Dead (X to use Stunt: Reason with the Dead)
 Thaumaturge's Trappings: (Thaumaturgy Stuff!)
 Thaumaturge Apprentice (can ready Theurgic spells)
 Tracking (bonus d12 to follow trails)
 Vessel of Unlife (X to use Stunt: Create Restless Dead)

Initiative d12, d8

Movement Stride 1, Dash 4, Sprint d8, Run 20

Guard Use "Guard" action for bonus d8 to all defenses, supernatural light gives Near allies Cover bonus d8 to Parry and Dodge, Short allies bonus d4

Aim Use "Aim" action for bonus d8 to attack one target

Attack Claws @ Close d12, d8, d4 – Damage +1, Critical
 Torment @ Medium 2d12, 2d6 – Damage +1, Critical, Penetrating, Weak
 Maelstrom @ Medium d12 – Explosion: Near, Damage +1, Penetrating, Confusion

Counter Claws @ Close d12, d8, d4 – Damage +1, Critical

Parry Claws @ Close d12, d8, d4 – Damage +1, Critical

Dodge d8

Soak d8, d4

Loot Loose black garb, assorted wands and talismans, assorted bones



MARTYR OF THE CATACOMBS

Being an Adventure That Reveals a Secret Malignance Thought Buried Safely Away and Out of Mind

“Martyr of the Catacombs” is designed for 2 to 5 players. Most groups should be able to finish the adventure in one or two play sessions.

The adventure takes place in Bruges, seat of Doloreaux power. It will take the players on a tour of the city, will introduce them to some of its most prominent citizens, and will present them with opportunity for glory, gold, and adventure. It starts with a murder mystery and ends with a grand confrontation. While this adventure is written specifically for Doloreaux adventurers, or freelance adventurers working for them, it can certainly be adjusted to involve players from other houses or independent characters.

Introduction

There are secret places in the bones of Calabria. There are hidden basements and sewers where thieves skulk and lizards breed. There are wild black caves where pale, eyeless creatures pad their way through absolute and unending night. Under the stone flags of the city streets, underground paths run for miles – through abandoned sewers, cellars, and stranger places. Above, ten thousand pairs of feet may tread every square inch of road every hour. Below, only the rare bold and foolhardy soul will venture.

Bruges, the seat of power for House Doloreaux, hides many such secret places. The city is famous for its extensive catacombs, some of which have not been explored in living memory. The catacombs were constructed for an unknown purpose in an earlier age and link deep underground to natural caverns in the Rothos Mountains. In turn, these cave systems run northward for uncounted leagues. No explorer has ever penetrated far into their inky fastness, but peasant legends tell of wanderers entering the tunnels in Bruges and emerging weeks later in the Chevernaise Pass. No one takes these legends seriously ... but there are other stories as well.

The credulous will whisper to each other of monsters and ghosts haunting the tunnels below the city. They tell stories of children snatched from cellars and basements - taken without a trace, without explanation, never to be seen again. They frighten each other with tales about ghostly figures condemned

to forever walk the lightless paths. Some even talk of monsters from the time of the Autarchs, horrible magical creatures who wait in grim caverns for the return of the Wizard-Kings. These stories are not true ... but the truth about the Catacombs of Bruges may be even stranger.

What Has Gone On Before

For some time, Doctor Hubert Plith the fox has been studying the secrets of the past, intent on discovering the hidden paths of power that the Autarchs must surely have used. He has become an accomplished Wizard, to the point of even finding a volume from the very rare Seven Virtues of Kyndranigar. Dr. Plith later gave up on the hermetic discipline of Wizardry, feeling that it must be “too recent” of a system to be the same methods of the Wizard-Kings of yore.

Dr. Plith sought to study the Blessed Paths. Being an outsider and without inborn talent, the ways of Invocation seemed beyond him. He was not discouraged, however. He felt he only required the right “teacher”. And there were many barrows and catacombs to be found. Surely if one were willing to suffer the risks of Black Magic, he reasoned, one could find a soul attached to a corpse who could tell him otherwise.

To this end, Dr. Plith found a copy of *Ye Book of Black Magick* by Frater Perphredo and studied the spells. Then under the guise of a medical doctor, he has moved into Bruges, offering treatment to the non-Doloreaux folk. At the same time, he made the acquaintance of Hilliam Luce, a scoundrel and grave-robbber. For many years, Plith paid Luce and his cohorts to excavate certain tombs and bring him the bodies. Luce believed it was for medical research – indeed, he had other clients of similar interest.

After hobnobbing with the royalty of Bruges, Dr. Plith found his greatest discovery – Lord Pascaline, a Doloreaux lord with a sizeable fortune and an interest in occult matters. Pascaline had an interest in Septagus, the mythic figure from the past who supposedly commanded supernatural power. The doctor ingratiated himself with the lord, and eventually he moved in as “staff physician”.



This gave Plith a place to stay and access to the library at all hours. A few months later, Dr. Plith recommended the services of Hilliam Luce to the lord, mentioning that Luce would work for half as much as a regular manservant. Lord Pascaline agreed to hire Luce and install him at the manor, unaware that Dr. Plith was paying the rest of Luce's salary out of his own pocket.

Plith eventually came to the conclusion that the forbidden island in the river contained the "lost" tomb of Septagus, and within would be the secret he was looking for...

Lord Pascaline may have been a bit on in years, but as of late he had become wary that Dr. Plith's true intentions of study may be more than just academic. Pascaline cautioned his friend to dismiss any ideas of traveling to the Barrows, but the doctor was insistent that there was much to be learned.

One night, as Plith was coming for his weekly visit, he heard Pascaline discussing the matter with Hilliam Luce. The doctor also heard that Luce, having become accustomed to living at the manor, having become tired of poking around in damp catacombs, and now having reservations about disturbing the most feared figure in Doloreaux history, was all too willing to follow the lord's orders to bring the matter before the Duke and the clergy. Luce agreed to carry a letter from the lord to the capital in the morning.

After Luce left, Lord Pascaline placed paper and pen on his writing desk and set to work drafting the letter. Dr. Plith entered the room using a duplicate key he had prepared for this purpose. He prepared a knife that he had "borrowed" from Luce ... Using a skeleton-key that he had prepared for the purpose, he stealthily entered Lord Pascaline's room and stabbed him in the back, activating the spell and drawing the life-force out of the poor man. As he waited for Pascaline to perish from his mortal wound, Plith then used the spell from the Virtue of

Culture to steal Pascaline's skill of Academics. After he heard the sound of Pascaline's death gurgle, he ripped up the note, left the room, and locked the door. He then set up an uproar and summoned Gavroche, Pascaline's valet, so that the two of them could "discover" the body together. When they did, Plith called for the night watch.

When our adventure begins, the reward is being issued for Luce's arrest. Hilliam Luce, realizing he has been made the fall-guy, is now in hiding at Maxim Bauer's shop. Doctor Plith is making arrangements to rendezvous with some of Luce's former associates and to sail out to the Barrows.

Getting the Players Involved

In order to "hook" your Player-Characters into this plot, there has to be something that would involve the players in the upcoming events. Get to know your player's Characters, and their motivations. Here are some suggested hooks:

- ↔ Do any of your PCs have Legal Authority? They will immediately be aware of the bounty on Hilliam Luce.
- ↔ Is one or more of your players nobility of some standing? They may be personal friends of Pascaline and may have known him personally. Also, it is not unknown for nobles to give one another "hospitallity" — perhaps the player would want to show up for a meal and lodging at no charge, only to find his prospect has been murdered.
- ↔ Are any of your PCs of a criminal bent? They may know of Hilliam Luce by reputation, maybe they've even worked with him before. Anyone who knows Luce would know that he prefers stealth to violence, that if he were a spy — which is likely to be true — he'd be more likely to sneak off into the night than to murder someone in cold blood.





- ↔ Academic PCs, such as Scholars and Archeologists, might know that Pascaline has collected some information on the prehistory of the Doloreaux.
- ↔ If the players enjoy the patronage of the inn-keeper Chloe Javert (see page 230), she may ask them to look into the matter. After all, anything that increases the normal Doloreaux antipathy towards outsiders is bad for her business. She will offer the players an additional five aureals on top of the official reward.

The Killer

In the twisting streets of Outer Bruges, rumors are flying like dead leaves. In the taverns, at the marketplace, and even in the shrines, everyone is talking about one thing — Lord Evard Pascaline de Doloreaux has been robbed and assassinated, killed after prayers in his private shrine, late last night! Word on the street is that a member of his household staff, a feline named Hilliam Luce, was paid by some foreign power to kill his master. Luce has since fled, which is proof of his guilt.

The next day after the murder, handbills have been printed up, reading:

Wanted for judgment! Hilliam Luce, murderer of the revered and aged Lord Pascaline. He is a thin feline, dark-furred, short, with a taciturn disposition. Caution must be taken, as he carries a brace of pistols at all times. Citizens are urged to grant him no quarter. Those who capture him, alive or dead, will be rewarded richly by His Highness the Duke, to the sum of twenty aureals.

Questions the Players may ask about the Murder

The Player-Characters may use Mind & Gossip vs. d8 to ask around about the Lord. Here are some typical answers they would get from the local lay-folk of Bruges. You, as the Game Host, are encouraged to make up personalities and faces to go with these quotes, depending on where your PCs prefer to hang out (bars, parties, alleyways, market-places, etc.)

“Who was this Lord Pascaline?”

“Pascaline was in some ways a reformer. He chose to live in the Outer City, and was renowned for his generosity to the poor of the city. A famous story tells how he once donated twenty denarii to a beggar who came to his door seeking nothing more than a meal. Pascaline was an elderly bachelor and has left no heirs. His death has aroused great public outcry and brought the natural Doloreaux suspicion of outsiders to the forefront.”

“Pascaline was also a famous scholar. In his youth he would spend days at a time in the catacombs, copying ancient runes. Of late he has been content to research in books and follow up on the study of others.”

The Outer City has been closed to outgoing traffic, and extra watchmen patrol the walls. Likewise, the Inner City has been sealed. Otherwise, business continues as usual ... except for the occasional party of armed citizens combing the streets.

Even if the players have no previous official status, be sure to tell them that freelance adventurers can present themselves to a magistrate and asked to be deputized. If the party looks reputable, or at least competent, they are given papers that grant them the equivalent of the low justice advantage. However, this special status applies only to catching Luce and any possible confederates. They will lose their right to low justice as soon as a suspect is tried and found guilty.

Clues and Leads

If the players have any kind of official status they will be told the following information. If they insist on investigating independently, some of the information might be made available as rumors.

The first person to find the body was Pascaline’s personal physician, Dr. Hubert Plith. He tried to restore the old boar to life, but Pascaline was just too far gone. Plith immediately summoned the watch. He claims to have seen Luce fleeing the house with a bag. Later, it was discovered that several small but valuable trinkets had been stolen from the manor. (Those who can score at least two successes from a test of Mind, Academics, and Medicine’s d12 vs. 4 will determine that the wound to Pascaline, while grave, was not fatal. Poisoning may have been involved, possibly magic – but what kind of magic kills while leaving no mark?)

Nobles or investigators working directly for a noble will know that Pascaline had long been out of favor with the Duke and Duchess. The Duchess has been known to refer to him as a “fool and gutter-muck toady.” They will also know that Pascaline was never particularly reverent when it came to observing the rituals and holy days.

Members of the clergy will also talk about Pascaline lack of religious fervor. They will also be told not to trust Dr. Plith – he is an “intellectual” and a non-believer.

Assuming the players have decided to take on the job of tracking down Luce, there are a number of different options available to them. The most obvious ones are listed below. The time taken in the investigation is quite important. If the players have not



found Luce four hours after beginning their investigation in earnest, he will be cornered by the city-watch. At this point, the host should proceed immediately to the section entitled "Where is Luce?"

Searching Pascaline's Manor

If the players choose to search the murder scene or question the Pascaline' servants, they will find the manor in an uproar. Mourning locals surround the garden walls, and inside are his four servants and about 20 officials of one sort or another are looking around.

The building gate itself is guarded by two Doloreaux watchmen, with about three more surrounding the premises. They will refuse admittance to anyone who isn't "acting in the state's best interests." They will probably shoo unsavory types away. PCs who are Nobility or have some sort of Legal Authority should be able to gain entrance. The guards can be bribed for 12 denarii (Roll Mind & Negotiation, plus Gifts like Bribery) — they would let the PCs in, but they will remind the PCs that there are servants and such who would be sure to see if they try to steal anything.

Sneaking in to the house is next to impossible during the day, with the crowd of onlookers and the guards (see "Hiding and Sneaking", Ironclaw, p. 147, suggested difficulty 9). At night, it will be somewhat easier (suggested difficulty of 5). Players are encouraged to come up with clever ways to investigate, such as distracting the guard, using magic or other powers, etc.

The manor house is three stories tall, and made of stone. It is surrounded by a small walled garden.

Last, but not least, there is a duo of independent investigators. They are Kierns, a goat bounty-hunter, and a monkey highwayman named Roncalli. Roncalli is currently in disguise as a manservant to Kierns. The duo will leave soon after the players arrive. Game hosts should use their presence to stress that there are others looking for Luce, and the clock is ticking ...

Gavroche has been pressed into service as the major-domo, or "head servant", since Hilliam Luce has disappeared. He is a middle-aged boar, with his posture stooped and his hands gnarled from a lifetime of physical labor such as rebuilding walls, re-shingling roofs, and the like. Dealing with people is not something he enjoys.

Questions the PCs may ask of Gavroche

"Who was Lord Pascaline?"

"One could not ask for a better master. He was generous and kind to those in need. At least once a

year, he would take in a beggar or some other indigent, and have his clothes mended and his purse filled. It is a shame the Lord has no heirs to carry on his family name."

"Who is Hilliam Luce?"

"He uses big words, which seemed unlikely for a fellow who dresses like one lowly-born. He and the Doctor were friends, I guess, since they would have long conversations about using those long, academic words. He didn't mix much with us folks."

"When did you discover the body of Lord Pascaline?"

"Last night, the good Doctor Plith came to call on me in my quarters. He told me that it was past time for him to administer the master's medicine. I told him I wasn't so keen to disturb the master's rest, but he said it was important. When we got to the master's room, it was locked up tight, which I thought was unusual. The doctor insisted that we get inside, and after a moment I agreed, confused about what was going on. With a few efforts, I managed to bust down the door, and what I saw would haunt me to the end of my days — to see my lord and master slumped over his writing desk. The look on his face ... why, I can't clearly recall it except that it was horrible."

"Did you find any letters or anything he was writing?"

"I'm afraid I don't know any reading or writing, so I wouldn't know."

"Why would Luce kill Lord Pascaline?"

"I don't rightly know. I don't ask much about the master's affairs, and being a man without letters or education, most of these things are not of my ken."

"What do you know about Doctor Plith?"

"He's been here for more than a year ... I think he moved in two summers ago. I can't really remember. He was a likable sort, I suppose, and since he's a doctor he'd surely know if the master was murdered."

Questions the PCs may ask of Doctor Plith

On the first and second day after the murder, Doctor Plith can be found in the manor house. He will be packing up his things. On the third day, he can be found at his Apothecary shop (p. 609). On the fourth day, he will have gone to the river to travel to Barrow Island.



“Who are you and what do you do?”

“My name is Doctor Hubert Plith. I am — excuse me, I was the personal physician to the late Lord Pascaline. I was also his friend. We shared mutual interests in history and science.”

“When did you discover the body?”

“Last night, I had knocked on Lord Pascaline’s door to request admittance to the room, to administer the Lord’s nightly tincture of medicine. When there was no response, I attempted to summon Mr. Luce, but he was nowhere to be found. Puzzled, I sent for Gavroche, and we forced the door open to the Lord’s chambers, to discover him slumped over his writing desk, his life gone from him, and the dagger that caused his surcease was protruding from the Lord’s spine.”

“Did you find any letters or anything he was writing?”

“No, which I find curious. Whatever he was writing was either destroyed or taken by his murderer, which I presume to be Luce, the last man to find him alive.”

“Why would Luce kill Lord Pascaline?”

“I suspect that the Lord found something out about Mr. Luce, something he’d rather not have known. I also suspect it must be something very serious if Luce would go to such great extremes to cover it up. I do know that Mr. Luce is a polyglot and is very well-traveled. It would not be unreasonable to assume that he is a spy for some foreign house.”

(If asked what a “polyglot” is, Dr. Plith will condescendingly explain that it’s someone who speaks several languages. This would be a role-playing point for you as Host to show what Plith thinks of “uneducated” folks.)

“I think you killed Lord Pascaline and have framed Luce. What do you say to that?”

“I would say that you are mistaken, that your conclusions are baseless and that they offend me personally. Lord Pascaline was my patron and my good friend for many years. I will thank you not to make such wild accusations, and since you are a stranger to this place, I will forgive this insult, this one time.”

Other Points of Interest in the Manor

The household staff is present as well. There are two maids, Patrice and Vivian, and a cook, Talman. All are boars; the maids are in their twenties, Talman is middle-aged. All live in the manor, the maids on the first floor, and the cook in the basement. The over-worked maids are seeing to the needs of the officials, while Talman lurks in the basement, sampling his

former masters’ wine. All expect to be terminated soon and are far more worried about future employment than the actual murder. If the PCs interrogate them, you as Game Host are encouraged to role-play the maids’ disinterested chatter and Talman’s drunkenness.

The maids say that Luce was a foreigner. They say that Pascaline was a firm but kindly master, and of late he seemed to be very worried. They have no idea why he was worried, and they will not speculate. Talman will repeat, somewhat drunkenly, that he didn’t see Luce come or go that night, but that he wouldn’t be surprised at all if Luce did the foul deed.

If any of the staff are questioned about Plith, they will react oddly. Patrice and Vivian will refuse to say anything about him, other than that he is a wise man. Talman will openly express his dislike for him, calling him arrogant and unpleasant.

Investigating Pascaline’s Room

Modern police methods of “leave everything where it is until the police arrive” are unknown in Calabria. If this is the second day, Pascaline’s body is laying in state on his bed, watched over by Mayhew, a boar Vidame in service of Jacqueline DePours. Mayhew will try to stop anyone from examining the corpse in detail, and will also try to stop anyone from using magic or Blessed powers to contact Pascaline’s spirit. He is armed with a Longsword, Metal Shield, and Plate Mail, but he will call the watch if he thinks he’s outnumbered. The knife has been removed from the body and is wrapped in cloth. Mayhew will permit the PCs to examine the knife — his job is to protect the body.

On the third and later days, Pascaline’s body will have been moved for the funeral. The knife will be in the hands of the City Watch.

Use of Magic to search the room will have mixed results. A Roll of Mind & Supernatural will allow the players to recognize Black Magic for what it is. A Locating spell on the knife will point the PCs towards the east, towards Maxim Bauer’s place — this knife did belong to Luce, so it does have a Synecdoche link to him.

Attempts to use Magic or Invocations to call forth Pascaline’s spirit will fail — it no longer resides here, having been drained away by Plith’s foul spell. In fact, attempts to call upon his soul are more likely to invite “angry spirits” to show themselves.

Optional Complications

As Game Host, you should “pace” the adventure based on what your Players prefer to do. Some will want to race through the adventure, eager to capture Luce or at least engage in violent “combat encounters”. Other groups may prefer to meet with NPCs and the like.

Two minor nobles who claim to be friends of Pascaline arrive in the city. One is a fat and grizzled boar knight in late middle age, and the other an elderly sow baroness. Both claim that Pascaline promised them a portion of his small holdings. They each have a solicitor with them. They know nothing about the murder, but simply argue back and forth about who was closer to the deceased. While they do so, their lawyers sigh and roll their eyes knowingly at each other.

Dame Jacqueline DePours is one of the Mystes, the highest order of Hierarchs. She controls a powerful estate outside the city. With Mayhew's assistance, she plans on seizing Pascaline's estate on the grounds that it must be "purified" because of the evil spirits that are present. (The lingering effects of Plith's spell-casting will lend strong credence to her cause.) One she and hers have been in the house for two weeks, she will "grease some palms" and apply pressure to certain folks to make sure the deed to the estate passes to her hands.

One of the players spots a feline darting down an alleyway. If they don't immediately give chase, some passersby will run after him shouting for blood. If the players or crowd manage to capture the cat, he does match Luce's description somewhat. But he is not Luce, simply a merchant taking a short-cut home. PCs who are quick with force may find they've injured an innocent man. Or perhaps a lynch mob develops from mob hysteria — the PCs might intervene before an innocent man is dragged off and killed.

On the second day or later, the PCs run into a squad of a half-dozen Doloreaux militia-men coming around a corner. A portly Doloreaux militia captain has put out the call to arms among his unit, and they are out searching every nook and cranny for Luce. The captain has the right to dispense low justice, and is being very free with his rank. If any of the players are cats, or obviously not natives to the city, they may be held and searched. If the players are Doloreaux citizens he might try to press them into service with his group. If the players refuse, he won't press the issue.

Someone shouts that Luce has been spotted, just a few streets away! Apparently he was seen entering the back door of a known bawdy house. The rumor is false and is just an excuse to get people into the house, where they will be plied with drinks and entertainment, then billed later.

While searching a likely looking alley, the players come face to face with Kierns and Roncalli. (see "Searching Pascaline's Manor") The confrontation will be tense, with the two boasting that they will be the ones to bring Luce to justice. A fight will attract the attention of the militia captain mentioned in the above encounter. The two bounty hunters will refuse to share information or work with the players.

Plith's Apothecary Shop

Plith operates a medicine shop in town, in a two-story wooden house that backs on to the walls of the Inner City. The ground floor is taken up with his apothecary practice, and his rooms are on the second floor, although he has moved out and Jenevieve Tanneux has moved in. The house has a basement, but this will not be immediately obvious as the door is hidden behind a wall-hanging.

Plith's shop is waited on by a thin cat woman named Jenevieve Tanneux. Plith will only be in attendance on the third day after the start of the adventure, to pack up his things to be ready for the trip. The same goes for Plith's friends, Roncalli and Kierns — they are out and about, preparing for the upcoming trip. They will return to the shop at frequent intervals to drop items off, such as wax-sealed powder-horns and thigh-high boots — the types of things folks take on a water trip.

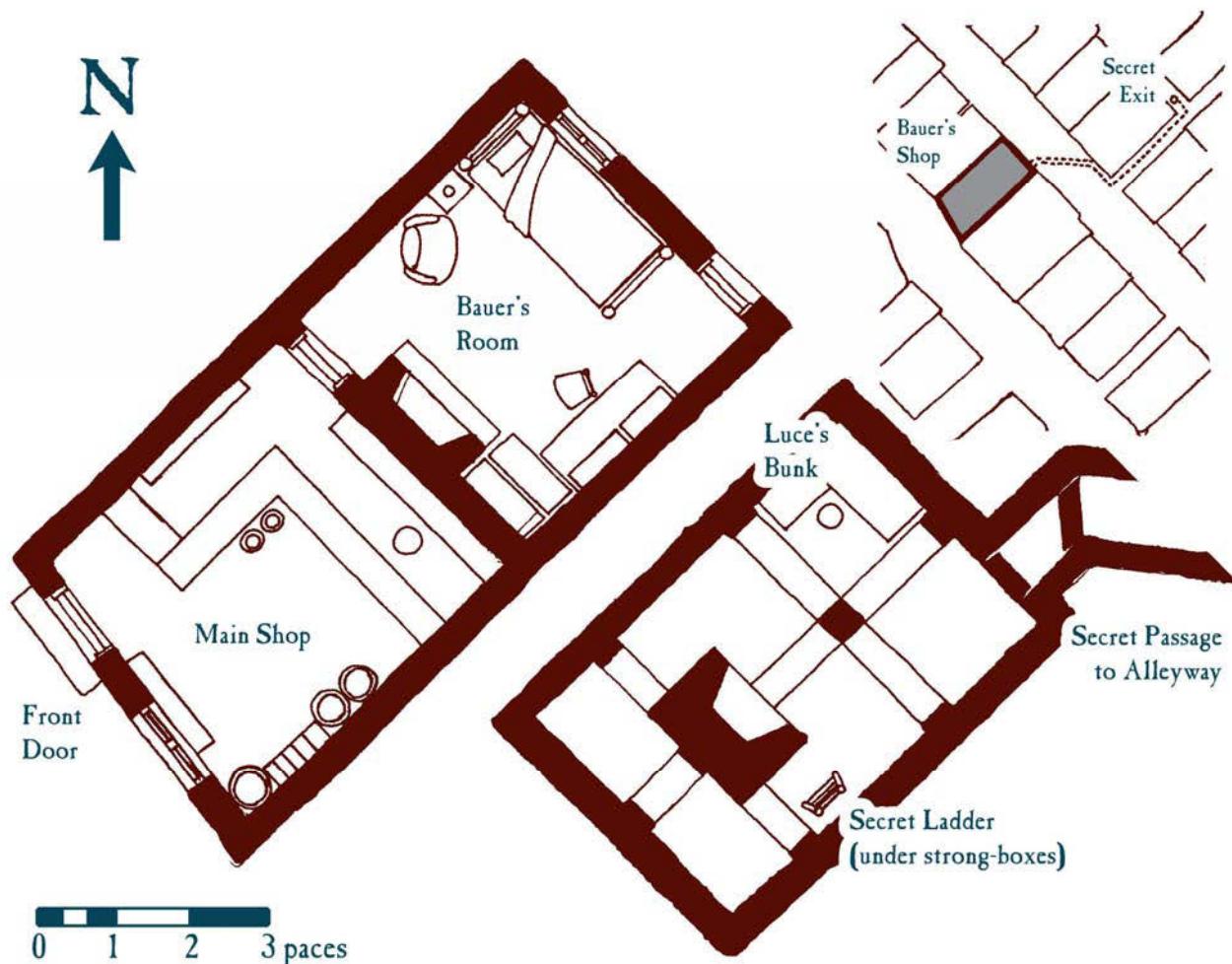
Questions the Players may ask Jenevieve

Jenevieve has a haunted look in her eyes and a pallid complexion. While she may appear fatalistic, her staunch belief in predestination and lack of "free will" has removed all fear and uncertainty from her life. She will glibly answer any questions made of her without concern. As Game Host, when you feel it will add some drama to the situation, have Kierns and Roncalli interrupt the conversation with Jenevieve by arriving, scowling at the PCs, and then chasing them off with implied threats, shows of bravado, or simply boasting of how they will be the ones who find Luce. (Their arrival should look suspect to some Player-Characters — why would some "random" bounty-hunters be good friends with Plith?)



"Who are you and what do you do?"

"You can call me Jenevieve. I run the shop when the doctor is away. I've been working here for the past three years."



“Where is Doctor Plith?”

If Doctor Plith is there, “He’s here. Would you like me to send for him?” (Jenevieve will get Dr. Plith for the PCs to talk to even if Plith asked her not to, or told her to watch out for them or send them away. Jenevieve dislikes arguing with people.)

If Doctor Plith isn’t there: “I’m afraid the doctor’s not here at the moment. You’ll have to make do with my services until he returns. No, I don’t know when to expect him.”

“Do you know Hiliam Luce?”

“Yes, I do. He and the doctor have been acquaintances for many years. I’ve talked with him often. He has been many places and seen many interesting things. I am sorry to hear of this reward upon his head — now I’ll probably never see him again.”

“Do you think Hiliam Luce or Doctor Plith killed Lord Pascaline?”

“In the grand scheme of things, anything is possible. One moment a man might be placid and smiling, and

in the next he is full of wrath and violence. What separates the sane from the mad?”

“Do you know where we can find Luce?”

“He is not here, if that is what you wanted to know. Don’t bother offering me bribes or threatening me with harm — I don’t know where he is.”

“Who were some of Luce’s friends?”

“A man like Luce is suspicious of all. He has told me that is what’s kept him alive all this time. I’ve always felt that each person has a certain amount of time on this earth, and when the roll is called up yonder, you must go. It’s probably why Luce isn’t fond of either me or Max.”

“Who is Max?”

“Maxim Bauer is an herbalist. He collects rare ingredients for the doctor and me to prepare in our tinctures and poultices. His shop is outside the city walls, on the east side. If you decide to visit him, be sure to mention my name.”

"Who are Kierns and Roncalli?"

"Who can say? I believe they style themselves bounty-hunters, so that is who they are. I do not know what Doctor Plith calls them, and I've never asked."

(If Kierns and Roncalli hear Jenevieve say this, they will get very cross indeed. They will either insist that the PCs leave, or they themselves will leave.)

"I need medical treatment. Can you help me?"

Jenevieve has training as a d4 Apothecary. If the PC follows her advice and buys the appropriate cure for 1 denar, include her d4 on their next Roll concerning their Healing Quota (Ironclaw, p. 130).

"We demand to search the premises. I have Legal Authority, Nobility, or something else that I can convince you gives me the authority to do so. Will you comply?"

If the players have at least low justice, Jenevieve will shrug and allow them to search the house. She will not take them into the basement unless specifically instructed to. Roll Mind & Searching (see Ironclaw p. 44). If the PCs take too long (such as an hour), either Kierns or Roncalli will make an appearance and show them the door.

Searching the Premises

Searching the first floor will find nothing unusual beyond shelves of medicinal herbs, a fireplace, and a pantry. The second floor is taken up by Jenevieve's bedroom. A small bookshelf holds a few books on the art of healing. The passage to the basement is underneath the first-floor stairwell, hidden by a carpet hanging on the wall. A roll of Mind & Searching Test will find this concealed door; Jenevieve also knows about the door and, if asked directly, will tell anyone who asks where it is.

The basement is one large room dominated by a primitive operating table, with straps to hold someone in place. If asked, Jenevieve will tell the players that Plith performs dentistry, bleeding, and boil lancing on the side.

A Roll of Mind & Searching vs. 4 will reveal that there is a secret panel in the pedestal — inside is a book with no spine, bound in string. (Jenevieve does not know about this panel.) A roll of Mind & Craft (and the Gift of Sabotage, if someone has it) will reveal that the book is trapped. If someone reaches in without disarming it, a small nail will fall down and puncture their hand — roll their Speed vs. 3 or suffer 1 point of Damage.

The book is actually two manuscripts tied together in one volume: *Ye Book of Black Magick* and *Kyndranigar's Virtue of Magic*.

Searching the City

The PCs can try to comb the city for clues to Luce's current whereabouts. Bruges is not as big as Triskellian, but it's still a sizeable place filled with colorful folks. As Game Host, this is an opportunity for you to play to your party's strengths — give them opportunities to show off their skills and abilities. Your Players are probably an imaginative lot, and they should come up with many ways to search for Luce. Here are some ideas you can use to involve them, but feel free to improvise other encounters and methods.

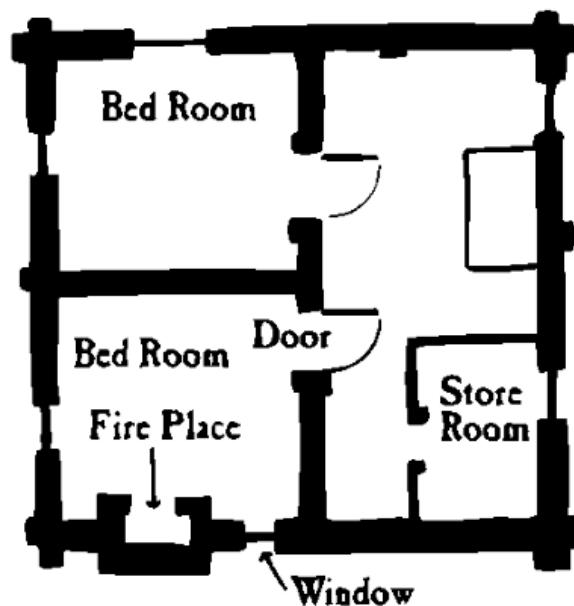
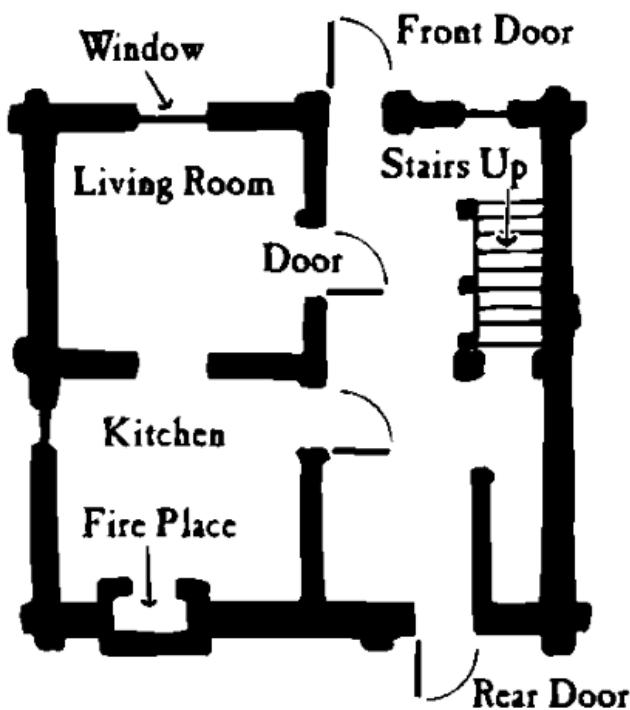
While cruising the various bars around town, use of Mind & Gossip (plus Gifts like Carousing) will confirm that Hilliam Luce has been seen more than once in the company of Maxim Bauer.

During a back-alley game of dice, a Roll of Mind & Gossip made using the Gift of Gambling will reveal that Hilliam Luce has used items from Plith's Apothecary shop as collateral more than once.

While hanging out with other scofflaws and ne'er-do-wells, a Roll of Mind & Gossip plus the Gift of Streetwise, if you have it, may reveal that Maxim Bauer hires folks for odd jobs, and that his connection is "some fancy-pants cat what lives in the inner city."

Those who use Supernatural skill for some guidance may be rewarded. Perhaps a patch of mold on their breakfast bread looks like a boar's head with only one eye. Or maybe a cluster of leaves in the street looks like the sign above Maxim Bauer's door. As Game Host, you should only use omens like this for appropriately "mystical" characters, and they should be hard to interpret, with difficulty of 6 or more.

The Thaumaturgy spell of "Locating", if cast upon Luce's knife, will reveal his whereabouts with a small margin of error — I.E., a few blocks. It's then a matter of "casing" around where the spell points and looking for a likely place.



Maxim Bauer's Herbalism Shop

Players who have followed some of the above leads may be directed to Maxim Bauer's herbalism shop. The place looks old and dingy, marked only by a rickety sign with a carved symbol of the mandrake root, which looks unusually humanoid.

The shop keeps very minimal hours, only open in the late morning to early afternoon. Inside are dusty shelves and moldy jars with scribbled labels. Characters with knowledge of herbalism or Keen Noses will find the selection here very old and largely useless.

That's because the shop is largely a front. Maxim Bauer is actually one of the most hated folk in all of Doloreaux lands — he is a *resurrectionist*, one who digs up dead bodies for medical experimentation. He and Hilliam Luce are old comrades-in-arms, having provided cadavers for Doctor Plith and others. However, the Doloreaux have great respect for the dead, believing that the spirit cannot pass on until the remains have completely decomposed. If Maxim Bauer's activities were discovered, he would be guilty of one of the greatest Lutarist sins. The fact that he's been at this activity a few years speaks of the quality of his craft and his discretion.

Luce has gone to Maxim's place to lay low. He certainly doesn't want to leave town while such a large reward is on his head. He figures that Dr. Plith has framed him, but he's not sure exactly why.

Gaining Entry to Bauer's Shop

If the players arrive when Maxim's shop is open, he'll be courteous but taciturn, and he will sell items from his paltry selection at cheap to average prices. If folks ask for advice on which items to buy, he'll mostly shrug and ask them what they want to buy.

Players who are obviously after Luce, such as town watchmen and bounty-hunters, will not learn much. Direct questions about Luce will be met with flat-out, monosyllabic denial. Bauer will then heave himself up from his chair and slowly shuffle around the shop, trying to sell them broken trinkets. Bribes won't work either. He knows that if he admits to dealing with Luce, he is just as likely to be executed as the murderer. Violence will not work either — if the players try such base methods refer to Violence against Bauer and Luce.

If the players arrive when Maxim's shop is closed, they'll discover the doors barred from the inside. Maxim isn't taking any chances — he and Luce are staying indoors and hidden until this all blows over. It will be obvious that the place is inhabited, as the chimney will be smoking from the fire. The players can try to force entry through the windows or doors, using a roll of Mind & Craft plus the Gift of Sabotage, or other methods.

If his shop and home is invaded, Maxim and his crew will attempt to repel the PCs with force, without summoning the watch.



Violence against Bauer and Luce

Depending on the nature of your party, they may try to surround the building and ambush the folks inside ... or they may simply storm the front door and attack. As Game Host, you should estimate the "combat ability" of your Player-Characters and stack the opposition accordingly:

If your PCs are a bit weak, then set the encounter up to have Luce, Maxim, and Max's two cousins, who are Boar Minions each armed with a Pistol and a Half-Spear. They will only use the guns if the PCs make a louder noise first, such as using their own guns or magic.

If your PCs are fairly combative, then set the encounter up to have Luce, Maxim, and one of Maxim's cousins for each of the PCs. Only two should be armed with guns, however.

If your PCs are unusually strong combatants, then set the encounter up as above, plus have a "visiting mercenary." Good choices would include Hendrick or Mansur (from the Ironclaw book), or Recondite (from "The Lost Heir" adventure).

Bauer will attempt to flee to the back room, which he will then lock. If the Players manage to defeat the thugs and batter down the door they will find Bauer mostly concealed behind a wooden keg, with his Musket braced and ready. He will immediately fire at the first person that comes through the door, and then attempt to flee into the back alley. If the players pursue him still, he surrenders right away and offers no other resistance — after all, the PCs are probably only after Luce.

Questions the Players may ask Hilliam Luce

If he is cornered, and the PCs look reasonable, then Hilliam Luce will surrender. He will hope to explain his innocence.



“Who are you and what do you do?”

“I am Hilliam Luce, son of Tyler Luce. I have worn many hats — gambler, trader, mariner, procurer, but never have I been a murderer.”

“Who murdered Lord Pascaline, and why?”

“I do not know, but I suspect it was Doctor Plith. You see, the night before the Lord was murdered, he and I had a private conversation. The Lord, he was sorely troubled. Apparently, the good Doctor had discovered something about this city that frightened even Pascaline. The Lord told me he was to compose a letter that I would take to the Duke himself, the next day.”

“Where were you at the time of the murder?”

“I was here. Maxim Bauer will attest to that. I had come here to gather my remaining possessions, such as my brace of pistols, because once I was to have delivered the letter, I would never return to this town again. Lord Pascaline was going to incriminate Dr. Plith, and with the end of his career, so too would my services here be finished.”

“What services did you provide?”

“If you have seen this far, then you must know the truth. Maxim Bauer and I are resurrectionists — we spade the ground and turn up the mysteries of the past. The risks are great, but the rewards can be even greater. Alas, this vein has been completely tapped — it is time for Mr. Luce to move on.”

“What do you think was so dangerous that Lord Pascaline would write to the Duke about?”

“As to this matter, I only have conjecture. Doctor Plith and Lord Pascaline had shared interests in history and science. Have you ever met the intelligentsia? With their faces buried in dusty books, their brains filled with syllogisms and slogans ... they are all a bit mad. For many years, I have humored the affectations of the academics to my own advantage. They provide coin; I provide the materials they need.”

“My last errand for them was the riskiest of them all. Employing my craft, I managed to cross the river to Barrow Island. I, Hilliam Luce, did trespass on the most forbidden ground in all of Bruges!”

“Guided by the Doctor's instructions, and using my own wits to avoid the patrols of vidames whose duty it is to safeguard the island against folks such as myself, I eventually found what I sought — a stone tablet with a sigil on it. I was asked to make a copy of the sigil, by holding a sheet of paper over the sign and rubbing charcoal on it. I made not one, but two copies. I gave the first to the Doctor. I have the second copy on my person.”

Luce will show the sigil to the players. “I confess I do not ken its meaning, but surely there must have been two other men who did: Lord Pascaline, and Doctor Plith. If I had known that the Doctor would have double-crossed me, I would never have risked my life in this way.”

As Game Host, you may ask Players for Academics and Supernatural Rolls plus any Gifts such as History or Local Knowledge of the area, vs. 2d6. Those who make their rolls will recognize this as a mark of Septagus. (See page 9.) There is only one conclusion — that Septagus' tomb is to be found on Barrow Island.



The Fourth Day, and Doctor Plith's Trip to Barrow Island

With Luce out of the way, Doctor Plith is planning a trip to Barrow Island. On the fourth day after the start of the adventure, he will take his party of Jenevieve, Roncalli, and Kierns to Barrow Island under the cover of the pre-dawn fog. Plith plans to overcome the guards using his magic and his weaponry.

Kierns and Jenevieve will stay behind to watch the boats. However, Jenevieve is plagued by visions of the future. The night before, she had a dream that everyone who visits Barrow Island will die within seven days. She will then become even more fatalistic than usual. After landing on the island, the boats Plith and company arrived in will sink, with no explanation. Kierns will become angry and will blame Jenevieve with sabotage. If the PCs "go after" Doctor Plith and arrive on the morning of the fourth day, they will find Kierns and Jenevieve on the shore. Kierns will be shaking and pointing his gun at the cat, whom will be shrugging and wryly bemused at the helplessness of the situation.

Doctor Plith knows he's not strong enough to move the slab that covers Septagus' tomb ... so he will first descend into one of the other barrows and use Mass Animation to summon forth the Koblynau (see page 81). If the Players track him down, he will order them to attack the Player-Characters while he defends himself.

From a combat perspective, you need to judge the strength of your Player-Characters. The suggested method is to send a wave of three or four Koblynau at them, and then to have another three arrive on the scene if it looks like the PCs are having an easy time of it. It should become apparent to the Players that there are an "endless" number of these things, and that finding Plith would be their first priority.

If you feel the PCs have moved with all haste that they could have, then you may choose to have them meet Plith shortly before he has entered the tomb. The doctor, being Proud, is the type of villain who might deliver a dramatic speech before his triumph.

Questions the PCs may ask Doctor Plith at Septagus' Tomb

"What are you doing here?"

"I am on the verge of the greatest discovery of our age – the secret to true power. You may bow down to me now, by your own free will, or you may bow down to me later, under different circumstances. It matters little."

"What is in that tomb that you're after?"

"The key to all my designs! The lost sorcerer, Septagus, himself! With but a word and a gesture, he will be my puppet on a string."

"Are you a Necromancer?"

"My insight goes beyond that of normal folk. I have seen the greatest understanding possible – I know what is beyond death!"

"We can't let you enter that tomb. Will you surrender?"

"What you see today is the final step of my lifetime of study. Today I ascend beyond mortal ken, and your orders have no meaning to me now."

Of course, your PCs may decide not to go to the island at all. In that case, assume that Dr. Plith's efforts to enter Septagus' tomb are successful.

What Will Happen to Plith's Plans?

Plith expects to enter the tomb, to find Septagus' remains, and to use the spell Vessel of Unlife to bring him back to life and to make him a slave. That's not what will happen, though.

Septagus' own spear has been used to pin his remains to the floor. All magical attempts to raise the body will fail unless the spear itself is removed. Plith will grasp the spear in both hands and, his face a mask of straining effort, he will pull it from the floor. This will prove his undoing – the spear will explode from the body, flying through the roof of the chamber (and sending up a very impressive spray of rubble in the process), only to land exactly seven leagues north of Barrow Island. This act will fling Plith's body several stories into the air, and then he will land on the ground and will suffer 10 flat Damage, Penetrating, almost definitely killing him. (Of course, someone else might try to remove the spear, only to suffer the same fate.)

Removing the spear will allow the corpse of Septagus to be freed from the prison imposed upon him by the High Mystes of centuries ago. The first round, his skeleton will rise from the floor. The second round, he will howl in rage at being imprisoned for all those years – everyone on the Island must pass a Scare stunt (Ironclaw, p. 118); those who can see Septagus must Roll Body, Will & Presence vs. 3d12, those within ear-shot must Roll vs. 3d8.



Dénouement

So, how did the adventure go? What did your players do, what sort of rewards do they expect to reap, and what sort of comeuppance do they deserve? Here are some suggestions.

Doctor Plith was Captured

If the Players managed to stop Plith from leaving the city, he can be brought to justice. Luce, if he's still alive, will not want to testify in court ... but he can be forced to do so. Jenevieve Tanneux will freely admit to having seen Dr. Plith engage in resurrectionist activities – in fact, her visions have shown her that the task of exposing Plith is one she was meant to do.

Doctor Plith was Thwarted, but Escaped

If all of Plith's Koblynau are destroyed, he will lack any appropriate tools to open the tomb. The exact number of the Koblynau isn't specified – basically, there should be as many as you deem to be difficult for the PCs to deal with, but not impossible. Also, if Dr. Plith finds himself attacked in full force, he will flee the island, possibly even divesting himself of all his gear and swimming to shore, if he has to. It would be many months before he would try another expedition to the island. With his contacts in high places and his supernatural abilities, Doctor Plith will find a way to exact a dire revenge upon the PCs, but he is willing to take his time in doing so.

Septagus was Freed!

The outcome of having Septagus free should be unlikely – Doctor Plith has to out-run a bunch of powerful Player-Characters, and he possibly has to fight all of them either in the city or on Barrow Island. This outcome should only happen if, in your opinion as Game Host, the Player-Characters "dropped the ball" and didn't pursue Plith aggressively enough, or if their combat encounters went especially poorly.

What happens if Septagus is freed is up to you, as the Game Host. Septagus, with his Koblynau undead minions and his incredible supernatural power, makes for a "good old fashioned super-villain".

The actual "game terms" of Septagus are up to you. In the tradition of many "fantasy sagas," Septagus could collect several minions, each more powerful than the last, to solidify his world domination.

One path might be that Septagus would travel from Sacred Grove to Sacred Grove, destroying each one. With each one destroyed, he creates a new minion devoted to the Blessed Path that the grove

was guarding; each minion would have the statistics for the Supernaut (*Ironclaw*, p. 260), plus the Gift of Blessed Ways (*Book of Mysteries*, p. 402) and one Blessed Path Gift. This outcome is best suited for campaigns that involve a lot of combat and action on a grim scale.

Another path might be that Septagus retires to an out-of-the-way location, seeking to appear to key folks within their dreams, trying to persuade them to go to war with one another. This outcome is best suited for campaigns where political intrigue and quiet mysticism are the order of the day.

The Inheritors of Pascaline's Estate

The resolution of who gets the heir-less Lord Pascaline's house could be an issue in and of itself. Numerous pretenders, such as "bastard children" and "good friends who were promised the house" will appear in force. Lady Jacqueline of the Mystes has plans of her own – her goal is to declare the house "impure", and to have lengthy ceremonies where each and every room is "purged" with elaborated Lutarist ceremonies. These rituals will buy her time while she instructs her vidame, Mayhew, to "grease the right palms" and have the paper-work made up so that her estate can absorb the house. In other words, Lady Jacqueline hopes to occupy the house long enough so that no one really notices when it becomes hers in name as well.

Jenevieve Tanneux

The strange cat is guided by where the omens take her – she has an uncanny knack of finding those who dabble in the strange and the portentous. She may "tag along" with the Player-Characters, since by their nature PCs get into lots of trouble. She can also be used as a plot device, showing up "out of the blue" to tell one of the PCs of a vision she has had of some errand that they must perform. (This kind of device works well once; after that, it's no longer "strange".)

Doctor Plith's Books of Magic

If Plith's books are acquired by the Player-Characters, one or more PCs may want to learn to learn the new spell lists. The Black Magic List is described in *Ironclaw*, p. 312. Kyndranigar's Virtue of Culture Spell List is described in the *Ironclaw Book of Mysteries*, on page 417. The Player who wants to learn a new Gift should make a note of it, and then they should begin spending Experience towards buying that new Gift. (As per *Ironclaw*, p. 134, it takes 10 Experience to learn a new Gift.)



As Game Host, you may want to limit the progress of “book-learned” spells by requiring Academics Skill Rolls. Have the Player roll their Academics Dice – whatever the Score is, that’s the maximum number of Experience they can spend on learning the Trait, that play session. Naturally, illiterate characters cannot learn spells from books.

The two books are:

Ye Book of Black Magick by Frater Perphredo. Any character with the Gift of Literacy may study this book, putting their Experience Points into buying the Gift of Apprentice Necromancy, provided they have the other prerequisites.

On the Virtue of Culture, by Kyndranigar the Shadow-Magus. Any character with the Gift of Literacy may study this book, putting their Experience Points into buying the “Virtue of Culture” Gift, provided they have the other prerequisites.

The Spear of Septagus

If Septagus is freed, one way of stopping him might be to use his own spear. The Spear of Septagus has the following powers:

It can be wielded using the Mélée Combat skill, as a Pike. It has a hollow metal shaft and a shiny steel head, with seven barbs.

It can strike at any creature, even ones that are immaterial, such as ghosts or Air Elementals.

When rolling to hit a target, any die over the target’s highest showing die that is also a 7 adds +1 damage, above and beyond any other damage. Likewise, when any of the target’s Soak or Armor Dice shows a 7, subtract two damage that would be caused.

Any supernatural being, such as an elemental, undead, or Septagus himself, that is struck with an Overwhelming Success on a Mélée Combat Roll, has become impaled upon the spear. It will remain impaled until the spear is removed by some other force. Supernatural beings so impaled cannot use any supernatural powers, and they cannot be magically compelled, activated, coerced, or otherwise manipulated until the spear is removed.

Dramatis Personae

What follows is a list of the relevant gaming information for the prominent NPCs in this adventure. Each write-up includes a brief description of the character, their rules and statistics, and their personal “list” of priorities, ranked in order of importance.

As Game Host, when you are playing the role of an NPC, check the NPC’s List to see what their priorities are, to better help you decide how the character would behave.

Doctor Hubert Plith



A short fox, and slim. His fur has the standard colorings. Plith generally wears very plain, but very well tailored clothes. His skill as a healer is well-known among the nobles of House Rinaldi and Doloreaux.

Plith hails from Triskellian, where he was the court physic to a minor house. He left that position about 2 years ago for no apparent reason and set up house-keeping in Bruges. His choice of cities is rather curious, as most Doloreaux nobles rely on the healing services of the Lutarist clergy. Plith came here for a reason of his own, however.



<i>Hubert Plith</i>	<i>Elite Red Fox Apothecary (Major)</i>
Goals	1. Gain ultimate power by divining the secrets of the past. 2. Survive 3. Maintain his dignity and pride.
Traits	Body d6, Speed d8, Mind d12, Will d12 Red Fox d4 (Forest, Omnivore, Night) Apothecary d12 Dabbler d8
Skills	Academics d12 Climbing d8 Negotiation d8 Observation d8 Supernatural d10
Gifts	Danger Sense (bonus d12 to sense danger) Doctor (treat patients to assist healing quota) Fast-Talk (bonus d12 for quick negotiations) First Aid (bonus d12 to First Aid, not a stunt) Haggling (bonus d12 for money talk) Keen Ears (can hear faint sounds) Literacy (can read!) Mystic: Black Magic (bonus d12 to understand magic) Night Vision (poor lighting is good lighting) Research (bonus d12 to look things up)
Initiative	2d12, d8
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 4, Sprint d8, Run 18
Guard	Use "Guard" action for bonus d8 to all defenses
Aim	Use "Aim" action for bonus d8 to attack one target
Attack	Scalpel @ Close d6 – Damage +1, Critical Pistol @ Short d8 – Spark d10, Damage +2 Slaying
Counter	Scalpel @ Close d6 – Damage +1, Critical
Parry	Scalpel @ Close d6
Dodge	d8
Soak	d8, d6
Loot	Chainmail, scalpel, doctor's bag

Koblynau

Hideous, pale, and hairless, these monsters are lean and gaunt creatures with chalky-skin, through which their veins and arteries may clearly be seen. They are the undead guardians of Septagus' tomb. Originally under the will of their imprisoned creator, Doctor Plith will use the Necromancy Spell Mass Animation to bring them under his sway.

Koblynau	Typical Horde
Goals	1. Obey the master without question. 2. Smite the living.
Traits	Body d12, Speed d4, Mind none, Will d4 Koblynau d10
Skills	Brawling d6 Dodge d6 Observation d6 Stealth d6
Gifts	Pack Tactics (d8 when threatening with ally, d12 if ally is Guarding) Resolve (include Will with Soak)
Initiative	d4
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 3, Sprint d4, Run 19
Guard	Use "Guard" action for bonus d8 to all defenses
Aim	Use "Aim" action for bonus d8 to attack one target
Attack	Claws @ Close d12, d10, d6 – Damage +1, Critical Teeth @ Close d12, d10, d6 – Damage +1, Grapple Pack Tactics = bonus d8 Tactics to hit target for each ally ... or bonus d12 to Tactics for each threatening, Guarding ally
Counter	Claws @ Close d12, d10, d6 – Damage +1, Grapple
Parry	Claws @ Close d12, d10, d6
Dodge	d6, d4
Soak	d8, d6 Immune to Afraid, Critical, Fatigued, Impaling, Sick, Slaying (except Holy), Terrified, healing, starvation, suffocation, sleep deprivation
Loot	Suffers Slaying damage vs. Holy attacks None

MARTYR OF THE CATACOMBS

Maxim Bauer



When people talk about “bad customers”, they usually refer to people like Maxim Bauer. Square of shoulder, with a muzzle that’s crooked from being broken once and then re-set improperly, Max looks like the last person one would expect to be a humble herbalist shop-keeper. That’s because he’s not – he’s a career criminal. After getting tired of numerous scrapes and fights, he eventually settled into the career of grave-robber, which is how he made the acquaintance of Hilliam Luce. Maxim found he liked the work – the risks are great, but the hours are short and he rarely has to deal with people directly. After this adventure, he will probably move on to a new career.

Maxim Bauer

Elite Boar Worker (Major)

Goals

1. Survive.
2. Avoid getting caught.
3. Make money.

Traits

Body d12, Speed d6, Mind d8, Will d8
Boar d10 (Forest, Omnivore, Twilight)
Worker d10
Merchant d4

Skills

Craft d8
Dodge d6
Melee Combat d8
Observation d6
Ranged Combat d8
Stealth d6
Searching d8

Gifts

Bribery (bonus d12 to inquire about or make bribes)
Carousing (bonus d12 when drinking)
Charging Strike (X to sprint and attack as one action)
Diplomacy (bonus d12 for long negotiations)
Fast-Talk (bonus d12 for quick negotiations)
Haggling (bonus d12 for money talk)
Increased Trait: Body (Trait up!)
Literacy (can read and write)
Local Knowledge: Bruges (for bonus d12)
Resolve (include Will with Soak)
Streetwise (bonus d12 to deal with criminals)
Strength (bonus d8 with Melee, Brawl, Thrown Attacks)
Team Player (give allies bonus d12 in assist rolls)
Tracking (bonus d12 to follow trails)
Vengeful Fighter (bonus d12 to counter when Hurt, Injured or Afraid)

Initiative

d8, d6

Movement

Stride 1, Dash 4, Sprint d6, Run 20

Guard

Use “Guard” action for bonus d8 to all defenses

Aim

Use “Aim” action for bonus d8 to attack one target

Attack

Shovel @ Close d12, d8 – Damage +2

Fusil @ Long d8, d6 – Spark d10, Damage +3, Slaying

Counter

Shovel @ Close d12 – Damage +2

Parry

Shovel @ Close d12 – Damage +2

Dodge

2d6

Soak

d12, d8, d6

Loot

Leather Armor, Shovel, Fusil, 15 denarii

MARTYR OF THE CATACOMBS

Hilliam Luce



Hilliam is a short feline of average build, with a blue-black pelt and green eyes. Normally, he dresses in rather fine clothes and a feathered hat. He has traded these fine clothes for a drab cloak, but his well made boots and trousers may give him away.

Hilliam is an up and coming young solicitor, but beyond a well-defined code of morality and duty, he is no different from many others. Normally, he would have lived his life quietly enough, advising nobles and rich merchants on legal matters. However, his recent experiences have forced into a new role - that of fugitive. He does not enjoy this life ... If, somehow, the players were able to spirit him away from Bruges, he would not join them for a life of adventure. Instead he would travel straight to the courts of Triskellian and throw himself on their mercy.

Hilliam Luce

Elite Cat Solicitor* (Major)

Goals

1. Survive.
2. Evade capture.
3. Make money.

Traits Body d6, Speed d8, Mind d10, Will d8

Cat d4 (Forest, Carnivore, Night)

Solicitor d10

*Career Skills are Academics, Negotiation, and Inquiry

*Career Gifts are Law, Oratory, Literacy

Dabbler d8

Skills Academics d8

Climbing d6

Dodge d8

Melee Combat d6

Observation d8

Ranged Combat d8

Stealth d6

Supernatural d8

Gifts Acrobat (acrobatic dash, extra 'stand up' action)

Etiquette (bonus d12 for manners)

Increased Trait: Speed (Trait up!)

Law (bonus d12 with legal matters)

Literacy (can read and write)

Mystic: Black Magic (bonus d12 to understand magic)

Night Vision (poor lighting is good lighting)

Oratory (bonus d12 for public speaking)

Research (bonus d12 to look things up)

Streetwise (bonus d12 to deal with criminals)

Initiative d10, d8

Movement Stride 1, Dash 4, Sprint d8, Run 18

Guard Use "Guard" action for bonus d8 to all defenses

Aim Use "Aim" action for bonus d8 to attack one target

Attack Pistol @ Short 2d8 – Damage +2, Slaying

Dodge 2d8

Soak 2d6

Loot Leather Armor, two Pistols, book on legal code

MARTYR OF THE CATACOMBS

Jenevieve Tanneux



Jenevieve is a very slender feline, almost painfully so. She has a dark brown pelt and a wiry frame. When working in Plith's apothecary shop, she dresses in drab clothes. When out on "assignment," she wears leather armor and a dark blue cloak.

She has been in Plith's employ for about three years now. She was living on the streets of Triskellian, making a living as a beggar and petty thief. When she saw Doctor Plith on the street, her ability to read the omens made it clear to her that she should follow this man, because "great things" would follow in his wake. With some quick fast-talking and a demonstration of her skills, the Doctor hired her to watch his shop.

Jenevieve is a peculiar sort – she does not believe in "free will", but rather that everything is pre-destined to happen for a reason. Her behavior seems random to other folks, but to herself she feels she is "reading the signs" and doing what she is supposed to do. She can be frustrating to talk to, as she only "tells folks what they need to know."

<i>Jenevieve Tanneux</i>		<i>Elite Cat Apothecary (Major)</i>
Goals	1. Take the easiest way out of any situation. 2. Follow where the omens take her. 3. Survive.	
Traits	Body d8, Speed d12, Mind d8, Will d6 Cat d10 (Forest, Carnivore, Night) Apothecary d4	
Skills	Academics d8 Climbing d6 Dodge d8 Melee Combat d6 Observation d8 Stealth d6 Supernatural d8 Throwing d8	
Gifts	Acrobat (acrobatic dash, extra 'stand up' action) Ambidexterity (all hands are good hands) First Aid (bonus d12 to First Aid, not a stunt) Increased Trait: Speed (Trait up!) Literacy (can read and write) Night Vision (poor lighting is good lighting) Research (bonus d12 to look things up)	
Initiative	d12, d8	
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 6, Sprint d12, Run 26	
Guard	Use "Guard" action for bonus d8 to all defenses	
Aim	Use "Aim" action for bonus d8 to attack one target	
Attack	Knife @ Close d8, d6 – Damage +1 Dagger @ Medium (Thrown) d12, 2d8 – Damage +1	
Counter	Knife @ Close d8, d6 – Damage +1	
Parry	Knife @ Close d8, d6	
Dodge	d12, d8	
Soak	d8, d6	
Loot	Leather Armor, Knife, Dagger, Cloak	

Roncalli

A monkey who dresses in slightly gaudy, though stylish fashions. He is fond of feathered hats and ruffled silk shirts. He tends to take charge of situations ... or at least tries to. If any of his companions are dead set against one of his plans, he will shrug and go along with their idea, no matter how suicidal it seems.

Roncalli	Elite Monkey Highwayman (Major)	
Goals	1. Survive	
	2. Make money.	
	3. Show everyone what a masterful rogue he is.	
Traits	Body d8, Speed d12, Mind d6, Will d8	Monkey d6 (Forest, Herbivore, Day)
Skills	Brawling d6 Climbing d6 Dodge d8 Jumping d8 Melee Combat d8	Observation d6 Presence d6 Ranged Combat d8 Riding d8 Stealth d6
Gifts	Acrobat (acrobatic dash, extra 'stand up' action) Contortionist (bonus d12 to escape or squeeze through) Dilettante's Trappings (Dilettante stuff!) Etiquette (bonus d12 for manners) Fencing (add dodge dice to parry) Increased Trait: Mind (Trait up!) Prehensile Tail (tail counts as off hand) Prehensile Feet (both feet count as off hands) Rider's Trappings (Rider stuff!) Streetwise (bonus d12 to deal with criminals)	
Initiative	d12, d6	
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 6, Sprint d12, Run 26	
Guard	Use "Guard" action for bonus d8 to all defenses	
Aim	Use "Aim" action for bonus d8 to attack one target	
Attack	Rapier @ Close 2d8 – Damage +2, Impale Pistol @ Short d12, d8 – Damage +2, Slaying	
Counter	Rapier @ Close 2d8 – Damage +2, Impale	
Parry	Rapier @ Close 3d8	
Dodge	d12, d8	
Soak	d8, d6	
Loot	Rapier, two Pistols, Leather Armor, over-the-top outfit	

Kierns

A grey-furred goat, he dresses almost invariably in black cloaks, which tend to make him look a little sinister. Kierns and Roncalli often run into minor conflicts on the direction the group should take. Kierns is an avowed sniper in combat. While others are in the thick of things, Kierns will generally retire to some safe spot in the distance and pick off opponents with his crossbow. If the players ever meet Kierns socially, they will find him to be an incredible egomaniac. He will listen intently to whatever they say, then blink and say something like, "Are we talking about me now?"

Kierns	Elite Goat Burglar (Major)	
Goals	1. Survive.	
	2. Make the most amount of money while doing the least work.	
	3. Talk about himself and what interests him.	
Traits	Body d8, Speed d10, Mind d8, Will d6	Goat d4 (Mountains, Herbivore, Day)
Skills	Burglar d12	Climbing d8 Dodge d6 Jumping d8 Observation d6
Gifts	Charging Strike (X to sprint and attack as one action) Diplomacy (bonus d12 for long negotiations) Fast Climber (climbing is an action, not a stunt) Haggling (bonus d12 for money talk) Increased Trait: Will (Trait up!) Resolve (include Will with Soak) Shadowing (bonus d12 to follow people) Streetwise (bonus d12 to deal with criminals) Sure-Footed (ignore bad footing, re-roll Sprint die if 1)	
Initiative	d10, d8	
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 5, Sprint d10, Run 23	
Guard	Use "Guard" action for bonus d8 to all defenses	
Aim	Use "Aim" action for bonus d8 to attack one target	
Attack	Lever Crossbow @ Long d10, d8 – Damage +2	
Dodge	d10, d6	
Soak	2d8	
Loot	Chainmail, Shovel, Fusil, 15 denarii, hand mirror	



THE RESCUE OF MIRANDA DEVOISIER

Being a Daring Sojourn into Phelan Demesne and an Accounting of the Strange Personages and Events Found Within

What Has Gone On Before

The rise of literacy among the middle-class has created a need for “greater learning,” the study of history, linguistics, geography, and the like. Many years ago, the Dunwasser shipping company of Triskellian started a correspondence service, copying notes and maps and cataloging them for reference. Although they are still active in shipping (owning stakes in about three ships), today most of their trade is in information. For a hefty sum, the Dunwasser College staff can make information about all sorts of things available, and they have full-time copyists to produce maps, navigation charts, and mathematical aids such as logarithm tables (which are invaluable to the Navigator’s Guild). The College is also home to one of the few printing presses.

There are those who believe that the Dunwasser employees are also maintaining a spy network, since their agents travel to the most remote places and have deep pockets. Dunwasser academics deny such allegations ... but it is certainly true that they send “journeyman students” all over Calabria to learn about the world.

Miranda Devoisier is such a Journeywoman. This raccoon is the world’s foremost expert on the Phelan. She can speak the Bérla Féini language fluently, and she knows the customs well enough to get along with the folk. She has traveled through the Wildenlands and into the darkest parts of the Muire Forest in search of the Shenn Charnane. So that she may be promoted to the Master Rank of Dunwasser College, she has been composing her life’s work: the greatest treatise on the Phelan ever written.

Unfortunately, Fate had other plans. After booking passage on the ship *Chanceux Fils* at the northern port of Mortemere, she was composing the final draft of her treatise when her ship ran into foul weather. The storm ran her ship aground on the rocky cliffs at the base of Cathair Murias.

Whether it is by luck or by virtue of her own capacity, Miranda was the only survivor of the shipwreck. However, the Phelan of Iargúl declared the ship and everything aboard as “bounty from the sea” — including Miranda herself. After dividing the spoils,

Miranda was sold as the slave to a Phelan Noble named Dúr Gilroy.

When two weeks went by and the *Chanceux Fils* failed to arrive in port, the Dunwasser College faculty made inquiries of their sources. Gossip travels quickly in Phelan lands if you know the proper people to talk to, and the grim fate of Miranda and her ship were discovered. Now that they are certain she is alive, a rescue mission can be undertaken.

Getting the Players Involved

Every gaming group is different. Some parties concentrate on militancy and combat, while others prefer to solve their problems through reason and other “higher” methods. Most groups are somewhere in between. You, as Game Host, know your Players and Characters better than we do, and it’s up to you to find a way to get them involved in this escapade.

Hooks

In order to “hook” your Player-Characters into this plot, there has to be something in the context of the story that would motivate them to participate. What are your PC’s motivations? What drives them to adventure? Here are some suggestions that may help you.

- ↔ Are any of your PCs members of the clergy? A Penitent of S’allumer PC may be asked to deliver a letter or other parcel to Brother Philippe at his mission in Cathair Murias. The academics of Dunwasser College, in turn, will find out about this trip and ask for help in their own personal plight.
- ↔ If your characters are scholars, they may have connections among the academics in the Dunwasser College, which may net them the lucrative job. Or they may owe the Dunwasser faculty a favor for previous services.

- ↔ Do your Player-Characters have any ties among the nobility? The Noble Houses of Triskellian have distrust of all middle-class organizations, such as Dunwasser College. A lord of the houses of Avoirdupois, Bisclavret, or Doloreaux may “volunteer” to send a party to recover Miss Devoisier ... with strict instructions for the party to report back all that they observe.
- ↔ Are any of your PCs criminals? This rescue mission does not only pay handsomely, it is also a trip that will take oneself out of town for two months — great for anyone who’s done something that would attract too much of the “wrong” kind of attention and needs to wait for “the heat to die down.”
- ↔ The Phelan are masters of mysterious Wizardly Magic and obscure Atavisms. Player-Characters may be looking for an excuse to journey into Phelan territory, and this rescue mission would be one.
- ↔ The Dunwasser College will try to hire mercenaries who have experience in a strange land, who can both make a show of force if they are threatened with violence but can also be diplomatic when it’s called for. Any Player-Characters who fit that bill will be the first to be hired.
- ↔ Any Player-Character with a background that gives them understanding of the geography of Calabria in general, or the Phelan in specific, would be a good choice to lead this mission.
- ↔ As Game Host, you can introduce Miranda Devoisier in a different adventure, perhaps as a tag-along NPC who joins up with the Player-Characters for a bit, so that they would develop a “personal connection” with her. Later, when you run this adventure, the PCs would have personal motivation to rescue her.
- ↔ Choose the episodes that you think your Players will enjoy — skip the ones they don’t. For example, if your Players don’t like combat and other such dire situations, then don’t use the “Bandit” episode described below. If you don’t think your Players would have fun participating in the “Swamp” episode, then skip that. You should also feel free to improvise new episodes or make major changes.
- ↔ Let the Players exercise their free will. Your Players may choose not to help poor Lugaid in his cage, or they may want to skirt around the swamp. Never force your PCs to participate in encounters — your best bet is to be familiar with your PC’s Gifts, Skills, and other motivations, and then tweak the episodes to play on those. It will make the Players feel more involved and it will make for a more satisfying game.

How to Run This Adventure

As Game Host, your job is to make sure the adventure runs smoothly, that all the PCs are getting “screen time” and contributing to the game experience.

- ↔ Episodes in the game should be tailored to your group. Many of the episodes in this game won’t happen until the Player-Characters actually “show up” at the places where they take place. The trick is to encourage your Players to want to solve whatever dilemma the episode causes, and then to be eager to move on to the next one.

Preparing for the Journey

Your Party of Player-Characters will probably be somewhere else in Calabria, most likely haunting the ports of Triskellian, or perhaps in another place of prominence, when they are hired by the Dunwasser College to rescue Miss Devoisier.

The last stop of “civilized land” before entering Phelan demesne is the Bisclavret city of Harrowgate. This will be the last place they will be able to spend denarii — the Phelan do not acknowledge any form of coinage. Also, they will be treading into a land that will not have inns or way stations — they will have to camp in the woods and live off the land.

The only food they can carry that will not spoil would be “hard-tack” biscuits, dried fruit, and nuts. At Harrowgate, one day’s meal of “iron rations” would cost about 1 denar and would weigh $\frac{1}{4}$ stone and is freely available. The Phelan lands are mostly Forest and Plains — those characters with poor Searching dice may find themselves going hungry.

Hired Help

Your Player-Characters may want to hire people to carry their bags and perform general duty — such folk are often called hirelings. Harrowgate is host to all sorts of folk who have a passing familiarity with Phelan territories and would be willing to brave the dangers in return for cash and a share of the spoils.



A hireling is “skilled labor” and thus expects 2 denarii a day. Since it will probably take three weeks to reach the coast and back, then the starting price would start at 42 denarii. (Trying to negotiate a lower price will almost definitely result in lower-quality help.)

Your typical “denarii-a-day” hireling has the same statistics as a Typical from the Ironclaw book, p. 254. They can be of any Race or Career, though wise Players will look to hire folks with Races appropriate for Forest or Plains Habitats and with Careers appropriate for foraging and for travel, such as Bodyguards, Mercenaries, Rangers, and Scouts. (As Game Host, if you think your party is weak in certain areas — poor magic, poor at ranged combat, poor survival skills — then you should make those kinds of hirelings available for hire.)

Hirelings hired to fight will want a share. (If the players insist, you can use a standard “privateer” scheme, where the captain gets 3 shares, the first-officer gets 2, and everyone else gets 1. This scheme makes the math more complicated.) Combat hirelings will stay in the fray, even if they are Afraid — if just to Guard and to provide Tactics bonuses for their friends. Combat hirelings who become Injured will break rank and flee. They may, or may not, come back later.

Non-combat hirelings are not entitled to any share of loot from a battle ... but they’re also not expected to fight. They’ll spend every battle using their actions to fall back (Dash or Sprint away from the center of the fight and behind cover) and Guarding. They may attempt pathetic Rallies (with Range penalties!) if it doesn’t cost them anything.

As Game Host, you control all hireling NPCs. Remember that hirelings are people in their own right — if their PC masters are cruel or unwise, then their hirelings will probably desert them.

As a narrative device, you can use hirelings to show off the dangers of the Phelan territories by using them as “cannon fodder.” They can wander off the trail, only

to sink into a bog without a trace. In any ambush, several NPCs could all gang up and attack one poor hireling, killing him instantly. Anything that the extras in movies and television usually suffer through, the hirelings can also suffer.

Foraging

There are no inns or way-stops in Phelan lands. Unlike other parts of Triskellian, there are no traveling traders or caravans moving goods from one place to another. As Game Host, you should impress upon your players that they are no longer in “civilized lands.” Some things to keep in mind:

- ↔ The coins of denarii and aureals have no value in Phelan lands. If the PCs want something from a Phelan NPC, they will have to trade something or perform some favor. Remember that the Phelan are a no-nonsense, earthy-type folk, more interested in tools and weapons than expensive gimmicks.
- ↔ There are no inns. The PCs will most likely be camping out in the wilderness. It is doubtful they will be able to carry all the food they need. Foraging in Phelan lands isn’t too hard — each success of Mind & Searching vs. 3 will turn up one day’s worth of barely-edible food (and there’s a whole bunch of gifts that will help, like Survival and Tracking) ... But the PCs might run trespass on someone’s property, or they might run afoul of the deadly bandits or monsters that lurk within.
- ↔ Finding water is not a big problem, but sustenance may be difficult. If a character goes without a meal, they will slowly starve. In game terms, a character that goes one day without eating cannot rest, so they cannot Refresh Respite Gifts or heal Injuries, except by magical means such as White Magic Spells. A character that goes without eating for a week straight will become Sick. Every day without a meal, they must roll Body & Will vs. 2d6. On a Failure, they become Dying.
- ↔ Desperation, or perhaps slothfulness, might prompt the PCs to steal from someone. Player-Characters can loot someone else’s traps, or even swipe foodstuffs from a farm that they walk past. As Game Host, you should ask the Players about what sort of scheme they want to undertake, then assign a difficulty to the task and ask everyone to roll their dice.



Interludes

This adventure is structured as a few “tales” or episodes that happen as the Player-Characters press forward into Phelan territory. However, several days will pass between each one. As Game Host, you need to be aware of what your Player-Characters enjoy and dislike, and you need to pace the adventure accordingly. To impress upon your players some of the mystery and danger of the Phelan landscape, work these interludes into the game.

- ↳ The PCs will have to walk past a farm or two. Any folk they encounter will watch them pass with keen interest, but as long as the PCs are not overtly hostile, they will keep their distance.
- ↳ While wandering across an almost-lost trail, the Players could walk past a standing-stone, its carvings nearly lost by hundreds of years of weathering.
- ↳ At night, strange howls can be heard. Only those who know the Baer Sgairneach will be able to decipher them. Mostly the cries will be of little use to the PCs — some wolf bragging about how great he is and some other group trying to drown him out, news of the passing of some important personage, news that a band of outlanders are wandering about, etc.
- ↳ The PCs could stumble across some of the dangerous fauna of the countryside — perhaps a pack of bethrachranna, or even one of the dreaded uadh-chrith. This sort of interlude is appropriate if the Party gets lost.
- ↳ The PCs come across a religious ceremony, several Druids making a sacrifice by throwing bits of jewelry into a pond. The Player-Characters may wait until the Druids leave and then retrieve the valuables from the water — this could incur the risk of reprisal from the Druids and their friends, or perhaps even supernatural “bad luck.”
- ↳ The PCs stumble across two families solving a dispute without violence. Instead, each has brought a Fool who hurls insults at the rival family. Eventually, one Fool will become flustered and will resort to fisticuffs, and the two families will hoot, holler, and otherwise cheer them on. Once only one Fool is left standing, the two families will amicably part ways after this strange spectacle is over.

Suggested Outline for the Adventure

- ↳ The Player-Characters gear up at Harrowgate, and travel west-by-northwest.
- ↳ After traveling one league or so, the PCs are attacked by Dallg ag Dael and his gang, as in “The Tale of the Evil-Eyed Shrew,” page 626.
- ↳ After traveling seven more leagues through Plains and Forest, they will come across Hagan fasting in front of Lugaid’s house, as in “The Tale of the Wronged Man,” page 626.
- ↳ After traveling four more leagues through Forest, they will be approached by Jilleen, as in “The Tale of the Crying Raven,” page 627.
- ↳ If the Players choose to help Lugaid, they will become involved in “The Tale of the War-Goblin,” page 627.
- ↳ After traveling ten more leagues, the PCs must make a choice — either pass through the mountains or through the swamp. (“The Tale of the Crossroads,” page 629)
- ↳ If they choose the mountains, they will struggle against the elements.
- ↳ If they choose the swamp, they may encounter the strange Foud ibn-Habsallah (“The Tale of the Necromancer,” page 630), or they may be ambushed by the Feòcullan (“The Tale of the Skunk Warriors,” page 631).
- ↳ After traveling ten more leagues, the PCs will arrive at Cathair Murias. Some quick inquiries will reveal that Miranda Devoisier is alive and the slave of Dúr Gilroy. The PCs will have to get Miranda out of his custody, as in “The Tale of the Noble and his Slave,” page 631.
- ↳ Miranda will insist that they retrieve her satchel, which she buried on top of the hill. Alas, in the month she has been held captive, Beltane has come and gone and the mistletoe has come into bloom, and strange magicks have come into being, as in “The Tale of the Haunted Hilltop,” page 633.
- ↳ Finally, if all has gone well, the PCs will go home, as in “Dénouement,” page 635.



The Tale of the Evil-Eyed Shrew

When the players have traveled out of sight of Harrowgate, they are quickly ambushed by a gang of Phelan marauders. These ruffians are the types who make forays into Bisclavret territory to rob outlanders and to take slaves.

The gang's strength should be proportional to how much you think your Players can handle. Check the Ironclaw Book, p. 254, for Sample Opponents to use. If your party is about "average" combat strength, then there should be about one Typical per PC. If your party is a bit stronger, mix in one or more Typical Horde. (When in doubt, under-estimate your PC's strength.)

The gang is led by Dallóg ag Dael, a Shrew Slaver. He is not known for his subtlety or his discretion — he will freely confront the Player-Characters on the road, from a hilltop, and he will issue the following threat:

"Outlanders! Know that you trespass upon Phelan land! Whether you have chosen to do this out of bravado or out of folly is not my concern. It is my labor to tell you that you are no longer under the protection of your lords and ladies, your guilds and your constables! It is your misfortune that you are now to be taken by Dallóg ag Dael and his fellow compatriots, to be shackled and led away to your new life, to toil for your new masters, the Phelan. Now, lay down your arms and surrender to us, so that your new life may begin swiftly and easily!"

Dallóg ag Dael is actually spoiling for a fight, and he will be disappointed if the Player-Characters surrender. It will be difficult to negotiate with him, as he enjoys watching a good fight, and he has several henchmen who are eager to prove themselves worthy to be Fianna and are thus itching for battle. He should have one Typical (see Ironclaw, p. 254) for each Player-Character ... unless you think your PCs are especially good at combat, then he should have twice as many or more.

Resolving the Encounter with Dallóg ag Dael

By no means will Dallóg ag Dael and his men fight to the death. This is a bandit attack — they are looking for interesting stuff to steal, maybe even slaves to run off with. If they suffer severe losses, they will flee. Dallóg ag Dael will abandon fallen comrades without a second thought — none of them are Fianna yet, and by falling in battle, they have shown that they are still "wet behind the ears" and have much to learn. He will use his Local Area Knowledge of escape routes in any Chase Contests (q.v. Ironclaw, p. 145).

Dallóg ag Dael should lose this encounter — the purpose of this encounter is to introduce the Player-Characters early in this adventure is that they are outlanders wandering into a landscape where they have

few friends and many enemies. This encounter should also give you a good feel for how powerful your party of PCs is in a combat situation. Do they co-operate and use defensive tactics, or do they charge in without any strategy? Are they good at close quarters? Are they good using ranged weapons? This will be good to know when you choose to stage battles later on.

The Tale of the Wronged Man

While wandering across the countryside, the Players come across what looks like an abandoned farm. Fields are overgrown and cumalaí wander the pasture untended.

Sitting next to the door of the house is Hagan, with a stern expression on his face. He will watch the players approach with keen interest. If they look dangerous, he will flee for his life. Otherwise, he has had nothing to do for the past few days and is bored enough to strike up a conversation.

Questions the PCs may ask Hagan

"Who are you and why do you sit here?"

"My name is Hagan mac Airmid. I sit here because that yellow-livered Lugaid mac Uathach is off cowering in the hills somewhere rather than facing me."

"Who is Lugaid and why are you mad at him?"

"Do you see this house here? This is Lugaid's house. This man, he would like to think that he can do as he pleases and expect that no one would stand up to him. But I, I am of Airmid's blood, and I was brought up to say what's right and to do what's right!"

"I don't expect you outlanders to understand our ways, but here, we take our land and our cumalaí seriously. This Lugaid, if he thinks he can get away with stealing from my land and rustling from my herd, he has another thing coming!"

(Hagan will go on and on about how Lugaid has wronged him. The gist of his story is that Hagan believes Lugaid and his family has been stealing from Hagan's property.)

"Where are Lugaid and the rest of his family?"

"Lugaid himself, he's not just a thief but a coward. No doubt he has taken to the hills, hoping that I will weaken first." (Hagan will stand up and shout to the hills, shaking his fist.) "You hear me, Lugaid? Hagan's still here! You won't be rid of me that easy, you mud-bug!"

"Ahem. As for his brood, they 'claim' they are off searching for him, that he's disappeared."



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"Why do you sit here waiting for him to return?"

"That is a question I would expect from an outlander. You seem quick, just ignorant, so I will tell you. As per our law, I am fasting here on Lugaid's doorstep, since he has refused to answer my call for arbitration. After four more nights, the Brehon that my daughter has summoned will arrive, and I am sure to win my grievance against Lugaid's accursed household."

What Hagan Doesn't Know

In reality, it was not Lugaid who stole Hagan's cattle. The evil Druid Ua-Dáire has captured Lugaid and used the spell Steal Guise to take his appearance. Ua-Dáire wants to pit Phelan against Phelan and to destroy the social order that exiled him.

The Tale of the Crying Raven

This next event takes place after two days' travel away from Lugaid's farm. Shortly after sunrise, a raven will alight on a high tree branch and will squawk down at the players:

"Attention, good folk of the land! Know this, that just over the hill of the broken rock, Lugaid mac Uathach clutches the bars of an iron cage and begs for freedom! Will no one help him?"

If the PCs ignore her (or even worse, attack her), then she will fly off in search of others.

Questions the PCs may have for Jilleen the Raven

What follows are some of the common questions your Player-Characters may ask Jilleen.

"Who are you and what do you do?"

"I am Jilleen sen Isibéal, a messenger of the Fiach, masters of the noonday sky. While we Fiach are of feather and the Phelan are of fur, we are both cousins in this place, as the clouds are cousin to the rivers below."

"What has happened to Lugaid?"

"He has been captured by a Morrínga! He is held in an iron cage, inside a cave just over the broken rocks of yonder hill. He has not seen the stars of night nor the light of day for a week or more, and he starves at the hands of the cruel beast! Pray save him!"

"What is a "Mor-REEGH-naw"?"

"It is a beast most foul, twice the size of a wolf and twice as fast as a raven! While it has the beak and feathers of my kind, it walks on two legs and has the fingers and thumbs of your kind. It guards the cave

against those who would enter, night or day, without sleep."

"How did you know Lugaid was in this cave?"

"I am Fiach, I am Raven. Where some hear only the whistle of the wind, we Fiach can hear the whispers of what is and what will be. When I woke up this morning, I could see by the way the leaves canted in the breeze that they were pointing me in this direction, to address this wrong against my land-bound cousin."

(Jilleen is referring to the innate skill of Supernatural that all Ravens have.)

"Why can't you help him?"

"He is trapped in a cage of iron. A heavy bar that would take two stout men to lift seals the door to his cage. And, as you can see, I am too small to free him."

Resolving the Encounter with Jilleen

Jilleen will try to talk the characters into helping Lugaid. If they refuse, then she will fly off to find someone else.

If they attack Jillian, she has the same attributes as a Typical Raven Messenger (with d6 in all relevant skills). She will flee any combat at her first opportunity. She has no loot.

If the Player-Characters agree to save Lugaid, then Jilleen will lead them as far as the hill with the broken rocks, which are marked with a curious spiral pattern. Below is a valley of dense trees.

The Tale of the War-Goblin

Off the beaten path, in a copse of trees growing in a boggy valley is the mouth of a cave, stalks the most feared monster in all of Phelan lore — the Morrínga.

Unbeknownst to the players, this Morrínga is in collusion with Ua-Dáire. Having stolen Lugaid's appearance with Steal Guise, Ua-Dáire is marauding across the countryside, committing crimes in Lugaid's name. The Morrínga's motivation is that anything that causes trouble among its enemies, the Phelan, is a good thing.

Outside the cave are numerous bushes, shoots, and loam that grow in the rich soil. Anyone in the bushes can claim soft cover (bonus d4 Cover) and good concealment (bonus d8 Concealment).

Inside the cave, it is pitch-black. Only those with Echolocation can make Attack Rolls without penalty. (See the Environment rules in the Ironclaw book p. 151 for details on fighting in total darkness.) Lugaid is trapped in a cage in the corner, sealed with an iron lever that must be lifted to unbar the door. It would take three successes on a roll of Body & Strength vs. 3 to release

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him – impossible without bonus dice or unless characters work together (using the Assist rule). Unfortunately, the cage is not very well oiled, and lifting the bar will make a loud noise, alerting the Morrígna.

Fighting the Morrígna

If the PCs try to surprise the Morrígna, they will start the fight and thus get to attack first. The Morrígna will fight everyone to the best of its ability; it is formidable enough to take on an entire party of PCs.

If anyone among the PCs is Honorable (or Overconfident), they may challenge the Morrígna to single combat. If so challenged, it will accept, choosing a duel of swords (naturally). If the challenger argues that they have no sword, then the Morrígna will produce its back-up weapon, and then offer the blade with a smile.

When fighting, the Morrígna will not want to leave the copse of trees or the cave — despite the reputations of the war-goblins, this Morrígna doesn't like to take risks.

If the battle goes poorly (that is, if it's forced to exhaust all its Saving Gifts), the Morrígna will flee, while shouting a variety of curses. The PCs can chase after it, but they probably won't be able to catch it.

If all is lost and it cannot flee, it will surrender. It will offer to return the favor of letting it live by granting the warriors who vanquished it one "labor". To seal this magic, the Morrígna will give the victor one of its feathers, and it will tell its name, "Badb ná Cosair Chró." (In other words, the Player-Character will be able to say, "Badb ná Cosair Chró, come to me!" and this Morrígna will appear, to perform one task.) While the Morrígna may be argumentative and belligerent, it will honor its own word. (Note that this is the *only* situation where the Morrígna will tell anyone what its name is.)

Talking to the Morrígna

Despite its fearsome countenance, the Morrígna is quite intelligent. It speaks Calabrese with a Bérla Féini accent, with a deep rumbling voice you would expect of a giant monster. It isn't very good conversation, though. Some examples:

“Who are you and what do you do?”

“I am a Morrígna! Look upon me and despair, puny mortal. But do not look too long, lest you die of fright. Myuh-heh-heh!”

“What is in that cave?”

“Are you still here? Since you are an outlander, then you are either ignorant or a fool, to think you may make demands of a Morrígna. What is in the cave is not your providence.”

“We know you have someone in the cave.”

Surrender him to us.”

“Myuh-heh-heh. Such impudent words. Again, you have mistaken me for someone who pays respects to one of your pathetic lords — I am Morrígna, and I am my own master. Now be away from this place while you still have the power to leave.”

“Why have you taken this man hostage?”

“You may have some wits about you after all. True, it is unusual that someone such as I would dare trifle in the affairs of you lowly-born mongrels. Yet there are reasons behind my actions, and I see no reason to dispose them to you.”

(In truth, the Morrígna is holding Lugaid hostage so that Ua-Dáire can continue to use the Steal Guise spell, which will stop working if Lugaid dies. The Morrígna will not let this slip unless it is somehow tricked into doing so.)

Dealing with the Morrígna

Like other kinds of people, the Morrígna can be tricked or confused. Players may try to use magic — spells such as Mesmerism might work. They could try sneaking past it (Ironclaw, p. 147). Or they may try bargaining with it, although it is unlikely they have anything the Morrígna might want, as money has no meaning to it and it already has fine arms and armor. The variety of what can happen is limited only by your Players' imaginations.

Resolution

If the PCs free Lugaid, he will thank them profusely. He is weak from hunger but otherwise physically okay, and he is shaken from his ordeal. The PCs should make all haste to return Lugaid to his farm so that he may tell everyone of his ordeal and clear his name before Hagan seizes his estate.

If the Morrígna escaped, it will probably return at some later time to exact its revenge. As Game Host, you are encouraged to play up the Morrígna's “monster” nature. Unlike a normal person, it shouldn't sneak into someone's house at night and murder him in their sleep or something like that. It should show up at some social event, like a parade or festival, where there will be dozens or hundreds to witness the PC's defeat. Or it should capture a loved one and spirit them off to a far hideaway, cackling gleefully as it does so in only the way melodramatic monsters do.

Of course, the Player-Characters may fail to free Lugaid, or they may even have ignored Jilleen... in which case, you should move on to “The Tale of the Crossroads,” page 620.



Questions the PCs may have for Lugaid

“Who are you and what do you do?”

“I am Lugaid mac Uathach, and I am but a simple farmer. Why this calamity has happened to me, I do not know! Thank you for saving me!”

“What happened to you?”

“It was a curious thing ... I had traveled into the Commons-Land near my farm, deep into the forest, looking for fallen wood. My axe has been sharpened once too many times, and I fear it no longer holds an edge. In my quest to find good firewood, I went deeper into the Commons-Land wood than I had ever traveled before.”

“I came across what appeared to be an old man sitting on a log. Once I satisfied myself that he was not armed nor did he have confederates in the woods, I approached him and asked him if he was lost.”

“He said that he was not, but that he was waiting for someone. He asked me my name. Knowing that to give a stranger your name is to give them power over you, I did not tell him. I only divulged that I was the master of a household not more than two leagues hence.

“With that, he laughed loudly and stood up — and at that moment I realized he was not a decrepit old man, but a stout, wild-eyed wolf with russet fur and gnarled fingers. He was Aos Daoine — as he stood on one leg and extended one hand, a rain of snow and ice descended from the sky, chilling me to my bones and holding me fast. As I watched in silent terror, he invoked more words of power, a sort of magic in which his appearance changed, to resemble mine!”

“Then from behind me, the giant arms of the war-goblin seized me, and I was spirited away, to be stuffed into that cave, where I have spent many nights.”

“What crimes did you commit against Hagan?”

“I have done nothing against Hagan! I fear that this witch, he has stolen my appearance and committed enormities in my name! I must go home immediately so that my family may know that I am alive and am innocent of wrong-doing!”

Lugaid will be eager to return home, and he would ask that at least one Player-Character come with him to give witness to his story.

The Tale of the Crossroads

As the PCs travel further into Phelan territory, they will come to a crossroad. Should they try to travel over the broken hills (a Mountains region with no roads), or should they try to brave the dangers of the swamp?

Should they take the path through the Broken Hills?

A roll of Mind & Academics vs. 3 that scores two or more successes will know that the Broken Hills are dangerous to pass. (Yes, gifts like Geography will help this roll.) There are numerous steep precipices into mist-shrouded valleys, and a waterfall or two. Much climbing will be involved.

If the PCs choose to cross over the mountains, then they will have some tough tests ahead of them. Barring some miracle, it will take three days to pass through. On each day, each traveler must roll their Body, Climbing, & Endurance dice vs. 3. (Yes, these dice are limited to d8 if you’re Burdened.)

Characters that fail to score any successes should have a minor mishap. Here are some ideas:

- ↔ While scrabbling over a slick surface, the character drops something important. It could be their pack or other easily replaceable items.
- ↔ One of the PCs could take a nasty fall — A flat 3 points of damage, Penetrating. This fall could be into one of the misty valleys, or perhaps into an unseen cave.
- ↔ Avalanche! The PCs may be required to roll Speed & Dodge vs. 4d6 as boulders rain down upon them. Getting hit means suffering Damage +1.

The choice to go through the mountains is more of a “man vs. nature” path than the swamp. Some Players will find this an exciting change of pace; others will be bored without any visible enemy. As Game Host, monitor your Players and spend as little or as much time on this part of the adventure as you think they’ll enjoy. Remember, there’s nothing like the loss of a hireling’s life to remind the Players of their own mortality.



Should they take the Swamp?

A roll of Mind, Academics & Supernatural vs. 3 that scores one or more successes will tell a PC that the Swamp is said to be haunted. (Yes, gifts like Geography will help this roll.)

The exact rumors of the haunting are variable — if multiple PCs pass this Test, each should know a different rumor! Here are some ideas:

- ++ In the darkness of the growth, sometimes floating lights can be seen. Do not approach them! These lights are the ghosts of people who have died in the swamps — they seek to lead travelers into quicksand so that they may die and join them.
- ++ A dread wizard makes his home in the swamp. He commands an army of goblins who kidnap children. Some say the wizard turns the children into goblins to serve him, others say that he turns them into soup.
- ++ Some believe that the Shenn Charnane is really hidden within this swamp, guarded by eighty-one warriors who have instructions to slay anyone who dare approach this lost place.
- ++ A tribe of subhuman cannibals lives here — folk who were once men but have become degenerate from the lack of light, from their own false religion, from their own foul practices, or what have you.
- ++ The truth of what is in the swamp is somewhat different, and offers you, as Game Host, the opportunity for one or two different encounters.
- ++ The swamp is also home to Foud ibn-Habsallah. See “The Tale of the Necromancer,” below. This encounter is a good role-playing opportunity.
- ++ The swamp is the home of a tribe of Feòcullan, the xenophobic skunk people. See below for details on encountering these folk. This encounter is very combat-intensive.

The Tale of the Necromancer

Even during the day, the swamp is shrouded in darkness. The ground must be tested every step, lest a misstep lead one into bottomless quicksand and an unmarked grave.

One of the characters, perhaps a hireling or the most skittish PC, should see mysterious shapes in the distance — shambling, humanoid figures. As Game Host, you should keep the Players guessing for a while exactly what they are up against. Eventually it will become clear that decaying bodies are rising out of the swamp — undead bodies, powered by arcane forces. The Players will probably take up arms and form a defensive line. At the right moment, a figure should

present himself, his accented voice booming over the muffled quiet of the mossy swamp:

“Hold! Know this, trespassers, that you have come into my demesne without making the proper offerings or the correct signs. Tell me — who would speak for you? Who is your leader? What banner or office do you serve?”

At this point, Foud and his undead apprentice should come forth. All shambling undead will halt at the sound of his voice.

Talking with Foud

Foud himself is curious about the outlanders. They’re obviously not the Feòcullan, who are the usual folk who come to harass him. And any non-Phelan in such a strange place is sure to arouse his curiosity. Being a wizard and a learned man, he will be curious about them. Here are some common questions the Player-Characters may ask.



“Who are you and what do you do?”

“My name is Foud ibn-Habsallah al-Avami. You may simply address me as Foud. I am a hermit and a scholar. I find that, in these swamps, I am rarely disturbed by worldly concerns.”

“Who is that behind you?”

“That is my apprentice. If you have questions, you should address them to me. He does not speak.”

You are a Necromancer, and as a servant of S'allumer or a Witch Finder, I oppose you. Will you surrender to me?

“I have done nothing to you, and it is yourself who trespasses into this place. I salute your zeal to your cause, and I would ask that we remain civil to one another. I bear you no animosity.”

Are you the man who captured Lugaid and commanded the Morrigna?

“Alas, I know not of this ‘Lugaid’ you speak of, so I have no feelings for him one way or the other. As for war-goblins, I avoid their company.”

We would like to pass through your swamp. May we?

“Once I am sure that your motives are not inimical to mine, then yes. Come forward.”

(See “Resolution,” below, for how Foud enables someone to bypass the zombies.)



“What do you know of the haunted swamp? Who are these zombies?”

“What you see before you are not ghosts, but the empty vessels of the Feòcullan, the savage tribe of skunks who are at war with the world. These folk thought to take my life or the lives of those I care about. You can see their folly.”

Resolution

If the Players attack Foud, he will order his undead to swarm the PCs and then he will flee. He has very few means of hostile magic, and he gains nothing by the combat. He has ten zombies at his call.

Foud has commanded the zombies to avoid anyone who is a Necromancer or has Necromancy magic on them. Once he has decided the PCs are not going to slaughter him or otherwise cause him harm, he will let them pass.

Foud is a hermit who avoids contact with the outside world. After an hour of gossip, he will have exhausted all the topics he cares to converse upon. If the Players are especially friendly and trustworthy, he may offer them the hospitality of his house, a camouflaged structure a half-league from here, but that is very doubtful.

The Tale of the Skunk Warriors

If your Players enjoy combat encounters, an attack by these swamp-dwellers could be fun. The Feòcullan will attempt to ambush unwary travelers and strike from surprise, using their Spray at range and their Spears in close-quarters.

The Feòcullan’s goal is to loot the Player-Characters of anything useful, and to take one or more of them as slaves. If the PCs lose this fight, they will find themselves whisked away to a life of dismal labor, toiling in the swamps to build defenses and sow mud-soaked fields with dismal corn. This could be your opportunity to run an escape adventure: other captives will want to escape; inclement weather or a uadh-chrith attack could give opportunity, et cetera.

The Feòcullan aren’t really up to negotiation, and they only speak a strange dialect of Bérla Féini. (Communicating with the Feòcullan is almost impossible unless the players have the Gift of “Cosmopolitan” or “Language: Feòcullan”.) Their ways should be a complete mystery to the Player-Characters. If any are captured, they will try to escape at the earliest opportunity. They will not seek revenge.

The Tale of the Noble and his Slave

After some more travel, the Player-Characters arrive at Cathair Murias, which is detailed in the Ironclaw book, p. 232. Once there, the PCs will have to make inquiries on to where to find her. This will call for a Roll of Mind & Gossip (Ironclaw, p. 41). You may want to increase the difficulty or include penalties if the Player-Characters are obviously outlanders or if they flout the local customs too much. Some suggestions for role-playing opportunities:

- ↔ Streetwise folks will make the acquaintance of Ionracan, a scarred Phelan wolf who hangs out at Thie Oast and is more than willing to talk to outlanders who buy him whiskey. He knows all about the ship that crashed on the coast, and that the only survivor was a raccoon woman who was remanded to Dúr Gilroy as his share of the loot.
- ↔ Clergy will probably talk to Master Phillippe at the S’allumer mission. He will be more than happy to receive strangers, and he will also tell of a ship that crashed on the shore and of all the last rites he had to administer to all the corpses. Thankfully, the local folk were quite willing to help him bury the bodies in the mission’s cemetery. He and his acolytes are going through the few personal effects that the looters left behind, to see which ones they can return. Master Phillippe knows that, sadly, Miss Devoisier was given to a disagreeable fellow known as Dúr Gilroy as that man’s share of the loot.
- ↔ Nobility may go to the main hall, to ask attendance of the chieftain. They probably won’t get it — instead, Princess Labhaoise mac Earlene will receive them. Once she has conversed with the nobility enough to be satisfied that they are who they claim to be (that is, they succeed in a roll of Mind & Gossip vs. 3 ... or maybe Body & Presence vs. 3 ... and any applicable dice from Gifts such as Nobility or Etiquette.), she will explain to them that the ship which washed up on their land was rightly claimed as spoils of the sea, to be evenly divided among all the nobles of Cathair Murias. There was only one survivor, and she was given to Noble Dúr Gilroy as his rightful spoils, to be his indentured slave.
- ↔ When evening presses in, many Phelan will make attendance at Thie Oast to drink after a hard day of labor. After enough drinks, PCs with the Gift of Carousing may get the locals to Gossip about that strange outlander ship that crashed upon their coast, and how that lucky bastard Dúr Gilroy won’t stop bragging about his new outlander slave.



Dúr Gilroy's Farm

Visible from the Cathair walls, and thus not far away, is the farmstead of Noble Dúr Gilroy. He has seven tenants on land that he owns; he himself and his family have claimed the best spot for themselves.

During the day, Miranda Devoisier is clearly visible, tilling the fields along with the other Phelan peasants. In fact, Dúr Gilroy is quite proud and is showing off to his neighbors his new prize. Miranda approaches her task with aplomb. She will be quite happy to receive the PCs and will gladly talk to them, but the astute will notice that she doesn't stop working as she does so.

Questions the PCs may have for Miranda Devoisier

“Who are you and what do you do?”

“I am Journeywoman Miranda Devoisier of the Dunwasser College in the free city of Triskellian. I trust you are my rescuers? I am pleased to make your acquaintance, although I do wish they were under different circumstances.”



“What happened to you?”

“As you may already know, I had booked passage on the ill-starred vessel, the *Chanceux Fils*, to sail around the west coast of Calabria and back home to Triskellian. Sadly, our vessel was shattered upon the inhospitable coast of Cathair Murias. The indigenous Phelan chose to view the incident as a windfall rather than an intrusion, for which I should feel grateful. They decided to divide up the spoils of the wreckage as “bounty of the sea.” I, as the only survivor, was included in said bounty. I was able to witness first-hand arbitration by the Chieftain! Such an event is invaluable to my study.”

“We are here to rescue you. Will you come with us?”

“Obviously, I would gladly lay down this hoe and be led away from the place. Unfortunately, I am currently a slave owned by Noble Dúr Gilroy mac Granuaile, who lives in that house on yonder hill. If I were to flee, he would summon his fellows and hunt me down as a runaway slave. As an anthropologist, I would avoid such a disturbance to their way of life. As a pragmatist, I do not desire to be hunted down by their skilled warriors.”

“In order for me to be free, you will have to pay my slave-price.”

“What is your ‘slave price’?”

“I believe my value was quoted as ‘two cumalai’, which means my price is two of their cattle. I’m flattered, frankly — I would have thought my value to be at most one cumal.”

“Are you all right? Are you ready to go?”

“I am in reasonable health. The only setback I have suffered is that one lens from my glasses is broken. I should be fine if I don’t need to shoot anything.”

[Whispering] “As for being ready to go … I had a few moments to myself before I was captured by their scouts. I took my possessions to that hill over by the cliffs, between those two standing stones, and I buried them under a tree. While most of it is trinkets that are easily replaced, up there is also my life’s work, my treatise on the Phelan and their ways, and we must retrieve it before we leave.”

Dealing with Dúr Gilroy

Everyone who knows him, from the peasants who work his farm to foreigners such as Miranda or Master Phillippe, knows that Dúr Gilroy is a stubborn middle-aged wolf who won’t give up his prize lightly. He has been enjoying the prestige of his “strange” slave. The Player-Characters are encouraged to think of some way to convince him to let her leave with them. The coinage of Triskellian will have no value whatsoever to Dúr Gilroy. Neither will weapons or armor — he already has those, and it’s doubtful the PCs have anything that he feels are significantly better than his Alumen Mail and his Gae Bolga.

This situation is a rich role-playing opportunity for the PCs. Here are some methods the PCs may try, and some suggestions on how to deal with them.

- ↔ Dúr Gilroy will let Miranda go for “two cumalai.” The PCs could obtain those from other folks. (Perhaps Lugaid can spare those as thanks for saving his life?) Stealing the cumalai is possible, but the PCs will have to travel far away from Cathair Murias to get them.
- ↔ The PCs could replace the slave with someone else. Perhaps they’ve taken a captive or two from one of their previous fights. Unethical PCs may try to turn over their hirelings.



- ↔ A PC could challenge Dúr Gilroy to a fight. Dúr Gilroy will not respond to such a challenge unless it is given by someone who can prove that they are nobility. If he does, then his terms are simple: if the challenger wins, Miranda goes free; if Dúr Gilroy wins, then the challenger becomes his slave.

Since Dúr Gilroy is the challenged party, he can choose the weapons of the duel ... and he will choose a satire — a duel of bard skills! Each party will sing three songs — first the challenger, then Dúr Gilroy, alternating, before a crowd of people who will use their applause to determine the winner. In Game Terms, this will call for three contests of Mind, Will & Presence, as well as any dice from Gifts such as Performance of Singing or Musical Instrument, or Oratory between Dúr Gilroy and his challenger. (Fortunately for the PCs, the crowd they perform in front of will be tired of Dúr Gilroy's boasting and thus won't be biased one way or the other.) It will take at least a day to assemble the crowd.

Dúr Gilroy's songs will be two old standards and one improvised rant against the foolishness of the outlanders who dared challenge him. As Game Host, you should encourage the PCs to describe their own songs and to give them bonuses for good preparation and for inspired thinking.

If the PCs can't find a legal method, they may try to steal Miranda away. This course will be very dangerous — the PCs will have to travel many miles back to their home territory, pursued by Dúr Gilroy and his friends every step of the way. At night, Dúr Gilroy will howl threats and insults into the night as he dogs their trail.

Hopefully, the PCs won't try a violent assault upon Dúr Gilroy's home. Even if they slaughter everyone there, they will incur the wrath of the Chieftain himself, who will declare war on these foreigners who dare such mischief in his demesne. The Ululants will cry out into the night of the misdeeds of the Player-Characters, and they will not be safe from any Phelan.

The Tale of the Haunted Hilltop

Miranda will refuse to leave unless they get her treatise first. She has buried it outside of southwestern Cathair Murias, on a hill that faces the sea.

On top of this hill are two standing stones that face towards the town, marked with the strange letters of the Bérla Galláneah. A successful roll of Supernatural vs. 3 will detect the the strange air of something unusual.

If there is anyone in the party with both the Gifts of Language: Bérla Féini and "Literacy: Bérla Galláneah," then they will be able to translate the stones:

Know this: beyond this way is forbidden to all save those of the Suthainn blood. Know also that here stands Aod Suthainn who can be defeated by no known man, woman or child. Know as well that those who would disobey the law of the Suthainn will have no peace.

If the PCs walk around the stones (which can easily be done), they will see a small rocky valley, and no sign of the tree that Miranda described earlier.

For folks who walk through the stones, they will find something different. The small valley has a tall tree within it, and someone is standing in front of it — a lean, handsome wolf, clad in unscathed armor and holding a sickle made of gold. He is facing the characters with a resolute expression on his face. If Miranda is with the PCs, she will walk right between the stones without even thinking to walk around them, and she will be quite surprised at the figure they meet.

This warrior is Aod Suthainn. He is under a geis to protect the tree and its mistletoe from all who would approach it. The mistletoe on the tree is no ordinary plant — it is only in bloom from Beltane to Samhain.



THE RESCUE OF MIRANDA DEVOISIER



Whenever it is in bloom, Aod Suthainn appears to guard it from all who would take it.

If Miranda is with the PCs, she will be totally flabbergasted. He wasn't there before! And unfortunately, she has buried her satchel (with her book) at the base of the tree.

If any approach the tree, Aod Suthainn will hold out his sickle and will tell them to stop. He will first speak in Bérla Féini. If it becomes apparent that the PCs do not understand that, he will pause and speak again in fluent Calabrese. (PCs who successfully roll Supernatural vs. 3 will know that Aod has magically learned to speak their language in an instant! Strange forces are at work here.)

Aod will announce to the Player-Characters:

"Stand back and be recognized! Know that you stand before Aod, Champion of the Suthainn race, and that you may come no closer without my leave. I ask you in good faith: who are you and whom do you serve?"

Aod will ask every character what their name is. This is important — the same geis that holds Aod here also makes him invulnerable to anyone, if he knows their name. If someone refuses to give their name, he will attempt to intimidate them using his Body, Will & Presence skill of d12, 2d8 to get them to say it. If someone tries to lie to him, they must pass a test of their Will & Deceit vs. Aod's Mind & Inquiry dice of 2d12, d8.

Reasoning with Aod Suthainn

The Player-Characters may try to reason with Aod. Here are some sample questions and answers:



"Who are you and what do you do?"

"I am Aod Suthainn, champion of my people. I guard this tree and its mistletoe from all who would falsely try to claim it as theirs."

"Why do you guard this mistletoe?"

"I have been here for more than five times thirty years. The reason is lost to my memory. I remain, and it is my duty that binds me to this place."

"We're not after your mistletoe, but something buried under the tree. Can we have it?"

"My duty is quite clear. I guard the tree when the mistletoe is in bloom. After Samhain, when the mistletoe is gone, then you may have freedom to search about here, as you will. But until then, I stand guard and none shall get within a rod's length of this tree."

(A rod, by old Phelan reckoning, is four paces.)

"What would convince you that I have rightful claim to the mistletoe?"

"Your name would have to be one of the Suthainn. It is not."

(It is quite unlikely that any of the characters would know any names of the Suthainn family, as they disappeared many years ago. Characters may attempt a roll of Mind & Academics vs. 3, but they would have to roll at least 3 successes to know. Even then, they would have to get a wolf to lie about his or her identity, and to win a contest of Will & Deceit Skill Dice vs. Aod's 2d12 & d8, as mentioned above.)

"What are those four swords behind you?"

"These swords are the spoils of the four who would challenge me and my right to stand my ground here. They fought well, they died well. They are gone and I remain. This should be testament to my skill and my resolve."

Fighting Aod Suthainn

Of course, the PCs may just choose to attack Aod Suthainn. He is a formidable combatant.

Aod Suthainn is completely immune to those people whose names he knows. Their spells will completely fail to affect him. Any attacks of theirs that hit him will fail to cause Damage or to have any other ill effects. This immunity will be obvious to any who witness it first-hand.

If anyone challenges Aod Suthainn, he will respond. Of course, he will first ask the challenger's name — he will refuse to fight someone under false pretenses, naturally. Then he will choose the weapons for fighting: "one-handed blade" will be his choice.

Aod Suthainn will fight until all his Saving Gifts are exhausted -- then, he will surrender. If defeated in combat, he will give his sickle as a spoil to those who defeated him.

If the PCs are clever, they will somehow anger (or Goad) Aod into challenging them. Then they will be able to choose the terms! Wise PCs will choose a satire, or a game of chess, or something that avoids combat altogether. If challenged to a duel of magic, Aod will refuse — he has no magic of his own.

If the PCs figure out that Aod Suthainn is invincible to anyone who knows his name, they may go hunting for someone else to challenge Aod. The local folk know that the tree behind the two standing-stones is "haunted" and they avoid the place.

Other Options

It will be very difficult to trick Aod Suthainn, as he stands guard day or night and does not sleep, eat, or drink. If somehow the PCs do find a way to get past him and dig up the satchel, then Aod Suthainn will hunt them to the ends of the earth.



If the PCs wait until after Samhain, then when they return they will discover the tree is there but there is no sign of Aod Suthainn, his swords, or the mistletoe. They can freely dig up the satchel and leave with it. However, that is almost six months away — the satchel may have suffered damage from the elements by then. Miranda will not like this course of action at all!

Dénouement

The players will have to take Miranda Devoisier back to Triskellian. They can travel back the same way they came, either through the swamp or through the mountains.

The journey back will probably be less eventful than the journey previous, if the PCs have been prudent. If they travel through the swamp and had defeated the Feòcullan, they won't be attacked a second time if they clearly won the first fight. If the PCs are on good terms with Foud, then the zombies of the swamp will leave them be. If they saved Lugaid, they will be more than welcome at his house.

Ua-Dáire the Exile

Just because the PCs have freed Lugaid does not mean that Ua-Dáire has no longer stolen Lugaid's Guise! Someone must find Ua-Dáire and trick him into revealing himself. Lugaid is no fighter, and Ua-Dáire's Body and Speed are much greater, so if forced into a nasty fight, Ua-Dáire may drop his guise to use his superior Traits. (See the Steal Guise spell in the *Book of Mysteries*, p. 375 for more details.)

If the Player-Characters ruin his scheme to use Lugaid's stolen appearance to sow disorder, Ua-Dáire will be angered, and he is a revengeful sort. He may hire other folks to exact his revenge or he may do it himself. He could either be a constant threat in the shadows, or he could take a more hands-on role in settling his score.

Miranda Devoisier and the Dunwasser College

The Dunwasser College faculty will thank the PCs profusely for returning Journeywoman Devoisier to them. If the Player-Characters went beyond the call of duty (such as recovering the satchel from Aod Suthainn), then Miranda will recommend that they receive an extra reward.

Aod Suthainn, His Golden Sickle, and the Mistletoe

If Aod Suthainn is defeated, then he will give a brief farewell speech, and he will wander off between the two

standing stones. Once he is out of sight of the PCs, he will disappear, never to be seen again. If he is not defeated, then he will reappear six months out of the year.

Aod Suthainn fights with a sickle that appears to be made of gold, but it is actually a leftover from a former time. Its hilt and blade are carved with intricate designs and symbols that will baffle scholars. The sickle is not made of gold, but of the mysterious metal known as orichalcum, the forging of which has been lost to the ages. It is a magical weapon, and thus it can hurt creatures that can only be hurt by such. Its edge is so fine that, when used properly, it can cut through anything. The sickle has the same combat values as a Battle Axe, except for its Special result:

Special: True Cut. You have struck your target with the inner edge of the sickle, which has been magicked so that it can cut through anything. Your target automatically suffers an additional +1 Damage, above and beyond all others inflicted in the Attack Roll.

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Dramatis Personae

What follows is a list of the relevant gaming information for the prominent NPCs in this adventure. Each write-up includes a brief description of the character, their rules and statistics, and their personal “list” of priorities, ranked in order of importance. As Game Host, when you are playing the role of an NPC, check the NPC’s list of Motivations to see what their priorities are, to better help you decide how the character would behave.

Dallgó ag Dael



It is not easy to rise to the rank of Fiann. It is even harder when you are not a wolf. But Dallgó the shrew is not one to be easily dissuaded. It does not hurt that he is gifted with a supernatural ability to instill fear in others by virtue of his unnatural “evil eye”, the birach-derc.

Dallgó and his band spend most of their time traveling the landscape. Their preferred form of looting is seizing outlanders in Doloreaux or Bisclavret territory, and then dragging them back in chains to sell to unscrupulous Cell or Reeoil nobles. Dallgó never apologizes for anything he does and will try

anything to get out of capture – he will sell out his companions, he will make up wild promises of ransoms and treasure, et cetera.

Dallgó ag Dael

Elite Shrew Slaver (Major)

Goals	1. Survive. 2. Gain wealth and power. 3. Win battles.
Traits	Body d10, Speed d10, Mind d10, Will d12 Shrew d10 (Shore, Omnivore, Night) Merchant d4 Worker d10
Skills	Brawling d8 Dodge d6 Melee Combat d8 Negotiation d8 Observation d6 Presence d8 Stealth d6
Gifts	Brawling Fighter (can counter with brawling) Bribery (bonus d12 to inquire about or make bribes) Carousing (bonus d12 when drunk) Diplomacy (bonus d12 for long negotiations) Fast-Talk (bonus d12 for short negotiations) First Aid (bonus d12 to First Aid, not a stunt) Haggling (bonus d12 for money talk) Increased Trait: Will (Trait up!) Keen Ears (can hear faint sounds) Local Area: Harrowgate (for bonus d12) Resolve (include Will with Soak) Strength (bonus d8 with Melee, Brawl, Thrown Attacks) Team Player (give allies bonus d12 in assist rolls) Veteran (Aim and Guard bonus are d12) Venom (X after biting to make a Hurt target Sick)
Initiative	d12, d10
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 5, Sprint d10, Run 25
Guard	Use “Guard” action for bonus d12 to all defenses
Aim	Use “Aim” action for bonus d12 to attack one target
Attack	Mace @ Close d10, 2d8 – Damage +2 Teeth @ Close 2d10, 2d8 – Damage +1, Grapple
Counter	Mace @ Close d10, 2d8 – Damage +2 Teeth @ Close 2d10, d8 – Damage +1, Grapple
Parry	Mace @ Close d10, d8 – Damage +2
Dodge	d10, d6
Soak	d12, d10, d8
Loot	Chain Mail, Mace, 20 denarii

Morrígná

Is it a bird, or is it a wolf? The Morrígná stands almost thirty hands tall and weighs in at thirty stone. Its feathers are as black as the darkest night, and it smells like the loam of the deepest forests. While they are particularly fearsome combatants, they can be easily confused and spooked in combat, often falling into traps. Despite their size, Morrígnai move silently and swiftly.

The Morrígná presented here is a strong one — lesser warriors would have lower Traits and will lack the ability to give their feathers away for summoning.

Morrígná		Elite Goblin (Major)
Goals	1. Survive. 2. Serve those to whom you've pledged your word. 3. Be strong and swift in thought and deed.	
Traits	Body d12, Speed d12, Mind d12, Will d12 Morrígná d12	
Skills	Brawling d12 Dodge d12 Melee Combat d12 Negotiation d12 Observation d12 Presence d12 Stealth d12	
Gifts	Anonymous (d12 to resist magic) Armored Fighter (armor dice up one level) Brawling Fighter (can counter with brawling) Flight (X to fly, must use once per turn to remain airborne) Flying Fighter (extra refresh of flight per turn) High-Altitude Flyer (can attain Very Long altitude) Hiking (bonus d12 for distance travel) Howling (bonus d12 to intimidate or scare) Local Knowledge: Resolve (include Will with Soak) Strength (bonus d8 with Melee, Brawl, Thrown Attacks) Unshakeable Fighter (Immune to Overkill's fear) Veteran (Aim and Guard bonus are d12) Special: Can give its word and a feather to a person to be summoned instantly to a faraway place.	
Initiative	2d12	
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 5, Sprint d10, Run 25	
Guard	Use "Guard" action for bonus d12 to all defenses	
Aim	Use "Aim" action for bonus d12 to attack one target	
Attack	Airmcoinneála @ Close 2d12, d8 – Damage +2, Slaying Beak @ Close 3d12, d8 – Damage +1, Impaling	
Counter	Airmcoinneála @ Close 2d12 – Damage +2, Slaying Beak @ Close 3d12 – Damage +1, Impaling	
Parry	Airmcoinneála @ Close 2d12	
Dodge	3d12	
Soak	2d12, d6 Immune to Fear and Terror	
Loot	Leather Armor, Airmcoinneála, feathers	

Foud ibn-Habsallah the Necromancer



Speaking with a strange accent, dressed in strange robes, Foud has traveled many leagues from his homeland to enjoy the relative solitude of the swamps in the Phelan demesne. A former slave, he was first introduced to the ways of magic by his last master, a figure known only as "The Hooded One" who released Foud from bondage after seven years of service. Since then, Foud became more estranged from the normal world. He found living people largely disagreeable, with their uninformed opinions and base appetites. He has been a hermit for more than a dozen years, attended by his undead servants, as he studies his craft to command yet more minions. Unlike the archetypical "evil wizard," Foud prefers to keep to himself, and when he does have visitors, he is polite and courteous to them.

THE RESCUE OF MIRANDA DEVOISIER



Foud ibn-Habsallah	Elite Hyena Dabbler (Major)
Goals	1. Survive. 2. Further his knowledge of Necromancy. 3. Get news of what is going on in the world.
Traits	Body d8, Speed d4, Mind d12, Will d12 Hyena d6 (Plains, Omnivore, Night) Dabbler d12
Skills	Academics d8 Dodge d8 Endurance d8 Melee Combat d8 Observation d8 Presence d8 Searching d8 Stealth d8 Tactics d8
Gifts	Animation (X to Rally a corpse into a Marionette) Apprentice Necromancy (may ready Unholy spells) Coward (bonus dodge & move when afraid) Curse (X and aim to upgrade from Illness) Hiking (bonus d12 for distance travel) Literacy (can read and write) Luck (X to re-roll one die three times) Mystic: Black Magic (bonus d12 to understand magic) Necromancer's Trappings (black magic stuff!) Research (bonus d12 to look things up) Survival (bonus d12 to survive in the wilderness) Unmaking (X and Aim to upgrade from Horror) Vessel of Unlife (X to use Stunt: Create Restless Dead)
Initiative	d12, d4
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 3, Sprint d4, Run 15
Guard	Use "Guard" action for bonus d8 to all defenses
Aim	Use "Aim" action for bonus d8 to attack one target
Attack	Staff @ Close 2d8 – Damage +2 Using Tactics? Add d8, d6 to melee Torment @ Medium 2d12, 2d6 – Damage +1, Critical, Penetrating, Weak
Counter	Staff @ Close 2d8 – Damage +2
Parry	Staff @ Close 2d8
Dodge	2d8
Soak	d8, d6
Loot	Leather Armor, Staff, Nonagram Talisman

Tanglebones

When Foud first arrived in Calabria, he sneaked into a pauper's common graveyard and used the spell Vessel of Unlife to raise a servant from the dead. Now in an advanced state of decay, Tanglebones has wrapped himself up tightly in rags to keep from losing any more parts of his body. This wretched creature remembers little of his former life, but he is well aware that he owes his entire existence to Foud and serves him loyally.

Tanglebones	Typical Undead Cat
Goals	1. Serve Foud without question. 2. Survive.
Traits	Body d4, Speed d10, Mind d10, Will d4 Undead d6 Servant d4
Skills	Academics d6 Brawling d6 Craft d6 Observation d8 Searching d8 Stealth d8
Gifts	Etiquette (bonus d12 for manners) Fast-Talk (bonus d12 for quick negotiations) Heraldry bonus d12 to know nobility) Literacy (can read and write) Low Profile (bonus d12 to not stick out in a crowd) Resolve (include Will with Soak) Team Player (give allies bonus d12 in assist rolls)
Initiative	2d10
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 5, Sprint d10, Run 19
Guard	Use "Guard" action for bonus d8 to all defenses
Aim	Use "Aim" action for bonus d8 to attack one target
Attack	Claws @ Close 2d6, d4 – Damage +1, Critical
Counter	Claws @ Close 2d6, d4 – Damage +1, Critical
Parry	Claws @ Close 2d6, d4
Dodge	d10
Soak	2d4 Always Hurt = +1 Damage Immune to Afraid, Critical, Fatigued, Impaling, Sick, Slaying, Terrified, healing, starvation, suffocation, sleep deprivation
Loot	Miscellaneous goods



Dúr Gilroy

People either love or hate Dúr Gilroy — there is no in between. Those who number him among their friends find that he livens up a party, that he is a man of his word, and that he's great to have to watch your back. Those who cannot stand his presence find his humor obnoxious and dislike his petty jealousy and constant need for attention and praise.

As a member of the noble class, Dúr Gilroy was entitled to some of the spoils of the shipwreck. He easily saw Miranda as a choice prize, because no one else in Cathair Murias has such an exotic slave. In his heart, however, he knows he won't be able to keep Miranda for long, so if he loses her to the Player-Characters, he won't be upset about it for too long. However, his pride prompts him to ask for something quite valuable in trade ...



Dúr Gilroy

Elite Wolf Farmer (Major)

Goals

1. Survive.
2. Live with honor.
3. Show everyone else up.

Traits

Body d12, Speed d8, Mind d8, Will d8
Wolf d10 (Forest, Omnivore, Night)
Farmer d10

Skills

Craft d8	Tactics d8
Endurance d8	Weather Sense d8
Melee Combat d8	Vehicles d8
Riding d8	

Gifts

Animal Handling (bonus d12 with animals, can rally them)
Carousing (bonus d12 when drunk)
Craft Speciality: Farming (bonus d12 to craft)
Hiking (bonus d12 for distance travel)
Language: Bérla Féini (can speak a language)
Howling (bonus d12 to intimidate or scare)
Nobility (X to assert noble influence)
Strength (bonus d8 with Melee, Brawl, Thrown Attacks)
Tracking (bonus d12 to follow trails)

Initiative

2d8

Movement

Stride 1, Dash 5, Sprint d8, Run 25

Dúr Gilroy

Elite Wolf Farmer (Major)

Guard Use "Guard" action for bonus d8 to all defenses

Aim Use "Aim" action for bonus d8 to attack one target

Attack Long Spear @ Reach d8, 2d6 – Damage +2, Impaling

Counter Long Spear @ Reach 2d6 – Damage +2, Impaling

Parry Long Spear @ Reach 2d6

Dodge d8

Soak d12, d8

Loot Chainmail, Long Spear

Aod Suthainn of the Haunted Hilltop



There is something strange about Aod Suthainn that cannot be clearly explained. Everything about him is larger-than-life: his voice is confident and it carries well; his stance is rigid with discipline yet never looks forced or tired; his eyes observe all without ever wavering. Aod is like a character out of a storybook come to life.

When playing the role of Aod, you should keep in mind that he's fanatic in his purpose. His conversation will be polite but limited in scope.

THE RESCUE OF MIRANDA DEVOISIER



Aod Suthainn	Elite Wolf Champion (Major)
Goals	1. Guard the mistletoe from all except the Suthainn. 2. Survive. 3. Maintain his dignity and pride.
Traits	Body d12, Speed d10, Mind d8, Will d8 Wolf d10 (Forest, Omnivore, Night) Champion d10
Skills	Dodge d10 Melee Combat d10 Observation d10 Presence d10 Tactics d10 Supernatural d10
Gifts	Bravery (X to remove Afraid) Combat Save (X to negate Unconscious, Dying, or Dead) Disarming Save (Melee fail? Killed? X to remove killing effects, but lose your Golden Sickle) Etiquette (bonus d12 for manners) Fast-Talk (bonus d12 for quick negotiations) Keen Nose (can detect faint smells) Language: Bérla Sgairneach (can speak a language) Honor (bonus d12 to defend your honor) Howling (bonus d12 to intimidate or scare) Tracking (bonus d12 to follow trails) Toughness (X to roll soak twice, add successes) Veteran (Aim and Guard bonus are d12) Bdmc Geis (Aod is invulnerable to anyone if he knows their name. See page 633.) Gift of Tongues (Once he hears 13 words of a foreign language, Aod can now understand and speak it.)
Initiative	d10, d8
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 6, Sprint d8, Run 28
Guard	Use "Guard" action for bonus d12 to all defenses
Aim	Use "Aim" action for bonus d12 to attack one target
Attack	Golden Sickle @ Close d12, 2d10 – Damage +1, See p. 633
Counter	Golden Sickle @ Close d12, 2d10 – Damage +1, See p. 633
Parry	Golden Sickle @ Close d12, 2d10
Dodge	d10, 2d8 *Encumbrance limit is d8, so Speed & Dodge dice are 2d8
Soak	d12, d8 and Armor d10 Geis – Aod takes no Damage from a combatant, if he knows their name
Loot	Golden Sickle

Miranda Devoisier, Journeywoman of Dunwasser



In other circumstances, Miss Devoisier might be thought to be nobility, because of her poise, grace, and gentility. In this situation, however, she looks like someone who has survived a shipwreck with little more than the clothes on her back. Miranda is very much a hands-on person, preferring to deal with things directly and to tackle problems quickly and decisively. People who think of her as a damsel-in-distress will earn her contempt, although she is never rude or insulting, as such coarse behavior is indicative of a small mind.

As an esteemed member of the Dunwasser Academy, Miranda has been made privy to the Dunwasser's secret copy of *On the Virtue of Ken*; such spells have proven quite valuable to her in her researches. (See *Book of Mysteries* p. 424 for more details on this magic.)



THE RESCUE OF MIRANDA DEVOISIER

Miranda Devoisier

Elite Raccoon Spy (Major)

Goals	1. Survive. 2. Maintain her secrecy as a wizard and spy. 3. Complete her treatise on the Phelan.
Traits	Body d8, Speed d8, Mind d10, Will d12 Raccoon d10 (Forest, Omnivore, Night) Spy d10 Scholar d6
Skills	Academics d10 Brawling d8 Climbing d8 Craft d8 Deceit d10 Negotiation d10 Ranged Combat d8 Searching d8 Stealth d8 Supernatural d8
Gifts	Ambidexterity (all hands are good hands) Disguise (bonus d12 to impersonate) Etiquette (bonus d12 for manners) Fast Climber (climbing is an action, not a stunt) Fast-Talk (bonus d12 for quick negotiations) First Aid (bonus d12 to First Aid, not a stunt) Forgery (bonus d12 to deal with fakes) Geography (bonus d12 to know places and people) History (bonus d12 to know the past) Insider with the Dunwasser Academy (for bonus d12) Language: Bérla Féini (can speak a language) Literacy (can read and write) Literacy: Bérla Galláneah (can read and write another language) Luck (X to re-roll one die three times) Night Vision (poor lighting is good lighting) Research (bonus d12 to look things up) Streetwise (bonus d12 to deal with criminals)
Initiative	d10, d8
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 4, Sprint d8, Run 20
Guard	Use "Guard" action for bonus d8 to all defenses
Aim	Use "Aim" action for bonus d8 to attack one target
Attack	Claws @ Close d10, 2d8 – Damage +1, Critical Teeth @ Close d10, 2d8 – Damage +1, Grapple
Counter	Claws @ Close d10, 2d8 – Damage +1, Critical
Parry	Claws @ Close d10, 2d8
Dodge	d8
Soak	d8
Loot	Spectacles

Ua-Dáire the Exile



Long ago, the Druids were the wisdom of the Phelan. They interpreted the omens and controlled political policy in a much greater role than today. Ua-Dáire feels he was born a thousand years too late, and he pines for the days when people cowered in superstitious awe of the miracles commanded by the Aos Daoine.

Ua-Dáire's attitude earned him few friends and many enemies. Eventually, his outspoken criticisms of the Flatha reached the ears of King Sen-Chormac. When called forth to answer for his minor transgressions, Ua-Dáire's pride got the better of him and he denounced the rule of warriors over wizards. This was the final straw — Ua-Dáire was declared "Broken" and beyond Phelan law. Furthermore, he was banished from all Phelan demesnes, never to return upon penalty of death.

His resentment festering inside his breast, Ua-Dáire has returned to his homeland, with the intent to foment disorder

THE RESCUE OF MIRANDA DEVOISIER



and strife against those who would refuse to recognize his authority ... and to take revenge on those who have crossed him, which may include the Player-Characters.

Ua-Dáire	Elite Wolf Druid (Major)
Goals	1. Survive. 2. Exact his revenge on the Phelan race. 3. Gain personal power.
Traits	Body d10*, Speed d10*, Mind d10, Will d10 Wolf d10* (Forest, Omnivore, Night) Curriadh d12 *While using the stolen guise of Lugaid, Ua-Dáire's Body, Speed, & Species are only d6.
Skills	Academics d10 Dodge d10 Leadership d10 Melee Combat d10 Negotiation d10 Stealth d10 Supernatural d10 Tactics d10
Gifts	Bribery (bonus d12 to inquire about or make bribes) Disguise (bonus d12 to impersonate) Druid Apprentice (X to ready Druidic weapon) Druid's Trappings (Druid stuff!) Fast-Talk (bonus d12 for quick negotiations) First Aid (bonus d12 to First Aid, not a stunt) Hiking (bonus d12 for distance travel) Howling (bonus d12 to intimidate or scare) Language: Bérla Féini (can speak a language) Luck (X to re-roll one die three times) Oratory (bonus d12 for public speaking) Palliative (X and Rally to heal, remove magic damage) Resolve (include Will with Soak) Steal Guise (X to Attack and steal someone's appearance) Summon Goblin (X to Rally and summon goblins) Tracking (bonus d12 to follow trails) Veteran (Aim and Guard bonus are d12)
Initiative	2d10
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 5, Sprint d8, Run 25
Guard	Use "Guard" action for bonus d12 to all defenses
Aim	Use "Aim" action for bonus d12 to attack one target
Attack	Shillelagh Mace @ Close d12, 2d10 – Damage +2 Rain of Fire @ Medium d12, 3d10 – Group Damage +0, On Fire Rain of Ice @ Medium d12, 3d10 – Group Damage +0, Dispel All Unreal
Counter	Shillelagh Mace @ Close d12, 2d10 – Damage +2
Parry	Shillelagh Mace @ Close d12, 2d10
Dodge	2d10
Soak	d12, d10, d8
Loot	Shillelagh, 216 bunné-de-at

Feócallan

As Game Host, you will have to make some judgment calls on how many warriors to use against your PCs. If the party's combat prowess is suspect, use no more than one Feócallan per PC. If your Player-Characters are really tough, you may want to use two-on-one odds.

You may want to have a "boss" or leader who has unusual ability. If so, then boost all of the leader's dice from d6 to d8, give him the Gift of Improved Spray (see *Ironclaw*, p. 320), and equip him with a Gae Bolga instead (see *Ironclaw*, p. 97).

Feócallan	Typical Skunk Bandit
Goals	1. Survive. 2. Repel the outsiders.
Traits	Body d6, Speed d6, Mind d6, Will d6 Skunk d6 (Forest, Omnivore, Night) Bandit d6
Skills	Dodge d6 Melee Combat d6 Presence d6 Searching d6 Stealth d6 Tactics d6
Gifts	Local Knowledge: Swamps (for bonus d12) Acrobat (acrobatic dash, extra 'stand up' action) Night Vision (poor lighting is good lighting) Pack Tactics (d8 when threatening with ally, d12 if ally is Guarding) Spray (X to attack with Stunt: Spray at range)
Initiative	2d6
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 5, Sprint d8, Run 25
Guard	Use "Guard" action for bonus d12 to all defenses
Aim	Use "Aim" action for bonus d12 to attack one target
Attack	Half-Spear @ Close 3d6 – Damage +2 Spray @ Medium 3d6 – Blinded 3, Stench, Sweep Short Pack Tactics = bonus d8 Tactics to hit target for each ally ... or bonus d12 to Tactics for each threatening, Guarding ally
Counter	Half-Spear @ Close 3d6 – Damage +2
Parry	Half-Spear @ Close 3d6
Dodge	d6
Soak	d12, d10, d8
Loot	d6 × bunné-de-at



A CRISIS OF FAITH

Being a Passion Play Wherein Ambition, Greed, and Worldly Matters May Lead Those of the Cloth to Tragedy and Ruin

The Characters

- ↳ Bettencourt (p. 654): Former Ardentine Factionnaire, stripped of his position and status as a result of political maneuverings. He was accused of excess and intemperance when he used violence against a fellow penitent. Because of treachery, he was refused trial by order and was instead subject to Hierarchical Clerical Law. He was convicted of actions against the Church and sentenced to expulsion from the ranks of the Capitular Orders.
- ↳ Fortienne (p. 655): Former Ardentine Factionnaire, now on sabbatical as a Hyperdulant in good standing. She is a good friend of Bettencourt, and seeks to have him reinstated.
- ↳ Metropolitan Charegiselus (p. 656): Metropolitan of Chalon-sur-Sauldre, and advisor to the Archbishop of the Royal House. He found Bettencourt to be too intrusive in matters of tithe gathering in his hometown, and by gathering incriminating evidence against his friend Fortienne, managed to have Bettencourt tried and convicted under Clerical Law. Now seeks to insure that Bettencourt poses no further threat to his position or his ambitions.
- ↳ Archbishop Alderic du Chaussé (p. 657): The Church Liaison to the royal house; claims residency with the Metropolitan Charegiselus at his house in Chalon-sur-Sauldre.
- ↳ Master Hunold (p. 657): (Avordupois) Master of the Ardentine Factionnaire, perplexed by the loss of Bettencourt.
- ↳ Brother Thibaud (p. 659): (A Badger) Ardentine du Sang, dispatched originally when the accusations against Bettencourt were leveled.
- ↳ Baron Guntram (p. 660): (Avordupois) A dissatisfied lord, suspicious of all of the Church's motives. He is a member of the Éteignoirs.
- ↳ Duke Berenger de Crinière (p. 661): A Duke quite loyal to the King, brother to the Queen, but also suspicious of the Church.
- ↳ Duchess Chlorinthe de Boulanger (p. 660): A Duchess loyal to Church and King.
- ↳ Duke Lothaire d'Enclume (p. 645): Armorer to the King and his troops, supplier of weapons and armor to many of the S'allumer forces as well.

What Has Gone On Before

The expansion of S'allumer has caused an unusual division of power and resources within the demesne of the Avordupois. The Church of S'allumer is pervasive, but it is monitored in its growth and expansion because it is effectively a foreign army and government operating within Avordupois lands. This means that there is some tension between officials in each hierarchy at every level of government. Tithes and excise are the same to the peasant toiling in the field, but not to the Lord and the Bishop. The Archduke, while benefiting from the protection and services of the Church, is still burdened by the resources leaving his demesne and going to Triskellian. The Church, on the other hand, is restricted in its handling of its own lands because they are subject to different rulers.

What started out as a simple relationship has become increasingly complicated. In addition, the Church has instituted two separate lines of authority — one through the Hierarchy of the Priesthood, one through the Orders which report directly to the Holy See. This separate authority means that the Holy See



still has authority not automatically routed through the Hierarchy, and can effectively police its own.

This policing is necessary. The Church tries to foster the best of morality and action in its adherents, but base worldly concerns like power and possessions often cloud the judgment of the most noble of souls. Corruption is at the heart of recent allegations against Church officials, allegations the Church can ill afford as it stands to occupy a secular seat of power. Specifically, the Archduke is considering filling the Avoirdupois' Emissary post with a member of the Church of S'allumer.

Emissary is an ambassadorial position in Triskellian, the communications link between the Holy See and various Calabrian political entities. It's not a position of real power (although the Emissary does control a flow of information), but it has always been strictly secular. The demesne of the Avoirdupois is arguably the most powerful political entity on Calabria, and a Church official occupying their post of Emissary would be a sign of a power shift both within the Avoirdupois lands and within the Church.

Recently, the former Ardentine Factionnaire Bettencourt has been tried by Clerical Law and not by his Order. This is unusual, because normally the Orders police their own members and are exempt from Clerical Law as administered by Hierarchy.

Behind the scenes operate the Éteignoirs, they who seek the destruction of the Church of S'allumer and the reinstatement of nobles as the supreme power. They are a mysterious lot, operating in the guise of all levels of society and within some of the Church's institutions. The Church, by contrast, has found the Éteignoirs impossible to infiltrate and difficult to expose.

Many currents run through the community of power. Some within the Hierarchical Church seek to move the Holy See to Chalon-sur-Saône, making the Orders loyal to the Archbishop of Sabon, and more closely tied with the Avoirdupois crown. Such may be the motive behind the appointment of a Church official to a position of secular power. The Archduke at the same time has been slowly moving to make his authority less subject to the whims of nobles by forming a standing army of professional soldiers. This idea may have been born of the balancing of power seen in the Church with Hierarchy and Order, but whatever the reason, it is popular among rich nobles and unpopular among the others. This army with no loyalty other than to the Archduke could move just as easily against nobles of the Avoirdupois as against any of their enemies.

Among the Orders there is tension, as the Ardentines are seen as controlling too much wealth and wielding too much authority. The Passarellites are viewed as recalcitrant to Church Law and uncooperative with High Justice. The Cenobites are felt as being too close to the

Doloreaux. The Assiduines or "Convulsionaries" are accused of strange, heterodox, and even cruel behavior. The Conscientines are overly bookish and given to excess. The Ascetics and Honnetines are the only orders that are currently above suspicion.

Nobles of the border houses are poorer, more likely to tolerate the worship of Anu, less likely to cooperate with the Church, and generally less cooperative with the troops under the direct control of the Archduke. It is fertile soil for the Éteignoirs.

Getting the Players Involved

In order to get the players into the action, there has to be something that draws in their characters. Consider the characters' backgrounds — there are many avenues of approach that could start them on a path through the story.

Characters created for this campaign

- ↔ If any of the characters are of the Order of the Ardentine du Sang, they can be dispatched initially to collect the rogue Brother Thibaud, who can fill them in on his suspicions and the status of his investigation and what it implies.
- ↔ If any of the characters are of the Order of the Ardentine Factionnaire, they can be dispatched by the Master to help Fortienne in the investigation of the arrest, trial, and subsequent disappearance of Bettencourt.
- ↔ If any of the characters are clerics or priests of S'allumer, they could be alerted to the ambition of Charegiselus and some of the suspicion surrounding him by conferring at local places of worship.
- ↔ Any footpads or rather unsavory types looking for a job can eventually be directed to the door of Baron Guntram, who is always looking for potential spies. Specifically they will be directed to a building that is in his possession, but will never actually meet him, nor even know they are in his employ. Payment will be in unstamped gold coins.
- ↔ Avoirdupois nobility might find themselves the target of Éteignoir recruiters.
- ↔ Those who wish dispensation to trade in various regions or license to avoid tolls could approach one of the houses of the Dukes, and as a consequence be recruited to take a message pertinent to the adventure to an appropriate party.
- ↔ If a worshipper of Anu, a player could be directed to Duke Berenger de Crinière, or possibly Duke Lothaire d'Enclume with important correspondence.

Characters created for a previous campaign

- ↳ Scholars of magic could end up being directed to Charegiselus himself for admittance to the library at Chalon-sur-Sauldre, especially if they are obviously from non-Avoirdupois lands.
- ↳ Clerics or penitents of S'allumer wishing to join a Capitular Order could be routed through local penitents, and word of the unusual trial of one of the Orders' members would be a hot topic of gossip and speculation among those of any of the Orders.
- ↳ Characters could be entrusted, if in good standing or of high office, to convey a message or contract to one of the Dukes or the Archduke by a Lord or Noble from their own lands.
- ↳ Necromancers might have been directed by others or through their own curiosity to contact the Éteignoirs.
- ↳ Characters could be on the trail of Lystragones the Athanasian from the Rinaldi campaign. He will travel to the realm of Chalon-sur-Sauldre in an effort to ascertain if rumors of Autarch artifacts found at Ascétique and subsequent capture by the Marteau/Éteignoirs are true.
- ↳ Characters could be on the trail of Amalsand Jakoba from the Rinaldi campaign, who apparently is no longer in the swamps of Paludestris.
- ↳ Characters could be following rumors of Foud from the Phelan campaign seeking his previous master among the Éteignoirs.
- ↳ Characters could be following Hilliam Luce or even accompanying him, if he survived or escaped in the Doloreaux campaign — he might be set on recovering artifacts from the Saith Colann (the Barrows) or offering his services in Chalon-sur-Sauldre.
- ↳ Characters could be present at the direction of the Doloreaux, if any are Lutarists. She is concerned about both the extent of training available to male Doloreaux among the Cenobites, and also at how much of Lutarism is detailed at the various libraries of S'allumer.

Sooner or later the characters are likely to fall in with the intrigues already underway, and some avenues of entry may allow them to jump right into the action. There are three main paths the characters will probably pursue:

- 1) The players may become involved in the search for Bettencourt with the Orders.
- 2) They may become involved in the Court intrigue surrounding Charegiselus, the Archduke and Archduchess, and the Archbishop Alderic du Chaussé.
- 3) They may end up working for or with the Éteignoirs, perhaps as pawns, perhaps as spies among the clergy, or perhaps as more active agents.

How to Run This Adventure

Much of this game is tailored to intrigue and political maneuvering. This need not leave out your combat monsters, however, as toughs employed by the Éteignoirs, and the involvement of the Éteignoir Necromancers directly, can be tailored to the physical confrontation level of your group.

Another important note is that major events end up branching into different versions of this adventure, and in some the face of Avoirdupois politics can be changed quite a bit. Generally these branchings will occur at the end of major encounters or events involving the characters that determine which route future events take. The options available to the characters will be clear in some cases, not so clear in others, but it should be left up to them to determine the course. Most scenarios will be provided for, so very few character actions or decisions should be disallowed or cause you much consternation, aside from a person dead-set on disrupting the campaign.

Finally, dialogue has been provided for characters in the game that answers common questions the characters may have and also sets the tone and character of persons the players may meet.

Part the First: Opening Moves

The story begins with three distinct threads:

- ↔ The machinations of the Church and the Holy Orders;
- ↔ The intrigues of Avoirdupois court and the State; and
- ↔ The secret conspiracy of the Apostates, led by the Éteignoirs.

Depending on the make-up of your Player-Characters' party, you may find your adventure following one thread, two threads, or all three. Consult *Ironclaw*, p. 137-140, for advice on knowing your Players and the themes they like to pursue during their adventures.

Church Events unfold that lead to clues to Bettencourt's disappearance. These clues may emerge from conversations with Sister Fortienne, Brother Thibaud, and/or Master Hunold. At this stage the adventure is a straightforward mystery, one best approached with reason rather than force. The primary clues, which can be garnered from conversation, clearly point to Metropolitan Charegiselus overstepping his bounds with regard to Bettencourt, and doing so for unknown reasons. The final clue will come from an overheard conversation between two clergy: The Metropolitan has had multiple meetings with two rhinos not of the clergy and probably, judging from their rather pedestrian garb, not of the nobility. The meetings themselves were conducted with unnecessary secrecy, and it's very much out of Charegiselus' character to consort with commoners. This trail leads to a poor noble family of rhinos who have adopted the Écorcheur name, to the rocky, unyielding lands they govern, and ultimately to their abandoned signal tower.

State

Characters learn of the maneuverings of Charegiselus within Chalon-sur-Sauldre through contact with the Dukes and/or senior clergy. There is strong opposition amongst the Dukes to giving Charegiselus such a visible secular position as Emissary, but no opposition has as yet been voiced. The Archduke himself has offered no further comment on the appointment. Player-Characters at first may be little more than wallflowers, but by speaking to the right people at the right time they will be able to position themselves as participants. If not nobles themselves, their association with nobles will be critical in determining their involvement, and their ability to ingratiate themselves with the nobility will be very important. This part ends when the nobles finally voice their opinions about Charegiselus' appointment,

and the players have been forced to align themselves either with the Dukes who oppose it or with the Archduke who desires it.



Éteignoirs

Whether working for the Éteignoirs knowingly or unknowingly, the characters gain information possibly harmful to the Dukes and the court — specifically, to the Archduchess. The message is simple: a veiled threat of the "we-know-what-you-did" kind attached to three lists. One list contains names which a little research will reveal to be those of Monophysite heretics, many outlawed by the Church. The second list is another series of names and places matched to a simple accounting of payments. The third list names the heretics on the first list and matches them with the individuals on the second in a clear progression out of Avoirdupois lands. In short, it's proof that the Archduchess has, for several years, been aiding and abetting the flight of heretics from Church justice. This is the Blackmail Message. The Éteignoirs will arrange for the Blackmail Message to get into the players' hands through an agent planted in the household staff — if willing agents, the players will be told to arrange for the Message's discovery; if pawns, they will be goaded or bribed into it.

Part the Second: Gambit

By this point, your Players will either be pursuing one thread, or they will have to divide their resources, which usually means splitting up. If your party does split up, it's a good idea to have a watch or other timer on hand. Spend about a half-hour to an hour with the group of Players at one scene, then switch and spend a like amount of time with the other

Church

The signal tower in Écorcheur lands is well-guarded. A camp of rhinos (ten more rhinos than Player-Characters) guards the tower. There are only two approaches to entering it — either quiet infiltration past the guards, or a major assault. If the characters choose the former, they must be very good; if the latter, they'll need to call on a group of Holy Knights to succeed. They'll get the help if they make known their suspicions that a member of the Orders is held there.

State

The Dukes speak out against giving Charegiselus the position of Emissary and bring to bear their influence on the Archduke. The Archbishop threatens each of their families with removal of Church favor, while the Archduke is left to fend off accusations of power consolidation and complicity with Triskellian. The players must reconsider their positions and will find that everyone involved is being pressured to change sides. The action at this stage involves the building of various factions, with Court officials and Nobles reaching out into their communities to stabilize their power bases and make alliances at every level of society.

Éteignoirs

The Blackmail Message can be used in one of two ways. The Éteignoirs recognize that their pawns/agents (the Players) are in the best position to determine the proper approach to its use:

- 1) Direct blackmail of the Archduchess into influencing the Archduke's relationship with the Church; or
- 2) As a plant in the possession of a Church official, whom they can then bring to the Archduke's attention.

Refusal to do either will bring the wrath of the Éteignoirs down on the players. The Blackmail Message will be discovered in the possession of the players by Baron Guntram, who will denounce them as traitors. Such a turn of events could push the players into the Court storyline — not as Nobles or well-to-do individuals, but as witnesses and suspects under threat of execution.



Part the Third: Schemes

In this part the three storylines begin to intertwine. At this stage it all centers around the Blackmail Message. Characters involved in the Orders storyline return with evidence incriminating Charegiselus in nefarious deeds, to which Bettencourt can provide eyewitness testimony... if still alive.

Church

The assault upon the Écorcheurs' tower will reveal incriminating evidence against Charegiselus, from both written agreements (to hold Bettencourt at least until Charegiselus' appointment as Emissary) captured in the raid and from Bettencourt himself (if freed alive). This evidence can be brought to the Court. The connection between Charegiselus' malfeasance and the Blackmail Message might provide enough reason to believe that the Message was a machination of the Metropolitan. Archbishop Alderic will certainly claim that Charegiselus acted without Church complicity. If the Message was secretly used against the Archduchess, she will feel honor-bound to reveal that she's been blackmailed and will do so. Even if the Blackmail Message was not used against her and was instead planted on a member of the Clergy, it will still be enough to cause the Metropolitan (despite his innocence in this matter) to lose his position and any hope of appointment as Emissary. Bettencourt himself, if still alive, will be invited to join the Order Ardentine once more, and encouraged by Brother Thibaud to join the Ardentine du Sang.

State

If no Player-Characters are involved in the Éteignoirs storyline, it will be up to the Host to determine whether the Message is used to blackmail the Arch-duchess or if it is planted. Whichever occurs, the Court is obviously impacted by its revelation, and will turn to investigating either the Blackmail Message or its origin. While this might well achieve the Dukes' goal of preventing the appointment of Charegiselus, it would severely destabilize the government if an unresolved investigation led to open warfare between Church and State. The Éteignoirs will be operating on the other end to ensure this outcome. Player-characters will be involved in investigating for the Court or Dukes, and could face violent Éteignoir action. The Host may choose whichever storyline personal preference dictates.

Éteignoirs

If the Blackmail Message has been used against the Archduchess she will persuade her husband to stick to his original decision and appoint Charegiselus as Emissary. If it's been planted, the Archduke's wrath falls on the Church and the Archbishop. In the former case, the rescue of Bettencourt and the evidence provided results in the Archduchess revealing the blackmail. Either way, Player-Characters working with the Éteignoirs will have to delay or possibly murder investigators and do their best to make the Church look guilty of complicity in the Blackmail Message — and thereby ensure open warfare between Church and State.

Part the Fourth: Schism

With the Holy Orders and the Avoirdupois Court reeling from recent revelations and the Church under a cloud, the Éteignoirs plan to hammer away at all parties and destabilize the situation still further — to the point of war if possible. To this end, official Church documents which appear to be the Hierarchical Church's plan for moving the Holy See from Triskellian to Chalon-sur-Sauldre turn up in a rather timely fashion. The documents start at the top with plans for appointments and dismissals, and go right on down to detailed plans regarding who gets office space where. It names names, but Charegiselus takes flight, making it even more difficult to determine if the plans for the move are genuine. Church functionaries are liable to be surprised by the plans, muddying the waters still further. Regardless as to whether or not they're real, the Archduke finds the idea appealing: the Church will seem less like an occupying foreign power and more like an ally. For similar reasons the clergy of Chalon-sur-Sauldre strongly support the move. The Dukes,

who already fear centralization of power in the Archduke's hands, let alone a strengthening of the Church's power in Chalon-sur-Sauldre, will vocally oppose the plans and will be ready to resort to civil war. Will the Archduke make the grab for power or will he be persuaded to announce his opposition?

Church

The ultimate aim of the Holy Orders is to expose any other players in the drama and to ensure that the Holy See remains in Triskellian. The new documents have exposed secret maneuverings that would move the Holy See. If it comes to war, the players may find themselves on the side of the Order and the See in Triskellian. To prevent this, they will be put on the trail of treachery, pursuing the Éteignoirs, and with Fortienne, Bettencourt, and possibly others, be sent to find out the truth — facing the threat of necromancy in Saith Colann (and incidentally meet up with investigators from the State storyline).

State

Life at court becomes very complicated. The revelation of the Blackmail Message requires some Nobles to engage in damage control, disproving the allegations contained within the Message, while the revelation of plans to move the See prompt other Nobles into pursuing Charegiselus to elicit from him the veracity or falseness of these plans. Investigation of further intrigue results in either confrontation with the Éteignoirs or war between Church and State.

Éteignoirs

Player-Characters are not fighting Court investigators alone. Investigation of the Blackmail Message has triggered the next step of Éteignoir intervention — discrediting the Hierarchical Church in the eyes of the Holy See in Triskellian. To this end the Éteignoirs will give the players the false plans mentioned above, and it will be up to them to plant them where they will be found. The Éteignoirs know that similar plans have actually been made by Charegiselus, contingent upon him gaining power, of course, and if the real plans can be found instead, so much the better. They know that the Archduke and local Church officials would benefit from the move and would actually support the plans, whether they are true or false. The players must decide whether to plant the false plans or search for Charegiselus and/or his plans. Exposure of either set of plans will result in a pause in everything whilst the origin of the plans is investigated, in which case the Player-Characters may have to delay

or murder more investigators in order to bring about one of two possibilities:

- 1) A division of Hierarchy and Orders and Archduke, with the Holy See, Nobles, and Archduke against the Hierarchical Church (a short battle weakening the Church); or
- 2) An alliance of the Archduke with the Church to accomplish the move against the will of the Nobles, the Holy See, and the Capitular Orders (a long and bloody battle, weakening everyone).

In short, the goal is war.

Part the Fifth: Dénouement

There are two likely conclusions for this series of events and conflicts: discovery of the Éteignoirs, or war. The Host should determine which is the more likely, given the actions of the characters involved, both Player-Characters and non-player characters.

Discovery of the Éteignoirs

Church & State: Characters in pursuit of the Éteignoirs will face them on the hostile ground of Saith Colann. Coded correspondence, if captured and deciphered, will prove Éteignoir involvement in the crisis, and may even provide the names of the traitors in the Court. If the players can return this evidence to the Court before the schism explodes into war, a united force can return to Saith Colann and rout the Éteignoirs from their hideout.

Éteignoirs: Unless the Player-Characters can provoke a war they will have to flee. If they have any loyalty to the Éteignoirs they will escape to Saith Colann and warn them of the coming siege.

The overall situation will remain tense and awkward for a time, but the moment of crisis will have passed. Charegiselus will attempt to set himself up as a new power in a foreign land, possibly turning to necromancy should his bent be such. He will, in the meantime, also do his best to muddy the waters with other exposures and allegations against virtually all of the Orders and Dukes.

War

Church: If there is a war, the Orders will side with the Church in Triskellian no matter what, even if it means battle with the clergy in Chalon-sur-Sauldre. Nothing must allow the Holy See to be moved out of Triskellian. To this end the Player-Characters must do their part to prevent an assault on the city.

State: In the event of warfare, the players may be called upon to take charge of troops in a major

battle. They may end up with the Archduke, either against the Orders or against the Hierarchical Church.

Éteignoirs: This momentary chaos will be the ideal environment in which to assassinate higher Church officials and Masters of Orders. It is to this use that the players will be put.

The course of the war and the shape of the new government is left to the Host to decide, depending on with which side the players align themselves. Naturally, the players are free to choose to ignore this entire storyline and have it going on in the background while they pursue other activities, perhaps one of the Further Adventures in this book. They might not be very happy with the consequences, but that is their choice.

Meeting the NPCs

Questioning Brother Thibaud

A veteran of many investigations of the Ardentine du Sang, Thibaud has found that one gets farther by listening politely than by making demands or threats. Any conversation with him may turn the tables — he may start asking the questions and the PCs may start answering them.



“What is your name?”

“My name is Brother Thibaud, bonded by Church and S'allumer with the charge of delivering Church Justice in all cases which call for it.”

“What do you do?”

“I assemble evidence in cases of wrongdoing, and prosecute to find the truth of the matter. In particular I am dispatched in affairs of the Capitular Orders.”

“What are you doing here now?”

“I am on an affair of the Church.”
(If pressed)

“I am actually going beyond my office. There was a certain Bettencourt, formerly of the Ardentine Factionnaire. I was to prosecute his case, but it was never brought before me. I am still puzzled by some of its aspects and currently am laboring to find the truth of a matter that has already been decided. A worldly preoccupation, to be sure, but one which will not let me rest.”

“What do you know of the case?”

“The case? Well, normally I would not discuss a case under my purview. This, however, is a case that has already been decided, so the justice of S’allumer need not be dimmed by my discussions. The case was brought by Metropolitan Charegiselus, and tried, in part, by him as well. It was Bettencourt’s right to refuse these arrangements, yet he did not do so.”

“Have you asked Bettencourt about his trial?”

“Unfortunately, he is nowhere to be found. This weighs heavily in favor of the actions of Charegiselus, yet it troubles me. Charegiselus has branded him an enemy of the Church, and this is an edict that the Pontiff alone may declare. Bettencourt has not been seen since a fortnight ago.”

“Do you know of anyone else who might know Bettencourt?”

“Fortienne. She is a Knight of S’allumer in good standing, and she in particular was to be called as a witness to his character. She was never called, and I have yet to contact her.”

“Why do you pursue a case that is already decided?”

“It is my office to “Deliver the justice of S’allumer.” It is, therefore, my obligation to see that justice is indeed what is delivered in all cases. I have my doubts.”

“What do you know of Charegiselus?”

“Very little. He is of the Church Hierarchy, and reports directly to the Archbishop Alderic du Chaussé. He can be found at his station in Chalon-sur-Sauldre.”

Questioning Sister Fortienne

Once, Fortienne thought she would make an excellent Ardentine. However, after failing numerous tests and finding herself wracked with doubts about the tenets of their belief, she amicably left the order to reside at the Diocesan Order of Vigne Bucolique, practicing Orchomancy. When she heard news of Bettencourt’s trial, she felt old emotions stir within her and she felt moved to find out the truth.



What is your name?

“You may address me as Mother Fortienne, and I am a humble servant of S’allumer. I help others to walk the Shining Path.”

“What do you do?”

“I am a soldier of the Church of S’allumer. It is my station to see that the Church does not fall victim to the enemies of this world, and provide an environment ... for justice ... for all ... the ... excuse me. I am ... distracted. If that is all...”

“Are you an Ardentine?”

“I have taken a leave of absence from the Holy Order of Ardent. Such undertakings are not unusual. I still maintain my connection to the Holy Order of Ardent, and I am prepared to resume my former duties when such is my calling.”

(Fortienne will not volunteer this information, but she has become disaffected with being a Factionnaire and these days finds the Church at Vigne Bucolique, who practice Hyperdulia, to speak more personally to her.)

“What do you know of Bettencourt?”

“Bettencourt? Have you some report of him? He has gone missing a fortnight now, and when I last spoke to him it was his purpose to seek answers with Father Hunold, Master of our Order – excuse me, Master of the Holy Order of Ardent. Please say you have news. I know he was despondent and filled with anger over his expulsion from the Order, but he would not confide in me more than this. I am worried because he is reportedly being ... pursued.”

(if pressed)

“He claimed it was his mission to rid the Order and the Church of corruption. What corruption he would not say, but it was plain that Charegiselus wished him gone from his city. I could not join him! It is not our station to pass judgment; it is for the du Sang to gather evidence and the Pontiff to ultimately decide wrongdoing! What he proposed was war against the Church. I still have faith in our justice and procedure.”

“What were the charges against Bettencourt?”

“The charges? I was never informed. Apparently they were of a magnitude to force him to give up his position in the Ardentines, but not enough to merit claiming him as a heretic. Since the trial, however, Charegiselus has branded him an enemy of the Church. Such information was not passed to the Masters of the Order by the Holy See, and so has not become our edict ... yet. Beyond this I cannot say. I was not at the trial. I cannot speak to those events or his guilt.”

“What do you know of Charegiselus?”

“He is Metropolitan of Chalon-sur-Sauldre. Beyond this, he is the accuser of Bettencourt, and a church official. I have no connections with Church Hierarchy.”

"What do you know of Brother Thibaud?"

"Nothing. To what order is he bonded?"

"What do you know of the Hyperdulia heterodoxy?"

"What? Nothing. I have ... uh ... no interaction with the Passarellites. I mean the Hyperdulians. I just ... don't ... know anything."

(If pressed)

"I ... I fear that I must decline further conversation. I cannot speak without ... without ... misleading you. Please, don't ask me again."

Questioning Master Hunold

An honest Avoirdupois, almost too good to be true, Master Hunold has upright posture and impeccable dress. He is unlikely to be found outside of Ardent, but should the players want to interview him about Bettencourt or a like matter, they can probably gain audience if they are polite and have good standing.



"Who are you?"

"I am Master Hunold. Welcome. I am Master of the Ardentine Factionnaire, the sword-wielding arm of the Church of S'allumer. May I offer you some of our meager hospitality?"

"What do you do?"

"I am the voice that speaks the will of the Pontiff to the Order. I am also the voice of the Order to the Holy See. I am caretaker of the soldiers in my home, and ear to those seeking the justice of S'allumer."

"What do you know of Bettencourt?"

"Bettencourt. It is unfortunate. He spoke to me not twelve nights before now. He is accused of assault on one of the Church's own, and chose not to seek justice from the Order or to contest the verdict."

"What did Bettencourt speak about?"

"He would only say that he wished Fortienne to have my protection, should anything happen to him. (If Fortienne is present) He seemed to think that Charegiselus has some design on her (your) person. I asked him to elaborate, but he acted as though he would be causing me trouble."

"What do you know of Brother Thibaud?"

"Brother Thibaud? I recall speaking of this to the Master of the Ardentine du Sang. Was he not the one designated as prosecutor of Bettencourt? I should think

he has moved on, now that there will be no trial by the Order."

"What do you know of Charegiselus?"

"I'm afraid I don't know much beyond that he is the Metropolitan of Chalon-sur-Sauldre. Oh, wait ... I recall Bettencourt mentioned him as being a possible candidate for appointment as one of the Archduke's Emissaries."

The Metropolitan Charegiselus

A very ambitious man, Charegiselus' past is full of minor crimes and a lot of disappearing witnesses. He is well aware that Emissary to the Church puts him one step away from assuming the role of Archbishop. He is not a religious man but an ambitious one, and he prefers to maintain an aloof, haughty demeanor. The PCs are unlikely to gain audience with him unless they have unusually high status or if they use some incredible scheme.



"What is your name?"

"If you do not know, you have no business here. Officially I am Metropolitan Charegiselus, and as such I bid you good day."

"What do you do?"

"I am Metropolitan of Chalon-sur-Sauldre. I am the supreme religious authority of this city and the extended will of the Pontiff. I am the light of S'allumer to this dark corner of Calabria. And, apparently, I am also your personal tutor."

"What do you know of Bettencourt?"

"Bettencourt ... Bettencourt ... Gage! Bring me my files! Hmm ... Ah, yes! Enemy of the Church as directed by the great light of S'allumer Pontiff. Now I remember ... excess of temper. Violence against no less than a fellow seeker of light. Assaulted and badly injured an innocent penitent. That penitent has since died, and by his Great Light's Holy Order the guilty party has been branded an enemy of the Church. If you bring me his sword as proof, I can grant you the favor accorded by law for justice delivered in the name of S'allumer."

"What do you know of Fortienne?"

"Fortienne? I must say I've never heard of her."

"What do you know of Brother Thibaud?"

"I have no course with the Orders. I know nothing of any Thibaud, Brother or other-wise."

“Do you have any information on any problems within the Church?”

“No.”

“Do you know Master Hunold?”

“I will reiterate ... I have no course with the Orders.”

Questioning Baron Guntram

It is quite likely that the players may connect Baron Guntram to the plot. Guntram will receive the characters at his estate in Chalon-sur-Sauldre if they have some credentials. If he perceives a threat, he will dispatch Prester John to spy upon them and, if necessary, to eliminate them.



“Who are you?”

“I am who I am. Baron Guntram of Rout-et-Axe. No more, no less. May I offer you refreshment? I realize it is a petty use of your time, but it would make me happy.”

“What do you do?”

“What do I do? What every Lord does. I exist to fulfill a link in the chain of possession by the Archduke. I exist to be exploited by his love for the Church. I exist to slowly expire as my holdings are stripped like leaves from a tree. I beg your pardon — do I shock you with my frank speech?”

“What do you think of the Church?”

“Let us not travel down that dark road.”

“What do you know of the Éteignoirs?”

“I know that they are a mythical group dedicated to the impossible — ridding our once glorious land of the all-pervading Church. Such a group must be made up of either heroes or madmen — neither of which walk our streets. I do not believe such a group exists.”

“Where might I find the Éteignoirs?”

“Where might you find the wind? It is everywhere, but there is no single place where it may be found. And even then, what would the wind mean to you?”

“How might I contact the Éteignoirs?”

“Why would you want to? Contact an organization that exists in myth, to tell it what? To ask it what? What grand message would you convey to the mythic?”

[If pressed]

“I do not know, personally. But I might know to whom messages can be delivered. Patience may be required, as myths are slow to reply.”

Questions the PCs may have for Arch Bishop Alderic du Chaussé

This is the S'allumer liaison to the Royal family. He is a somewhat doddering old Avoirdupois, and often repeats a person's questions to him. He tries to maintain a regal bearing but tires quickly.



“Who are you?”

“Who am I? I am the Archbishop du Chaussé, and I am a humble seeker of truth and Penitence.”

“What do you do?”

“What do I do? That is a good question. Ask the Archduke or the Dukes, for of late they are very concerned with every word that drops from my lips. Perhaps they can reply, for right now I am resting. When I am in the Court, I am the Archbishop, and I do what an Archbishop does. When I am at home, I am a penitent groping blindly in this dim world for the Light that fills all of existence. I am a man trying to open his eyes.”

“What do you know of Charegiselus?”

“What do I know of Charegiselus? Do you mean Metropolitan Charegiselus? He is ... a good and loyal follower of S'allumer. [Looks pained] Can we speak of aught else, or later perhaps? I beg your pardon, but this worldly frame is complaining loudly.”

“What do you know of Bettencourt?”

“Bettencourt? What do I know of him? Is this person a friend of yours? I know of no such person, unfortunately.”

“What do you know of Fortienne?”

“What do I know of Fortienne? I don't know anyone of that name.”

“What do you know of Brother Thibaud?”

“What do I know of Brother Thibaud? I cannot say I have had the pleasure. Penitents of S'allumer are always welcome into my company.”

“What do you know of the Éteignoirs?”

“What's that? Éteignoirs? Oh, ancient enemies of the Church. We dispatched the last of them nearly a century ago. That is part of the reason the Church has re-established Ascétique. Bad business, that.”

Questioning Prester John

Prester John is not likely to be interrogated by the Player-Characters, unless they catch him scheming to incriminate someone or is otherwise up to some mischief.

Prester John is a “disposable character.” As Game Host, you can use him to prod the game’s plot along if you feel he fills a niche, or you can leave him out. You could also use him for a completely different adventure.

Here are some sample ramblings that spectators might hear from Prester John, as he maintains his disguise as a mad prophet. His usual act is to ramble like this until people avert their eyes, (which is what most people do when confronted by a blustering madman) and then he scrutinizes them.

“Alas for you! Hypocrites and mountebanks that you be, searching for souls and fools to forsake them – you travel the land, you scour the sea, and after you’ve got your converts you crush them twice-fold with the weight of your worldly rapacity! Blind fools!”

“Begone you ever-piercing apparatus, cutting all solidarity! For those who would break the window of our true reflections have eight sections of the world! Cast thee out, cast thee out with a vengeance! I do not believe in devils, I do not believe in demons – I only believe in you!”

“I see no day, so grey is the face of every mortal! Fly, fly and find the new green bough, for I tell of death that comes as a bone-white haze, taking the lost wretches who run all too late. These kings of beasts, now counting their days! The earth will shake, and death all around shall be your dowry!”

Should the PCs figure out what Prester John is about, or if they capture him, he will attempt to bluff them into thinking he’s mad. If that fails, he will come clean quickly.



“Who are you and what do you do?”

“I am called Vaslov, and I am an adventurer in the truest source of the word. The world is a ripening fruit, and I am here to taste it in large bites.”

“What do you know about Bettencourt?”

“Should this name have meaning to me?”

(If pressed.) “I believe I have seen this man. Large hands, with the furrowed brow of one who wishes all to believe that he is sincerely deep in thought on theological matters. A nice enough gentleman, but I doubt he has the perspicacity to succeed in the grand game he seeks to join.”

“What do you know of Fortienne?”

“The warrior-nun? I have no time for such people.”

“What do you know of Brother Thibauld?”

“He is a perceptive fellow, one who is old and wise — a rarity. I wonder if that is the result of unusual luck or unusual skill.”

“What do you know of Metropolitan Charegiselus?”

“The circle of politics around the high offices of the Church of S’allumer are the subject of the wagging tongues of cloistered monks and choir-boys; they are hardly the interest of vagabonds such as myself.”



Questioning Vaslov Jakoba

The motivations of Vaslov Jakoba are dubious at best. He is likely to become interested in the case of Bettencourt, but he will probably not become involved unless one of the PCs strikes his interest, if there is money offered for his sword, or if you can think of some other reason for him to become involved (such as if the PCs were involved in the adventure from Rinaldi, as Fabrizio di Rinaldi is Vaslov’s half-brother).

Like Prester John above, Vaslov is a “disposable character.” As Game Host, you can use him to prod the game’s plot along if you feel he fills a niche, or you can leave him out. You could also use him for a completely different adventure.

Look for Vaslov in *Ironclaw*, p. 261.

Dramatis Personae

What follows is a list of the relevant gaming information for the prominent NPCs in this adventure. Each write-up includes a brief description of the character, their rules and statistics, and their personal “list” of priorities, ranked in order of importance. As Game Host, when you are playing the role of an NPC, check the NPC’s list of Motivations to see what their priorities are, to better help you decide how the character would behave.

Good Bettencourt Autrefois des Factionnaires



A former Ardentine Factionnaire, Bettencourt has been stripped of his position and status as a result of political maneuverings when he discovered irregularities in the collection and use of tithes under Metropolitan Charegiselus’ control and reported it to him. Because Charegiselus was in fact the mastermind behind the “irregularities” and directly responsible for them, Bettencourt was betrayed by the Church he was sworn to protect. One of Charegiselus’ assistants was sent to buy him off or, failing that, silence him by force. Neither effort succeeded. He was accused of “excess” and “intemperance, in actions of violence against a fellow penitent”, was refused trial by Order, and was instead subject to Hierarchical law. Bettencourt submitted to this because of a threat to have his friend

Fortienne persecuted for heterodoxy. He was convicted of actions against the Church and expelled from the ranks of the Capitular Orders, whereupon he disappeared. Whilst it is believed that he fled, in actuality he had caught wind of Charegiselus’ designs on the post of Emissary and is being held by ne’er-do-wells in the employ of the Metropolitan.

Bettencourt		Elite Horse Ordinary (Major)
Goals	1. Remain pure to the ideals of S'allumer. 2. Expose corruption within the Church. 3. Survive.	
Traits	Body d8, Speed d6, Mind d12, Will d8 Horse d8 (Plains, Herbivore, Day) Ordinary d8	
Skills	Academics d8 Dodge d8 Gossip d8 Leadership d8 Melee Combat d8 Negotiation d8 Tactics d8 Supernatural d8	
Gifts	Acolyte (X to resist a spell and be a pillar of faith) Diplomacy (bonus d12 for long negotiations) Fast Mover (move faster) Fulguration (X to ready Fulguration) Increased Trait: Body (Trait up!) Language: Magniloquentia (can speak a language) Literacy (can read and write) Ordainment in s'Allumer (bonus d12 for religious matters) Piety of Penitence (bonus d12 for religion) Prayer for Generosity (X to use stunt to refresh someone else's Gift) Prayer for Kindness (X to rally someone for the future) Prayer for Love (X to take damage for someone else) Prayer for Self-Control (X to resist or defend using Will) Prayer for Zeal (X to Rally self instead of Recover) Strength (bonus d8 with Melee, Brawl, Thrown Attacks)	
Initiative	d12, d8	
Movement	Stride 2, Dash 6, Sprint d6, Run 26	
Guard	Use “Guard” action for bonus d8 to all defenses	
Aim	Use “Aim” action for bonus d8 to attack one target	
Attack	Calendar Sword @ Close 3d8 – Damage +2, Critical Using Tactics? Add d8, d6 to melee. Fulguration @ Medium 3d8 – Damage +4, Weak, Sweep Short, Counters Unholy	
Counter	Calendar Sword @ Close 2d8 – Damage +2, Critical	
Parry	Calendar Sword @ Close 2d8	
Dodge	d8, d6	
Soak	2d8	
Loot	Chainmail, Calendar Sword, holy symbol, holy vestments	

Mother Fortienne of the Diocese of Vigne Bucolique



While Fortienne is an Ardentine Factionnaire in good standing, she has taken a leave from the Order after failing numerous tests and finding herself wracked with doubts about their tenets of belief. She now resides at the diocesan order of Vigne Bucolique. Fortienne is a good friend of Bettencourt and seeks to have him reinstated. She is currently working with the Master of the Ardentine Factionnaire, Master Hunold, to petition the Pontiff for clemency. Fortienne has only a vague idea of what was involved in Bettencourt's unorthodox trial. She is covertly a devotee of the Hyperdulia heterodoxy, something that is not looked upon fondly outside of the Passarellites. For this reason she is wary about approaching Brother Thibaud, even though they share the same interest in finding Bettencourt.

Mother Fortienne	Elite Horse Ordinary (Major)
Goals	1. Remain pure to the ideals of S'allumer. 2. Save Bettencourt from the forces arrayed against him. 3. Survive.
Traits	Body d8, Speed d6, Mind d6, Will d12 Horse d8 (Plains, Herbivore, Day) Ordinary d8 Almoner d6
Skills	Academics d8 Dodge d8 Gossip d8 Leadership d10 Melee Combat d8 Negotiation d8 Tactics d8 Supernatural d8
Gifts	Acolyte (X to resist a spell and be a pillar of faith) Cleric's Trappings: Left-Hand Path (Cleric stuff!) Diplomacy (bonus d12 for long negotiations) Fast Mover (move faster) Fulguration (X to ready Fulguration) Guidance (bonus d8 cover when you Rally) Increased Trait: Body (Trait up!) Language: Magniloquentia (can speak a language) Literacy (can read and write) Ordainment in s'Allumer (bonus d12 for religious matters) Piety of Hyperdulia (bonus d12 for religion) Prayer for Generosity (X to use stunt to refresh someone else's Gift) Prayer for Humility (X to make next spell have the "Mystic" descriptor) Prayer for Love (X to take damage for someone else) Prayer for Penance (X to use stunt to attack with Prayer for Penance (<i>Book of Mysteries</i> p. 389))) Prayer for Self-Control (X to resist or defend using Will) Prayer for Zeal (X to Rally self instead of Recover) Sanctuary (X to create Sanctuary in over Near Range) Strength (bonus d8 with Melee, Brawl, Thrown Attacks) White Magic Apprentice (may ready Holy spells)
Initiative	d12, d6
Movement	Stride 2, Dash 6, Sprint d6, Run 26
Guard	Use "Guard" action for bonus d8 to all defenses
Aim	Use "Aim" action for bonus d8 to attack one target
Attack	Calendar Sword @ Close 3d8 – Damage +2, Critical Using Tactics? Add d8, d6 to melee.
Counter	Calendar Sword @ Close 2d8 – Damage +2, Critical
Parry	Calendar Sword @ Close 2d8
Dodge	d8, d6
Soak	2d8
Loot	Chainmail, Longsword, Metal Shield

His Excellency, the Metropolitan Charegiselus of Sauldre

The Metropolitan of Chalon-sur-Sauldre is an advisor to the Archbishop of the Ducal House, Charegiselus is not a religious man, merely an ambitious one. He found Bettencourt to be too intrusive in matters of tithe gathering, and by gathering incriminating evidence of heterodoxy against Bettencourt's friend, Fortienne, managed to have him and convicted under Hierarchical law. Charegiselus now seeks to ensure that Bettencourt poses no further threat to his position or ambitions.



Charegiselus of Sauldre

Elite Horse Almoner (Major)

Goals

1. Survive.
2. Maintain dignity and face.
3. Rise in power within the Church of s'Allumer.

Traits

Body d8, Speed d4, Mind d12, Will d12
Horse d8 (Plains, Herbivore, Day)
Almoner d12
Ordinary d12

Skills

Academics d10	Negotiation d10
Dodge d10	Observation d10
Gossip d10	Throwing d10
Melee Combat d10	Tactics d10

Gifts

Acolyte (X to resist a spell and be a pillar of faith)
Benediction (X to use Stunt: Benediction)
Cleric's Trappings: Left-Hand Path (Cleric stuff!)
Diplomacy (bonus d12 for long negotiations)
Fanaticism (bonus 2d8 with all Holy attacks)
Fast Mover (move faster)
Flesh Ward (X and Rally to give ally Flesh Ward)
Guidance (bonus d8 cover when you Rally)
Healing (X and successful Rally to heal target)
Increased Trait: Body (Trait up!)
Kyndranigar's Trappings (Shadow-Magus Stuff!)
Lazarus Heart (X to use stunt: Apply Lazarus Heart)
Literacy (can read and write)
Luck (X to re-roll one die three times)

Charegiselus of Sauldre

Elite Horse Almoner (Major)

Gifts Ordainment in s'Allumer (bonus d12 for religious matters)

(cont.) Piety of Penitence (bonus d12 for religion)

Prayer for Generosity (X to use stunt to refresh someone else's Gift)

Prayer for Humility (X to make next spell have the "Mystic" descriptor)

Prayer for Love (X to take damage for someone else)

Prayer for Penance (X to use stunt to attack with Prayer for Penance (*Book of Mysteries* p. 389))

Prayer for Self-Control (X to resist or defend using Will)

Prayer for Temperance (X to recover and negate Fatigue)

Prayer for Zeal (X to Rally self instead of Recover)

Sanctuary (X to create Sanctuary in over Near Range)

Strength (bonus d8 with Melee, Brawl, Thrown Attacks)

Virtue of Intuition (X to attack with Intuition's Interdiction)

White Magic Apprentice (may ready Holy spells)

Initiative d12, d4

Movement Stride 2, Dash 5, Sprint d6, Run 23

Guard Use "Guard" action for bonus d8 to all defenses

Aim Use "Aim" action for bonus d8 to attack one target

Attack Misericord @ Medium (Thrown) d10, 2d8, d4 – Damage +1, Critical

Intuition's Interdiction @ Medium d12, d10 – Damage +0, Penetrating, Target Hurt? You are now Guarding.

Counter Misericord @ Close d10, d8, d4 – Damage +1, Critical
Intuition's Interdiction @ Short d12, d10 – Damage +0, Penetrating, Target Hurt? You are now Guarding.

Dodge d10, d4

Soak 2d8

Loot Chainmail, Misericord



His Eminence, Arch-Bishop Alderic du Chaussé

Second only to the Pontiff of the Church of s'Allumer, audience with Arch-Bishop Alderic is probably beyond most Player-Characters, unless they have unusual influence or have shown themselves to be of high character.

While Alderic claims residency with Metropolitan Charegiselus at his house in Chalon-sur-Sauldre, this close relationship is suspect, as the Metropolitan appears to be able to bend the ear of the Archbishop at will, and the Archbishop wields great influence with the Archduke. It is even more questionable as the Archbishop has recommended Charegiselus for the secular position of Emissary and gotten informal assurance that the appointment will be made.

Age has not been kind to His Eminence, and even though his post may be for life, time has taken its toll upon his senses. He may have to step down soon, and many wonder who he might name as his successor ...



Alderic du Chaussé

Elite Horse Almoner (Major)

Goals

1. Serve the Church of s'Allumer.
2. Eschew wordliness.
3. Maintain dignity and face.

Traits

Body d6, Speed d4, Mind d6, Will d10
 Horse d6 (Plains, Herbivore, Day)
 Almoner d12
 Ordinary d12
 Functionary d8

Skills

Academics d12
 Gossip d12
 Negotiation d12
 Observation d10
 Presence d10

Alderic du Chaussé

Elite Horse Almoner (Major)

Gifts

- Acolyte (X to resist a spell and be a pillar of faith)
- Administration (bonus d12 to run a business)
- Benediction (X to use Stunt: Benediction)
- Bribery (bonus d12 to inquire about or make bribes)
- Cleric's Trappings: Left-Hand Path (Cleric stuff!)
- Diplomacy (bonus d12 for long negotiations)
- Fanaticism (bonus 2d8 with all Holy attacks)
- Fast Mover (move faster)
- Flesh Ward (X and Rally to give ally Flesh Ward)
- Guidance (bonus d8 cover when you Rally)
- Healing (X and successful Rally to heal target)
- Increased Trait: Body (Trait up!)
- Lazarus Heart (X to use stunt: Apply Lazarus Heart)
- Literacy (can read and write)
- Ordainment in s'Allumer (bonus d12 for religious matters)
- Piety of Penitence (bonus d12 for religion)
- Prayer for Generosity (X to use stunt to refresh someone else's Gift)
- Prayer for Humility (X to make next spell have the "Mystic" descriptor)
- Prayer for Kindness (X to rally someone for the future)
- Prayer for Love (X to take damage for someone else)
- Prayer for Penance (X to use stunt to attack with Prayer for Penance (*Book of Mysteries* p. 389))
- Prayer for Self-Control (X to resist or defend using Will)
- Prayer for Temperance (X to recover and negate Fatigue)
- Sanctuary (X to create Sanctuary in over Near Range)
- Strength (bonus d8 with Melee, Brawl, Thrown Attacks)
- Wealth (X to assert wealthy influence)
- White Magic Apprentice (may ready Holy spells)

Initiative

d6, d4

Movement

Stride 2, Dash 5, Sprint d6, Run 21

Guard

Use "Guard" action for bonus d8 to all defenses

Aim

Use "Aim" action for bonus d8 to attack one target

Attack

Hooves @ Close d6, d4 – Damage +1, Critical

Counter

Hooves @ Close d6, d4 – Damage +1, Critical

Parry

Hooves @ Close d6, d4

Dodge

d4

Soak

d6

Loot

Chainmail, Misericord

Master Factionnaire Hunold l'Inestimable of the Holy Order of Ardent

The Master Capitular of the Ardentines

Factionnaire, Hunold is perplexed by the loss of Bettencourt and his choice to submit to Hierarchical justice rather than judgment by his peers. An honest Avoirdupois, almost too good to be true, Hunold is a noble and truly gracious soul, which makes him blind to subterfuge and complicity by others. He is working with Fortienne to ferret out the truth in Bettencourt's trial. Any allegations leveled against the Metropolitan will be forwarded by Hunold to the Archbishop, where they will be quickly intercepted by Charegiselus.

Hunold l'Inestimable		Elite Horse Paladin (Major)
Goals	1. Remain pure to the ideals of s'Allumer. 2. Serve the Holy Order of Ardent. 3. Survive.	
Traits	Body d10, Speed d10, Mind d10, Will d10 Horse d10 (Plains, Herbivore, Day) Paladin d12 Cavalier d12	
Skills	Academics d12 Dodge d12 Leadership d10 Melee Combat d10 Negotiation d12	Observation d10 Presence d10 Riding d12 Tactics d10 Supernatural d10
Gifts	Acolyte (X to resist a spell and be a pillar of faith) Cleric's Trappings: Right-Hand Path (Paladin stuff!) Diplomacy (bonus d12 for long negotiations) Fanaticism (bonus 2d8 with all Holy attacks) Fast Mover (move faster) Fulguration (X to ready Fulguration) Heraldry (bonus d12 to know nobility) Increased Trait: Body (Trait up!) Literacy (can read and write) Nobility (X to assert noble influence) Ordainment in s'Allumer (bonus d12 for religious matters) Piety of Penitence (bonus d12 for religion) Prayer for Generosity (X to use stunt to refresh someone else's Gift) Prayer for Humility (X to make next spell have the "Mystic" descriptor) Prayer for Kindness (X to rally someone for the future) Prayer for Love (X to take damage for someone else) Prayer for Temperance (X to recover and negate Fatigue) Prayer for Zeal (X to Rally self instead of Recover) Rider's Trappings (Rider stuff!) Strength (bonus d8 with Melee, Brawl, Thrown Attacks) White Magic Apprentice (may ready Holy spells)	
Initiative	2d10	
Movement	Stride 2, Dash 7, Sprint d10, Run 33	
Guard	Use "Guard" action for bonus d8 to all defenses	



Hunold l'Inestimable	Elite Horse Paladin (Major)
Aim	Use "Aim" action for bonus d8 to attack one target
Attack	Calendar Sword @ Close 2d12, 2d10, 3d8 - Damage +2, Critical Fulguration @ Medium 2d12, 2d10, 2d8 - Damage +4, Weak, Sweep Short, Counters Unholy
Counter	Calendar Sword @ Close 2d12, 2d10, 3d8 - Damage +2, Critical
Parry	Calendar Sword @ Close 2d12, 2d10
Dodge	d12, d10 & Cover d8
Soak	d10, d8
Loot	Chainmail, Calendar Sword, wooden shield

**Brother Thibaud, Capitular of the
Ardentine du Sang**



The agent of the Ardentine du Sang, who had been dispatched when the accusations against Bettencourt were leveled, he is still investigating the goings on of Bettencourt's case, despite the matter having been officially closed. A strong sense of duty is coupled with a healthy dose of suspicion. His investigations have turned up several troubling instances of deception and apparent errors of accountancy, some of which point to a high official. He now seeks to interview Bettencourt, who may know the official involved. He has a piercing gaze and a terse manner.

Brother Thibaud

Elite Badger Paladin (Major)

Goals

1. Remain pure to the ideals of s'Allumer.
2. Seek the truth.
3. Survive.

Traits

Body d8, Speed d6, Mind d10, Will d8
Badger d8 (Forest, Omnivore, Night)
Paladin d8

Skills

Academics d8
Dodge d8
Leadership d8
Melee Combat d8
Presence d8
Searching d8
Stealth d8
Supernatural d8

Gifts

Acolyte (X to resist a spell and be a pillar of faith)
Cleric's Trappings: Right-Hand Path (Paladin stuff!)
Frenzy (X to become Enraged)
Guidance (bonus d8 cover when you Rally)
Increased Trait: Will (Trait up!)
Language: Magniloquentia (can speak a language)
Literacy (can read and write)
Luck (X to re-roll one die three times)
Ordainment in s'Allumer (bonus d12 for religious matters)
Overconfidence (choose to gain bonus and penalty d12 for anything)
Prayer for Generosity (X to use stunt to refresh someone else's Gift)
Prayer for Humility (X to make next spell have the "Mystic" descriptor)
Prayer for Kindness (X to rally someone for the future)
Prayer for Love (X to take damage for someone else)
Prayer for Self-Control (X to resist or defend using Will)
Prayer for Temperance (X to recover and negate Fatigue)
Prayer for Zeal (X to Rally self instead of Recover)
Sanctuary (X to create Sanctuary in over Near Range)
Strength (bonus d8 with Melee, Brawl, Thrown Attacks)
True Measure (Stunt to know the true measure of distances, goods, etc.)
Two-for-One March (X to use a stunt to run double speed)
White Magic Apprentice (may ready Holy spells)

Initiative 2d8

Movement Stride 1, Dash 4, Sprint d6, Run 18

Guard Use "Guard" action for bonus d8 to all defenses

Aim Use "Aim" action for bonus d8 to attack one target

Attack Longsword @ Close 3d8 – Damage +2

Counter Longsword @ Close 3d8 – Damage +2

Parry Longsword @ Close 3d8

Dodge d8, d6

Soak d8

Loot Chainmail, Longsword

Duchess Chlorinthe de Boulanger



A duchess loyal to both the Avoirdupois Manor and the Church of S'allumer, Chlorinthe is the head of the Boulanger family, the richest Avoirdupois family in terms of lands and material wealth. It is in their best interest to keep the situation as it lies, as any change at all could alter their fortunes or status. Until Duchess Chlorinthe feels she has amassed enough material wealth, she will do everything she can either through influence or guile to keep any changes from taking place that might jeopardize her family's future – and such changes include Charegiselus' bid for the post of Emissary.

Duchess Chlorinthe de Boulanger Elite Horse Diplomat (Major)

Goals

1. Maintain or increase the power and influence of the Boulangers.
2. Survive.
3. Spy on Charegiselus, who must be up to something.

Traits Body d10, Speed d8, Mind d8, Will d6
Horse d8 (Plains, Herbivore, Day)
Diplomat d12

Skills Academics d8
Gossip d8
Inquiry d8
Melee Combat d8
Negotiation d8
Tactics d8

Duchess Chlorinthe de Boulanger Elite Horse Diplomat (Major)

Gifts Diplomacy (bonus d12 for long negotiations)
Etiquette (bonus d12 for manners)
Fast Mover (move faster)
Fast-Talk (bonus d12 for quick negotiations)
Heraldry (bonus d12 to know nobility)
Increased Trait: Body (Trait up!)
Literacy (can read and write)
Nobility (X to assert noble influence)
Strength (bonus d8 with Melee, Brawl, Thrown Attacks)
Wealth (X to assert wealthy influence)

Initiative 2d8

Movement Stride 2, Dash 7, Sprint d8, Run 31

Guard Use "Guard" action for bonus d8 to all defenses

Aim Use "Aim" action for bonus d8 to attack one target

Attack Longsword @ Close d10, 2d8 – Damage +2

Counter Longsword @ Close d10, 2d8 – Damage +2

Parry Longsword @ Close d10, d8

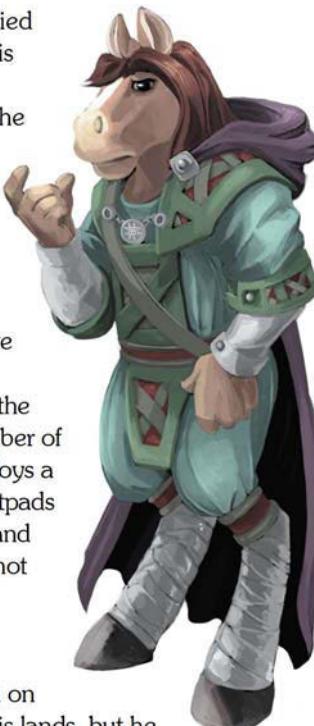
Dodge 2d8

Soak d10, d8

Loot Chainmail, Longsword

Baron Guntram de Rout-et-Axe

A vocal and dissatisfied minor noble, Guntram is suspicious of all the Church's motives, but the Church is not suspicious of him — all too often he has been heard to wish that the Éteignoirs were real, which is hardly in keeping with the secretive nature of that dark brotherhood. However, the Baron is a genuine member of the Éteignoirs, and employs a number of spies and footpads disguised as merchants and pilgrims. His purpose is not revealed to these employees; they merely work for the gold. His holdings are in the south on the border of Avoirdupois lands, but he still makes his home in the capital of Chalon du Sauldre. He has heard hints about Charegiselus' problems with Bettencourt. He seeks to gain more information and, should he get it, bend the Metropolitan to the will of the Éteignoirs once he gains the position of Emissary.



Baron Guntram of Roux-et-Axe Elite Horse Cavalier (Major)	
Goals	1. Maintain dignity and face (which includes concealing his membership in the Éteignoirs.) 2. Survive. 3. Reduce the influence of the Church of S'allumer within Avoirdupois demesne
Traits	Body d8, Speed d6, Mind d12, Will d8 Horse d8 (Plains, Herbivore, Day) Cavalier d8 Functionary d8
Skills	Academics d8 Negotiation d8 Dodge d8 Riding d8 Gossip d8 Tactics d8 Melee Combat d8
Gifts	Administration (bonus d12 to run a business) Bribery (bonus d12 to inquire about or make bribes) Diplomacy (bonus d12 for long negotiations) Fast Mover (move faster) Heraldry (bonus d12 to know nobility) Increased Trait: Body (Trait up!) Insider with the Éteignoirs (for bonus d12) Literacy (can read and write) Nobility (X to assert noble influence) Strength (bonus d8 with Melee, Brawl, Thrown Attacks) Wealth (X to assert wealthy influence) Rider's Trappings (Rider stuff!)
Initiative	d12, d6
Movement	Stride 2, Dash 6, Sprint d6, Run 26
Guard	Use "Guard" action for bonus d8 to all defenses
Aim	Use "Aim" action for bonus d8 to attack one target
Attack	Longsword @ Close 4d8 – Damage +2
Counter	Longsword @ Close 4d8 – Damage +2
Parry	Longsword @ Close 3d8 Shield Cover d8
Dodge	d8, d6
Soak	2d8
Loot	Chainmail, Longsword, Metal Shield

Duke Berenger de Crinière

A duke strongly loyal to the Archduke and brother to the Archduchess, Berenger is also suspicious of the Church, as he is a secret practitioner of the worship of Anu. He dearly wants to keep this concealed from the Archduke as he kept it concealed from his sister so as not to lose his status. The Éteignoirs would happily recruit him, but his loyalty to the Archduke is an obstacle. In addition, he was secretly responsible for arranging for the Elementalist priests of Anu to tend the magic forge of the Enclume, one of their most well-guarded secrets. To avoid an investigation into his own affairs he has been rather silent on Metropolitan Charegiselus' controversial nomination to the post of Emissary.



Duke Berenger de Crinière Elite Horse Cavalier (Major)	
Goals	1. Serve the Avoirdupois. 2. Maintain dignity and face 3. Survive.
Traits	Body d4, Speed d6, Mind d12, Will d8 Horse d6 (Plains, Herbivore, Day) Cavalier d8 Diplomat d8
Skills	Academics d8 Melee Combat d8 Dodge d8 Negotiation d8 Gossip d8 Riding d8 Inquiry d8
Gifts	Bribery (bonus d12 to inquire about or make bribes) Diplomacy (bonus d12 for long negotiations) Fast Mover (move faster) Fast-Talk (bonus d12 for quick negotiations) Heraldry (bonus d12 to know nobility) Increased Trait: Body (Trait up!) Literacy (can read and write) Nobility (X to assert noble influence) Strength (bonus d8 with Melee, Brawl, Thrown Attacks) Wealth (X to assert wealthy influence) Rider's Trappings (Rider stuff!)

Duke Berenger de Crinière	Elite Horse Cavalier (Major)
Initiative d12, d6	
Movement Stride 2, Dash 5, Sprint d6, Run 21	
Guard Use "Guard" action for bonus d8 to all defenses	
Aim Use "Aim" action for bonus d8 to attack one target	
Attack Falchion @ Close 2d8, d4 – Damage +2, Critical	
Counter Falchion @ Close 2d8, d4 – Damage +2, Critical	
Parry Falchion @ Close d8, d4 Shield Cover d8	
Dodge d8, d4	
Soak 2d4	
Loot Cloth Armor, Longsword, Metal Shield	

Duke Lothaire d'Enclume



The chief armorer to the Archduke and his troops, and supplier of weapons and armor to many Clerical forces as well, Lothaire rose to his esteemed position with the help of his brother Donatien, who is the Archduke's minister of war. Donatien achieved this position while the former Duke d'Enclume (his father) was alive, and has retained his ministerial post for an unprecedented twenty-seven years. The Duke's magic forge is kept up through a secret compact with the priests of Anu, a secret that would be devastating to his family should it get out. He is the most vocal in opposition to Metropolitan Charegiselus gaining the position of Emissary.

Duke Lothaire d'Enclume	Elite Horse Artisan (Major)
Goals	1. Conceal the existence of the Enclume forge. 2. Survive. 3. Oppose Charegiselus' bid for Emissary.
Traits	Body d8, Speed d6, Mind d12, Will d8 Horse d8 (Plains, Herbivore, Day) Cavalier d8 Craftsman d8
Skills	Academics d8 Craft d8 Inquiry d8 Melee Combat d8 Negotiation d8 Tactics d8
Gifts	Craft Specialty: Arms and Armor (bonus d12 to craft) Fast Mover (move faster) Haggling (bonus d12 for money talk) Heraldry (bonus d12 to know nobility) Increased Trait: Body (Trait up!) Literacy (can read and write) Nobility (X to assert noble influence) Strength (bonus d8 with Melee, Brawl, Thrown Attacks) Rider's Trappings (Rider stuff!) Team Player (give allies bonus d12 in assist rolls)
Initiative	d12, d6
Movement	Stride 2, Dash 6, Sprint d6, Run 26
Guard	Use "Guard" action for bonus d8 to all defenses
Aim	Use "Aim" action for bonus d8 to attack one target
Attack	Falchion @ Close 4d8 – Damage +2, Critical
Counter	Falchion @ Close 4d8 – Damage +2, Critical
Parry	Falchion @ Close 3d8, Shield Cover d12
Dodge	d6
Soak	d10, d8
Loot	Plate Armor "Armure d'Enclume", Falchion "Seax d'Enclume," Pavise

Prester John



With wild staring eyes under his thick cloak, “Prester John” is often seen at the gates of Chalon-sur-Sauldre or other cities, condemning the wicked ways of the populace until the constables make him move on. Normally, folks like John are dismissed as harmless lunatics ... which is exactly what John wants, as he is in secret an Apostate spy, in league with Baron Guntram.

Prester John’s usual method is to size folks up by pretending to preach at them, while examining them with his “wild staring eyes” act. Then later he hires thugs to deal with them. More than once, John has arranged for an attack in a public place, where he casts spells on the thugs he hired himself, so his targets might be accused of Apostasy themselves. To this day, no one suspects John of being an Apostate.

Prester John	Elite Lynx Spy (Major)
Goals	1. Survive, even if that means selling others out. 2. Avoid being found out as a henchman or wizard. 3. Maintain his act as a mad preacher.
Traits	Body d6, Speed d6, Mind d12, Will d8 Lynx d8 (Plains, Herbivore, Day) Spy d10 Preacher d6
Skills	Academics d8 Craft d8 Deceit d8 Dodge d8 Inquiry d8 Melee Combat d8 Negotiation d8 Observation d8 Searching d8 Stealth d8 Tactics d8
Gifts	Acrobat (acrobatic dash, extra 'stand up' action) Disguise (bonus d12 to impersonate) Etiquette (bonus d12 for manners) Fast-Talk (bonus d12 for quick negotiations) Heraldry (bonus d12 to know nobility) Hiking (bonus d12 for distance travel) Increased Trait: Body (Trait up!) Keen Ears (can hear faint sounds) Knowledge of Things to Come (X to see future outcome of next roll) Kyndranigar's Trappings (Shadow-Magus Stuff!) Literacy (can read and write) Night Vision (poor lighting is good lighting) Oratory (bonus d12 for public speaking) Shadowing (bonus d12 to follow people) Tracking (bonus d12 to follow trails) Virtue of Intuition (X to attack with Intuition's Interdiction)
Initiative	d12, d6
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 3, Sprint d6, Run 24
Guard	Use “Guard” action for bonus d8 to all defenses
Aim	Use “Aim” action for bonus d8 to attack one target
Attack	Stiletto @ Close d8, d6 – Damage +2, Impaling Intuition's Interdiction @ Medium d12, d8 – Damage +0, Penetrating, Target Hurt? You are now Guarding.
Counter	Stiletto @ Close d8, d6 – Damage +2, Impaling Intuition's Interdiction @ Short d12, d10 – Damage +0, Penetrating, Target Hurt? You are now Guarding.
Parry	Stiletto @ Close d8, d6
Dodge	d8, d6
Soak	d8, d6
Loot	1x book, <i>On the Virtue of Magic</i> by Kyndranigar



THE WOLVES IN WINTER

In Which a Forest Shrouded in Fog and Ice Becomes a Theater for Tragedy

What Has Gone On Before

There is an ancient saying common among the Phelan, “The World is only as large as your Spirit.” Like most Phelan sayings, it is scoffed at by the Bisclavret. However, at least two Bisclavret nobles personify the spirit of the old Phelan adage.

For twenty years, a bitter conflict has raged between the Baron Afligeant and his neighbor, Sir Ricaner. The two nobles share a hilly patch of forested land at the base of the Lochlan Mountains, known locally as the Méchant Wood. Neither can tolerate the other.

Their dispute has its genesis in an act of extraordinary courage on the part of Sir Ricaner’s father, 25 years ago. A guardsman at Harrowgate, he saved the life of the former Duke’s wife from a slave assassin, and was granted a noble title. Unfortunately, the plot of land he was given along with the title, while ownerless in theory, had been long occupied by the family of the Baron Afligeant. The Baron understandably resented the intrusion of the newcomer, and does so to this day. Sir Ricaner’s father tried to make peace with the Baron for a time, but soon resigned himself to a lifetime of feuding. His son was raised in this environment, and sneers at the doddering old Baron, thinking him unworthy to hold his land.

Though their hatred and disdain have festered and bubbled for two decades, action is rarely taken. They act only when they are certain the other cannot definitely trace their attack back. Wells are fouled, peasant huts burned. Each blames every accident, every bandit raid, and every professional failing on the other as a result. Recently, a junior member of the Indicateur assigned to the area as an advisor and observer unwisely informed both nobles that he intended to advise his superiors of their constant squabbling. The brave young Indicateur managed to reach a garrison of Ducal mercenaries, and even now they are preparing to march to the Méchant to investigate matters.

There are other forces gathering as well. The mysterious organization of thieves and assassins known as the Invisible Guild, who have allied themselves with Ricaner, have plans of their own. And who is the mysterious mad wanderer the adventurers find hiding in a burnt out village?

For Afligeant and Ricaner, the world is limited to their remote land. The Duke, the Indicateur... they are all far from thought. Their petty dispute has bound them to the Méchant. Soon, their spiritual isolation will become a very physical, for themselves, and for others, as their dispute flares into open conflict during a bitter winter.

Getting the Players Involved

Every gaming group is different. Some parties concentrate on militancy and combat, while others prefer to solve their problems through reason and other “higher” methods. Most groups are somewhere in between. You, as Game Host, know your Players and Characters better than we do, and it’s up to you to find a way to get them involved in this escapade.

The assumption made in the adventure as written, however, is that the players have been hired by a scribe, Henri d’Muiresud. Henri has been summoned by the Baron Afligeant to record samples of the Baron’s poetry, and share them with the world. At least, this is his ostensible purpose. Henri is in reality an Indicateur agent sent to check on the deteriorating relationship between the two nobles. He is also here to investigate reports that Afligeant intends to leave his lands to the Church, a possibility that angers the Duke and his advisors.

Hooks

In order to involve your Player-Characters with this plot, there has to be something in the context of the story that would motivate them to participate. What are your PC’s motivations? What drives them to adventure? Here are some suggestions that may help you.

- ↔ Are any of your PCs members of the clergy? Baron Afligeant is a relatively devout adherent of S’Allumer. His personal confessor has recently died, and a cleric must be sent to settle his affairs and act as temporary spiritual advisor. Or, perhaps they have been sent to make arrangements for Afligeant’s lands to be transferred to the Church upon his death. Alternately, the players could be sent on a mercy mission in light of the extreme weather, dispensing food and blankets to the peasantry.
- ↔ If your characters are scholars, it may be harder to come up with a reason to entice them to the remote Méchant Wood. Other scholars may have been summoned to research his land claim against Ricaner. Or maybe they have been sent to make a copy of one of the Baron’s books?
- ↔ Do your Player-Characters have any ties among the nobility? Perhaps they have been dispatched to negotiate a treaty between the two lords, or simply to pay regards to them. By the time they arrive, of course, it is too late for talk.



- ↔ Are any of your PCs criminals? As the situation grows worse in the Méchant, news of the easy pickings spreads in the Underworld. Whole villages left empty, just waiting for the right person to stop by and fill his pockets! Of course, the reality is a little different.
- ↔ Wizards might be attracted by rumors of forbidden knowledge. The Méchant Woods are said to conceal ancient Autarch ruins which have never been properly researched. The ruins are simply a few standing stones left over from Phelan days, but once the wizards are in the Méchant, they will find it difficult to leave. Or, they might have heard of a magical text in the Baron's library, one he is willing to sell.
- ↔ It is no secret that Afligeant and Ricaner have hated each other for some time. Word of their current dispute has found its way to nearby settlements. Both nobles seek mercenaries to help them, and both are offering very good shares of booty.
- ↔ Perhaps the easiest way to involve the players in this adventure is to have them stop in Méchant on the way to somewhere else. They simply get drawn into the local dispute, whether they like it or not.
- ↔ Let the Players exercise their free will. Your Players may choose to avoid Schaphandre's haunt all together, or they may want to talk to each of the Bisclavret knights leading the siege on Castle Afligeant. Never force your PCs to participate in encounters — your best bet is to be familiar with your PC's Gifts, Skills, and other motivations and then tweak the episodes to play on those. It will make the Players feel more involved and it will make for a more satisfying game.
- ↔ The game host should note this adventure is not a traditional "treasure and glory" scenario. Instead it is intended to clearly show the players the cost of political infighting and blood feuds on the part of the Bisclavret. The Baron and his household will scheme and plot, even as the enemy batters the gates and supplies grow short. The players will, at best, be able to achieve a kind of Pyrrhic victory simply by staying alive and learning a few valuable lessons.

How to Run This Adventure

As Game Host, your job is to make sure the adventure runs smoothly, that all the PCs are getting "screen time" and contributing to the game experience.

- ↔ Episodes in the game should be tailored to your group. Many of the episodes in this game won't happen until the Player-Characters actually "show up" at the places where they take place. The trick is to encourage your Players to want to solve whatever dilemma the episode causes, and then to be eager to move on to the next one.
- ↔ Choose the episodes that you think your Players will enjoy — skip the ones they don't. For example, if your Players don't like combat and other such dire situations, then don't use the Ambush episode described below. If you don't think your Players would have fun participating in a particular episode, then skip it. You should also feel free to improvise new episodes or make major changes.

The Tale of the Forest Méchant

In summer, the Méchant is an unremarkable part of the larger Muire Forest. Its location in the foothills of the Lochlan Peaks mean there are more pines here than broadleaf trees, and it is not as well settled as some other places. These things aside, it is very much a representative sample of a typical Bisclavret demesne.

In winter the Méchant area has a reputation for unusually heavy snowfall and unexpected changes in weather. Snowfall can be very heavy and block doors, roads, and form drifts in the valleys that are as deep as a grown wolf's whiskers. Occasionally, the area is isolated from the outside world for several days at a time. The residents are used to this, but this winter has been different.

Frigid rains have been falling for days. At night, the rain freezes on the ground, trees, and buildings. Over the past three weeks, the entire area has been coated with ice. Trees are literally bent double under the weight, and all have lost branches. Even though branches are scattered everywhere, fires are hard to light because of the constant freezing rain. Any kindling that is gathered must be scraped free of ice before being thrown on the fire. Roofs have collapsed, and walls are covered in up to two full inches of hard ice. Peasants have found themselves climbing out through windows, because their doors have been frozen shut over night.

However, as the players approach the Méchant, it is the end of a clear and relatively warm day. If they have not yet met with their employer, Henri, they may do so at a small hostelry on the outskirts of forest. In the distance, the players can see the grey peaks of the Lochlan

THE WOLVES IN WINTER

Mountains rising indistinctly from an expanse of snow-topped forest to the west. Dark clouds above the mountains hint at more bad weather on the way. The wood is separated from the rest of the Muire by a rapidly flowing river, a tributary of the much larger River Nith. An infrequent ferry service runs across this river, and a two-story wooden building is located on the east side.

This establishment, the called the 'Timber and Water,' is a small inn and common house. The owners, a young dog and his wife, maintain the ferry as well. The inn is empty but for the owners and Henri, who can be found sipping ale in the main room of the hostelry.

If Henri is expecting the players, he will greet them warmly, and order food and drink for them. If they are not here to meet the young wolf, he will nonetheless be likewise friendly, and carefully enquire as to their reason for visiting the Méchant.

No matter their purpose for being here, Henri will present himself as an affable scribe. If the players are seeking employment, he offers to pay them for escorting him to Baron Afligeant's castle. He cannot pay them until they arrive at the castle, and will offer no more than 12 denarii apiece for the escort. If he finds they are on their way to the castle independently, he will suggest traveling with the group, for protection. If Henri is rebuffed, he will maintain his genial façade, and soon after will have the innkeeper ferry him across the river.

Speaking to the innkeeper or his wife may prove useful. They are friendly, but very isolated at their quiet inn, and unable to comment usefully on the situation between Ricaner and Afligeant. If the players engage them in conversation, they will say that business is generally slow in the winter. However, two weeks ago, a party of a dozen or so "rough and crude rats and foreign types" passed through. They caused no trouble, but made the couple very nervous. The innkeepers can provide no other information about these strangers.

The innkeeper is able to ferry the players across the river on his flat-bottomed barge at any point during daylight hours, and will not charge for the service if they stay one night. Otherwise, he will ask for 1 denar for each person, and 5 denarii for any mounts. He can take three people across at once, or one steed. The players may elect to ferry themselves across in his boat, and leave the vessel on the west side of the river. They are free to do this, but it will anger the innkeeper.

Henri will want to leave the inn almost at once, but he is willing to stay overnight if the players insist. If they do, their rest is fitful. Shortly after midnight, a new winter storm strikes in earnest. Dozens of trees, already strained by a heavy cake of ice, collapse in the fierce winds. The road is covered with a thick blanket of drifting snow. As grey skies lighten to the dawn, the players arise to a transformed world. Freezing sleet continues to pour from

the skies, obscuring the horizon. Except for the river, no landmark is familiar. Attempts to attract the attention of the innkeeper will fail – he and his wife are shuttered in their home.

If the players leave at once, the storm begins shortly after they are ferried to the opposite of the river. In any case, the innkeeper wishes them luck and safe journey. The road to Afligeant's castle lies before them, a narrow icy track that disappears into a snow covered forest of pines.

The Tale of the Unforgiving Winter

Even following the road, the adventurers soon find themselves hard-pressed to fight their way through the broken trees and icy ground as they penetrate deeper into Afligeant's realm. The weather shifts dramatically from hour to hour. When the winds blow from the south, cold rain soaks everything. When they come from the west or the north, the rain turns to snow, and fur and clothing acquire a thin coating of ice. The forest seems unnaturally lifeless and still. For hours at a time, the only sound is the wind and the eerie creaking of the trees under their coats of ice.

It will take two or three days for the players to cover the distance to Afligeant's castle, more if they wander away from the road. The forest paths have been so badly blocked by snow and fallen timber that the PCs are forced to struggle through at a snail's pace. There are a number of possible encounters that may occur along the way, at the host's discretion. These are detailed below.

The host should also make sure to get details of the party's preparations for encamping each night. Henri has a small tent, but if the players have no portable shelter of their own, their best bet may be to create some from the plentiful broken timber that lines the road. Each character should roll Body, Mind, Craft, Endurance, and Searching vs. 3. (Gifts like Survival will definitely help, as well as a "Forest" species.) It takes 3 successes to weather the cold with no ill effects. (Two successes loses a good night's sleep and inflicts Fatigue; one success does that, and inflicts Hurt from frostbite; no successes can result in become Sick.) Characters may sacrifice some of their own successes to give d8 bonuses to others.

If you want the journey to be a little more memorable, use some or all of the following encounters.

Ambush!

This encounter will occur unless the players are taking every effort to conceal themselves. While carefully crossing a frozen creek, the party is attacked by a band of ragged ruffians! They will be operating in two groups, one of either side of the creek, thus hoping to put the adventurers at a disadvantage.

The bandits are wandering thugs in the employ of the Invisible Guild! They are wandering the countryside, raising panic among Afligeant's peasantry, and keeping an eye for outsiders, like the players. The majority of them are dressed in scraps of leather, and armed with spears and short swords. Use the "Typical Horde" statistics provided in *Ironclaw* p. 254. There are two of them for every player, though the host should tailor this number to suit his group. They are led by a grizzled ferret named Inégal. Use stats as per a Typical Leader in the *Ironclaw* rules, and arm him with a rusty Saber and a Pistol.

If they defeat the players, they will simply take whatever arms and money the group has and run off into the wilderness. If they players display powerful magic, or disable more than half the bandits, they will likewise retreat. Those left living will beg pitifully for mercy, with the exception of Inégal. If he is left alive, he will try to convince the players to bring him to Baron Afligeant. Inégal has a small price on his head (12 denarii), but he tells the party that Afligeant will reward them richly for his safe capture.

If the players search Inégal thoroughly, they will find a brand scar on his left shoulder. The brand is in the shape of an oval above a cross; a stylized skull and crossbones. Any Bisclavret character will recognize this at once as the insignia of the feared Invisible Guild! If Henri discovers this, he will insist the players bind Inégal and bring him along. If they refuse, he will tell them that the only other option is to execute the miserable wretch on the spot. He will display a signet ring, indicating his noble blood and his right to dispense low justice.

The players may wish to interrogate Inégal when they find his brand. He will tell them nothing unless tortured, or probed with Thought-Reading or Mesmerism. He knows that the Guild has been hired by Ricaner to cause trouble for the Baron, and that is all he knows. He thinks the Guild is involved simply as mercenary soldiers. This fact alone, however, is enough to bring the full weight of Bisclavret wrath down upon Ricaner.

Perceptive players may suspect Henri is more then he seems in his dealings with Inégal. If questioned, he will insist he is simply obeying the will of the Duke. (This is true.) He will not reveal his additional status as an Indicateur except under the most dire threats, or under the influence of magic.

Hunted!

This encounter should occur no matter what the players do. While hiking or camping at night, the player with the keenest ears hears an oddly discordant melody floating on the wind. The tune is being played on a distant flute. Attempts to track the unseen musician fail at night,

though the party may occasionally see faint lantern light a few hundred paces away.

Attempts to find the musician during the day will turn up a set of tracks that clearly belong to a rabbit. These paw prints disappear into the woods. The players are being tracked by Fetter Prisent, an Invisible Guild ranger in the employ of Sir Ricaner. He will simply observe them from a distance, unsure of their strength. If the players have some magical means of tracking the rabbit, he will led them to Sir Raciner's camp, which is described later in this adventure.

Refugees

As they fight through a particularly dense patch of forest, the adventurers will find themselves almost face to face with a ragged line of twenty peasants, led by an aged wolf farmer. They will regard the adventurers warily.

The peasants are mostly wolfish and canine stock, but there is a young family of mice struggling to keep with the rest. The refugees have no valuables with them, and little food. If any of the players is a cleric, the refugees will beg for prayer. If any players are an obvious noble, the oldest of the refugees will approach them and humbly ask for assistance. If the players are so crass as to threaten these wretches, they will flee.

If questioned, the refugees will tell the players they are fleeing from bandits and the soldiers of Sir Ricaner. If asked why do not seek refuge at Baron Afligeant's castle, they will fall silent for a few moments, and finally say they have heard the road is blocked by soldiers. This is not true - they simply fear the Baron's cause is doomed. They will be able to direct the players to their nameless village (described in the next section), which lies on the road to the castle.

Attack!

One morning, as the Player-Characters prepare to head out they hear angry growls and the sounds of breaking branches. Looking behind, they see a small pack of lean and fierce lizards, mouths filled with forbidding teeth. These are Burindents, known to the Phelan as "bethrachranna." While dangerous, they seldom attack people. The harsh winter has them desperate for food, and they are willing to risk spears for a meal.

The Burindents attack without subtlety, simply running in and attacking the nearest person en masse. There is one for every player, though the host may adjust this to fit the players. The Burindents will have to be killed - they cannot be chased off or frightened.

Once the players have tired of the perils of the Méchant, and the host feels he has battered them sufficiently, proceed to the next section.

The Tale of the Village of Ghosts

After a long day of trudging through frozen muck and ice, the party spots a welcome refuge, just in time for nightfall! Here and there through the fallen and bent trees a dozen small wooden dwellings can be seen clustered around a stone cottage in a small clearing. The buildings are silent and still. No light can be seen through their windows, and no smoke arises from their chimneys or smoke holes. All is quiet and cold. The only sign of life is a churned mess of footpad prints in the snow of the clearing. A fairly-large group of people has been within the last day. A successful roll of Mind, Search, and Tracking's d12 vs. 3 shows that there were about a dozen people, mostly canines, though a few ferret prints are seen as well. They entered the village from the north, milled about, then headed to the east.

If the players investigate the buildings, they find that most of them are peasant cottages. The roofs of some have collapsed under the weight of snow and ice, and others show signs of fire damage. All have been broken into - doors are smashed, and shutters torn from windows. No valuables are left inside, and very few personal effects. There are no bodies or signs of struggle. None of the cottages are particularly suitable as shelter, unless one of the adventurers happens to be a carpenter. At the host's discretion, the players will be able to scavenge some blankets and stale food from the hovels. The residents obviously left with most of their useful possessions.

The most interesting structure is the nearly undamaged stone cottage, which serves as a blacksmith's home and workshop. The window shutters were torn off, but seem to have been partially, and inexpertly, repaired. Likewise, the smashed door has been propped up against the frame. If the players peer through the shutters, they will be able to see a dimly glowing fire pit in the centre of the smithy. Inside, the embers in the furnace have burned down considerably, but the warmth they emit is a welcome comfort after the fierce cold outside.

Unless the players make a lot of noise entering the smithy, they will find a miserable wreck of a dog asleep on the floor by the furnace. This is Schaphandre, and he seems entirely mad. If the host feels the players made a lot of noise while exploring the village, Schaphandre is hiding under the blacksmith's bed. If the players don't look under there, he will try to run off into the woods when they leave or settle for the night.

Schaphandre will start away, uneasy, when the players awaken him. He will clamber to his feet, and stare at them blinking. If they threaten him with violence, he will fall down on the ground and start wailing incoherently. When given a chance, he will run off into the wilderness. If the players are not obviously threatening, or speak to him

kindly, he will sit down on the floor and grin a wide and nearly toothless grin.

"How now, how now? Spare some coins for the S'Allumer damned soul? For the sake of the Lady and her blessed servant, the good Duke?"

At this point, Henri will suddenly step forward, and place a coin in Schaphandre's outstretched paw. "May S'Allumer comfort you, for all the Duke's true men support each other," he will say. This is a sign and countersign of the Indicateur, and the exchange may be noted by clever players.

If the other players give Schaphandre some money, he will clutch it his chest and count it over and over again, chortling to himself. He will not respond to any questions for some time, though if anyone comes close to him, he will try and hide the money in his mouth. If they attack him, he will suddenly produce a dagger from his dirty rags, and defend himself ably. Henri will draw his sword and Pistol, and fight alongside the beggar. If the players defeat the two Indicateur, they will find both carry the iron eye badge of their office hidden in secret pockets. A search of the smithy will turn up clerical robes, a book of scriptures, and some trail rations, all hidden in a wooden box in the ashes of the furnace. Schaphandre has more than one disguise.

The majority of what Schaphandre says is complete nonsense. However, if the players are patient, they may glean some useful information from his rambling.

Frequently-Asked Questions for Schaphandre

Who are you and what do you do?"

"Do? Do? I didn't do nothing, we didn't, and now we lost it. I don't know what I do. You're lost? I am lost, lost, poor and wandering in the wind, frost in my fur screaming agonies. Spare a coin? Spare a bit of bread? A bit of bread?" He will then mime eating and drinking with great gusto.



If the players ask him his name again, he will rather sulkily say...

"I'm the Duke in his damn castle, with 100 guards. Not Schaphandre, never that dirty flea."

"What did you lose?"

"*Ubi sunt!* What a question! Love, paradise, myself, my shoe, my tooth! Give me some money. I don't know what we lost. A coin for the wicked, you who are blessed of S'Allumer?"

"Why are you here?"

[Schaphandre will point to the fire. Then he will wink, and mime eating food, and perk his ears inquisitively.]

"Can you help us?"

"Help? Is there help? Help the noble lords? Maybe help the sun move in sky! Ha! Oh, but I am tired and still I must find ..." He then glares at the party suspiciously.

"Can you lead us to Baron Afligeant's castle?"

"We are all lost, then! In the morning, we may be found."

[That is the only answer he will give until the next morning, when Schaphandre will go out the door and start walking towards the castle. If the players don't follow him quickly, he will just keep walking, and not be seen again for the rest of the adventure.]

If the players decide to ignore Schaphandre, he will simply sit quietly and watch them. If they camp in the smithy, he will remain and sleep when they sleep, taking food only if it is offered. When they head out, he will follow them at a distance, unless threatened. Henri will try and convince the players to let Schaphandre join them, saying it is the charitable thing to do. The party has gained an unsavory, though apparently harmless, mascot.

If the players have run through the adventure "The Lost Heir of The Rinaldi", they may suspect Schaphandre to be some local worthy under the influence of an enchantment. Schaphandre will play along with this, to Henri's amusement. He will make Delphic pronouncements, and vague references to gold and handsome rewards for his "last loyal friends."

Wise players will choose to camp in the village for the night. The game host may wish to mention the strange growls and twig snaps they hear outside, suggesting a huge pack of Burindents just outside. Emphasize the pleasantly warm fire, and contrast this with the miserable biting wind that howls around the corners of the smithy and rattles the shutters. They should make the sensible choice.

At some point in very early morning, one of the players will awaken to see Schaphandre peering out of one of the broken shutters, and muttering quietly to himself. If the players look out, they will see a trail of dimly flickering lights through a veil of blowing snow. There are about a two dozen lights, all in a row, and they seem to be about one hundred paces off. These are militia from Sir Raciner's army on the march, but the player may ascribe a supernatural origin to the sight. As soon as others are awakened to see the lights, they wink out one by one. Otherwise, the night passes quietly.

The storm breaks temporarily as morning dawns. When the players leave the smithy, they will see the dark peaks of the Lochlan range rising into the pale blue winter sky, much closer than before. They will also see Afligeant's

castle, a dark pile of stones half a league distant, perched atop one of the Lochlan foothills. A few black tendrils of smoke rise from the hills around the castle, too thick to be campfires. The way is clear from here on.

If the players insist on setting out in the night, the game host should feel free to make multiple challenging Endurance Rolls, and consider a random Burindent attack. No matter the outcome, shortly before dawn the group runs into a Ricaner patrol, as described in the section entitled "Capture!"

The Tale of the Mournful Baron

Afligeant's castle is an obsolete tumble of stone, constructed atop a hill that gently rises about 80 feet from snow-covered fields. At the southern base of the hill is a small town, or rather the ruins of one. Smoke still rises from a few burned out houses. All the residents have long since fled or taken refuge in the castle. As they approach the castle, they will see Ricaner's camp built in a natural "dip" in the ground halfway up the southern side of the hill. The depression shelters the camp from sight of the castle, while giving a commanding view of the approach to Afligeant's castle. A single cannon is pointed at the ruins of the village. Strangely, no sentries are visible at this camp, though sunlight can be seen glinting off the armor of soldiers manning the castle walls.

The players can openly approach Ricaner's camp, investigate the ruined village, or try to circle around the back of the hill. The last two routes will involve the danger of capture. If the players simply walk straight to his camp, proceed to the section entitled "Sir Raciner's Camp." If the players can turn themselves invisible, teleport, or otherwise transport themselves to the castle without fear of capture, proceed to the section entitled "In the Castle."

If the players pass through the village, they will pass a number of recently killed peasants, whose bodies are frozen into grisly statues by the freezing rain and snow of the past few days. They will be able to take advantage of the ruined walls and houses to cover their approach to the base of the hill. After that, they will be very much exposed, and would be well advised to make a beeline for the castle gates.

Capture!

As the players pick their way through the ruins of the village, or creep up the side of the hill, they stand a chance of being picked up by one of Ricaner's patrol. His tracker and sword master, Fetter, has been tracking the players through the forest. He has finally ordered one of his more skilled patrols to pick them up for questioning. They are hiding behind a ruined garden wall in the village, or behind a stunted grove of pines if the players decided take another route to the castle.

Have the players make Rolls of Mind & Observation vs.3 – they need to roll more than the militia men's rote of Speed, Stealth, & Local Knowledge, so they need 2 successes or more. In all likelihood, the players will spot the soldiers inexpertly lurking behind their cover, and manage to sneak past or outrun them. If they are ambushed, or stand and fight, assign two soldiers for every player, using the "Typical Horde" stats from Ironclaw. The soldiers will demand the players surrender, and then try to capture them. If the players show no mercy, the soldiers will fight to the death.

Fetter watches the proceedings from a safe distance, and will not attempt to interfere unless the players are captured. He will then lead the guards into Sir Ricaner's camp. Proceed to that section of the adventure.

In the Castle

However the players get to the castle, they find it in a shocking state of disrepair, and obviously has been for some time. The eastern wall has partially collapsed, and the number of missing stones is matched by the number of moss-covered boulders at the base of the walls. More recent damage is evident on the wooden gates, which has been holed by cannon shot in a number of places, and charred by fire in others. Another grisly hallmark of war are the arrow filled corpses of Ricaner's men that line the base of the walls.

As the players approach, they will be challenged by a pair of dirty wolf sentries, who threaten them with crossbows from the safety of the walls. They will accept any reasonable story, and let the players in through a small iron sally-port set in the wall. If they are being pursued by Raciner's men, the sally-port will be open, and the sentries will slam it shut as the players enter.

Inside the walls, the players see a three story stone keep in much better repair than the surrounding walls, as well as a wooden chapel, stable, smithy, and barracks. Everywhere the players look, they will see wretched peasants huddling for warmth around meager fires. Players obviously dressed as clerics will find themselves subjected to numerous requests for prayer and healing on the parts of these peasants, who will soon be chased off by the sentries.

The captain of the sentries, a bored looking wolf-woman with an eye-patch named Leth-shuil, will inquire as to their business at the castle. If it legitimate, or if they are obviously nobles, she will immediately arrange an audience with the Baron. If she thinks they are spies, she will likewise arrange an audience, but under guard. She will let Afligeant judge their tale himself. If the players can not give any good reason for being at the castle, she will offer them employment as soldiers, and again bring them before the Baron. If Schaphandre is with the players, he will be treated kindly, but will not be welcomed into the Baron's presence. The wily spy will not be particularly concerned by this, as in his last audience with the Baron, he was disguised as an itinerant friar. It was to Schaphandre that the Baron unknowingly announced his intentions to leave his lands to the church!

Meeting the Baron

The players will be ushered into the keep, which is pleasantly warm after their ordeal. If they are noble, they will be offered a change of clothes before meeting the Baron. The audience will be held in a room on the third floor of the keep. The Baron will greet the players from a table littered with maps of the hill surrounding area. He speaks in a slow and precise manner, as if carefully dispensing precious stones of wisdom. With him is an attractive and rather exotic bat woman (Semence Fleuve) dressed in elaborate robes, and a pair of sullen looking guard captains. If the players are not suspected as spies, he will offer them wine and bread, then ask them what it is that brings them to his castle.

Frequently-Asked Questions for Baron Afligeant

“Who are you and what do you do?”

“I am Baron Cedric de Afligeant, proper ruler of these lands by right of antiquity, and right of worth. And who might you be?”



“Why are you being attacked?”

“Ricaner is a young man, with a number of silly ideas he gathered from his hot-headed father. He thinks I conspire against him, when really, it is his father who mistreated me. He poisoned my wells, stole from my herds, and burnt my crops! He should be before the Duke for trial ... but I suppose the Duke has more important things to worry about than this odd corner of his realm, yes?”

"Why do you not send for help?"

"Help? Against that boy and his rabble? He will tire himself out soon enough. And if he does not, well, he will have certainly learned a lesson about the fate-forged valor of the men of Afligeant, yes?"

"Where are the Indicateur?"

"Captured by Ricaner as they tried to bring word of our plight to the Duke! Slain, perhaps. He has no respect for the philosophy of Bisclavret unity, I fear. A terrible situation all round, no?" (This is a lie. The Indicateur was on his way to recommend the Duke have both nobles before judgment.)

"We are here to aid your cause! How can we help you?"

"I am honored. This is not your fight, but you obviously recognize my just position. I welcome you and your talents! Let us a plan a strategy, hmm?"

"The people are starving. Why do you not help them?"

"I give them daily rations of bread. That is all I can spare from the soldiery. They will not suffer overmuch. This siege will be over soon, and even if it is prolonged... well, my people are bred of a tough stock, well used to privations and the challenge of war. They will endure, and if they do not, their bravery will be an example, will it not?"

"This war is unlawful. Lay down your arms, and await Ducal judgment!"

"And not defend myself against the unwarranted aggression of that ... that ... whelp? I think not! Leave my castle immediately!" (He will then have his soldiers escort the players out of the castle, unwilling to take chances at imprisoning an Indicateur agent.)

[Assuming the players achieve the good favor of the Baron, proceed to the section entitled "Siege of Castle Afligeant."]

The Tale of Ricaner's Camp

Ricaner's camp is a noticeably rag-tag collection of two dozen large tents set in a depression on the side of the castle hill. A single cannon is pointed at the village at the base of the hill, but is unmanned. Closer inspection shows that it is not in working order - a portion of the barrel has burst outwards. If the players are brought here as captives, they will be disarmed and taken to Ricaner's tent.

No sentries are immediately visible as the players approach, but there are four hidden behind snow-covered rocks. If the players are entering the camp openly, two guards will jump out and brandish spears at them,

demanding to know their business. If the players fight, the other two will run and sound a general alarm.

Especially fool-hardy or well-armed players may try to stand and fight. They are free to do so, but the host should make it clear that there at least 120 armed men in the encampment. Even powerful destructive spells will likely not give them victory. If the players give the sentries a good reason for their presence, the sentries will bring them to see Sir Ricaner, under guard. If they cannot give a good reason, they will be arrested and disarmed, and then brought to Ricaner's camp tent.

If the adventurers sneak into the camp at night, they will have to avoid regular patrols of crossbow-armed guardsmen. However, this approach will give them the greatest chance of wreaking havoc on Ricaner's forces. Refer to the section entitled "Lifting the Siege" later in this adventure.

As the players make their way to Ricaner's tent they will find themselves the subject of curious stares. Though most of the residents of the camp are militia, there are a few civilian camp followers as well, mostly washerwomen and slaves. There are also about a dozen armed commoners, who seem somehow separate from the main force. These are mercenary leaders from the Invisible Guild, keeping an eye on the conflict. Sir Ricaner has relatively few troops, no siege machines beyond a single cannon, and some ladders. Without the cannon, his attack would be a risky gamble.

Ricaner will greet them in his tent, a large canvas affair with half a dozen rooms. He will be in deep conversation with an aide when the players arrive, but will immediately give them his full attention, demanding to know their names and business. If Schaphandre is with them, Ricaner will assume he is a servant of some sort and ignore him.

Frequently-Asked Questions for Baron Ricaner

"Who are you and what do you do?"

"Why, I am Sir Bonaré Ricaner, rightful lord of this land. We are here to evict this outlaw princeling, that gloomy scoundrel Afligeant, who has pressed my patience too far! Who are you, and what is your business here?"

"Why do you wage war?"

"For twenty-five years, my family has withstood the outrageous impertinence of Afligeant. More than once, he has attempted to oust us from the lands given to us by the hands of the Duke himself! Why, he has even hired a magician to cast spells against me, some treacherous bat woman. He would be dead or in my dungeon even now, had not my cannon burst. Another will be here within the day."

"This war is unlawful. We demand that you lay down your arms."

[If the players are of noble blood, or Indicateur]: "What? Good sirs, can you not see that Afligeant is a wicked man, who secretly harbors hatred against our beloved Duke!? I will not lay down arms. My actions will vindicate me. It is with great regret that I must ask you to stay here as my guests until such time as I am victorious." (He will then summon his guards.)

[If the players are Clergy of S'Allumer]: "Yes, yes. I have heard the counsel of priests before in this matter. I tried, many times, to speak peace with the Baron. I have been forced at final extremity to take up bloody arms. Save your breath for prayers, gentle reverends." (He will allow the players to remain at the camp, or leave as they wish.)

[If the players are commoners]: "Guards! Arrest these spies!"

"May we join you in your noble crusade against the evil Baron?"

"Certainly! We have need of experienced sword arms, strong backs, and nimble minds. I shall appreciate your aid."

If the players are placed under arrest, they will be taken to the outskirts of the camp and chained by their feet to a heavy timber beam that masses about 50 stone. This spot is exposed to the elements, and to the gaze of militia drilling in the camp. If any of them are obviously magicians, they will be gagged and chained hand and foot as well. Go to the section entitled "The Tale of the Needful Pressed-Man."

If they join Ricaner, or are allowed to stay in the camp, he will let them set up camp where they please – provided he is able to establish that they are not spies. When the audience draws to a close, the players will be led from Ricaner's tent to the quartermaster's tent to draw pay. The quartermaster is not present, and the guards tell the players to wait while they find him. Shortly after they leave, Fetter Prisent will enter. He will look about nervously, and then approach the party. "May I have a favor, good sirs, for the sake of the Lady and her blessed servant, the good Duke?" he will ask.

This is a trap. If Henri is with the group, he will give the countersign. Smart players who remembered the similar exchange between Schaphandre and Henri may try and give it as well. If anyone gives the countersign, Fetter will smile broadly, and then dart from the tent. Immediately, the guards will rush back in with weapons drawn, and an alarm will be raised. If the players are quick witted they may be able to escape the camp, but standing and fighting would be suicide. If they are caught, the players will be placed in irons, and chained to a spar of wood on the outskirts of the camp. Proceed to the section entitled "The

Tale of the Needful Pressed-Man." If the players respond in any other way other than the countersign, Fetter will say "Oh, never mind," and leave without another word.

If the players elect to throw their lot in with Ricaner, and pass Fetter's test, proceed to the section entitled "The Siege of Castle Afligeant."

The Tale of the Needful Pressed-Man

The party will soon find their predicament to be rather unpleasant, as the cold winter rains start to deluge the earth once more. Sullen militia men will check on them intermittently, and regular traffic between nearby tents will ensure the players are unable to make use of any magic or embark on obvious escape attempts. They will be able to watch Ricaner's men as they prepare for a renewed assault. They also witness the arrival of a new cannon around sunset.

After a time, a young fox soldier in ill-fitting armor brings them bread to eat, and melted snow to drink. This is Ronaldo de Muire, a former slave in the service of Afligeant, who volunteered for Ricaner's army as they passed through his village. If the players seem unwilling or unable to come up with an escape plan, Ronaldo may be able to help them. He will watch them eat, then try to start a conversation with them.

Frequently-Asked Questions for Ronaldo

"Who are you and what do you do?"

"I am footman Ronaldo de Muire, and I am bringing you food at the orders of the noble Sir Raciner." (He will make a face when he says that name.)



"Do you like being a soldier?"

"It is better than being a slave, which is what I was. At least I get fed every day. Perhaps if I am a good fighter, I will become a famous general, and be able to return to Triskellian."

"What is in Triskellian?"

"My heritage. I am of noble blood, you know. I imagine my retainers have been holding on to my family lands, awaiting the day of my return."

"You are a noble?"

"Of course! I am a fox, as you can see. My great-great grandfather was one of the brave knights who was captured many years ago, on the Via Salutis."

"You are not a noble, you're just a slave."

"Oh? Well, then, high and mighty masters, I hope you enjoy your food." [He will sulkily pelt them with bread rolls, then stalk off.]

"If you help us gain our freedom, we can reward you."

"You have my interest..." "

Ronaldo wants to strike out on his own, and dislikes being a soldier. However, he is cautious. Promises of later wealth will not interest him. If the players promise to bring him to Triskellian, or if a noble offers to help him regain his heritage, he will jump at the chance. He will hint at this, and if the adventurers don't take the hint, he will sigh and walk off.

If the players are able to persuade Ronaldo to free them, he tells them to wait. As the sun sets, the camp is a buzz of activity. In the chill hours before dawn Ricaner's men start to march into formations on the hillside. Ricaner himself can be seen riding to and fro on a courser of indifferent quality. As the camp empties, Ronaldo steals over to the area the players are chained in. He has a set of keys with him, and quickly removes their manacles. "Remember your promise!" he says. From there, he will follow them wherever they go.

As the players break free, it will be become clear that the Baron's castle is the sanctuary easiest to reach, though soon to be imperiled. If they try to flee into the woods, Ricaner's men will spot them and head off in hot pursuit. If they have already been somehow evicted from Afligeant's castle, they will find themselves in a very tenuous situation. Assuming they immediately head for the castle, return to the section entitled "In the Castle." If they decide to wait around Ricaner's camp, they will soon be seen by the handful of elderly or wounded soldiers that remain as rearguard. Still, the players may find this to be an unparalleled chance to loot the camp and flee. If the players try to enter the Baron's castle anytime after the siege begins, refer to "The Siege of Castle Afligeant."

If the players failed to befriend Ronaldo, they will simply have to wait until the camp is nearly empty the morning after their capture. At this point, they will be left alone and can free themselves as they wish. If they are still trapped, they will be eventually freed when the Duke's mercenaries arrive.

The Tale of the Storming of Castle Afligeant

How the adventure plays out once the characters have arrived at the Castle Hill is very much dependent on whether they end up on the outside or the inside, and upon which force they have elected to support, if any.

If the players joined with Ricaner, the hours leading up to his final assault will be taken up with preparations and planning. Ricaner will tour the troops, giving inspirational speeches. Clerical players will be asked to deliver a blessing to the troops, and will be later approached by individual soldiers hoping for a prayer of protection. Those with military experience or noble rank may be offered command of a small unit of men. Once the replacement cannon arrives, he will begin his preparations for the final attack, at dawn the following day. Some of the soldiers will spend the last night in uneasy roistering, and the rest in fitful sleep.

Those in the castle will be offered the full hospitality of the Baron, including a banquet on the evening before the assault. Though he goes about dressed in full military regalia, he will seem oddly calm about the prospect of attack. If questioned, he will refer the players to Semence Fleuve, his Repense astrologer. Fleuve has cast a positive horoscope for the battle, and assured the Baron that Ricaner will lose even if the Baron takes no action. "And what could I do to him, anyway? If I leave the castle, I am dead. If I remain, I will endure until the end. And if I die, my lands will go the church. No matter his course, the young whelp is denied my lands," the Baron says.

He will allow the players to do as they will. They may see to improving the defense of the castle, or even suggest raids on Ricaner's camp. Provided they do not take more than a few men with them, the Baron will be agreeable. Perhaps they are the instruments of victory promised to him in his horoscope. Proceed to the section entitled "Lifting the Siege." If the players remain in the keep, the Baron takes them on a tour of his library and war room. He is not the most cheerful of companions, and is prone to quoting gloomy poetry. They will be comfortable enough, regardless. He will offer them fine wine and rich food as they await the inevitable assault. The players may also choose to speak with Semence, who follows the Baron wherever he goes.

Frequently-Asked Questions for Semence Fleuve

“Who are you and what do you do?”

“I am the lady Semence Fleuve, of the Repense. I am his lordship’s personal advisor and astrologer.”



“You are an astrologer?”

“Yes, many of the Repense are. We have a gift for reading the fates in the paths of the stars as they proceed through the crystal spheres of heaven.”

“What do you foresee for this battle?”

“I have prepared numerous horoscopes for the Baron. They all prove one thing. His enemy will be defeated soundly by the time the Bear Star ascends into the Constellation of the Burindent. That happens tomorrow night.”

“How can you be sure?”

“I have never been wrong before! Perhaps you would like your horoscope prepared? It will help us pass the time until this unpleasantness is resolved.”

“Can you fly to bring us help?”

“I fear my wings are too delicate to bear me far enough! Besides, did I not say that our victory is writ large in the stars? There is no danger.”

Semence will happily prepare a horoscope for any respectable looking character who asks. Once complete, it will indicate a great struggle in the near future, followed by peace. The players may make of this what they will. (The peace of death? A quiet dungeon cell?)

“What of the Indicateur?”

If Henri or Schaphandre are still with the players, they will be busily making plans as soon as they arrive at the castle. Henri will excuse himself from the players, and make himself scarce, and Schaphandre, if he was with them, will simply disappear into the crowd of ragged refugees inside the castle.

The actions they take will be very much dependent on the progress of the siege, which is detailed below, and upon what information they have. In general terms, the Indicateur is dedicated to preventing this kind of internecine conflict, and both Afligeant and Ricaner stand to be punished by the Duke. However, the heirless Afligeant has elected to leave his lands to the church, rather than leave them to be handed out by the Duke upon the Baron’s death. This galls the Indicateur, who would rather see Ricaner take the lands than see them given to the Rinaldi dominated church of S’Allumer.

Of course, if they know Ricaner has been working with the support of the Invisible Guild, this crime will take precedence over all others. Both Schaphandre and Henri will work to stymie Ricaner and do what they can to ensure he is taken to justice. This does not necessarily mean they will support the Baron. Schaphandre, who is rather less idealistic than Henri, may well decide to simply let Ricaner defeat Afligeant, and then turn Ricaner in when outside forces arrive.

Possible actions taken by the two spies could include such skullduggery as opening a sally port to the enemy overnight, or attempting to kidnap Afligeant and take him to Ricaner’s camp. If the agents decide Ricaner is in the wrong, they will take a different tack. They might try to organize a midnight raid against his camp, or an assassination attempt. They could encourage the players to act as double-agents, feigning support for Ricaner and promising to leave open a sally port as above, and leading Ricaner’s men into a trap. If Henri and Schaphandre feel there is nothing they can do, both will simply leave the castle or camp, over the walls if necessary, and disappear into the woods.

In any case, only Henri will dare reveal his true identity to the players. He will try to convince them to support one side or the other with moral arguments. Which side will depend on whether he knows of Ricaner’s ties to the Invisible Guild. If the players refuse these arguments, Henri may play his trump card and show them his badge of office. Unless the players are of noble blood, they could get into serious trouble by refusing to aid an Indicateur in the course of his duties.

While the Baron sits idly in his castle, Sir Ricaner has been busy preparing his troops for what he hopes to be the final attack in the siege. As the sun rises, and the snow begins to fall once more, the army will march resolutely up the hill and array themselves around the castle. The main body of men will face the gate, while small groups will station themselves at the compass points to ensure no one escapes.

It is possible the players may decide to throw their lot in with Ricaner. In this case, victory is almost assured, though they run the risk of injury or death in the taking of the castle. If the players are all on Ricaner’s side, skip ahead to the section entitled “The Castle Falls.”

Ending the Battle by Brute Force

Perhaps the surest way of stopping the attack is sabotaging Ricaner's cannon on the night before the attack, or otherwise raiding his camp. It will be difficult to sneak into the camp unobserved – the sentries are on full alert, and few in the camp are sleeping. The cannon itself is guarded by the six members of the gun crew. At least two of them will be on careful watch through the night, while the others play at cards and dice near the cannon. If an alarm has been raised, all six will be carefully keeping watch with their weapons drawn, and a soldier will be on guard at every tent. The PCs may also attempt to kill (or a much easier option, to spook) the eight Dray that are being kept to haul the cannon to and fro. Destroying or otherwise sabotaging the cannon will severely hamper Ricaner's plans. The attack will still take place at dawn, but it will be much harder and bloodier.

Other possibilities include attempting to assassinate Sir Ricaner, or causing a panic in the camp by setting fire to the powder magazine, or striking with powerful spells and atavist powers like the Cry of a Hundred Souls. Bold players may even attempt an all out attack on the camp with a handful of Afligeant's braver soldiers. None of these options will prove easy.

Assassinating Ricaner will effectively end his claim on Afligeant's lands, and will also throw the camp into turmoil. Fetter and the other Invisible Guild mercenaries, if alive, will steal Ricaner's cash boxes and disappear into the woods, and Ricaner's captains will call off the attack. However, they will make every effort to catch the assassins, and if they feel Afligeant is harboring the killer, the siege will continue. Though Afligeant hates Ricaner, and welcomes his death, he would willingly turn the players over to Ricaner's men if he feels they killed him. After all, slitting a nobleman's throat in the night is very much in violation of the rules of war.

Panicking the troops in the camp with the use of powerful spells, such as Upheaval or Maelstrom, will prove fairly effective in the short term. Ricaner's men will be thrown in disarray for a time, long enough to provide cover for further sabotage attempts, or to soften the camp up for a frontal assault.

Attacking the camp with Afligeant's men will not be easy. The Baron will not part with more than 40 of his soldiers, and they will be badly outnumbered. Simply assaulting the camp will cause great commotion for a time, but the Baron's men will be quickly beaten. If the players are able to throw the camp into turmoil before the attack, the assault will have a slim chance of success.

Gaming out the full assault would be madness, indeed. It's probably better to play out a smaller skirmish, with a battlefield 72 paces across in each dimension, filled with two to three times as many

Typicals as the PCs, and constantly replenishing 1d6 or more each turn. The players will have to take out a few dozen or so before they can be declared winners. The attacking force will still be forced to retreat, but the morning's attack will not take place.

Ending the Attack by Diplomacy or Trickery

Ricaner is willing to meet with other nobles or high-ranking clergy to discuss the situation. However, he will use this audience to simply rant about the injustices Baron Afligeant has heaped upon his head, and try and convince his listeners to support him. Simply talking to him will likely achieve nothing. However, if the game host feels a player has role-played a particularly impassioned speech calling for peace, it would not be untoward to make a Mind & Negotiation Roll, including any bonus dice from Gifts like Oratory or Diplomacy, vs 3 ... but you would need at least 5 successes or more. (Maybe your allies can assist?). If successful, Ricaner will agree to give Afligeant a few more days to surrender. By that time, the Duke's mercenaries will have arrived.

Creative players may be able to come up with other ideas to stop the attack. Ricaner's force has no magical support to speak of, and spells like Blind or Mesmerism could be used to great effect against him. Sneaky players might get the idea to somehow blackmail or threaten him into returning to his lands. This is a risky proposition, however. Ricaner would surely remember any such dealings, and repay them ten-fold.

Throwing in with Afligeant, and Defending the Castle

If the players are trapped within Afligeant's castle as the final assault proceeds, they may very well feel there is little they can do except wait for the end. This is not so, though stemming Ricaner's advance will certainly prove a daunting task.

Unless the players are directing the Baron's few score troops, there will be no fire from the walls until Raciner's men are well within bow shot. The castle guards have wasted too much ammunition in previous attacks, and will fire only if sure of a target.

They will not get their chance. As soon as the cannon is brought into range, it will open fire, shattering stones, and sending one of Afligeant's men screaming to the ground. The cannon crew will adjust their range and reload, a process that takes a few minutes.

The shot is heard in every room of the castle. When he hears it, Afligeant will rise and stamp towards the nearest window, and remain there, watching his men scramble for shelter, and the peasants in the courtyard cowering. The cannon will fire once every five minutes. Ricaner will ride back in forth in front of his men impatiently, who

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themselves stand eager for battle, watching hungrily as the castle gate is smashed bit by bit. Players with Ricaner's force may attempt their own raids, climbing the walls, or sniping at guards.

Players within the castle are in a sticky situation indeed. Short of magical attacks on the cannon crew, little can be done from the walls. The bulk of Ricaner's men are out of range of bow and gunshot. The cannon is key to Ricaner's attack – if it is destroyed or disabled, Ricaner will be forced to attack the castle with ladders and a small ram. This will prove much bloodier for his side, and the attack may be cut short by the imminent arrival of Ducal mercenaries.

As the cannon is located near the rear of Ricaner's army, it may be possible for stealthy characters to exit the castle secretly and sneak around to the cannons, avoiding the watchful eye of sentries. Once there, they will have to fight their way through the gun crew, and will have a few moments to sabotage the cannon as best they can before Ricaner's soldiers spot them and open fire with bows and guns. There is a cart of gunpowder kegs near the cannon. If this is set on fire, it will explode in d10 rounds if the flames are not extinguished. The explosion will severely damage the cannon, and cause a flat 6 Damage, Weak, to anyone within Short range (12 paces).

If the players hold tight in the castle, the gate will be smashed to pieces after about one hour of bombardment. This can be prolonged somewhat if players inside have managed to shore them up somehow. Once the gates are smashed, Ricaner will order his men to batter what is left down with an iron-tipped ram carried by twenty men. About half will be felled by arrows and bullets from defenders, but the gates will quickly collapse.

Once the gate is breached, Ricaner's men run howling into the courtyard. Screaming peasants take what shelter they may as the invaders torch and slay at random. Afligeant and his remaining men secure themselves in the keep. He and Semence shelter in his third floor war room, along with his older servants, and any non-combatant players whose status warrants this special protection. The Baron will be utterly despondent, sinking into his chair and alternately weeping and praying. Semence will vainly, and half-heartedly, assure him that victory is just a matter of time. Something will happen to save him. In the meantime, arrows and occasional shots rattle against the walls.

This is likely the last chance the players on Afligeant's side will have to save the day. Succeeding in a Roll of Will & Leadership test against a difficulty of d12 will allow them to rally Afligeant's guards in a counter attack. If you enjoy large set-piece battles, now is the time for an assault against three Elite Leaders and a host of Typicals. The PCs will have to rout the enemy (that is, render them all Afraid or incapacitated) to force the enemy back and advance far enough to capture or sabotage the cannon.

Ricaner will regroup and attack again, but will not be able to capture the castle before the Duke's forces arrive.

If the players remain neutral in this fight, or are prisoners in Ricaner's camp, or simply take shelter with the Duke in his keep, the castle will fall in short order according to the sequence of events outlined below. The keep does not remain secure for long. Through the windows, players who are inside will be able to see Ricaner's men directing drays to push the cannon into the courtyard, where they will then aim it at the door. A few well-aimed arrows will delay them, but a Petard placed against the keep door by a nimble soldier will destroy it just as readily as a cannon.

Ricaner's men will soon overrun the first two floors of the keep. They will smash and burn everything in sight, and kill anyone they see who does not immediately surrender. Afligeant's remaining castle guards are slain or taken prisoner, and it is up to his household servants to hold the final stair. They do not last long, and soon Raciner's men are pounding on the final door. Unless the players have some magical means of holding it, it too bursts.

The Battle for Castle Afligeant

As his servants and courtiers run screaming, Afligeant runs shouting into the mass of soldiers, swinging wildly. He wounds the first few, but is soon overrun and stabbed several times with spears – unless the players are somehow able to restrain him. The soldiers will grudgingly accept the surrender of any of the players. Alternately, clever adventurers may be able to escape to a forgotten part of the castle, where they may fight on. If they are captured, they are brought down into the courtyard and tied together.

If the players were actively involved in the fighting on either side, the game host can individualize the battle to suit his players. For example, as Ricaner's men burst into the keep, a player knight might be faced with a pair of canny swordsmen. A gentle cleric may find himself pursued through corridors by a spear-toting soldier. A scholar might find himself trying to defend the Baron's extensive library from being consumed by fiery destruction, a few books at a time.

If Ricaner is Victorious ...

If the players are unable or unwilling to stop him, Ricaner's men will seize control of the keep just as the sun reaches its peak. They will tear down the Baron's banner, and raise Sir Raciner's crest in its place. A fire will be set in the library, and outside in the chapel. The soldiers now ignore the miserable peasants who flee from the castle, back to their wrecked homes and an uncertain future.

If the players are nobles, clerics, or Indicateur, they will be brought before an exultant Ricaner. He will set them

free, and explain this unfortunate local conflict was brought about by the treacherous nature of the Baron. If the players object too loudly, he may consider throwing them in his newly acquired dungeons. Ricaner will personally parade the Baron's head (or parade him, if he is still alive) in front of his cheering troops and cowering prisoners in the courtyard.

His delirious joy at the victory will not last long. At that moment, a pistol shot is heard. Turning, all in the courtyard see a finely garbed porcupine astride a Courser. Beside him is a mounted member of the Indicateur (a much cleaner Schaphandre, if he is alive and with the players) with a smoking pistol. A score of musketeers stand behind them, guns at the ready. More enter with every moment.

The knight spurs his mount forward a few paces, and instructs all present to lay down their arms in the name of Duke Mausein Bisclavret. The Esclage knight who leads the mercenary company, Sir Morlage, will immediately place Ricaner under arrest, and free Afligeant if he is alive. He will order the soldiers to lay down their arms and return to their homes. He will then leave half of his men at Afligeant's castle under the command of an officer, and begin the long trek to Harrowgate, with Ricaner and Afligeant in his custody. There, the nobles will be called to task for making unlawful war.

If Afligeant is dead, and the Indicateur are unaware of the support the Invisible Guild gave to Ricaner, he will be judged as the rightful heir to the Baron's lands. If players have proof that Afligeant pledged his lands to the Church, this transfer will take place, but they will have made many enemies in Harrowgate. If Afligeant is dead and the Indicateur know of the Invisible Guild's role, Ricaner will be executed and his lands given to some worthy knight, or the Church, if proof can be shown that Afligeant intended this.

The winter storms break in a few days, and the peasants of the Méchant get on to rebuilding their broken lives. Proceed to the section entitled "Dénouement."

If Ricaner is Defeated ...

Assuming the players were able to stall Ricaner's attack through one means or another, Afligeant and the castle will be saved. In late morning, guards on the walls will spot a column of several hundred men approaching the settlement at the base of the hill, and soon after an Esclage knight, Sir Morlage, will arrive to take charge of the situation. He is accompanied by a senior member of the Indicateur (Schaphandre, if appropriate). This Indicateur is acting in the name of the Duke, and will not hesitate to dictate terms to either noble. They in turn will grudgingly accept them.

How Sir Morlage and the Indicateur take care of the situation will depend on the condition of Ricaner's attack, and upon the information available to the Indicateur. If

they know Ricaner is working with the Invisible Guild, they will not bother with Afligeant at all. Ricaner will be placed in irons, and his lands will be given to the Baron or some other worthy.

If Ricaner's force was mostly scattered by the players, the Ducal representatives will be relatively lenient. They will disarm his men and escort them back to Ricaner's lands. A small force will be left behind to ensure the two keep the peace, and both Ricaner and Afligeant will be summoned to Harrowgate in the Spring to settle the matter at the Duke's court.

If Ricaner's army is whole, the Duke's men will not be as merciful. They will disarm both sides and send all combatants home. Sir Morlage will leave half his men behind to keep the peace, and both Ricaner and Afligeant will be taken to Harrowgate to immediately answer to the charge of unlawful war making.

Dénouement

As an option, Sir Morlage may decide the situation in the Méchant is grim enough to warrant leaving his entire force. In that case, he will hire the players to escort the prisoners to Harrowgate. He will provide them with a carriage and mounts for this.

The players might also choose to remain and help the populace recover from the conflict. A character of noble Bisclavret rank might even be expected to do so. Clerics, scholars, and craftsmen could also find no end of work to put their hands to.

If they made any promise to Ronaldo, he will loudly insist they be honored. A journey to Triskellian may be in the offing. And Schaphandre might insist on tagging along.

Of course, if the players came to the Méchant for a reason besides the war between Afligeant and Ricaner, the way now lies clear for them to continue on their adventure. They may be a little wiser and cynical for their experience here.

While the adventure as written contains few opportunities for enrichment, the host may wish to allow the players to try their hand at thievery, or a shot at some booty as the fog of war descends. The Baron has a finely stocked library for such a provincial noble, one that may hide a handwritten copy of a magical tome. Also, his table is set with solid silver cutlery that would fetch a fine price on the open market. Fleuve's chambers hide an ornate golden orrery, and some clockwork toys, items very much in demand in Harrowgate and Thanon.

Ricaner's camp doesn't offer as much in the way of valuable artifacts, though he does have a pair of pearl handled dueling pistols marked with his family crest. Perhaps more practical for most player groups is the chest full of small coins meant to pay for mercenaries. This

THE WOLVES IN WINTER

contains about sixteen aureals in denarii and “copper-nose” coins from Bisclavret mints.

If the players support Afligeant, and he is still in possession of his life and lands at the end of the adventure, he will reward them depending according to their role in his victory. He will give mercenaries five gold aureals each. Fellow nobles will be offered tracts of land on his demesne. Scholars, clerics, or mages will be given a choice of books from his library. He will send letters to the Duke praising them, and this praise may prove useful later on.

If Ricaner is the victor, and is given the Baron’s lands, his rewards may be less welcome. He will offer cash as a reward, no more than one or two aureals, and try to entice the players with the promise of more paid mercenary work in the future.

Dramatis Personae

What follows is a list of the relevant gaming information for the prominent NPCs in this adventure. Each write-up includes a brief description of the character, their rules and statistics, and their personal “list” of priorities, ranked in order of importance. As Game Host, when you are playing the role of an NPC, check the NPC’s list of Motivations to see what their priorities are, to better help you decide how the character would behave.

Baron Cedric Afligeant

A heavy-set wolf in late middle-age, the Baron is flabby, slow-moving, and grim. He has a penchant for spouting long-winded speeches about honor and the immutable nature of destiny. Baron Afligeant is a mournful and tragic soul, doomed to die a poetically heroic death ... or so he hopes.

Throughout the adventure, the Baron will put on airs of “death or glory,” and rally his troops with speeches about the honor that will be bestowed upon the martyrs.

The Baron is smarter than he sounds, however. Though not skilled at arms, he has a keen intellect, and is a capable administrator. This current crisis has simply aggravated his already gloomy personality.



<i>Baron Cedric Afligeant</i>	<i>Elite Wolf Dilettante (Major)</i>
Goals	1. Survive. 2. Stand fast against Lord Raciner 3. Have a noble death.
Traits	Body d8, Speed d6, Mind d12, Will d10 Wolf d6 (Forest, Omnivore, Night) Dilettante d12
Skills	Academics d10 Dodge d10 Leadership d10 Melee Combat d10 Presence d10 Ranged Combat d10 Searching d10 Tactics d10
Gifts	Dilettante’s Trappings (Dilettante stuff!) Etiquette (bonus d12 for manners) Fencing (add dodge dice to parry) Heraldry (bonus d12 to know nobility) Hiking (bonus d12 for distance travel) Howling (bonus d12 to intimidate or scare) Literacy (can read and write) Nobility (X to assert noble influence) Tracking (bonus d12 to follow trails) Wealth (X to assert wealthy influence)
Initiative	d12, d6
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 0*, Sprint d6, Run 14 *Burdened, Dash is 0
Guard	Use “Guard” action for bonus d8 to all defenses
Aim	Use “Aim” action for bonus d8 to attack one target
Attack	Rapier “Sommeil de Raison” @ Close d8, d10 – Damage +2, Impaling Pistol @ Short d10, d6 – Damage +2, Slaying
Counter	Rapier “Sommeil de Raison” @ Close d10, d8 – Damage +2, Impaling
Parry	Rapier “Sommeil de Raison” @ Close d10, 2d8
Dodge	d10, d6
Soak	d10, 2d8
Loot	Chainmail and Plate Armor, Rapier “Sommeil de Raison”

Lord Bonaré Raciner

People know when Raciner is in a room. The cocky, strutting wolf makes an impression, though not usually a good one. Raciner's torso and arms are of ordinary stature - but his legs are unusually short. This deformity does not affect him seriously, but he will not take any comments about it with good grace. Ricaner is several years younger than Afligeant, just 32 years of age, and he has inherited the current dispute from his late father.

Ricaner is a capable general, but imagines himself to be much, much more than that. In his mind, he is a world-conquering empire builder. His every waking moment is filled with martial dreams.



Lord Bonaré Raciner

Elite Wolf Cavalier (Major)

Goals 1. Survive.
2. Destroy that fool Afligeant.
3. Avoid Ducal entanglements.

Traits Body d8, Speed d10, Mind d6, Will d12
Wolf d8 (Forest, Omnivore, Night)
Cavalier d10

Skills Academics d10
Dodge d10
Leadership d10
Melee Combat d10
Presence d10
Ranged Combat d10
Riding d10
Searching d10
Tactics d10

Gifts Heraldry (bonus d12 to know nobility)
Hiking (bonus d12 for distance travel)
Literacy (can read and write)
Nobility (X to assert noble influence)
Shield Fighter (improve d8 shield cover to d12)
Rider's Trappings (Rider stuff!)
Tracking (bonus d12 to follow trails)
Veteran (Aim and Guard bonus are d12)
Wealth (X to assert wealthy influence)

Initiative d10, d6

Movement Stride 1, Dash 4, Sprint d10, Run 18

Guard Use "Guard" action for bonus d12 to all defenses

Aim Use "Aim" action for bonus d12 to attack one target

Attack Longsword "Sifflet Final" @ Close d10, d8 - Damage +2
Pistol @ Short 2d10 - Damage +2, Slaying

Counter Longsword "Sifflet Final" @ Close d10, d8 - Damage +2

Parry Longsword "Sifflet Final" @ Close d10, d8

Dodge 2d10

Soak 2d8

Loot Plate Armor, Longsword "Sifflet Final", brace of pearl-handled pistols

Semence Fleuve

Semence is the impoverished third daughter of a minor Repense nobleman. She is a young, attractive bat woman. Semence dresses in gaudy fashions, festooned with cabalistic symbols which she feels make her look mysterious.

She has served the Baron for three years now, and feels a great deal of loyalty towards him. She is deeply moved by the depth of his soul, and by his noble spirit. (Or at least, what she thinks of as such.) If only he were younger, and of bat stock ...

She is a competent astrologer, and has a fair record of success with her predictions.



Semence Fleuve

Elite Bat Seer (Major)

Goals

1. Survive.
2. Live comfortably.
3. Unlock the secrets of the ages.

Traits Body d6, Speed d10, Mind d8, Will d8
Bat d6 (Forest, Carnivore, Night)
Seer d12

Skills Academics d8
Dodge d8
Melee Combat d8
Presence d8
Searching d8
Stealth d8

Semence Fleuve

Elite Bat Seer (Major)

Gifts Astrology (bonus d12 to divine truth from the stars)
Echolocation (can use echolocation to see in the dark)
Fast-Talk (bonus d12 for quick negotiations)
Flight (X to fly, must use once per turn to remain airborne)
History (bonus d12 to know the past)
Language: Night Speech (can understand Night Speech)
Literacy (can read and write)
Nobility (X to assert noble influence)
Oratory (bonus d12 for public speaking)
Research (bonus d12 to look things up)

Initiative d10, d8

Movement Stride 1, Dash 5, Sprint d10, Run 21

Guard Use "Guard" action for bonus d8 to all defenses

Aim Use "Aim" action for bonus d8 to attack one target

Attack Dagger @ Close d8, d6 – Damage +1

Counter Dagger @ Close d8, d6 – Damage +1

Parry Dagger @ Close d8, d6

Dodge d8, d6

Soak d6

Loot Dagger, *On the Virtue of Mystery* by Kyndranigar the Shadow-Magus

Fetter Pris  nt

Fetter is a tall and thin rabbit with a brown pelt. He dresses in multiple layers of clothing to guard against the cold of the Bisclavret lands, topped off with a large and heavy overcoat. His clothing makes him seem larger than he really is.



Fetter is currently under contract to Lord Raciner, serving as a kind of general advisor, scout and tracker. If anyone escapes the castle, Fetter will try and find them before they can summon aid. When closing in on his prey, he will occasionally sound discordant notes on his tin flute in an attempt to confuse and dismay his target.

While he is loyal for the time being to Raciner, he has no respect for him. If he feels he can gain more from the players, he will throw in with them. No matter what happens, as soon as the Ducal Mercenaries arrive, he will disappear into the wilderness.

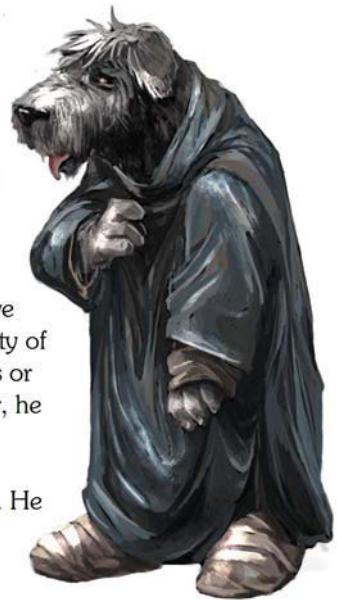
THE WOLVES IN WINTER

Fetter Prisent <i>Elite Rabbit Bounty-Hunter (Major)</i>	
Goals	1. Survive. 2. Fulfill the terms of his contract. 3. Be enigmatic.
Traits	Body d6, Speed d12, Mind d8, Will d10 Rabbit d8 (Plains, Herbivore, Day) Bounty-Hunter d12
Skills	Academics d8 Ranged Combat d8 Dodge d8 Searching d8 Melee Combat d8 Stealth d8 Observation d8
Gifts	Coward (bonus dodge & move when afraid) Fast Jumper (jumping is an action, not a stunt) History (bonus d12 to know the past) Insider with the Invisible Guild (for bonus d12) Keen Ears (can hear faint sounds) Literacy (can read and write) Resolve (include Will with Soak) Shadowing (bonus d12 to follow people) Streetwise (bonus d12 to deal with criminals) Tracking (bonus d12 to follow trails)
Initiative	d12, d8
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 6, Sprint d12, Run 24
Guard	Use "Guard" action for bonus d8 to all defenses
Aim	Use "Aim" action for bonus d8 to attack one target
Attack	Composite Bow @ Long d12, d8 – Damage +2, Critical Dagger @ Close d12, d8, d6 – Damage +1
Counter	Dagger @ Close d12, d8, d6 – Damage +1
Parry	Dagger @ Close d8, d6
Dodge	d12, d8
Soak	d8, d6
Loot	Leather Armor, Dagger, Composite Bow, tin whistle

Schaphandre

Schaphandre is far from an innocent, mad beggar, though he plays the role quite well. He has wandered the Bisclavret countryside for several months, begging to stay alive.

Sometimes, he will settle down in one place and live fairly happily on the charity of superstitious peasant folks or S'Allumer friars. However, he is no simple wanderer. Schaphandre is a special member of the Indicateur. He wanders the countryside in a variety of guises, keeping a general eye on the state of things, and passing regular reports on to the Lyceum.



In his current guise, Schaphandre is a stooped canine with ragged grey fur and bloodshot eyes. He dresses in a heavy coat, covered in grease. He stinks terribly. When he speaks and breathes, fluid in his lungs gurgles nastily.

Schaphandre <i>Elite Dog Spy (Major)</i>	
Goals	1. Survive. 2. Serve the Duke 3. Foil the Invisible Guild.
Traits	Body d8, Speed d8, Mind d10, Will d10 Dog d4 (Plains, Omnivore, Day) Spy d12
Skills	Academics d8 Searching d8 Dodge d8 Stealth d8 Melee Combat d8 Tactics d8 Observation d8 Throwing d8 Ranged Combat d8
Gifts	Disguise (bonus d12 to impersonate) Fast-Talk (bonus d12 for quick negotiations) Hiking (bonus d12 for distance travel) Keen Ears (can hear faint sounds) Keen Nose (can detect faint smells) Law (bonus d12 with legal matters) Literacy (can read and write) Low Profile (bonus d12 to not stick out in a crowd) Shadowing (bonus d12 to follow people) Spy's Trappings (Spy gear) Streetwise (bonus d12 to deal with criminals) Survival (bonus d12 to survive in the wilderness) Tracking (bonus d12 to follow trails)
Initiative	d10, d8

THE WOLVES IN WINTER

Schapandre	Elite Dog Spy (Major)
Movement Stride 1, Dash 4, Sprint d10, Run 20	
Guard Use "Guard" action for bonus d8 to all defenses	
Aim Use "Aim" action for bonus d8 to attack one target	
Attack Dagger @ Close 2d8 – Damage +1 Claws @ Close d8, d4 – Damage +1, Critical	
Counter Dagger @ Close 2d8 – Damage +1, Critical	
Parry Dagger @ Close 2d8	
Dodge 2d8	
Soak d8, d4	
Loot Cloth Armor, Dagger	

Ronaldo de Muire



Ronaldo is a tall and wiry fox in his late teens. He dresses in dirty trousers and a wool cloak that his master gave him. Ronaldo is a descendant of one of the defeated Triskellian knights who invaded the Bisclavret lands many years ago. At least, that's what his mother used to tell him, before he was taken away from her. For the last seven years he has served as a field hand for one of Baron Afligeant's farmers, though it was not something he was particularly good at. When Ricaner attacked, he was pressed into the invading militia, but is not much of a soldier either. He has been put on guard duty behind the lines. He dreams of finding his way to Triskellian and claiming his title.

Ronaldo de Muire	Typical Red Fox Farmer (Major)
Goals	1. Survive. 2. Find his rightful heritage. 3. Avoid working.
Traits	Body d8, Speed d12, Mind d10, Will d8 Red Fox d4 (Forest, Omnivore, Night) Farmer d4
Skills	Craft d6 Endurance d6 Melee Combat d6 Riding d6 Stealth d6 Weather Sense d6 Vehicles d6
Gifts	Animal Handling (bonus d12 with animals, can rally them) Carousing (bonus d12 when drunk) Craft Specialty: Farming (bonus d12 to craft) Danger Sense (bonus d12 to sense danger) Hiking (bonus d12 for distance travel) Keen Ears (can hear faint sounds) Literacy (can read and write) Night Vision (poor lighting is good lighting) Tracking (bonus d12 to follow trails)
Initiative	d12, d10
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 6, Sprint d12, Run 26
Guard	Use "Guard" action for bonus d8 to all defenses
Aim	Use "Aim" action for bonus d8 to attack one target
Attack	Half-Spear @ Close d8, d6 – Damage +2
Counter	Half-Spear @ Close d8, d6 – Damage +2
Parry	Half-Spear @ Close d8, d6
Dodge	d12
Soak	d8, d6
Loot	Leather Armor, Half-Spear

Henri d'Muiresud

Henri is young wolf, is in his twenties. He is of average height, and has a light grey pelt, with touches of brown. While in the Méchant, he dresses as in plain, simple clothing, befitting a scribe. However, as the players may discover, he wields more than just a pen.

Henri is a pleasant, though quiet, young man. He was the fourth son born to a baron of the Muire forest, and had little prospect for a useful life. On his sixteenth birthday he decided to join the Indicateur and traveled to Harrowgate for schooling. His teachers found him very talented and intelligent, and well suited to undercover work. As such, his first assignment is as special Ducal representative and secret courier in the foothills of the Lochlan Mountains.

He serves his remote community to the best of his ability. His loyalty to the Duke and to the principles of Riddock's Dawn is absolute, but he is no fanatic. He is leery of violence, and will use his pistols as a last resort.



Henri d'Muiresud

Elite Wolf Spy (Major)

Goals	1. Survive. 2. Serve the duke. 3. Foil the Invisible Guild.
Traits	Body d8, Speed d6, Mind d10, Will d12 Wolf d4 (Forest, Omnivore, Night) Spy d12
Skills	Academics d8 Dodge d8 Melee Combat d8 Observation d8 Ranged Combat d8 Searching d8 Stealth d8
Gifts	Coward (bonus dodge & move when afraid) Disguise (bonus d12 to impersonate) Forgery (bonus d12 to deal with fakes) Heraldry (bonus d12 to know nobility) Hiking (bonus d12 for distance travel) Howling (bonus d12 to intimidate or scare) Legal Authority (he is the law) Literacy (can read and write) Shadowing (bonus d12 to follow people) Streetwise (bonus d12 to deal with criminals) Tracking (bonus d12 to follow trails)
Initiative	d10, d6
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 4, Sprint d12, Run 18
Guard	Use "Guard" action for bonus d8 to all defenses
Aim	Use "Aim" action for bonus d8 to attack one target
Attack	Longsword "À Gloire d'Muiresud" @ Close 2d8 – Damage +2 Pistol "Foudre" or "Tonnerre" @ Short d8, d6 – Damage +2, Slaying
Counter	Longsword "À Gloire d'Muiresud" @ Close 2d8 – Damage +2
Parry	Longsword "À Gloire d'Muiresud" @ Close 2d8
Dodge	d8, d6
Soak	d8, d6
Loot	Leather Armor, Longsword, "À Gloire d'Muiresud", brace of Pistols: "Foudre" and "Tonnerre"



THE WAGES OF ENVY

Being an Adventure Of Intrigue, Disguise, and Discord Among The High Society of Triskellian

“The Wages of Envy” is an adventure which takes place in Triskellian, and as such is a suitable bookend to “The Lost Heir of The Rinaldi”, or even the sample adventure in *Ironclaw*, p. 323. It serves to introduce the Players to an underworld of criminals, the fanciful lives of nobles, and the ways in which these two worlds collide. It will put Players in contact with both sides, and provides them with opportunities to pursue gold, fame, and favor.

An elaborate charade is afoot and almost everyone is not as they seem; this culminates in a battle that decides the fate of one of the most celebrated establishments in Triskellian, and of the Players. While freelance adventurers will be the quickest to embark on such an adventure, there is room for Player-Characters of all castes. Though it is a conversation and roleplay-heavy adventure, there are numerable encounters for more conflict-minded PCs.



What Has Gone On Before

The Free City of Triskellian caters to the tastes of innumerable people. Nobles take in shows, merchants buy and sell goods at rates they hope can cut a profit, and adventurers seek jobs to advance their names, right wrongs, and pick up a few denarii on the way. Many travelers come by means of the Via Salutis, the River Granvert, and the Bay of Auvrich. Among them are the righteous and upstanding, as well as the unseemly, the disreputable, and the weird.

The large presence of a growing merchant class and richer commoners, as well as the blooded nobles who have always had full coffers, demands a great deal of diversions for their spare time. The Three Spears Inn remains a popular haunt for the carousing crowd, but the city also boasts the grand Teatro Principale di Triskellian, a full-blown theater and opera house that puts on performances nearly every night. This makes Triskellian a cultural and artistic power in addition to being an economic one. Famous singers and actors are often the talk of the *nouvea riche*; moneyed merchants, foreign dignitaries, and perhaps even a highly successful adventurer or two who struggle to appear as graceful as the nobles do.

Though the power of the Rinaldi has waned in recent times, nobles of all color and banner hold houses in the city for their leisure and to ensure their representatives are properly heard by the guilds. One such house is owned by the red foxes of Bombolona. The patriarch of the family is the Duca Aberto di Bombolona, and he has made his fortune in dealings that have not always been above board. His wife, Octavia (née Boulanger), is a well-known composer and world-traveler rarely seen in Calabria.

Some whisper, behind closed doors of course, that Aberto has dealings with The Invisible Guild, a network of thieves and vagabonds that extends from Bisclavret territory to as far south as Triskellian. Widely feared among the Bisclavret, it is speculated that their influence extends beyond the island of Calabria, and that their agents lurk in locations as juxtaposed as the castles and sewers of every major city.

Marchesa Catarina di Bombolona, only daughter of the illustrious Aberto, is an idle potentate occupying the house her family owns in Triskellian. Much to the consternation of interested parties, she remains unwed despite being marrying age, and frequently turns down



suitors. Thanks to influences from her composer mother, an endless amount of free time, and the best schooling, she is also considered by many to be Calabria's foremost prima donna in her vocal range of coloratura soprano. She has recently returned from Chalon-sur-Sauldre after a lengthy tour and there are excited whispers among the well-to-do that she plans to appear once again in Triskellian's theater, to put on perhaps the greatest performance in years. A haughty sort, rumors also exist that she has bought her way into wizardly knowledge of an elemental variety, for she is willful and flagrant of temperament.

Catarina di Bombolona has also made enemies, and in the world of the opera, grudges between performers burn brightly. Enter Bernadette LeBlanc, an ermine known for her breadth of complex performances, whom once considered herself utterly incomparable. After being upstaged by Catarina, and replaced by her as the lead in several shows, she has retreated into what she does best: subterfuge, foul-play, and deceit. As of now, she has been amassing wealth by importing weapons, particularly of the proscribed variety, into Triskellian, while she constructs a plan for revenge against the woman she feels has ruined her life. Disguised as her old alter-ego, Masque Bel Étranger, a man who commands a coterie of minions and is in the service of The Invisible Guild, she is assisted by her patron Lord Niall, a blooded Bisclavret who counts himself as an official in the Guild. With his sponsorship, she sews discord amidst the staff opera house as it gears up for the upcoming show, which is to occur in several days.

LeBlanc has stolen scripts, necessitating a lengthy reprinting to be ordered from the Dunwasser College, and along with the weaponry being smuggled in under Lord Niall's watch, she has begun the import of large amounts of gunpowder and a great number of grenades in order to bring down the opera house itself – preferably while her rival takes the stage. Meanwhile, Catarina gets her practice in private and leaves much of the day-to-day operations and setup of the show to the staff at the opera house. She is growing annoyed at the interruptions and will likely seek out assistance in ensuring the show goes smoothly. This could mean bodyguards, investigators, or even additional actors. Several nights ago she received a threat in the form of a bloodied letter, and it has only made her more indignant and resolved to put an end to this low-borne haze of criminality surrounding her performance.

Getting the Players Involved

- ↔ Do any of your PCs have the Gift of Legal Authority? They may be beseeched by the Marchesa via a letter or intermediary to assist in discovering who has been threatening her.
- ↔ Is one or more of your Players nobility of some standing? They may be personal friends of Catarina, or know her or her parents. Nobles often afford each other their “hospitality”, perhaps the Player could be roped into assisting her after being given the “favor” of a stay in her house.
- ↔ Are any of your PCs unsavory types? They may know of Bel Étranger's presence in Triskellian and his reputation as a larger-than-life figure, perhaps they have even ran jobs for him before. Anyone who knows him would know that he never does anything as small as interrupting the arrangement of an opera. His presence in the city, if it is true, must mean something big is going on. Alternatively, they may have heard rumors of Lord Niall's underworld dealings, and may seek employment with him.
- ↔ Spellcaster PCs may be interested in the rumors of the Marchesa's own appetites for magic. Finding out if there is any truth to them could prove interesting, and lucrative, since she is more likely to employ one mediocre mage than a band of competent swashbucklers.
- ↔ Freelance adventurers are likely to hear gossip of the Marchesa's problems, or those of Lord Niall in Old Town. If they can prove they are competent and trustworthy, Catarina is likely to hire them to settle these matters for her. Lord Niall will employ them even if they seem incapable.

How to Run This Adventure

As Game Host, your job is to make sure the adventure runs smoothly, that all the PCs are getting “screen time” and contributing to the game experience.

- ↔ As In “The Rescue of Miranda Devoisier”, p. 614, this adventure takes place in the form of episodes. They denote a sequence of events ending in a confrontation, so there is a need for your Players to make their way into the locations or interact with the NPCs that prompt these episodes. The goal is to get your Players invested in the mystery surrounding the upcoming stage performance, and to unmask some of the criminal element plaguing Triskellian. After the completion of each episode, they should be eager to continue to the next one as the story progresses.
- ↔ Choose the episodes you think will be most appealing to your Players’ style. If their Characters are combat focused, use less of the episodes regarding intrigue, deceit, and negotiation, and opt for more of the ambush, tracking, and combat encounter episodes, or even consider adding combat to other episodes. Episodes that the Players do not take part in should be considered to take place in the background.
- ↔ Let the Players exercise their free will. They might not want to stop and speak to the crazed street-peddler, or perhaps they decide the sewers aren’t worth investigating. Never force your Players into action – the best course of action is to tailor the episodes and change aspects to play to their Gifts, Skills, Goals, and other motivations. By doing so the Players will feel like this is an adventure crafted with them in mind, and it will make for a more satisfying game.

One Eye, One Problem

The PCs start somewhere in Triskellian, perhaps trying to figure out what to do with Fabrizio once the “Lost Heir” adventure concludes. Depending on their makeup, the manner in which they are approached by a hyena-woman with a facial scar and one eye may differ. “One-Eye” Marigold is a servant and bodyguard of the Marchesa di Bombolona. Some suggestions:

- ↔ PCs with significant armor, weaponry, and a combative bent might be approached with the opening line: “Hold there. The lot of you look tough. I’m in a bit of a jam and my employer wants a job done that I can’t do myself ... Can you swing those weapons as ably as you carry them?”

- ↔ Scholarly PCs or Wizard types could get the following: “I’m no good at this... Uh, hello! Don’t be alarmed, I am just a servant of nobility; I saw your clothing and thought you educated types. I carry with me a request from the Marchesa di Bombolona, an urgent one that needs settling. I just have brawn, myself ... Maybe you folks could lend me some of your brains?” Hosts are encouraged to play up Marigold’s hesitating, boorish delivery, as she is not usually the type to be recruiting or talking to strangers.

Questions the Player-Characters may ask Marigold



“Who are you and what do you do?”

“Oh, yeah, sorry about that. I’m Marigold, some call me One-Eye. I don’t approach strangers very often unless they’re bandits and I’m about to stab th... Nevermind. I’m the personal bodyguard and servant of the Marchesa di Bombolona, surely you’ve heard of her presence in Triskellian? I make sure no one gets too close to her, you know, fans and all that.”

“What can you tell me about your employer?”

“The Marchesa? Well, she’s a better boss than some other nobles I’ve worked for. She’s not much of a scheming nonsense type, very direct and to the point. I guess she’s kind of like me in that way. She’s a real big shot, I think, or her father is. I don’t ask much, I just hear what my one good ear lets me, and she pays me well.”

“What’s this job you need help with?”

“You see, there’s been a big to do surrounding my boss’ show, she’s going to be singing in the city in a few days. All I know is there’s some trouble about the performance and she’s been getting threats. Since I’m no sneak I thought it might be best to look for some freelancers or some guards with off hours to help figure out who’s sending these threats. I can tell you, she’ll pay well.”

(Marigold doesn’t know how much she’ll pay, but she figures someone who wears as much jewelry around her neck as Catarina does has plenty to spare. Despite being in possession of a scroll dictating her employer’s orders, she is not literate.)

She pulls out a handwritten scroll and hands it to the PCs.

On this day, the Third of Muliebrea, I, Marchesa Catarina di Bombolona, do assert the following: I am in need of able-bodied and able-minded individuals, preferably those free of state or church interest, to assist me in finding the source of threats I have received regarding my upcoming performance at Teatro Principale. I will agree to the sum of two aureals per individual who assists in the solving of this problem.

The scroll is stamped with a signet ring; those with the Gift of Heraldry gain an extra d12 when making a Roll of Mind & Academics to ascertain that it is a true crest.

“What happened to your face?”

“Long story ... Well, actually I guess it’s not all that long. I fell out of a tree when I was a kid. I bet you thought I got it in a bloody battle or something, huh?”

Threats and Theatre

Provided the PCs decided to accept Marigold’s plea, she leads them to a large house in the New Town area of Triskellian. This is the house owned by the Bombolona family. Upon entering they are greeted by several servants and promptly lead to a room. Inside, surrounded by expensive furniture and tapestries is the large figure of the opera singer and noble heir. Catarina’s outfit is an immaculately tailored red gown, and her neck, ears, fingers and hair are smothered in sparkling jewelry of gold and gemstones. Characterized by her Decadent Personality, she will accept interruptions in the conversation for servants to bring her food and drink.

She will barely (or pretend not to) notice the PCs entrance into her room, glancing between them and Marigold with a mix of disappointment and shrewd examination. The leader of the PCs group or the most refined one should probably do the talking here to garner the most respect.

Questions the Player-Characters may ask Marchesa Catarina di Bombolona

Catarina has her suspicions as to who may be harassing her, but given her vanity she is not likely to mention this unless asked directly. Rolls of Will & Inquiry may be necessary to get more information out of her. If your Players have no experience dealing with nobles, play up her reactions to the gracelessness with which she is greeted and addressed. When questioned, she answers the PCs in a heavily-accented and sonorous, if self-aggrandizing, tone.



“My apologies for my servant, she oft seems but a rock amidst polished gems.”

“Who are you and what do you do?”

“I should hope that my servant has adequately explained my name and station to you, but my appearance speaks for itself! I am Marchesa Catarina di Bombolona, and I am the only heir to House Bombolona, as well as the greatest voice in Calabria. To hear me speaking must be such an honor for you, I understand if you must take a moment to collect yourselves!”

“Do you know who is threatening you?”

“I have my suspicions. There are, unfortunately, a multitude of performers who are envious of my talent. Then there are those who feel my performance may be too successful, or that my family is deserving of some bad luck. My father is a very powerful man, naturally if they wanted to hurt him, they would first target me. Of course, I am also a woman of enormous influence.”

(Catarina suspects that a criminal organization may be the origin of the threats she has received, but will bite her tongue about this. She doesn’t want the PCs to think they are getting in over their heads; she wants them to think that this will be a relatively easy job with a hefty reward. To even get her to mention the Invisible Guild would necessitate two successes with Will & Inquiry against her Will & Deceit.)

“May we see these threats?”

“Certainly.” She will instruct Marigold, who has been standing in the corner watching the exchange, to fetch several papers from a shelf. They are notes on paper, written in red ink to give the appearance of blood. They read as follows:

The Stage will collapse under your feet for it will bear only the most skilled, not the most boastful.

Beware and seek shelter from the conflagration, your name and the name of your family is doomed.

“Why haven’t you gone to the Constabulary?”

“I have done this. The bumbling constabulary is a force concerned with its own valor, yes, but it seems their incompetence outweighs their sworn duty. All they have done is assure me that I am in no danger, that I have adequate guards and servants, and that the Teatro itself is impregnable by the criminal element. I am not so sure. This city is rife with areas where the unsavory gather and work in secret. That is why I have insisted upon hiring outside help, you, to find and stop whoever is responsible - if you agree to my price.”

Her offer is two aureals apiece. The PCs may attempt to haggle with her for their services by rolling Will & Negotiation plus any applicable bonus gifts

versus her substantial 2d10 and Gift of Fast-Talk. She is not likely to be swayed by their attempts, and will voice her disgust at the very practice of haggling. With one success she will agree to fifty-five denarii, and two successes will net three aureals apiece. Another possible point to negotiate is the terms of payment, such as payment upon completion of services; half before and half upon completion, or so on.

Inquiring with the Constabulary

The Player-Characters may wish to consolidate what little information they have so far with the information gathered by the Town Guard. If they have participated in the “Lost Heir of The Rinaldi” adventure, then they will be recognized when they return to the Don’s Palace. If they have anyone of importance with them, such as someone with the Gift of Legal Authority, Nobility, or are a ranking member of the Church, they are likely to gain an audience with a higher-up like the Magistrate Umberto. If not, they are likely to speak with a captain, or worse, a bored guard.

Questions the Player-Characters may ask the Constabulary

“What are you doing about the threats to Marchesa di Bombolona?”

“I don’t know what sort of interest any of you have in her affairs, but as a noble of her rank we are doing our best to keep the peace surrounding her and her performance.”

(The Constabulary has promised they will post guards at the Teatro Principale, but they don’t have the manpower to investigate the strange threats Catarina has received.)

“Have you seen any suspicious characters or anything out of the ordinary?”

“In Triskellian you can never be too sure who is strange because of where they hail from, and who is strange because they are hiding something. We have people milling about who come from countless lands and speak countless tongues. Our charge is to keep the peace between these varied factions and individuals.”

“We are investigating the threats on behalf of the Marchesa di Bombolona. What leads can you give us?”

“I can’t assist in a freelance investigation; I would probably lose my job.” Player-Characters can attempt to make Gossip Rolls to get more information. Upon success, some Constables will say the following:

“Leads? Now, I’m not the sort to go telling adventurers to stick their noses in places where they don’t belong. I think I’d lose my position if I were to go telling every band of vigilantes to look for threads or question the folk in Old Town or Dock Town. I suppose I might mention how even pickpockets seemed better armed lately ...”

The Old Town

With many odd turns of street and dark alleyways, Old Town is the oldest section of Triskellian, with architecture dating back a thousand years, before the time of Helloise. The Constabulary patrolling the streets considers anyone wandering around to be somewhat suspect. The criminal element is in full force here, and even the respectable that inhabit this section of the city tend toward underworld dealings, or at the very least operate establishments such as brothels or gambling houses. Here are some roleplaying opportunities for your PCs to flesh out their experience in this shady corner of Triskellian:

- ◆ The PCs encounter a street-peddler, a grizzled rat of advanced age who introduces herself as “Sawtooth Snedges”. She attempts to sell the PCs various useless objects that she is insistent have some value, such as “magic rocks”, “divining rods”, and treasure maps to various legendary treasures. Use this as an opportunity for your PCs to be on the defensive end of a Negotiation Contest. Too poor a result on their part and they might end up convinced that the rat’s wares are worth some coin. Of course, then the haggling comes in.
- ◆ A curious Town Guard or two flags down the PCs to ask them what they’re doing in this part of town. They might question their dress or what business they have. Players should get the feeling that they’re walking into bad territory, and if they aren’t careful, they might attract suspicions that they’re the same unsavory sorts as those they’re trying to locate.

A Businessman in Distress

Located within Old Town at the in-city location of his import/export company, Lord Niall is a Bisclavret noble who, with the assistance of his tough, Bel Étranger (Bernadette LeBlanc), is importing weapons into Triskellian through ships listed as carrying nothing more than books and astrological equipment. In reality, the ships are loaded with a great deal of fine Bisclavret weapons, and powerful explosives. Bel Étranger and

his underlings keep the local criminals from pushing in on their turf while the smuggling operation persists. Lord Niall is a high-ranking member of the Invisible Guild, and he is backing LeBlanc's insistence on getting revenge on Catarina di Bombolona. It is his aim to hold the show as ransom to get her father to cease his involvement in the affairs of the Guild, in order to allow his own holdings and operations to expand. If he can't control the show, he would happily settle for ransoming off the Duca's daughter to him.

Lord Niall is a placid-looking wolf with black fur and dark eyes that hide his true nature as a high-ranking career criminal. He dresses in the Triskellian style, but somewhat simpler and more utilitarian. His delivery is calm and collected.

The Players could find their way into his offices in any number of ways. Successful rolls of Mind & Gossip plus dice from gifts such as Streetwise could afford the PCs hints from local snitches or beggars about who has anything to do with the threats against the Marchesa. If the PCs are particularly bad at gathering information, have an underling of Niall's approach the PCs insisting that the Lord can help them with information about the veiled threats, insisting that he has the same problem.

Lord Niall's offices are nondescript, as anything ostentatious would arouse unwanted attention and the hands of thieves. He has several secretaries in his employ, set up at desks in a main room, while his office is off to the side. Perceptive players who succeed on a Mind & Observation check might notice that these secretaries are rather well built, and some are even carrying concealed weapons.

Questions the Player-Characters may ask Lord Niall

“Who are you and what do you do?”

“I am Lord Niall, of Harrowgate. Forgive me, do you take tea? I am an importer of fine goods, books and the like. Surely you know of the popularity of astrology in the Bisclavret demesne? Enterprising merchants such as I are attempting to get it to catch on here; there's a market everywhere, for everything, if you can sell it properly.”



“What do you know about the threats and Catarina?”

“I have also received threats. I assumed it was because I am a foreigner, but if this fox noble is being similarly harassed, then perhaps it is due to my wealth and success. Are you employed by the Marchesa? I can

double whatever she's paying you if you can find out why I am receiving these threats as well.”

Or, if they have not met Catarina,

“What do you know of the threats against you?”

“I can't tell you from there they come, but I am deeply concerned by them. As a businessman noble and foreign to Triskellian, I am an easy target for elitist nobles loyal to the Rinaldi, chafing that I am doing business in this so-called “Free City”. I can offer you a fair reward if you can find out why I am receiving these threats, and from whom.”

In either case, he presents the Players with a tattered piece of paper, also written on in red ink.

Wealthy merchants are as a plague on the face of the city. Money belongs in the hands of local powers, not Bisclavret dogs.

The note is a creation of LeBlanc, who also sent similar threats to Catarina. The party is being led into a trap.

“I implore you. It is my suspicion that the blackguards make their base in the sewers, slipping out under cover of darkness to intimidate and cause mayhem in this fair city.”

Lord Niall is willing to pay double whatever amount the Players managed to get Catarina to agree to. This will come in the form of a promissory note, to be honored after the PCs find out who is threatening him ... That is, if he wasn't the one behind this scheme.

Triskellian's Mysterious Sewers

The sewers of Triskellian are a marvel of engineering and serve the city's numerous bath houses. While the main channels are mapped, countless tributaries and channels that split off were built hastily to serve need, and were not always recorded. The Players are walking into a trap. Regardless of whether or not they have met Lord Niall, they have been watched ever since meeting with Catarina di Bombolona. This is the perfect opportunity for the criminals to dispose of the adventurers threatening their plan – if they can.

Also wandering the sewers is the polecat Jarreth, an associate of the Dunwasser Academy. He has been afforded the dubious honor of mapping the sewers, and can be found walking aimlessly with his covered lantern and hand-drawn map, attempting to find his way to the surface through his own scribblings and the dying light he carries. It is up to the host whether the Players find him before or after running into the group of thugs waiting for them. Including this NPC as a combatant or even a civilian in need of saving changes things up; he'll be happy to promise the Players a

reward from the academy for helping him complete his work and get out alive.

A tall, somewhat well-muscled fellow, the Players might have a hard time believing Jarreth is the scholar he says he is. He is clumsy in manner and doesn't seem well suited for social situations. Any Players with the Gift of Fast-Talk will have a definite advantage if they decide to roll Mind & Negotiation to convince him to assist them. In combat Jarreth will attack using his Longsword, but will retreat if he is made Afraid or worse. As important as mapping the sewers is, it's not worth his life. With his maps, finding an escape route if the Players decide to retreat from any battles will be easier, and will keep them from running into a dead end.

Use the sewers as an opportunity to make the Players feel like they are beyond help. Deep in the underbelly of the city, no town guards are available to help them should they run into trouble. Placers may choose to use Stealth while investigating the sewers, and making them roll Mind & Observation will have them think there is a threat behind every corner. Use these opportunities to feed unease before the encounter with several armed thugs in Lord Niall's employ. Use the "Typical Horde" statistics provided in *Ironclaw* p. 254. Gauge your Players' combat strength: there should be about two per Player, not counting the scholar Jarreth if they have him in their group.

The hired toughs are looking for the Players, and they are not merely there by coincidence. Even so, give your group the opportunity to ambush them if they do well in rolls of Mind & Searching to find them, and Speed & Stealth to sneak up on them. Lord Niall was right about the sewers being a hideout, but most of his hires can't read or write, so there aren't any documents or plans of attack lying around. Instead, the sewers are where they disseminate orders down the chain verbally – no one is likely to hear them down here, except the PCs. If the Players are able to ambush the group of thugs, and succeed in a roll of Mind & Observation, they can overhear them talking in hushed, gravelly voices that the boss has been having some trouble at the docks, and something about Triskellian citizens being too nosy.

If the thugs defeat the Players, they won't leave any of them alive, and unless they look particularly wealthy, they probably won't even loot their corpses. They will fight viciously, only fleeing when their numbers are reduced to two or less, or if Terrified. Any captured thugs will not talk save for under extreme duress, such as torture or the use of mind-altering sorcery. Even then, they should not be so helpful as to tell the Players who they work for. If asked, they will insist they are under the employ of the Masque, Bel Étranger.

They describe him as "somewhat mad, though he's got an excellent sword arm" or "the kind of all-frills boss who's as likely to sing his orders as he is to say them". Any questions from Players about locations will get them pointed to the same place: Dock Town. However, after being attacked in the sewers, they may want to go back to question Lord Niall out of suspicion. If they leave with Jarreth, he will part ways and head back to the Dunwasser Academy unless the PCs somehow convince him to join their cause.

The Lord's Companion

Upon returning to Lord Niall's company the Players will find only staff whom they can question all they like, but they don't know where he is. If they have the Gift of Legal Authority or Nobility, it will be easy to convince the parchment-pushers to allow them to search his office with a roll of Mind & Negotiation. With one success, they will be allowed to search his office, with none, they will be allowed to search the parlor. There is nothing of interest in the parlor except expertly falsified import documents. A Roll of Mind & Academics, plus a bonus d12 if they have the Gift of Forgery, will be able to discern their lack of authenticity but only with two successes over a difficulty of 5. These could make for good evidence.

In Lord Niall's office, amidst drawers full of inkwells and quills, the Players find nothing incriminating; he hasn't left anything for them to find. That is except for one sealed envelope, on which is written, in red ink, *To Those Concerned for the Lord Niall's Well-being*.

Inside there is a patch of black fur, assumed to be the wolf's, and a letter.

Greetings and salutations! Don't look so lugubrious, my dear, intrepid adventurers; this is a letter which will no doubt allow you to find me. I am in possession of one Lord Niall. I would have gladly captured with him the insufferable Catarina di Bombolona, but that woman makes a millstone seem as a feather, and I have neither the strength nor the men to carry her! Ha! Additionally, she is too well guarded. Not to worry!

If you have want for the funds you're owed for risking your hides in Triskellian's refuse-canals, and bending your necks to that dreadful fox, it is the succor of this writing that allows for that. Make your way kindly to Dock Town under night's cover, whereupon I will greet you in my typical way of doing, and we shall enjoy a discourse most beneficial to both parties.

Do refrain from inviting the esteemed Constabulary, and though you may try to hire some mercenaries, know that most of them answer to me already!

**Perniciously yours,
Masque Bel Étranger**

Yes, he actually writes "Ha!"

Depending on how long the PCs take to search the building, they may meet a stunning young black weasel

woman before or after reading the letter, this is the host's choice. This is Bernadette LeBlanc, possessor of the very alter ego whom wrote the letter. She will seem somewhat flustered but will politely greet the heroes by curtseying to them, despite her noble appearance and dress. She will ask them if they have seen Lord Niall, as they were to meet that evening.

Questions the Players May Ask Bernadette

“Who are you and how do you know Lord Niall?”

“Yes of course, forgive my rushed demeanor; I was to meet Lord Niall at the Three Spears Inn to take tea with him. I am Bernadette LeBlanc, and for the last year I have been courting his Lordship. He is very dear to me.”



“What do you know about the contents of this letter?”

Bernadette will look visibly dismayed if the PCs relay the letter to her. She will implore them, “Please, you must go! I will take over any reward my dear Connla has offered you, if only you will rescue him! Nobles will create an uproar in this city if they fear being abducted by this ... this ... criminal syndicate. All will fall into chaos! But I already have the most to lose!”

The woman is acting despondent, and is playing the part perfectly. Figuring out that something is off will require a roll of Mind & Inquiry against a Bernadette's own Mind & Deceit dice, as well as her Gift of Knack: Deceit. If they succeed, let the Players know that something is off, but keep them guessing – there are more clues available to pick up once Bernadette leaves. After giving the PCs each an advance of four denarii, she will insist that they go while she returns to her estate to prepare the rest of the reward and to the Cathedrale de Temoin to pray for their success.

Once Bernadette leaves, ask the Players to roll Mind & Observation. Two successes will allow them to discover some soot on the floor. Try not to allow your Players to brow beat its origin from you, they should be allowed to infer what they like from this clue. This soot is from Bernadette's own fur. She has used soot to color herself black, which will cast suspicion away from her when she greets the PCs later as Bel Étranger, a male weasel with white fur, thus ensuring that she has two buffers of disguise. Her Personality of Vainglorious is what drives her to converse with the heroes directly, both in and out of costume. Remember that as the

Host you can exhaust her Gift of Personality in any Roll that serves her elaborate plan.

Ominous Request

At some point during their adventure, PCs who are under the employ of Marchesa Catarina di Bombolona may return to her residence to relay to her the status of their investigation so far. They may tell her whatever they like, but she is cunning and will attempt to discern false statements by rolling her Mind & Inquiry against their Will & Deceit. The more true information they can give her, the more likely she is to give them some sort of pay advance, or raise their reward. Marigold paces the room, eyeing the Players and listening in concern and frustration at her inability to have a direct hand in figuring out who is threatening her boss. In short, her sword hand is twitching.

Catarina is already hatching plans of her own. She will ask that the PCs do one of two things: Participate in the opera to act as her defense in case things go awry, or inspect the opera house and stage beforehand. She may even ask them to do both. Naturally, this would come with a pay raise, and an advance of ten denarii each. Consider splitting up your group: party members with skills like Presence and gifts like Oratory would be well suited to take the stage, while members with high Searching and Observation dice may be better at searching the opera house for traps or guarding the exits during the performance.

The Players will get their chance to ask questions after Catarina makes her proposals. Depending on what they know and what they are willing to tell her, here are some questions your Players might ask:

New Questions the Players may ask Bombolona

“Do you know Lord Niall?”

“Do I look like a wolf to you? I am not in the business of dealing with those territories which one so low ranked as he calls home ... In fact I am in no business but that of the stage, you see. My father has a broad catalogue of relationships with other nobles and guildsmen, but you would hard-pressed to speak with him about this man. He is on business in Doloreaux.”



“Do you know the name Bel Étranger?”

“I cannot say as I have. If you knew anything about him I may perhaps be able to elucidate any suspicions as to whom this character is. There are many covert, masked characters in opera ... Including the opera in which I am to perform soon, *The Wedding of Siviglia!*”

“What can you tell us about the opera?”

“I will be playing the part of Bella Balena, for only my coloratura soprano voice can truly perform her arias as she struggles against the tides of war, all to marry her beloved, a masked prince!”

Some Players may pursue this line of questioning. If they want her to continue, a Roll of Mind & Inquiry against her Will & Presence will be required as she shrugs off further questioning, perhaps disinclined thanks to their interrogative tone. Reward Players for roleplaying their characters’ requests and any cajoling convincingly; Catarina is susceptible to flattery.

After a roll with two successes, she will happily elaborate:

“Circumventing the battalions and the roar of cannon fire, the princess returns to her besieged castle! The prince, Alfonso’s cannonballs burst into the palace, to destroy it and her controlling father, so that their love may unite! But, you see – and you must promise not to be dissuaded from attending by knowing the ending – the prince destroys the castle, not knowing that his princess has returned from her exile and is present inside! Ah, how melancholy! She dies in the collapse of the ramparts, singing in anguish from her forlorn love!”

Patroned by the Arts

After the conversation, Catarina will become emotional and begin singing. The Players will be escorted out of the room by Marigold, who proceeds to ask the PCs to let her come with them. If they agree, she will slip out, leaving the rest of the guards and staff to see to protecting her employer. She will fight from range if possible using her Composite Bow, and in close quarters will fight with her Badelaire until she is Injured or worse. If Injured, she will retreat from battle, likely to Catarina’s estate.

Players who have decided to participate in the opera will need to spend between half a day to a full day rehearsing with Catarina. This would be a good opportunity for you, the Host, to allow them to roleplay what their characters reactions to her opulent lifestyle and overbearing demands will be. She takes meals often and the PCs will be expected to acquiesce to her every demand of their performances, including costumes. Oddly, there doesn’t seem to be a director of the opera besides her, as if her vanity requires that she

direct it all herself. Even most characters with the typical Gift of Nobility would be outranked by her. Players with several Gifts of Nobility would be on equal standing, and may be able to gain some respect from her, though she will be wryly bemused at their participation in mercenary activities.

You may want to write down lines for your Players to memorize, but don’t hand them out immediately. Try testing them later with rolls of Will & Presence on stage, and asking them to repeat their lines. With two successes or more, let a Player see their lines. With one success, let them see their lines, but with several blanks they are required to fill in.

Tightening the Noose

The Players will make their way into Dock Town on some day before the opera, and after nightfall, unless they choose to ignore the terms of the letter or don’t care about Lord Niall with one noble already set to pay them. Lord Niall is already out of Triskellian, and the only one waiting for them in Dock Town is Bel Étranger and his henchmen, eager to recruit or humiliate the heroes, perhaps even to kill them. The streets will be somewhat barren. The common sight of city watch is no longer so common, as LeBlanc has bribed them to turn a blind eye to this district for a few hours. Players don’t know what they’re looking for or what’s coming to them. Emphasize this. Here are some examples of random events to keep them on edge during their exploration of Dock Town:

- ↔ The Players are alerted by a loud bang. Some may draw their weapons, but will find that the source of this surprise is nothing more than a peasant woman opening her shutters and slapping out a dingy old rug. The party should be well prepared to jump at anything by this point.
- ↔ One of the Players is approached by a street vendor, or a tough-looking mercenary trying to sell them “protection in these fearsome streets”. If they are convinced to hire him, he will accompany them in the docks for several hours for five denarii. When the PCs run into Bel Étranger, and if they engage him in combat, he will fight on the side of the crime lord, having been in his employ all along.

- >If the Players ran into “Sawtooth Snedges” back in Old Town, consider having her show up again here, either trying to get money out of the PCs again, or as a chance for the Players to recoup any losses. If they choose to attack her, she will attack by biting until she scores a result of Hurt or worse on a Player, whereupon she will exhaust her gift of Venom to poison them. Afterwards, she’ll run away, preferably into Triskellian proper where the crowds and guards provide cover. Since the Players are in Dock Town on business, giving chase any further may endanger their reward prospects.

Bel Étranger has been waiting for the party to arrive in the docks, and will let them stew for a bit before making his entrance. Players who succeed overwhelmingly with rolls of Mind & Observation will sense that they are being watched, but in the seedy Dock Town area, outsiders are watched carefully by everyone. Pick an alleyway. When the Players pass through, they will be pinched on both sides by two Typical Hordes (Ironclaw, p. 255) per Player, more if Marigold or Jarrett is with them. Bel Étranger will be on a nearby rooftop at a Medium range, well out of reach for melee and some ranged weapons.

The weasel is an elaborately coiffed fop, a ruffled white cravat offsetting his choice of bright red and canary yellow doublet and tights, boots and gloves quite starkly. He wears a wide brimmed hat with a feather, and a domino mask sits over his eyes. Addressing the heroes with a loud voice tinged with an accent, he paces and dances to and fro across the roof, the consummate performer.

"You made it, magnificent! Allow me to introduce you to my compatriots. A horde of hull-scrubbers, throat-cutters, and, ah, I believe Champignon there was a toughboy for the late Don Rinaldi. I am here to offer you a job. Assist my destruction of the family Bombolona and I will... I suppose I could pay you, but there is no greater reward than your own lives. I have been watching you, very entertained by what I see. That wretched windbag does not deserve the stage she takes, no, it should belong to Bel Étranger! If you are not with me, you are against me, and a churlish lout at that! Have you no appreciation for the arts?"

Questions the Players may ask Bel Étranger

As Host, you are encouraged to ramble. Bel Étranger is eager to tell these interlopers his plans and bad-mouth his competition. The Players will no doubt try and ask him questions, but he is insistent on conversing on his terms.

“Who are you and what do you do?”

“Have you had your heads in the sand this whole time? I am the incomparable, the inimitable: Bel Étranger! I am the world’s most elaborate, most insidious, perfect criminal and performer to ever take a stage or a purse! You would do well to heed my every order, or we’ll see how many holes we can put in you. A number greater than roles I can play? I think not!”

“Why are you threatening Marchesa Bombolona?”

“Why? You have *met* the woman, have you not? She is a spoiled, vulgar thing, and what’s more, completely unfit for the roles they so foolishly give her! I will no longer tolerate her dominance of the world of opera!”

“Why are you threatening Lord Niall?”

“Ah, yes, the plutocrat, the scoffing wolf who fills the good city of Triskellian with his Bisclavret filth. We have our own guilds, our own nobles, and he can take his trade and ride it back to Harrowgate!”

“What do you intend to do during the opera?”

“I am tempted to avoid attendance altogether, just so I don’t have to suffer that wide-saddled siren’s voice! But alas, I am needed in the final act, and I intend to bring the house down. I’ll bust down the set-dressing and the walls themselves like that repugnant fox busts dress seams - Ha!”

The Pincer Attack

The Players can pledge their allegiance to him if they like, but Bel Étranger has already marked them for death in his own theatrical way. He will merely observe for several turns, and if the tide turns against him (half or more of his thugs are defeated – they fight to the death), he brandishes a Pistol and fires at the Players. If someone tries to climb up to the roof and attack him prior to this, he will fire at them instead, especially if they are capable of Flight. Thugs will also target flying species and wizards first, as well as any ranged combatants, to make sure their overseer is not in danger.



The thugs will close in from both sides, using their Gift of Pack Tactics to gain extra dice by flanking the Players. They are merciless and well-armed, but their combat skills leave something to be desired. Displays of elaborate magic may cause them to use Guard more often and fight more cautiously, but they are more afraid of the Bel Étranger's wrath than most anything the PCs can dish out. As the weasel watches and waits to fire a shot, he will taunt the PCs on his turn, followed by taking the Guard Action.

Any honorable challenges to the weasel will be laughed off brusquely – he only wears the veneer of an upstanding duelist, but in fact is eager to watch the Players squirm against unfair odds, and then escape into the night. After the round in which he fires his Pistol, he will abscond across the roofs, down the alleys, and escape into the sewers. He knows their canals like the back of his hand, and if the Players are able to pursue him, they will suffer a d8 disadvantage to chase Bel Étranger through the sewers, unless they have Jarreth and his maps with them. Even so, there is little time to stop, light lanterns, and check maps in the dark, labyrinthine canals of the sewers. Players foolish enough to follow him might be met with another group of thugs, which will make quick work of the softened up PCs.

If the players win the battle, that's that. They walk away from the experience with a sense of who their target is, but he seems untouchable, and all-pervasive. At this point, the PCs need to take defensive action or risk their Goals and their monetary reward. The opera house is a well-guarded establishment, but by now the PCs are aware of just how dangerous this situation really is. They may attempt to convince the constabulary to lend some more guards to the performance, but with ten already queued for

attendance, it will take two successes of Mind & Negotiation just to get one extra guard.

The Curtain Rises

Opening night. The Teatro Principale di Triskellian is bustling with activity as the staff prepares for the first performance of the season. Red-carpeted hallways and gilded wood paneling, along with a dozen or more chandeliers spread throughout two floors. If the PCs haven't been in an establishment like this before, play up the opulence of the building in which the richest and most well-bred of Calabria take in performances. The auditorium seats one thousand, counting the balconies and the private boxes reserved for the great noble houses.

Searching the Opera House

The Players may wish to tell Bombolona of their run in with Bel Étranger, but she is far too busy and it is far too late for her to take action now. She will suggest that the best thing for the PCs to do now would be to search the opera house for any signs of sabotage. Marigold will accompany them even if she didn't join them before. There are at least fifteen dressing rooms and facilities, on-site costume and prop building shops, as well as the rehearsal area. The PCs have been given the run of the place by the Marchesa, and they might decide to split up in order to cover more ground. Rolls of Mind & Searching are in order, and for large rooms, remember that Players can assist each other to get a job done faster, or to ensure more dice for more successes.

Feel free to create your own traps or acts of sabotage and decide where they will be placed, and how many successes the PCs need to find them. If they



aren't found, they can give the villains an edge in the final showdown. Here are several examples of traps the PCs may come across:

- ↳ A rope holding up a sandbag has been nearly cut, meaning it will break during the performance or rehearsal, requiring a Dodge roll to dive out of the way. Anyone struck by the bag will have to Soak a flat 3 Damage.
- ↳ Several back exits have been unlocked or propped open, allowing for the influx of hired mercenaries and toughs to storm the stage when the signal is given.
- ↳ A number of explosive satchels have been placed under the stage, waiting for an underling of Bel Étranger to light them. The underling will then need to either get out of the auditorium in time or sacrifice himself for the cause. Either way, if those explosives are lit, it won't be pretty for anyone but the villain. The explosions will cause a flat 6 Damage, Weak, to anyone within Short range (12 paces).

All The World's a Stage

PCs who have been recruited to perform in the show will have to do so unless they want to risk losing their rewards or failing their Goals. While they are on stage, Bel Étranger and his hired help will funnel in to prepare the attack. PCs assigned to search the opera house may remain as guards, but they should roll Mind & Observation against the Stealth of incoming intruders to notice a slew of costumed men and women funneling in from the exits. Triskellian guards are few and far between – bribes with Invisible Guild funds go a long way.

Bel Étranger himself will ride in astride a ribauldequin – a mobile anti-personnel gun with multiple barrels, giving it the likeness of a pipe organ. It requires two people on either side to move and steer it, and Bel Étranger will insist on using the one volley he can get out of it effectively on the stage itself. Consider one or two Typical Horde per PC and an additional one for each NPCs fighting on the Players' side, but don't be afraid to have your Players deal with whatever number you think they can handle. For the most part, the wealthy, somewhat sheltered nobles in the audience will think all this part of the show, even when blood is spilled, seeing it as "opera grotesque".

Regardless of whether the PCs are on stage or protecting the stage when the villain makes his appearance, their prerogative is to protect the one dishing out money upon success. Catarina will not lightly accept this intrusion, however, and will fight back as fiercely as those hired to protect her. She will immediately begin casting fire magic, but is careful with spells

that have explosion radius – she won't use Fireball or Sunburst if some of the audience will also be caught in the conflagration. Using her high Body, Will & Presence dice, she will also perform a Scare stunt and make an attempt to sweep as many targets as she can.

The first turn that Bel Étranger is in Medium range of the stage, he will order the ribauldequin fired. Two henchmen besides him will need to be present at Close range to the unit to do so, so the PCs have a chance of disabling it entirely. This attack counts as an Explosion with Near range (4 paces) and any hit must Soak a flat 5 Damage, Weak.

Every turn thereafter, Bel Étranger will attempt to rush the stage and take on Catarina, who has no qualms about using Pilum of Fire on him. His thugs will go for any guards and offensive PCs to keep them off his back. Marigold will support Catarina with her Tactics dice by flanking anyone who attacks her and uses her Gift of Bodyguard to take attacks for her. Marigold and Catarina will fight to the death, and Bel Étranger will only give up once he has used his Gift of Dramatic Disheveling. This will reveal him to be Bernadette LeBlanc, the female performer that Catarina is very well acquainted with. The two are not on good terms. Bernadette will be aghast and cease combat, ordering her thugs to fall back. That she is revealed for who she is in front of the audience destroys her ruse, rendering her speechless and cowed. She doesn't resist attempts by either the Players or any constabulary present to take her into custody.

After the battle, the PCs will receive any reward they were promised from Catarina, and depending on their actions during the battle, you may want to give them additional rewards. For example, the town guard could offer a sum for the capture of Bernadette, who is wanted for questioning regarding her relationship with Lord Niall. The town guard will also have some questions for the Players about the adventure, hoping to get some leads on the criminal underworld. For now, the Players have saved the state of performance in Triskellian.

Dénouement

Once the scene has settled and the Players have received their rewards, there are a few loose ends left. Read below to find out what may occur in the aftermath of this adventure that may serve as seeds for the next one.

Lord Niall?

The Bisclavret businessman will have fled to Harrowgate to await news of Catarina's capture or death. When he doesn't get it, he will imagine the PCs had something to do with it, and begin hiring mercenaries to go after them. News of Bernadette's imprisonment will only

exacerbate his ire, and he will continue to watch the PCs from the shadows via his cohorts in the Invisible Guild.

If the PCs were able to find and verify the forged import documents in Niall's offices, they can take them to the Constabulary in Triskellian. After having these claims substantiated, an investigation will be launched, further hampering Niall's ability to do business. With his shipping business called into question, he will be forced to disappear into the fold of the Invisible Guild, to pursue more violent and underhanded methods of getting back at the Players.

LeBlanc Rots in Prison?

Given the tirelessly vengeful nature of LeBlanc, she is unlikely to be kept in prison too long. Invisible Guild members under the orders of her partner Niall will either bribe guards to look the other way during a breakout – or bribe officials to pardon her entirely. If, or when, she escapes, she will go into hiding and try to make her way to Harrowgate, where the eyes and ears of Triskellian's powerful hold less sway.

She won't forget the PCs, and could include their deaths in her next plan.

The People of Triskellian?

The affair at the Teatro Principale was a very public one. The PCs, especially if they followed Bombolona's request and participated in the opera itself. People will begin recognizing them in the streets and expressing their amazement and excitement at the proceedings. Most people still seem to think all the fighting and any traps that went off were all part of the show. The heroes may get offers to participate in other productions or from eccentric nobles who want to hire the "exquisite actors".

The Inimitable Marchesa di Bombolona?

Provided the PCs did a good job and were paid by Catarina, she won't have any grudges with them. If the PCs aren't noble or otherwise worthy of her respect, she probably won't want to deal with them again either way. Her father is very protective of her and may be keep an eye on the PCs, which may lead to some complications with the Invisible Guild – if Lord Niall has his men watching them, the PCs could find themselves in the middle of a guild war between these two ambitious members. They may be coerced to pick a side and assist a former enemy in Niall, or even Catarina's father, Aberto.

Dramatis Personæ

What follows is a list of the relevant gaming information for the prominent NPCs in this adventure. Each write-up

includes a brief description of the character, their rules and statistics, and their personal "list" of priorities, ranked in order of importance. As Game Host, when you are playing the role of an NPC, check the NPC's list of Goals to see what their priorities are, to better help you decide how the character would behave.

Marchesa Catarina di Bombolona

The spoiled heir to House Bombolona conducts herself with measureless aplomb and a passionate lust for life. She wears only the finest gowns, typically in shades of red and gold, and is festooned with expensive jewelry at all times. A layer of armor beneath these expensive fabrics is testimony to her headstrong desire to deal with things herself when sell-swords and servants fail her. A decadent lifestyle has made her quite portly, though she is kempt and keen of eye. While perhaps too vain and self-assured, the powerful speaking voice she has hints at her innate talents as a singer, and perhaps at her strong will. It is almost impossible to find her alone, so extensive is her retinue of servants, and she often makes good use of her time by studying libretto and acquiescing to her weakness for extravagant food. Her personality can swing between cloying appeals to those she wants something from, to unbridled rage at those she condemns.



Marchesa Catarina di Bombolona Elite Red Fox Entertainer (Major)

Goals

1. Maintain dignity, station, and decadent lifestyle.
2. Survive.
3. Amass elemental power in downtime.

Traits Body d12, Speed d4, Mind d8, Will d10
Red Fox d6 (Forest, Omnivore, Night)
Entertainer d12
Warlock d4

<i>Marchesa Catarina di Bombolona</i> <i>Elite Red Fox Entertainer (Major)</i>	
Skills	Academics d10 Melee Combat d8 Deceit d12 Negotiation d10 Gossip d8 Presence d12, d8 Inquiry d10 Supernatural d8 Leadership d10
Gifts	Armored Fighter (armor dice up one level) Carousing (bonus d12 when drunk) Combat Save (X to negate Unconscious, Dying, or Dead) Danger Sense (bonus d12 to sense danger) Disguise (bonus d12 to impersonate) Elementalist Trappings: Red (Fire Wizard!) Elemental Apprentice (May ready elemental spells) Fast-Talk (bonus d12 for quick negotiations) Fire Ball (X to ready Fire Ball) Keen Ears (can hear faint sounds) Knack: Presence (X to re-roll a use of Presence) Knack: Deceit (X to re-roll a use of Presence) Literacy (can read and write) Mystic: Elementalism (bonus d12 to understand magic) Night Vision (poor lighting is good lighting) Nobility (X to assert noble influence) Oratory (bonus d12 for public speaking) Performance of Singing (bonus d12 when singing) Pilum of Fire (X and Aim to upgrade from Ignite Fire) Resolve (include Will with Soak) Wealth (X to assert wealthy influence)
Initiative	d12, d8, d4
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 0*, Sprint d4, Run 16 *Burdened, Dash is 0
Ready	Elementalism – X to use Ready action to load a spell into hand or into Treble-Best Rod/Hawthorne Wand
Aim	Pilum of Fire – X to Aim and upgrade from Ignite Fire
Attack	Ignite Fire @ Medium d12, d10, d8 – Damage +1, Critical, On Fire Fire Ball @ Medium d12, d10, d8 – Explosion, Reach, Damage +3 Pilum of Fire @ Medium d12, d10, d8 – Damage +3, Critical, On Fire
Counter	Treble-Best Rod @ Close d12, d8 – Damage +1 Critical
Parry	Treble-Best Rod @ Close 2d12, d8
Dodge	2d4
Soak	d12, 3d10, 2d8
Loot	Hawthorne Wand, Treble-Best Rod, Alumen Armor, Ambrascura Armor, Assorted Jewelry, Noble's Clothes

Lord Connla Niall

An experienced businessman and high-ranking member of the Invisible Guild, Connla is a native of Harrowgate. He prefers to wear simple earth-tones and conducts himself as a strictly above board fellow. His underworld contacts are numerous and he will do anything to acquire more power. He is the money behind Bernadette LeBlanc's alter ego, and prefers to enforce his will through her. They have some degree of romantic entanglement.



Lord Connla Niall

Elite Wolf Fence (Major)

Goals	1. Survive 2. Gain further control over the Invisible Guild. 3. Make money.
Traits	Body d8, Speed d8, Mind d12, Will d8 Wolf d8 (Forest, Omnivore, Night) Fence d12
Skills	Brawling d8 Inquiry d12 Presence d6 Deceit d12 Negotiation d12 Ranged Combat d8 Dodge d8 Observation d8 Stealth d8
Gifts	Administration (bonus d12 to run a business) Bribery (bonus d12 to inquire about or make bribes) Etiquette (bonus d12 for manners) Forgery (bonus d12 to deal with fakes) Haggling (bonus d12 for money talk) Hiking (bonus d12 for distance travel) Howling (bonus d12 to intimidate or scare) Nobility (X to assert noble influence) Streetwise (bonus d12 to deal with criminals) Tracking (bonus d12 to follow trails) Wealth (X to assert wealthy influence)
Initiative	d12, d8
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 4, Sprint d8, Run 20
Guard	Use "Guard" action for bonus d8 to all defenses
Aim	Use "Aim" action for bonus d8 to attack one target
Attack	Claws @ Close 2d8 – Damage +1, Critical Pistol @ Short d12, d8 – Damage +2, Slaying
Dodge	d12, d8
Soak	2d8
Loot	Expensive clothes, Chainmail, Pistol, incriminating evidence, stolen goods, forged documents

Bernadette LeBlanc (Bel Étranger)

Bernadette is a slender ermine with a cool countenance. She has sharp, darting eyes and a false smile, but is effortlessly able to change her outward personality to suit whatever swindle she has going. Her family has long been loyal to The Invisible Guild, the network of thieves and criminals throughout Calabria, and she has also adopted this loyalty. She wears fine black clothing that contrasts with her stark white fur, and she is well-groomed. As Bel Étranger, she wears bright costumes in male style, feathered hats, and plays the part of a dashing, romantic, criminal mastermind with a quick wit and a quicker rapier. She is madly jealous of Catarina and will do anything to seal her undoing.



Bernadette LeBlanc

Elite Weasel Charlatan (Major)

Goals

1. Destroy, humiliate, or collapse House Bombolona.
2. Survive.
3. Be recognized as the “superior talent” that she is.

Traits Body d8, Speed d12, Mind d12, Will d8
Weasel d4 (Forest, Carnivore, Twilight)
Charlatan d12

Skills	Academics d10	Inquiry d6	Negotiation d8
	Climbing d12	Jumping d12	Ranged Combat d10
	Dodge d12	Leadership d6	Presence d12
	Deceit d12	Melee Combat d10	Stealth d10
	Gossip d8		

Bernadette LeBlanc

Elite Weasel Charlatan (Major)

Gifts	Contortionist (bonus d12 to escape or squeeze through) Carousing (bonus d12 when drunk) Combat Save (X to negate Unconscious, Dying, or Dead) Danger Sense (bonus d12 to sense danger) Disguise (bonus d12 to impersonate) Fast-Talk (bonus d12 for quick negotiations) Fencing (add Dodge dice to parry) Forgery (bonus d12 to deal with fakes) Literacy (can read and write) Melee Finesse (use Speed & Melee Combat for attacks) Oratory (bonus d12 for public speaking) Performance of Singing (bonus d12 when singing) Springing Strike (melee attack, then bounce back) Streetwise (bonus d12 to deal with criminals) Wealth (X to assert wealthy influence)
Initiative	2d12
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 6, Sprint d12, Run 28
Guard	Use “Guard” action for bonus d8 to all defenses
Aim	Use “Aim” action for bonus d8 to attack one target
Attack	Rapier @ Close d12, d10 – Damage +2, Impale Pistol @ Short d12, d10 – Damage +2, Slaying
Counter	Rapier @ Close d12, d10 – Damage +2, Impale
Parry	Rapier @ Close 2d12, d10
Dodge	2d12, d4
Soak	3d8
Loot	Rapier, Alumen Armor, Hat, nice, Domino Mask

“One-Eye” Marigold

Marchesa Catarina di Bombolona’s bodyguard. She is quite serious and often seems joyless, but this is just her way of being protective, stoic and alert. Her left ear and eye are deaf and blind, respectively, but this hardly hampers her combat ability. She is quick to take to warriors and holds martial skill very highly. Catarina treats her somewhat overbearingly. Okay, extremely overbearingly.



"One-Eye" Marigold		Elite Hyena Bodyguard (Major)	
Goals		1. Protect Catarina. 2. Survive. 3. Make money.	
Traits		Body d10, Speed d12, Mind d4, Will d6 Hyena d6 (Forest, Omnivore, Night) Bodyguard d12 Soldier d8	
Skills	Brawling d8 Dodge d8 Inquiry d12 Melee Combat d12	Observation d8 Presence d6 Ranged Combat d12	Searching d10 Stealth d8 Tactics d8
Gifts	Bodyguard (X to take attack for ally) Danger Sense (bonus d12 to sense danger) Hiking (bonus d12 for distance travel) Keen Nose (can detect faint smells) Resolve (include Will with Soak) Sharpshooter (range penalties down) Survival (bonus d12 to survive in the wilderness) Team Player (give allies bonus d12 in assist rolls) Veteran (Aim and Guard bonus are d12)		
Initiative	2d12, d8		
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 4, Sprint d8, Run 20		
Guard	Use "Guard" action for bonus d12 to all defenses		
Aim	Use "Aim" action for bonus d12 to attack one target		
Attack	Badelaire @ Close d12, d10, d8 – Damage +2, Sweep Close, Tilting Composite Bow @ Long 2d12, d8 – Damage +2, Critical Using Tactics? Add 2d8 to melee		
Counter	Badelaire @ Close d12, d10, d8 – Damage +2, Sweep Close, Tilting		
Parry	Badelaire @ Close d12, d10, d8		
Dodge	d12, d8		
Soak	d10, d8, d6		
Loot	Chainmail, Badelaire, Composite Bow, earrings for her good ear, eye patch (unused)		

Sawtooth Snedges

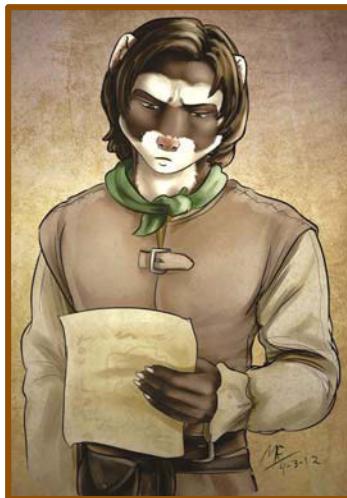
The off-kilter bag lady who shows up at several points in the adventure to sell objects of little worth to the heroes is more than she seems at first glance. Hiding under her tattered, greasy robes is a brace of pistols, and she is apt to use them. She wanders the streets of Triskellian looking for objects for resale, and knows a rube when she sees one. Cockeyed, her mind is not all there, and she is in bold contrast to the noble individuals the Players encounter in the campaign.



Sawtooth Snedges		Elite Rat Peddler (Major)	
Goals		1. Survive 2. Make money off out-of-towners.	
Traits		Body d4, Speed d6, Mind d12, Will d6 Rat d8 (Shore, Omnivore, Night) Peddler d12	
Skills	Brawling d8 Deceit d10 Dodge d8 Gossip d10	Observation d8 Ranged Combat d8 Stealth d8	
Gifts	Contortionist (bonus d12 to escape or squeeze through, wins on dodge ties) Craft Specialty: Clothing (bonus d12 to craft) Haggling (bonus d12 for money talk) Junk Expert (X to draw cheap item from junk sack) Keen Ears (bonus to hear sounds, ultrasonic) Streetwise (bonus d12 to deal with criminals) Survival (bonus d12 to forage) Toughness (X to roll soak twice, add successes)		
Initiative	d12, d6		
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 3, Sprint d6, Run 13		
Guard	Use "Guard" action for bonus d8 to all defenses		
Aim	Use "Aim" action for bonus d8 to attack one target		
Attack	Teeth @ Close d8, d4 – Damage +1, Grapple Venom = X after biting to make a Hurt target Sick Pistol @ Short d12, d8 – Damage +2, Slaying		
Dodge	d8, d4		
Soak	d6, d4		
Loot	Brace of Pistols, Leather Armor, bottomless junk sack		

Jarreth

Jarreth is employed by the Dunwasser Academy as a cartographer, but he is an explorer and occasional adventurer by trade. He is hale and hardy, but lacks social skills and often can't think of what to say in a conversation. Despite this, he is literate and holds special interest in ancient ruins. It is his misfortune that he is saddled with mapping the sewers, especially because of the rumors of criminals and monsters making them their home...



Jarreth		Elite Polecat (Major)
Goals	1. Survive 2. Explore the unexplored. 3. Map the unmapped.	
Traits	Body d8, Speed d8, Mind d12, Will d6 Polecat d6 (Forest, Carnivore, Twilight) Fence d12	
Skills	Dodge d8 Inquiry d10 Melee Combat d10 Negotiation d10	Observation d8 Searching d12 Stealth d8
Gifts	Cartography (bonus d12 to read and to make maps) Contortionist (bonus d12 to escape or squeeze through, wins on dodge ties) Haggling (bonus d12 for money talk) Hiking (bonus d12 for distance travel) Literacy (can read and write) Research (bonus d12 to look things up) Springing Strike (Melee attack, then bounce back) Tracking (bonus d12 to follow trails)	
Initiative	d12, d8	
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 4, Sprint d8, Run 20	
Guard	Use "Guard" action for bonus d8 to all defenses	
Aim	Use "Aim" action for bonus d8 to attack one target	
Attack	Longsword @ Close d8, d10 – Damage +2	
Counter	Longsword @ Close d8, d10 – Damage +2	
Dodge	d12, d8, d6	
Soak	d8, d6	
Loot	Longsword, Leather Armor, maps, scrolls, books, 15 denarii	

UNEARTHED ALCHEMY

Being and Adventure of Ancient Beings, Weird Wonders, and Two-Faced Charlatans

“Unearthed Alchemy” is an adventure which takes place in Omigre-Haudie, a resort community near Mt. Arlotte. See *Ironclaw*, p. 226 for a map of Calabria. This adventure shows players that people are not always as they seem, and dark secrets can lie under any floorboards or under any soil. It also gives players an opportunity to make decisions about who to side with, and which can lead to rich roleplaying opportunities if PCs make different decisions – you may even find your group split up!

This adventure also involves some Doloreaux nobility, so it can either lead into “Martyr of the Catacombs” or serve as a sequel adventure while players are in the area. While there is room for more conversation and story-minded players, this adventure also contains foot travel, investigation, and a classic dungeon crawl fraught with danger for players who want to risk it all.

What Has Gone on Before

The placid little resort community of Omigre-Haudie is the nexus of a scramble for ancient secrets that have a conman, an unearthed alchemist, and the local Baron about to butt heads. Just a few weeks ago, a shift in the earth allowed the long entombed alchemist’s assistant, Natuche, to emerge from her master’s buried laboratory in Mt. Arlotte. Her master was long gone, and she pieced together her life and memories from what remained. She has since made her way into the outside world, first coming across Omigre-Haudie, and has conveniently been mistaken for another tourist by the locals. In the weeks that have passed she has hired several people to be her eyes and ears, as she begins her search for the whereabouts of her old master. The coins she used to pay them are strange and old, but are accepted nonetheless. She rarely appears in town anymore, instead sticking to the fringes or racing back and forth between her master’s long-forgotten lab and a quiet, unattended cottage she has taken up fleeting residence in.

Meanwhile, the local Baron has received some disturbing news on two fronts. First, the legend of the haunted tomb of Natuche The Most Terrible has been on everyone’s lips ever since strange noises and sightings have been made on or near the mountains. This has been bad for business, and what’s bad for business is bad for the town. The people here thrive on

the rising merchant class and old nobility vacationing in the area and without their patronage, Viges will see his beloved town disappear.

Second, the Baron’s cousin, Lord Rugen, has left his estate to overgrow and devalue while the grounds and manor are beset by scavengers and squatters. As his guardian, the Baron is ultimately responsible for Rugen’s actions which frequently include drink-fueled escapades across the country, chasing all manner of women and pass time. These matters vex the Baron deeply and he has been looking to hire adventurers that will not be missed if the trouble turns out to be more serious than he suspects. In truth, it is consummate conman and ne’er-do-well Solomon Ostler who has hired miners to dig up the earth below Rugen’s manor, as he has it on (flimsy) authority that an ore contained in veins below has magical properties. He is always chasing the next supposedly magical artifact, solution, or item in order to exploit the public into buying his nostrums.

So far the Baron has hired two people, Fosca Boutonnierre and Chaucer, a wizard and detective team from Triskellian who are known to occasionally contract with the Dunwasser Academy. Fosca, for all her magical talents, is a bit of a paranoid wreck and acts as a foil for the cynical but calm Chaucer. They have been tasked with investigating both of the Baron’s problems, but after some discussion amongst themselves they have decided that it would be best to hire on more people to help them. Fosca insists that the conspirators at the root of these problems will likely have a shadowy army ready to silence them once they get too close.

Strange reports of an oversized foreign creature lurking in the inn have also been circulating around town. Enter Vostok Mir, a nomadic warrior from Xi Yeren whose exile has brought him here after a great deal of time spent wandering and formulating a plan to regain his honor and glory. Unfortunately, the honest brute was swept up in conman Solomon Ostler’s ruses and aphorisms and has agreed to work for him; to gather a small force and investigate the Tomb to find the “magical artifacts and recipes” therein, which Ostler hopes to use to make more of his esteemed products. He hopes no one finds out about

his involvement with Lord Rugen's manor, and hasn't told Vostok anything about it.

So, with the goals of nobles, conmen, and ancient alchemists coming to a head, with the fate of a town's livelihood in the balance, any outcome is possible. It is exactly at this time that our Player-Characters find their way into Omigre-Haudie, bordering the mountains that touch the Broken Coast.

Getting the Players Involved

In order to "hook" your Player-Characters into this plot, there has to be something that would involve the players in the upcoming events. Get to know your player's Characters, and their motivations. Here are some suggested hooks:

- Is one or more of your PCs nobility? They may know Baron Talon Viges personally, and have heard of his plight. Favors are valuable between the blooded families, and dealing with another noble's problem could shrewdly acquire some future boon.
- Are any of your PCs of a criminal bent? They may know of Solomon Ostler by the tell-tale reek of his potions, or they may have worked for him before. Perhaps one of them owes the other for a job. Anyone who knows him knows that trouble follows him.
- Curious or academic PCs may have heard of the legend of Natuche the Most Terrible and her ominous tomb. They would know that it is unexplored, at least by anyone living, and they may be convinced to finally map it out.

A Bucolic Beginning

After several days' travel the Player-Characters arrive at the town of Omigre-Haudie in the foothills of the Rothos Mountains. This town, with its lovely vistas, nearby mines, and famous hot springs, is as close to a resort community as one can find in a feudal society.

Omigre-Haudie, a community of some thirty-five hundred souls, seems utopian on the surface. The inhabitants are happy, healthy, and make a good living. The local Baron, Talon Viges, rules wisely and promotes commerce, and even the peasants who work the terraced fields below the town sing in their work. No one is unclothed or homeless, and even a stranger can get a bed and a meal for an honest day's work.

Below the surface, Omigre-Haudie is still utopian, but with a harsh edge. Baron Viges has no time for justice and all criminals are punished harshly. Misdemeanors are punished with two days to two

weeks in the stocks, while serious crimes are met with torture in Viges' own dungeons. Viges has no place in his town for those who might endanger its economy, since it is from Omigre-Haudie's wealth that he draws his own.

The town is far from the center of Doloreaux power and escapes their notice, except for those family members who make twice-yearly trips to the hot springs. Viges is unwavering in his loyalty to the Doloreaux. On their way into town, the players encounter the first major NPC in whose employ they may choose to find themselves.

Three Avenues, One Way to Go

The following introduces the major NPCs who may hire the players.

A Wolf in Creep's Clothing

While traveling down the main road to Omigre-Haudie, the players spot a crowd of about 30 locals gathered around what looks like a traveling merchant's wagon. When they get closer, they see that a small stage has been set up. On the stage is a tall male canine wearing a red cloak and feathered hat. This is Solomon Ostler. He's speaking in a loud voice, and seems to be telling a story. Written on the side of the caravan are the words "Lord Master Solomon Ostler, explorer extraordinaire, speaks tonight of his glorious victory against the black enemy of All Folk, ill-health." After describing the scene, read the bold text below out loud to your players.

"...and so, with the Temple of the Grand Black Priest behind me, I rowed seventy miles through raging winds, beset by sirens, mermaids, and krakens! The way was fearful, and my stout heart faint, but I knew that only the most courageous could win through the Foul Straits of Mortal Doom to the Fabled Isle of the Garden of Golden Mists! The terrible yawning gulf of the deep clutched at my oars, but conquered me not..."

As the players pass by, Ostler points at them and shouts...

"Good sirs! (or madams) Please, tarry a moment, and hear the astounding conclusion to my tale, for it may well be of eternal benefit to you."

If the players don't stop to listen, proceed on to the next encounter, An Adventurous Proposition. Otherwise, read the following...

The canine, who introduces himself as Lord Master Solomon Ostler, describes a journey he undertook many years ago to a magic island. On this island he found, among many other fantastic things like sausage bushes and talking rocks, a tree from which grew

remarkable peaches. One bite of these astounding fruit would extend a mortal's life by decades.

The King of this marvelous island allowed Ostler to carry away a single peach from this tree. Rather than greedily devour the fruit for himself, Ostler claims that he applied his secret alchemical knowledge and created an elixir that distilled "the peach's own essence of eternity, and through the well-known principles of increased potency through dilution, made a great quantity of this most wondrous nectar!" He is willing to sell small bottles of this elixir to those worthies "who promise not to misuse its precious gift of life."

Ostler opens up the back of the caravan, revealing a shelf full of little green bottles, and asks who will be the first to buy.

The players are probably smart enough to realize that the stuff in the bottles has no effect at all, but let them buy as much as they like. If they decide not to buy anything and keep moving, skip ahead to the next encounter.

If they ask about the elixir, Ostler will speak in generalities about amazing processes of distillation. The information below is for the Host's own knowledge only.

Each bottle costs 1 denar. They contain mostly water, an ounce of gin, 3 tablespoons of mustard, and a good measure of peach juice. Each bottle contains enough for a week's worth of daily doses. Ostler claims that a single dose will have life-long positive effects.

Whether or not the players buy any of this bitter tasting stuff, Ostler approaches them as they are about to leave, and asks them if they would be interested in "gainful employment."

If any of the players express interest, he draws them aside and says that he is in search of a great treasure. However, he fears that this is too public a place to discuss the details, and asks to meet them in one hour at a local tavern, the Dancing Saurian. If they agree, go on to the next encounter. If they refuse, go on to An Adventurous Proposition regardless.

An Adventurous Proposition

This part of the adventure is set in a local tavern. If the players passed by Ostler in the first part, then this episode takes place the very next time they arrive in a tavern. If they refused Ostler's offer of employment at the end of the last episode, they will receive a different offer rather than the following conversation with Ostler.

Once the players arrive at the Dancing Saurian, they are summoned over to a corner table by Ostler, who is sitting with a rat (His helper, Meeks.) Assuming they sit down, he smiles toothily at them, and asks them if they would be interested in an "adventurous proposition." If

they say yes, read the following bold text. If they refuse, or ignore him all together, Ostler frowns and leaves. Skip ahead to the meeting with Vostok.

"Ah, excellent! I knew you to be heroes as soon as I clapped eyes on you! Gentle sirs, I ask you not to speak of what I am about to say to anyone else..." He looks around the tavern, as if seeking spies, then leans toward you and lowers his voice. **"I have found the last resting place of a magnificent treasure... the fabled Tomb of Natuche The Most Terrible! The map was given to me from the hand of One-Eared Jovario, his first mate, as he lay mortally wounded on the field of battle. However, I fear that Meeks and I alone will be unable to procure this treasure and still defend against treachery. I offer you a share of the treasure... 20 percent split amongst you... if you will investigate and bring back what you find. Or, if you prefer, I might sell you the map, for the trifling sum of 120 aureals. To which are you agreed?"**

If they argue about their share of the treasure, Ostler will go as high as a third share for the party if they are able to succeed in a test of Mind & Negotiation. If they wish to buy it, he can be bargained down to as low as 75 aureals, again only after participating in a dice contest with him. In reality, Ostler is hoping the players will unknowingly assist him in his search for "Stones of Philosophy", a supposed alchemical mineral that remains in the tomb, or at least the recipe for them does. He intends to use it the same way he has used his peach juice – as a kind of snake oil.

If the players refuse to have anything to do with Ostler at any point but have already entered the tavern, they will be approached by Vostok Mir. If they have not entered the tavern and continued on the road to Omigre-Haudie after encountering Ostler on the road, the players are free to explore the town on their own. Refer to the section entitled Rumors.

The Serpent's Call

Vostok Mir has long been in exile from his native land. The victim of betrayal by his clansmen, he has been forced to make a living here on Calabria, at least until he can muster a force strong enough to take back that which was once his. The players may end up meeting him if they follow the rumors in the next section, or he may just be one of the more interesting patrons they come across while looking for work in the tavern. He is coiled around a table, looking quite out of place on this eastern island where his species is so rare. He mostly keeps to himself, at least, until he sees the players. They have just the right bearing to him that leads him to believe they could be the right men or women for the job. He speaks with a peculiar accent, his imposing size captivating during conversation.

Questions the Players may ask Vostok Mir

“Who are you and what do you do?”

“I am Vostok Mir. I am descended from a proud tradition, but for now I do work for the people of this land. You all look quite strong. I would be foolish not to search for allies amongst your number.”

“What do you need us for?”

“As a mercenary, many seek my services but one recently has given me a most difficult job. I am to investigate a tomb, but I know not what secrets lie within. I...” He looks away briefly, “I am charged with putting an end to the rumors of haunting surrounding this tomb. Perhaps if some amongst you chose to accompany me, we could share in the spoils?”

“Where are you from?”

“Across the ocean to the west, I was a member of a proud clan of honorable and nomadic warriors. You seem quite capable yourselves, so my faith in your abilities will not be misplaced, I hope? I have too often been forced to deal with violence from cowards; hopefully whatever this job I was hired to do involves little more than dusting off an old cave...”

Vostok has in truth been hired by the fast-talking Ostler to investigate the tombs and put down any bandits or, heaven forbid, monsters that have caused the haunting rumors to get so out of hand. He is also charged with bringing back anything of “esoteric import”; what that means is anyone’s guess. If the players side with this honest man they will in turn be working for the dishonest Ostler by proxy. Vostok may be large and quite powerful, but he is doubtful that he could clear a haunted tomb in a foreign land by himself. After all, the ways and wiles of the Calabrians are quite peculiar. If the players decide to help the snake and are successful, they will receive half of what the Baron has offered him – six aureals, to split amongst themselves. He is not a liar and in fact speaks in a very forthright fashion, so he will be happy to inform the players who have hired him without requiring an Inquiry roll on their part. Consider spilling this information halfway through their trip to the Tomb, so that they will be in too deep to back out.

Rumors

However the adventurers come to Omigre-Haudie they will find nothing of particular interest to them unless they’re willing to really hit the streets. There are no jobs beyond maintenance and guard posts at nearby riverside and hot springs resorts or working for tavern keepers unless the characters search. Some of

the rumors are red herrings, some are vague and some relate to jobs, but most will point the way towards the high peak to the north of the town, Mont Arlotte. If the players engage and get one success in vague, general gossip with a roll of Mind & Gossip, roll 1d10 and give them a vague rumor listed below. If they get two or more successes roll 1d10 and give them one of the more specific rumors.

Vague Rumors, Jobs, and Red Herrings

1. A mercenary from a foreign land has arrived seeking employment. The Baron has been hiring mercenaries of all sorts at the best rates in all of Doloreaux holdings, so perhaps this is what drew the mercenary here.
2. Vaden, an old archeologist (a bat), remembers a monolith on Mont Arlotte and remembers there used to be stories about the peak being haunted, but at his age he can no longer remember those stories.
3. A traveler by the name of Agramant (actually an incognito Doloreaux dilettante) claims that Mont Arlotte is haunted, and that the locals have the sense to stay away from it.
4. Seignour, a swashbuckling boar, has come here that he might never again see the terrible ocean. He is silent as to why, saying only that his ship and the souls of his crew are lost.
5. A tired guard standing at the town gates explains that an out of town investigator has been hired by the Baron and will have the towns troubles wrapped up before you can say denar, unless someone enterprising can beat him to the punch.
6. Lyle, the keeper of the tavern “The Pleasure Palace”, claims that his sybaritic inn is a favorite of the Doloreaux, who travel to it twice a year incognito.
7. The scholars Octave and Eglantine are looking for workers to help them penetrate ruins on Mont Arlotte. They will pay very well.
8. The town guard is short of men and is hiring at very good rates.
9. In passing a dark alley, a voice is heard to murmur, “Wipe them out?” Another, deeper voice responds, “All of them.” There is then the sound of a door opening and then closing again. The alley is empty and there are a half-dozen doors which open onto it.
10. A wild eyed vole woman in wizard’s attire beseeches the heroes to watch the shadows for

the hands of the untrustworthy, for they are behind every disaster and wrongdoing!

Rumors About Stones of Philosophy and the Mont Arlotte Cordon

1. An old ranger, Gaetan (a coyote) recalls scouting out Mont Arlotte for new hot springs. He remembers seeing a monolith inscribed with the legend "Here lies Natuche the Most Terrible."
2. Thierry, a seller of trinkets, shows a bronze seal which he claims is from the tomb of Natuche the Most Terrible, on Mont Arlotte. In weaving his story he claims that Natuche had created a mineral called "Stones of Philosophy" with which inanimate objects could be brought to life.
"That's what they say. Now surely you'll buy this lovely seal, or if nothing else pay me for the tale!"
3. The notorious town gossip, Masselin (an ape coachman for a local noble), reports that the tomb of Natuche the Most Terrible is located on Mont Arlotte. But none dare go there, as the place is haunted—nay, *cursed*—and that the place is deadly, since no tomb raiders have ever returned alive from it.
4. Harrietta the Scholar claims she once possessed a manuscript which pointed out Natuche's tomb as the resting place for something called "Stones of Philosophy", which was used in ancient times to create armies of golems.
5. Campbell, a young guard employed by a local merchant, remembers seeing city guardsmen climbing the high peak.
6. A town official named Burcet states that climbing Mont Arlotte is forbidden by Baron Vegers because of the danger of mudslides.
7. Grenville, a member of the town guard, complains about the waste of his time cordoning off Mont Arlotte to which no one would travel anyway since it's haunted. "Dang job" gives him the creeps because he keeps looking over his shoulder at the mountain, and it feels like the mountain's looking back.
8. A porcupine innkeeper, Elliot, confirms that Mont Arlotte is off-limits to travelers. He doesn't know why.
9. A wealthy wolf merchant, by the name of Javier, claims that Talon Vegers is doing him a favor and keeping people off Mont Arlotte while his people search for a place to put a Doloreaux dacha.
10. A badly bruised skunk wanders in to town. His name is Armand and he claims he was set upon

by raiders who came from Mont Arlotte. They took him unawares because they were disguised in the uniforms of the town guard.

The Host is welcome to expand on these rumors as desired. Even some of the red herrings may instead be used as adventure seeds. Some of the Vague Rumors can lead to employment directly, such as the rumors about the foreign mercenary, Vostok, and the investigator hired by the Baron seeking able men. Others tie in together — there is a Doloreaux in town pursued by five would-be assassins. They are petty thugs whose idea of a subtle plan is a frontal assault on Agramant and his plainclothes bodyguards. The plan is doomed to fail, but the Host could always make something more of it if desired.

Employment with the town guard or with the Baron himself will lead directly to the mysterious tomb on the high peak or to the Baron's derelict manor to investigate the odd occurrences there. The players may decide which job to pursue first. If they are set on exploring the tomb first, introduce them to two other people employed by the Baron. That's right, based on the path the heroes take, they will encounter different NPCs, meaning this adventure could be run twice, thrice, or more and follow a unique path each time with different groups of players.

Meet Your New Coworkers

As mentioned in the prologue, Fosca and Chaucer are an oddly paired team of freelancers hired by Vegers to look into the matter of the Tomb. They each lend a very specific area of knowledge and skills to the effort. Fosca, tawny-furred vole, is a known conspiracy theorist and beholden to the Dunwasser college. She supplements her magical studies with reports of supposed secret organizations that are usually just fabricated in her own mind. Chaucer on the other hand, a dour panther in wrinkled common clothing, is much more down to earth; he doesn't see a conspiring organization behind anything in particular, but he has dealt first hand with plenty of the criminal element.

They have pulled together all the stories of "Stones of Philosophy" from the surrounding area and tied them together with the tomb of Natuche the Most Terrible. Fosca is eager to believe this mythical alchemical substance really exists, and that the formula for their manufacture must lie in Natuche's catacombs. Chaucer however suspects that he is chasing bandits making a fuss in a cave system they have easily turned into their hideout. Regardless of which of them is closer to the truth, they are now in a position where they need to hire some muscle to explore the Tomb at the

Baron's insistence. History records no successful tomb entries by raiders or other persons. Viges does not wish to send in his own troops because they too have heard that Mont Arlotte is haunted and asking them to penetrate the tomb would draw unwanted attention to his endeavors. Thus, outsiders like Fosca and Chaucer, as well as the players, are the perfect hirelings. They are, after all, expendable.

Questions the Players May Ask Fosca and Chaucer

The Baron more or less demands that the players cooperate with these individuals, so it would behoove them to ask a few questions if they're going to be spelunking into a mountain together.

“Who are you and what do you do?”

“I’m Chaucer, and there’s little I don’t do. I find people, I deal with bandits, and I deal justice in the utmost, wherever possible.

“You may call me Fosca; I am pleased to make your acquaintance. I study elementalism and occasionally take up contracts to fund my schooling... That is why you find me here.”

“What do you know about the Tomb?”

Fosca answers, “The Tomb could be anything, as it is easily over a thousand years in age. No one has come back alive from an expedition, well... Ever. Anyone could be behind this... From the Doloreaux nobles to the merchants of Triskellian, or the Invisible Hand of the Invisible Order!”

Chaucer adds, “Guild. It’s Invisible Guild. And if there is a conspiracy here, we’ll find it. It’s probably just some bandits. Ghosts are a possibility, but there’s nothing we won’t be able to handle... Worst case scenario – how fast can you folks run?”

The Tomb on Mont Arlotte

Town guardsmen have cordoned off Mont Arlotte for the time being and the only way people can get onto the mountain without harassment is to be in the employ of the Baron. If they are, they can easily take the direct path to the tomb. There are a few different routes onto the mountain for those who seek unauthorized access or are hired by unsavory characters.

From Town

This path is fairly direct but has virtually no cover and is closely watched. The town watch has an observation point and will dispatch ten men to stop anyone who approaches (this will leave six men in

reserve at the observation post). If not holding some seal or letter from the Baron, players will have to choose between fight or flight - or surrender. Nobles among them they may attempt to talk their way through with rolls of Will & Negotiation, but the Baron won’t take kindly to other nobles encroaching on his land without his say. Treat each guard as a Typical Horde as per *Ironclaw* p. 255.

From the Plains

A lengthy detour would allow a party to approach through rocky valleys coming up from the plains to the east of Omigre-Haudie, on the west side of the mountains. However, the party would soon find that some of the valleys are deep enough that views of the mountain are obscured, and for part of the way they would have to rely on dead-reckoning navigation. The route through the valleys has been anticipated, however, and there is a guard post with eight guards stationed at a point where the routes converge. The guards are not ready for action, though, and can be heard in a game of cards with a successful Mind & Observation test, with characters who have Listen as a racial sense able to roll their Species die. What the players do next is up to them. It will probably be more difficult to sneak past these guards if the players have joined forces with Vostok Mir, whose Gift of Giant makes him quite a bit larger than your average person. Because of this gift, anyone trying to observe him gains a bonus d12 to such a roll.

Out of the Wilderness

Four leagues through the hills to the west of Omigre-Haudie is a forested plateau. It can be reached in a full day’s march. The group could then turn and march to the high peak (another two leagues over mountainous terrain). This route has also been anticipated, and five guards watch over the region. There is plenty of cover in which to hide if a frontal encounter should take place, so be prepared for Hide, Search, and Chase tests. Again, the more people your players are allied with that they have brought along the more difficult sneaking will become. It only takes one low roller for the party to be betrayed by a misstep in some brush or a snapping twig.

Once on Mont Arlotte there still remains the matter of finding the tomb. A mountain is a big place on which to hide a tomb. The players may despair, but luck is with them. There is a cobblestone road leading directly to the tomb. The road can be found quickly with a roll of Mind & Searching and one success, after

which it can be followed up the mountain to the tomb. It should take no more than an hour.

Down Into The Mountain

The tomb itself is unguarded. The locals fear the curse so much that the only individuals willing to approach the tomb are out of town mercenaries, and in reality even bandits haven't taken over the mysterious chambers, a fact the Players should only discover after exploring. Fallen rocks and dead plant-life surround the opening, which is a gaping chasm that leads into the darkness. Make sure someone brought a torch; even the Gift of Nightvision won't be of any use in total darkness. Each room is intended to present the party with a different challenge or slice of the overall mystery surrounding the tomb. By the end they may have pieced things together, but there will be time to discuss who knows what during the denouement. Still, encourage your players to talk amongst each other while exploring, and give them the appropriate opportunities to do so.

Upper Level

There are two widely-separated entrances to the tomb; one of which is hard to find as it is covered by brush. Each entrance opens onto a tunnel. The two tunnels eventually intersect near the old welcoming hall, but any valuables have long since been looted. At that intersection there is a grand alcove in which there is a mural fresco of a distinguished and fearsome-looking old wolverine; his eyes blaze thanks to two strategically placed bits of mica. The background of the fresco shows a laboratory of some kind, with a great vault door opened on a room with many riches.

In the main tunnel there is a door in the right wall that leads to an old armory (its door battered down and everything rusted or stolen) and a hemispherical bath house, in the middle of which bubbles a large, warm, spring-fed pool.

The upper level has traces of a poisonous gas in its atmosphere. Fumes seeping up through the masonry from the magma deeper in the mountain fill the rooms in varying degrees of intensity. Sniffing out the poison is test of Mind & Observation with the appropriate Species die for characters with the Smell sense. The poison strength must be resisted by a roll of Body, Will & Endurance and a check is made every half hour to determine if anyone is weakened by the oppressive atmosphere. Failing the roll causes only fatigue at first but could eventually result in suffocation.

Living Quarters

The secondary tunnel (hidden from the outside) has a section along one wall where the masonry has been visibly disturbed. The bricks are in place but most of the mortar lies as powder on the floor. Pulling out the bricks reveals a secret passage.

The passage splits. The left branch leads to a dead end where the hallway has collapsed. Partially concealed by the rubble is the crushed skeleton of a squirrel. The right branch leads into living quarters, with the destroyed remains of a bed and shelves dotting the modest room. No one has lived here for centuries.

From the living quarters there are three passages. One leads to another rockfall (here there is a monkey skeleton in the rubble), and the other two lead to doors. One door opens up into a lab, the other into a hazy undertomb.

The secret crypt has a more concentrated poison gas. Lower the difficulty to detect it and raise the difficulty to resist it.

Lab

Beyond the door to the lab, the passage continues. It turns left and immediately one comes across the arrow-riddled corpse of a porcupine. Beyond his body lies the door into the octagonal room which is the laboratory.

The place is a mess. Smashed workbenches and shattered glass are strewn about. The floor presents a hazard to unshod feet, with sharp shards of crystal glittering on the floor. To the left as one enters is a large vault door, closed and locked. Across from it in three walls are three doors, all locked.

If the vault is opened, the three doors unlock and swing open with a frightening suddenness. Beyond those doors, however, lie nothing but three bare closets. When the vault door is closed it automatically locks, and with a grinding of chains the three doors slowly close and lock again.

The poison gas in the lab is more diffuse than in the rest of the secret crypt—it is equivalent to the upper level's vapors in strength.

Undertomb

The door into the undertomb is a great stone plug which due to a clever counterbalancing arrangement can be easily opened. The door pivots upward supported by several stout chains to reveal a flight of stairs down. At the foot of the stairs is another passageway. A short distance along the passageway is the mummified body of a large squirrel (probably 12 stone in life) pierced by several arrows shot from holes in the wall. The trap has been sprung, but another trap

is set in motion by stepping on the stones in the floor here—the door to the undertomb closes firmly, and resists all attempts to open it from this side.

The poison gas in the undertomb is strongest of all. The very air is hazy and smoky, and tastes gritty.

The passageway reaches a four-way intersection; in the center is a gruesome sight. A great iron jaw trap, once hidden in a circular groove in the floor, has been sprung, nearly biting in half a long-dead, unknown grave robber. His skeletal grimace is that of a feline. Moving beyond it is not a problem, but it does serve as a forceful reminder to be careful down here.

Shining a light in each direction reveals that each of the passages turns left after a short distance. The left passage leads to an empty storeroom. The passage straight ahead merely leads to a dead end, but before the turn is reached there is a pit trap—the floor is designed to tilt and precipitate its unfortunate victims onto a bed of spikes. Then, with their weight no longer pressing upon it the floor returns to equilibrium, sealing them in. A couple of skeletons already decorate the pit (a large coyote and a small shrew).

The passage to the right leads explorers deeper into the undertomb. Down the long passageway and across a broad, deep crack in the ground is a library. Its shelves are dusty with soot and earth and its tomes are long since ruined. There is a crack in the floor of the library as well, allowing the volcanic vapors to seep in. In a corner of the library a small table with a hooded crystal ball sits undisturbed. If the hood is removed and light falls upon one of the crystal balls, a second light flashes briefly in the crystal depths. Characters who succeed in a roll of Mind & Observation will feel a vibration carried through the stone at their feet.

A door leads out of the library and down another hallway; ancient stones have shifted and are diagonal in some places where they once sat flat. The hallway forks in three directions. To the right is nothing but storerooms with empty crates. Straight ahead is a great audience chamber, with dusty, rotted tapestries and a throne on a dais, its cushions befouled with ash. To the left from the library the passage ends in a locked steel door.

Crypt of Nautche

Beyond the steel door lies a great hall dominated by a stone sarcophagus. Disturbingly the sarcophagus has been shattered—and from all appearances just recently—smoke still rises from it. Another iron door on the far side of the crypt hangs by a hinge, and a gap big enough to admit a character of up to a Body of d8 has been created by the angle at which the door hangs. There are four other iron doors in the walls spaced

around the crypt. The poisonous atmosphere in the crypt is weaker than in the undertomb—treat it as the same concentration as in the secret crypt level described above.

Approximately thirty seconds after the last character has entered the room the iron door will swing shut with a clang, and lock itself again. The four remaining doors will all open to reveal armored figures with full-stone staves. They lurch into the room and noiselessly, wordlessly attack anyone that moves. Vostok Mir will be aghast at such unethical foreign sorcery, and retort with the vigor of his physical prowess. Fosca will likely flail and scream about whatever secret society she thinks constructed these things and put them here to silence her and the party for good. She might even start the encounter with the Afraid status and need to be rallied out of it., after which her elemental magic will be of aid in battle. Meanwhile, Chaucer will exhale his trademark grizzled sigh and support the Player-Characters however necessary.

Underground Work Areas

The first change in the corridor is the existence of another locked iron door, stuck unobtrusively in a wall as one rounds a corner. This leads into a vault, long ago cleaned out, its iron shelves hold only dust. Beyond the vault door is another corridor intersection. The left branch leads to a prison block—a guardroom and three vacant cells. The right branch leads towards the surface. The middle path leads to a work area, with huge cauldrons, pulleys and chains, and a huge anvil and forge.

Another heavy iron door, again locked, leads out of the workroom. The door is warm to the touch. Beyond are two rough-hewn tunnels festooned with chains and pulleys along their ceilings. Each leads down a considerable distance, ending in similar caverns. Light shines from deep cracks in the floor of the room. Issuing up from the cracks is extremely hot air. Large adamantine buckets suspended from strong chains are arranged neatly along one wall.

This room is a treasure in and of itself. It has been designed to draw magma directly out of the earth. The magma is unusually well-suited to magic use. It would take considerable experimentation to determine this, but whomever does the research will benefit from it.

Towards the Subsurface

The route out continues through a large dining hall and kitchen. The tunnel then zigzags towards the surface. It passes one final room, which appears to be a guardhouse complete with severely rusted armor and weaponry, before giving way to a natural tunnel. After a long walk the tunnel comes out high on the mountain

overlooking Omigre-Haudie. A curiosity—the tunnel's exit is choked with debris, but an exit has only recently been made, as scattered stones and clumps of earth will attest. Large animal prints are pressed into the rock as well. Mind & Academics plus dice from Animal Handling will discern that these are the prints of a destrier.

Back in Town

The adventurers may return to Omigre-Haudie however they choose. No guards will stop them. They may even choose not to (bringing the adventure to an early close). But by the time they reach the town there is some commotion. They need not even search far for it, for at the first inn within the palisade a huge destrier is hitched out front. It's not exactly a destrier, either. Close examination will reveal it to be a bronze destrier statue covered with tanned hide! Indeed, it must be a statue, the bronze glistens in the light from where it peeks between gaps in the hastily fastened hides. There is a shout from within the inn—someone shouting for service. The high pitched and strangely accented voice resonates outside and sounds quite angry.

Natuche the Most Terrible

The individual demanding faster service and more food is at the far table, a location from which she can watch the whole room. She's an unimpressive figure, a shrew just fewer than 15 hands tall, clad in dark cloak and burnished leather armor with high boots. It's clear she hasn't a clue how to interact with the mild-mannered citizenry. The (people who hired the players) are there with her, but after trying to get her to settle down she fires them on the spot. She has no need for their help anymore.

She is, of course, the owner of the destrier outside. She's angry and very hungry, and is literally throwing gold coins at the staff. They are consequently eager to please and to put up with her verbal abuse. Everyone is watching her but none have dared disturb her in her feasting. Woe to those who do!

If Natuche is undisturbed she will eat her fill (taking several hours), then mount up on her artificial Destrier, whereupon it will come to life and take her out of town. She will disappear from Omigre-Haudie, probably forever; an alchemist's work is never done, and she may run into the players the next time powerful reagents are the crux of an adventure.

If she IS disturbed, however, she won't take kindly to it. She will bare her teeth and invite the individual(s) disturbing her to do something obscenely biological. Persistence only gets threats from her.

"You fool! I'm Natuche the Alchemist! I could blast your bones to powder right where you stand!"

If someone dares provoke her further by continued interference there will be a terrible retribution. Also, if anyone refers to her as "Natuche the Most Terrible" there will be a terrible retribution.

A Retribution Most Terrible

"You have twisted my tail for the last time," growls Natuche, baring her teeth. She leaps to the table and throws her cloak back. At this point Natuche is initiating combat, or at least the players will think so. After initiative, her first action will be to attack. Holstered at her hips are small red and blue vials. The blue ones have little leather thongs looped through a glass grommet at the bottom. She sweeps a red vial off her right hip, a blue one off the left, sticks the neck of the red vial through the thong and tightens the loop with her teeth, all in a fluid motion that takes but three seconds. She draws her arm back to throw and cries, "You will all perish in flames!", and hurls the paired vials at the offending party. The vials break and the powders within mingle, and nothing happens.

If anyone cares to attack her, Natuche is now vulnerable. If not, she'll try it a second time, with the same result. With a cry of frustration she'll then remove her belt and toss all the vials attached thereon to the floor. The mingled powders this time manage to kick up a cloud of smoke, but nothing more impressive than that.

Dénouement

Natuche is beaten, with no fight necessary. She's an alchemist, but her fearsome weapons have had time over the centuries to lose their efficacy. Dispirited, she's easy to talk with for a while. Anyone who asks the right questions (and gets successes on a roll of Mind & Inquiry) can receive the following information:

The "tomb" is not a tomb, and in fact Natuche is irritated to hear it described as such. It was her master's underground facility until Natuche broke it. She accidentally set off an explosion that shifted part of the mountain, which split the ground and allowed volcanic vapors to seep into the complex. For that her master called her "the most terrible assistant in the world" and . . . well, she remembers nothing after that. Being called "Natuche the Most Terrible" was *not* her idea.

Her master was a most powerful and learned alchemist by the name of Daon, a wolverine who had studied the legend of Al-Akram, a sculptor in service to the fabled Autarchs whose works impressed even them, and who granted to him the secrets of alchemy so that

he might bring them to life. Whatever the origin of the story, these rocks work. Her steed attests to that.

Her master came from the Far West and to the West he has probably returned. Her top task is to hunt him down and have her revenge. She leaves tomorrow. She knows where some of his older workshops were and intends to trace him by his mark. She wears an amulet on her bosom, emblazoned with Daon's device (the same device as on the bronze trinket from the rumors section). Furthermore she can recognize Daon's distinctive handiwork in anything he may have left behind.

Alchemist? Yes she is, but only barely. Daon treated her like a servant rather than a student. What she learned she learned in spite of him rather than because of him. Revenge would surely be most sweet. Daon's almost certainly still alive, preserved in a similar manner as Natuche through exposure to the various alchemical experiments. As far as Natuche knows, he's immortal. And immoral!

On this anticlimactic note this half of the adventure is essentially finished. Natuche will depart into the deep mountains the next day and will probably never be seen again. It's conceivable that she would accept some fellow travelers, especially if they were to express indignation for her treatment at the hands of Daon. So what started as a search for Stones of Philosophy could become the opening for grand quests in the unknown depths of the Rothos Mountains, and even beyond the island of Calabria!

If Fosca accepts her frank retelling of events, she might be swayed to accompany her both to keep an eye on her and unravel the secrets of the Autarchs, who might be behind the shadowy organizations she sees everywhere. Of course, it's up to you whether or not her quest will actually lead to that. At this point, the world is open. The players may also want to come along, and Chaucer could be added to their party as an Ally as a Gift if the completion of this quest deserves such a reward. This could be the start of a grand new adventure, using the lore and characters introduced from Unearthed Alchemy.

Natuche's "tomb" is only one half of the mystery, however. If your players were hired by the Baron but have not yet been to his cousin's estate, now is the time to do so. If they were employed by Vostok Mir, consider having them approached by the Baron's guards to request their services. If they already worked with the Baron indirectly by cooperating with Chaucer and Fosca, they could be requested to assist in this additional matter as well. If they were employed instead by Solomon Ostler, they will find out that after all this he has been arrested thanks to the efforts of Chaucer. The Baron knows an opportunity when he

sees it. They can choose a week in the stocks, or they can lend him aid in the trouble with his cousin's estate...

What Lies Beneath Never Lies Long

This half of the adventure deals with the goings on at the estate of Baron Veges' cousin, Lord Rugen. If the players decided to come here first, this will be the first half of the adventure with the journey to the Tomb coming afterward. If they have decided to investigate Mont Arlotte first, turn to page 707.

The Baron Himself

This scene takes place entirely in Lord Veges's second dining room. Keep in mind there are several scenarios that could have brought the PCs here, and in their dealings the Baron may react to them differently. This is not the place he usually entertains this dining room is out of the way and discrete. It is sparsely but tastefully furnished. The centerpiece of the room is the long dining table. The head of the table is not set and all of the adventurers are seated at side chairs. The needs of each adventure are catered to exquisitely, both food and drink.

After several minutes, and a mug or two of ale, Baron Veges enters. He apologizes for the delay. With only the briefest courtesy (unless there are nobles in the party) he begins his story.

"It seems that my incompetent cousin, Lord Rugen has left his estate unattended and something untoward has happened. The villagers of Esse, which is nearby, are too scared to investigate and no news has been heard from my cousin's Warden, Chirek. As guardian of the Lord and his holdings it is my duty to investigate. Because of commitments elsewhere I cannot dispatch my people to the task. That is why I am hiring adventurers."

The Lord is the Baron's cousin, also a Boar. He is a lush and a womanizer. His obvious flaws have led to his social downfall. Reduced to a ward of his cousin, Bonham spent much of his time in Omigre-Haudie drinking away the allowance the Baron gives him, at least until his disappearance. In truth, he has drank and fondled his way cross-country to the city where all roads meet, Triskellian. What he's doing there is anyone's guess, and could be a seed to a new adventure following this one.

At a gesture from Veges, Doddlemire, an old boar and the Baron's steward, produces a map and a purse with traveling expenses. (Destriers are provided to any nobility in the party) The map, while not good, is sufficient to find Rugen's estate. Veges promises 5 denarii each for identifying the cause of trouble, and 1 aureal each for solving the problem.

Should the adventurers accept the Baron's proposition, and he will ask everyone individually, he will explain the additional conditions. Nothing in the house is to be harmed or removed. Any foul play or interlopers should be dealt with swiftly and in his name. Any booty of such action will belong to the adventurers. Should someone be occupying the house that person and their belongings should be brought to the Baron before being disposed of; dead or alive doesn't matter.

On further discussion (should the adventurers press the issue) Viges reveals that he has received a note from one of the villagers. Doddlemire brings the note at Viges's request. The note contains several symbols.

- ↳ **1 Success** with Mind & Academics or Supernatural will reveal the symbols to relate to death.
- ↳ **2 Successes** will reveal this to be a binding symbol.
- ↳ **3 Successes** will reveal the symbols to be from a lost school of magic.

Lord Viges keeps the note for himself, however.

If pressed about the location and importance of the estate (and a successful roll of Will & Inquiry) Viges will indicate that his cousin's lands are on the eastern edge of Doloreaux land. They are on the Avoirdupois border. The regional representative of the Avoirdupois has assured Viges that the difficulties are not their doing. Viges indicates that he believes them.

Two or three successes on a roll of Will & Inquiry Baron Viges knows the house is indeed haunted, and he knows it is not the Avoirdupois. Indeed he suspects it is a distraction to keep him from attending to other affairs, such the tomb on Mont Arlotte. Based on that he has decided to hire a solution rather than make one of his own. The report that his investigator (a dog who recently passed through Esse) sent back was inconclusive, only interesting enough to be intriguing.

The true antagonist in this match is either Natuche or Ostler, depending on who the player sided with or didn't side with. The manor isn't the actual goal, but rather is sitting on the actual goal. A vein of unique ore that was discovered under the manor is very special and serves some obscure magical purpose, and where there is some there may be much. In order to investigate this without being observed the manor and its surroundings must be cleared of prying eyes, ears and noses. This opponent did not count on the players and their companions.

Arrival at Esse

The village is the last stop before setting off to the manor. It is also the last civilization the players will see between Omigre-Haudie and their destination. Esse is a small village with only three buildings; three homes, a shrine, and a common house. It is charming enough, but for anyone other than those who live here it might be hard to eke out an existence in this remote landscape. The village is small so there are few people and fewer places to visit. The only interesting buildings the players may find themselves in are the shrine and the common house. Joanna the mouse and her son Joshu run the common house; he cleans while she cooks. Muri tends the shrine, performs services, and lives there.

If the players are traveling with Vostok Mir or Chaucer and Fosca at this point, their reactions to this little hamlet will be as follows. Vostok is at ease in the smaller town, but his interactions with the locals will be penalized by his strange accent and clumsy grasp of Calabrese. If the players want him to assist in any social rolls, they should be wary; he has few social dice and his verbal opponents will gain a bonus to decline his negotiations, and if a helper botches then the whole task fails.

Meanwhile, Chaucer is a natural at detective work, so he may prove an asset if the Player-Characters decide to question the locals. Fosca will be somewhat of liability because of her insistence that some evil is bubbling below the surface of this quiet village. She mumbles constantly that they should watch their backs, and that any of these supposedly "harmless" small-town citizens could be the leader of a cult or an organization otherwise beholden to conspiratorial masters.

Joshu

A very large mouse, and the bus boy at the common house, Joshu is exuberant and excited to see the adventurers. Hungry for knowledge of the world he will press the players for information from beyond the village. Joshu also frightens easily and will run from anything he does not wish to deal with. This includes any discussion of the Manor or his friend Alphonse. Though Joshu does not like talking about things he is frightened of he does let things slip. This tends to lead to uncomfortable situations for him, but more information for the players. Despite his large size, he is inexplicably terrified by Vostok's presence if the players have him amongst their ranks.

Joanna

Joanna the Mouse is Joshu's mother. Unless provoked she will not come out of the kitchen. She is intensely proud and protective of her son. Despite her diminutive size, she can intimidate even the most rowdy crowd when her son (or her inn) is threatened.

Muri

Muri, an elderly Badger, keeps a small shrine to S'allumer and conducts services at sunrise and special occasions. While she is a devoted clergywoman to S'allumer, she is not a spell-caster. She knows all the local farmers, Chirek and has even spoken with Vegers. Aware of the situation with Lord Rugen, she acts as leader of the villagers in case of trouble. She is likely the only person who will know more about what has happened to Rugen and his estate.

The Common House

The common house has one large room with an earthen floor, a large table and a fireplace. There are several windows that are typically shuttered. The only door other than the main entrance goes to the kitchen and beyond that to Joanna and Joshu's home. Guests are not allowed in the kitchen.

The common room is the last public house before going to the Manor. This means the players might want to rest or take a meal here.

The Shrine

The shrine looks like the other two houses except for the sigil on the side and a large window facing the east. The window would be shuttered except during services. The first room of the house is the shrine itself. There are a few benches, and a small altar. A small lamp is kept burning at all time.

The Talk of the Town

By the time the players arrive, recent events have shaken the townspeople somewhat. They may hear hushed whispers between Joshu and Joanna while saying at the common house, and Muri will tell them everything she knows if they happen to ask her about anything strange happening around town lately.

Where is Alphonse?

Alphonse the skunk is a friend of Joshu's. He has been missing for almost two weeks. Muri believes that Alphonse went into the Manor never to return. The Manor is said to reek of skunk. No one has been brave enough to go near the Manor and find out. She has heard strange noises there after dark.

A Disturbance at the Cemetery

Behind the shrine is a small cemetery for the local and regional faithful. At first glance the cemetery looks normal. If the PCs choose to investigate they must use an appropriate skill to even determine that someone other than Muri was here. Examples include:

Mind & Searching plus dice from Digging will reveal someone has disturbed two graves.

Mind & Searching plus dice from Supernatural will reveal the earth has been magically moved.

As the Host, you have several options here. If your players are more combat minded, this could be the work of a third party, maybe even Natuche if her alchemy can bring things to life, to rally skeletons as combatants and slaves to dig up the earth beneath the manor. Alternatively, it could be that Ostler's men have been digging up more than just the Rugen's estate, as they suspect more of the valuable ore is embedded in natural deposits in the vicinity.

The Previous Outsider

Joshu tells of the last traveler to come through, a dog. The dog was unfriendly and bossy. He came in one night, ordered his food, slept and left the next morning. Joshu does not know where he went. He did notice that the dog was wearing leather armor and carried a sword. The dog actually works for Vegers, but he was killed investigating the manor.

The Manor

The manor is a day's walk from the village. Depending on how fast and capable they are, the players will get there around nightfall if they left at dawn. The manor can be seen from a nearby hill when approached from the west, it looms in a valley, completely derelict and seemingly forgotten. As the adventurers near the manor they may see the symbols on the walls or smell the skunk depending on their racial sense and success a roll of Mind & Observation.

The manor is a sprawling complex of rooms. There are only two entrances, the great door that leads to the main hall and a reinforced door in the rear that leads to the kitchen. Alphonse is staked to the main door, and surrounded by various mysterious symbols. The manor is made of stone and wood and is quite simple given how far it is from any major city. It is slightly overgrown with creeping ivy thanks to the lack of a regular gardener.

The interior of the manor is completely trashed. Wall hangings and rugs have been destroyed, and the tables are overturned. The kitchen has also been ransacked, and anything that may have been of value was stolen some time ago.

There is very little in the house other than the destroyed possessions of Bonham. However, the wily Ostler has had several underlings working in the dilapidated manor for some time, digging beneath the floorboards and into the earth to search for the rocks that have some alchemical purpose, or are said to. The Players may happen upon holes and ripped up floorboards, and there is any number of things that could have caused them. After spending long enough exploring the manor, the illegal diggers will return for another digging shift, only to find cause to wield their swords instead. Consider having them use their mattocks and other mining implements to attack, referring to the rules for Improvised weapons on *Ironclaw* p. 92. General scaling to the players' combat prowess is expected here; one or two typicals per PC, more if they have hired help like the mighty Vostok or Fosca and Chaucer with them.

The Symbols

A test of Mind & Supernatural with the appropriate bonus dice from gifts like Mystic will reveal that the symbols on the house are magic wards, designed to keep magical beings from trespassing into or out of the house.

Alphonse

Use Mind & Academics with the appropriate bonus dice from gifts like Doctor to realize the odd thing about Alphonse. Other than the fact that he is pinned to the manor door, he has no other wounds. The fur around his eyes and mouth are whiter than would be expected for a skunk, as if he were frightened to death.

The Ore

Mind & Searching will uncover another of the oddities in the house; a peculiar rock. At first glance the rock appears to be normal quartz. When seen in darkness, some of the embedded crystals glow with reddish light. The rock sits on a mantle between two silver candlesticks. Particularly intelligent players may connect the rock with the dug up sections of the manor's floor, and may even find evidence of the ore veins themselves.

Returning to the Baron

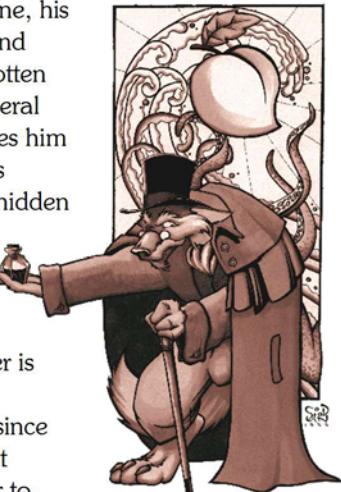
After the manor, the players may choose to return to the Baron, he will pay the promised one aureal each for dealing with the trouble, or 5 denarii for only information. Since the players dealt with the problem, he will send only a small force of town guards to clean up the mess undoubtedly left behind. After this he insists they investigate the Tomb on Mont Arlotte next, if they haven't already – he wants to know what's inside to put the populace's fears to rest. Turn to page 707 to begin the foray into the Tomb.

Dramatis Personae

What follows is a list of the relevant gaming information for the prominent NPCs in this adventure. Each write-up includes a brief description of the character, their rules and statistics, and their personal "list" of priorities, ranked in order of importance. As Game Host, when you are playing the role of an NPC, check the NPC's list of Motivations to see what their priorities are, to better help you decide how the character would behave.

Dr. Solomon Ostler

A middle-aged canine, his confident expression and silver tongue having gotten him (barely) out of several scrapes, if one examines him closely they can see his ragged ears and scars hidden partially by his light colored fur. Under his cloak he has hidden a wheel-lock pistol. Ostler is wanted for fraud in a number of towns, but since he is very careful about whom he sells his elixir to, the worst he can expect is a few lashes or a day in the stocks. He has a profound interest in finding a new avenue with which to sell people useless ointments and tinctures, hence his interest in Natuche's Tomb and the ore underneath the manor of the Baron's cousin. Although a man of few scruples, he's not evil.



Dr. Solomon Ostler	Elite Dog Charlatan (Major)
Goals	1. Survive. 2. Make Money. 3. Maintain appearance of legitimacy.
Traits	Body d6, Speed d6, Mind d10, Will d10 Dog d4 (Plains, Omnivore, Day) Charlatan d12
Skills	Academics d8 Dodge d4 Inquiry d4 Negotiation d8 Observation d8 Presence d6 Ranged Combat d6 Searching d10 Stealth d6
Gifts	Coward (bonus dodge & move when afraid) Danger Sense (bonus d12 to sense danger) Disguise (bonus d12 to impersonate) Forgery (bonus d12 to deal with fakes) Keen Ears (can hear faint sounds) Keen Nose (can detect faint smells) Oratory (bonus d12 for public speaking) Streetwise (bonus d12 to deal with criminals) Tracking (bonus d12 to follow trails)
Initiative	d12, d10, d6
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 3, Sprint d6, Run 15
Guard	Use "Guard" action for bonus d8 to all defenses
Aim	Use "Aim" action for bonus d8 to attack one target
Attack	Pistol @ Short 2d6 – Damage +2 Slaying Cane @ Close d6 – Damage +2 Weak
Counter	Cane @ Close d6 – Damage +2 Weak
Parry	Cane @ Close d6
Dodge	d6, d4
Soak	2d6
Loot	Leather Armor, Pistol, Cane (Club), dubious potionery

Meeks

A cunning rat, if a little greedy. He acts as muscle and intimidation for Ostler. He also drives the cart. Meeks wears dirty leather breeches and a patched cotton jacket. He hangs around in the background during Ostler's sales pitches, pointing out people with bulging purses, and watching for law officials. When driving the caravan, he keeps a rusty saber and a pistol under the seat.



Meeks

Elite Rat Coachman (Major)

Goals	1. Survive. 2. Make money by duping simpletons with Dr. Ostler.
Traits	Body d6, Speed d8, Mind d6, Will d4 Vole d8 (Shore, Omnivore, Night) Coachman d6
Skills	Dodge d6 Gossip d6 Inquiry d4 Melee Combat d6 Negotiation d4 Ranged Combat d6 Searching d6 Stealth d6
Gifts	Animal Handling (bonus d12 with animals, can rally them) Contortionist (bonus d12 to escape or squeeze through) Coward (bonus dodge & move when afraid) Geography (bonus d12 for geographical features) Keen Ears (can hear faint sounds) Survival (bonus d12 to survive in the wilderness) Teamster (bonus d12 to drive animal-powered vehicles)
Initiative	2d8
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 4, Sprint d8, Run 22
Attack	Shortsword @ Close 2d6 – Damage +1 Impaling Pistol @ Short d8, d6 – Damage +2 Slaying
Counter	Shortsword @ Close 2d6 – Damage +1 Impaling
Parry	Shortsword @ Close 2d6 – Damage +1
Dodge	d8, d6
Soak	2d6
Loot	Leather Armor, Shortsword, Pistol, large sack

Baron Talon Vegers

The Baron is an elderly and distinguished loyalist to the Doloreaux. Though not head of the household his holdings along the escarpment are both strategic and lucrative. These holdings include the River town of Esse, his "home". Additionally the Baron possesses keen political skills, a sharp wit and a sharper eye. A good judge of character he is liable to overlook social blunders with only mild admonitions. He is quite sociable and kind-mannered, though very aware of class distinctions. He guards his motives very closely.

Baron Talon Vegers	Elite Boar Diplomat (Major)
Goals	1. Survive. 2. Protect his holdings and his people.
Traits	Body d8, Speed d4, Mind d8, Will d6 Boar d6 (Forest, Omnivore, Twilight) Diplomat d8
Skills	Academics d6 Brawling d6 Deceit d8 Gossip d6 Inquiry d6 Leadership d8 Negotiation d8 Presence d6
Gifts	Bribery (bonus d12 to inquire about or make bribes) Charging Strike (X to sprint and attack as one action) Diplomacy (bonus d12 for long negotiations) Increased Trait: Body (Trait up!) Literacy (can read and write) Nobility (X to assert noble influence) Vengeful Fighter (bonus d12 to counter when Hurt, Injured or Afraid) Wealth (X to assert wealthy influence)
Initiative	d8, d4
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 3, Sprint d4, Run 16
Attack	Tusks @ Close d8, 2d6 – Damage +1 Impaling Include Boar species die if using Tactics
Dodge	d4
Soak	d8
Loot	Noble clothes, Signet Ring, Eyeglasses

Doddlemire

Typical Boar Servant (Major)

Goals	1. Survive. 2. Serve the Baron as required.
Traits	Body d10, Speed d4, Mind d8, Will d6 Boar d6 (Forest, Omnivore, Twilight) Servant d6
Skills	Academics d6 Craft d6 Dodge d6 Gossip d6 Inquiry d6 Negotiation d6 Observation d6
Gifts	Charging Strike (X to sprint and attack as one action) Etiquette (bonus d12 for manners) Increased Trait: Body (Trait up!) Low Profile (bonus d12 to not stick out in a crowd) Team Player (give allies bonus d12 in assist rolls) Vengeful Fighter (bonus d12 to counter when Hurt, Injured or Afraid)
Initiative	d8, d4
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 3, Sprint d4, Run 18
Attack	Tusks @ Close d8, 2d6 – Damage +1 Impaling Include Boar species die if using Tactics
Dodge	d6, d4
Soak	d8
Loot	Rich clothes, books, ink, scroll case

Doddlemire

Doddlemire is the Baron's seneschal, also a Boar. As such he is in charge of the business affairs of the Baron's households and lands while the Baron is away. Doddlemire is old and stoic and extremely loyal to the Baron. If pressed he is unaware of the Baron's motives though he is always up to date on the happenings in town.



Vostok Mir

Called the “Prince-in-Exile” in his native land, Vostok Mir is a gargantuan serpent from Xi Yeren, West of Zhongguo. His clan was comprised of nomadic warriors with a strict code of ethics. He has been involved in trading and mercenary work, but was eventually labeled as a bandit by local forces and was usurped by insidious members of his own clan. Now, exiled from the lands he once traveled, he seeks work to earn money and rebuild his status. Failing that, he seeks to recruit capable warriors to take back his tribe. For now, though, he is a mercenary of the highest order, commanding a great price and providing great results.

Vostok Mir		Elite Snake Doppelsöldner (Major)
Goals	1. Survive. 2. Regain control of tribe. 3. Acquire funds and people to help with Goal 2.	
Traits	Body d12, Speed d6, Mind d4, Will d6 Snake d6 (Forest, Carnivore, Day) Doppelsöldner d8	
Skills	Brawling d4 Climbing d6 Dodge d8 Melee Combat d10 Presence d8 Tactics d8	
Gifts	Armored Fighter (armor dice up one level) Contortionist (bonus d12 to escape or squeeze through) Counter-Tactics (defend against Tactics with Tactics) Fast Mover (move faster) Giant (Can strike one pace further, easier to spot) Increased Trait: Body x2 (Trait up!) Mob Fighter (Sweep to new target after incapacitation) Ophidian (Prehensile Tail, extra action “Stand Up”) Strength (bonus d8 with Melee, Brawl, Thrown Attacks) Resolve (include Will with Soak) Veteran (Aim and Guard bonus are d12)	
Initiative	d6, d4	
Movement	Stride 4, Dash 0*, Sprint d6, Run 28 *Burdened, Dash is 0	
Guard	Use “Guard” action for bonus d12 to all defenses	
Aim	Use “Aim” action for bonus d12 to attack one target	
Attack	Great Sword @ Close 3d12, d8 – Damage +3 Teeth @ Close 2d12, d6, d4 – Damage +1 Grapple	
Counter	Great Sword @ Close 3d12, d8 – Damage +3	
Parry	Great Sword @ Close 3d12, d8	
Dodge	d6, d4	
Soak	d12, d10, 3d6	
Loot	Great Sword, Chainmail, Gambeson	



Fosca Boutonnier

Involved in wizarding from an early age, this vole has a methodical approach to her work. Occasionally this causes her to get quite single-minded. Fascinated by the workings of the world, she became interested in conspiracies during her training at Dunwasser College and has begun to believe that Calabria, perhaps even the world, is secretly run by an ancient shadowy conspiracy. Or several. Since then she has blossomed into a full-blown conspiracy theorist, suspicious of every noble house, guild, religion, family, and organization in general... except for the Dunwasser Academy. Fosca doesn't often respond positively to people pointing out the problems with this.

Aside from this, she is generally a polite and gregarious person, and it is in fact possible to get along with her... as long as her strange beliefs can be tolerated.

Fosca Boutonnier Elite Vole Elementalist (Major)

Goals	1. Survive. 2. Reveal conspiracies, or at least stay one step ahead of them.
Traits	Body d6, Speed d8, Mind d8, Will d4 Vole d6 (Plains, Herbivore, Night) Elementalist d8
Skills	Academics d10 Gossip d8 Inquiry d6 Negotiation d6 Searching d8 Stealth d6 Supernatural d8
Gifts	Contortionist (bonus d12 to escape or squeeze through) Coward (bonus dodge & move when afraid) Danger Sense (bonus d12 to sense danger) Elementalist Apprentice (May ready elemental spells) Elementalist's Trappings: Star (Star Wizard!) Increased Trait: Speed (Trait up!) Insider with the Dunwasser Academy (for bonus d12) Literacy (can read and write) Research (bonus d12 to look things up)
Initiative	d12, 2d8
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 4, Sprint d8, Run 18
Ready	Elementalism – X to use Ready action to load a spell into hand or into Myrtle Wand/Dioptra Rod
Attack	Create Earth @ Long 2d6 – Damage +2 Critical Create Water @ Long d8, d6 – Damage +2 Critical
Counter	Dioptra Rod @ Close d6, d12 – Damage +2
Parry	Dioptra Rod @ Close d6, d12
Dodge	d8
Soak	d6, d4
Loot	Cloth Armor, Myrtle Wand, Dioptra Rod, Astrolabe Talisman, a journal full of crazed rambling



Chaucer

Chaucer is large and lean, but his work harrows him. His clothes are wrinkled and stained, his fur is out of order; he often looks as though he rolled out of bed and directly into a wheat thresher. As what is often called a "finder", he is dedicated with every fiber in his being to dole out his vision of justice, even if it conflicts with what he has been hired to do. He is frequently hired by contract to locate missings persons or obtain evidence for one noble house against another, but his sense of justice runs deeper than whatever he is being paid at a given time. If someone commits a crime, be they king or commoner, it is the duty of the just to hunt those criminals down and make them atone for their actions - at least, this is his view on matter.

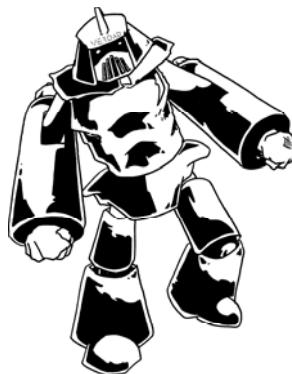
<i>Chaucer</i>	<i>Elite Panther Bounty-Hunter (Major)</i>
Goals	1. Survive. 2. Dole out justice to those who deserve it. 3. Make money in his profession.
Traits	Body d10, Speed d8, Mind d6, Will d6 Panther d4 (Forest, Carnivore, Night) Bounty-Hunter d10
Skills	Brawling d6 Dodge d8 Gossip d8 Inquiry d8 Melee Combat d10 Negotiation d6 Observation d6 Searching d8 Stealth d6
Gifts	Acrobat (acrobatic dash, extra 'stand up' action) Increased Trait: Body (Trait up!) Danger Sense (bonus d12 to sense danger) Literacy (can read and write) Low Profile (bonus d12 to not stick out in a crowd) Night Vision (poor lighting is good lighting) Resolve (include Will with Soak) Shadowing (bonus d12 to follow people) Streetwise (bonus d12 to deal with criminals) Tracking (bonus d12 to follow trails)
Initiative	d12, d8, d6
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 5, Sprint d8, Run 26
Attack	Mace @ Close 2d10 – Damage +2 Claws @ Close d10, d6, d4 – Damage +1 Critical
Counter	Mace @ Close 2d10 – Damage +2
Parry	Mace @ Close 2d10
Dodge	2d8
Soak	d10, d6
Loot	Leather Armor, Mace, backpack full of documents he calls "case files", tobacco, papers

Natuche the Most Terrible

Natuche is a woman out of time. Literally, she comes from the distant past after having been preserved by whatever combination of magic and alchemy that did the same to her master, Daos. She has only recently awoken when the PCs encounter her in the story, and will serve as a mysterious launching point for further adventures should they decide to help her track down her master.

She is a shrew of average height and appearance, and was but a mere servant in her previous life. She assisted Daos but only learned what she could teach herself, as her “mentor” taught her nothing. Her manner is brash and outspoken, at least until she gets her bearings.

Natuche		Elite Shrew Servant (Major)
Goals	1. Survive. 2. Enact retribution on Daos, her mentor.	
Traits	Body d6, Speed d8, Mind d10, Will d6 Vole d6 (Shore, Omnivore, Night) Servant d6	
Skills	Dodge d6 Gossip d6 Inquiry d4 Melee Combat d6 Negotiation d6 Presence d6 Throwing d6 Searching d6 Stealth d6	
Gifts	Etiquette (bonus d12 for manners) Increased Trait: Will (Trait up!) Keen Ears (can hear faint sounds) Literacy (can read and write) Low Profile (bonus d12 to not stick out in a crowd) Mathematics (bonus d12 when working with math) Strength (bonus d8 with Melee, Brawl, Thrown Attacks) Team Player (give allies bonus d12 in assist rolls) Venomous Bite (X after biting to make a Hurt target Sick)	
Initiative	d8, d10	
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 4, Sprint d8, Run 22	
Attack	Improvised @ Short 2d6, d8 – Damage +2 Weak	
Dodge	d8, d6	
Soak	2d6	
Loot	Leather Armor, lots of mysterious vials swirling with unknown liquids, out of date clothing	



Armored Golems

Animated beasts that seek to protect the defiled laboratory in which they were created. Long having forgotten their original master, they are incapable of speech or reason. They seek only to crush that which has entered their domain.

Armored Golems	Elite Golem Soldier (Major)
Goals	1. Destroy any trespassers.
Traits	Body d8, Speed d8, no Mind, no Will Golem d8 (Include with Endurance, Brawling, Observation) Soldier d8
Skills	Brawling d8 Dodge d8 Endurance d8 Observation d8 Presence d8 Searching d8
Gifts	Brawling Fighter (can counter with brawling) Bravery (X to negate Afraid) *Diehard (increase Soak when Hurt or Injured) Natural Armor (include Species with Soak) Increased Strength (bonus d12 with some attacks)
Initiative	d8
Movement	Stride 1, Dash 4, Sprint d8, Run 24
Attack	Pile-Driver Fist @ Close d12, 2d8 – Damage +1 Critical
Counter	Pile-Driver Fist @ Close d12, 2d8 – Damage +1 Critical
Dodge	2d8
Soak	2d8, +1d6 when Hurt*, +1d6 when Injured* Does not eat, sleep, breathe, or age At Dying Status, automatically becomes Dead
Rally	Exhaust Bravery to negate Afraid on self
Loot	1d8 Fragments of stone, Plate Armor



FURTHER ADVENTURES

The Ring-Faller

While wandering the streets of Triskellian, one of the Player-Characters (probably a greedy one, or at least one that doesn't "look too bright") finds a ring with a set jewel sitting in the street. When they try to pick it up, they bump heads with Giacomo, a grey fox who claims that he found the ring at the same time the PC did. He will insist that the ring is his, and that he found it first. If the PC concedes, Giacomo leaves with the ring.

If the PC counters that they "found it first", Giacomo will argue for a bit, until arriving at the idea of a compromise: the PC can keep the ring if they pay Giacomo half its value. This can either prompt a Mind & Craft vs. 3 to find its true value (see below), or they can go to a conveniently-close jewelry shop owned by Thorley the bear.

However, this is all just a scam. The ring is brass shined to look like gold, with a cheap resin bead instead of a stone, worth only one denar. Seeing through this sham requires a test of Mind & Craft vs. 3, and you must score at least 3 successes. (If you have the Gift of Forgery, you may include a bonus d12. And if you have a proper jewelry shop, you can claim a d8 situation bonus ... but the Ring-Faller's Scam is supposed to keep you out of such places.)

Giacomo has been "casing" the crowd and arranged to drop the ring in front of the PC most likely to fall for this scam (low Mind Trait, Personality of "Greedy," etc.). Giacomo will use his fast-talking skills to convince the PC to part with four denarii or more. (It takes at least 2 successes of Mind & Inquiry vs. Giacomo's rote to win this contest. Yes, Giacomo has done this so many times, he can do this scam by rote.) Thorley will corroborate Giacomo's story, as he gets half of whatever Giacomo makes. The scene of Giacomo's subterfuge and Thorley's exaggerated "appraisal" is a good opportunity for role-playing.

If the PC walks away with the ring, a week or so later it will begin to show its true value, by tarnishing and losing its luster. If they try to sell it at other jewelry shops, shop owners will easily see the ring as a false imitation. Depending on the PC, their reaction may vary from shrugging it off to blood-boiling rage.

A Jury of One's Peers

Alroy Doloreaux may be of noble blood, but he often fails himself with the dignity that befits the higher classes. Last night, he got caught in a drunken brawl inside the Golden Sun beerhall and dished out quite a bit of damage. Normally, the Constables would arrest him and press him into community service, but since Alroy is blooded, he is entitled to "high justice" and a court of his peers.

The PCs may become involved as mercenaries hired by the Doloreaux to escort Alroy from the jail in Triskellian to their capital at Bruges. They will be given a letter stamped with the House Doloreaux seal that entitles them to escort Alroy from the city. Travel by road is often eventful, given bad weather, assault by bandits, and other things you as the Game Host decide are appropriate.

As an additional complication, Mynogan de Bisclavret sees an opportunity to take advantage of Alroy's misfortune. His goal is to capture Alroy and ransom him to House Doloreaux. To do that, he has to get Alroy out of the PCs' custody. Of course, brute force will work, but that involves risk of life and limb, not to mention that other houses would take umbrage. A subtler technique is to steal or destroy the PC's letter — without it, they will have no franchise to act as Alroy's escorts, and that duty could only be filled by Alroy's "peers" ... such as Mynogan himself, a landed lord. Despite his proud nature, Mynogan may also try to bribe or otherwise influence the PCs to turn Alroy over to himself.

If your PCs are a combative lot, assume that Mynogan is a Wolf Cavalier Typical Leader (see "Menagerie" in Ironclaw, p. 255) with one Typical Horde per PC. On the open road, if the Players are nearing Bruges, he may be daring enough to try a mounted assault. If you want to use the included Mounted Combat rules, Mynogan would find jennets for himself and one or two others and would try to run the PCs down. Remember that Mynogan's goal is to apprehend Alroy with the minimum amount of force. The PCs will most likely be lower-classes and thus "beneath" Lord Mynogan, so he would give them small quarter.



The Mystery of the Coin Shavers

During the evening, a Journeyman of the Sailors Guild, Hawthorne the porcupine, pays a visit to one or more of the PCs. He has a letter from the Master of the Guild, empowering him to investigate one or more of the PCs for evidence of “coin-shaving”. The City of Triskellian, enfranchised by the Rinaldi estate, controls commerce by limiting the number of denarii in circulation. A coin-shaver is a counterfeiter who makes more coins by shaving off bits of true coin, then melts down the shavings into new dies.

Hawthorne is exploring a rumor that one of the PCs may be this shaver. This can be a good opportunity for role-playing – as Game Host, you should pick the PC who is accused to be the one for either the most comic value or the most plausibility. Hawthorne is a jovial sort, who keeps his cool and his sense of humor.

Turns out there have been a rash of shaved coins lately. The Minters Guild and the Sailors Guild are up in arms – the former because they have guaranteed the coins in circulation to be of a fixed value, and the latter because several of the foreign merchants are arguing for changes in the exchange rate. Hawthorne is one of many investigators calmly attempting to sort things out. There is a reward of six aureals for finding the culprits. If the PCs choose to investigate, they will find Hawthorne a willing ally. (He may or may not



make it clear that, as a Guildsman, he's entitled to three shares of the reward, whereas the PCs would each get one share.)

The forgeries are being created by an infernal device, a noisy contraption inside the basement of some building. The exact location is up to you, but it has to be powered by something. If you didn't use the windmill in the “Lost Heir of The Rinaldi” adventure, you could put the machine on the second floor, in place of the grindstones. Another location could be in Old Town, with a water-wheel in the canal. The designer of the machine, Doctor Tyndareus the ocelot, is an ex-apprentice of the Dunwasser Academy who found the plans for such a machine in a forgotten book. The resolution of the adventure depends on your Players. If they prefer diplomacy, the Doctor could try to reason with them, or even bribe them. If your Players prefer combat, the Doctor will hire mercenaries to deal with them, either to scare them off or to rub them out. If possible, the Minters Guild will have the machine destroyed and the plans for it burned.

The Monster of the Sewers

Normally, the loss of a few ne'er-do-wells is nothing to worry the Constabulary. But when their comrades come back with stories of dark monsters inhabiting the bowels of the city, such accusations must be taken seriously. And it becomes impossible to discount the rumors when a body of a beggar turns up mutilated at one of the flood gates.

The Player-Characters may be mercenaries hired by the Constables to help find the culprit behind the slaying. Unsavory, scofflaw PCs who have been arrested may be put in a press-gang and forced into the sewers to find out the source of the brutal killings!

The sewers of Triskellian are hundreds of years old, and accurate maps are hard to find, if non-existent. The subterranean complexes are pitch-black; without personal lighting, the only way to navigate is Echolocation. Rolls of Mind & Observation with Species dice from Listen or Smell (ugh!) may be called for, as well.

The source of the brutal murders is up to you. There could be a pack of rheumy-eyed, pallid mastiffs, as detailed on page 598 of this book, have made their home in the dark. Or this could be the work of a gang of thieves who, having found a secret way in and out of the city, have killed anyone who has found out about it. Maybe Lady Amalsand has found a way to direct her undead monstrosities into the tunnels under the city; see page 596 for the details on these foul creatures.

The Builders of the Shipyard Walls

The Constabulary has finally voted to extend the city walls around the Shipyards. While it may sound like a common-sense idea, it is not without controversy. The labor for such a large undertaking will cost a lot of money, unless slave-labor and press-gangs are used ... and the unskilled laborers and Stonecutters Guilds have very definite opinions on these issues. The wall must also be designed, and the consulting fees for engineers do not come cheaply.

The major Noble Houses are also opposed to the project, as they gain nothing by such walls being built, and it would only diminish their power to threaten the city. As the wall project is underway, the Houses will sabotage its construction. Carts bringing stone from the quarries will be waylaid. Workers will be beaten by "roving brigands", secret mercenaries in the employ of the Houses. If Recondite is still around, her magic can be contracted to start fires or unleash elementals, additional distractions in the building.

The Player-Characters may be contracted by the city to oversee the construction and put an end to these incidents. If Lystragones and his Pretender are still in power, then hiring the PCs to watch over the walls is an ideal distraction to keep them away from investigating the whereabouts of the true heir.

Alternatively, the Player-Characters may be hired by a Noble House as saboteurs. The mischief that your Players can cause is probably great and only limited by their imaginations. In this scenario, the PCs must be careful to not get caught by the Constabulary. They can expect no help from the Noble Houses, who will disavow any knowledge of such subversive activities.

Poachers on the Granvert

For years, Doloreaux farmers along the Granvert have been crossing the river under cover of darkness to cut a few good logs of hardwood. While the Bisclavret on the other side discourage this activity, they tend to turn a blind eye to it if the Doloreaux leave behind a bushel of roots, or take no more than they need. At most, a Doloreaux peasant who is caught will be given a day in the stocks and sent home. The poaching expeditions are very much an open secret in the area.

Of late the situation has polarized. Some Bisclavret foresters were found dead on the banks of the river, riddled with Doloreaux arrows. Soon after, a young Doloreaux farmer caught cutting Bisclavret wood was shot dead by a huntsman in revenge. A small border war might well erupt if the situation is not resolved.

Local landowners on both sides have armed their peasants, and some are drilling for battle in plain sight.

This situation has been engineered by a pair of enterprising merchants from the Armorer's Guild in Triskellian. They hope to generate a conflict, and make money by selling bows and spears to both sides. Players can discover this by talking to both sides involved in the dispute. Alternatively, one of the thugs hired to kill the foresters might drop some hints around the players. If the players are able to defuse the confrontation, and prove the merchants arranged the killings, they will be given the merchant's inventory as reward. This might well win them a few enemies in the guild.

The Tale of the Boastful Man

Braisleach Ua-Magairle may be the greatest warrior the Cell has ever known. Spears cannot stab him, swords cannot cut him, and magic cannot kill him. To match his fighting prowess, Braisleach has the greatest ego as well. The idea that someone else might be considered mightier than him will not sit well.

If your party of Player-Characters has performed any feats of note, Braisleach will eventually hear about it. Bothered that some "mee-ghooghysagh" could be thought of as a greater warrior than Braisleach Ua-Magairle will make the bile rise in his throat.

Eventually, Braisleach and his manservant, Miolasg the Fool, will leave the demesne of the Cell and hunt down the PCs. First Miolasg will defame the PCs and will deride their abilities. If a PC takes offense, Miolasg will challenge them to a fight – but in the name of his master, Braisleach. (And yes, in Phelan culture, that's the right of a fool, to challenge on behalf of a master.)

Braisleach's game statistics can be as fierce as you want them to be. One recommendation is to make him a Supernaut with the Atavisms of The Cry of a Hundred Souls, Inner Might, Invulnerable Hide, Reserves of Vitality, and Secrets of the Wilding Way.

This could be an excellent role-playing opportunity to see how your party reacts when a giant savage outlander shows up on their doorstep. Braisleach won't be satisfied until he's challenged every Player-Character in turn and seen them grovel before his feet. As Game Host, you can play up the comedic aspects of a fish out of water, as Braisleach and Miolasg display a disdain for all outlander customs and speak with their big mouths whatever is on their minds. (To complete the comedy, Braisleach could be hunted down and dragged back to his farm by his annoyed wife, Ban-Torrunn.)

The Lost Treasure of Gustafus

The infamous pirate Gustafus the Green was hanged in Port Spar twenty-one years ago. As the hangman pulled the fatal gallows lever, the unrepentant rat was heard to boastfully cry "My mute bones shall hold my secret forever!" No one knows what secret he referred to, though most naturally assumed the wily corsair had secreted a vast hoard of treasure in some hidden cave or island.

Since that day hundreds of "real" maps have been purchased from "former shipmates" of Gustafus. Many bold adventures have resulted, but not one has ended in the discovery of the fabled treasure hoard, or any other great secret. Still, rumors persist among the credulous and the hopeful that Gustafus' first mate, a mighty-thewed bear known to history as One-Eared Jovario, escaped from justice after learning the secret. He has been living in hiding ever since, on the run from Bisclavret and Rinaldi bounty hunters.

The adventurers, or perhaps their patron, have heard that a one-eared bear named Neant now runs a tavern in the free pirate town of Port L'Olonaise. He fits the description of Jovario to the letter, and is evidently quite wealthy. Perhaps he could be compelled to share the secret? Even if there is no treasure, Jovario himself is worth a fortune in bounty!

If the adventurers follow the trail, they will first have to find Port L'Olonaise; no mean feat considering the treacherous and labyrinthine nature of the Corsair Islands. Not even the Duke's own network of secret police are sure of its location.

The best place to find a guide might be the dingiest taverns of Thanon and Port Spar. However, these places are known to be favorite haunts of undercover Indicateur, and obvious inquiries will no doubt arouse their attention. Once they arrive at the grubby and salt-caked pirate town, finding Neant will be another challenge. His tavern is a meeting place for the chief pirates and scoundrels, and a hiding place for the most desperate refugees. The players will have to prove they are worthy of the information, either by way of a serious underworld reputation, through bribes and threats, or by simply searching high and low.

Having found Neant, they will have to determine whether or not he is really Jovario, and whether or not he has any secrets. Neant may be amused by these persistent seekers, and string them along. He might sell them fake maps, or promise a portion of the "treasure" if they undertake certain unsavory tasks for him. The adventurers might also choose to take a visit to Gustafus' remote abandoned fortress on the Quistonsee Coast. This will not avail them much. The tower is mostly ruined, and inhabited only by small

reptilian flyers. Ambitious sorts may elect to claim the tower as their own and resurrect the legacy of Gustafus. They might do well to heed the local tales of a strange glowing green figure seen through the upper windows of the tower on stormy nights!

What was Gustafus' secret? Does Neant really know it? Is the tower haunted by the restless ghost of the evil rat? Only you can decide. Perhaps he did have a treasure. Perhaps his secret was simply a scandalous social one - he was a noble-man in disguise. Or maybe he discovered a new civilization on his voyages. The choice rests with the game host.

The Tale of Martienne

While exploring or hunting far from their home village on a cold winter morning, the players hear a faint cry of pain. Upon investigation, they discover a middle-aged Bisclavret noble facedown in the snow. He has been badly injured by an unknown attacker, and a broken spear-haft protrudes from his side. He will not survive long without help.

The noble is conscious but delirious, and he will not respond to questions with anything more coherent than a moan. His scabbard is empty, and he is entirely unarmed. Lying in the snow next to him is a small iron chest, securely locked. If the players search him, they will be unable to find a key for this chest. They will find a small sack containing twenty denarii, however. His wounds are not immediately life-threatening, but he will most likely not survive without aid. (In game terms, he is Injured, Sick, and Fatigued.)

If one of the players has the skill to treat him, he will most likely live, but will not be rational until he has rested for a few days. They will have to make a litter to carry him to shelter, or construct one on the spot.

If the players are able to heal him, he will be grateful though very suspicious and secretive, especially when it comes to questions about the contents of the iron chest. His name is Martienne, and he will claim to be part of a Bisclavret diplomatic party that was traveling northward to the Keylljeyder. His party was camping for the night, when they were set upon by a pack of berserk skunk warriors. He will try to hire the players to guide him back to the Bisclavret holdings.

Of course, the players may simply decide to loot the poor fellow, or ignore him and leave him to fate. After all, he is clearly a Bisclavret. If they do so, and are able to break open the chest, they will find it contains a land treaty between the Bisclavret Duke and a Keylljeyder chieftain. The treaty permits the Bisclavret to build a mining outpost in the Rothos foothills at the north end of the Ruther River, in exchange for 100 slaves. It is



marked with the seal of the Bisclavret duke himself. The treaty may spark a tribal war with the Keylljeyder if it is brought to the attention of a chieftain.

Regardless of how the players deal with Martienne, within a few hours of their discovery of him a party of Screeberagh warriors will arrive on the scene. They will demand that the players turn Martienne and his box over to them, and will attack if they do not. It is up to game host to decide what motivation the cats have for pursuing Martienne.

The Movements of Unseen Hands

Whisper two words to all but the most confident of Bisclavret nobles, and you may be rewarded by the sight of an involuntary chill running down their spine. The words? "Invisible Guild."

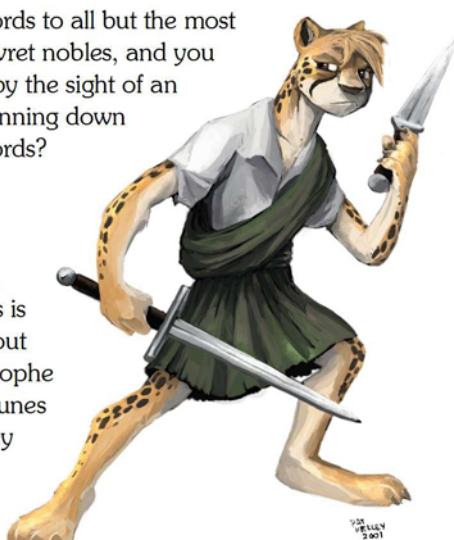
This shadowy network of thieves, cut throats, pirates, and revolutionaries is blamed for just about every single catastrophe that befalls the fortunes of the nobility. They are thought to be spies, working hand in glove with foreign

powers to undermine the power of the Bisclavret.

Their symbol, a crude circle and an X representing a skull and crossed bones, can be found daubed in alleys in any of the larger Bisclavret settlements. Paranoia about the Guild runs so high that more than one unwise youngster who painted the symbol in jest has found himself being questioned in a Harrowgate dungeon.

The Indicateur has recently captured a fairly senior member of the Guild, and managed to learn the name of his superior before the prisoner "found himself incapable of aiding their inquiries." His chief is named Gymari, a cruel cheetah. Though he is by no means one of the leaders of the Guild, Gymari is the most senior members the Indicateur has ever had a crack at. The players are hired (or ordered) to serve as undercover agents in the Duke's service. They are instructed to act as potential recruits for the Guild, and try to contact them in The Stumps, the Phelan settlement north of Harrowgate.

This adventure could well serve as the basis for a lengthy campaign, as the players follow false leads and rumors from town to town, rarely catching a glimpse of



their elusive quarry. More than once, their carefully prepared nets will close on air. However, the game host should make sure to temper their failures with the occasional success. Perhaps they manage to capture one of Gymari's lieutenants, who gives them one more clue to his whereabouts.

In the course of their investigations, they may uncover any number of nefarious schemes. Mass slave revolts, plots to blow up the Ducal palace, caches of powerful poison intended for barracks' wells, the creation of armies of undead monsters - nothing is too low for Gymari and his shadowy henchmen. It is up to the game host to decide whether these plots are real, or simply part of a clever ploy to distract attention from what may be the Guild's true goal: Frightening the fur off the nobility, and getting rich in the process.

Ghosts of Broken Tusk Ridge

The mine at Broken Tusk Ridge has been effectively shut down in recent days by a series of fatal and near fatal accidents. The miners refuse to return to work, saying that the mine is haunted. The owners of the mine offer a reward of ten aureals to anyone who can prove that the mine is safe, or failing that, deal with whatever malevolent force is afflicting the miners. Alternately, the players might be ordered to investigate the matter by the noble who owns the land.

The miners are correct about the haunting, to some degree. While following a seam, they broke into a series of tiny caves inhabited by weird insects and the like. They continued on, unaware that they had opened up a den of Koblynau (p. 609), evil humanoid creatures created as magical soldiers long ago. These foul creatures have spread out into the mine and claimed it as their own. The players will have to kill them to ensure the mine is safe. This adventure is likely to be combat heavy, but clever players might be able to lure the Koblynau into a trap, or seal them into a chamber. The spiteful little goblins are unable to tunnel through stone, and would be trapped once again.

In addition to the reward offered by the mine owners, the host might wish to allow the players to find a few minor items of treasure in the Koblynau cave.





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