

Symbaroum



Adventure Pack 2

TWO MYTHIC ADVENTURES FOR SYMBAROUM

Adventure Pack 2

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Symbaroum



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Thus spoke Aroaleta

*And the gaunts charged forth,
thirsting and hungering,
thousand and thousand again
through the night-colored woods*

*Clan-folks fell and perished,
trampled and booted,
women, men and spawns,
dead then drained and wolfed*

*But grand was Adina's bell,
flawless and vibrant,
filled by a different thirst,
it chimed the gaunts to ruin*



FEVER OF THE HUNT

1	INTRODUCTION	8
	Player Characters	8
	The Legend of the Wild Hunt	10
	Treasure Hunting Player Characters	11
2	THE LANDSCAPE	12
	Salindra's Hope	12
	Non-player Characters	15
3	EVENTS	21
	Developments	21
	Surrounding Factions	25
	Possible Endings	25



THE BELL TOLLS FOR KASTOR

4 INTRODUCTION

28

Player Characters	28
Background.....	30
Scholarly Matters	31

5 THE LANDSCAPE

35

The Town of Kastor.....	35
Non-player characters.....	38

6 EVENTS

45

A State of Emergency.....	45
Initial Investigations	45
Developments	46
Complications	49
Climax: In the Serpent's Lair	50

APPENDIX

7 APPENDIX

54

New Rules	54
Artifacts.....	56
Map: Salindra's Hope	58
Map: Kastor.....	60



Legends come alive...

... WITH THE TWO ADVENTURES featured in this book. The world of *Symbaroum* is built on layer upon layer of defining events. Some of these had an obvious and immediate effect on whole continents or regions, like the death of Alberetor; others were more limited but with a profound impact on the local area. However, there is no clear distinction between these two: depending on the outcome, what first appears as a local crisis can in the end lead to widespread death and destruction.

FEVER OF THE HUNT revolves around a conflict between two powerful forces of nature: a predatory winter elf, and an ancient forest spirit in the shape of a giant aboar. According to legend, the two forces clashed about three centuries ago; both were injured and the elf found shelter in an old Symbarian serpent temple. Since then the Elder Sow Gylta has been circling the site waiting for the battle to continue, and now humans are digging their way into the temple, threatening to provoke the winter elf into action. The final confrontation is drawing near...

The second adventure, *The Bell Tolls for Kastor*, is set on the plains along Davokar's southern edge. Again, there is an old legend that to some extent can explain what is happening – the tale of a greedy dragon and the artifact that made it possible for a witch, a chieftain and a sorcerer to defeat the beast and banish it to the Yonderworld. But in this case,

the most acute threat comes from a cult of monster worshippers who recently managed to outsmart and defeat a rival sorcerers' cult. The cultists have taken control of Kastor and are now brutally searching for information that can help them return their monstrous dragon lord from the world beyond.

In both these adventures, the characters can have a number of reasons for getting involved. The suggestions offered should be regarded as a point of departure and inspiration, but in the end each GM must adjust what is written to suit his or her gaming group. As in most roleplaying games, the motivation can always come from finding treasure and bashing monsters, but in the case of *Symbaroum* the characters' incentives can also be rooted in beliefs, morals and relations to powerful factions. How to handle this is not for us to say; in the end *Symbaroum* is what you and your friends want it to be.





Fever of the Hunt



The muddy hill stands in desolate majesty amidst the woodlands of Davokar. At its foot some hundred treasure hunters are crammed behind a simple palisade, seeking shelter from the dangers of the forest; wild animals, elves, and worse. You are met by muddy daythalers staggering towards their shacks for some sleep, while a few prospectors celebrate their findings on “the Main Street” – a couple of jerry-built houses with ostentatious exteriors in the middle of the camp.

Suddenly, the bellow of a wounded beast echoes through the woods. “Did the sow frighten you?” A rugged woman in a leather apron approaches, holding a repeating crossbow in her arms. Half her face is covered by a mask of blackened silver. “You better get used to it; the old lady refuses to die and keeps bothering us with her wailings.” She adjusts her mask and continues: “They call me Silvercheek. I am the one to see, if you are to purchase a claim. Come, this way.”

On the path to her office you pass a wooden pole sticking up from the clay, dressed in withered flowers. “There lays Salindra, hoping,” grins Silvercheek. Prayers have been carved into the rough wood, and the ground below is strewn with copper coins; meager offerings to appease the ancient forces of the forest, untamed and hungry ...

Introduction

DEEP INSIDE DAVOKAR, prospectors are digging for treasure in a hill of clay. Hoping to fulfil their dreams, they challenge the region's barbarian clan, Karohar, for whom the place is taboo. The player characters arrive as treasure hunters – or under the guise of being treasure hunters. Soon they realize that these dreamers cannot all be right about the area; the objects of their desires are too diverse to be found in the clay of a single hill, but they are seemingly blind to this obvious fact.

Great forces are in motion. The real threat to all of their lives comes from two directions. In the deep of the hill hides an ancient and bloodthirsty hunter, on the run from a past prey, an Elder Sow circling the hill, waiting to finish what she started. To both of them, the prospectors are mere tools in their age-long fight for supremacy in the region; a fight which after centuries of attacking and retreating now approaches its climax. The prelude to the final battle begins, as it often does, with a murder.

Fever of the Hunt is designed as a combination of an adventure landscapes and a classic adventure. In the spirit of the landscape, we present a setting (Salindra's Hope), some non-player characters with

their own ambitions (a few driven people in the treasure hunter's camp and, in the background, the two ancient forest gods), and a dramatic event (Handelo's murder) that sets the ball rolling. From there on, the players may do as they please.

There is also an aspect of classic adventure to *Fever of the Hunt*, as it follows a set chain of events comprised of 12 scenes. This event chain describes what happens if the player characters do NOT act to change its course. Sure, even with the players' involvement some outcomes are more likely than others (see Possible Endings, page 25), but it is important that the players feel that their actions have consequences, making their adventure unique.

Player Characters

THE ADVENTURE MAY be played using any characters with reason to travel to a perilous and remote place like Salindra's Hope, together as a group or on their own.

There can be several reasons for the characters to head for the digging site; and when they have arrived there are many ways to start the adventure (for suggestions, see Other reasons to visit Salindra's hope below).

AGENTS OF THE IRON PACT

The Iron Pact has placed an infiltrator in Salindra's Hope, to keep a watchful eye on the place and promptly learn if the situation grows into a threat against the surrounding area. The player characters can be sent as backup, since the infiltrator Semel hardly is a man of action.

If so, their mission is to make sure that the situation is not aggravated, that is, to maintain status

quo. The mission is worth 200 thaler; 250 with a passed *Persuasive* test. Half of the money is paid up front, the rest upon the player characters' return.

The leader of the group gains an additional 50 thaler for the road by the secretive employer in Thistle Hold; the veiled woman does not hide the fact that she is Ironsworn and that the player characters are acting on the Pact's behalf. She is, however, unwilling to reveal her identity.

To make sure that the player characters receive the rest of the payment, the employer allows them to choose one person in Thistle Hold to keep the money for them until the mission is completed. The leader also receives an iron ring, beautifully engraved, to show Semel in Salindra's Hope. The woman is Lysindra Goldengrasp, a former treasure hunter who has had a change of heart and realized what man's ventures into Davokar will cost them, and what it has cost already.

OTHER REASONS FOR VISITING SALINDRA'S HOPE

Here are a few alternative reasons for the player characters' presence. They might suit the players better than working for the Iron Pact. If the group is indeed hired by the Iron Pact, one or a few player characters could have additional motives for going to Salindra's Hope. Should that be the case this may complicate the main mission in interesting ways, without compromising the quest as a whole.

Consultants

Rumors of the place's eerie ability to influence one's senses have attracted the curiosity of some organization (most likely the Sun Church or Ordo Magica). Thus, they send reliable consultants to study the phenomenon, but with no expressed orders to intervene in any way. The player character receives 20 thaler in travel funds, for personal expenses, bribes, and so on.

Dreamers

Player characters with obsessive tendencies or personal goals of a kind that in theory might be hidden within a hill in the woods, could themselves be dreaming of the place and think it worth investigating.

Rescue mission

The meek and passionate dreamer Gidjabolgo has influential parents. His mother Felega is married to a wealthy merchant in Thistle Hold, and would pay fine silver to have her son brought back – with or without his approval. The last time she heard from him, he told her about a breakthrough in his treasure hunt and claimed Salindra's Hope to be

the next stop on his journey. Felega has offered a reward of 200 thaler, and another 100 if the player character succeeds with a *Persuasive* test during the negotiation. Haggling aside, the travel funds will be 50 thaler, for bribes and other expenses.

Sorcerer wanted

Player characters who are Black Cloaks, witch hunters or Templars have, while interrogating cultists, heard of a skilled sorcerer residing in the prospectors' camp. Or maybe one of the player characters is a sorcerer himself, and has heard the same rumors from his or her own network.

- If the player characters are witch hunters, they have heard about a Black Cloak named Neferena who went to Salindra's Hope and then vanished. Caution is advised!
- In the latter case, the characters either have a problem that, supposedly, only a sorcerer can solve, or one of them is in need of a dark master and rumors suggest that the sorcerer in the camp could prove to be just that.

Whatever their reason for seeking the sorcerer, the player characters know nothing about him, other than his supposed whereabouts and that the man called himself Vandal while in Thistle Hold (he no longer does, see Khenad/Handelo/Vandal among the Non-player Characters).

CAN THE CHARACTERS WIN?

The characters can finish the adventure in several different ways. The following are a number of possible endings favorable to the player characters.

- They prevent Sikander, a fallen Master of Ordo Magica, from reaching the Eternal Hunter. Although it merely delays the battle between the forest gods it is still a victory of sorts.
- They realize that the final battle would leave the Eternal Hunter corrupted by darkness, and convince him lay down arms.
- They realize that Gylta is about to get her own herd killed, and make her see the danger in fighting. Then she will not interfere with the Eternal Hunter, as they go their separate ways. If – and in that case, where – the two will meet again, is another story.
- They defeat the Eternal Hunter inside the Serpent Temple below the hill, or during the final battle – the Dance of Death – on top of the hill.
- They defeat Gylta, protector of the aboars; a mighty task, as she is constantly surrounded by members of the herd.



Let the
players decide

The player group should agree on what reason (or reasons) their characters have for visiting the site. Certain player characters may of course have their own highly personal incentives, but it is often helpful if the group settles on a common goal. The game master should present the possible reasons for the group's presence in Salindra's Hope, and let the players discuss what option suits them best.





The Legend of the Wild Hunt

The legend of the Wild Hunt is significant for the adventure's backstory. The legend is widely known in Davokar, in broad strokes, but also has a very specific meaning to the area surrounding Salindra's Hope. The two levels of the legend, general and specific, are briefly presented below, along with what it takes for the player characters to know of them.

LEGEND OF THE WILD HUNT (GENERAL):

Who: Player characters with the ability *Loremaster*.

In this scenario, the treasure hunter's outpost Salindra's Hope is located along the river Eanor, in the territory of clan Karohar. But the camp could be placed anywhere in Davokar, as long as it is reachable by water and surrounded by barbarians isolating the place with strict taboos.

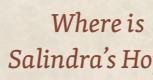
to define the nameless horrors that run rampant through the nights? There is also a moral version of the story, where people are hunted for having broken the witches' taboo.

THE LEGEND OF THE WILD HUNT (SPECIFIC TO THE ADVENTURE):

Who: The witch Girind, and player characters with the ability *Loremaster* who successfully passes a *Cunning* test.

The barbarians of Davokar tell different versions of the legend. It all centers on a hunter and his savage band of followers – sometimes a hunting god, other times a bloodthirsty winter elf or an undead Symbarian lord who even in death indulges in his favorite avocation: hunting. The hunter's prey is usually some other mythological creature, such as a lindworm, an aboar or another winter elf. Perhaps the tale is but a thrilling way to explain the storms that sometimes shake Davokar, forcing barbarians to cower in their huts or seek refuge in the halls of their chieftains; perhaps it is an attempt

In the region where the adventure takes place the myth actually has a historical basis. The witches of clan Karohar tell it as follows: the hunter is one of the ancient gods of Davokar, who has forsaken his duties as a shepherd for the more pleasurable activity of hunting. The local witches know him as the Eternal Hunter. His prey is the Elder Sow known as Glyta, the mighty protector of the region's aboars. Having tired of pursuing easy game, the Eternal Hunter decided to go after the Elder Sow. About three centuries ago they fought in this very place. The Eternal Hunter slaughtered the aboars and their piglets, and in turn the sow stomped and



Where is
Salindra's Hope?

gored his followers. It was a vicious battle, raging all over the region so that men, beasts, and even elves were killed or forced to flee for their lives. Eventually, the hunting god and the sow faced each other upon a muddy hill among the ruins of an old temple. The hunter was all but killed by the sow's terrible tusks and fled deep into the hill. Mad with lingering rage, the Elder Sow has circled the hill ever since, grunting and snorting, killing indiscriminately. And within the hill the wounded hunter still licks his wounds. Both await an opportunity to finish the battle.

The witches declared the hill and its surroundings taboo, hoping that the two gods would keep each other at bay and that none of them would gain the upper hand. Should that day come, it would be a bloody one for all living in the area – according to the prophecies spoken by the witches of Clan Karohar.

The Fever of the Hunt

The title of the adventure refers to the particular obsession linked to the clay hill and to the fierce battle between the two forest gods, the Elder Sow Gylta and the winter elf known as the Eternal Hunter.

The Fever of the Hunt is not a direct consequence of any ritual or power that these gods use. The obsession arose in the meeting between the powers and the limitless passion of the seekers, which on the slopes of the hill form a certain kind of alchemy. This is Davokar, and here one can experience curious, dreadful and wondrous things that seldom occur anywhere else. It is entirely up to the game master to make use of, or discard, this sort of effect in other places of the forests. In any case, upon the hill, under the special circumstances of the scenario, the Fever of the Hunt is very much a reality.

Treasure Hunting Player Characters

IT IS ENTIRELY possible for the player characters to purchase a claim for themselves and start digging, believing that there really are treasures hidden inside the hill. And there are indeed things to be found, if nothing that would secure their future.

Use the following guidelines for the player characters' activities in the claim.

- Setting up the claim and beginning to dig takes one day. No dice need to be rolled and no treasures can be found.
- After the first day, every full day of digging grants a roll against Vigilant. A successful roll grants one roll on table 1. If there are several player characters digging, they make separate rolls. If several characters dig for only part of the day, the game master lets them roll when the total time amounts to one day.
- If the roll against Vigilant results in 20, some disaster occurs. Roll 1D4:

1. River of mud: Muddy water bursts through the clay wall, hauling the digger along with it if he or she does not succeed with a Quick test. Failure does 1D6 damage, ignoring armor.

2. Collapse: A Quick test is needed not to avoid being buried. A digger drowning in the mud takes 1D4 damage each turn (ignoring armor), and it takes a Strong test to rescue him or her (both the buried one and possible rescuers may roll).

3. Snakebite: A kanaran slithers through the mud and attacks the player character, who counts as being *Surprised*. The serpent tries to constrict its victim and drag it further into the hill... For the serpent's stats, see page 233 in the *Core Rulebook*.

4. The ground gives way, leading to the temple where the Eternal Hunter is waiting...

Table 1: The player characters' claim

1D20	FIND
1–10	Nothing
11–14	Pieces of mosaic, black and white (worth 1D10 shillings to a collector)
15–17	A religious offering (worth 1D10 thaler to a collector), roll 1D4: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bronze censer 2. Silver box of myrrh 3. Obsidian serpent figurine 4. Wooden box containing an embalmed finger, painted like a snake
18–19	A Symbarian gold coin, value 10 thaler a piece (15 to a collector)
20	Serpent jewelry, a jade snake in a chain of gold, once worn by the priests of the temple (20 thaler, worth double to a collector)

The Landscape

THE SCENE OF the adventure is a muddy, treeless hill in the middle of Davokar. Not far from there flows a river, giving passage to those who do not want, or dare, to challenge the barbarians along the forest paths. To clan Karohar the place is taboo; they will hunt down anyone travelling there or trying to leave. But the Karits will not enter the area itself.

Salindra's Hope

1. Palisade and gate

The palisade is little more than three meters high and sturdy enough to withstand even a raging aboar. The gate, roughly five meters wide, is the weakest point of the palisade.

2. Salindra's tomb

A simple wooden pole in the mud, surrounded by modest offerings such as dried flowers, a wooden cup of ale, and a dozen patinated ortegs.

3. The gambling den 5:2 (the sign depicts a pair of dice, a five and a two)

People: Silvercheek

Price for a claim: 10 thaler (7 if [Persuasive -5])

4. The Prospector's Friend

Here Semel sells equipment for twice the price listed in the *Core Rulebook* ($\times 1.5$ if [Persuasive +1]).

5. The Great Fire

The Great Fire burns every night, and continues to glow until the next one. Its embers constitute a meeting place for unemployed daythaler, who often roast river rats and other rodents while singing melancholy songs about their faraway homes. Now a massive aboar piglet rotates over the fire, feeding many; a gift from Silvercheek to bolster morale in the camp.

The treasure hunter Handelo made himself known to the camp's prospectors as he searched the piglet's entrails for "alchemical substances", which the daythaler love talking about as the news of Handelo's death arrive. (see The Murder of Handelo, page 21).

6. The cluster of daythaler shacks

A crude array of shacks giving shelter to the many daythaler. When they are not resting here or toiling on the hill, they dawdle around the Great Fire.

7. The hill and its claims

- 7.1. Sikander's excavation
- 7.2. Gidjabolgo's claim
- 7.3. Handelo's excavation
- 7.4. Arkali's grave digging
- 7.5. Neferena's search for saints

8. The Elder Sow's tracks around the hill

The wide tracks of a great beast having paced the forest in circles, round and round, for ages.

Vigilant and the ability Beast lore: the tracks were made by an exceptionally huge aboar.

9. The witch Girind's lookout

A wooden platform up a tree on the hill, with a small camp of tents where Girind and her bodyguards reside.

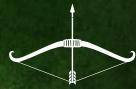
The Serpent Temple

Made of adobe bricks, the temple is sunken into the hill. The crawlway walls are full of holes, where serpents once slithered across devotees crawling towards the center of the shrine. Most of them are long gone, as is their guardian, a sacred lindworm to whom disobedient believers were fed by the priests. Its withered carcass can still be found at the heart of the temple.

A. Crawlways: The Serpent Priests built their temples so that worshippers would have to crawl their

EANOR

0 25 M



way to that which was most holy. Some serpents still slither inside the temple walls, and those entering the crawlways have a one-in-six risk of encountering one. If so, it takes a successful roll against *Resolute* not to be overcome by claustrophobia. A terrified person may still continue, but gets a second chance at failing every test while staying inside the hill.

B. The heart of the temple: Half a dozen kana-rans, along with the withered remains of the lindworm that was once both god and guardian of the temple can be found here. Furthermore, there is the Eternal Hunter, resting on his back inside the lindworm's skeleton, staring at the ceiling, his eyes glowing red (see the Eternal Hunter on page 18).



BACKGROUND

What is today a muddy hill divided into claims was once a Symbarian serpent temple, now buried deep in the mud. Throughout Symbaroum the Cult of the Serpent was held in high esteem before losing followers as the Symbarians went on to worship other, darker powers. The temple was abandoned and slowly began to sink into the muddy grounds. After the fall of Symbaroum, the elves planted the forest of Davokar over the land, but nothing would grow on the hill; it remained a pile of clay.

Much later, the desolate hill became the scene of a duel between two gods of the forest: the Elder Sow Gylta and the bloodthirsty winter elf known as the Eternal Hunter. The sow won the first round, sending the hunter fleeing down the crawlways of the serpent temple. These were too narrow for the sow's tusks to reach very far, so the mortally wounded winter elf could slumber at a safe distance from his enemy. With the passing centuries, the temple slowly sank deeper into the clay, and was in time completely hidden from the world. But Gylta did not forget

The Elder Sow, grunting and rummaging as she circled the hill, obsessed with the thought of finishing what she started, posed a great threat to the region's barbarian clan, Karohar. This caused the witches to declare the hill taboo, along with its immediate surroundings.

PRESENT DAY

The clay hill has rapidly grown into a prospecting camp with simple entertainment establishments and a tired bailiff who, on orders of local merchants, attempts to keep some degree of order among the many dreamers and fortune seekers attracted to the place. Of the almost two hundred people present, about twenty are qualified dreamers, smitten by the Fever of the Hunt. The rest are daythalers, toiling for those with the means to pay for their services.

Most of these daythalers are destitute barbarians who, desperate with hunger and against their better judgement, defy the taboos. It is hard work, but so is the work available in the south. Furthermore, tasks that would be worth an orteg on the plains can here earn you a shilling.

The river and the monthly stops made by a few river merchants are the lifeline of the camp. Travelling by land is dangerous, bordering on suicidal. In the forest surrounding the hill roams a grunting and bellowing she-beast, wounded by a hunter's spear and filled with hate for all things living. The sow leads a herd of aboars, who has

not yet attacked the camp itself. But those heading out to collect firewood and hunt small game often end up disappearing; if they are ever found, it is a gruesome sight: the remains of dismembered bodies and gear stomped into a shallow pit, rummaged through the ground by raging tusks and mighty hooves.

The barbarians of the region, the Karits of Clan Karohar, will never enter the area because of ancient taboos, but they observe the camp from among the trees of a distant hill. For all who have broken the taboo, leaving the area by land is punishable by death - at least according to what is said among the inhabitants of the camp.

RUMORS IN SALINDRA'S HOPE

There are many fanciful and contradictory rumors floating around the camp regarding what lurks in the forest and what is really hiding inside the hill. Here are some samples for the Game Master to use as he or she sees fit, either when the player characters ask around the camp or pass small groups of prospectors loudly discussing the matter.

Rumors regarding the hill:

- *"The hill is a giant maze of narrow crawlways, I have seen them!"*
- *"Several diggers have suffered nasty snake bites, many of them lethal."*
- *"Several diggers, at least a dozen, have disappeared inside the hill, not just in a collapse, but without a trace."*
- *"I heard the cry of children from within the hill, both of infants and older kids."*
- *"I saw an alluring light down there. It was green. Or blue-green. Spooky..."*
- *"I could feel the clay pulsing, as if a heart was beating in the dirt."*
- *"I got clay in my mouth yesterday, and I swear, it tasted like blood."*
- *"I tell you, I could hear someone humming from inside the hill!"*

Rumors regarding the creatures of the forest:

- *"An enormous abomination wanders the forest."*
- *"The elves butcher those venturing too far into the forest, leaving only shreds of flesh."*
- *"Someone downed a piglet earlier, and the sow was injured - she is still out there, wounded and vengeful."*
- *"The barbarians are watching us from the woods."*
- *"This place is taboo for the barbarians, but that does not stop the witches from sending their tamed aboars to kill us!"*

Ron-player Characters

HERE FOLLOWS DESCRIPTIONS of the non-player characters relevant to the setting and the adventure.

Khenad/Handelo/Vendal, the sorcerer

Khenad, or Handelo as he called himself in the prospectors' camp, is not just any sorcerer. He was once a disciple of the Dark Lords in the far south, and just barely escaped alive as they were defeated in the Great War. Since then he has lived in the shadows, cultivating the dark wisdoms he acquired from his masters: that the end of the world is imminent, that the corruption cannot be stopped, but may well be utilized – and that only the bravest of seekers will manage to escape this world before it is too late. Paradise was (as far as Khenad was concerned) a new world, innocent and free from corruption, to be exploited and depleted – and then abandoned, when it too had been consumed by the spreading darkness.

At the end of his life, "Handelo" was sure that a vital clue on how to escape the Eternal Night could be found within the hill. Handelo is murdered by another treasure hunter, the demented former Master of Ordo Magica, Sikander. He is killed, not because of his sorcery, but because Sikander believes him to be his most dangerous rival in the search for the hill's treasures.

Gidjabolgo, treasure hunter

The charming but simple-minded Gidjabolgo comes from a prominent family, yet chose at an early age a life of adventure and partying over managing his family's estates. Gidjabolgo is convinced that the hill is the tomb of "The Emperor of Symbaroum" and, as such, filled with gold and artifacts. Which emperor this would be, or how Gidjabolgo ever heard of his tomb, is unclear even to Gidjabolgo himself. But he certainly does not lack conviction.

With a more patient temperament and a skilled master, Gidjabolgo could probably have been a competent mystic; so profound are Gidjabolgo's convictions, that he spontaneously uses his trait *Mirage* on things he finds inside the hill; shards of clay turn into complete vases in his hands, pieces of metal become Symbarian gold coins. This occurs more or less without him realizing what he is doing, and he is most likely fooling himself more than anyone else.

Should Gidjabolgo's stats be needed, use Fortune-hunter (page 215 in the Core Rulebook) with the traits *Mirage* (new trait, page 54) and *Privileged*. Also, switch *Strong* and *Persuasive*: Gidjabolgo has *Strong* 5 (+5) and *Persuasive* 15 (-5).

Sikander, former Master of Ordo Magica

Sikander was once a Master of Ordo Magica in Agrella, one of the Order's brightest stars and, according to some, a possible successor to Grand Master Seldonio. This view was shared by Sikander himself, as he happily tells people after a few glasses Urtal. But that was before he began studying the forgotten arts of artifact-crafting, and came across the legend of Oromal the Suppressor – and the lindworm skin he created; a skin that is said to provide hypnotic powers.

Having searched for a long time, Sikander found proof that Oromal had been laid to rest in what is today known as Salindra's Hope and that, if Sikander was correct, the mighty skin would still be buried with its maker. With the artifact in his possession, Sikander hopes to contribute to reestablishing the art of artifact-crafting within Ordo Magica. He has now lost himself completely to the Fever of the Hunt and will, in his obsession, mistake anything for hostility.

At the start of the adventure, Sikander murders Handelo, as the paranoid former Master of the Order considers him to be his number one rival.

The importance of (over)powerful opposition

The two forest gods looming in the background of this adventure (the Eternal Hunter and the Elder Sow Glyta) are powerful adversaries. In other words, it is probably not reasonable for the player characters to fight them.* The purpose of their presence is to bring about dramatic roleplaying in the form of negotiations and uncomfortable alliances, or at least force the players to try other strategies besides fighting. For that reason, there are no scenes where battle against these creatures is inevitable.

It is expected that the players will feel small in the landscape, as if they have walked right into an older and grander world, a world which once was and which threatens to rise again. As Game Master you should try to describe how massive, dark-minded and powerful the creatures are. Also, a successful *Cunning* test with the ability *Beast Lore* will provide the stats of the creatures – on condition that they are in sight.

When the Game Master has done his or her best to portray the danger it is up to the players to make their choice, whether that means running away, trying to negotiate or engaging the enemy in brave (foolhardy?) combat.

*If the adventure is played using highly experienced player characters (at least a hundred Experience Points above beginner level), who also have access to one or more artifacts, it is possible to defeat both the Eternal Hunter and Glyta in battle, albeit with difficulty.

When Sikander finally reaches a brick wall inside the hill, he spends his last bit of money on hiring all available workers (see scene 7, page 24). Then he stands by the entry to his claim, guarding it from those trying to prevent him from finding his coveted artifact. Should he succeed, the daythalers will extinguish the Eternal Hunter's thirst, in which case the dance of death will surely follow (see Scene 10: The Eternal Hunter Initiates... on page 24).

Manner	Forced speech, quick to anger
Race	Human (Ambrian)
Resistance	Strong
Traits	<i>Contacts</i> (Ordo Magica)

Accurate 9 (+1), **Cunning** 11 (-1), **Discreet** 5 (+5),
Persuasive 10 (0), **Quick** 13 (-3), **Resolute** 15 (-5),
Strong 7 (+3), **Vigilant** 10 (0)

Abilities	<i>Alchemy</i> (novice), <i>Brimstone Cascade</i> (master), <i>Flame Wall</i> (master), <i>Loremaster</i> (master), <i>Ritualist</i> (adept: <i>Clairvoyance</i> , <i>Flaming Servant</i> , <i>Tale of Ashes</i>), <i>Wizardry</i> (master)		
Weapons	Sword 4		
Armor	Order Cloak 2 (flexible)		
Defense	-3		
Toughness	10	Pain Threshold	4
Equipment	1D10 thaler		
Shadow	Blackened silver (corruption: 5)		

Tactics: Sikander raises a *Flame Wall* around himself and his flaming servant. Anyone entering through the wall of fire encounters Brand in melee while Sikander maneuvers so he can cast a chain of *Brimstone Cascades* at the enemy. He is prepared to die for his claim and during the fight he accuses the attackers of wanting to "steal his precious treasure".

"Brand", Sikander's flaming servant

Brand is the flaming servant of the fallen wizard Sikander, and together they have endured many horrors and survived many dangers. Brand is never more than a few paces behind his master, and his full set of smoldering armor and glowing two-handed sword commands the respect that becomes the bodyguard of a Master of Ordo Magica.

Resistance	Challenging
Traits	<i>Contacts</i> (Ordo Magica)
Accurate 13 (-3), Cunning 7 (+3), Discreet 9 (+1), Persuasive 5 (+5), Quick 11 (-1), Resolute 10 (0), Strong 15 (-5), Vigilant 10 (0)	

Abilities	<i>Bodyguard</i> (master), <i>Iron Fist</i> (master), <i>Two-handed Force</i> (adept)		
Weapons	Burning heavy sword 10, if the first attack misses he gets another try, damage 6		
Armor	Glowing, oozing full plate 4 (flexible)		
Defense	+1		
Toughness	15	Pain Threshold	8
Equipment	None		
Shadow	Glowing, like fire reflected in a spotless copper mirror (corruption: 0)		

Tactics: Brand protects his master by attacking an enemy in full force. Also, Brand will defend his master from all attacks and make counterattacks against any attacker within range of melee, damage 8 (see the ability *Bodyguard* at master level).

Arkali, the widower

Arkali is a treasure hunter from Thistle Hold, and a widower since a year ago, when his wife disappeared during an expedition in Davokar. The widower Arkali is on a quest to find his lost wife, Berelin, whom he absolutely and wholeheartedly believes is trapped inside the hill. The fact that she vanished in an emergent sinkhole is irrelevant to Arkali, as he strongly senses that Berelin is down there, calling for him through the clay.

He will first be saddened, then angry, if someone keeps pointing out the absurdity of his wife being trapped inside the hill.

If Arkali's stats are needed, use those of the Fortune-hunter (page 215 in the *Core Rulebook*).

Neferena, Black Cloak

The Black Cloak Neferena is certain that the light-bringer Agani, a legendary Templar from the Great War, lies buried inside the hill. Neferena grew up with heroic tales from the war, and developed an early fascination with the brave Agani, who with his inner light and burning hammer broke through the enemy lines and slayed the Dark Lord Malak. The Templar disappeared on a holy quest into Davokar almost a dozen years ago. Neferena came to Salindra's Hope to find and destroy a notorious Dark Lord, Vandal. But as she arrived, she realized that finding the saint was much more important, and has spent every waking moment digging into the clay of the hill ever since.

If Neferena's stats are needed, use those of the Black Cloak (page 214 in the *Core Rulebook*).

Roughneck, bailiff, ogre, and the witch Girind's ears in the area

As the camp's bailiff, the ogre Roughneck is paid by Silvercheek and Semel to keep some degree of order in Salindra's Hope, a job she is well suited for, with her calm, her imposing presence, and firm hand when the situation demands it. Roughneck is also a double agent working for the witch Girind. The witch and the ogre go back a long time, since the ogre was found by Girind's teacher, who left it to Girind to raise the ogre and teach it the language and customs of the barbarians. Since then, Roughneck and Girind have shared a series of adventures, both in Davokar and northern Ambria. The witch sent Roughneck down river to Salindra's Hope to report on serious events. She has given the ogre a collection of fire dyes as a means of communication; when thrown into the Great Fire, the flames shift color and Girind receives simple messages regarding what happens on the hill.

As the situation deteriorates around the camp, Roughneck will pass the details on to Girind. Since the ogre cannot leave the camp without abandoning her post and raising suspicions, she will ask the player characters for help – if they have given impression of being of the conscientious persuasion.

When not on patrol, she sits in her little shack, spelling her way through a volume of Ambrian love poems written by Taubio, as a lesson from Girind in the ongoing effort of educating the ogre.

Roughneck's stats are the same as those of a Plunderer (page 215 in the *Core Rulebook*).

Silvercheek, tavern owner

Silvercheek is the closest thing there is to a central authority in Salindra's Hope. It is she alone who sells the prospecting claims (unofficially – or there will be accidents; see the gang of non-player characters called The Legbreakers below) and she also manages the gambling den 5:2, where most people spend their hard-earned ortegs and shillings.

Silvercheek is a middle-aged woman who often polishes the silver mask covering half her face, while holding her repeating crossbow in the other hand. She never shows her disfigured face to anyone, and if someone asks about what happened, she speaks evasively about a failed attempt to enter a tomb in Davokar, where the acid of booby-traps put an end to the expedition. The tone of her voice suggests that Silvercheek got off lightly, compared to the treasure hunters accompanying her.

Silvercheek has the stats of a Self-Taught Witchhunter (page 214 in the *Core Rulebook*), but with the abilities Marksman (novice) and Sixth sense (novice). She is armed with a repeating crossbow that is reloaded like a bow (see the Appendix, page 55).

Acquiring Girind's help

It is entirely possible to persuade Girind that either the Eternal Hunter or the Elder Sow Gylta, or even both, must be stopped. With a passed *Persuasive* test, Girind will hand her elixirs over to the player characters to help them on their way. The witch strongly advises that the player characters settle the situation through negotiation or by outsmarting the enemy; not because she necessarily wants to keep the forest gods alive, but because she has had their power described to her by older witches, making her less comfortable with the player characters facing them in battle, in what she would regard as a suicide mission.

If the player characters have not already tried to contact Gylta, Girind will encourage them to do so. Gylta was wounded by the Eternal Hunter and Girind has seen the Elder Sow's hatred ravage the herd of aboars. Maybe there is something to be gained from speaking to the forest goddess?

The Legbreakers

The Legbreakers is the small gang of barbarian thugs led by the boisterous Dvarak. They do Silvercheek's dirty work, and the gang's loyalty to her is such that most people regard them as her goons. However, it happens that they act on their own accord and get into trouble with Bailiff Roughneck; something that bothers Silvercheek, as she is also paying the bailiff to maintain order.

The number of Legbreakers is $PC+1$, and they have the stats of a Robber; their leader Dvarak has the stats of a Robber Chief (both on page 211 in the *Core Rulebook*).

Girind, the region's witch

Girind is a young witch, but as a close friend to the local chieftain Basuma she was asked to oversee the guarding of the hill and the taboo area. Girind is deeply worried by what is happening in the camp, knowing that there is truth behind the myth of the Wild Hunt. Since the witch herself cannot enter taboo grounds, she has – with some slight bending of the rules – sent “her” ogre Roughneck to the camp. This proved to be a smart move, as the spy also came to shoulder the role of bailiff, enabling her to meddle in most matters without raising suspicion. On the contrary, it is expected of Roughneck to investigate things.

Girind keeps watch from her treehouse on a hill in the outskirts of the area. She has a good view of the clay hill, but aside from a few rooftops over the edge of the palisade she does not see much of the camp below. She has provided her spy with fire dye, an alchemical salt that makes fire shift colors. Using it, Roughneck may send simple messages to Girind.

What Semel knows

Semel suspects more than he actually knows, but believes that what is happening in the area (the dreamers and the Fever of the Hunt) is connected to the myth of the Wild Hunt (see Legend of the Wild Hunt (general)). He knows that a witch oversees the area from a hill, and that a wild beast circles the place, waiting for something. Something terrible.

Manner	Listening, speaks slowly	
Race	Human (barbarian)	
Resistance	Ordinary	
Traits	<i>Bushcraft</i>	
Accurate	9 (+1), Cunning 10 (0), Discreet 11 (-1), Persuasive 13 (-3), Quick 5 (+5), Resolute 15 (-5), Strong 7 (+3), Vigilant 10 (0)	
Abilities	Curse (adept), Leader (novice), Ritualist (novice: <i>Borrow Beast</i>), Witchcraft (adept)	
Weapons	Spear 4 (long)	
Armor	Witch Gown 2 (flexible)	
Defense	+5	
Toughness	10	Pain Threshold 4
Equipment	3 doses Elemental Essence (acid), 1 dose Elixir of Life, 1 dose Concentrated Magic, Field Equipment, 1D10 shillings	
Shadow	Green like baby leafs with single black spots from parasitic infestation (corruption: 1)	

Tactics: The witch stays behind her guard warriors and leads them to victory. If the battle takes a turn for the worse she will order retreat and assemble a larger group of warriors before returning.

Girind's bodyguards

Girind is accompanied by five Karitian guard warriors, see page 216 in the *Core Rulebook*. They do however fight with Karitian battle claws instead of a double-axe, and has the ability Natural warrior (master), giving them the following stats:

Weapons	Two Battle Claws 7 (deep impact).
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Negotiation with the Eternal Hunter

There is a chance of negotiating with the Eternal Hunter (social challenge, see page 172 in the *Core Rulebook*) by slaying Gylta and returning the spear that is stuck in her side. Player characters who manage to acquire the spear during negotiations may try to bluff, claiming that Gylta is dead, just as player characters possessing the ability *Witchsight* may try to convince the Eternal Hunter that fighting Gylta would not be worth it – corruption awaits the hunter should he go through with his plan.

It is recommended that the Game Master lets the characters speak to the Eternal Hunter (telepathically) and – whatever the outcome of the challenge – leave the hunter as the Dance of Death is about to begin. Engaging the Eternal Hunter in combat is close to suicidal, and it must be left to the players to (slightly desperately) decide whether or not to do so.

Karitian warriors

If the player characters decide to escape the taboo area by land, they will be pursued by the clan warriors of Karohar.

They hunt and fight in groups made up of Village Warriors [as many as the PCs], led by a Guard Warrior (same stats as Girind's bodyguard).

Semel, vendor and agent of the Iron Pact

Semel is a low-ranking ally of the Iron Pact, and has yet to become a real agent; this is part of his final test. Semel is painfully aware that his future depends on what he demonstrates in the camp, in terms of wisdom and loyalty. One thing is certain: there is nothing wrong with Semel's convictions, as he is convinced that the treasure hunters sooner or later will awake the evil lurking within the hill.

He has sent a message to his employer in Thistle Hold, stating those exact words, and is deeply troubled by the fact that the Pact has not yet taken action. If the player characters arrive at Salindra's Hope on orders from the Iron Pact (they must show their engraved iron ring in order to convince him), he thanks them with a sigh of relief.

If Semel's stats are needed, use that of a Village Warrior (page 216 in the *Core Rulebook*), but with **Persuasive** 13 (-3) and **Quick** 7 (+3), giving him **Defense** +3 instead.

The Eternal Hunter, bloodthirsty Winter Elf

The Eternal Hunter was once a master huntsman who fought for the Iron Pact against the growing darkness of Symbaroum. He watched Symbaroum fall, and saw the elves plant the first seeds of Davokar. When the trees were still young he entered the winter of his life, and emerged from it as the Eternal Hunter. But something went horribly wrong.

Maybe there was once a higher purpose to the hunt, to clear the way for new life to rise. Or perhaps the lingering darkness was already taking root at the start of his winter, and the hunt had a purpose in itself: killing for sport and pleasure. His stay in the Serpent Temple has not alleviated matters, and what hope there once was for the hunter to find harmony is now gone.

The hunt is all that remains. The first step is to heal his wounds. Step two is to arrange a new Wild Hunt using any creature he can ensnare with the entrancing *Dance of Death*. With the Elder Sow Gylta put down, Davokar will experience a new hunt, wilder and darker than ever before.

Manner	Careless and playful even in the midst of carnage
Race	Elf (winter elf)
Resistance	Mighty
Traits	<i>Bloodlust</i> (III, see p. xx), <i>Long-lived</i> , <i>Manifestation</i> (III), <i>Spirit Form</i> (III)
Accurate 5 (+5), Cunning 10 (0), Discreet 10 (0), Persuasive 7 (+3), Quick 11 (-1), Resolute 16 (-6), Strong 9 (+1), Vigilant 18 (-8)	
Abilities	Acrobatics (master), Beast Lore (master; specialized on Beasts), <i>Exceptionally Resolute</i> (master), <i>Exceptionally Vigilant</i> (master), Marksman (master), Ritualist (master; only relevant is <i>Dance of Death</i> , new ritual), Sixth Sense (master), Steadfast (master)
Weapons	Longbow 5 (precise), +3 on Beasts
Armor	None
Defense	-8
Toughness	10
Equipment	None
Shadow	Greyish yellow like winter leaves, with broad streaks of black threatening to become dominant (corruption: 15)

Tactics: The Eternal Hunter moves among the death dancers, shooting single arrows for encouragement. When a worthy opponent emerges, the hunter begins his own, personal hunt. He alternates between firing deadly arrows and trying to charm and drink warm, delightful blood from the victim, saturated with the sublime taste of desperation and fear. As soon as Gylta's herd becomes occupied with fighting the death dancers he takes the opportunity to commence his fight against the forest goddess.

Death Dancing Daythalers (about 100)

If the Eternal Hunter manages to get loose and initiate his Dance of Death, the majority of the daythalers working on the clay hill will be consumed by the intoxication of the dance, and form the hunter's own little army.

Manner	Weeping, laughing, yowling
Race	Human (barbarian)
Resistance	Weak
Traits	<i>Bushcraft</i>
Accurate 10 (0), Cunning 7 (+3), Discreet 9 (+1), Persuasive 10 (0), Quick 11 (-1), Resolute 5 (+5), Strong 15 (-5), Vigilant 13 (-3)	
Abilities	None

Weapons	Single-handed weapon 4
Armor	Leather 2
Defense	+1
Toughness	15
Equipment	"Protective amulette", "Lucky dice", 1D10 ortegs
Shadow	Green intertwined with black cords (corruption: 2)

Tactics: The average daythaler would normally flee from anything but a proper brawl with nothing but fists and boots as weapons. However, when caught up in the Dance of Death they will fight to the death, alternately weeping and laughing.

Gylta, the Elder Sow

Gylta is the holy protector of her people, an ancient force that has willingly relinquished the circle of life of being born, giving life, and dying. She will never bear piglets, but compensates that grief with the pride of leading and protecting her kind from danger. Her greatest challenge yet was facing the Wild Hunt and its leader, the Eternal Hunter. She still keeps the hunter's broken spear (artifact, see page 56) stuck in her side as a painful reminder of the battle, and now spends her time brooding on vengeance; in her eyes, the Eternal Hunter is a grave threat to her people and, in her obsession, she has forsaken them to such a degree that all that remains of the once proud tribe is a weak and dwindling herd, gathered around Gylta herself. The Eternal Hunter is a potential threat, but right now Gylta is a greater one. The one who makes her see this will receive her help – assuming that he or she also agrees to wipe the Eternal Hunter from existence.

If someone promises Gylta to put an end to the Eternal Hunter, she will turn her wounded side to the person and ask for the spear to be extracted.

The corruption of the Eternal Hunter

The corruption of the Eternal Hunter is imminent, and if the Dance of Death were to take place at the end of the adventure, this would ultimately push the Winter Elf into everlasting darkness. Such an event would be disastrous to the surrounding area; eventually, maybe even to the entire region. It would bring about the birth of a dark prince, a lord of horror leading his growing number of death dancers through the woods, laying waste to barbarian villages and burning Ambrian colonies.

What would happen if the blight born hunter were to reach Thistle Hold or some other town and invite its people to dance, is almost too terrible to imagine...



Manner	Sad, full of suppressed anger		
Race	Beast		
Resistance	Strong		
Traits	<i>Armored (III), Natural Weapon (III), Robust (III)</i>		
Accurate 7 (+3), Cunning 10 (0), Discreet 10 (0), Persuasive 5 (+5), Quick 13 (-3), Resolute 11 (-1), Strong 15 (-5), Vigilant 9 (+1)			
Abilities	<i>Berserker (master), Iron Fist (master)</i>		
Weapons	Tusks 16 (long)		
Armor	Thick skin 10		
Defense	-3		
Toughness	15	Pain Threshold	8
Equipment	Wedged in her side is the Eternal Hunter's spear, other than that nothing		
Shadow	Deep red, with roses of rust and ashen grey (corruption: 5)		

Tactics: Gylta leads her herd straight for the enemy and her target is to reach the Eternal Hunter to finish what she started so long ago. The fools standing in the way have themselves to blame.

Gylta's herd of aboars

Gylta's herd consists of twelve aboars, plus some thirty younger or smaller wild boars. The herd is all that remains of Gylta's once proud tribe, the largest aboar tribe in all of Davokar. Now the beasts are few, weakened and scraggly from Gylta's lack of care. If she does not let go of her obsession with the Eternal Hunter, the entire herd will soon have perished, and Gylta will linger on as the lone guardian and indirect killer of her dead kin.

Note that the Elder Sow will only take the dozen fully grown aboars with her into the battle with the Eternal Hunter, should it come to that. For the stats of the aboars, see page 221 in the *Core Rulebook*.

Persuading Gylta

Persuading Gylta of the danger she poses to her own herd is a social challenge (page 172 in the *Core Rulebook*), where few or no rolls are recommended; dice rolls may be needed to recognize the deterioration of the herd and conclude

that it follows from Gylta's obsession, or that the spear stuck in her side belonged to the power of the hill and could be an essential weapon in the fight.

In other words, the GM is advised to turn the negotiations with Gylta into a

dense roleplaying scene with a minimum of dice rolls and success tests.

Gylta communicates telepathically with the player characters, which she is able to do as long as she maintains eye contact.

Events

IF THE PLAYER characters do not change its course through their actions, the adventure follows a series of predetermined events. It begins with the murder of Handelo on the day of the player characters' arrival, and concludes a few days later with the two forest gods facing each other in furious battle, a battle that evokes a burning bloodlust within most creatures present, causing panic and mass slaughter. However, the player characters have every opportunity to change the course of events – to a certain extent, and not without taking risks.

Developments

A SERIES OF events transpire following the characters' arrival to Salindra's Hope. They are all connected to the backstory of the two forest gods, though it may very well take the players a while to figure that out.

The initial, and most obvious, incident is a murder (scene 3). Less obvious, but of even greater importance, is a disappearance (scene 6). Both of these take place on the hill.

SCENE 1: MEETING SILVERCHEEK / PURCHASING A CLAIM

The player characters are greeted by Silvercheek, who is always on the look-out for new customers; the claims are her main source of income. She actively seeks out the player characters, and a little later on she sends the Legbreakers on some freelance treasure hunters who “forgot” to pay her for the right to dig into the hill – just to demonstrate what happens if the characters decide to do the same.

Claim: Claims are purchased from Silvercheek who keeps a ledger with the names of all treasure hunters in the camp. The price is 10 thaler, which with a [Persuasive -5] may be reduced to 7 thaler.

Clairvoyance: During the conversation with Silvercheek, the wizard Sikander will be spying on 5:2, paranoid as he is when it comes to newcomers.

The ability *Witchsight* and a successful [Resolute +5] gives the player character a feeling of being watched. If the character – or any other player character made aware of the situation – has either *Wizardry* or *Ritualist*, and succeeds with a *Cunning*

test, he or she realizes that another mystic is using the ritual *Clairvoyance* on their location.

Silvercheek believes there may be three Mystics in Salindra's Hope: the Black Cloak Neferena (Silvercheek calls her “the fanatic”), the former Master of Ordo Magica Sikander (whom Silvercheek, with ill-concealed fear in her voice, refers to as “the fire worshipper”), and Handelo (whom Silvercheek calls “the alchemist”, because of his search for salt inside the auroar piglet above the Great Fire). She also speaks of “the witch spying from the hill” (Silvercheek does not know her name).

Silvercheek can point out the hill where the witch has her camp.

SCENE 2: GIDJABOLGO'S FAKE COINS

While in the characters' presence, Gidjabolgo pays Silvercheek a gold coin. He buys food, a jar of fine black-brew, and uses the rest as credit for future purchases.

A successful Vigilant with Loremaster: the coin is a Symbarian gold coin.

A successful Vigilant with Witchsight: the coin is a piece of metal (a rusty hinge) surrounded by the illusion of a gold coin.

SCENE 3A: THE MURDER OF HANDELO

There is an ongoing conflict between two prospectors who believe each other to be rivals in the search for the hill's treasures. On the day of the player characters' arrival at the camp, Handelo is murdered, which can be used as a trigger to start off the adventure.

Tale of Ashes

Player characters possessing the proper rituals may quickly gain clues as to who committed the murder, or solve it at the scene of the crime. The cooled-down knife and the scorched parts of Handelo's clothes and body are enough to cast the ritual *Tale of Ashes* and have a vision of Sikander and his flaming servant killing Handelo. Sikander is heard screaming: “*it is mine, mine, mine!*” in rhythm with his stabbing.

Confronting the ogre

If the player characters confront Roughneck about the fire dye, two things can happen:

If they are being inquisitive but diplomatic, the one with the highest *Persuasive* may roll a [*Persuasive* -1] to make the ogre admit that she is communicating with someone outside the camp. She confesses that it is the witch on the hill, Girind, and has a suggestion. Roughneck can only pass on simple messages, as more complex ones demand direct contact. Perhaps the characters could go to the witch and give her the details regarding the camp?

If they behave threateningly, Roughneck acts the same: the roll against *Persuasive* has a second chance of failing. If the ogre realizes that the characters mean well, for example by how they handle Handelo's murder, she will tell them about Girind and ask the characters to seek her out and give the witch her regards.

Handelo is found inside his claim by a daythaler supposed to deliver food to the alchemist. He screams about what has happened while running aimlessly through the camp.

The voice of the fire: Roughneck casts red fire dye into the Great Fire when she thinks no one notices, and its flames rise in blazing crimson – signaling that a murder has taken place.

The player character with the highest *Vigilant* may roll to detect the signal. He or she then gets another roll [*Vigilant* +1] to notice that Roughneck is leaving the place alone.

SCENE 3B: THE SCENE OF THE MURDER

Handelo's shack contains a bunk bed, an alchemy table, and a gaping pit in the clay leading down into the hill, all hidden behind a leaky wooden door.

The body: The body has a warm (once glowing hot) knife between its shoulder blades.

The ability Alchemy: The knife is hot from being smeared with a burning elemental essence.

The ability Medicus: He was stabbed a dozen times in neck and chest, and there are no signs of defensive wounds on his arms. The wounds are scorched around the edges, barely bleeding at all. There are bruises on the upper arms, as if someone was holding the man as he was being stabbed. (Sikander did the stabbing while his flaming servant, Brand, held Handelo).

The shaft: The shaft of Handelo's claim is about seven meters deep; its bottom can be reached by a rickety wooden ladder. There are spades in various sizes lying around, as well as half a dozen buckets. A single bucket dangles from a hoist above the pit. The bottom is covered by a meter of dirty water.

The alchemy equipment: A number of alchemical tools and ingredients are found on the table.

The ability Alchemy: it is a portable laboratory, a set of alchemical tools giving +1 on rolls against *Alchemy* (value: 10 thaler).

On the table is a crumbly rock that any alchemist would recognize as a bezoar, an extremely potent ingredient of antidotes. The bezoar rock comes from the belly of the Elder Sow's piglet now roasting over the Great Fire. It is a mixture of salts, fats and vegetable fibers accumulated within the piglet, and can be used to craft powerful antidotes. Adding bezoar makes antidotes count as one tier higher than normal: weak antidotes become moderate, and moderate ones become strong. Strong antidotes are unaffected, but a master alchemist may of course create more doses of moderate antidotes and turn them strong using the bezoar.

The sleeping quarters: Handelo's sleeping place consists of a camp bed with a wooden crate for a

bedside table, on which stands a kerosene lamp and a tome, "So Sayeth Almegaster", an apocryphal text from before the recognition of Prios as "the One and Most Exalted". The tome claims that Prios was actually a knight and theurg named Priosander who, having found his light, expelled a plague from the long since fallen empire beyond the Ravens in the east. Priosander preached mercy, love and forgiveness. The author, Almegaster, was burned in Alberetor for his heretical beliefs, and those seen carrying the tome in Ambria risk suffering the same fate. To a collector of forbidden tomes, however, it is worth 100+1D100 thaler.

A successful roll against *Vigilant* reveals what might be more interesting: a wrinkled letter chipped into the laths of the bed, addressed to an "Agathara" and signed "Khenad". The envelope is not sealed, and aside from the letter there is a single smooth, grey rock inside.

The letter reads:

"Agathara, sister of the night, hearing that you are alive brings me hope, here in the shadows of the new world. It pains me that you must struggle to get by; you who possessed such insight into the twilight. Oh, what did we all not leave behind in the ashes of our beloved Lyastra; what did we not sacrifice for our dreams of a better world?

Earlier, Demereka crossed my path, informing me that Kheltran hides in Thistle Hold among the wizards of Ordo Magica. And I know that Flavus was slain by the dwarves of Yndaros over a gambling debt. I think no one ever realized what dark wisdom was lost with him. There are few of us left, and if the enemy finds out that we are alive, we shall be fewer still.

If you still dare to dream, as I do, hold the rock in your hand and think of me.

Disciple Khenad"

Conclusions drawn from the letter:

The ability Loremaster: The rank "Disciple" was the lowest among the now extinct – or at least vanished – Dark Lords of the south. It is equivalent to Ordo Magica's "Novice".

If the players cannot figure the following out themselves, the game master may allow player characters to do so by passing a test against *Cunning*:

With the phrase "sister of the night", the letter suggests that this Agathara carries the same rank as the letter's author; in other words, that she too was a low ranking Dark Lord.

The author of the letter is most likely Handelo himself, which can be confirmed by comparing its handwriting with, for example, the signature

The return of the Dark Lords?

As indicated by the letter, Handelo was a sorcerer schooled by the Dark Lords; the nefarious foes from the Great War, who even in defeat managed to drive the Ambrians north. Evidence of the Dark Lords – or at least their disciples – being alive and operating in Ambria, is worth a lot to many organizations. The Queen's legates,

as well as Ordo Magica and the Church of Prios, would be anxiously grateful and offer a reward of 100 thaler, should the owner of the letter demand compensation (100+1D100 in case of a successful *Persuasive* test).

This insight has no immediate consequences, but in secret the hunt for the

Dark Lords commences with renewed intensity. Should the player characters spread the news far and wide, there will soon be wild rumors floating around regarding "the return of the Dark Lords", followed by a brief increase of pitchfork-wielding mobs and people burned at the stakes.

in Silvercheek's ledger where Handelo signed for the ownership of his claim.

The rock inside the letter:

The letter also holds a clue regarding the rock that came with it – "Hold the rock in your hand and think of me". The ability *Loremaster* and a successful roll against *Cunning*: The rock is a lesser artifact called a Meeting Stone. It was made with a specific person in mind, and when that person touches it, the recipient immediately knows where the sender will be at a certain point in time. As the rock was made for Agathara, it will not show the player characters where or when Handelo wished to meet with her. One guess is that he wanted her to come to Salindra's Hope, something a clever use of rituals such as *Oracle* or *Fortune-telling* can reveal.

SCENE 4:

SILVERCHEEK SHOOTS GIDJABOLGO

The characters witness how Silvercheek shoots Gidjabolgo in the leg with her repeating crossbow – the gold coin has faded into a rusty piece of metal! Gidjabolgo seems to be genuinely upset, claiming that he has done nothing more than payed with what he believed to be a gold coin he had found in his claim.

SCENE 5 INTERLUDE: BLOODY VISIONS, PART I (REQUIRES WITCHSIGHT)

As a consequence of Arkali bursting through the wall of the Temple (see Arkali's Disappearance to the right), the Eternal Hunter rips off the dreamer's head and drinks his blood. Powers are then released, transmitting a vision to sensitive minds in the area.

A successful Vigilant with Witchsight: The player character receives the following vision – "Blood gushes from the claims of the hill and streamlets of blood reach the camp by its foot. In the forest, a great, wounded beast raises its head, roaring furiously at the heavens."

INTERLUDE: COMPLAINING DAYTHALERS

A group of muddy diggers is complaining loudly about not having been paid by Arkali, and him now being gone – a bit too convenient, the diggers think, since the old man spoke gleefully about how close he was to a breakthrough and that all laborers would soon be paid for their trouble. Suddenly he was gone, and the claim abandoned. The loudest of the diggers are convinced that the man has struck gold and then left without paying them. Others are not as convinced. Some mutter audibly: "Where would the old man go with all that gold, as crooked and frail as he is?" Someone else bluntly says: "I think the hill took him, we will probably never see neither him nor any payment."

The voice of the fire: Roughneck casts white fire dye into the Great Fire when she thinks no one notices, and its flames rise like a whirling blizzard – signaling that someone has gone missing.

Like before, the player character with the highest *Vigilant* may roll to detect the signal. He or she then gets another roll [*Vigilant +1*] to notice that Roughneck is leaving the place alone.

SCENE 6: ARKALI'S DISAPPEARANCE

Breaking down a stone wall down his claim, the digger Arkali reaches the crawlways near the heart of the Serpent Temple. As the clay collapses behind him, he is forced to dive into the nearest of them. After a bit of crawling, he encounters the Eternal Hunter. Arkali approaches the slumbering elf, thereby becoming the Eternal Hunter's first victim in a long time. The hunter awakes, but he is frail. From now on he has but one goal: to quench his thirst and grow strong enough to gather his allies before the battle against Gylta.

Arkali's claim

The claim of Arkali consists of a tiny palisade raised around a pit in the ground. Next to the pit

~~~~ ♦ ~~~

**What happens if/  
when the player  
characters stop  
Sikander?**

It is likely that the player characters will go after, and stop, Sikander. If so, the Eternal Hunter's freedom is postponed – until other dreamers break through. To prevent the hunter from ever being set free, one must stop

Sikander and make sure that no one else digs any further. With Sikander stopped, Gidjabolgo will be the first to break through if left unchallenged. Next in line to find a way into the Serpent Temple, where the Eternal Hunter is waiting, is

Neferena.

~~~~ ♦ ~~~

is a canvas set up above a rickety camp bed and a small stove. By the gaping pit there is also a small pile of bricks.

Loremaster: The bricks are made from adobe, reinforced with reed or horsehair, which were often used in ancient Symbaroum. Back then, bricks were used even in minor constructions, as wood was less common before the expansion of Davokar.

The pit has collapsed about five meters into the hill, and one can see a boot sticking out from the clay, as well as a spade and a pickaxe.

It would take five days to dig back in; three if there were two people digging. There is not enough room for more than two people, but if pairing up and working in shifts one would reach the wall in a day, and find a hole through which to enter the Serpent Temple. (see The Serpent Temple, page 12).

SCENE 7: SIKANDER HIRES ALL AVAILABLE WORKERS

With the help of the many diggers, Sikander will soon break into the heart of the Temple where the Eternal Hunter awaits, still weak. The hunter kills Sikander and quenches his thirsts with the blood of both him and the diggers who fail to escape.

INTERLUDE: DREAMS OF BLOOD (REQUIRES NO ABILITIES)

Sikander's diggers break through the brick wall inside the hill and reach the heart of the Serpent Temple, where the Eternal Hunter quenches his thirst and initiates the ritual *Dance of Death*. This incident releases a vision perceived by all who succeeds with a *Vigilant* test.

"Blood gushes from the claims of the hill, like fountains of blood. A wave of blood reaches the camp at the foot of the hill, knocking over people and buildings alike. In the forest roams an army of beasts, led by a massive aboar sow. She raises her head and bellows furiously at the top of the hill."

SCENE 9: GIRIND HAS BARBARIAN WARRIORS FORM A RING OF IRON AROUND THE TABOO AREA

Girind is also haunted by the dream of blood, and acts on it by summoning her kin to the area.

About three hundred village warriors from Clan Karohar, led by some fifty clan warriors, form a guard around the borders of the taboo area. The witch Girind and chieftain Basuma stand on the hill with their bodyguards. Also, there are three other witches present. The ogre Roughneck joins them, if she can, and takes her place by Girind's side. They do not interfere in the area, but will act forcefully to keep what happens in there isolated.

SCENE 10: THE ETERNAL HUNTER INITIATES THE DANCE OF DEATH

The Eternal Hunter emerges on the hill, accompanied by a dozen death dancers (Sikander's former employees). The dance rapidly spreads among the other daythalers. Half of them are affected and gather around the hunter at the top of the hill; the rest seek shelter in the camp, but dare not flee into the woods.

The voice of the fire: Roughneck casts black fire dye into the Great Fire when she thinks no one notices, and its flames rise in ominous purple-black – signaling that the hunter is awake.

The player character with the highest value in *Vigilant* may roll to detect the signal. He or she then gets another roll [*Vigilant +1*] to notice that Roughneck is leaving the place alone. If the one with the highest *Vigilant* fails, other player characters may give it a try.

SCENE 11: THE ELDER SOW GYLTA ATTACKS THE CAMP

The Elder Sow appears at the edge of the forest, and as she bellows, more aboars gather by her side. Stomping into the ground, they storm the camp. Gylta blows open one of the gates, trampling her way through daythalers and others, closely followed by a dozen grown aboars. Left at the forest edge are some thirty young animals and piglets, looking scared and confused.

Gylta is not looking to fight anyone other than the Eternal Hunter and his howling death dancers, but people located outside when the assault commences must succeed with a [*Defense -5*] not to be hit by the many charging aboars and be dealt 10 damage (armor protects as usual).

SCENE 12: THE CARNAGE ON THE HILL

Up on the hill the armies collide, one aboar against some ten death dancers. Gylta reaches the Eternal Hunter and their final duel begins. During this time, player characters located on the hill will face either an aboar or ten death dancers. Once they have handled 1D4+1 encounters, the duel between Elder Sow and the Hunter is over.

Note that if the player characters are within a hundred meters of the Eternal Hunter they risk being affected by the *Dance of Death* (see the new ritual on page 54). Gylta and her aboars count as direct enemies of the Eternal Hunter; the same is probably true about the characters – if the players consider the hunter to be the enemy, the criterion is met. Enemies of the Eternal Hunter get a second chance to resist or break free from the *Dance of Death*.

Surrounding Factions

Some of Davokar's factions - the Iron Pact and the witches - are interested in the clay hill and the conflict revolving around it. Their views on the matter are described here.

THE IRON PACT

The two opposing forest gods may be dangerous to humans, but to elves they are just that; gods, or spirits, of the forest, whose conflict does not yet impinge on their interests. The elves keep out of their way, as they always do when the elder creatures of the woods fight their battles.

However, the Iron Pact does have an agent in place (see Semel among the Non-player Characters) to monitor how things develop; partly because the Iron Pact is aware of the Symbarian ruins located in the area (such as the Serpent Temple), partly because these kinds of conflicts attract the corruptive powers of Davokar. It would be a terrible thing indeed if either Gylta or the Eternal Hunter were to become blight born - but as long as there is no sign of this happening, the Iron Pact will not take direct action in the area. The elves aim to fight corruption, not to keep the peace in general. Also,

they do not mind if the gruesome deaths of greedy treasure hunters serve as a clear and deterring example to others of their kind.

The Iron Pact agent in Thistle Hold, the former treasure hunter Lysindra Goldengrasp, is not as convinced as her elvish allies - maybe for sentimental reasons; she will not let people die in vain. That is why (should the Game Master decide that the characters are acting on orders from the Iron Pact) Lysindra sends reinforcements, just to be safe.

THE WITCHES OF KAROHAR

For a long time, the barbarians have regarded the area as taboo, which is why they will not enter it. As previously mentioned, the barbarians will guard the area from people approaching by land, and hunt down those leaving it. The witch Girind has been charged with overseeing the area, and has been slightly bending the rules of the taboo; she has recruited an agent (see Roughneck in the Non-player Characters' section) from the south. The agent now acts as bailiff of Salindra's Hope and uses an alchemical powder called fire dye to convey important happenings to Girind.

Echoes through the game world?

The events at Salindra's Hope are of such importance that rumors will spread far and wide. Whether the stories portray the characters as heroes or villains depends entirely on the outcome, but if you continue to play with the same characters they should be granted a modification to rolls against Persuasive during the subsequent season; +1 if the player characters acted nobly and -1 if they acted out of self-interest.

The collective memory does not last more than a season, as other events will have seized people's attention

Possible Endings

SINCE THE PLAYER characters will interfere with the story, the last scene in the chain of events - the carnage on the hill - will probably not occur; at least not in the manner described above. The game master may plan for the following versions, since playtesting have proven them to be probable consequences of the players' actions.

1. The Eternal Hunter prevails

The Eternal Hunter defeats Gylta and her aboars, with or without the player characters' assistance. The Winter Elf is corrupted and turns into a Lord of Horror, the leader of a growing band of death dancers participating in their master's wild hunt throughout Davokar. His following brings death and destruction wherever they go, and will return as a serious threat to barbarians and Ambrians.

2. The Elder Sow Gylta prevails

The Elder Sow Gylta stomps the Eternal Hunter into the mud, bringing the Dance of Death to an end. Salindra's Hope is abandoned by the survivors, daythalers and treasure hunters alike. The hill of clay stands deserted, as a bleak funerary monument to the Eternal Hunter. But Ambrians have a short memory. Soon, some will surely return - there are

rumors of a Serpent Temple being hidden within the hill, and there must surely be treasures!

3. The player characters flee the slaughter

The player characters think the situation to be hopeless, or in any case not worth the risk, and decide to run. They either flee by river on an improvised raft, or take their chances sneaking through the territory of clan Karohar.

Since the player characters through their actions do not determine the outcome, the game master may choose who - if any - of the two forest gods will prevail in the final battle.

4. The player characters evacuate prospectors and daythalers before the final battle

The player characters flee the area, as described above, but not before trying to save as many of the daythalers as possible. Basically, this requires leaving the area by foot, which in turn calls for some kind of agreement with Clan Karohar. There is such an opening; when Girind and her likes realize that the two forest gods are about to clash, they may consider the player characters' pleads. Here, too, the game master may determine which - if any - of the forest gods will prevail in the final battle.





The Bell Tolls for Kastor

Kou are finally approaching Kastor, the infamous jewel of Seragon. There is the stone wall, thick and high, to guard against elven arrows and barbarian war claws; the sun temple with its shimmering dome; the tower with its renowned bell. But there are also disturbing elements – jet-black smoke rising from the annex of the sun temple, and an abundance of town guardsmen. You halt one of the residents. Eying you fearfully, she asks: “Have you not heard? They murdered our mayor!” She neither waits for your reply, nor answers your question as to who “they” are.

You approach a squad of town guards, dressed in filthy clothes with single blue details – armbands, belts or patches – visible beneath their service coats: “Murderers struck in the night, killing four members of the council, the mayor being one of them. But you are in safe hands. The new mayor has strengthened the town’s defenses.”

You head onwards towards the sun temple; there you will find the one you seek, whom you know and trust. Further north stands the Bell Tower; tall and mighty, built by the industrious ancients. At its top hangs the town’s proud bell – not having tolled during the murders, and still just as silent as the cooling corpses ...

Introduction

THE LEGENDARY BELL OF KASTOR has always warned the town's residents of attacks, and according to myth, its clang will scatter any darkness threatening the town. The citizens of Kastor are no strangers to suffering and catastrophes; numerous are the barbarian assaults that were repelled in the early days of the town, and many still remember the mass slaughter of year 15, when a cryptwalker prowled the streets searching for an artifact and the treasure hunters who stole it.

Now the bell has not tolled for a long time, and people have begun to take their safety for granted, not noticing the agents of darkness operating in Kastor. But when several members of the Town Council are killed in a single night, the citizens are roused from their slumber.

The murders appear to be connected to a witchburning three years earlier, but soon it is shown to go even deeper – all the way back to the very creation of the town. And, as so often before, the seed of creation is marked by death.

THE BELL TOLLS for Kastor is an adventure for the role-playing game *Symbaroum*. The first section addresses ways to make the player characters (pc) interested and invested in the adventure. Then the background of the adventure and the town of Kastor are introduced, followed by descriptions of central non-player characters (NPC) and the chain of events that drive the adventure

forward – should the player characters not act to change its course.

The events are divided into Developments (actions that the characters are likely to undertake), and Complications (incidents the Game Master may use to make the adventure more interesting). The chain of events ends with a presentation of the story's most probable climax.

Darda's time in Thistle Hold

Should it seem wrong for the player characters to have met Darda in Kastor, she could as well have spent time in Thistle Hold, or some other place, and met the player characters there.

Player Characters

THE BELL TOLLS for Kastor may be played using any PCs with reason to visit the town, either with each other or on their own.

If new player characters are created for the adventure, they should either receive an extra 50 in *Experience* in order to stand a chance, or the Game Master could reduce the number of enemies to achieve reasonable odds in battle. Either way, the PCs should have good reasons for caring about what happens, or at least have an interest in the continued existence of Kastor.

AN OLD FRIEND OR LOVER

The easiest way to start the adventure is to make the NPC Darda (see page 40) a close friend or former lover to one of the PCs. In that case, Darda enlists a professional courier to deliver a message to one or more of the PCs. The message comes in a sealed metal tube, containing the letter and a capsule of vinegar. Should the tube or its lock be forced open, a needle breaks the capsule and the letter will wither, becoming unreadable. On the cylinder it reads: "The moons in the Sun Tower – Darda".



This text (which may be construed by a close friend who has grown up in Kastor along with Darda) refers to the nights the friends spent in the copper dome of the sun temple, watching the moon through its lead-framed windows. To the friends it seemed like a hundred and one moons were dancing on the glistening marble floor. "101" later became a secret code for meeting in the sun tower by nightfall, when the priests of the church had gone to sleep.

If it seems inappropriate for someone to have grown up with Darda, their relationship could be of some other nature – close friends or lovers – and the story of the 101 moons could have been something Darda told the PC in confidence, perhaps as a code word, so that they will always be able to trust letters or messages from each other.

The letter can be found as a handout at the back of this book, page 62. When reading it, note that Darda thinks the PCs know about the witch-burning almost three years ago, when in fact they do not. The news did not travel far beyond the borders of Seragon and never reached the player characters' ears. Let it be a mystery to them until they arrive at Kastor where, in conversation with the non-player

characters present, they soon learn what Darda is referring to.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE ADVENTURE

The Bell Tolls... is a combination of an Adventure Landscape and a Classic Adventure. In the spirit of the adventure landscape a setting (Kastor) is presented, along with a collection of non-player characters harboring their own ambitions (primarily the Teratomancers and their leader Kagliostro) and a dramatic incident to set the story in motion. This incident – the murder of the council members and the new order rising as a consequence – has already transpired when the player characters arrive in Kastor. From there on, the players may do as they please.

But there is also an aspect of classic adventure to The Bell Tolls..., as it follows a certain chain of events. Note that the chain of events describes what happens if the player characters do NOT act to change its course. The adventure has many possible endings, the most likely one being a final battle inside an abandoned mine. But the player characters may as well confront Kagliostro at another time and place.

A delegation of templars from Templewall was present at the burning of Kastor's sorcerers.

Let the players decide

The players should agree on what reason, or reasons, the characters have for being in Kastor. Individual player characters may of course have their own highly personal reasons (perhaps a previous love affair with Darda?), but it is always helpful for the group as a whole to strive towards a common goal. The Game Master should present the possible reasons for the player group's presence, and then let the players discuss which alternative seems most suitable to them.

Background

THE ADVENTURE'S BACKSTORY can be divided into three parts. First, the legendary time when the Bell of Kastor played a part in defeating a mighty lindworm. Secondly, the more current struggle between two sects, Terato's Dawn and the Spawn of Symbar, in which the former emerged victorious. Lastly, as a consequence of their victory, Terato's Dawn took over Kastor, right before the start of the adventure.

The legend of the Bell and the Dragon is summarized in the Scholarly Matters section (see page 31). The battle of the cults and the takeover in Kastor are described below.

TERATO'S DAWN AND THE SPAWN OF SYMBAR

For a couple of years, the town of Kastor was the scene of a battle between two rival cults; the dark-seeking sorcerers of the Spawn of Symbar and the monster cult Terato's Dawn, led by monster mages known as the teratomancers.

At first, the two cults worked together, but over time they began to compete for the authority over, and revenue from, Kastor's shadow world, as well as the infiltration of the town's various offices and organizations. One drastic move, made three years ago by the ruthless leader of the teratomancers, led to ultimate victory for the monster cult.

After months of planning, they planted evidence proving their opponents to be darkseekers and sorcerers – which they were, but had always managed to keep secret. The teratomancers seized the opportunity to rid themselves of yet another enemy: Garala, the snooping Sister of Prios from the town's sun temple. Evidence was planted so that the infamously callous black cloak Baumelo would find it, and soon no fewer than five daemon worshippers – four leaders of the Spawn of Symbar,

and the innocent Sister Garala – were burning at the stake. The Spawn of Symbar's remaining members fled the town, were murdered in Kastor's alleys, or disappeared without a trace.

Now, three years have passed and the teratomancers have plotted and schemed, infiltrating Kastor's ruling class. The dawn of monsters is imminent, in Kastor's case taking the form of the Great Awakening. The teratomancers' goal is to find a lost mine outside Kastor, and there free the shackled dragon (actually the lindworm) Margumal.

In order to reach this goal, they require the Chieftain's Axe (see page 38) and someone to guide them on their journey. They must also maintain control of the Bell Tower and the bell at its top; not to use it, but to prevent it from being used against the dragon. The axe can simply be taken, while acquiring a guide calls for a rigorous interrogation of people who might hold information regarding the mine's whereabouts. Controlling the Bell Tower is basically a military matter, requiring control over the Town Watch.

This is not impossible to achieve, at least not to a resourceful and relentless group of monster worshippers. But not even Terato's Dawn is able to subdue the town for long; a few days at the most. The leaders of Terato's Dawn are aware of this, and will do anything – literally anything – to realize their ambitions within that timeframe. That this would most likely mean the death of countless citizens, and possibly the ruin of Kastor itself, is considered a small price to pay for the rebirth of their monstrous god.

THE TAKEOVER IN KASTOR

About a month ago, the council member Grendol began to have dreams about the destruction of Kastor, watching it emerge in the form of a roaring dragon ("death on rusty wings!" he wrote in his journal). But it was actually the leader of Terato's Dawn, the wizard Kagliostro, who sent him these dreams of doom in order to manipulate the council member into taking his side. Kagliostro later contacted Grendol in person, openly threatening him with the town's – and more importantly, his own – destruction.

Shaken by his dreams, Grendol decided to cooperate. He allowed assassins to enter the Town Hall and kill Mayor Selima. At the same time, two other antagonistic council members were murdered – the town's highest ranking theurg was attacked in the sun temple and the Treasurer on the way home from her favorite tavern. Lastly, another member of the council was thrown in one of the cells beneath the Town Hall.

Fever of the Hunt

The adventure Fever of the Hunt can end in many ways. One ending results in the survivors of Salindra's Hope travelling south, reaching Kastor and eventually settling down in its slums. The player characters could have gone with them for their protection, or simply because they too yearned for the relative safety of Kastor. Whatever the reason for the PCs' presence, in The Bell Tolls... it is assumed that the survivors of Salindra's Hope (most being of barbarian heritage) are there as well, making their mark on the town's poorer areas.

Grendol justified his actions to himself: "Better to let these clueless worshippers of light die than allowing them to put up a futile resistance when the dragon arrives - for that would be the death of us all!" This way, only a foolish few would lose their lives. Also, Grendol was appointed mayor, which is always nice - and potentially lucrative. Kagliostro had made it very clear that they sought the riches of the mine as a tribute to their monstrous overlords, and that Grendol would receive a piece of it. However, this was a lie. In reality, the teratomancers intend to wake Margumal and let him feast on the people of Kastor.

Following the murders, the remaining members of the council were summoned to an emergency meeting, where they immediately voted for Grendol to be the new mayor - with "special authority" to deal with the current crisis.

The assassins made two mistakes. The first was killing the wrong person, allowing their intended victim to escape; the second was leaving a witness, and an important one at that. The wine-guzzling treasurer Ardetta had lost her distinctive slouch hat in a game of dice and, in the dark, the assassins attacked the wrong woman. While hiding, the actual council member watched as

her "doppelganger" was stabbed to death. One of the assassins noticed the witness and tried to silence her with a poisoned knife, but Ardetta managed to escape with her life.

Another victim was First Theurg Karstak, who at the time of his murder was with his protégé Darda in the annex of the sun temple. A veteran of the Great War, albeit an aged one, the high priest was considered a difficult target; the girl accompanying him was seen as a slight complication. But this proved wrong. Having killed the First Theurg, the attackers were in for a grave surprise, as their victim's young protégé had soon killed three of them. The surviving assassins retreated, throwing fire bombs into the annex. Wounded, Darda fled down the church's catacombs to where she felt safest: the Temple of the Many.

It is now the morning after the murders and the meeting where Grendol was declared mayor. The official story is that three members of the council were murdered. Another one has - according to Grendol - disappeared, and Darda is thought to be dead. Three of the assassins were killed as well, their bodies severely scorched in the burned down annex.

This is the situation when the player characters arrive to town.

Darda and the Temple of the Many

Darda showed an early interest in theology, particularly in the Temple of the Many, a heretical movement with history in Kastor. Though the Temple of the Many was already forbidden back then, a PC who knows Darda could not have failed to overhear her debating the issue of Prios and the pantheon to which he once belonged - even though the apostles of Prios have condemned the Lawgiver's former kin. To learn more about the Temple of the Many, see The Kastor Heresy and The Temple of the Many under the heading Scholarly Matters (page 31).

Scholarly Matters

THE ADVENTURE IS largely based on Kastor's history; a fact that player characters with the *Loremaster* ability may draw conclusions from.

It mostly revolves around the witch-burning three years earlier and the feuding cults Terato's Dawn and the Spawn of Symbar, but also the legendary bell of Kastor and the "dragon" that is said to have once tormented the town.

THE LEGEND

The legend of the bell and the dragon is of great significance to the adventure's backstory. The tale is widely known in Kastor and its surrounding region, and its two levels - general and specific - are recounted below, along with non-player characters who know of them and the requirements for player characters to hold such knowledge.

Note that the specific level reveals that the beast is not a dragon, but a lindworm.

THE BELL AND THE DRAGON (GENERAL):

WHO: All characters possessing the *Loremaster* ability.

The Dragon and the Bell is a cautionary tale. Various versions of the legend are told amongst the barbarians of south Davokar, and in the dwarves' account

of the story, the bell is claimed to have been forged by their ancestors in Symbaroum.

In the general version of the legend, the main characters are a dragon, a witch and a barbarian chieftain. The chieftain established a mine to rob the earth of its iron, thus luring a dragon to the area. His witch then recalled a bell in the deep of Davokar; one that allegedly had the power to repel monsters. The chieftain retrieved the bell, and with its help, the dragon was shackled and slain inside the mine. The chieftain fell in battle, but the witch survived, and she hung the bell in a tower to protect against future monsters. She mounted the chieftain's axe - still stained with the serpent's blood - in the longhouse as a reminder of what awaits those who greedily pursue the earth's riches.

THE BELL AND THE LINDWORM (SPECIFIC TO THE ADVENTURE):

WHO: The teratomancer Kagliostro, the self-taught mystic Darda, player characters with the *Loremaster* ability who pass a *Cunning* test.

Between a hundred and a hundred and twenty years ago, the barbarian clan Jezora had a settlement where Kastor is currently located. The clan was

in possession of a mine, providing them with iron, which they forged into weapons to keep rival clans at bay. The chieftain's witch suggested that part of the iron could be used for trade, not just weaponry. That way, the clan's enemies would grow fewer over time. Fearful of his neighbors, the chieftain did not listen. He dug further into the mine, his zeal even greater than before. The digging caught the attention of a terrible lindworm – named Margumal by certain sources – which seized the mine. Iron weapons could not penetrate the serpent's scales, and the witches' curses were equally ineffective. The clan's chieftain had no choice but to yield to the serpent's supremacy.

The chieftain asked his advisors for a way out of this dilemma, and the solution came from someone unexpected. A captive sorceress, enchain'd and awaiting her execution, claimed to have the answer: deep within Davokar was an ancient weapon, an alarm bell from the days of old Symbaroum, an artifact the sorceress said could be used against the serpent. Thus, a group of warriors were sent to find and retrieve the bell.

As the decimated expedition returned, the bell was mounted in a tower built for the purpose, and when Margumal came to demand tribute of the chieftain, the sorceress sounded the bell, ridding the serpent of much of its power. The clan warriors charged and drove it back into the mine.

Still not satisfied, the chieftain, his witch, and the sorceress pursued the wounded monster to its lair. There, the chieftain struck it with his axe. The serpent easily deflected the blow and shrieked (if one is to believe the legend): "You cannot slay me!", to which the sorceress answered "that is true, and why would I?". Her magic crashed down on the serpent like a wall of solid rock, and with a loud bang, the creature fell through the fabric of reality, banished to the Yonderworld.

The chieftain arose, leaning on his axe. The sorceress took his hand and grasped the weapon, which still reeked with the blood of the serpent. "Here is the key" she said, nodding towards the axe. Then, she struck the chieftain down with one precise blow. According to the most wide-spread version of the tale, as he died, the chieftain looked at her with bewilderment. The sorceress shrugged: "The rift must be sealed, must it not?"

The witch and the sorceress fought each other in the mine, and after a long battle the witch prevailed. She left the mine, concealing the place with her magic so that no one would ever find it. She passed the chieftain's axe to his heir, hoping that it would serve as a commemoration and protect future generations from choosing the same fate.

THE SPAWN OF SYMBAR

WHO: Anyone with the abilities *Loremaster* or *Sorcery*, who passes a *Cunning* test.

A successful test means the person knows about the cult, recognizes their symbols, and may recall what they stand for: the Spawn of Symbar is one of many darkseeking cults, led by sorcerers who derive their calling and heritage from the glory days of Symbaroum. As they see it, the elves and their Iron Pact allies ruined something great and beautiful – the ultimate liberation and supremacy of mankind; the divinization of the fettered human being. They regard themselves as children of Symbaroum, dedicated to finish what their ancestors could not.

TERATO'S DAWN

WHO: People with the abilities *Loremaster* or *Beast Lore* who pass a *Cunning* test possess superficial knowledge of the matter. Those with *Loremaster* or *Beast Lore* who pass a *[Cunning -5]* test may recall further details regarding the cult.

Superficial knowledge: Terato's Dawn is a monster cult convinced that mankind is really a servitor race to monstrous overlords, and that the hardships of contemporary life – the death of Alberetor, corruption, the spread of the undead – are a consequence of the hubris that has driven humans into thinking otherwise. The cult's teachings resemble clan Gaoia's worship of Grandfather Lint, and are not very different from those of the Jakaars in Thistle Hold and other groups within the widely unpopular movement known as the Friends of the Forest. Of course, the Iron Pact shares a similar criticism of civilization, though the elves and their allies do not engage in downright monster worship.

Deep knowledge: The leaders of Terato's Dawn call themselves "teratomancers"; monster mages. They speak to monsters and interpret their will. Though it may seem like they are controlling the monsters, such a claim would be rejected by any teratomancer – the monsters simply protect their own, just as the cultists sacrifice themselves for their monstrous gods.

The cult has its origin in early Symbaroum, where many worshipped powerful serpents and mighty spiders, as well as other godlike beings and creatures. According to the teratomancers, Symbaroum fell because of mankind's growing tendency to worship itself. The worst of these sins was the hunting of dragons; the slaying of these sacred creatures foretold the terrible devastation to come.



The cult lacks historical continuity in Kastor. Its recent incarnation stems from treasure-hunting mystics who found scriptures in the depths of Davokar and, inspired by these texts, recreated the cult. For a long time, members of Terato's Dawn were secretly recruited among the town's mystics. Its core consisted of a few self-taught mystics, who soon were joined by a small group of wizards from Ordo Magica.

Later they also managed to convert a few sun priests; something that has its own particular reasons, connected to the so called Kastor Heresy...

THE KASTOR HERESY

WHO: People or player characters with the abilities *Loremaster* or *Theurgy*.

Aside from the military presence, the town of Kastor was initially inhabited by refugees from Alberetor who still worshipped the gods within the Temple of the Many.

It was only after the cleansing of year 13 – known by scholars as “the Kastor Heresy” – that the inhabitants joined ranks with the followers of Prios, or at least pretended to. Today there is still

The sorcerers in The Spawn of Symba may have lost the battle in Kastor, but they are intent on winning the war!

an underground reverence for the Temple of the Many, which recognizes Prios as one of the gods, but would never depict him as the One.

THE WITCH-BURNING

WHO: Anyone who has lived in Kastor for at least three years. Everyone with the *Loremaster* or *Sorcery* ability.

Three years ago, five sorcerers were burned at the stake, in a village just north of Kastor. Four of them were lowborn and of little significance; the real scandal was that a sister of Prios had been converted and had fallen to darkness. Her name was Garala, and she maintained her innocence until the very end.

Those who pass a *Cunning* test remember further details, such as the location of the burned bodies (they were buried in a corner of the catacombs beneath the Sun Temple, where Darda sometimes hides).

THE TEMPLE OF THE MANY

WHO: All Ambrians know some of the old gods, just as barbarian PCs have practical knowledge about the powers of Davokar. The Game Master may assume that the PCs are more or less familiar with what is described in the “Spirituality” section of the chapter “Welcome to Symbaroum!” (page 20 in the *Core Rulebook*). Encourage the players to read this section before the adventure if you think their memories need refreshing, or they could be asked to read it when questions arise during the course of the game.

People with the *Loremaster* ability are familiar with the most common gods of the Temple of the Many. With a successful *Cunning* test, they may also recognize their symbols and recall which of the gods have an equivalent among the barbarian deities (see Table 2 below).

Today, those devoted to the Temple of the Many make up a small part of Kastor’s citizens. They are not very prominent amongst the town’s elite, but can be found there as well.

The Temple of the Many is one of several religious groups worshipping the gods of Alberetor as a

divine collective. The Temple of the Many was one of the more prevalent churches in the south, even though it was an organization of commoners, rather than one for the elite. Their main competitors were more specialized mystical cults, who recognized all gods, but focused on one, or sometimes a few of them. The Vestals of Prios were, for example, always popular among Alberetor’s nobles, as was the oracle worship affiliated with the Wildling in the city of Berendoria.

Which gods are worshipped within the Temple of the Many, as well as their names and number, varies from place to place. Sometimes even local heroes have been granted a place among the Many. But most deities are honored wherever there is a temple. People worship the Many, individually and collectively, as gods of certain domains. Usually one prays to the god of the domain one wishes to affect, but the majority of holy days and religious festivals (the spring- and fall equinoxes, and the summer- and winter solstices) belong to them all.

These days, people worship in two ways. As mentioned earlier, Prios was one of the gods, and those devoted to the Many therefore visit the sun temple to worship him – albeit in his earlier and more diminutive form (the one represented by Father Sarvola in Thistle Hold). But some people go to secret masses in hidden temples, where the Many are worshipped as a collective.

The persecution of all who renounce the word of Prios as interpreted by the First Father and the Curia has led to bitterness and sheer desperation. Strengthened by the people’s discontent, the monster cult Terato’s Dawn has managed to convert a number of sun priests – clerics who “played along with the Prios charade” while secretly worshipping the Many, and have grown increasingly hateful of how the Curia treats those who follow the old ways. To these priests, Terato’s Dawn is a paradoxical backlash: if the Church of Prios will not recognize the other Young Gods, they should suffer the wrath of the Old Ones: the monster gods who ruled mankind before it found salvation in the Temple of the Many.

Table 2: Gods prominent in Kastor’s chapel

| YOUNG GOD | SYMBOL | DOMAIN | BARBARIAN EQUIVALENT |
|------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Prios (The Sun) | Sun/beams | Sun/life/hearth fire | Lyssa the Sun Cat |
| The Earthmother | Cup/well | Harvest/safe birth | Uron the World Serpent |
| The Pathfinder | Triangle of twigs | Luck/hunt/safe travel | Arex the Hunter Wolf |
| The Executioner | Double axe (stylized rune) | Punishment/ justice/natural death | Oroke the Spider Queen |
| The Wildling | Braid | Passion/inspiration/visions | The Blood-Daughter (in part) |
| The Arch-Builder | Arch/open gate | Creation/building/forging | Lamarruk the Elder Dwarf |

The Landscape

KASTOR IS LOCATED next to the southern shore of River Eanor, a day's march from the edge of Davokar. The town was raised in a location where the stronghold of a barbarian chieftain once stood. There is not much left of the wooden structure; the Ambrian troops who conquered it reshaped it into a military camp of Ambrian design. All that remains is the central stone tower and its bell, engraved with ancient runes.

The Town of Kastor

WHILE KASTOR GLOWS with hope and confidence, the surrounding duchy of Seragon is a nuisance to the town's rulers. Kastor is the largest town in Seragon, the duchy governed by the vain Duke Gadramei. He is the youngest of the late king's many nephews – making him Queen Korinthia's cousin – and known to be an idle drunkard; characteristics somewhat incompatible with fiscal stability. However, he has made defending against the north a priority, causing many to overlook their duke's dubious lifestyle.

Today, Kastor is the heart of Seragon's economy, but the duke himself is ever absent, constantly indulging himself in pleasure and amusement at his palace further south. He visits the town once a year, enticed by the annual spring festival and its carnival (which is almost solely responsible for Kastor's reputation as a town of decadence and promiscuity), but with that exception, the Council is relatively free to govern its town.

There are more than twelve hundred people living in Kastor, and its demographics have changed in recent years, as conflicts between the barbarian clans of southern Davokar has caused refugees to seek shelter in the town. These people have formed a more or less isolated settlement within the already vast Slum District.

As Thistle Hold grows increasingly bureaucratic and difficult to manage, more and more treasure hunters choose Kastor as the base of their expeditions. Another perk of doing so is that fewer ranger patrols are based in Kastor, making it easier to

venture into Davokar without a license. This will probably not be the case for long – hence, one should take advantage of the opportunity while it lasts. The treasure hunters bring riches, but also a degree of public unrest to the town. However, they have caused the town's blighted north-eastern area to flourish and brought an economic surge to other parts of Kastor as well.

The following are brief descriptions of places relevant to the adventure. To aid the Game Master, additional establishments in Kastor are also listed below – while they are not essential to the adventure, they could be helpful in bringing the town to life, or be used to answer player characters' questions regarding things not related to the adventure's central locations.

THE CHAPTER OF ORDO MAGICA

Ordo Magica's chapter in Kastor was founded by the surviving masters from the city of Berendoria in Alberetor. These masters have now grown old and their leader, Chapter Master Isokles, is nearing death. His imminent demise has led to a conflict of succession between the two masters Myndol and Kyhara. The adventure's main antagonist, the teratomancer Kagliostro, is an established adept at the chapter and, being interested in politics, he has been chosen to represent Ordo Magica at the Town Council – a position no master would ever dream of accepting.

The tower of the chapter is occupied by the following individuals:

The History of Kastor

- 500 (approx.) Clan Jezora settles in the area, which according to legend was deserted.
- 100 (approx.) The Bell and the Dragon, see the Scholarly Matters section.
- 3 Ordo Magica sends a delegation to clan Jezora. They are the first to describe the settlement and way of life of these barbarians. The Bell Tower is mentioned in detail, even though the wizards are denied entry to it.
- 5 The duchy of Seragon is founded, along with the other Ambrian duchies, despite the Jezites' ongoing rebellion in parts of the new realm. In Seragon, battles rage continually between Ambrians and Jezites.
- 10 Chieftain Haloban is defeated, and all surviving Jezites are hunted down and executed. The Queen's Army sets camp in the strategically important area where Kastor is located. The camp is soon transformed into a wooden fort for permanent occupation of the area.
- 11 The wooden fortification is replaced with a stronghold of stone, enticing many settlers to set up camp not far from its sturdy walls. The town rapidly emerging around the fort is named Kastor.
- 12 The barbarians of clan Karohar attack Kastor, bursting through its palisade. The town is saved only by the perseverance of its defenders and the legendary power of the bell. This victory has been celebrated annually ever since, with Kastor's famous carnival.
- 13 The Kastor Heresy takes place – heretics worshipping the Many refuse to convert and accept the pure teachings of Prios. For this offence, on the opening day of the annual carnival, they are executed by hanging.
- 15 Treasure hunters draw a vengeful and exceptionally powerful cryptwalker to the town. Hundreds die as this "King Wraith" reclaims its treasures, in the middle of the summer's harvest festival.
- 16 Kastor receives the title of town and is, as such, granted the proper privileges.
- 20 Five sorcerers, including Sister Garala of the sun temple, are burned outside the town.

- **Arastor, Symbolist** of the barbarian clan Vajvod, invited by Isokles to further the exchange of knowledge between Ordo Magica and the Azure Temple of Vajvod.
- **Kagliostro, Adept of the Order** (also leader of the teratomancers)
- **Kyhara, Master of the Order, Illusionist**
- **Myndol, Master of the Order, Mentalist**
- **Orondo, witch**, invited by Isokles to facilitate knowledge exchange.
- **Isokles, Master of the Chapter, Pyromancer** and war hero, currently dying of old age
- **The Magisters Grego, Haas and Ukoul** (an ogre)
- **Five Adepts**
- **Seven Novices**

THE SLUM DISTRICT

Many of Kastor's citizens are poor, and have gathered in one of the town's shabbier areas. In the Slum District one finds a mixture of exiled barbarians, refugees from civil conflicts in Davokar, and Kastor's least prosperous. The Town Watch is reluctant to enter the Slum District. Most people living there get by on the charity of Prios's soup kitchen, while some work odd jobs in other parts of the town. During the day, the Town Watch tolerates the presence of paupers throughout Kastor, but makes sure to drive them back into the Slum District by nightfall.

In the Slum District, order is kept by the newly arrived Legbreakers; goons working for Silvercheek, a middle-aged lady of barbarian descent who runs the gambling den "5:2". Silvercheek and the Legbreakers are survivors of a failed treasure-hunting excavation deep within Davokar, in a place called Salindra's Hope. They will not speak of it, but the look on their faces clearly suggests that few survived whatever horror was awakened by the diggers.

THE SUN TEMPLE'S SOUP KITCHEN

The sun priests manage a soup kitchen to feed Kastor's poorest, which actually keeps the residents of the Slum District from starving to death. The soup kitchen is run in shifts by initiates of the church. One of the most frequent is young Eglio, who feels closest to Prios while helping those in need, and is happy to take other people's shifts at the soup kitchen. Hence, the other initiates regard Eglio as head of the operation.

Eglio does not mind this unofficial designation, although at times he feels burdened by the responsibility it entails. In fact, he often dreams of heading

west, to Thistle Hold, where Father Sarvola runs his mission house. If he was not so desperately needed in Kastor, he would immediately gather his belongings and hope to become one of Sarvola's initiates.

THE CHIEFTAIN'S BELL, INN

At the Chieftain's Bell the Carnival of Kastor never ends; everything the town is infamous for (the drinking, the brawls, the debauchery) can be found here, day in and day out, from before the sun sets to after the break of dawn. There are rooms for hire, but if you want a good night's rest you should definitely go to some other place. The Chieftain's Bell is for those who have no intention of sleeping – either because they returned from their latest expedition laden with treasures, or because they returned with nothing at all.

The inn is run by a family of mixed Ambrian and barbarian heritage. The wife Agshela, called "the Comandress" due to her outspoken style, manages the dining area while her husband, Seralo, does the cooking and the dishes. Their three children do what they can to help out.

THE RUSTY DRAGON, INN

The Rusty Dragon is one of the oldest inns in Kastor. Even though its condition has deteriorated over the years, it is still regarded as the fanciest establishment around, and many of the town's most prominent citizens visit its tavern regularly. The innkeeper, Ramigal, is a direct descendant of the inn's original founder.

The inn was named after the legend of the Bell and the Dragon, which many guests – and certainly all personnel – are familiar with. They do not know the story in detail, but expect that most learned folk would, and are happy to refer inquisitive PCs to the sun temple or the tower of Ordo Magica.

Below the Rusty Dragon, behind a hidden door, is a tunnel leading to the Many's chapel. It is kept secret, of course, as belief in the Many has been considered heresy for years. Few of the inn's guests adhere to the Temple of the Many, but Ramigal and his family do. Yet they keep up the appearance of being god-fearing worshippers of Prios, which is mitigated by the fact that the Temple of the Many does recognize Prios as one of the deities. The inn's cellar is one of a few ways leading to the chapel, but most devotees go through the catacombs and sewers, not to draw attention.

THE SORCERERS' CRYPT

Here rest the five "sorcerers" who were burned some years ago. One of them was sister Garala, who had a close relationship with Darda. She was also

on to Kagliostro, and had to be disposed of. For a while, Darda came here to rest, next to her late fellow Sister of Prios.

On Garala's tomb, covered with dust, lies a triangle made out of rat bones. Player characters with *Loremaster* may, with a successful *Cunning* test, recognize that the symbol represents the Pathfinder, a now heretic antecedent to the Church of Prios. For more information, see *The Temple of the Many* under *Scholarly Matters*.

One of the sorcerers executed alongside Sister Garala has returned to life as a Necromage (page 232 in the *Core Rulebook*). Darda is protected by Sister Garala's spirit, but player characters who come there looking for Darda are not given the same protection.

THE HIDDEN CHAPEL

The Temple of the Many's chapel is located below the town, west of the Rusty Dragon, and can only be reached from either the inn or through the sewers and catacombs. It is a small congregation, comprised by some thirty adults; no children are allowed, as they would risk exposing the chapel. For more about the Temple of the Many and its intricate relation to Prios, see the sections *Scholarly Matters* and *The Kastor Heresy*.

In the adventure *The Bell Tolls for Kastor*, Darda uses the chapel as a hideout, most likely accompanied by a handful of other devotees who have also sought shelter and spiritual guidance in these dark times. The members of the congregation are happy to welcome player characters to their chapel, but

Why won't the wizards sort out the mess?

The wizards of Kastor are old-fashioned scholars, primarily interested in their own research and status among their fellow wizards. To them, minor concerns like the town's future existence are less of a priority. When required, they are willing to contribute with rituals comfortably performed within the walls of the Chapter. But it would take a direct attack on their tower, or a full-blown invasion of the town, for them to leave their sheltered existence.

However, there is – or was – one exception: Isokles, the Chapter Master who in his youth was a prominent pyromancer and military commander. In later years he worked hard to achieve peace and understanding between the mystical traditions, and invited theurgs, witches and symbolists alike to the chapter, to learn from each other. Now, the old man is dying, spending more and more of his time crying and babbling about old battles and mistakes that left friends and allies dead on the battlefields of the Great War.

Survivors of Salindra's Hope

Some of the refugees living in the slums are survivors from the adventure *Fever of the Hunt*. If the player group has not yet played that adventure, but plans on doing so later on, or if the adventure ends in such a way that the survivors' presence in Kastor would be unlikely, it is recommended that the names of Silvercheek and the Legbreakers are changed.

If the player characters have played *Fever of the Hunt*, they probably have some form of relation to Silvercheek and her Legbreakers, which affects what happens in this adventure.

will – with the exception of Darda – cover their faces, fearing persecution.

The Temple of the Many's high priest is brother Tamilo, a middle-aged, silver-tongued tinker with a profound love for the Many. He is the first to uncover his face, should the characters prove themselves trustworthy. Then the rest of the congregation will follow his example.

THE TOWN HALL

The Town Hall is the mayor's workplace and, ever since the murders, the well-guarded residence of the surviving council members. Mayor Grendol sits in the great hall on the second floor, constantly signing arrest warrants.

On the wooden wall behind him hangs the axe mentioned in the legend of the Bell and the Dragon. It is a long-shafted bastard axe* with the qualities *Bastard weapon, Long, Slow and Massive*. Down in the basement, Kagliostro has gathered all "traitors" who might know the location of the lost mine; one of them being the "missing" council member Mullando.

For more about the situation at the Town Hall, see *Audience at the Town Hall* (page 47) and the complication *Captured!* (page 49).

KASTOR

1. Ordo Magica
2. The Slum District
3. The Sun Temple's Soup Kitchen
4. The Chieftain's Bell
5. The Rusty Dragon
6. The Town Hall
7. The Bell Tower
8. The Executioner's Cottage
9. Garrison
10. Sun Temple
11. The Crypt
12. The Chapel of The Many

Non-player characters

BELOW YOU WILL find descriptions of the non-player characters featured in the adventure. Some of the recently deceased individuals are also listed, as they will probably be mentioned during the player characters' investigations. NPCs who play no significant part in the adventure are instead mentioned in the description of the location where they can be encountered.

Some non-player characters have *boons* and/or *burdens*, as introduced in the upcoming *Player's Handbook*. Those featured in this adventure are described in the Appendix.

*The long axe may be wielded with one hand. If so, it no longer has the qualities Long and Massive, but is still Slow. The quality Slow means that the person wielding it may not attack and move on the same turn – both the Movement Action and the Combat Action are spent on the attack. The quality Massive means that the weapon's damage die is rolled twice, and the highest value determines the amount of damage inflicted. If such a weapon is used against a PC, the armor die is rolled twice and the lowest value determines the level of protection.

THE BELL TOWER

The bell-ringers in Kastor are dwarves of the Burukh family. They manage the bell with diligence, but do not ring it until they are ordered to do so. Nor do they stop anyone else from ringing it, although they advise against it, repeating "the price is high" over and over.

The Bell Tower is central to this adventure. As its power threatens the plan of Terato's Dawn, they keep it under strict surveillance as soon as they have gone through with their coup. The sellswords of the Blue Company make the tower their headquarters, by order of Kagliostro, to prevent it from being used against the lindworm Margumal after it has been freed.

THE EXECUTIONER'S COTTAGE

This is the home of Kastor's executioner, Segvilla. She is a middle-aged changeling and a loner, who – when not working – carves intricate wooden figurines, which she then sells to wealthy collectors.

Segvilla remembers the witch-burning very well, and can give a detailed account of how it was performed. However, she is less observant when it comes to people, and if someone asks about who was present at the burning, or what their reactions were, the changeling simply shrugs and matter-of-factly describes how she picked the firewood, impregnated it, and placed it so that it would catch fire as quickly as possible.

ARDETTA, TREASURER

Ardetta is Kastor's treasurer, and normally quite a lively person who enjoys playing dice, having a glass of port, and smoking her ceramic pipe. On the night of the murders she got more drunk than usual, gambling away her characteristic slouch hat. This saved her life, as it caused the assassins to target the hat's new owner instead. After witnessing the murder she was detected by one of the assassins who then threw a poisoned knife at her. She survived the poison, but will never be the same, with scales covering her chest and neck – still spreading – and a strange hunger



Darda as a companion

Should it be needed, Darda may join the player group, controlled by one of the players during combat. She can also replace fallen PCs throughout the adventure..

for the wild (see Terato's Draught in the Appendix). Ardetta has the stats of a Cultist (page 211 in the *Core Rulebook*), with the following additions:

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Manner | Polite and tired |
| Traits | Privileged |
| Boons/Burdens | Bestial (scaly skin), Dark Blood |
| Shadow | Silver with black lining (corruption: 1) |

THE BLUE COMPANY

The Blue Company is an infamous group of sellswords, commanded by the charismatic and vicious Captain Tredella. By order of Kagliostro, she has occupied the Bell Tower, from which she commands her troops. For this particular mission the troops are dressed in the uniforms of the Town Watch. However, all sellswords wear some kind of distinctly blue-colored sign on their clothes or weapons, which may be perceived with a successful Vigilant test.

The sellswords of the Blue Company – including Captain Tredella – have the stats of a Robber (page 211 in the *Core Rulebook*), with the addition of Manners: Grinning arrogantly.

| | | | |
|---|---|-----------------------|---|
| Manner | Struggles to remain calm | | |
| Race | Human (Ambrian) | | |
| Resistance | Ordinary | | |
| Traits | <i>Contacts</i> (the Sun Church) | | |
| Accurate 10 (0), Cunning 11 (-1), Discreet 5 (+5), Persuasive 15 (-5), Quick 7 (+3), Resolute 13 (-3), Strong 9 (+1), Vigilant 10 (0) | | | |
| Abilities | <i>Holy Aura</i> (novice), <i>Lay on Hands</i> (novice), <i>Leader</i> (novice), <i>Theurgy</i> (novice), <i>True Form</i> (novice) | | |
| Weapons | Dagger 3 (short) | | |
| Armor | Blessed Robe 2 (flexible) | | |
| Defense | +3 | | |
| Toughness | 10 | Pain Threshold | 5 |
| Equipment | Worn copy of <i>The Lightbringer</i> (the holy book), Field Equipment, 1 thaler, 3 shilling | | |
| Shadow | Gold shimmering, like sun on a silver vase (corruption: 0) | | |

Tactics: Belago does not fight, he heals. If he indeed finds himself in battle, he shrouds himself in a Holy Aura and asks the attacker to show Prios' mercy; should that not help, he turns to flee or hopes that his allies will save the day.

BURUKH, THE BELL-RINGERS

The Burukh family, and its matriarch Artak, keep to themselves. They have no connection whatsoever to Yndaros' dwarven families or the kingdom of Küam Zamok, nor do they practice Dwarf Law. Their kin have lived in Kastor for ages; they claim to have been present even before the refugees who, following the war against the Spider King, established an outpost in the area about five centuries ago.

The dwarves are a quiet lot, and if they have anything to say at all, they gently but firmly refer to their matriarch, Artak, who speaks on their behalf.

The dwarfs have the stats of a Self-taught Witchhunter (page 214 in the *Core Rulebook*), with the additions of the Traits: *Earth Bound* and *Absolute Memory*, and Manners: Quiet.

Artak has stats like a Cult Leader (page 211 in the *Core Rulebook*). If the Game Master has access to the *Player's Handbook*, Artak possesses the mystical power *Retribution* instead of *Curse*. She also has the traits *Earth Bound* and *Absolute Memory*, and Manners: Muttering.

BELAGO, SUN PRIEST

Until recently, Belago was the second highest ranking sun priest in Kastor. When father Karstak was murdered, Belago took his place as First Theurg. With this sudden advancement and the

chaos following the temple fire, he now focuses on keeping his people calm and securing the burnt-down annex. Politics, on the other hand, do not interest Belago. Even though he has officially inherited Karstak's place at the Council, he will not take any part in it. However, tenacious player characters may convince Belago that something strange is going on at the Town Hall, prompting him to take action.

DARDA, HERETIC

Darda was raised in Kastor and has, with the exception of one year in Thistle Hold, spent all her life in the town and its Sun Temple. That being said, Darda is an apostate; a heretic devoted to the Temple of the Many. Darda's position as liturg of the Sun Temple protects her and provides a place to worship Prios as she deems proper.

Darda had a rough upbringing, and often stayed close to Sister Garala. As the priestess was accused of sorcery – and burned for it – Darda entered a very dark period in her life. When she emerged from it, she started looking into what had really happened.

When the characters meet Darda, regardless of when or how it happens, she tells them the following: She is certain that Garala had uncovered some dark cult, and that the evidence of her being

Earth Bound & Absolute Memory

Dwarves are protected from corruption, taking physical damage instead. 1 temporary corruption deals 1 damage to Toughness.

Dwarves remember anything they see or read; they never write themselves.

a sorcerer was fabricated in order to get rid of her. One important piece to this puzzle is that it was Kagliostro who presented the allegations against the five sorcerers and saw to it that they were burned. While Darda has no physical evidence of this, there are witnesses (Belago, Illeva and Purgida) to confirm it – if they dare, and if the PCs get to them before they are taken to the Town Hall dungeons.

It is an open secret that Darda often visits the catacombs beneath the Sun Temple. She is also said to dwell in the mausoleum where Sister Garala is buried. This is not true, but certainly not something Darda wishes to correct, as she uses the catacombs to reach the Temple of the Many.

| | | | |
|---|---|-----------------------|---|
| Manner | Quiet but friendly | | |
| Race | Human (Ambrian) | | |
| Traits | Contacts (The Temple of the Many) | | |
| Accurate 5 (+5), Cunning 11 (-1), Discreet 10 (0), Persuasive 7 (+3), Quick 13 (-3), Resolute 15 (-5), Strong 9 (+1), Vigilant 10 (0) | | | |
| Abilities | Alchemy (adept), Knifeplay* (novice), Poisoner (novice), Ritualist (adept: Borrow Beast, Possess, Quick Growth), Twin Attack (novice) | | |
| Weapons | Two daggers 3, and poison 3 for 3 turns | | |
| Armor | Blessed Robe 2 (flexible) | | |
| Defense | -5 | | |
| Toughness | 10 | Pain Threshold | 5 |
| Equipment | 3 doses moderate poison | | |
| Shadow | A copper surface with spots of verdigris (corruption: 3) | | |
| Tactics: Darda really wants to understand what is happening, which is why she hesitates risking her life in combat. If she has no option, she uses her knives to hold the enemy off while looking for an escape route. If she fights together with allies (or a former lover), the combat scene turns into a good test of her true emotions; who is she willing to risk her life for and who will she decide to leave in order to solve the vexing riddle. | | | |

*The Knifeplay ability at novice level lets Darda attack using Quick instead of Accurate when using short weapons

GARALA, SECRET HERETIC

Garala was Darda's protector and friend, and the one who led her to the Temple of the Many. Sister Garala was on to Terato's Dawn, which is why Kagliostro planted false evidence of her being a sorcerer. Sister Garala was burned alongside actual sorcerers affiliated with the Spawn of Symbar (see

page 31-34 for more about the Temple of the Many, Terato's Dawn, and the Spawn of Symbar).

GRENDOL, UNDEAD MAYOR

Grendol had only been Mayor for less than a day when he was killed and brought back to life by Kagliostro. Now undead, he is at the Town Hall signing arrest warrants with machinelike motions, and will keep doing so until interrupted. Should someone attack him, or interfere with the job at hand, Grendol will defend himself. He attacks by grabbing and headbutting his enemy – with the tip of the sword that killed him still protruding from his eye socket.

The undead Grendol has the stats of a Dragoul (see page 230 in the *Core Rulebook*), but with *Man-at-arms* (novice) instead of *Shield Fighter*. Manners: Twitching, repetitive motions. Weapons: Sword-tipped headbutt 6 (short).

HARBASSAS' MARAUDERS, GOBLIN WARRIORS

Harbassas' Marauders are a band of brigands named after its leader. The Marauders are hired by Kagliostro to tighten his grip on the town; a welcome respite to the goblins, who would otherwise be lying in soggy ditches waiting to rob bypassing paupers. The mystic has also promised them the right to harass and subdue the people of Kastor – quite a tempting offer to the vengeful goblin warriors.

Harbassas' Marauders – including Harbassas himself – have stats like a Fortune-Hunter (page 215 in the *Core Rulebook*). They also have Manners: Nervously giggling.

UWULGAS AND MURKY

The goblins' "own" ogres obey no-one but Harbassas. They have the stats of a Plunderer (page 215 in the *Core Rulebook*), with the addition of Manners: Glaring arrogantly, muttering.

ILLEVA, COMMANDER OF KASTOR

The town's commander is a taciturn veteran, hardened by many battles against monsters and barbarians. She is the firm-handed leader of Kastor's Town Watch, although she prefers resolving problems herself. She is often seen where order is disrupted and crimes are being investigated.

If Illeva's stats are needed, use those of a Ranger Captain (page 212 in the *Core Rulebook*). She also has Manners: Suspicious and worried.

KARSTAK, KILLED IN THE SUN TEMPLE

Karstak was a leading political figure in Kastor, and one of Mayor Selima's strongest allies. Following sister Garala's execution, he was the one taking care

Sister Garala and the Necromage

The circumstances in the crypt – the necromage being bound to it and refraining from attacking Darda while she is accompanied by the spirit of Sister Garala – is part of the place's extraordinary magic. If the player characters arrive at the crypt together with Darda, they too gain the protection of Garala's spirit, and the murmuring necromage

retreats down its tomb. If the party is followed by enemies, the necromage will attack them instead, which is obviously an unexpected bonus to the player characters..

~~~~~ ♦ ~~~~

of Darda, but their relationship was not without friction. In secret, Darda was already worshipping the Temple of the Many, and she blamed Karstak for not having fought hard enough to save Sister Garala from the fire. At the night of the murders, Karstak was killed in the sun temple's annex, where he was speaking to an upset Darda. She got away – he did not.

### THE TOWN WATCH OF KASTOR

Kastor's town watchmen are strangers in their own town, outnumbered by Kagliostro's forces – the Blue Company, Harabassas' Marauders, and the cultists of whom they are not even aware. Formally, all orders come from Mayor Grendol, though all but the most ignorant realize that something is terribly wrong with the current situation. They trust in their commander, Illeva, but since her complaints have been ignored by her superiors, most watchmen now make as little effort as they possible can without disobeying direct orders.

The Town Watch of Kastor has the stats of a Self-taught Witchhunter (page 214 in the *Core Rulebook*), with the addition of Manners: Demoralized and afraid.

### MULLANDO, HEAD OF SANITATION

Mullando is a modest and thoughtful man, to whom excelling at his job and being appreciated by strong leaders was always important – one such leader being Kagliostro, until the mystic threw Mullando in the Town Hall dungeons for “treason”.

Initially, he is said to be one of the murder victims, though no one has seen his dead body; he is simply assumed dead because of his disappearance. Mullando has actually been imprisoned, as Kagliostro suspects that he knows where the mine is located.

Mullando has no significant abilities to speak of beyond the standard stats and Manners: Smiling ingratiatingly, nervous hands.

### KAGLIOSTRO, TERATOMANCER

The son of Ambrian settlers, raised at the edge of Davokar, young Kaglio watched his family be annihilated by a beast of the forest, a raging aboar, furious from being wounded by Ambrian monster hunters. Only Kaglio managed to survive, thanks to his curious talent for moving unseen.

For a few years he lived on the streets of Kastor, stealing to survive, before his talents were discovered by a passing member of Terato's Dawn, who took him in. Kaglio has since advanced rapidly within the cult, and some years ago he adopted the suffix “-ostro”, thinking it a powerful name more suitable to a man of his potential. If his plan to free

the serpent Margumal is successful, Kagliostro will be able to claim leadership of Terato's Dawn – and then mankind will enter a new era, ruled by monstrous masters!

Kagliostro conceals his growing horns and claws by wearing long gloves and a large slouch hat, and covers his spreading scales with cosmetics. An attentive player character may see through all of this with a successful [Vigilant -4] test. Kagliostro is well aware that his exalted state cannot be kept secret for long, but soon, such things will no longer matter: when his plan has succeeded, he will display his bestial features to the world as a badge of honor.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                      |                       |   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| <b>Manner</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Grandiose gestures, grand words on exaltation and submission                                                                                                         |                       |   |
| <b>Race</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Human (Ambrian)                                                                                                                                                      |                       |   |
| <b>Resistance</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Strong                                                                                                                                                               |                       |   |
| <b>Traits</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <i>Armored (II), Bushcraft, Natural Weapon (I), Regeneration (III)</i>                                                                                               |                       |   |
| <b>Accurate</b> 10 (0), <b>Cunning</b> 10 (0), <b>Discreet</b> 13 (-3),<br><b>Persuasive</b> 15 (-5), <b>Quick</b> 11 (-1), <b>Resolute</b> 9 (+1),<br><b>Strong</b> 7 (+3), <b>Vigilant</b> 5 (+5)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                      |                       |   |
| <b>Abilities</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <i>Larvae Boil (master), Powerful Gift* (novice), Ritualist (adept: Break Link, Raise Undead, Telepathic Interrogation), Unnoticeable (master), Wizardry (adept)</i> |                       |   |
| <b>Boons/ Burdens</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Bestial (small horns, claws), Dark Blood                                                                                                                             |                       |   |
| <b>Weapons</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Claws 3 (short)                                                                                                                                                      |                       |   |
| <b>Armor</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Cloak and scaly skin 5 (flexible), and Regeneration 4 Toughness per turn                                                                                             |                       |   |
| <b>Defense</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | -1                                                                                                                                                                   |                       |   |
| <b>Toughness</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 10                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Pain Threshold</b> | 5 |
| <b>Equipment</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Tome of Ceremonies (including <i>Monster Control</i> , see Appendix, page 56), Disguise Kit (+1 on disguises)                                                        |                       |   |
| <b>Shadow</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Lush green with streaks of rotting vegetation (corruption: 3)                                                                                                        |                       |   |
| <b>Tactics:</b> Kagliostro has no interest in berating insubordinate characters, unless they are an acute threat to his plans; he gladly leaves such activities to his minions. If he has to intervene, he keeps to the background, making himself unnoticeable and his enemies life difficult using Larvae Boil. During the fight in the mine, Kagliostro is consumed by the ceremony until it is completed or interrupted by the characters. |                                                                                                                                                                      |                       |   |

\*Powerful Gift grants Kagliostro a Corruption Threshold equal to his full Resolute value.

**MARGUMAL, LEGENDARY LINDWORM**

The lindworm Margumal hatched sometime during the glory days of Symbaroum. The serpent still remembers with horror the human lords' hunt for his kin, and the joy of seeing Symbar crumble to dust. In memory, he can still enjoy his own hunt across the open reaches where the accursed elves saw fit to plant the forest of Davokar.

These memories, and many more, are now overshadowed by his long and harsh stay among the abominations haunting the Yonderworld. Margumal has survived only by falling into hibernation over long periods of time, protected by his great magic; a lesser creature would surely have returned to this world thoroughly corrupted.

However, the serpent has not returned completely unaffected – his horns are glowing red, his eyes are black as tar, and streaks of rust stretch over the silvery blue pattern on his body.

|                   |                                                                                           |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Manner</b>     | Bewildered and furious                                                                    |
| <b>Race</b>       | Serpent (Lindworm)                                                                        |
| <b>Resistance</b> | Mighty                                                                                    |
| <b>Traits</b>     | Armored (III), <i>Enthrall</i> (III), Long-lived, Robust (III), Sturdy (III, see page 56) |

**Accurate** 7 (+3), **Cunning** 9 (+1), **Discreet** 5 (+5), **Persuasive** 11 (-1), **Quick** 10 (0), **Resolute** 18 (-8), **Strong** 16 (-6), **Vigilant** 10 (0)

|                  |                                                                                                              |                       |   |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| <b>Abilities</b> | Exceptionally Resolute (master), Exceptionally Strong (master), Iron Fist (master), Natural Warrior (master) |                       |   |
| <b>Weapons</b>   | Bite (short), two attacks at the same target 12/8, or one attack 14)                                         |                       |   |
| <b>Armor</b>     | Scales 8 (flexible)                                                                                          |                       |   |
| <b>Defense</b>   | +4                                                                                                           |                       |   |
| <b>Toughness</b> | 48                                                                                                           | <b>Pain Threshold</b> | 8 |
| <b>Equipment</b> | None                                                                                                         |                       |   |
| <b>Shadow</b>    | Pulsing green, like a great moss-clad heart with veins a dark and oily purple (corruption: 16)               |                       |   |

**Tactics:** The lindworm is initially confused and prone to regard all creatures nearby as enemies. When it calms down, its goal will be to get free and will avoid any fights which do not further that course. Should it find itself cornered it uses bites and the trait *Enthrall* in a deadly combination.

**PURGIDA, ADEPT OF THE ORDER**

Among the wizards of Kastor, squabbling between themselves while leaving external affairs to the sociable Kagliostro, there is but one potential ally to

the player characters: the ambitious adept Purgida. A student of the pyromancer Isokles, she dreams of one day being a master pyromancer herself. Her fiery disposition makes her less inclined to be reading tomes and scrolls in her chambers; she prefers to put her skills to the test by, for example, assisting the Town Watch.

|                  |                                                                                                                                                                               |                       |   |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| <b>Manner</b>    | Loud and clumsy                                                                                                                                                               |                       |   |
| <b>Race</b>      | Human (Ambrian)                                                                                                                                                               |                       |   |
| <b>Traits</b>    | Privileged                                                                                                                                                                    |                       |   |
| <b>Accurate</b>  | 10 (0), <b>Cunning</b> 11 (-1), <b>Discreet</b> 5 (+5), <b>Persuasive</b> 10 (0), <b>Quick</b> 13 (-3), <b>Resolute</b> 15 (-5), <b>Strong</b> 7 (+3), <b>Vigilant</b> 9 (+1) |                       |   |
| <b>Abilities</b> | Brimstone Cascade (adept), Flame Wall (novice), Ritualist (novice: <i>Flaming Servant</i> ), Wizardry (adept)                                                                 |                       |   |
| <b>Weapons</b>   | Walking staff 3 (long)                                                                                                                                                        |                       |   |
| <b>Armor</b>     | Order Cloak 2 (flexible)                                                                                                                                                      |                       |   |
| <b>Defense</b>   | -3                                                                                                                                                                            |                       |   |
| <b>Toughness</b> | 10                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Pain Threshold</b> | 4 |
| <b>Equipment</b> | Worn copy of Isokles' memoirs                                                                                                                                                 |                       |   |
| <b>Shadow</b>    | Polished gold mirroring a fire (corruption: 0)                                                                                                                                |                       |   |

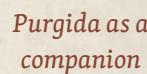
**Tactics:** Purgida tries to shield off the field of combat with her flame wall so that fewer enemies reach her allies. After that she offers support, casting brimstone cascades from behind the melee. Her flaming servant is always close to her for protection.

**IGNIS, PURGIDA'S FLAMING SERVANT**

**Accurate** 10 (0), **Cunning** 7 (+3), **Discreet** 9 (+1), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 11 (-1), **Resolute** 13 (-3), **Strong** 15 (-5), **Vigilant** 10 (0)

|                  |                                                                   |                       |   |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| <b>Abilities</b> | Bodyguard (novice), Iron Fist (novice), Two-handed Force (novice) |                       |   |
| <b>Weapons</b>   | Oozing double-axe 7 (deep impact)                                 |                       |   |
| <b>Armor</b>     | Glowing heavy chainmail 4                                         |                       |   |
| <b>Defense</b>   | +2                                                                |                       |   |
| <b>Toughness</b> | 15                                                                | <b>Pain Threshold</b> | 8 |
| <b>Equipment</b> | None                                                              |                       |   |
| <b>Shadow</b>    | Blazing like a roaring bonfire (corruption: 0)                    |                       |   |

**Tactics:** Normally, Ignis walks behind Purgida, but in combat he positions himself in front of her, swinging his enormous axe. Ignis also tries to make sure that the attacks aimed at his mistress hit him instead (this requires a passed Resolute test, see the Bodyguard ability).



Purgida as a companion

It is possible for Purgida to join the player characters in their fight for the town's survival; in combat, she is then controlled by a player. Purgida would also make a suitable replacement for any fallen PCs.





The descendants of Margumal rove the shadowy halls of Davokar, expecting to be worshipped and celebrated for their strength and majesty.

### SELIMA, FORMER MAYOR, DECEASED

Selima was quite popular as Mayor, re-elected on several occasions to continue serving the town. At the night of the murders, she was killed in the Town Hall by Kagliostro himself. Her corpse was burned in the fireplace, in the dining room below the Grand Hall.

### TERATO'S CULTISTS

Terato's Dawn in Kastor is comprised of Initiated Cultists and Enlightened Cultists, of which the latter command the former and report to Kagliostro. All Enlightened Cultists have willingly subjected themselves to Terato's Draught, and survived with holy marks (see the Appendix, Elixir: Terato's Draught, Boon: *Dark Blood* and Burden: *Bestial*).

Low-ranking cultists have the stats of a Cult Follower (see the *Core Rulebook*, page 211), plus Manners: Fanatic gaze and Equipment: Monster mask. Enlightened Cultists have the following stats:

|                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                   |                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Manner</b>                                                                                                                                                                                 | Growls, teeth bared                                                               |                         |
| <b>Race</b>                                                                                                                                                                                   | Human (Ambrian)                                                                   |                         |
| <b>Resistance</b>                                                                                                                                                                             | Ordinary                                                                          |                         |
| <b>Traits</b>                                                                                                                                                                                 | Contacts (Monster Cults)                                                          |                         |
| <b>Accurate</b> 5 (+5), <b>Cunning</b> 13 (-3), <b>Discreet</b> 10 (0), <b>Persuasive</b> 7 (+3), <b>Quick</b> 10 (0), <b>Resolute</b> 11 (-1), <b>Strong</b> 9 (+1), <b>Vigilant</b> 15 (-5) |                                                                                   |                         |
| <b>Abilities</b>                                                                                                                                                                              | <i>Poisoner</i> (novice), <i>Sixth Sense</i> (novice), <i>Steel Throw</i> (adept) |                         |
| <b>Weapons</b>                                                                                                                                                                                | Throwing knife 3, possibly coated with Terato's Draught                           |                         |
| <b>Armor</b>                                                                                                                                                                                  | Woven silk 2 (flexible)                                                           |                         |
| <b>Defense</b>                                                                                                                                                                                | 0                                                                                 |                         |
| <b>Toughness</b>                                                                                                                                                                              | 10                                                                                | <b>Pain Threshold</b> 5 |
| <b>Equipment</b>                                                                                                                                                                              | 5 throwing knives, monster mask, 3 doses Terato's Draught                         |                         |
| <b>Shadow</b>                                                                                                                                                                                 | Sooty silver (corruption: 4)                                                      |                         |
| <b>Tactics:</b> The enlightened cultists throw their teratogenic knives while chanting dark hymns.                                                                                            |                                                                                   |                         |

# Events

**DEPENDING ON HOW** the characters decide to approach the situation, the following events may transpire or be used as inspiration in describing what is happening. Should they act unexpectedly, the Game Master must (as always) play along, based on what he knows about the goals of other actors.

## A State of Emergency

**WHEN THE PLAYER** characters arrive in Kastor, it is already obvious that something terrible has occurred: everyone seems to be on edge.

Serious-looking guards are posted in street corners and outside important buildings. When faced with questions, they answer curtly, and then refer to the declared state of emergency, hoping to cover up the fact that they themselves know very little. However, if the characters pass a *Persuasive* test, they may provide the following information:

Four members of the council, including Mayor Selima, were murdered during the night. An emergency meeting was held, where Grendol – the merchants' representative at the council – was appointed mayor.

The new mayor is at the Town Hall with the rest of the council, protected by ranks of grim guards.

Apparently, the murder victims were Selima (former mayor), Father Karstak (high priest),

Ardetta (treasurer) and Mullando (Fire Chief and Head of Sanitation).

The Sun Temple is still smoking from a fire that recently burned its annex to the ground. The temple is not guarded by the Town Watch, but by frightened laymen and a few novice priests.

When meeting the Town Watch, a successful *Vigilant* test reveals that at least some watchmen differ from the others – they wear blue details among their equipment, indicating that they are sellswords of the infamous Blue Company.

Furthermore, a successful [*Vigilant* -5] reveals that there appears to be a secret elite among the Town Watch. A few seemingly ordinary watchmen use secret signs to communicate with each other; signs that neither regular watchmen, nor Blue sellswords, seem to notice. The ones using signs are actually cultists who, a long time ago, infiltrated the Town Watch.

## Initial Investigations

**SNOOPING PLAYER CHARACTERS** may gather many pieces of information, but while some are obvious to everyone, others are revealed only to the wise, the perceptive, and the well-connected.

### QUESTIONS REGARDING DARDA

When the player characters go looking for Darda, no one will answer questions about her, but only refer to Father Belago, who has replaced the late Father Karstak.

Belago tells them about the attacks, and that Darda was with the high priest when the enemy burned the church's annex to the ground – with

her and Father Karstak still inside. Father Belago thinks aloud: “Darda’s return was most unfortunate; the witch-burning took its toll on her, with Sister Garala and all that...”

Since the characters probably know nothing of this, Belago continues: Sister Garala was, along with four others, accused of witchcraft and collaborating with daemons, and burned at the stake three years ago. Darda did not take Garala’s death very well, and would have succumbed to despair, had father Karstak not been there for her. But despite his support, she made plenty of poor choices – and her fascination with death did not help. “And now, they are both gone...”

If pressured, Belago admits that Darda never seemed happy with being a priest: "She preferred dwelling in the catacombs, with the dead..." Notice that this is misleading: Darda is a member of the heretical Temple of the Many; sure, at first she only visited the catacombs to be near sister Garala's grave, but later she used it as an excuse for heading underground - to secret gatherings at the Temple of the Many's chapel.

#### ON NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS

Grendol (formerly representing the merchants) is said to have been appointed new mayor. Other surviving council members are Illeva (commander of the Town Watch) and Kagliostro (representing the wizards). Who will replace Mullando as Head of Fire and Sanitation is, apparently, unclear (due to him still being alive).

#### A SUCCESSFUL VIGILANT TEST WHILE WANDERING THE TOWN

There is a remarkable number of guards standing watch around the Bell Tower - for what reason is unclear.

The purpose of the bell is to warn the town and its surrounding settlements in case of an attack. According to rumors, the bell is an artifact of tremendous power, capable of dispelling dark magic, that has saved Kastor's population many times in the past.

#### A SUCCESSFUL VIGILANT TEST OR THE TACTICIAN ABILITY, WHILE WANDERING THE TOWN

The number of guards is surprisingly large for a town of this size; citizens can also confirm that many of them (further investigation proves it to be 50%) are people they have never seen before (the Blue Company, cultist infiltrators, and assassins - all in Town Watch uniforms).

#### A NETWORK OF SHADY CONTACTS (AS TREASURE HUNTERS), OR TIES TO THE MILITARY

There is talk of arrests having been made, and that earlier this morning "traitors" were rounded up and taken to the Town Hall dungeons.

## Developments

**THIS SECTION EXPLAINS** what happens when the characters decide to follow up on certain leads or walk down a particular path. In their eagerness to find out what is going on, it is of course possible for the players to come up with completely different alternatives, in which case the Game Master must, with discretion and flexibility, bring them back on the right track.

#### EXAMINING THE MURDER SCENES

The player characters will probably want to examine what is left of the burnt-down temple annex, where Darda and Karstak are supposed to have been. Most of the wooden inner walls were completely incinerated. The scorched remains of four bodies can still be found where the dining hall used to be, in the middle of the scene, yet to be dealt with by Commander Illeva and her medicus. The following conclusions may be drawn:

- Passing a *Vigilant* test is enough to realize that only one of the corpses is wearing a priest robe, while the others seem to have worn leather armor beneath thick wadmal clothes. A successful *Cunning* test with the *Medicus* ability concludes that the dead priest was a man (Karstak).
- A successful *Vigilant* test with the *Medicus* ability, directed at the other corpses, shows that they were stabbed repeatedly with a knife. Furthermore, a *Cunning* test with

*Medicus* or *Poisoner* reveals that it was not the blade itself that killed them, but the poison with which it had most likely been smeared. A close friend or lover of Darda recalls that she often carried a pair of daggers, and was a skilled alchemist.

- It takes a successful [*Vigilant -5*] test directed at the leather-armored corpses to notice that their charred faces appear to have been deformed, or possibly covered by some sort of leathery mask...

Selima was murdered inside the inaccessible Town Hall, and apparently no one knows exactly where Mullando died (since he is not really dead, but merely imprisoned in the Town Hall basement). However, the characters are free to have a closer look at where Ardetta was killed.

At the scene of her murder, just north of the Town Square, they find nothing more than a large stain of dried blood on the ground. But if the characters expressly decide to search the place for clues (hoping to find something related to the murderers) and pass a *Vigilant* test, they notice another dried-up bloodstain in the western part of the square.

A successful *Cunning* test with the *Medicus* ability reveals that the blood found on both of these locations was spilt around the same time, and the

size of the western one indicates that the victim could still be alive. In other words, there may be a witness to Ardetta's murder!

## DARDA IN THE CATACOMBS

Having listened to father Belago, the player characters might decide to go after Darda and try to locate her in the catacombs - and the town's sewers to which they are connected - beneath the Sun Temple.

Finding a trace requires that someone with the *Bushcraft* trait passes a [Vigilant -5] test - many people have visited the catacombs, particularly near the entrance where the graves of former high priests and other deceased are still looked after and provided with flowers and candles. Finding Darda's trace, among all the others, is not easy.

Having found her trace, one must follow it to the correct location. It takes three successful [Vigilant -3] tests to track Darda through the catacombs, to the underground chapel of the Temple of the Many.

Should one fail the first test, a second try is granted, but then the trace leads to the Sorcerer's crypt instead. Darda used to go there for rest, and sometimes still returns to lay flowers by sister Garala's grave. The problem is that a necromage haunts the place; one that Darda is aware of, but not affected by (as she has sister Garala's protection).

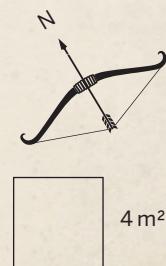
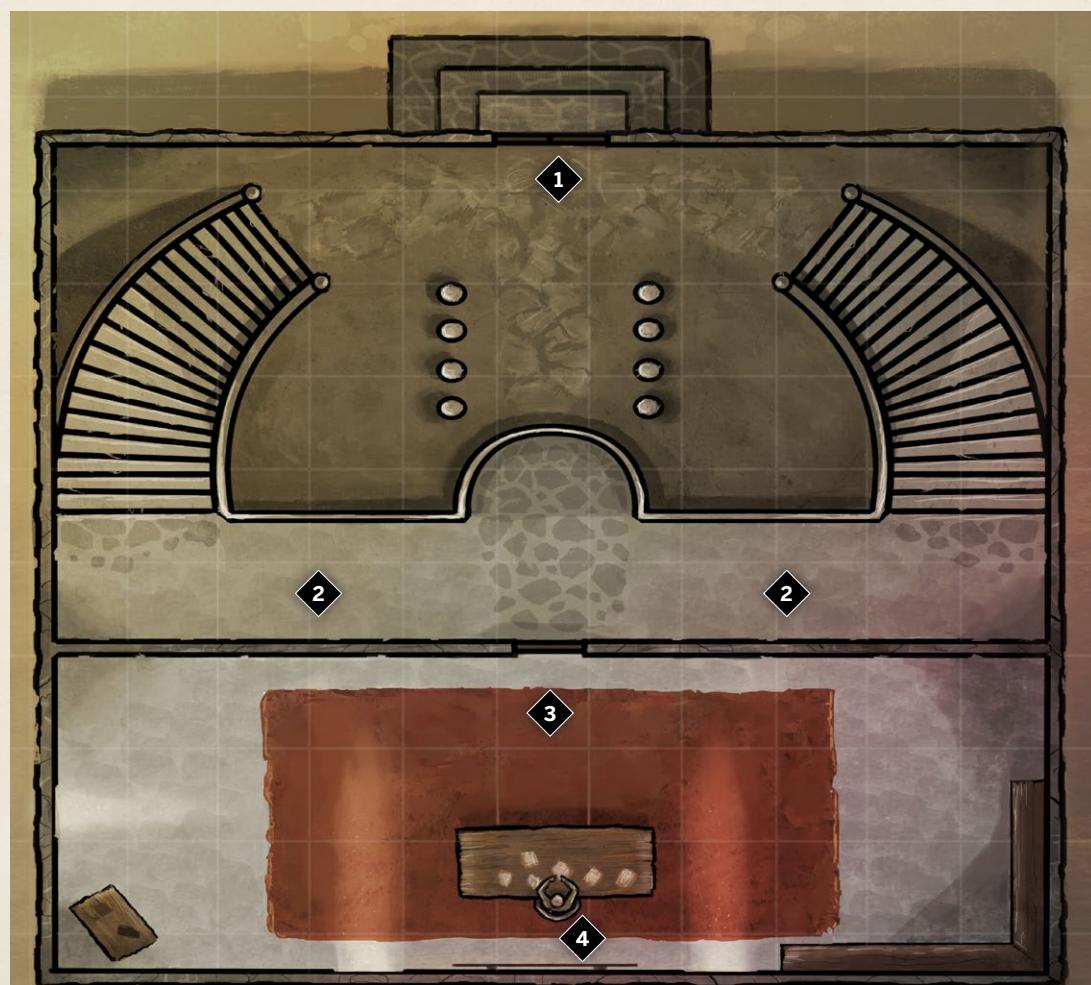
Arriving player characters may not be as lucky (for more information about the place, see the description of Kastor, page 35).

## THE TOWN HALL

**Audience:** The player characters may seek an audience with the new mayor, Grendol, at the Town Hall. But actually meeting him is difficult, as Kagliostro claims him to be "terribly busy". If the player characters insist (by passing a *Persuasive* test), Kagliostro allows them to see the Mayor - or rather, to walk into a trap in front of the undead Grendol. Then, the goblins and their ogres sneak up on the player characters from behind and attack them - as does Kagliostro - when they approach the Mayor in the Great Hall.

**Forced entry:** Should the player characters try breaking into the Town Hall, they are greeted by (pc+2) of Harbassas' Marauders, who will fight until half of them are injured. Then they flee to gather reinforcements - Kagliostro had promised them power and authority to harass the snooty humans, and they did not expect any heavy resistance.

The bottom floor of the Town Hall is empty, its basement serving as Kagliostro's prison (see *Captured!*, page 49). In the Great Hall on the top floor sits a solitary mayor, signing arrest warrants



### THE TOWN HALL

1. Entance
2. Balustrade
3. The Grand Hall
4. Mayor Grendol

for people singled out by Kagliostro as potential “traitors”. The Mayor does not respond when spoken to, and when the player characters come closer, they realize something is wrong. By passing a *Vigilant* test, the player character notice the shaft of a small sword protruding from the back of Grendol’s head – yet, he is still moving! He is undead, slain and reanimated by Kagliostro in order to keep doing the necessary paperwork.

#### AUDIENCE WITH WATCH COMMANDER

Gaining an audience with Illeva, Commander of the Town Watch, is not very difficult, as she already suspects that something is wrong. She thinks the assassins might have had help from the inside; how else could they know so much about the town’s leaders and where to find them? She has also gotten hold of the cultists’ monster masks, left behind at the murder of “Ardetta”. Illeva has not yet shown it to anyone, but may reveal it to the player characters, should they ask for help and pass a *Persuasive* test.

Illeva also knows that the corpse now lying on a stretcher below the Town Watch Headquarters is not really Ardetta, but a widow named Gerda – an avid drinker and gambler who had squandered her late husband’s entire fortune. That the assassins murdered the wrong woman, is only known by Illeva and the Town Watch’s medicus, Klarag. If it were to get out, the killers would surely come after the former treasurer, which Illeva would rather avoid.

If Illeva is absolutely convinced that the player characters speak the truth and can be trusted, she will ask them for help in finding Ardetta (as she herself is probably being watched by whoever is behind it all). Later on, she is willing to lead the original half of the Town Watch against the other half (the Blue Company, Harbassas’ Marauders and cultists), for example in an attack on the Town Hall or the bell tower.

#### MAYOR GRENDOL’S RESIDENCE

As the Mayor is never home, but stuck at the Town Hall, breaking into his private residence is quite a

simple feat. In the bedroom/office, players who pass a *Vigilant* test may find Grendol’s diary, in which his dreams of Kastor’s death and destruction are described in detail.

He writes about desperately explaining his concern to the other council members; “the only one who appears to be listening is the wizard Kagliostro, but him I do not trust!”. The last entry is dated three days ago: “I have received an anonymous letter; someone wishes to see me and present a proposition. I do not know if I can listen to any more of this town’s schemes, for tonight everything was clear to me. Death approaches on rusty wings!”

#### THE MYSTERIOUS BELL OF KASTOR

Darda – or some of the other wizards in the town (such as Purgida) – knows the bell to be a powerful artifact, but has not been able to study it more closely, as the bell-ringing Burukh family has not let her. Now the dwarves have been “sent home”, and the guards will not allow anyone but Kagliostro to enter the tower.

The Burukh family home – not far from the Bell Tower – is empty. There are clear signs of the family members having been violently abducted. They are now being held captive in the Town Hall basement, along with the rest of the “traitors” (see the *Captured!* complication).

The Blue Company has taken complete control of the Bell Tower, and their leader, Captain Tredella, has turned it into her headquarters. Its gate is guarded by  $(PC+2)$  sellswords at all times, and there are an additional  $(PC+2)$  sellswords sleeping on every one of the five floors. On the top floor – where the legendary great bell is mounted – a single sellsword keeps watch.

It is possible to climb the tower’s exterior all the way to its top. Player characters with the *Acrobatics* ability succeed automatically, while others must pass a *Quick* test for every floor (5 tests). Failing means the person cannot continue, but must either turn back or enter the nearest floor through a window. A player character reaching the bell may throw down a rope for the others to climb, causing them to succeed automatically, with or without *Acrobatics*.

Holding the top floor against sellswords charging from within is quite a challenge. However, the narrow staircase only has room for two enemies at a time, while those holding the high ground may attack from all directions. The sellswords are not interested in suicide missions, and if they suffer ten casualties, they will settle for closing off the way down and inform Kagliostro that there are traitors at the top of the tower.

### Combat in the Great Hall

A fight against Kagliostro, the goblins with their ogres, and the undead Mayor, is not easily won. If the player characters wish to flee, they must either try to jump through windows (a five-meter fall), concede, or be struck down. In the latter case, they are kept alive for questioning. They are disarmed and placed in the Town Hall basement (see *Captured!* under Complications).

## Complications

WHILE THE PLAYER characters conduct their investigations, many complications may arise. These are described below.

### ARDETTA ASKS FOR HELP

Council Member Ardetta was lucky enough to escape the attacks. She spots the characters from her hideout on the Rusty Dragon's second floor, and as she is unsure if any of Kastor's permanent residents can be trusted she decides to put her faith in the newcomers.

She later contacts them through the innkeeper Ramigal, who offers to help the characters in their search for Ardetta. Should they accept his offer, he will bring them to her. She recounts what happened to her on the night of the murders, and will answer questions regarding the town and its history. If the player characters ask for details concerning the assassins, she answers thoughtfully: "Well, I think they wore monster masks to cover their faces, but... I was rather tipsy, you see, and it was dark, and... And I was quite terrified, so I might have been mistaken."

The skin on Ardetta's neck has grown scaly, as a result of her being infected with the enemy's poison. Obviously, this scares her to bits, and she asks medically or alchemically skilled PCs for help. There is no help to be had, but despite the condition of Ardetta's skin, her actual health is improving. However, she is now being hunted by both Terato's cultists and, in the long term, witchhunters.

A character learned in alchemy may extract the poison from her wound (requires passing a *Cunning* test), and in doing so, learn its forbidden and quite valuable formula. For more details concerning the poison, see Terato's Draught in the Appendix.

### GREEN-EYED CREATURES

Following the attack, Darda fled to the chapel below the town. There she received further information from other members of the heretical movement, and soon it became clear that the attack had nothing to do with the Temple of the Many.

To learn more, she uses *Borrow Beasts* to spy on the local government. She is also likely to notice her friend/s - the player characters - as they will be drawn to the places of interest to Darda. The PCs must then pass a [Vigilant -1] test to realize that they are being watched by animals; a difference of at least 5 also reveals that the animal in question - a dove, crow, dog or cat - has green eyes.

For a player character with the Beastlore ability, it only takes a successful Vigilant test to become

aware of the animals watching them, and the strange color of their eyes.

A person who knows Darda remembers that she too has green eyes. In addition to this, by passing a *Cunning* test, player characters with the Ritualist ability recall the following fact: Mystics performing the *Borrow Beast* ritual may let the animal mirror certain aspects of the mystic's appearance, as a way of communicating with the world. In this case, the mystic has given the animals her eye color.

### THE TOWN WATCH'S RAID

When the player characters have pursued two or three leads, Kagliostro sends several bands of cultist on raids, supplied with thick bundles of arrest warrants for "traitors", signed "Mayor Grendol".

Each group is composed of (pc) number of cultists, led by an Enlightened Cultist, all wearing Town Watch uniforms. The characters' names are among those listed in the arrest warrants. Belago is captured, as is Ardetta, who is found and dragged away if the characters do not intervene. If Commander Illeva and Purgida have openly assisted the player characters, they too are arrested.

The captured "traitors" are hauled to the spacious basement of the Town Hall through a backdoor. There Kagliostro and his thugs question them about the location of the lost mine. For more details, see the complication "Captured!".

### CAPTURED!

It is possible for the player characters to be captured by Kagliostro's minions. This could be the result of the PCs either being defeated in combat or failing in their attempt to break into the Bell Tower or the Town Hall.

Captured PCs are taken to the Town Hall basement, where other "traitors" are already gathered. If the PCs are wounded or dying, their wounds are bandaged - not healing them, but preventing them from dying. Kagliostro was clear on his point: people caught snooping around are likely to know something, and must be interrogated.

Among the other captives are the Burukh family and the Head of Fire and Sanitation, Mullando, who was imprisoned just after the takeover as Kagliostro had no further use of him. The following people may also be found here, depending on how far into the adventure the player characters end up in the dungeon, and what has transpired before then:

- **Ardetta:** The treasurer is caught in a raid, if the player characters do not come to her rescue.

- **Belago:** The sun priest is arrested, if he draws attention to himself (for example by helping the player characters) or is believed to know the location of the mine.
- **Illeva:** The Commander ends up in the dungeon, if she openly sides with the characters.
- **Purgida:** The Adept is also arrested, if she displays an abnormal interest in what has happened in Kastor, or if she helps the player characters.

Kagliostro resides in a room in the basement, some distance from the dungeon, leaving all dirty work to the goblins of clan Harabassas and their ogres. They threaten, beat, and intimidate the prisoners, dragging them up the stairs one by one to Kagliostro, who performs the *Telepathic Interrogation* ritual in order to find out the location of Margumal's lair.

If the player characters end up in Kagliostro's dungeon, they will have help getting out of there. Darda has kept her eyes on them, and decided to intervene. Through the sewer system, which is connected to the catacombs where she has hidden ever

since the murders, she enters the Town Hall. While the PCs are waiting in the dungeon, a green-eyed rat appears, carrying a small pry bar in its mouth.

Once they have acquired the tool, they hear a scraping sound from the other side of the wall, where Darda is digging. If the PCs do not give themselves away in some obvious manner, they may soon crawl through the opening and meet Darda. She leads them through the sewers, to the relatively safe Temple of the Many.

### KAGLIOSTRO HEADS FOR THE MINE

Sooner or later, Kagliostro will learn the location of the mine. Whom he receives this information from is irrelevant in this scenario.

When this happens, Kagliostro and his thugs leave the town heading east. Many people watch him go, accompanied by some twenty cultists. They cover their tracks as best they can, and someone with the *Bushcraft* trait/boon (PC or NPC) must pass three consecutive *Vigilant* tests in order to track them to the mine, located near the low hills a three-hour march east of Kastor.

## Climax: In the Serpent's Lair

A POSSIBLE CLIMAX is the confrontation with Kagliostro and his cultist in the mine, where the teratomancer is about to free the lindworm Margumal from his prison in the Yonderworld. A series of battles take place to stop Kagliostro from completing the ceremony.

### THE AMBUSH

The goblins and ogres who have managed to survive thus far are planning an ambush by the overgrown path leading to the mine. Luckily for the player characters, neither goblins nor ogres are able to keep quiet, constantly squabbling amongst each other.

If they pass a *[Vigilant +3]* test, characters approaching the location can hear the sound of bickering and shushing. Should they fail the test, they are surprised by the goblin attack.

Those passing the test detect the goblins in time, and can also tell that their argument concerns whether or not to support the "Monster King" (which is what they are calling Kagliostro) in freeing the "Killer Snake" (Margumal). The leader of the clan, Harbassas, is the strongest proponent for completing the mission, as they have not yet been paid. He is supported by any surviving ogres. The rest of the goblins are strongly opposed to the idea, stating everything from chafed feet to fear of both the dragon and the PCs (if they have beaten the goblins before) as reasons for finding other work.

The player characters have several options: attack head-on, sneak up on them for a surprise attack, negotiate with the goblins, or proceed towards the mine – the long way around.

**Head-on attack:** The goblins are not surprised, and the fight unfolds as usual.

**Sneak attack:** Every person trying to sneak up on them must pass a *[Discreet +3]* test. Those choosing not to do so start with a full turn's Movement Action towards the bushes where the goblins are hiding.

**Negotiation:** Should the player characters choose to negotiate, they must persuade Harbassas, which requires a successful *[Persuasive -1]* test; if

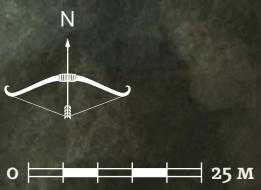
### Captivity as a Deus ex Machina

It could be useful for the Game Master to use captivity as a Deus ex Machina, rather than letting defeated player characters die. This happened in a play test: the entire player group was beat down during a less successful foray into the Town Hall, and instead of being killed, they woke up in the Town Hall basement with 1 Toughness remaining ...



#### THE MINE

1. The Mine's Entrance
2. The First Chamber
3. The Main Hall
4. The Portal



the player characters offer to match what Kagliostro is paying them, they will have to stump up ten thaler for every goblin and ogre, and then pass a [Persuasive +5] test instead.

If they do, the goblins set off on new adventures ("There is a Sun Temple filled with gold near Karvost! Come on!"). Should they fail the test, the goblins attack nonetheless.

**A detour:** Taking a detour on the way to the mine requires no tests, but wastes a lot of valuable time, causing events in the mine to skip stage 1 and begin with stage 2: Margumal partially freed. The Game Master should explain that the detour will be time-consuming, but not reveal what consequences it will have.

### THE MINE'S ENTRANCE

The mine's entrance is guarded by (pc) number of cultists, led by an Enlightened Cultist. As they are lurking in the shadows, player characters must pass a Vigilant test to detect their leader, but a [Vigilant -5] test to notice the others. Should they fail to do so, they are surprised by attacking cultists.

When the cultists are defeated, characters who pass another Vigilant test can hear the sound of polyphonic chanting coming from deep within the mine.

Player characters with the Ritualist ability realize that a ceremony is being conducted; some kind of powerful, collective ritual. The player characters learn what is mentioned about ceremonies in the Appendix. With a successful Cunning test, the player character may also recall how to cancel a ceremony; by taking out its leader, or by causing enough participants to lose their focus (harming them would do the trick).

### THE FIRST CHAMBER

(pc+1) cultists guard this area, but are completely mesmerized by the miracle taking place deeper inside the mine. They do not watch the opening, where the player characters enter, but gaze towards the main hall further in. The player characters automatically surprise them.

A successful Vigilant test: The ground is shaking, as though something enormous is twisting and writhing inside the mine.

### THE MAIN HALL

Here Kagliostro's ceremony, meant to free and assume control over Margumal, is being conducted.

It is assumed that the characters arrive at the main hall as the ceremony is reaching its crescendo. Then follows a number of stages, starting the turn after all enemies in the First Chambers is defeated.

Leading the ceremony, Kagliostro is utterly entranced. Around him stand five enlightened cultists, assisting him in the ceremony. Another (pc+2) initiated cultists have formed a semicircle around them for protection.

The ceremony is canceled if Kagliostro is taken out (reaching 0 Toughness) or if three enlightened cultists lose their concentration [Resolute -Damage]. If the ceremony is canceled it remains in stage 2, as described below.

#### 1. The Ground Trembles

**Duration:** 1 turn.

The ground is now shaking with enough force for any player character to notice.

#### 2. Margumal partially freed

**Duration:** 2 turns

Margumal's head and upper body break through the fabric of reality. With its terrible fangs and claws, the serpent attacks anything in its way, but is unable to move. It cannot use its active traits and abilities while still being partially trapped in the Yonderworld. The serpent can only reach halfway through the main hall, making fighting it avoidable by staying close to the left wall. The enemy is also aware of this, and five cultists position themselves by that wall, defending the ceremony.

If the ceremony is canceled at this stage, the ritual goes no further, and those trying to stop the serpent may exit the mine and destroy its entrance. If so, the last thing heard as the rocks collapse over the opening is the resounding roar of Margumal.

#### 3. Margumal freed and disoriented, but in control of himself

**Duration:** 2 turns

Margumal breaks loose, master of his own fate, if only for a moment. Should no-one stop Kagliostro within 2 turns after the serpent has been freed, the mystic will take control of it. However, if Kagliostro is defeated, the serpent remains its own master.

While the ceremony is being conducted, the disoriented serpent will not attack except in self-defense. If the lindworm is harmed, it loses its mind with rage, attacking whoever is closest. If there are several people within the same distance from it, it chooses a victim at random.

The player characters must decide whether to ignore the serpent and continue fighting the cultists, attack the serpent (a foolish choice, but the PCs might not realize it), or try to negotiate with it. Should Kagliostro fall and the cultists be taken out, the PCs may once again choose to either attack a free Margumal or give him safe passage.

**Ignoring the serpent:** Margumal is disoriented, growling and roaring, but not fighting unless he is attacked.

**Negotiation:** Those who know the barbarian or elvish tongues are able to calm the serpent down, and convince him that Kagliostro is the real enemy. This requires a successful *Persuasive* test, and every attempt consumes the player character's turn.

The serpent will not attack the negotiating character. He or she is granted two attempts; should all of them fail, the serpent does attack, making any further negotiation impossible.

**Safe passage:** If the ceremony is canceled while the serpent is loose, the player characters may choose to stand back. If so, the serpent will neither attack, nor pursue them.

Having fed on the corpses of fallen cultists, the free Margumal will head out, terrorizing the world until driven into Davokar (or some other forest) by mightier forces.

#### 4. Margumal freed and under Kagliostro's control

**Duration:** 3 turns, but only if the ceremony is allowed to run its course.

If the player characters fail to stop the ritual, Margumal will be bound to Kagliostro's will. Kagliostro orders it to attack the player characters, as he himself attacks along with any surviving members of his cult.

This is a battle the player characters cannot win, but they might be able to escape. Kagliostro would rather set his grand plan in motion than chasing after the player characters. He intends to head for Kastor, carried by Margumal, and there establish the Capital of the Beast Realm, with Margumal as god and himself as high priest.

#### KASTOR IN THE SNAKE

##### CHARMERS GRIP

What happens to Kastor under the monster cult's reign is not part of this scenario, even though it is a possible outcome of the player characters' failure. But such information might be useful to the Game Master, should it come to pass and the player characters want to continue fighting the menace. Therefore, a possible course of events is summarized in the following:

Kagliostro forces the remaining leaders of Kastor into submission, proclaiming himself High Priest of the Serpent Church. Margumal takes hold of the Bell Tower, staying by the bell at its top after having demolished the lower floors. Kagliostro takes his place at the Town Hall; soon to be the high temple

### The Gratitude of a Lindworm

If the player characters manage to convince Margumal that Kagliostro is their mutual enemy, and then fights alongside them against the cultists, the lindworm will consider itself in their debt. The serpent breaks off one of its fangs, handing it to the negotiating PC – when the pulp has rotted away or been removed, the fang may be used as a flute. "Blow it, and I shall appear", the serpent says before leaving the place.

It takes the serpent 1D100 hours to reach the person blowing the horn (the Game Master is free to choose a time span more suitable to the adventure). Having arrived, Margumal will do the person a favor before disappearing, believing the debt to be paid. The serpent may join the player characters in battle (if it can be won) or teach them one of his mystical powers or rituals.

When Margumal has paid his debt, he has no sentimental bond whatsoever with the player characters; should they ever encounter him again, it would be as though it was the first time, except Margumal would recognize their scents and names, and have a clear understanding of their capacity.

of his monstrous order. Monster worshippers are summoned to Kastor, to begin the new era, but those heeding the call are vastly outnumbered by the people fleeing the town. Soon, Kastor is but a shadow of its former self, its citizens cowering before the sacrificial monster cult.

As this does not go unnoticed by the surrounding civilization, the Duke sends troops to liberate the town. The siege of Kastor becomes a protracted one, as the cultists are not only protected by the town's thick walls, but have both Margumal and the bell at their disposal.

After a time of guarded attacks and failed diplomatic initiatives, it becomes clear to the besieging commander that the only hope is storming the town, while simultaneously striking at the heart of the enemy: as they charge, a small group of soldiers move stealthily into Kastor to assassinate Kagliostro and/or take control of the bell.

Maybe such a raid would suit the player characters, as they are already familiar with both the town and the enemy?

# Appendix

**THIS FINAL SECTION** of the book describes the new rules and mystical artifacts featured in the two adventures. Among these are three novelties which may require an introduction. First there is the concept of Boons and Burdens, a set of positive and negative characteristics made available for player characters in the *Player's Handbook*. Second, *The Bell Tolls for Kastor* introduces Mystical Ceremonies – a type of collective rituals that we will return to and develop in future modules.

## New Rules

### BLOODLUST, MONSTROUS TRAIT

The creature thirsts for warm blood, and with its gaze it can put a victim into trance before feasting on its life-giving juices.

- I **Active.** The creature may charm [Resolute←Resolute] and bite its victim in a single Combat Action. The bloodsucker then slurps blood, 2 Toughness per turn, ignoring armor. It takes a [Resolute←Resolute] each turn to maintain the trance. Damaging the bloodsucking creature can also break the trance, [Resolute –Damage].
- II **Active.** Like Novice, but the bloodsucking creature heals as much Toughness as it draws from the victim.
- III **Active.** The creature may charm [Resolute←Resolute] and bite its victim in a single Combat Action. He then slurps blood, 3 Toughness per turn, ignoring armor. The victim cannot break the trance; this requires damaging the bloodsucking creature [Resolute –Damage]. The bloodsucker heals as much Toughness as it draws from the victim.

### MIRAGE, TRAIT

The person has a mystical gift and may weave momentary mirages from thin air; heatless flames jumping between his or her hands, tiny figures of light dancing in the air, pebbles turning into shiny coins, etcetera. Over time, the mirage will not fool anyone as its effect wears off within minutes. However, it can trick and impress people. With *Mirage*, the person may roll

against *Persuasive* to dupe someone into accepting fake goods or payment in the form of illusory coins, to a maximum “value” of a hundred thaler. Also, *Mirage* grants +1 to *Persuasive* when the player character threatens someone with “powerful magic”.

### DANCE OF DEATH, RITUAL

**Tradition:** Sorcery

The mystic may summon heavy rhythms that seduce people present in the area; the music is heard far and wide, but only those within a hundred meters are actually affected. Every person neutral to the mystic must pass a test against *Resolute* or be drawn into the dance. The mystic is immune, but his or her allies are not. The allies, as well as direct enemies, get a second chance to pass the test against *Resolute* (roll twice, use the best outcome). Death-dancers are not controlled perse, but highly inclined to obey the mystic’s commands; as long as they involve violence against someone not considered a friend, they will attack. Death dancers may roll against *Resolute* every time they kill another creature, and also every time they suffer damage.

The *Dance of Death* is bound to the mystic, and follows wherever he or she goes.

The dance lasts as long as the mystic wishes, but dancers lose 1D4 Toughness with every hour.

The ritual can be stopped entirely with *Break Link*. Individual death dancers can be freed with the ritual *Exorcism*, but the mystical power *Anathema* would be more effective.

**FIRE DYE, ELIXIR**

Fire dye consists of salts that change the color of the fire into which it is cast. It can be used for signaling or as entertainment. Every dose produces its own distinctive color. Fire dye is a novice elixir.

**REPEATING CROSSBOW, WEAPON**

**Cost:** 40 thaler

The repeating crossbow is a mechanically advanced version of the crossbow. The weapon has a push lever on its underside, for quicker reloading. Only the most skilled blacksmiths are able to construct such technically advanced weaponry. A repeating crossbow is reloaded as a free action, without losing the striking power of the regular crossbow.

**TERATO'S DRAUGHT, ELIXIR**

To the teratomancers, monsters are sacred and monstrous traits are signs of having been chosen (for example the burden *Bestial*, which can be used among members of Terato's Dawn in the same way as the trait/boon *Privileged*).

One way for the cult members to become exalted is by willingly injecting themselves with a teratogenic poison, which grants the boon *Dark Blood* along with the burden *Bestial*. Unfortunately, the poison is also very likely to kill the one subjected to it – this is the test; to ascertain whether one will be Chosen by the gods or, if unworthy, die by one's own hubris. This deadly side-effect has caused the sect to use it as a poison against unbelievers – those who survive, monstrously altered, clearly did not deserve to die, as the powers of monstrosity mark them as Chosen Ones!

This Draught is a highly forbidden master elixir. Making it adds 1D4 temporary corruption, and it can only be bought on the black market for 6 thaler a dose.

Everyone affected by the poison take 2 damage for 2 turns, and immediately develops a monstrous trait. With suggestions from the Game Master, the player chooses a trait suitable to his or her character. See the burden *Bestial* on page 56.

Those who pass a [Strong← alchemist's Cunning] test are not affected any further; the bestial trait fades within 1D6 days. If failing the test, the PC will instead take 4 damage for 4 turns. Should the PC be reduced to 0 *Toughness*, the player must decide whether to let the character die or accept "exaltation". In the latter case, no Death test is made – with 0 *Toughness*, the PC heals as usual, but with the boon *Dark Blood* and the burden *Bestial*, both being permanent (see the boon *Dark blood* and the burden *Bestial* on page 56). Furthermore, the player character suffers one permanent corruption from the experience.



The player may choose for the PC not to be marked by the elixir, and make its Death tests.

If non-player characters are afflicted by the poison, the GM decides what the outcome will be; Terato's Draught is not always stable or predictable.

### DARK BLOOD, BOON

Dark blood flows through the character's veins, passed down from an ancestor, or as a result of being cursed. Maybe the player character was simply born in the wrong part of Davokar at the wrong time. The dark blood always comes with some form of physical stigma, represented by the burden *Bestial*. The character may adopt the following monstrous traits as though they were ordinary abilities: *Natural Weapon*, *Armored*, *Robust*, *Regeneration*, *Wings*.

### BESTIAL, BURDEN

The player character has a bestial appearance, in the form of one (or a few) conspicuous traits - jakaar eyes, aboar tusks, lindworm scales on arms and neck, or something else arousing fear and disgust. Concealing the traits requires the character to pass a *[Discreet←Vigilant]* test.

If failing the test, the character will have a second chance at failing all *Persuasive* tests concerning help or protection. However, the bestial exterior grants a second chance to pass all *Persuasive* tests meant to threaten or intimidate.

As soon as they can, those subjected to the character's intimidation - whether or not it is successful - will report him or her to the Town Watch (or similar authorities) suspected of being an abomination.

### STURDY, MONSTROUS TRAIT

The monster possesses a remarkable vitality, possibly born out of a strong link to the infinite power of nature, or maybe its power stems from the bottomless source of corruption.

The creature's *Toughness* is higher than its *Strong*, but its *Pain Threshold* is unaffected (based on *Strong/2*, as usual).

## Artifacts

### THE ETERNAL HUNTER'S SPEAR, ARTIFACT

This weapon is stuck into Gylta's side. The shaft is broken about a meter from the spearhead, depriving the spear of the quality *Long*, but it is still effective in combat. It will only come into the player characters' possession if Gylta is defeated in battle, or if an agreement is made with her where the player characters swear a blood oath to use it against the Eternal Hunter - in combat or negotiations.

I **Passive:** The monster's *Toughness* is based on its *Strong* x 1,5.

II **Passive:** The monster's *Toughness* is based on its *Strong* x 2.

III **Passive:** The monster's *Toughness* is based on its *Strong* x 3.

### MYSTICAL CEREMONIES

Kagliostro's ceremony - intended to free and possess the serpent Margumal - is a kind of magic called Ceremonies: powerful and collectively performed rituals, able to permanently alter local geographic and the very course of history. Firestorms, earthquakes, swarms of insects, ravaging plagues - even volcanic eruptions and devastating tidal waves - have all been ascribed to brilliant mystics and death-worshipping sorcerers. Even though many tales of ceremonial magic are far from true, ceremonies are found within all established mystical traditions.

It is well-known among mystics that ceremonies were used by the Dark Lords in the Great War, and that performing or even planning ceremonies long has been forbidden in both Alberotor and Ambria.

Ceremonies are intended as a dramatic tool for the Game Master to use. While it is not primarily a player resource, it is theoretically possible for a group of player characters to perform a ceremony, either by themselves or through an alliance with other factions. However, the mystical ceremony is mainly meant to be performed by a hostile group or faction, which the characters must try to stop.

### MONSTER CONTROL, CEREMONY

The ceremony that Kagliostro attempts to perform is described in the tome he carries. The *Monster Control* ceremony allows the mystic to summon and possess a living creature, much like demonologists do with daemons, but without having to pass any tests in order to control the beast. The taint of this particular ceremony is moderate: 1D4 temporary corruption on everyone (and everything) within a hundred meters from the caster.

Replacing the shaft requires high-quality wood and craftsmanship. If neither of the characters can do it (which is likely), they can hire someone in the prospectors' camp to do it for them. The job costs them a thaler and takes one day to complete.

### Finishing Blow

When the prey is seriously wounded, the one who wields the spear may summon the powers of death

and finish the hunt with a mighty thrust. The power may be used against an enemy who has lost half or more of its *Toughness*. Against such a foe the wielder may perform an extra Combat Action. The power may only be used once per enemy and battle.

**Handling:** Free

**Korruption:** 1D4

### THE BELL OF KASTOR, ARTIFACT

No one knows when the bell was brought to Kastor, or by whom it was forged – only that it is mounted in a tower believed by scholars to be much younger than the bell itself. In any case, to those bold and knowledgeable enough to use it, the bell is a powerful weapon of defense. One could argue, with good reason, that a small and relatively undefended colony such as Kastor has the bell to thank for its very existence.

The ringing of the bell is said to strengthen the defenders, weaken their enemies, and even dispel corruption. The former is true; the latter is a slight misunderstanding – the bell does not in fact dispel corruption, but absorbs it. When it is completely filled with corruption, the next time it is rung, it will explode in a rain of darkness. The player characters' battle against Margumal might be what ultimately breaks the bell, showering the town with corruption. They must decide whether or not the lindworm poses a large enough threat for such a catastrophe to be worth the risk.

Today the bell holds such enormous amounts of corruption, should it absorb 10 or more corruption during a single scene, it will break. Its amassed corruption is halved at the end of every scene, and over time, the bell will lose 1 corruption a week until its breaking limit is once again down to 10. It will never go any lower than that.

The Bell of Kastor is extremely rare, if not unique, in that one may use its powers without binding oneself to it. Anyone may ring the bell and gain its mighty protection. What powers it possesses is revealed to the person ringing it.

Someone with the *Loemaster* ability must pass a *Cunning* test in order to analyze and fully understand the dangers of the bell – that it absorbs corruption and will eventually break, resulting in catastrophe.

**Chiming Courage:** A person ringing the bell may invoke its powers in combat, allowing the person and all his/her allies to re-roll a test of their choosing – be it a success test or an effect test. Further use of Chiming Courage only grants additional re-rolls to those who have already used their previous ones.

**Action:** Active

**Korruption:** 1D6, amassed within the bell

**Binding Clangor:** A person ringing the bell may ask its help in harming a nearby enemy. The player character must pass a *Resolute* test in order to block one of the enemy's traits, abilities or powers for the duration of the scene. In order to bind it, the player character must know that the enemy possesses the trait or ability in question, and then state the enemy's name. Passive traits and abilities cannot be bound.

**Action:** Active

**Korruption:** 1D6, amassed within the bell

**Swallow Corruption:** The bell may also swallow the temporary corruption of mystics in its immediate proximity, whom will then receive no temporary corruption whatsoever from using powers, abilities or rituals. All mystics positioned in the Bell Tower (PCs and NPCs) may use this ability whenever they please.

**Black rain:** When the corruption inside the bell reaches its breaking point, it will – the next time it is rung – explode in a cascade of darkness; pure corruption will rain over Kastor, black and fuming like hot oil.

Kastor is then tainted to such a degree that one takes 1D4 temporary corruption for every day of staying in the town. Each day counts as a new scene – i.e. one test is made per day, unmodified by the day before. This means that people living in the town always have 1D4 temporary corruption, and that those weak in spirit (*Resolute* 8 or lower) sooner or later will be corrupted, just from being in Kastor.

Kastor will never be the same, but known as The Town of the Eternal Night; a place where children are born stigmatized, where the dead rise from their graves and ravenous beings prowl the streets in hunt of warm-blooded prey. Few – except witch-hunters and fascinated mystics – will ever want to set foot in the town again.

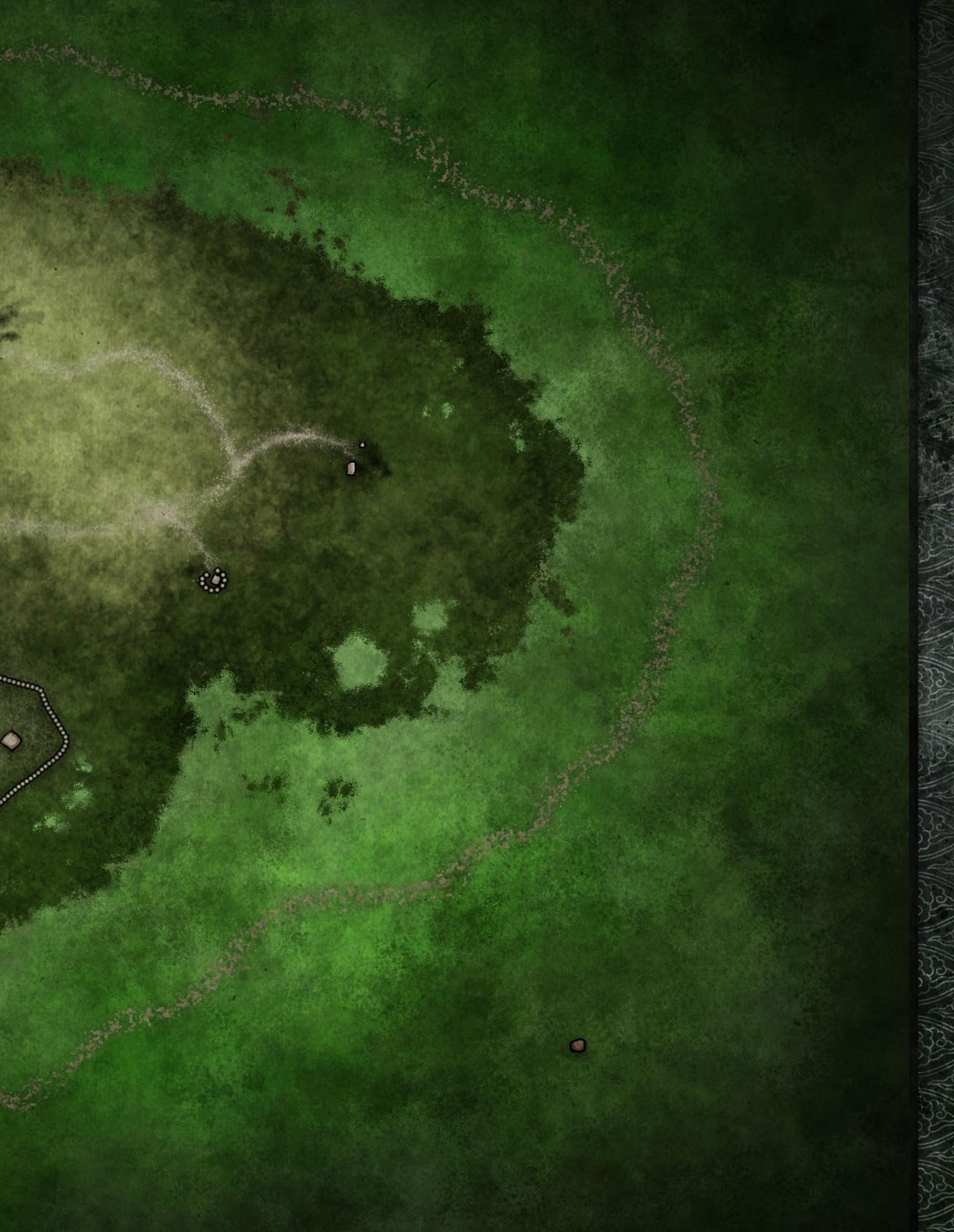
**Action:** Reactive

**Korruption:** All individuals present inside the walls of Kastor suffer corruption relative to the extent of his/her own corruption when the black rain begins to fall (see table 3).

Table 3: Corruption from the broken bell

| PERMANENT CORRUPTION | TEMPORARY CORRUPTION FROM THE BLACK RAIN |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 0                    | 1D4                                      |
| 1-3                  | 1D6                                      |
| 4-6                  | 1D8                                      |
| 7+                   | 1D12                                     |











Dear friend, a long time has passed since we met, but never  
think that I've forgotten or found someone I trust more.  
Kastor is dark and after the witch burning, the shadows  
seem longer than ever.

Now I am alone, again. After many, lengthy investigations I  
believe I know what happened and who's behind it all.  
The guilty ones must be punished, but how do you punish  
those who everyone else believe to be free from blame?  
I don't know where you are, what you are doing or planning.  
But I beg of you, come to my aid.

:: Darda ::



