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THE NOSTRADAMUS GAMBIT

GENCON 2006 ADVENTURE

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THE NOSTRADAMUS GAMBIT

Welcome to Nostradamus Gambit, an adventure for RPGObjects' Blood and Relics game of modern gothic conspiracy. Nostradamus Gambit takes the PCs on an exciting, globe-trotting journey in search of a series of mysterious artifacts. Their adventures will take them from London, to Cairo, to Las Vegas, trying to acquire items of power before the villains. Nostradamus Gambit was one of two adventures RPGObjects debuted at this year's Gen Con convention.



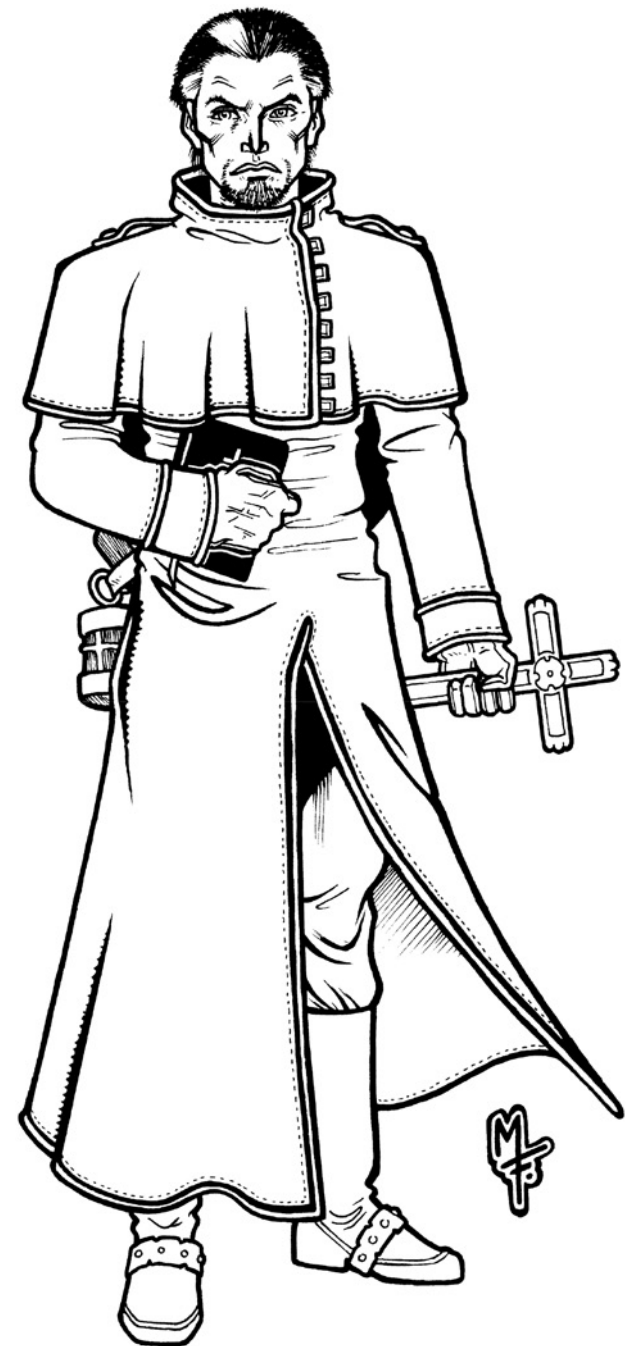
The adventure is basically a scavenger hunt, with the PCs in search of three key items highly sought after by their order, the Knights Templar. The Knights aren't the only group looking for the items, however—two rival orders, the Teutonic Knights and the followers of Marcus Adrastus, seek them as well. (More information on both of these groups can be found in the *Blood and Relics* sourcebook). Along the way the PCs will journey from Egypt to Britain and finally to America, where their adventure will come to an end (one way or another). Ideally the adventure should end with all three items in the PCs' possession. If this doesn't happen, this provides the perfect excuse for more adventuring as they attempt to retrieve the items in scenarios of the GM's design. And even if they do succeed completely, the adventure leaves open several avenues for further adventures: what information in *The Orphic Litany* is so vital to three secret societies?

1. The Book
 1. Introduction to the Book
 2. Surprise Attack
 3. The Repository of Alexandria
 4. Flight from Egypt
2. Recruitment Drive
 1. Top Men
 2. Conspiracy Theories
 3. Kidnap attempt
3. The Key
 1. Intro the Key
 2. The Cole Museum of Art and Antiquities
 3. Safehouse Assault
4. The Lens
 1. Assault on East to West Radio
 2. Mummy of Old Egypt

ADVENTURE

The Nostradamus Gambit is broken down into four acts. Each act consists of several encounters which are described according to this format: act and encounter number, name, player's briefing, research and mission information.

The player's briefing is given to them by their patron (in this case the Knights Templar) and lays out for the PCs what their basic objective is. Research is the PCs' chance to get a leg up by using their brains to discover what they're facing, or possibly unearth a weakness in the creatures they will be facing. Research lists a DC after a description. This DC can be applied to any skill check the GM deems appropriate — Computer Use, Gather Information and Research being the most common such skills. Mission



information is for the GM and gives him all the information he needs to run the encounter (including stat blocks for any NPCs).

ACT I: THE BOOK

In Act 1, the players are sent to recover a mystical text known as *The Orphic Litany*—a text which can allegedly serve as a template for the future.

I.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK

Player's Briefing: We just got word from our Alexandrian branch of a unique, potentially dangerous book. We'd like you to retrieve it for us. It seems our old friend and pop culture icon Nostradamus wasn't a seer after all: he was a translator. A copy

of *The Orphic Litany*, a book several thousand years old, written in Greek and attributed to Orpheus, had somehow made its way into the good doctor's possession and he was translating it. We think all the works we have of his might be translations or inspirations of the *Litany* though we'll need our own translation to be sure. Also remember the good doctor wanted his predictions to be cryptic so they wouldn't be misused.

A black market book dealer in Cairo, Egypt is claiming to have found this book and others. We need you to go negotiate for the *Litany* and anything else you can convince this dealer to part with. You can find Landen at the bazaar in Cairo; we have a plane waiting for you. You're authorized to pay up to \$500,000 for the *Litany*. Under no circumstances is the book to be allowed to remain in Landen's possession or be sold to a third party.

The PCs have access to this money in the form of a wire transfer. They may transfer as much as \$500,000 from an account to Landis' account. They may not do anything else with it, like transfer the money to themselves or use any unspent money to buy equipment.

Research: The PCs can learn that the book has been the focus of an ancient Orphic cult since the time of Ancient Greece. Like the PCs, this cult is still seeking the book to improve their worship of the "lord of song." (DC 20) Note that this sketchy information is all the PCs will be able to learn about the Orphic Cult. It was an ancient mystery cult, whose worshippers did not speak of it, dating from a time with no written records.

Gregor Landen is a well-known figure on the black market specializing in forbidden and mystical texts. He has a good

reputation (as dealers go) for not selling forgeries and always delivering what he promises. (DC 20)

Mission Information: The encounter sets forth the mission and provides the PCs with their ultimate goal. It should introduce the PCs to their characters, their contact in the Knights Templar, the organization of the knights and the world of *Blood and Relics* in general.

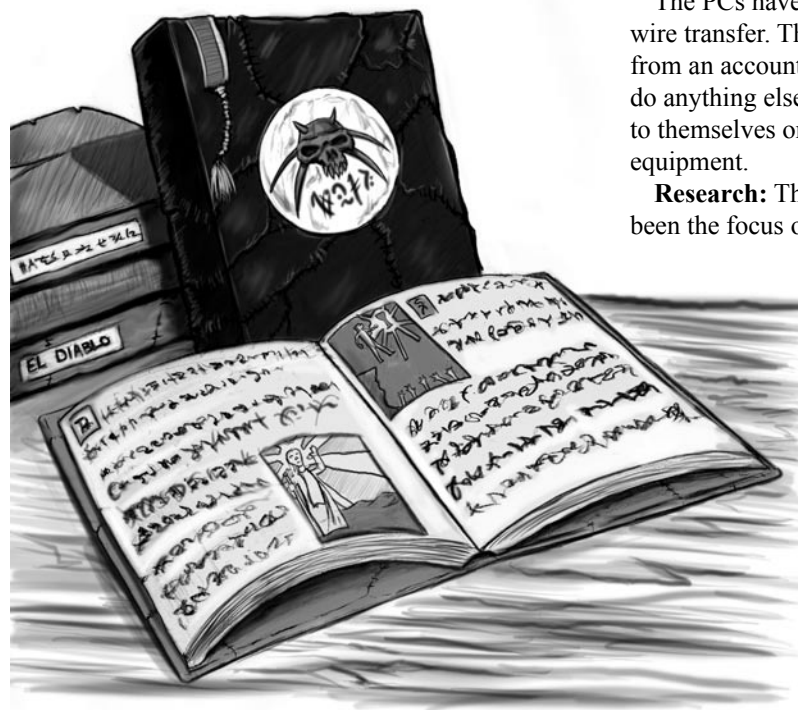
I.2 SURPRISE ATTACK (EL 3)

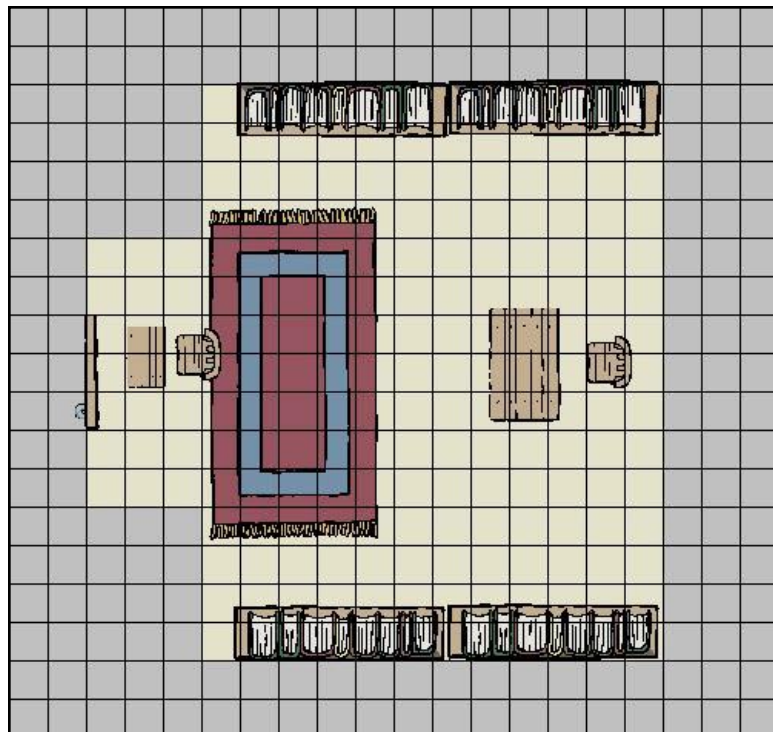
Player's Briefing: None. This encounter occurs when the PCs go to visit Landen in Cairo and come upon the fiends that attacked him.

Research: Although the PCs have no chance to prepare, a Knowledge (arcane lore) skill check (DC 20) reveals that the creatures they are fighting are fiends of gluttony who are very strong and immune to cold. A character making this skill check also knows that the creatures are very strong physically.

Mission Information: As the PCs approach Landen's office in downtown Cairo for their appointment, they hear loud rustling noises and occasionally the most disgusting belch they've ever heard. These noises are very, very loud, no Listen DC required to notice them. Upon entering the office, they see Landen on the floor critically wounded, with four bloat fiends sitting on the floor nearby eating all of Landen's books and records (they were ordered to start there to destroy the evidence, but they're fairly anxious to get to Landen himself).

Bloat Fiends CR 3; Large Outsider; HD 5d8+25; HP 48; Mas 20; Init -2; Spd 10 ft; Defense 21, touch 7, flatfooted 21 (-1 Size, -2 Dex, +14 natural); BAB +5; Grap +15; Atk +11 melee (1d8+6, slam); Full Atk +11 melee (1d8+6, slam); FS 10 ft by 10 ft; Reach 10 ft; SQ darkvision, telepathy, immune to cold, damage reduction 5/+1, instill gluttony, crush, ingestion; AL Gluttony, Dark Power; SV Fort +9, Ref -1, Will +0; AP 2; Rep +0; Str 24, Dex 6, Con 20, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 8.





Skills: Intimidate +7, Knowledge (history) +6, Knowledge (theology and philosophy) +8, Knowledge (arcane lore) +8.

Feats: Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Enemy (Higher Power), Perdition's Prayer.

Aftermath: Assuming the PCs defeat the bloat fiends, they have several issues to tend to: stabilizing Landen and searching the remains of his office.

Stabilizing Landen: Requires a Treat Injury skill check (DC 15). Landen is unconscious and at 0 HP, so if the PCs can restore even a single hit point they can bring him to enough consciousness to talk. If Landen regains consciousness, the PCs can get him to reveal the location of the Repository of Alexandria with a Diplomacy skill check (DC 25). For every \$50,000

the PCs offer Landen, they gain a +1 bonus to this skill check; this check may be made more than once as the PCs make multiple offers. Yes, it may seem ludicrous to haggle over money when you're helpless and near death—but that's the kind of guy Landen is (how do you think he wound up almost dead in the first place?).

Searching Landen's Office: On a Search skill check (DC 20), the PCs find a partially-eaten map leading out into the desert. It will not get them all the way to the Repository, but it will get them close enough to track a huge creature moving through the desert to retrieve the book.

13 REPOSITORY OF ALEXANDRIA (EL 7)

Player's Briefing: None. This encounter follows the previous one, in which the PCs were sent to buy the manuscript. Now they must race through the desert to an unknown location to find it.

Research: Although the PCs have no chance to prepare, a Knowledge (arcane lore) or Knowledge (history) skill check (DC 25) allows the PC to recall the legend of a lost repository where a few rare texts were hidden from the barbarians when the Library at Alexandria was destroyed. These texts were saved from destruction, but the monks who hid the texts were killed, causing knowledge of the location to be lost. The location to which the PCs are headed might be that lost Repository—in which case it could contain a treasure trove of priceless manuscripts.

Mission Information: This mission can go one of two ways: either the PCs revived Landen and have the

location of the Repository, or they have followed a partial map into the desert and will have to make their own way to the Repository.

If the PCs need to find their own way to the Repository from Landen's partially eaten map, they must make three successful Navigate or Survival skill checks (DC 20) to find the Repository. Each skill check takes one hour of game time, so the fastest trip the PCs can take (assuming they do not get lost even once) takes three hours.

Finding the Repository: If the PCs take more than six hours to find the Repository, they will find the library already ransacked, and *The Orphic Litany* taken. If they arrive in six hours or less, they will come upon the theft in progress and be able to battle the thieves to prevent them from entering the Repository.

(4) Cult Grave Robbers (Charismatic Hero 3/ Grave Robber 2): CR 5; Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d6+3 plus 2d8+2; HP 25; Mas 13; Init +3; Spd 30 ft; Defense 15, touch 15, flatfooted 12 (+0 size, +3 Dex, +2 class); BAB +2; Grap +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6+0/19-20, Metal Baton), or +6 ranged (2d6+0, Glock 17); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ ; AL avarice; SV Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +0; AP 2; Rep -1; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 14.

Occupation: Criminal (Forgery, Hide)

Skills: Bluff +8, Climb +5, Diplomacy +8, Disable Device +6, Disguise +8, Forgery +8, Hide +10, Knowledge (Arcane Lore) +7, Knowledge (Streetwise) +7, Knowledge (Theology and Philosophy) +7, Move Silently +8, Search +2

Feats: Conviction (Avarice), Dodge, Low Profile, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Simple Weapons Proficiency

Talents (Charismatic Hero): Charm, Favor

Talents (Grave Robber): End Justify the Means 1/day, Contact, low-level

Possessions: Metal Baton, Glock 17

Aftermath: If any of these grave robbers are caught and questioned, they have no idea who hired them. They are “archaeologists” who specialize in obtaining ancient relics and selling them to foreign collectors (bypassing those silly museums and any notions of Egypt’s cultural heritage along the way). They were hired to steal *The Orphic Litany* and return it to a buyer in Alexandria; that’s all they know about him and all they care to.

1.4 FLIGHT FROM EGYPT (EL 7)

Player’s Briefing: None. The players are either chasing or being chased across the Egyptian desert.

Research: None. Attempting to examine the manuscript under these conditions is not recommended, since it is old, brittle and extremely fragile.

Mission Information: Depending on whether the PCs arrived at the repository in time, they are either chasing the thieves across the desert to retrieve the manuscript or they are being chased by a secondary team sent to stop them.

(4) Cult Enforcers (Tough Hero 3/Dark Warrior 2): CR 5; Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d10+6 plus 2d10+4 plus 6; HP 44; Mas 14; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; Defense 17, touch 14, flatfooted 16 (+0 size, +1 Dex, +3 class, +3 equipment); BAB +3; Grap +6; Atk +6 melee (1d8+3/19-20, Longsword), or +4 ranged (1d8+0, Compound Bow); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ ; AL Celestan, Avarice; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +0; AP 2; Rep +1; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 12.

Occupation: Military (Drive, Navigate)

Skills: Drive +9, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (Arcane Lore) +5, Navigate +3, Survival +2

Feats: Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (light), Conviction (Dark Power), Power Attack, Profane Ritual, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Toughness

Talents (Tough Hero): Robust, Damage Reduction 1/—

Talents (Dark Warrior): Hatred 1/day

Possessions: Undercover Vest, Longsword, Compound Bow

Aftermath: These dark warriors are junior members of the Cult of Celestan and were told to retrieve the book and kill the grave robbers. They were not told what the book does or why they are retrieving it.

ACT 2: RECRUITMENT DRIVE

Having obtained the *Litany* and returned it to the Knights Templar in Britain, the PCs are called on again to find a way to render the *Litany* comprehensible. This requires them to recruit experts in cryptography and ancient languages from several universities and museums. In the course of this recruitment drive, the PCs come to the attention of Mal Fulton, roving reporter for “East to West,” a radio show hosted by Al Bannister and dedicated to the search for the truth that is out there.

2.1 TOP MEN

Player’s Briefing: We’ve got our experts working on deciphering the *Orphic Litany* but they’ve run into some trouble. While the alphabet (ancient Greek) is well known to them, the text is indecipherable. Worse, it’s indecipherable in a very specific way: while it’s written using the Greek alphabet, the language is in fact Etruscan, which scholars have never been able to translate. It would be a shame to let such a potentially valuable find rot away in a vault somewhere, so we want you to contact a couple of experts in ancient languages. You’ll have to be circumspect; we can’t let them know what they’re actually working on. We’ve got a few Etruscan texts that you’ll take them for translation. If they make any headway, we’ll use those

texts as a sort of “Rosetta Manuscript” to translate the litany. Good luck.

Research: The PCs find three academics that might be able to help them: Saul Kolatch of Bar-Ilan University in Israel, Stewart Henry of Oxford University in England and Giselle Garnier of Université Paris Dauphine in Paris (DC 20). For the purposes of the adventure it doesn’t really matter in what order the PCs interview the scholars. These interviews are more a backdrop for the second act, providing the PCs with a mission and a reason to interact with characters that will become more important later in the adventure.

Mission Information: This mission involves the PCs traveling across Europe and contacting scholars, trying to convince them to aid the PCs’ cause. The PCs are given a line of credit with which to pay the scholars for their time. This mission is strictly role-playing and requires the PCs to be charming rather than formidable.

Each of the scholars has a piece of information that will prove vital to the PCs’ quest. Therefore, establishing good relations with all three is crucial to the PCs’ chances of success.

Saul Kolatch (Smart Ordinary 4): This scholar has a theory that Etruscan was not a real language *per se* but a code. Etruscan government and society were highly ritualized, and he believes they considered all government documents to be sacred. To keep their “special” relationship with the gods from being violated or stolen by a third party, they encoded all state documents.

If the PCs establish good relations with Saul he will tell them an American gentleman named Mal Fulton approximately a week ago.

Stuart Henry (Smart Ordinary 2/Dedicated Ordinary 2): This scholar has a 13th-century account of a secret society that was able to read any manuscript, even those written in lost languages or in code. They used a mysterious artifact in the shape of a

cross which, when passed over the manuscript, would render it intelligible.

If the PCs establish good relations with Stuart he will tell them an American gentleman named Mal Fulton approximately a 2 days ago.

Giselle Garnier (Smart Ordinary 3/Charismatic Ordinary 1): This scholar has heard of the cross as well, though her account is somewhat different: the cross had a rose quartz lens embedded in it. While the cross was passed over the manuscript, the lens was also vital. The text, when read through the lens while the cross was in contact with a manuscript, would become intelligible.

Ms. Garnier relates the story of the cross to the PCs, telling them she just told an American gentleman named Mal Fulton the same story earlier that day. He too seemed interested in a means to decipher an ancient text.

2.2 RANDOM ATTACK? (EL 7)

Player's Briefing: None. In the process of interviewing one of the scholars, the PCs come across two men being attacked: Mal Fulton and Alejandro Montoya.

Research: None, but see below as the PCs might want to hit the books *after* this encounter.

Mission Information: The PCs come across a group of 4 hatemongers attacking two men.

This encounter introduces two NPCs that will be important later in the adventure's climax, so it is important that the PCs rescue them. They have an item of importance to the PCs (the lens), but there is no way for the PCs to learn that in this encounter.

(4) Hatemongers: CR 3; Medium-size Outsider; HD 5d8+10; HP 40; Mas 14; Init +0; Spd 30 ft, .y 30 ft (clumsy); Defense 19, touch 10, flatfooted 19 (+9 natural); BAB +5; Grap +8; Atk +8 melee (1d6+3, slam); Full Atk +8 melee (1d6+3, slam); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ telepathy, darkvision, instill hate,

immune to .re, damage reduction 5/+1, rage; AL Wrathful, Dark Power (most often Marcus Adrastus); SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +4; AP 2; Rep +0; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 14.

Skills: Bluff +6, Diplomacy +10, Forgery +9, Gather Information +10, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (history) +6, Knowledge (theology and philosophy) +6, Knowledge (arcane lore) +6, Sense Motive +8, Speak Ancient Hebrew, Speak Latin, Speak Abyssal, Speak 2 Modern Languages, Read/Write Abyssal, Read/Write Ancient Hebrew, Read/Write Latin, Read/Write 2 Modern Languages.

Feats: Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Conviction (Wrathful), Enemy (Higher Power).

Aftermath: After fending off the creatures, the PCs learn from Montoya that the two men had gone to the Cole Museum of Antiquities and talked to the proprietor Augustus Cole about using a special tool, the Cross of Agricola, to decode an ancient manuscript. He almost tells them what manuscript is before being interrupted by Fulton, who thanks the PCs and then departs with Montoya.

After encountering Montoya and Fulton, the PCs might do some research on them.

What they find is that Montoya was a somewhat eccentric Catholic priest who stumbled upon the nest of secret societies hidden in the organization of the church. Against the orders of the church, he spoke about what he had learned publicly on the East to West radio show, which caused the church to disavow him, paint him as mentally unstable and defrock him. Since then Montoya has been obsessed with proving the validity of his claims. (DC 20)

Fulton is a roving reporter for the East to West, a radio show specializing in the occult and supernatural hosted by Al Bannister. He is currently on assignment in Europe with Montoya, investigating various conspiracy theories about the Catholic Church. (DC 15)

ACT 3: THE KEY

The PCs have now learned through their rescue of Montoya that *The Orphic Litany* is in code and that they need a mysterious key to decipher the text. The PCs must now embark on a quest to find out where and *what* this key is.

3.1 INTRO THE KEY

Player's Briefing: So there's a key needed to decipher the manuscript. Find out as much as you can about it, then we'll decide on a course of action.

Research: The device is the Key of Agricola, an artifact used by mystery religions to encode ancient texts so they could not be read by the uninitiated. If the key is soaked in the blood of the author and then touches the text, the text is rendered indecipherable unless read through a special lens built into the center of the key. (DC 20)

The key was used throughout the Middle Ages to look for hidden content in texts considered heretical by the church, including alchemical and scientific works. Because of this, the key was seized by the church, which used it extensively during the Inquisition to prosecute alchemists who attempted to transmit their formulae in coded manuscripts. The key was lost during the Second Crusade, and its location was unknown for several centuries. (DC 20)

The last known location of the key was the Cole Museum of Art and Antiquities. (DC 20)

Aftermath: Once the PCs have successfully conducted their research, the Templars suggest that they visit the Cole Museum to see if they can learn anything about the key or its present location.

3.2 THE COLE MUSEUM OF ART AND ANTIQUITIES (EL 9)

Player's Briefing: Ok, I've spoken to the Templar Elders and they agree that the Cole Museum should be your next stop. From me to you, something about this Augustus Cole character doesn't add up. The last people who went to him and asked about the key were attacked by fiends, so be on your toes.

Research: The Cole Museum specializes in rare artifacts from the Middle East. It has a somewhat shady reputation, having been cited in the past for procuring items on the black market. (DC 20)

Mission Information: If the PCs visit the museum during the day, they are met by Augustus Cole himself, who stays in the offices of the museum out of direct sunlight. He thanks them for their interest the key but informs them, as he did the previous visitors, that examining the key is strictly forbidden; it is a valuable historical artifact.

Should the PCs contact the Templars for guidance, they are told they can use any means short of murder to acquire the key. If the PCs attempt to call or speak to Cole in person a second time, they are told he is unavailable.

If the PCs return at night to snoop around (before or after meeting Cole) they will learn the hard way that Cole is a vampire in service to Marcus Adrastus.

Augustus Cole (Vampire Smart Hero 7): CR 9; Medium-size Undead; HD 7d12; HP 46; Mas 0; Init +8; Spd 30 ft; Defense 22, touch 16, flatfooted 18 (+0 size, +4 Dex, +2 class, +6 natural); BAB +3; Grap +7; Atk +7 melee (1d8+4/19-20, Longsword), or +7 ranged (by weapon+0, by weapon); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ blood drain, create spawn, domination (DC 10 + 1/2 HD + cha mod), energy drain, alternate form, children of the night, damage reduction 15/+1, fast healing 5, gaseous form, cold and electricity resistance 20, spider climb, +4 turn resistance, darkvision 60 ft., weaknesses; AL evil, chaos, master,

Marcus Adrastus; SV Fort +2, Ref +8, Will +5; AP 4; Rep +3; Str 18, Dex 18, Con 0, Int 17, Wis 12, Cha 18.

Occupation: Military (Hide, Move Silently)

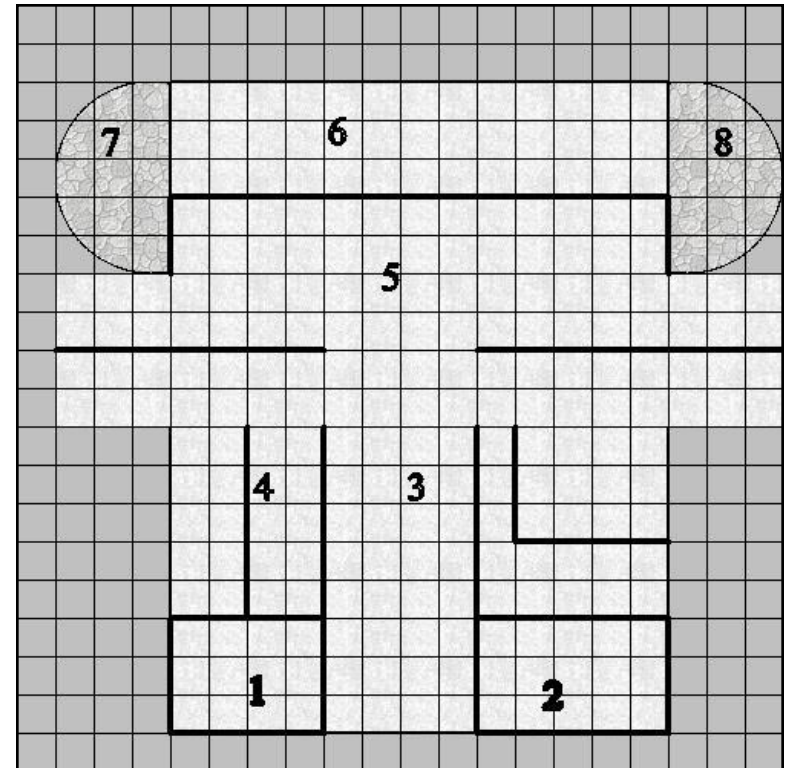
Skills: Bluff +12, Computer Use +13, Craft (pharmaceutical) +13, Disable Device +13, Forgery +13, Hide +22, Knowledge (Arcane Lore) +20, Knowledge (History) +13, Knowledge (Theology and Philosophy) +13, Listen +11, Move Silently +22, Read/Write Language +10 (Ancient Greek, Cantonese, Mandarin, Sanskrit, French, Italian, Latin, English, Aramaic, Middle Egyptian), Research +13, Search +11, Sense Motive +9, Speak Language +10 (Ancient Greek, Cantonese, Mandarin, Sanskrit, French, Italian, Latin, English, Aramaic, Middle Egyptian), Spot +11

Feats: Alertness, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (light), Bloodletting, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Human Sacrifice, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Lightning Reflexes, Profane Ritual, Simple Weapons Proficiency

Talents (Smart Hero): Savant (Knowledge [Arcane Lore]), Exploit Weakness, Plan, Trick

Possessions: Longsword

Aftermath: Following the battle with Cole (or a successful stealthy reconnaissance of the museum), the PCs find an unmarked address in Cole's desk. Searching local information (Research check DC 20) reveals that this location has been rented out to Augustus Cole for storage.



1. Security Office
2. Gift Shop
3. Entrance Hallway with "Worlds of History" banner
4. Ancient Egypt display (both left and right sides)
5. Ancient Ships of the Viking Seas
6. Storage
7. Cole's Office
8. Private offices of the Archaeologist in Residence

3.3 SAFEHOUSE ASSAULT (EL 7)

Player's Briefing: This storage unit of Cole's looks to be some sort of safe house. The key might be there. Of course now that we know how deeply involved in all this Cole really is, I don't need to remind you to be careful again, do I?

Research: Cole has rented the storage facility for five months (DC 20).

Mission Information: Getting into the storage facility requires the PCs to break in (DC 20 Disable Device check required to defeat the outside lock). Once inside the storage facility, the PCs must open a locked safe (DC 30 to disable the lock and retrieve the key). Of course, Cole knew the lock alone wouldn't keep anyone from taking the key if they were prepared, so he also left a little "present" for them in the form of some unfortunate victims of his, turned into twisted and foul creatures through the magics of his order.

(5) Ghouls (Human Strong Ordinary 1/Tough

Ordinary 1): CR 3; Medium-size undead; HD 2d12; hp 13; Mas —; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 natural); BAB +1; Grap +4; Atk +4 melee (1d3+3, claw); Full Atk +4 melee (1d3+3, 2 claws) and +2 melee (1d6+1 plus disease, bite) or +3 ranged; FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ create spawn, darkvision 60 ft., disease, scent, undead; AL chaos, evil; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 16, Dex 14, Con —, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Occupation: Blue collar (class skills: Drive, Intimidate)

Skills: Craft (mechanical) +5, Drive +6, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (popular culture) +2, Knowledge (streetwise) +2, Profession +4, Read/ Write English, Repair +2, Speak English, Swim +4.

Feats: Brawl, Multiattack, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Possessions: None

Aftermath: The PCs recover the key but realize that the rose quartz lens needed for the device to operate is missing (the PCs realize this immediately if they received this information from Giselle Garnier; otherwise they are told by the Templars after they attempt to use the key to decipher *The Orphic Litany*.

At this point the PCs may be at a dead end for a bit, so it's time to hit the books again (or in this case the web). When they do, they find a report that Fulton and Montoya have returned from Europe with a wondrous device, a lens that decodes any book read through it. Montoya plans to use it on an upcoming special broadcast to read from encoded Catholic manuscripts which he claims will prove his theories about secret societies within the church.

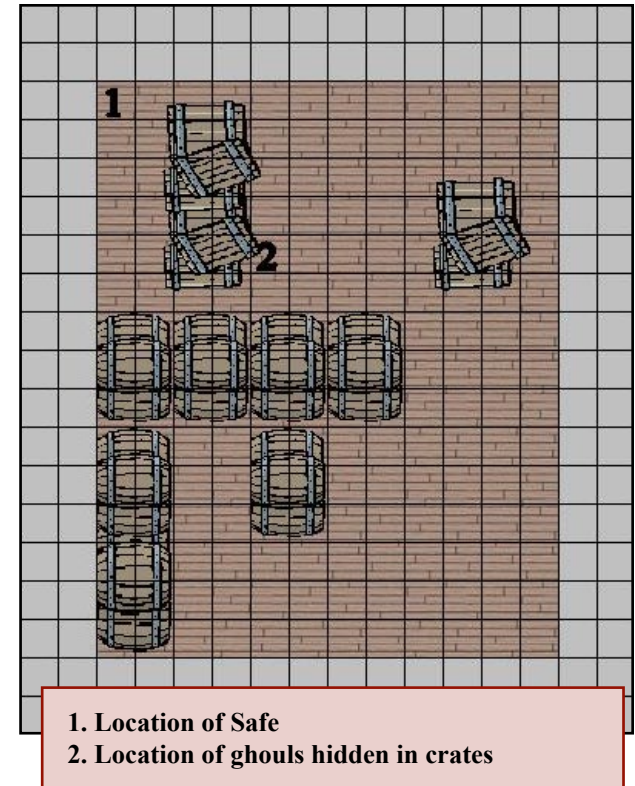
ACT 4: THE LENS

4.1 ASSAULT ON EAST TO WEST RADIO (EL 4)

Player's Briefing: Looks like Montoya played us for a sucker this whole time. It's really against protocol to do something this public, but I want you to find Montoya and retrieve this lens. It can't be allowed to remain in the hands of a nutjob like him. Be as discreet as possible, but get that lens.

Research: The East to West radio show broadcasts out of Al Bannister's house, located just outside of Las Vegas. Montoya is scheduled to appear live from Bannister's house in two days. The PCs must leave as soon as possible to arrive in time to intercept Montoya before the broadcast.

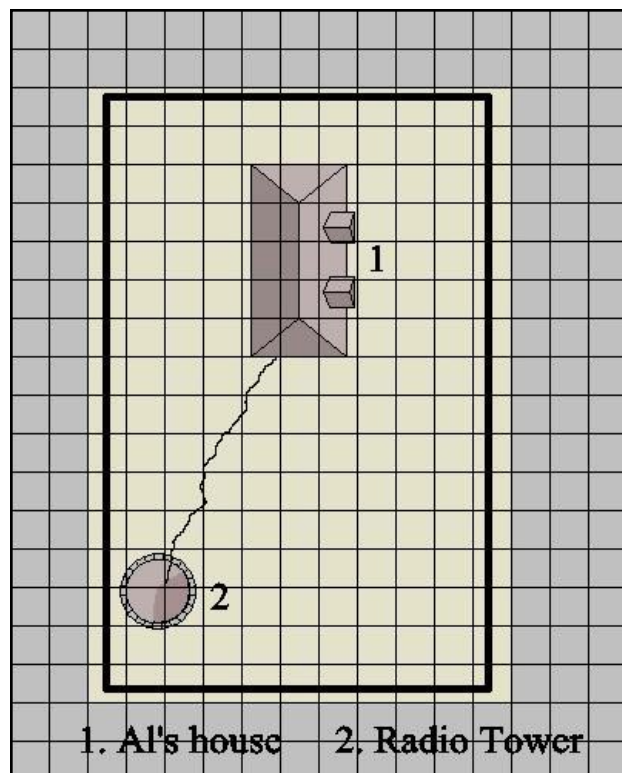
Mission Information: Unfortunately for the PCs, Montoya is extremely paranoid. He's convinced that members of a secret society or societies are out to get the artifact he carries from him, and to stop him from making his appearance on East to West (somewhat



ironic given the PCs' mission).

Consequently he has arrived at Bannister's house early and Bannister, believing his guest to be in danger, has begun a marathon broadcast building up to Montoya use of the lens. This means it is impossible for the PCs to get to Montoya before the broadcast starts. Whatever they do, it will have to be done while East to West is on the air (at least in some markets).

How the PCs handle this is up to them. They could simply attack, which would be broadcast live over the radio. While the private security on hand is likely no match for the PCs, this would be messy and attract a lot of attention, both from the conspiracy community (where the PCs are likely to become legends on a par with the Roswell cover-up) and from the local



authorities who will see the whole incident as two groups of whackos getting violent.

Probably the best bet for the PCs would be to block Bannister's satellite feed (at least temporarily) taking him off the air long enough for them to retrieve the lens. If they manage to accomplish this with minimal violence, the authorities will view the entire scene as an elaborate publicity stunt by Bannister.

Disabling the satellite dish Bannister uses to broadcast his show worldwide requires a Disable Device skill check (DC 25). If the PCs cannot disable the device, they can try to cut the power (Disable Device DC 20) or simply destroy the satellite dish by shooting it or blowing it up (25 points of damage will do the trick).

While this last method is sure to disable the broadcast, it will draw more attention from the authorities, who will no longer be able to dismiss the attack as a publicity stunt.

(4) Bannister Security Guards (Tough Ordinary 2): CR 2; Medium-size humanoid; HD 2d10+2; HP 13; Mas 13; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 12, touch 12, flatfooted 12 (+0 size, +0 Dex, +2 class); BAB +1; Grap +0; Atk +0 melee (1d6+1, Club), or +1 ranged (2d6+0, M-1911); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ ; AL none; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +1; AP 1; Rep +0; Str 9, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Occupation: Law Enforcement (Diplomacy, Listen)

Skills: Diplomacy +2, Drive +1, Knowledge (Popular Culture) +3, Listen +7, Spot +7

Feats: Alertness, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Simple Weapons Proficiency

Talents (Tough Ordinary):

Possessions: Club, M-1911

4.2 MULTITUDE OF OLD EGYPT (EL 7)

Player's Briefing: None.

Research: None. This is the big showdown. No books required.

Mission Information: As the players are driving through Las Vegas they are attacked by the "Old Egypt" mummy, raised by the priests of the Teutonic Order to retrieve the lens.

The mummy allows the PCs' vehicle to hit its henchman (also on display), which overturns their vehicle and begins combat. The henchman mummy walks out in front of the PCs' incoming car. Either they swerve to avoid it and crash or just hit it. The henchman will probably survive the impact (but maybe not). The main mummy then engages the dazed and confused players.

Main Mummy Charismatic Hero 3: CR 7; Medium-size undead; HD 9d12 plus 3 (Toughness feat); hp 62; Mas —; Init -1; Spd 20 ft.; Defense 18, touch 10, flat-footed 18 (-1 Dex, +1 Class, +8 natural); BAB +4; Grap +7; Atk +7 melee (1d6+4 plus mummy rot, slam); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+4 plus mummy rot, slam), or +3 ranged; FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ undead, despair, mummy rot, fire vulnerability, resistant to blows, damage reduction 5/+1, darkvision 60 ft.; AL evil, law; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +8; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 17, Dex 8, Con —, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 15.

Skills: Bluff +7, Diplomacy +7, Hide +8, Knowledge (arcane lore) +4, Knowledge (theology and philosophy) +1, Listen +9, Move Silently +8, Read/Write Egyptian, Speak Egyptian, Spot +9.

Feats: Alertness, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Henchman, Toughness.

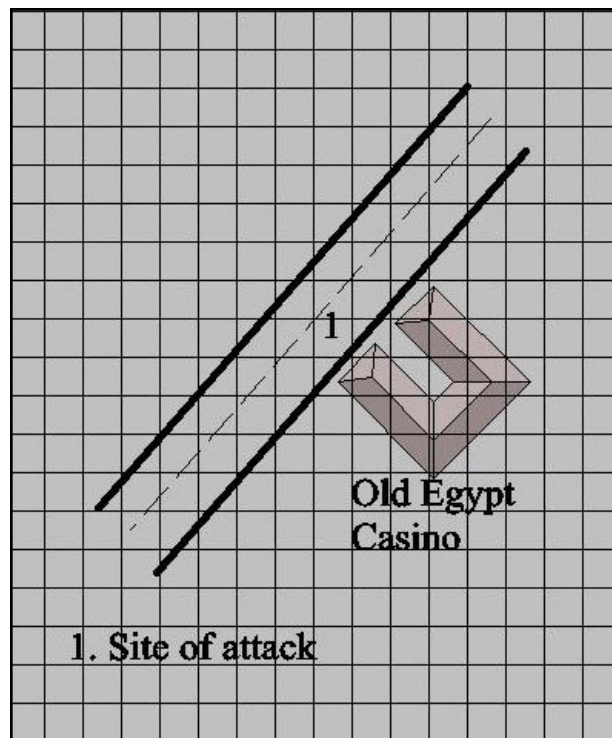
Talents (Charismatic Hero): Coordinate, Inspiration

Henchman Mummy Strong Hero 1: CR 5; Medium-size undead; HD 7d12 plus 3 (Toughness feat); hp 49; Mas —; Init -1; Spd 20 ft.; Defense 18, touch 10, flat-footed 18 (-1 Dex, +1 class, +8 natural); BAB +4; Grap +7; Atk +7 melee (1d6+5 plus mummy rot, slam); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+5 plus mummy rot, slam), or +3 ranged; FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ undead, despair, mummy rot, fire vulnerability, resistant to blows, damage reduction 5/+1, darkvision 60 ft.; AL evil, law; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +7; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 17, Dex 8, Con —, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 15.

Skills: Hide +8, Intimidate +3, Listen +9, Move Silently +8, Read/Write Egyptian, Speak Egyptian, Spot +9.

Feats: Alertness, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Toughness.

Talents (Strong Hero): Melee Smash



Aftermath: Although the adventure ends here, the PCs still must get the lens out of the country and reunite it with the key. The knights will then be able to decipher *The Orphic Litany*. What light can it shed on the nature of the last days? Once the *Litany* is deciphered, it and the key can serve as a source of future adventures as the knights try to use the information and their enemies make further attempts to wrest the litany and/or the key from their control.

NPCs

Al Bannister (Charismatic Hero 3) CR 3; Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d6+3; HP 14; Mas 12; Init +0; Spd 30 ft; Defense 11, touch 11, flatfooted 11 (+0 size,

+0 Dex, +1 class); BAB +1; Grap +0; Atk +0 melee (by weapon), or +1 ranged (by weapon); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ ; AL none; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2; AP 1; Rep +5; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Occupation: Creative (Bluff, Craft [writing], Knowledge [Arcane Lore])

Skills: Bluff +10, Craft (writing) +8, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +4, Gather Information +8, Knowledge (Arcane Lore) +8, Knowledge (Business) +8, Knowledge (Current Events) +8, Knowledge (Popular Culture) +8, Knowledge (Theology and Philosophy) +8, Perform +8, Profession +2

Feats: Banter, Deceptive, Renown, Windfall

Talents (Charismatic Hero): Fast-Talk, Dazzle

Possessions: Wealth +10

Background: Al Bannister, host of the late night “East to West” radio show, is a leading “expert” on supernatural and alien phenomena.

Dr. Alejandro Montoya (Dedicated Hero 3) CR 3; Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d6+3; HP 14; Mas 12; Init +0; Spd 30 ft; Defense 12, touch 12, flatfooted 12 (+0 size, +0 Dex, +2 class); BAB +2; Grap +1; Atk +1 melee (by weapon), or +2 ranged (by weapon); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ ; AL none; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +4; AP 1; Rep +1; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 13.

Occupation: Religious (Knowledge [Arcane Lore], Knowledge [Theology and Philosophy], Sense Motive)

Skills: Knowledge (Arcane Lore) +10, Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences) +8, Knowledge (History) +8, Knowledge (Theology and Philosophy) +10, Listen +8, Sense Motive +8, Treat Injury +8

Feats: Educated (Knowledge [Arcane Lore], Knowledge [Theology and Philosophy]), Sacred Ritual, Exorcism

Talents (Dedicated Hero): Empathy, Intuition

Possessions: Wealth +7

Background: Montoya is a defrocked Catholic priest turned paranormal investigator. He has a great belief in the supernatural and tends to see a supernatural explanation for anything that defies easy explanation. He was removed from his office as a church exorcist after his appearance on the late night radio show “East to West,” where he went on a ranting tirade about secret societies existing unknown even to high-ranking officials in the Catholic Church—societies called “the Doctrine” and “Fratr Torquemada.”

Quote: Your trouble is indeed grave, my son. But I can help you.

Mal Fulton (Smart Hero 2): CR 2; Medium-size humanoid; HD 2d6+2; HP 9; Mas 12; Init +0; Spd 30 ft; Defense 11, touch 11, flatfooted 11 (+0 size, +0 Dex, +1 class); BAB +1; Grap +0; Atk +0 melee (by weapon+1, by weapon), or +1 ranged (by weapon+0, by weapon); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ ; AL UFO Support Groups (UFOSG), Al Bannister, The Truth!; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +4; AP 1; Rep +1; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 13.

Occupation: Investigative (Gather Information, Sense Motive)

Skills: Computer Use +7, Craft (writing) +7, Decipher Script +4, Gather Information +6, Investigate +9, Knowledge (Arcane Lore) +7, Knowledge (Business) +7, Knowledge (Civics) +7, Knowledge (Current Events) +9, Knowledge (Popular Culture) +11, Research +9, Sense Motive +9

Feats: Attentive, Brawl, Educated (Knowledge [Current Events], Knowledge [Popular Culture]), Simple Weapons Proficiency, Studious

Talents (Smart Hero): Savant (Knowledge [Popular Culture])

Possessions: Wealth +5

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