

In Residence

A fight for sanity in an old asylum!

This first-level adventure suitable for 4-6 players is atmosphere-rich and contains three encounters which should take approximately 3-4 hours to complete, depending on your preferred level of gruesome embellishment. The adventure can be quite dark, so player discretion is advised.

The Briefing

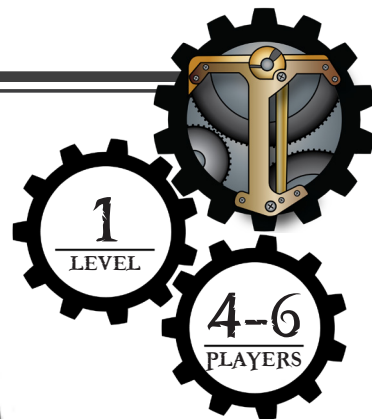
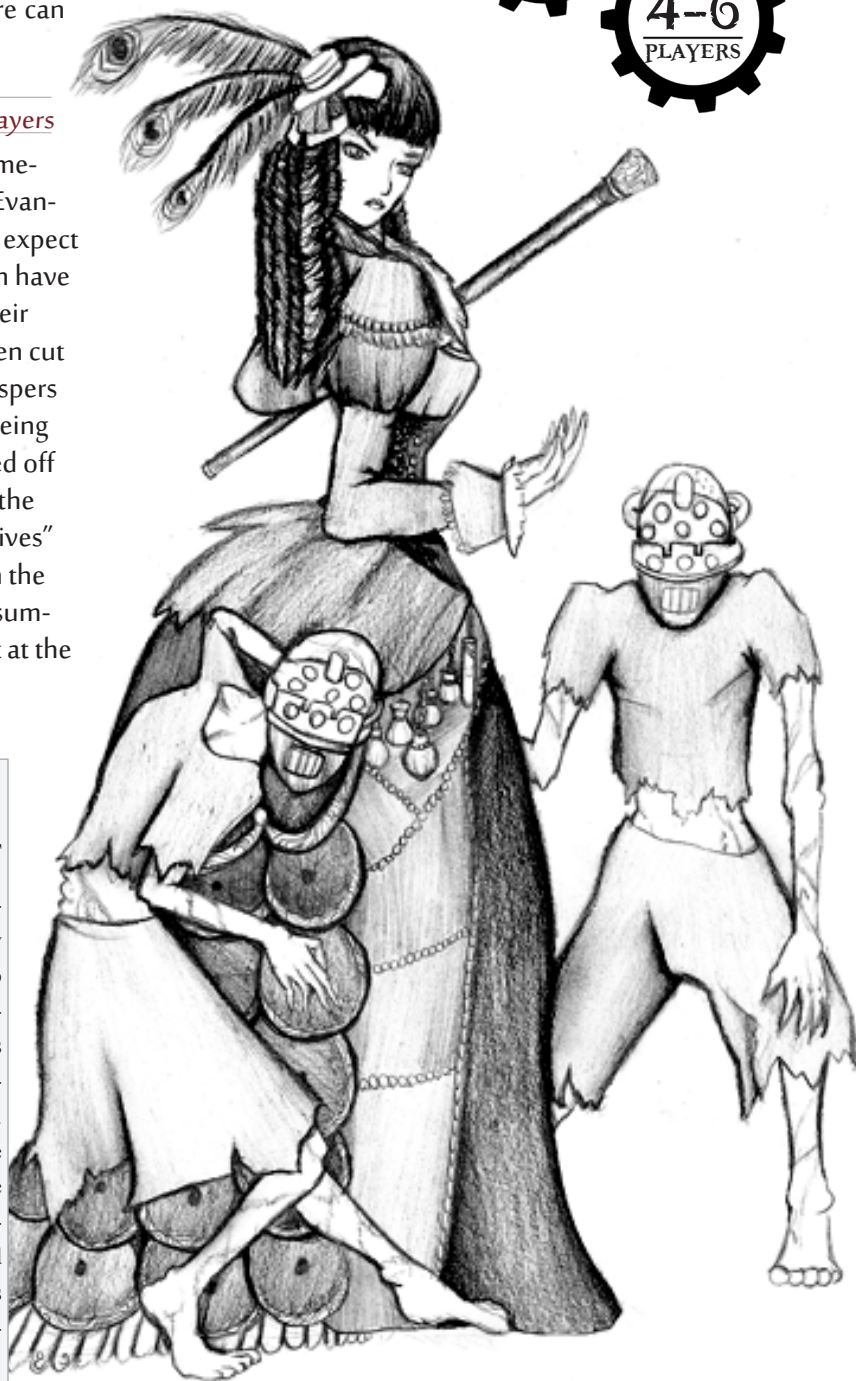
For Players

Your adventure is set in the city of Aldamiir, a bustling metropolis near the eastern coast of the mighty nation of Evangless. Aldamiir is plagued by all the social ill one would expect in a large city, but lately the lives of abandoned children have encountered a new menace. Families who have sent their children to be admitted to adolescent asylums have been cut off from their children, unable to visit or see them. Whispers have begun circulating that inhumane treatments are being conducted, and even that street urchins are being picked off the streets to continue these experiments. Only one of the victims has escaped, whispering “broken hearts and knives” and little else. Your group is aware of these events from the city paper, and each individual has answered a furtive summons sent through various back alley channels to meet at the city hall.

CITY’S POOREST CHILDREN PREYED UPON BY UNKNOWN SADIST

A youth of not more than eleven years of age was found by Constable Riley Glick in the alley behind Moore’s Dry Goods on Thursday night in a shocking and deplorable state. Gentle readers will read no further. The boy’s eyes had been removed, but the stitches that remained were finely done. Constable Glick reported that rumor leads them to believe this is not an isolated incident. Though no other victims have been found, speculation has become the talk of the town.

The youth has been in too delicate a mental state to divulge information regarding the person or persons responsible for these heinous acts. The victim has reportedly muttered the phrase “broken hearts and knives” many times, but the good Constable and his fellows are unaware of the implications of this speech. There is a reward currently offered by the mayor’s office for any information that will bring an end to these ghastly incidents.



By **Garrett Sweet**, expanded upon by Alana Torrez, executive editor Daniel Burrow, illustrations by Callie Smith
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This adventure is designed for Tephra: the Steampunk RPG using the Clockwork System.
Maps are included for the adventure and may be copied for personal use.

Cracked Monocle



The Task



Read this as the adventure begins:

You enter city hall through a side entrance and are led by a secretary to an office with silk paneled walls and a large patterned area rug. Tufted armchairs upholstered in dark blue velvet are placed across from a large dark oak desk. Seated behind the desk is a magistrate of Aldamiir, Sir Ezekiel Sorrenson, who stands to greet everyone as they enter the room. He is tall and exceedingly thin. His impeccable manner of dress does not stop him from making nervous movements with his hands. He is overly friendly, but his manner does not seem entirely sincere. Before too long, he starts reading loudly from notes that look meticulously prepared, his monocle aiding him.

If any of your party members attempt to interrupt the magistrate to ask questions, there is chance he will ignore them. He suffers from hearing loss that he is trying to keep secret, so it is quite possible that many pertinent questions that are thrown his way will be brushed aside with a “yes, yes, I’m sure you’ll do fine.” The magistrate has a rather nasally voice.



The magistrate’s speech:

“Thank you all for coming. I requested your presence because I have been led to believe that each of you possess superlative qualities that will ensure your success in the task at hand. No doubt you have heard a little regarding the er, mishaps being experienced by some of the city’s less fortunate young ones. Because Aldamiir cares about all of its citizens equally, I have been authorized by the city council to assemble a party of intrepid explorers to discover the person or persons responsible for these heinous acts. My constables have been stretched thin, and are needed elsewhere, but we’ve recently received a tip that may help you.”

The magistrate then unfolds a map on the desk and beckons the party to look. He points to a solid gray box at the far edge of the city.

“Here is the location of Saint Valeria’s Home for the Wounded Heart. One of the last children brought in was known to have done odd jobs for its proprietress, the Lady Mori va Umbral. I asked around, and no one has seen or heard from Lady Mori in a little over a month. Don’t mistake me, I’m sure she has played no part in these vile acts. She is a lady, after all, and a member of Galantria’s founding families to boot. It’s possible someone in her employ, perhaps one of her orderlies, has gone mad and is holding her hostage. Yes, yes, I’m sure it’s something of that nature. Poor Mori.”

Extra Information

This is the additional information that the magistrate will reluctantly reveal if someone manages to successfully ask the right questions (perhaps by raising their voice substantially?):

- ✱ Saint Valeria’s houses children with “mental and emotional disturbances.”
- ✱ Lady Mori is indeed a member of one of Aldamiir’s oldest families, but her family has always been looked at with a certain amount of disapproval. Her grandfather, Dr. Mordecai va Umbral, was one of the first physicians to confine Evangless’s mentally unstable to asylums and insanity wards; once his patients were confined, his preferred methods for treating hysteria were lobotomy and sense deprivation.
- ✱ Lady Mori is in fact suspected of continuing her grandfather’s work unburdened by ethical guidelines, and this led to her dismissal a month prior. Of course, the reason for the dismissal was presented and circulated as Lady Mori’s decision to engage in more ladylike pursuits, but many of Aldamiir’s well-off whisper in meeting rooms that that isn’t the whole story.

As They Depart

Before the group departs, the magistrate shakes everyone’s hand. One member of the party (most likely a female member due to his belief that a woman will be more receptive to his cause, but the ultimate choice is up to narrator) will find a small folded paper has been placed in his or her hand. The magistrate leans in and whispers (well, tries to whisper) to the person that they should read it discreetly, and share its contents with no one. The paper is a letter folded around a rough sketch of a little boy. There are options here for the person to roll for how well they hide this action, or for the party members to observe either the hand off or the later letter reading. The letter reads as follows:

To Whom it May Concern,

It pains me to say this, but my family has personal concerns regarding the deplorable recent events affecting Aldamiir’s less fortunate children. Fifteen years ago, my brother conducted an ill-advised liaison with one of the city’s fallen women. She was of the coarsest sort, and their affair resulted in two twin children, a boy and a girl. Wishing to preserve his marriage and the family’s honor, my brother made small intermittent payments to the mother in exchange for silence until his death four years ago. I heard nothing from the mother until last week, when she came to me with news of her children’s disappearances. Please locate the boy and girl if you are able. They should be about 14 years old, now. If you

can find the children and keep my family's connection out of the paper, I will reward you handsomely.

The letter is unsigned, and it is perfectly clear the magistrate cares less about the twins' welfare and more about his family's unsullied name.

If any of the other members discover the letter, the player could convince them to remain silent about it (appealing to honor, offering to share reward, etc.). If the magistrate discovers that any of the other party members know, the reward will be less.

Checking In

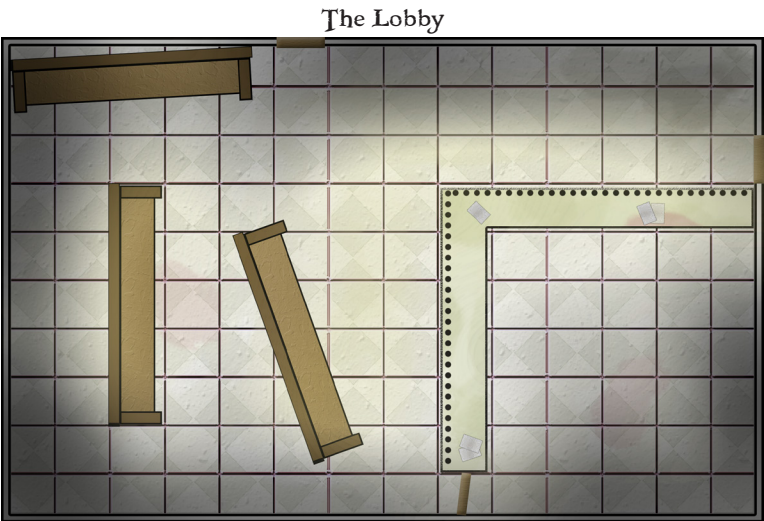


Read this as they approach the asylum:

As your group approaches Saint Valeria's Home on the far side of town, you see a single story building coated with industrial grime. The gray stone is broken up by dusty windows that face the worn and cracked cobblestone street. The front doors are unlocked. Inside, the interior looks as neglected as the exterior; the high ceilings are dingy, the receptionist's desk is lopsided, and the few benches in the waiting area are grimy. There is light streaming in from the large windows on the front and sides of the building. Immediately, the group sees six thugs dressed in stained orderly uniforms, staring at the ceiling, barely noticing that you've entered.

The six orderlies are behind the counter, where it looks like they might've been playing cards. They're extremely stupid, as if they've been drugged themselves. The orderlies can be intimidated if the party can get the drop on them, otherwise the orderlies are quite prone to attacking. The orderlies are nervous and on edge, as they've been ordered to not let anybody past.

Worth
1
experience



Orderly

x6

Race: Human
Level: 1st AP: 2
HP: 13 Wounds: 6
Priority: +0 Speed: 25 feet

Guard

Orderly Uniform and Leather Apron (minimal textile armor)

Eva: +0 Def: +0
Soak: 1 | 2 | 3 | 4

Attacks

Nightstick (2 AP)

Acc: +2 Stk: +6
Damage: 6 | 12 | 18 | 24

Special Actions

Hallucinogenic Syringe (2 AP)

The orderly can attack with a hallucinogenic syringe with a +2 accuracy. If it hits, the victim rolls Brute to resist. The target hallucinates for 2 turns. A tier 3 brute is required to negate the poison, while a tier 2 brute lowers the effects to just 1 turn. While hallucinating, the victim must roll a tier 2 cunning every time they want to make an action; if they fail, they spend 1 AP roaming aimlessly.

Hold Steady

When the orderly is holding somebody, anybody who attacks the victim gains a +3 on their accuracy roll.

Skills

Agility: +2
Brawl: +3
Luck: +2
Marksmanship: +1
Overpower: +1
Resilience: +1

Attributes

Brute: +3
Cunning: +0
Dexterity: +3
Spirit: +2
Sciences: +0

Reference

Specialties: Hold Steady

Equipment: Nightstick (medium wood melee weapon), orderly uniform (minimal textile armor), hallucinogenic poisons (instant Mq.I and Hallucinogenic Mq.II)

If they attack, four of the orderlies grab nightsticks and rush the party. The remaining two spend the first turn moving behind the desk and finding syringes of some sort.

The orderlies are accustomed to putting down frantic children and will employ the same tactics against the adventurers. The four orderlies who attack first will attempt to grab the adventurers (often putting two orderlies onto a single adventurer). Then the other two orderlies will run up and stab them with hallucinogenic poison, hoping to incapacitate them for a few turns. After using the two sedatives, the orderlies will let go of the adventurers and just use their actions hitting them with their clubs. If the combat goes on for too long and the orderlies start to lose, they'll try to run out the door and flee.

Once the orderlies have been dealt with, the party will find a ring of keys either left in one of the desk's drawers or on the belt of one of the fallen. The key ring contains several keys that can be used to unlock the doors in the next hallway and activate the old elevator.

Through the Asylum



Read this after moving down the corridor:

The corridor is darker than the previous area as there are no windows, but there are a few lights still functioning overhead. The flickering light illuminates what look like old blood stains along the walls, with a few smears at waist level that could be partial handprints. The corridor is lined with bolted doors, and the faint murmurs of children can be heard throughout the corridor.

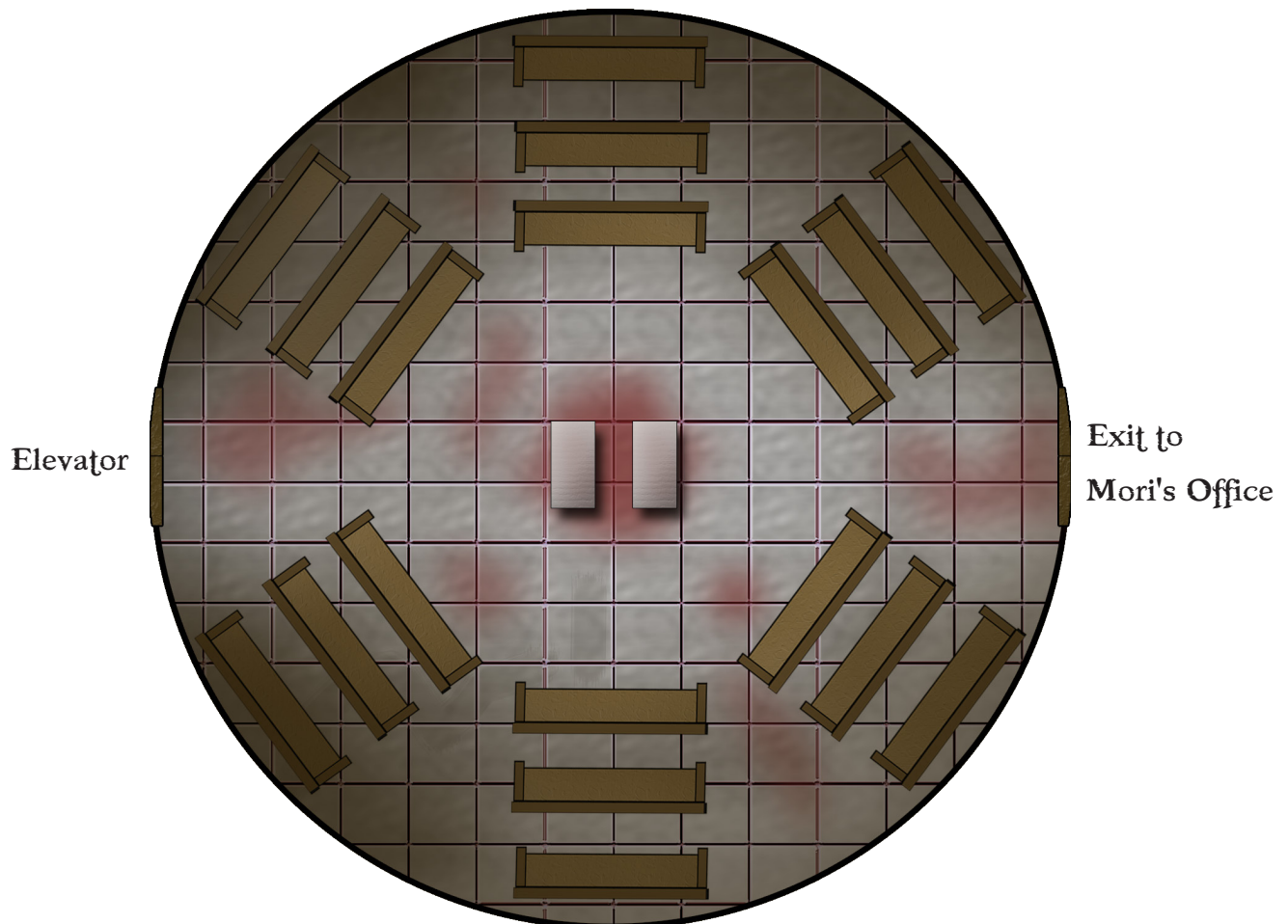
At the back of the corridor an elevator can just be seen. The elevator has an accordion-style door pulled across it with a lock sealing the door.

Gathering Information: While the children won't respond well to any sort of intellectual conversation or prodding, they will react to comforting gestures. If any of the adventurers attempt to comfort the children, they can roll their spirit. A tier 2 or higher will have the children open up just enough to let the adventurers know that Miss va Umbral has been experimenting on children down below, and that going down the elevator means you'll never return.

The Elevator: The elevator has an old accordion-style door across it with just two buttons inside: up and down. On this floor, the up button won't do anything; only the down buttons works.

The corridor has four doors on either side, each with a single child inside. The children range from the ages of 8 through 14. Most of them are bound by straight jackets, and they look both malnourished and abused. They either can't or won't say anything intelligible, and they won't leave if their doors are opened—instead, they'll just wander into the hall aimlessly. None of these children appear to be the ones the mayor wants returned.

The Theater



The Theater



Read this once they go down the elevator:

The elevator creaks and slowly goes down into the basement. When the elevator stops, the doors open to a circular operating theater with seating all around. The theater is large, and in the center of the room are two operating tables. One is clean but obviously well-used, and the other has a boy's unconscious body strapped to it. Moaning and creaking comes from five cages that are suspended from the ceiling; they look much like over-sized bird cages. You see several small hands stretching out from the cages.

A petite young woman stands behind the operating table with the boy on it, cradling a wrapped parcel. She is dressed oddly; she has on a light blue dress, but over this she wears a small, ill-fitting boy's shirt and a leather jacket. A tight skull cap that looks like a spider's web threads through her hair and is studded with small diodes that wink red. To the right of the far exit are cranks that operate ropes connected to the cages.

The girl is Melissa Sorrenson, and the teenaged boy strapped to the operating table is the girl's twin brother, Demetri Sorrenson. Demetri is comatose and can't wake up for a while, but his leather bonds can be easily broken. If the players don't guess that they're the two that the mayor wants returned, a cunning roll of tier 2 will provide that information.

The young woman does not bother with small talk. Instead, she unwraps the parcel, revealing a longsword. Unsheathing it, with tears in her eyes, she murmurs "I'm sorry, I don't have a choice" before attacking.

The girl will move around constantly, putting her specialties to good use, but she seems panicked and distraught through the entire battle; she has no control over her actions. As her body takes further punishment, she appears close to giving up, but then the diodes on the skull cap will go green and she will scream in pain and continue to fight.

Destroying the Control Crown: The control crown that Melissa Sorrenson is wearing is built into her head. The control crown has 10 diodes that must be destroyed before it stops working. Called shots to the head will have their normal effect, but will also break off one diode per tier of the attack. A sunder attempt at the control crown, or a brute roll while holding the crown, will also break one diode per tier of the result. Once broken, Melissa will fall unconscious.

If Beaten: When Melissa's wounds are exhausted, she won't go into fatals. Instead, the girl falls to her knees, weeping from the pain and what the skullcap seems to be inflicting. She is unable to make eye contact with anybody; instead, she drops the sword and passes out.

Worth
1
experience

Melissa Sorrenson

Race: Human

Level: 4th

AP: 4

HP: 58

Wounds: 12

Priority: +8

Speed: 35 feet

Notes: Melissa can move 20 ft. for free every turn. If she moves, she gets a +2 on her accuracy and evade until the end of her next turn.

Guard

Leather Jacket (light textile armor)

Eva: +3

Def: +0

Soak: 2 | 4 | 6 | 8

Deflection: Melissa gains a +4 evade in exchange for 1 AP.

Attacks

Longsword (2 AP)

Acc: +6

Stk: +4

Damage: 6 | 12 | 18 | 24

Special Actions

Carry Through (melee attack +1 AP)

After successfully attacking one opponent, she can attack additional adjacent opponents for just 1 AP.

Skills

Agility: +5

Frenzy: +2

Grace: +3

Overpower: +1

Showmanship: +1

Swashbuckling: +6

Attributes

Brute: +3

Cunning: +1

Dexterity: +11

Spirit: +3

Sciences: +0

Reference

Specialties: Carry Through, Free Movement, Footwork Training

Equipment: Sorrenson Longsword (medium metal melee weapon with the Accurate mq.I and Deflection augments), leather jacket (light textile armor)



The Lady in Question



Read this shortly after defeating the girl:

The door across the theater swings open and Mori va Umbral enters the theater. She makes quite an impression of damaged beauty. Willowy, dark haired, and pale skinned, va Umbral is dressed in mottled grays and blues under a stained lab coat. She wears a key at her neck, and sewn into the center of her corset is a gray metal skull and worn away coat of arms. Though the rest of the metal has been stained by dark streaks, the skull and coat of arms has been meticulously shined and polished.

At Umbral's side are two hunched figures, a teenage boy and girl clad in rags and the barest of undergarments. Scars and infected sores cover their limbs, and full face masks of copper and brass, studded with diodes and thin wires, bracket their shaved heads. The boy and girl appear to carry no weapons.

Mori va Umbral seems more upset at her work being interrupted than at the destruction or problems the adventurers have caused. She'll discuss what her work, making a case about how her experiments will eventually provide society with knowledge about the body they never would have had otherwise. She is interested in clearing her family's reputation in posterity by producing results that never could have been attained by lawful means. She offers to let the party walk away unharmed if they lie to the mayor, but refuses any offer of rehabilitation or clemency. She will stand back and take notes as her two minions move forward to attack, defending herself only if her two minions fall or if she is attacked directly.

Worth
2
experience

Unlike Melissa Sorrenson, Alpha and Beta are difficult to save. Their bio-mechanic parts are grafted into their heads, and attempts to remove them are likely to kill them.

If Mori starts to feel like she's losing, Mori will pull out a knife and begin sawing through the ropes that attach to the cages. For every 2 action points that that Mori spends sawing through the ropes, she'll roll her brute (at a +1). If she gets a tier 2, she'll succeed in completely fraying the rope to one of the cages, causing the cage to crash down to the ground below. Roll a fatal to determine the enclosed child's fate. If an adventurer is underneath the cage when it falls, the adventurer takes a random wound.

After her defeat, the party can choose to take the key around her neck. The key activates the mechanism that lowers the children to safety and can unlock the suspended cages.

Alpha and Beta

Race: Human
Level: 3rd **AP:** 3
HP: 50 **Wounds:** 10
Priority: +2 **Speed:** 25 feet (moving or climbing)

Guard

Bio-fluxxed skin (unarmored)
Eva: +3 **Def:** +3
Soak: 3 | 6 | 9 | 12
Deflection: Melissa gains a +4 evade in exchange for 1 AP.

Attacks

Empty Hands & Clawed Fingers (1 AP)
Acc: +4 **Stk:** +8
Damage: 2 | 4 | 6 | 8

Special Actions

Burning Grasp (while holding)
The twins' skin is like fire to the touch. If they are holding somebody, that person takes 4 damage per turn.
Heavy Handed (unarmed attack +1 AP)
The twins can increase their unarmed damage class to 7 by spending an extra AP.

Skills

Agility: +2
Brawn: +5
Frenzy: +3
Grace: +1
Overpower: +2
Resilience: +2

Attributes

Brute: +12
Cunning: +0
Dexterity: +2
Spirit: +1
Sciences: +0

Reference

Specialties: Heavy-Handed

Mori va Umbral

Race: Human
Level: 5th **AP:** 4
HP: 48 **Wounds:** 12
Priority: +2 **Speed:** 20 feet

Guard

Corset & Stomacher (light metal armor)
Eva: +3 **Def:** +0
Soak: 2 | 4 | 6 | 8
Deflection: Melissa gains a +4 evade in exchange for 1 AP.

Attacks

Extending Baton (2 AP)
Acc: +2 **Stk:** +0 **Reach:** 10 ft.
Damage: 5 | 10 | 15 | 20
Eyelid-Fusing Bio-Zapper (2 AP)
Acc: +3 **Reach:** 25 ft.
Effect: Target becomes blind unless they make a tier 2 Brute resist.
Target can spend 1 AP to take 1 wound and unseal their eyelids.

Skills

Bio-Flux: +10
Gadgetry: +7
Luck: +2
Resilience: +1
Swashbuckling: +4
Tactical: +6

Attributes

Brute: +1
Cunning: +6
Dexterity: +4
Spirit: +2
Sciences: +17

Reference

Equipment: Extending baton (medium metal melee weapon with reach), knife, key, eyelid-fusing bio-zapper (accurate mq.l, eyelid-fusing mq.l, micro-zapper mq.l), corset & stomacher

Mori's Office

The theater doors open into Mori va Umbral's office, which reeks of decaying human flesh and formaldehyde. All around the room, she has different body parts on display. Her office is a mess, covered in papers and diagrams. The papers explain that Mori va Umbral had been using the children for experiments in an attempt to advance science. If the characters attempt to read the documents or gain any knowledge from them, they can roll their sciences attribute. If they get a tier 1 result, they might think that she was on to something, but it's difficult to tell. A tier 2 or higher reveals the truth: Mori va Umbral was insane; her notes are a mess and any mentioned "successes" were anything but. She was grasping at straws, convincing herself that her work had merit.

Conclusion

If your party returns with the twin nephews of the magistrate alive and without making a scene, the magistrate rewards each member with 20 princes (30 for the person he originally gave the letter to). If no children are brought back, but Mori has been taken care of, the magistrate gives them a reward of 10 princes. The magistrate thanks them, but otherwise seems likely to move.

If Melissa and Demetri Sorrenson are returned safely, the mother will meet with the adventurers outside city hall, extremely happy to have her children back. If they'll take it, she offers them Melissa's sword.

Through the adventure, the players will likely receive 4 experience, though a bonus experience point can be rewarded if they saved many lives or approached any situations creatively.

Winnings

Aside from the princes listed above, there are a few more items of note in the adventure the players might keep. The Sorrenson Longsword was a blade rewarded to Melissa Sorrenson when she won the Razule Junior Open Swordsman-ship competition in 843. The players might keep it, or they might try to return it to the Sorrenson family. If the players try to return it, the mother will insist that they keep it. If they managed to keep Melissa alive, Melissa herself will give it to them as thanks.

Sorrenson Longsword

Medium Melee Weapon

Damage Class 6

Deflecting augment

Accurate augment Mq. I (+1 accuracy)

The blade is straight and immaculately forged. At the point where the hilt and guard cross is an engraved token certifying one 'Melissa Sorrenson' as the victor of the Razule Junior Open Swordsman champion of 843.

Sell Price:

25

princes

The other major item of value is Mori va Umbral's bio-zapper.

Eyelid-Fusing Bio-Zapper

Medium Bio-Zapper

Accurate augment Mq. I (+1 accuracy)

Eyelid-Fusing Mq.I

Micro-Zapper Mq.I

Sell Price:

50

princes

In addition to these items, the enemies are carrying enough loot to add up to around 10 princes, if the players decide to sell it.

Story Rewards

Anybody who completes this adventure gains this story:

THE DOCTOR IS IN

Your exposure to the macabre and grotesque has fortified you against the shocking events life throws at you. When you are rolling against stun, you gain a +1 on the roll.

If the party attempts to or successfully parleys with Mori va Umbral, they receive the following story:

THERAPY SESSION

You've successfully brought someone back from the brink. When attempting to change someone's attitude towards another person or subject, you gain a +2 on the roll.