

Ars Magica

Tales of Mythic Europe



by Ferguson, Lawford,
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Timothy Ferguson is a librarian who lives in Australia. While working on this book, he and his wife Linda, who he always dedicates books to, adopted a pair of kittens and named them after Ozian witches. The idea for "Fall and Rise" came from a song called "Nothing At All" by Kasey Chambers. The idea for "Return of the Raiders" came from NextWave, or possibly Mythbusters.

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Ars Magica players participate in a thriving fan community by subscribing to email discussion lists (like the Berkeley list), compiling archives of game material (such as Project Redcap), maintaining fan-created web sites, and running demos through Atlas Games' Special Ops program. To learn more, visit www.atlas-games.com/ArM5. You can also participate in discussions of *Ars Magica* at the official Atlas Games forums located at forum.atlas-games.com.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Welcome to *Tales of Mythic Europe*, a collection of short adventures for *Ars Magica Fifth Edition*. The stories given here cover a wide range of themes, handling demons, faeries, and magic, as well as the more mundane problems arising in Mythic European society. No matter what the interests of your troupe, there's something here for them.

The Stories

This section provides quick summaries of the stories, without giving away any important details, to help troupes decide which ones they would like to play. If the troupe has multiple storyguides, all can read this section to choose the stories they would like to run, and then only read the details for their own stories.

The Champion's Portion

"The Champion's Portion" takes place in the tumultuous lands of Ireland. A temporary magical path leads player characters from their covenant, no matter where it is, to the province of Ulster, where opposed forces clash for a fortress and a magical resource. The player characters are asked to join as allies to the various factions that desire these goals. But these contests pale in comparison to the one offered by a mystical entity, who promises a great prize — the champion's portion — to the winner of its contests. As mundane and magical conflicts come to a head, the PCs must decide their own course of action.

The Ship of Desire

"The Ship of Desire" is a light-hearted adventure that allows players to explore the motivations and passions of

their companion-level characters. The scenario starts with the PCs aboard a sailing ship accompanied by several other passengers; a merchant, a knight, a musician, and a messenger among others. They all seem affable enough and as the journey progresses they become friendlier. But friendliness soon oversteps its boundaries, and the longer the ship sails, the more friendly some of the passengers become. Is this normal behavior for ship-bound travelers or is something foul afoot? Can the PCs dance through the various social entanglements that arise and uncover the cause for these sudden romances?

Fall and Rise

A magus escapes Faerie after centuries of imprisonment. Friendless and disorientated, he confronts the player characters and then flees into the wilds. Powerful supernatural forces cluster about this man, as nightmare creatures and a crippled goddess of fortune vie for his fate. Can the players guide him to safety, and the freedom to determine his own destiny?

The Hospital's Due

The cash-strapped Knights Hospitaller have turned their hungry eyes on the property of your covenant. How can your covenant retrieve its possessions from the powerful crusading order, without risking its wrath or breaking the Hermetic Code? What lengths will your characters go to in order to retrieve what is rightfully theirs, and can they really trust an old ally?

Loyalty and Law

A visiting Jerbiton mage asks that the PCs assist a non-mage cousin of his with some legal difficulties. The visitor has

his reasons for not attending to this himself, and offers reasonable payment for the favor. Of course, he doesn't necessarily mention all the possible complications. His cousin is a noble widow, who is endeavoring to hold onto her lands and protect her daughters' dowries against legal and other challenges from her neighbors. So the PCs must help her case, deter her neighbors, and maybe see off a few trouble-making ruffians — all within the limits of Hermetic law. There's little in the way of a fixed plot; the PCs simply have to deal with obstacles, come up with plans, and avoid offending powerful figures. The need for subtlety rather than force makes it suitable for use with PCs of almost any power level, including possibly companions or grogs rather than magi.

A Musical Murder Mystery

When a small village comes under the spell of mysterious music, no one knows who is safe. Who will be the next victim? How does the murderer commit his crimes? Will your characters risk their sanity to stop the killings? This scenario demonstrates that even Hermetic magi can participate in murder mysteries, and is suitable for magi and companion characters.

Return of the Raiders

Every century, forgotten stories say, the population of a certain village is slaughtered by the ghosts of Viking raiders. The raid is due, and the story is remembered, but can the player characters lead it to a different ending? In this story, conventions concerning the repercussions of magical violence may be put aside.

Warring Families

The conflicts in small villages can be as bitter as those between great princes, for all that their scale is shorter. When one family rises quickly, resentment festers. Now, the conflicts that have risen between a returned crusader and the family of a village elder seem ready to break out in murder.

What Lies Beneath

Battle Abbey has been expanding its estate into the marsh for generations, with a fair and generous landlord supporting the region. But their work has now struck a

new path, one that could bring it into conflict with the Order of Hermes. What's more, there's something hate-filled beneath the marsh, something eager for release and the monks may be about to unearth it. How do the magi contain the threat? What accommodation can they reach with the monks? And where does the corruption within the Abbey start and end?

A Note on Faeries

The rules for designing and playing faeries have been expanded by *Realms of Power: Faerie*. This insert contains a kernel of those changes, so that people who do not have the faerie supplement can make full use of this book.

Faeries are made up of stray matter held together with mystical rules. Despite this, their physical attacks are not blocked by Magic Resistance, including the Parma Magica.

Faeries cannot break their roles. They would prefer to die, because death is rarely permanent for faeries.

The faeries in this book have Pretenses instead of Abilities. Most faeries cannot learn, so they use faerie glamour to mimic human Abilities. Skill in mimicking a particular Ability is called Pretense. For example, a character with a Single Weapon Ability of 5 or more, when facing a faerie, may make a Perception + Awareness roll against an Ease Factor of 12 — the Ability score the faerie is pretending to have. If successful, the character realizes that the faerie's weapon does not travel through all the space between its strikes and blocks; instead, sometimes it simply appears in the locations where its movements end.

In most scenarios, the difference between Abilities and Pretenses is insignificant. A faerie knight trying to kill a character is still dangerous regardless of whether he is using his sword the way a human would or not. In some scenarios, spotting that a character is using Pretense is a way of detecting its faerie nature. This is significant, for example, in the scenario where the characters are told they will be fighting the ghosts of Vikings, because it tells the player characters that their rivals have powers and vulnerabilities that are different from those that they have prepared for.

New Virtues and Flaws

Faeries have an innate ability to regenerate damage, retaining only those superficial injuries necessary to make their roles believable. They never suffer fatigue, although

they may pretend to. They are unencumbered by the normal accoutrements of the role they are playing, which are formed from the glamour of the faerie, and increase its Touch range.

Cognizance is the degree to which a faerie knows it is a faerie, and what that means about its relationship to stories. Most of the faeries in these stories have the Cognizant Within Role Free Virtue. This means they are aware of their faerie nature in a limited way. They try to play a role accurately, and cannot break role even if it leads to their deaths. There are some faeries, with the Highly Cognizant Virtue, who are able to adapt their roles to feed on human emotional energy. These are the most dangerous faeries, because they are able to change their roles. Incognizant faeries, conversely, do not even know they are faeries: they follow their roles because they have no potential to understand any other option.

Faerie Sight is the ability to read glamour, the magical rules from which faeries are constructed. Assume that characters with Faerie Sight can see magical things, and tell what other faeries want, just by looking at them.

Faerie Speech allows faeries to pretend to know the language of whomever they are talking to. If the faerie fails to penetrate Magic Resistance the faerie's sounds are gibberish. Faerie speech is a Mentem effect with a Penetration as given below.

FAERIE SPEECH PENETRATION:

the faerie's **Might** score + **Penetration Pretense**
+ aura adjustment

The Penetration Pretense is doubled if the human speaks to the faerie.

Intricacy Points are used in the *Realms of Power: Faerie* rules during character creation. Ignore them: they aren't significant in play.

A **Traditional Ward** is a taboo: the faerie may not touch a thing protected by the ward with its glamour. The faerie is likely uncomfortable in the presence of the ward, but is not compelled to flee. The faerie cannot regenerate Might points in the presence of a traditional ward. If forced to touch the ward, the glamour holding the faerie's body together begins to decay. The damage to the faerie's body can be simulated with the Heat and Corrosion rules found on page 181 of the core rulebook. Assume that the object acts as a source of damage with an intensity of +6.

A **Sovereign Ward** is a powerful taboo. A faerie cannot hurt someone carrying that faerie's sovereign ward. This includes indirect harm like burning down the building the warded person is in, or poisoning the well at which they are likely to drink. Direct contact with a sovereign ward destroys the body of a faerie, removing it from the scenario.

Faerie powers can work in holy places under certain conditions that are too elaborate to describe here. When the story requires a faerie power to work in the Dominion, simply assume it does.

Chapter Two

The Champion's Portion

"The Champion's Portion" puts the player characters in the middle of two conflicts, one Hermetic and the other mundane. Transported to a distant location, steeped in legend and embroiled in imminent violence, they must decipher the motivations of the various parties before determining how they will interact with them, either aiding, ignoring, or hindering their various schemes. They will meet a potentially lethal Hermetic opponent and be introduced to a new tradition of Ex Miscellanea wizards.

a suitable challenge.

A fair bit of combat is involved, so martial grogs and companions are necessary. Even with the many ways that skilled magi can avoid combat, the probability for a fight or two is high. Players should be encouraged to bring along some covenant muscle, to fully enjoy the events included in this scenario. Academic and artistic characters will be less useful, although a smart player will still find ways to include such a character in the scenario.

Scenario Alterations

Because of the magical means of traveling to Ulster, it is not necessary to change the location other than anchoring the beginning to the characters' covenant. As written, the scenario provides an oak tree as the beginning connection, but it is an easy matter to change this. If there is an appropriate source of annual vis already controlled by the covenant, a storyguide could drop the oak tree and have the regio boundary begin from this site instead. The only qualifying conditions are that the site is in a regio and provides a believable connection to the Herbam bound-

ary. Boundaries to the Magic Realm are undetectable with current Hermetic magic, so it is not unreasonable that such a boundary has existed in a nearby regio for some time.

Nor does Aedh need to show up on the PCs' doorstep. He could arrive somewhere else, which would mean relocating the oak, after which an NPC with a connection to the characters asks them for help. Don't position this location too distantly from the covenant, since the boundary to the Herbam Province will close in four days. Several Story Flaws could incorporate this idea. A Magical Ani-

mal Companion could find Aedh lying in the woods and take its friend PC to the Irishman. A Difficult Underling could be shirking his duties and find Aedh while loafing in the woods. Someone who a PC owes Favors to could ask the PC for help returning Aedh. Visions could show a character a scene at Dún Rudraige, where the character is awarded a prize. Or perhaps a character's Mentor is a friend of Eustace or Muirgen. On hearing of Aedh's arrival, he is suddenly concerned about his friend, knowing that he (or she) was headed for Ulster.

This scenario is designed for two or three magi characters, each approximately five to 10 years out of apprenticeship, and their small staff of retainers. Less-skilled characters could still succeed, if they prefer parley over melee, but might find themselves more of witnesses to the action than participants. More-skilled magi would easily overcome the magical antagonists, meaning that the storyguide will have to increase the NPCs' powers to provide

"The Champion's Portion" is a mix of high fantasy and gritty mundane history. From anywhere in Europe, the player characters travel through the Magic Realm to arrive in Ulster, in northern Ireland. This scenario should take place between the years of 1223 and 1227. If your troupe is not concerned with adhering closely to European history, it could take place anytime after 1220 (the canonical starting date of a saga) and before 1240.

Précis

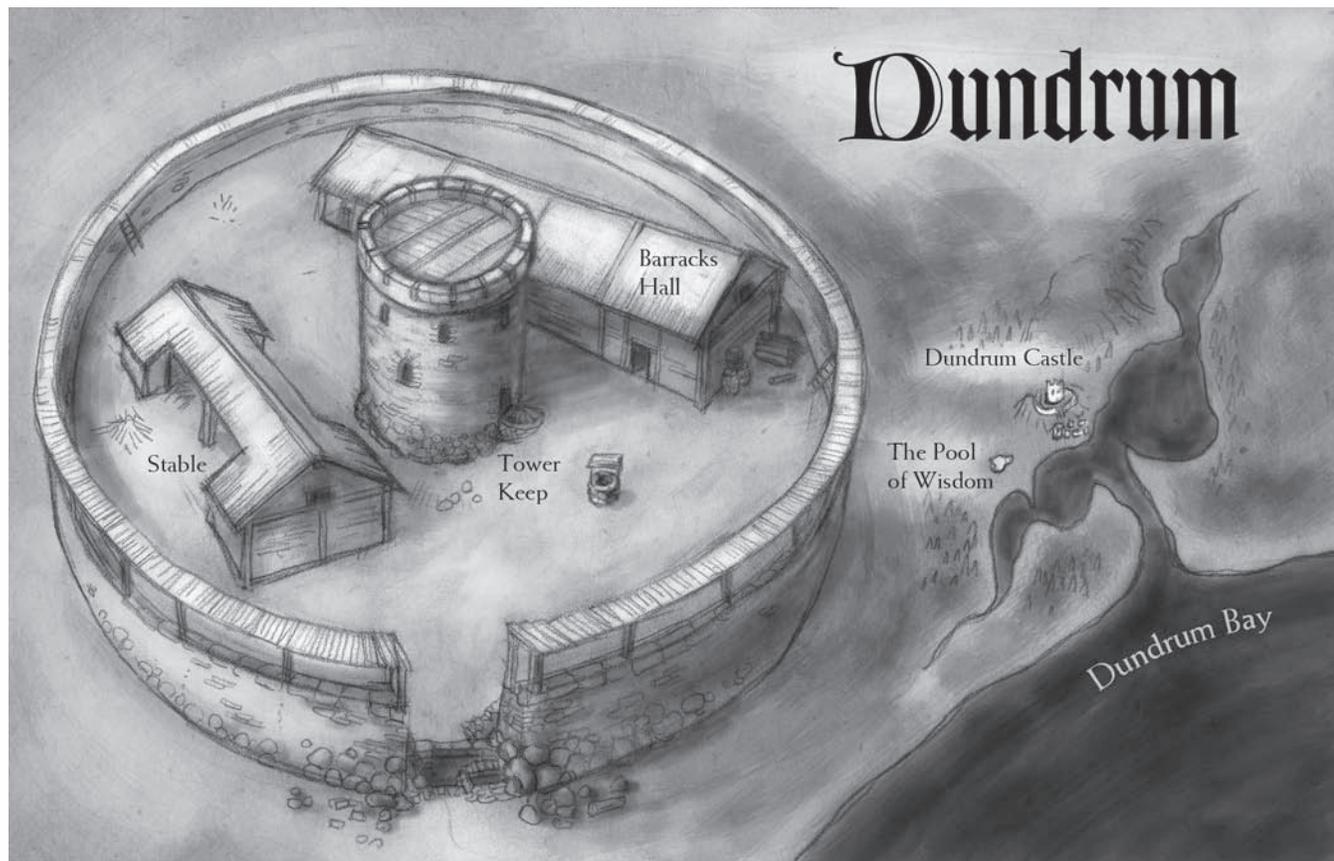
As the magi prepare for their annual Mid-Summer's Eve activities, one of the covenfolk discovers a naked foreigner wandering the covenant grounds. He claims to be an Irish prince, named Aedh mac Cathal Ua Conchobair (anglicized to Aedh O'Connor), who was abducted from his home by a witch. He did not come by land or by sea, he says, but via a magical highway that led him through mystic vistas, so that in a single night he strode from his home in Ireland to just outside the characters' covenant. Aedh is desperate to get home. He is more aware of the customs of the Order than the characters may be used to, and offers them vis to assist him.

Aedh reveals his story to the magi, honestly telling them all he knows. He is an Irish prince participating in the violent struggle between Irish and English forces in Ulster. While planning an attack on a local garrison, his captains rebelled, calling him a coward and a weakling and other slanderous terms. Aedh learned that a local witch, whom he had been fairly friendly with, had used her poison-tongue to turn his captains against him. Aedh also knows that she and another wizard are scrambling to get the champion's portion, which is the largest or best cut of meat awarded to

the king's champion. This prize is offered by a faerie, Aedh believes (wrongly), and is enchanted as to allow the holder to control men as a king could.

The situation in Ulster is tense. The English occupiers of conquered Ulster are preparing for an invasion. Not against the indigenous Irish, but against Hugh de Lacy, another English lord returning to reclaim the earldom of Ulster. Aedh's father, Cathal Ua Conchobair (anglicized Cathal O'Connor), plans to ally with de Lacy. Aedh planned to lead a group of warriors against the English garrison of Dundrum. The castle is being renovated and is particularly vulnerable. He had a force gathered, but the witch caused them to turn against Aedh. He gathered another, smaller force, but on the eve of the attack the same witch visited him and led him away. Thinking she was offering some type of recompense or bargain, he followed, only to arrive at the covenant. If he can return as quickly as he left, he can still attack Dundrum while it is being renovated, and asks the characters for their help.

The prince leads the assembled characters to a place previously unnoticed by the covenant — a giant tree that acts as a portal to a peripheral area of the Magic Realm. The group travels a path through two magical boundaries into the Twilight Void, and eventually into the province of Ulster on the eastern shore of Northern Ireland.



The Villain

This story has no “bad guy”. Players may be frustrated to find that each individual NPC, while exploiting the situation to his own ends, is acting within the moral and quasi-legal code of his station. Several characters might bend the rules of their society’s contract, but none are outright law-breakers. Rather than being villains, or victims for that matter, each NPC is striving for power and personal advantage. The Ex Miscellanea Muirgen desires to keep Dún Rudraige for

herself. Eustace desires the source of the legally unclaimed vis site. Aedh wants to defeat de Maginnis to claim personal honor, while his father wants to wait for the returning de Lacy. The conflict is not black and white, and players will have to decide who to help based on their own interpretations. Like the NPCs, they may very well follow the course of action that best suits their interests.

Some troupes might not like this moral ambiguity, enjoying a more

specified antagonist rather than this miasma of personal desires. If so, the storyguide will have to alter one or more of the NPCs to make them more vicious. This is not hard. Aedh could be a treacherous son looking to ally with his father’s enemies. Muirgen could be a rogue maga, expelled from the Loch Leglean Tribunal. Eustace might be furtively siding with de Maginnis, helping him defend Dundrum in exchange for finding the Dún Rudraige’s entrance stones.

Once in Ulster, characters discover a tangled plot of mundane and Hermetic politics, each party moving against the others and each desiring the player characters’ aid once their presence is known. Aedh is friends with the witch Muirgen, who is an Ex Miscellanea maga from the Nemthenga tradition. She is trying to prevent Eustace, a French Flambeau magus, from entering a specific regio called Dún Rudraige, home to the legendary magical creature Bricriu. Castle Dundrum stands atop of the existing regio of Dún Rudraige, and the magical stones that once stood as a portal entrance to Dún Rudraige have been taken and used as building material for the new gatehouse. Once a year, Bricriu holds a feast in which guests compete for a prize, or champion’s portion. Muirgen usually attends and receives a few pawns of vis for her involvement as a judge. Eustace desires to kill Bricriu and take his tongue as a trophy. Needless to say, their interests conflict. However, as the feast of Bricriu approaches, the regio is closed because of the missing stones.

Eustace freely admits that he magically impersonated Muirgen to lead Prince Aedh away. He wishes to delay the prince’s attack until he can find the missing portal stones. Muirgen is also looking for the stones. Her tactics of threatening the various Irish captains failed, and she now promises to help the prince if the stones are found. The characters become involved in the frantic rush to enter Dún Rudraige before the Normans lay siege to Dundrum.

The stones are not that difficult to find, and the characters eventually enter the regio, with or without Muirgen and/or Eustace. Inside is a massive wooden fort, home to Bricriu, a magical human from traditional Ulster legends. His feasting hall is full of “heroes” — other magical humans who exist in the regio solely to compete at the feast. A

series of challenges is laid for the heroes, and the winner receives the champion’s portion of the feast. The characters can assist Muirgen and act as judges, side with Eustace and slay Bricriu, or enter into the challenges and compete for the prize themselves.

Historical Background

Ulster is a province on the northeastern coast of Ireland. Prior to the English invasion in 1167, it was home to several dynastic families who often fought among themselves. In a sense, the English invasion and the bloodshed it brought was nothing new. Setting out from captured Dublin, John de Courcy led three hundred soldiers along the coast and captured southern Ulster in a series of monumental battles. In typical Norman fashion, he dotted the conquered territory with motte and bailey castles. He built two larger fortifications, the castles of Dundrum and Carrickfergus.

De Courcy’s fortunes turned when the fickle and favorite-playing King John took the throne, and he was replaced by Hugh de Lacy. The new earl of Ulster didn’t last long, and in 1210 King John invaded de Lacy’s Ulster holdings. Norman fought Norman, each side employing Irish mercenaries, and John proved victorious. De Lacy fled to southern France. John kept Dundrum and Carrickfergus, making them crown lands and not bequeathing them to any of his vassals; each castle’s constable was loyal to John without owning the property.

John’s successor, the young King Henry, sought de Lacy’s loyalty, and pardoned his actions against King John. The new king did not return his land, to de Lacy’s vexation. Leaving the fight against the Cathars, de Lacy de-

Pronunciation Guide

This short guide should help players unfamiliar with Irish Gaelic (which is most of us) in pronouncing the names of some of the main NPCs of the adventure. Stressed syllables are in bold-face.

Aedh	ay (rhymes with "day")
Bricriu	brik -ru
Cathal	kath -al
Conán	kon -in
Muirgen	mur -gen (g in "girl", not "gem")
Ua Conchobair	o kon -chov-ar

clared that he would regain his lands and title by force, and started mustering soldiers for an invasion. The Justiciar of Ireland, William Marshal — son of the William Marshal of chivalric fame — ordered Ulster to prepare their defenses. Marshal began raising troops in southern Ireland to head north and meet de Lacy. In 1220, the stage is set for this violent confrontation.

Historically, de Lacy returned to Ulster in 1223. He allied with Aedh O'Neill, king of a large tribe in northern Ulster and a former vassal of King Henry. Turmoil raged for four years as de Lacy fought William Marshal's combined Norman and Irish forces. Through fierce campaigning and his indomitable will, De Lacy regained his lands and title in 1227.

Dramatis Personae

This section lists the NPCs most important to the scenario, including information that ties the major NPCs together. Game statistics are provided in the section when they are most likely to appear in the story.

Aedh mac Cathal Ua Conchobair (Aedh O'Connor)

Aedh is a son of Cathal O'Connor, the reigning king of Connaught, which is a province to the west of Ulster. He is not the eldest son, but is the mightiest. Ten years ago, he formed his own *fian*, a group of warriors, and began raiding Connaught's eastern border. Aedh does not

distinguish between Gael or English, happily stealing the cattle of anyone his band happens upon. His victories outnumber his defeats, and he has made a name for himself in both provinces.

Five years ago, he encountered Muirgen fleeing from a band of English pursuers. Liberating her from that predicament, the pair formed a shaky alliance, which has strengthened over time. Through her, Aedh has learned a few things about the Order of Hermes. He knows that there are several tribes (Houses) scattered among many kingdoms (tribunals). They occasionally fight among themselves, often over magical trinkets of the most gruesome form (*vis*). Aedh has encountered these gewgaws before in his travels, recognizing them through his Supernatural Virtue: Magic Sensitivity. After meeting Muirgen he started collecting them, knowing that he can sometimes use them to buy Muirgen's services.

As tensions mount in Ulster, Aedh decided to attack Dundrum, hoping to take the small garrison while they are refurbishing the castle. He gathered several Irish captains to him for his attack. At the same time, Muirgen discovered that the portal stones to Dún Rudraige were missing. She sought out several of the Irish *fian* leaders, Aedh's captains, and suspecting them of stealing the stones, threatened them with her poison-tongue power if they did not return the stones. When they did not, because they didn't have them, Muirgen acted on her threat and turned them against Aedh. Deterred but not defeated, Aedh gathered a much smaller force to attack Dundrum.

On the eve of the attack, during his nightly swim, Muirgen came to him and asked him to follow her. Not even waiting to dress, Aedh followed her along a mind-boggling path of river and wood, unlike any he'd seen in Ireland before. At its climax, she ordered him to jump down from a tree. She did not follow, and when Aedh turned to look at her, she was gone. He found himself in a strange land, naked and alone.

Aedh doesn't know this, but it was actually Eustace in disguise, rather than Muirgen, who led him to the players' covenant. He did notice the fox leading Eustace, but thought little of it.

Characteristics: Int 0, Per -1, Pre +1, Com -2, Str +2, Sta +2, Dex +1, Qik +2

Size: 0

Age: 29 (29)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Knight; Death Prophecy, Magic Sensitivity; Driven (to rule Connaught); Heir, Reckless

Personality Traits: Reckless +3

Reputations: Fian Leader 3 (Ulster)

Combat:

Dodge: Init +2, Attack n/a, Defense +6, Damage n/a
Dagger: Init +2, Attack +8, Defense +7, Damage +5
Javelin: Init +2, Attack +9, Defense +8, Damage +7
Short bow: Init +1, Attack +6, Defense +4, Damage +8
Axe: Init +3, Attack +11, Defense +8, Damage +8
Soak: +2

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Area Lore: Ulster 3 (geography), Animal Handling 2 (horses), Athletics 2 (jumping), Awareness 2 (ambushes), Brawl 4 (dagger), Bows 1 (short bow), Carouse 3 (drinking games), Charm 1 (subordinates), English 1 (peasants), French 3 (nobles), Irish 5 (military terminology), Latin 3 (grammar), Leadership 4 (his fian), Magic Sensitivity 3 (vis), Organization Lore: Order of Hermes Lore 1 (Ex Miscellanea), Ride 2 (speed), Single Weapon 5 (axe), Swim 2 (ocean), Thrown Weapon 4 (javelin)

Equipment: Once properly attired, Aedh wears an embroidered tunic and a heavy red cloak trimmed with boar fur. He carries his weapons and wears no armor.

Encumbrance: 0 (2)

Appearance: Aedh is slightly taller than average, with long black hair, a thick beard, and soft blue eyes. His brawny arms and hands are laced with scars.

Aedh can lead a gang of fénneda that fight as a trained group. The maximum size is 5, counting his specialty in Leadership. The maximum combat advantage is +15.

Aedh has a stash of vis hidden in the forest to use as bribes. He has collected 8 deer antlers each worth a pawn of Animal vis, and 6 hand-sized rocks each worth a pawn of Terram vis.

Aedh's ultimate motivation is to take Dunderum castle with magical assistance. Muirgen refused him this request. As soon as the PCs are in Ulster, he plans to ask them for military assistance.

Aedh's Death Prophecy is that he will be killed by a carpenter. The Normans employ many carpenters in their ambitious castle-building program, and Aedh is sure that several are busy rebuilding Dunderum. This drives him to find magical help to defeat the garrison.

Muirgen, Ex Miscellanea Maga

Muirgen is a Scottish maga, hailing from the Loch Leglean Tribunal. She is a Nemthenga, an Ex Miscellanea tradition that has a long history in the Celtic lands (see the appendix to this chapter). Within the Order of Hermes she

is unattached to any specific covenant, but still retains the right to vote at tribunal and other Hermetic privileges. A wanderer and naturalist, Muirgen has no home. She spends most of her life traveling in Ireland and the Scottish Highlands, from vis site to vis site, collecting vis and slowly improving her Arts. She has no laboratory or personal library, although a few covenants have allowed her to use their facilities in the past.

Her parents discovered Dún Rudraige just before the Normans began building Dunderum castle. Knowing that the regio would be safe if he removed the portal stones, he asked a friendly fian to assist him, taking the stones away and hiding them until needed. This worked for many years. With his eventual decline into Final Twilight, Muirgen continued the practice of hiding the stones. Recently, the stones disappeared, stolen from their hiding place. Her threats to the various fian leaders failed, even after she cursed a few with her Embitterment power. Soon after, Eustace appeared on the scene. At first he was polite, asking questions about Muirgen and Dún Rudraige, but soon revealed his true intentions. Muirgen vowed to bar his entrance, and searches for the stones in earnest to find them before the Flambeau.

Characteristics: Int +1, Per +2, Pre -3 (2), Com +3, Str -2, Sta +3, Dex +2 (1), Qik 0

Size: -2

Age: 39 (39)

Decrepitude: 0 (3)

Warping Score: 2 (11)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: The Gift; Hermetic Magus; Embitterment; Affinity with Corpus, Affinity with Muto, Free Study, Improved Characteristics, Puissant Embitterment, Puissant Muto, Subtle Magic; Deficient Rego, Dwarf, Study Requirement

Personality Traits: Flighty +3, Entitled +2, Shy +2

Combat:

Dodge: Init +0, Attack n/a, Defense +4, Damage n/a

Soak: -2

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-3), -3 (4-6), -5 (7-9), Incapacitated (10-12), Dead (13+)

Abilities: Area Lore: Scotland 2 (geography), Area Lore: Ulster 2 (vis sites), Artes Liberales 1 (ritual magic), Awareness 2 (searching), Brawl 3 (dodge), Concentration 1 (spell concentration), Embitterment 6+2, Faerie Lore 2 (faerie forests), Finesse 3 (targeting), Folk Ken 2 (peasants), Hunt 3 (covering tracks), Latin 4 (Hermetic usage), Magic Lore 2 (creatures), Magic Theory 4 (Muto), Parma Magica 3 (Mentem), Penetration 1 (Terram), Scottish 5 (peasants), Stealth 2 (sneak), Swim 2 (speed)

Arts: Cr 2, In 8, Mu 13+3 (12), Pe 5, Re 0; An 5, Aq 1, Au 1, Co 8 (2), He 7, Ig 0, Im 0, Me 1, Te 4, Vi 6

Twilight Scars: Muirgen's pupils fill her entire eyes, like an animal, leaving no white showing. Her fingernails are scaly, like a fish, and her voice is raspy like a crow's.

Equipment: Muirgen carries some gear necessary for surviving in the forest, and items required for her spells: a black shawl and a piece of chainmail.

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Spells Known:

Beast of Outlandish Size (MuAn 15/+24)

Growth of the Creeping Things (MuAn 15/+24)

Eyes of the Cat (MuCo(An) 5/+24)

Preternatural Growth and Shrinking (MuCo 15/+27)

Shape of the Leafy Herbivore (MuCo(An) 20/+24) R: Per, D: Sun, T: Ind. A spell that changes the target into a deer.

Gift of the Bear's Fortitude (MuCo 25/+27)

Cloak of the Black Feathers (MuCo(An) 30/+24)

Coat of the Slippery Warrior (MuCo(An) 30/+24). R: Per, D: Sun, T: Ind. Similar to *Cloak of the Black Feathers*, this spell changes the target into a fish. The caster drapes a small piece of chainmail over her head during the transformation, which ends the spell when removed.

Intuition of the Forest (InHe 10/+18)

Shriek of the Impending Shafts (InHe 15/+18)

The Weightless Menhir (MuTe 20/+23) R: Touch, D: Sun, T: Ind. This spell makes a stone as light as a feather. Muirgen created this spell to easily move the portal stones. (Base 4, +1 Touch, +1 stone, +2 day — the base size is big enough without adding magnitudes for size).

Pit of the Gaping Earth (PeTe 15/+12), Mastery 1, Fast Cast.

Vis: Muirgen has a sack with 6 pawns of Muto vis (six mummified tadpole bodies).

Appearance: Muirgen is a diminutive, dirty, ragged-looking woman, reminiscent of a feral child. She usually shouts when she speaks, making her seem almost imposing.

Muirgen's Scottish is linguistically close enough to Irish to allow her to communicate with Aedh and his fellows. Treat her score as 2 points less when she converses with the Irish natives.

Muirgen typically changes her shape with her spells when she travels, casting *Shriek of the Impending Shafts* prior to her transformation to protect her from hunters. If threatened in human form, she casts *Pit of the Gaping Earth* at the aggressor and then flees.

The fian that assisted Muirgen in moving the portal stones is gone, having left Ulster six months ago. She does not think the portal stones are with them, and had thought the stones were safe in their hiding place. Their absence has made her frantic and she is desperately searching for them. Other fianna are frightened of her and will not offer

help. She has turned several of them against Aedh. She and Aedh are friendly, after a fashion, but Aedh wants Muirgen's help in defeating the Dundrum garrison before he will offer to help find the stones. Muirgen resists this offer, but as the time to enter Bricriu's regio draws closer, she may change her mind.

Living alone, Muirgen does not trust her Hermetic brethren, nor does she count on Hermetic justice from a legal court or tribunal. She refused to enter certamen with Eustace when he first suggested it, having never participated in one since apprenticeship. Nor does she think she is breaking the Code of Hermes by embittering several of the local Irish leaders. She is not interfering in their affairs, she says, they are interfering in hers and she is merely rebuking them.

She has not yet performed a longevity ritual, a drawback of not having a permanent laboratory. She will be interested if anyone wants to offer her one, and be willing to trade vis and information.

Eustace and Vafer

Eustace is a Flambeau magus, born and trained in the Normandy Tribunal. He loves his House and fully embraces its ideology and knightly trappings. Born in a noble family, Eustace continues his infatuation with hunting in his Hermetic career, and has become a hunter of House Flambeau. He follows the School of Apromor for his fighting style (*Houses of Hermes: Societates*, page 27).

Eustace met and befriended Vafer soon after his gauntlet. Vafer is a magical fox who wanders the border provinces of the Magic Realm looking for prey, his primary incentive. Although the magical creature does not need to eat, he enjoys it. When his hunting skills fail him, he lies unmoving, feigning death, waiting for a curious bird or animal to approach, at which point he gobbles the curious onlooker up. This trick failed him when Eustace happened upon him. Before Vafer could escape, Eustace grabbed him by the neck, intending to slay him for his overly long tail. The wily Vafer worked a bargain, however, promising to lead Eustace to magical regiones and the various magical beasts they contained. The magus agreed and has spent the last twenty years following the fox through the mysterious byways of the regiones and boundaries of the Magic Realm, always terminating in a magical regio in which he can hunt.

Five years ago, Eustace visited the covenant of Cunfin and met Celeres, follower of Bonisagus (see *The Lily and the Lion: The Normandy Tribunal*, pages 106-111). His imagination was instantly ignited by Celeres' tales of Arthurian knights and the quests they undertook. Sharing these tales with other Flambeau hunters, he and a few of his fellows began

a contest to see who could acquire the best trophy. Calling themselves the Young Squires, a reference to Gawain and his cousins, the group of hunters try to out do each other in their quests for magical beasts. Eustace has fallen behind in the competition.

EUSTACE OF FLAMBEAU

Characteristics: Int -1, Per 0, Pre -1, Com 0, Str +2, Sta +2, Dex +2, Qik +2

Size: 0

Age: 43 (38)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 3 (6)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: The Gift; Hermetic Magus; Flexible Formulaic Magic; Affinity with Corpus, Affinity with Perdo, Improved Characteristics, Puissant Perdo, Second Sight, Skilled Parens; Ambitious, Blatant Gift; Deficient Form: Aquam, Magical Animal Companion

Personality Traits: Vain +3, Determined +2

Combat:

Dodge: Init +2, Attack n/a, Defense +5, Damage n/a

Long sword: Init +4, Attack +12, Defense +9, Damage +8

Soak: +7

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Artes Liberales 1 (astronomy), Athletics 2 (grace), Awareness 2 (searching), Brawl 2 (dodge), Code of Hermes 2 (mundane relations), Etiquette 1 (Hermetic events), Finesse 1 (Corpus), French 5 (chivalric terminology), Hunt 3 (tracking), Latin 4 (Hermetic usage), Magic Theory 4 (Perdo), Parma Magica 4 (Ignem), Penetration 3 (Corpus), Second Sight 3 (regiones), Single Weapon 5 (long sword)

Arts: Cr 6, In 5, Mu 6, Pe 15+3(1), Re 5; An 8, Aq 5, Au 5, Co 13, He 5, Ig 6, Im 5, Me 5, Te 5, Vi 7

Twilight Scars: Eustace leaves black smudges on things he touches, as if his hands were permanently stained by soot.

Equipment: Partial chainmail and long sword.

Encumbrance: 0 (2)

Spells Known:

Image of the Beast (InAn 5/+15)

Tire the Bounding Stag (PeAn 10/+28) R: Voice, D: Mom, T: Ind. This spell causes an animal of up to Size +1 to lose one Fatigue level (base 4, +2 Voice).

Tire the Strident Destrier (PeAn 20/+28) R: Voice, D: Mom, T: Ind. This spell causes an animal of up to Size +6 to lose one Fatigue level (base 4, +2 Voice, +2 Size).

Cripple the Howling Wolf (PeAn 25/+28)

Eyes of the Cat (MuCo 5/+18)

Disguise of the New Visage (MuCo 15/+18)

Preternatural Growth and Shrinking (MuCo 15/+21)

The Wound that Weeps (PeCo 15/+33)

Invocation of Weariness (PeCo 20/+33), Mastery 1, multiple casting.

Bane of the Decrepit Body (PeCo 25/+33)

Invocation of the Giant's Weariness (PeCo 25/+33) R: Voice, D: Mom, T: Ind. This spell causes a target of up to Size +2 to lose one Fatigue level. Mastery 2, multiple casting, penetration.

Grip of the Choking Hand (PeCo 25/+33)

The Wound that Wails (PeCo 25/+33) R: Voice, D: Mom, T: Ind. This spell causes a Heavy Wound in a target (base 15, +2 Voice).

Endurance of the Berserker (ReCo 15/+20)

Pilum of Fire (Crlg 20/+14)



Dragon's Eternal Oblivion (PeVi 5/+27) This spell is a variant of *Demon's Eternal Oblivion* that affects magical creatures. Mastery 3, fast casting, multiple casting, penetration

Dreadful Bane of the Fae (PeVi 5/+27) This spell is a variant of *Demon's Eternal Oblivion* that affects faerie creatures.

Vis: Eustace carries a pouch containing ten pawns of Perdo vis (black cap mushrooms).

Appearance: Eustace is a foreboding figure, dressed in black, partial chainmail, and a black cloak. He has a long, drooping black mustache that he caresses while he speaks, and his eyes dart around under his dark brow like a fox's.

Eustace's appearance is deceiving, since he is not the "black knight" he styles himself as. He is very aware of the boundary between associating with and interfering with mundane society, and while he might push the limit, he will not readily break it. Nor will he easily break his Hermetic Oath.

Eustace is a trophy hunter rather than a vis collector. He'd rather kill a magical creature outright and then transfer any residual vis to another vessel. But if the beast proves too powerful, he will destroy the creature's Might and be content with the remaining trophy. He is vain, overtaken with romantic of ideas of sword-wielding knights battling monsters. In combat, he first casts spells to make his opponent tired, then enters the fray under the protection of his *Endurance of the Berserkers* spell. He will exert for four rounds and hope his opponent is dead by then. Eustace has fought giants before. He will use his Flexible Formulaic Magic Virtue to boost his Corpus spells by one magnitude to affect creatures of larger size.

Eustace thinks the stones are still hidden and does not know that they are missing. He did discover Aedh's plot to attack Dundrum, and led the prince away to delay the attack, using his spells *Preternatural Growth and Shrinking* and *Disguise of the New Visage*.

His longevity ritual Lab Total is 25 (boosted by using extra vis), for an aging modifier of +5.

Eustace has the necessary Art scores to train an apprentice. He has desired an apprentice for several years, but has not taken the time to find one. He is interested in any Gifted child the PCs may know.

VAFER THE MAGICAL FOX

Magic Might: 12 (Animal)

Characteristics: Int +1, Per 0, Pre -2, Com -5, Str -5, Sta -1, Dex +2, Qik +5

Size: -2

Season: Summer

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Magical Animal; Perfect Balance; Nocturnal

(Animal) Qualities: Ambush Predator, Crafty, Good Jumper, Keen Sense of Smell

Qualities and Inferiorities: Greater Power; Gift of Speech, Lesser Power (x2)

Personality Traits: Sly +3

Combat:

Dodge: Init +5, Attack n/a, Defense +8, Damage n/a

Bite: Init +5, Attack +9, Defense +10, Damage -4

Soak: -1

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-3), -3 (4-6), -5 (7-9), Incapacitated (10-12), Dead (13+)

Abilities: Athletics 4 (running), Awareness 3 (food), Brawl 3 (bite), French 4 (poetry), Hunt 4 (prey), Stealth 4 (stalking prey), Survival 4 (meadows)

Powers:

Tread the Paths of the Magic Realm, 2 points, Init +4, Variable.

Vafer can see connections between regiones and the Twilight Void, and pass through them. The entrance stays open after his passing, typically for a number of days equal to the boundary's level, allowing others to follow him.

Skirt the Territories of the Twilight Void, 2 points, Init +4, Variable. Vafer can find and pass through mystical portals that connect the various provinces of the Twilight Void. The passageway stays open after Vafer passes.

The Impatient Hunter, 4 points, Init +3, Vim. Vafer can decrease the time it takes him to travel through the Twilight Void. A journey that regularly takes a year can be traveled in half a day (Sun Duration). If you are using the rules regarding Magical Travel in *The Realms of Power: The Magic Realm* (Chapter Three), this power increases Vafer's travel by three Speed Levels. This power includes any group that is traveling with Vafer.

Vis: 2 pawns of Animal in tail.

Appearance: Vafer is a red fox, with an immaculate red coat and a bushy tail that is twice as long as it should be.

Vafer's speed along a Twilight Void path is determined by his Perception + Hunt score. On average, it takes him a year to travel from one point to another, but he can quicken his pace using *The Impatient Hunter* power (see earlier).

Vafer likes traveling through the Twilight Void and doesn't mind dragging Eustace along. Vafer would prefer to travel through the Void more, but Eustace is reluctant to make frequent forays through the mysterious realm. Vafer might consider abandoning Eustace if he could find a maga more willing to travel the Twilight Void than the Flambeau.

Bricriu, the Heroes, and the Followers of Ulster

Bricriu is one of several characters made famous in the Ulster Cycle of tales, a collection of poems and stories about the area's heroes. Cúchulainn is probably the most famous, followed by King Conchobair and the druid Cathbad. Whether Bricriu was once a hero made into a magical creature or a magical creature all along is immaterial to this scenario. Bricriu is a Magic Human (see *Realms of Power: The Magic Realm*), a creature of the Magic Realm. The Heroes and the Followers are also Magic Humans.

Bricriu is huge, as are the Heroes of Ulster who inhabit Dún Rudraige. Just like their legends, which are larger than life, so too are the Heroes. The more important and powerful the character, the taller he actually stands. This fact is known among the learned Irish clergy, one of whom mentions it in the thirteenth century book *Acallam na Senórach* ("Tales of the Elders of Ireland"). For reference, Bricriu is Size +3, the Heroes are Size +2, and the Followers are Size +1. A player may make an Intelligence + Magic Lore + a simple die against an Ease Factor of 12 to allow his character to know that these are not giants or giant-kin, but legendary Irish heroes.

BRICRIU THE MAGIC HUMAN

Magic Might: 30 (Corpus)

Season: Autumn

Characteristics: Int +1, Per +1, Pre -3, Com +6, Str +9, Sta +3, Dex 0, Qik -2

Size: +3

Confidence Score: 2 (5)

Virtues and Flaws: Magic Human; Great Communication (x2), Increased Characteristics, Self-Confident; Bound to Magic; Infamous

Qualities and Inferiorities: Gigantic (x2), Greater Power (x2), Improved Communication

Personality Traits: Troublemaker +6, Jovial +3

Reputations: Malcontent 4 (Ulster)

Combat:

Dodge: Init -2, Attack n/a, Defense +4, Damage n/a

Short spear and round shield: Init +0, Attack +8, Defense +10, Damage +14

Soak: +3

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-8), -3 (9-16), -5 (17-24), Incapacitated (25-32), Dead (33+)

Abilities: Area Lore: Dún Rudraige regio 4 (monster lairs), Brawl 3 (grappling), Carouse 5 (staying sober), Eti-

quette 5 (hosting), Guile 4 (lying to magi), Leadership 6 (intimidation), Irish 5 (poetry), Magic Lore 3 (Ulster monsters), Music 3 (drums), Single Weapon 5 (short spear), Stealth 6 (spying)

Powers:

Extolling the Champion, 0 points, Init +0, Mentem. This power causes a target to become obsessed with the desire to win the champion's portion, or any prize in any competition. The target can not refuse to compete.

Greater Power: Base 4, +2 Voice, +2 Sun. 30 remaining spell levels covert to 6 mastery points, which decrease Might cost to 0 and raise Initiative by four.

A Brother's Vengeance, 0 points, Init +0, Mentem. This power causes a target to turn against a former ally, no matter how strong his allegiance, and attempt to defeat him. Bricriu can decide how the target must defeat his new enemy, from a simple off-hand remark made in public to murder.

Greater Power: Base 4, +2 Voice, +2 Sun. 30 remaining spell levels covert to 6 mastery points, which decrease Might cost to 0 and raise Initiative by four.

Equipment: Expensive clothes with gold embroidery, a solid gold torc, gold rings, a short spear, and a round shield.

Vis: 6 pawns of Mentem in tongue.

Appearance: Bricriu is wild eyed and crazy looking, with an uncombed mane of hair and a bushy red beard. One eye is larger than another, and his teeth are the size of window shutters. His size makes him imposing but his lunatic manner is offset by his continuous mirth.

Bricriu cannot leave the regio of Dún Rudraige. This does not displease him, as he is content to run his challenges and watch the competitors.

HERO OF ULSTER

Magic Might: 15 (Corpus)

Characteristics: Int -2, Per -2, Pre -2, Com -2, Str +8, Sta +4, Dex +3, Qik -1

Size: +2

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Magic Human; Focus Power*, Gigantic*; Tough; Monstrous Appearance, Proud

Personality Traits: Brave +3, Proud +3, Disobedient +2

Combat:

Dodge: Init -1, Attack n/a, Defense +5, Damage n/a

Fist: Init -1, Attack +10, Defense +6, Damage +8

Spear and Round Shield: Init +1, Attack +16, Defense +12, Damage +13

Soak: +7

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Heroes' Names

To help individualize the Heroes and Followers, the storyguide needs to give them names. Simply pick two names from the list provided below and separate the first from the second with "mac" (son of).

Alchad, Bran, Brian, Caeilte, Ciardan, Conall, Conan, Donn, Eachann, Faughnan, Fingar, Garbhán, Incha, Laoghaire, Lonán, Machar, Mogue, Nevan, Ógán, Oscar, Ros, Sanctan, Seachnall, Treon, Ultán

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-7), -3 (8-14), -5 (15-21), Incapacitated (22-28), Dead (29+)

Abilities: Animal Handling 3 (cattle), Athletics 6 (leaping), Brawl 6 (fist), Carouse 5 (excessive drinking), Etiquette 4 (feasting), Hunt 5 (deer), Irish 5 (poetry), Leadership 3 (Followers), Music 4 (singing), Ride 2 (tricks), Survival 3 (in the regio), Single Weapon 10 (spear)

Powers:

Perfect Form of the Contender, 5 points, Init -4, Corpus. This power gives the recipient a +3 on any physical challenge he undergoes, including combat. Like spontaneous magic, it can affect a variety of the target's physical resources: arms, legs, breathing, singing, etc. (Base special, Range: Per, Duration: Sun, Target Ind., +2 Size adjustment)

Equipment: Archaic clothing, wooden shield, spear, and assorted jewelry.

Vis: 3 pawns Corpus in head.

Appearance: A Hero appears as a large, monstrous-looking Irish warrior, with tangled hair, a wild beard, red eyes, embroidered clothing, and weapons. His features are asymmetric, and his muscles bulge and contort in an abnormal fashion.

FOLLOWER OF ULSTER

Magic Might: 5 (Corpus)

Characteristics: Int -1, Per 0, Pre -2, Com -1, Str +2, Sta +2, Dex +2, Qik +2

Size: +1

Virtues and Flaws: Magic Human; Tough, Large; Monstrous Appearance

Personality Traits: Brave +2, Rowdy +2, Loyal +1

Combat:

Dodge: Init +2, Attack n/a, Defense +2, Damage n/a

Fist: Init +2, Attack +5, Defense +5, Damage +2

Spear and Round Shield: Init +3, Attack +11, Defense +11, Damage +7

Soak: +7

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-6), -3 (7-12), -5 (13-18), Incapacitated (19-24), Dead (25+)

Abilities: Animal Handling 2 (chariot horses), Athletics 2 (running), Awareness 4 (guarding), Brawl 2 (fist), Carouse 3 (excessive drinking), Etiquette 2 (carving), Hunt 2 (tracking), Irish 5 (poetry), Music 2 (harp), Survival 1 (in the regio), Single Weapon 6 (spear)

Equipment: Archaic clothing, wooden shield, spear, and assorted jewelry.

Vis: 1 pawn Corpus in head.

Appearance: A Follower appears as a smaller version of a Hero of Ulster.

Followers are the generic supporters and assistants of the Heroes of Ulster. Although they are magic humans, they have no innate magical powers. If lead by a Hero, Followers can fight in a trained group. The maximum size of the group is 4, including the Hero, and the combat advantage is +12.

Expected Sequence of Play

"The Champion's Portion" unfolds in three parts: getting the PCs to Ulster through the boundaries of the Magic Realm, interacting with the various Ulster factions, and entering Bricriu's regio. The initial part is purposely linear, but the second and third segments offer more choices for the players.

Getting to Ulster

Many covenants are busy on Mid-Summer's Eve, most of them collecting vis from the various sites around their home. It is an especially magical time of the year, a good time for ritual spells or celebrations. During the bustle of preparations for whatever will occur, one of the covenfolk encounters Aedh, sitting naked by an oak tree, and brings him to the attention of the magi. Observant covenfolk notice his gold torq — a thick, U-shaped necklace — and several gold armbands worn around his biceps. He walks with a near regal bearing and his arms and hands are laced with battle scars. A Perception + Folk Ken roll against an Ease Factor of 9 will indicate that he is likely a noble, de-

spite his lack of clothing.

Aedh willingly meets the wizards. Although disconcerted by their Gift, he is not afraid of them. Once met, he asks the magi for help returning home. He explains his situation, as he understands it; on the eve of his attack against the English, a witch from the "Ex Miscellanea tribe" led him on a journey along paths he'd never seen before. At the journey's end, the witch, a notorious poison-tongue, left him.

If the magi respond immediately to his plea, all is well. But most won't be interested in such mundane affairs. If aid is not forthcoming, Aedh will promise to pay the magi with *vis*, which he calls "small objects of magic stuff." He has used *vis* to gain Muirgen's services in the past, and knows its value as currency. He doesn't have any with him — he doesn't have anything but gold jewelry with him — but promises to make good on his promise of payment.

If asked about Muirgen, Aedh will tell the PCs that she is a Scottish maga that he has known for a few years. She has the power to turn her enemy's allies against him, sowing discontent with her "poison tongue." Her primary interest is visiting Bricriu, an ancient hero who lives in the Otherworld. Any character with Magic or Faerie Lore knows that the Otherworld is a colloquial term mundane folk use for the Magic or Faerie Realms, or *regiones* in general. Characters with Magic Lore may check to see if they have heard of Bricriu and the Nemthenga (poison-tongue) tradition. If an Intelligence + Magic Lore + simple die beats an Ease Factor of 12, the storyguide may provide a little more information, culled from the sections below. Aedh also knows that Muirgen is currently flustered because another magus from another tribe has entered the area.

The champion's portion is a great prize, he says, awarded to the king's champion and signifying his importance. If he had it, Aedh claims he could command hundreds, and would not be limited to his small band of warriors. Ennobled with this prize, he could order bishops to abdicate, dukes to resign, even wizards to return to the Gates of Hell. Naturally, he's exaggerating, but the PCs won't know this, and he believes these tales to be true.

If the PCs are still unwilling to help, Aedh will fume a bit and reluctantly accept their decision. He'll ask to spend the night before leaving in the morning. During the night, he'll steal something and leave. His motivation is to grab something magical, hoping to bribe either Muirgen or Eustace with the item. Fumbling along, he will be able to return to Ulster through the regio boundaries. Alternatively, Aedh might convince one or more of the covenant's martial grogs to join him, extolling the virtues of combat and its glories. If any of the covenant grogs

are easily swayed — and if their sudden departure might force the PCs to follow them — some grogs follow Aedh to Ulster.

At least one of the hint of mystery, the fabulous prize, the outright bribe, the retrieval of stolen goods or soldiers, or even the desire for combat, should be enough for the PCs to go to Ulster.

The Oak and the Herbam Province

Standing somewhere outside the PCs' covenant is an oak tree, one of many or perhaps standing alone, it doesn't matter. This tree is large, but not unnaturally so. It grows straight for several yards before splitting in two and continuing up to its leafy crown. It is slightly magical, but not enough to actually have an aura or produce *vis*, so it has escaped the magi's notice. Vafer the fox has the power to travel through the Magic Realm and its provinces, and his journey was able to force open a regio portal that normally is too small to notice. Because of Vafer's intrusion, the oak now has a Magic aura of 1 and connects to a Magic regio. This condition will only last a few days before it returns to its normal state.

The Magic regio has a Magic aura of 4. A Perception + Appropriate Ability (Second Sight or Magic Sensitivity) + stress die roll against an Ease Factor of 11 will allow a character to see the regio from the underlying magic aura. An Intellego Vim spell will also point out the regio. Inside the regio, the oak becomes massive. Huge and hoary with age, its bark is scarred and pock-marked and its enormous limbs tower over the characters, reaching almost one hundred feet in height. The oak's trunk is nearly 10 yards in circumference and four paces up from its base before it splits in two directions, forming a crotch just like the tree on the mundane level. Nothing surrounds the tree except grass, and at a hundred paces a cloudy mist forms an amorphous circle around the entire regio. If a character enters the mist, she will walk for a few paces unable to see at all through the mist, before re-entering the regio at the opposite side of the circle from which she departed.

There is nothing in the regio besides the oak. Whatever creature or thing that once lived here is long gone. The tree does not produce *vis*, even in the regio. To exit the regio, characters must climb up the north side of the tree and slide through the crotch. They will be suddenly transported to the mundane level, the tree instantly changing as they pass through. However, if the characters climb the southern side of the tree and go through the crotch from that direction, they are in for a surprise.

The oak actually stands as a boundary marker between the Magic regio and the Twilight Void, an intermediate mystical area that continues on to the Magic Realm. More information about the Twilight Void can be found in *Realms of Power: The Magic Realm*. The Void is flavored with a specific Art, one of the ten of Hermetic magic. This path travels through the Herbam Province of the Void. The boundary has a level of 4, which is added to all magical activities. To see this boundary, a character needs to make a stress die + Perception + appropriate Ability (Magic Sensitivity or Second Sight) + Herbam Form bonus against an Ease Factor of 18. Add +15 to the player's roll because this boundary acts as an Arcane Connection to its destination, a specific location. This makes it easier to cross than other boundaries, as explained in *Realms of Power: The Magic Realm*. Remember the value of this roll, because it will determine the group's travel time once in the Twilight Void. Hermetic spells cannot reveal the boundary to the Twilight Void. Such a spell would require a Minor Magical Breakthrough.

If told where to look, Aedh will feel the boundary with his Magic Sensitivity Ability. He will be able to lead characters into the Herbam Province of the Twilight Void.

Once through the tree's crotch, characters find themselves in a tangled forest, populated by gigantic trees of a size and girth unseen in the mundane realm. The branches and trunks grow chaotically, in a tangled explosion of untamed growth. Sunlight filters down through the leafy canopy, like a perpetual spring day at noon, and the forest is awash with vibrantly colored green leaves and rich brown and russet limbs, interspaced with brilliantly budding flowers of white, blue, and red. It is difficult to see more than a few yards through the verdant flora. A twisting path weaves through the woody jumble, across branches and up boles, like a forester's nightmare labyrinth. The path is wide enough for only a single person at a time, who must walk, climb, and shuffle through the tree tops. This territory of the Herbam Province adds +14 to magical effects, +4 for the boundary level and +10 because it is part of the Magic Realm. Herbam effects gain double the boundary level bonus, because it is a Herbam Province, for a +18 benefit.

Any active magical effect, including Parma Magica, is cancelled as soon as the character enters the Twilight Void. Items and talismans remain potent, but active spells cease. Characters re-casting spells notice the higher aura of the Twilight Void.

THE PATHS THROUGH TWILIGHT

Once on the path in the Twilight Void, the group needs a leader to guide them. If Aedh or another PC with Second Sight or Magic Sensitivity led the group through the boundary, use the value of that roll to determine how fast they move through the Twilight Void. Because the boundary is an Arcane Connection to a specific destination, adding +15 to the initial roll, travel should be rapid. Use the following table to calculate the group's speed.

EASE FACTOR	LENGTH OF JOURNEY
9	One Season
12	Moon
15	Entire Day
18	Sun
21	Two Hours

The leader intuitively knows how long the journey will take. If she decides that her speed is too slow, someone else can lead by concentrating on the path and guiding the group. In this case, the new leader makes a stress die + Stamina + Concentration + Herbam Form bonus + 15 (specific location bonus). Since time does not pass in the Twilight Void, meaning that travelers do not age, need to eat, or require sleep, the new leader can maintain concentration of the length of the journey.

Walking off the path is very similar to entering Temporary Twilight, and is explained in *Realms of Power: The Magic Realm*. Travel should be rapid enough that players won't desire to wander off the path, especially when the storyguide describes it as eerie, nerve-rattling, and frightening. If a PC persists, have her undergo an immediate Temporary Twilight, using the rules in *ArM5*, page 88.

As they move along the path, have each PC besides the leader make a Stamina + Concentration + stress die roll against an Ease Factor of 15. Tell the first player who fails the roll that her character's attention has wandered. The character notices a rapidly growing vine and lags behind the group to watch it. Tendrils swirl and swoop as the vine grows higher, and it suddenly lashes out at the PC to entwine it. The PC can avoid the vine with a Quickness – Encumbrance + stress die roll against an Ease Factor of 12. Characters who botched the initial Stamina + Concentration roll do not get a chance to avoid the vine and are instantly caught. The vine continues to grow, pushing shoots through the character's skin in an effort to sap his vigor. A trapped character loses a Fatigue Level per round unless he succeeds with a Stamina + stress die roll against

an Ease Factor of 12. Once a character falls unconscious, the vine will take root in the PC. Each round thereafter it does +5 damage to the character. The PC is allowed a Soak + stress die roll against the damage, ignoring armor benefits. A character may break free with a Strength + stress die roll of 15. Other PCs can help the trapped character by cutting him loose. Consider all such attacks successful. Roll a PC's Damage + stress die against the vine's Soak of 5 + a stress die. The vine is Size 0. Once it has accumulated enough damage to render it Incapacitated (just like a regular Size 0 creature), the vine is cut apart and the trapped character is freed.

The Crossing

To the left of the path through the Herbam Province is a multi-colored smear that seems to hang in the very air. The changing hues of blue and purple stand in contrast to the Herbam Province's greens, yellows, and browns, and its scintillations are reminiscent of a rippling stream or trickling brook. The air bristles with energy as the PCs draw near. The shimmering is a crossing point between the Herbam and Aquam Provinces, which Vafer led Eustace and Aedh through. Normally more difficult to discover, the crossing remains open because of Vafer's lingering magic. It will allow anyone who finds it to walk from the Herbam Province to the Aquam Province.

When the PCs reach the Crossing, they can step through it, from the Herbam Province and into the Aquam Province. This change does not affect the length of the journey. The Crossing is a favorite hunting ground for a sea-cat, who lies in wait for those walking through, lurking nearly submerged in the crashing waves. Its motivation is simple; it is a predator and anything small than it is prey. This sudden violence sets the tone for the scenario.

A PC must make a Perception + Awareness + stress die against an Ease Factor of 18 to see the sea-cat before it pounces. Those who notice the cat can act accordingly. Those who fail are surprised by the beast. The sea-cat will exert itself on its first round of combat, and may use Ferocity points as Confidence points in the fight. A surprised defender may not exert on her Defense roll during the first round. To leap back through the hole and escape, use the Disengagement rules (ArM5, page 173). The Crossing is only wide enough to allow one character at a time to pass through, but does not impede them otherwise. The other PCs may jump into the Aquam Province to save their fellow. The sea-cat will not follow a character through the Crossing.

SEA-CAT

Magic Might: 11 (Aquam)

Characteristics: Cun 0, Per 0, Pre -2, Com -5, Str 0, Sta +7, Dex -1, Qik -1

Size: +1

Season: Summer

Ferocity: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Magic Animal; Ferocity, Lightning Reflexes, Tough; Nocturnal

(Animal) Qualities: Ambush Predator, Hardy, Think Fur

Qualities and Inferiorities: Gigantic; Improved Attack (claws) (x2), Improved Soak (x3), Lesser Power, Ulster Regio Network

Personality Traits: Aggressive +3

Combat:

Claws: Init -2, Attack +15, Defense +12, Damage +2

Bite: Init -1, Attack +11, Defense +9, Damage +1

Soak: +9

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0/0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-6), -3 (7-12), -5 (13-18), Incapacitated (19-24), Dead (25+)

Abilities: Athletics 7 (climbing), Awareness 6 (prey), Brawl 9 (claws), Stealth 7 (stalking), Hunt 6 (tracking)

Powers:

Stench of Putridity, 1 point, Init +2, Auram. At will, the sea-cat can exude a noxious stench that mimics the effects of *Wreaths of Foul Smoke* (ArM5, page 125). The sea-cat is itself immune to the malodorous vapors.

(Base 3, +2 Sun, excess mastery points increase Init.)

Vis: 2 pawn Aquam in its eyes

Appearance: The sea-cat looks like a monstrous lynx, with unkempt gray fur and red prickly eyes. It exudes a putrid aroma, reminiscent of fish guts and dead seaweed at low tide.

The sea-cat is a magical creature native to Ireland. It has the ability to travel from regio to regio within the province of Ulster, favoring the costal areas, and may occasionally wander the Twilight Void paths connecting Ulster to the Magic Realm.

The sea-cat's preferred attack is its claws. Because of its Quality: Ambush Predator, it gets a +3 on the first round of a surprise attack. Exerting at the same time gives the sea-cat an Attack of +28. This could be quite lethal, and the storyguide should take care who the sea-cat ambushes. It won't be much fun for the players if a magus is killed before stepping foot in Ulster. A grog is the ideal candidate, and slaying a grog at this point in the adventure would indicate how deadly the upcoming tale will be.

The Aquam Province and the Pool of Wisdom

This territory of the Aquam Province looks like an ocean coast during a storm. Brackish gray waves crash against the surf, dark clouds obscure the sky and seem to touch the sea, and thick raindrops pelt everything. The path through this Province runs parallel with the rocky coastline, and travelers must wade through the tumultuous tide. The crossing from the Herbam Province opens from the face of the jagged cliffs that line one side of the path. The cliffs are slate-gray and slick with sea spray and rain, their tops lost in the ominous clouds above. This path has a +14 Magic Aura, just like the path through the Herbam Province. Aquam effects receive double the boundary level: +18 (10 + (2 times 4)).



The path through the Aquam Province leads through the brackish waves. The going is rough, and any character who fails a Stamina + Athletics + stress die roll against an Ease Factor of 12 suffers the loss of one Long Term Fatigue Level. Eventually, the group reaches the end of the beach and the waterfalls. If Aedh is with the group, he will tell them that he simply jumped down from the top on his way to the covenant. The nearby cliff face is sheer and slippery, and nearly impossible to climb. Any intelligent character looking at the cliffs can accurately determine the insurmountable difficulty of climbing them. Still, some players may remain undaunted. It takes three Dexterity + Climb + stress die rolls to reach the cliff's summit, each with an increasingly difficult Ease Factor: 15, then 18, then 21. Falling deals damage to the PC equal to a stress die + the Ease Factor.

Magic aura (+14).

Once atop the waterfall, the path changes into a forest river, which the PCs must continue to wade through. The path terminates in the Pool of Wisdom, where a temporary boundary exists between the Magic regio of the pool and the Aquam Province. To spot this boundary, the PCs need the same Perception + Appropriate Ability roll they needed to get into the Herbam Province. The actual boundary is a swirling eddy near the edge of the pool, which characters must dive under and then resurface to cross the boundary.

Fringed with watercress and lilies, the Pool of Wisdom's surface shimmers with sparkles of light. The regio has a Magic aura of 4, and is home to Fintan, a magic salmon that is nearly the size of a man. Fintan lazily swims in the pool,

and is immediately obvious to anyone who looks. Fintan can speak, and will respond kindly if hailed. He can tell the PCs that he watched a small woman and a fox lead Aedh through his pool and the boundary that borders the Aquam Province. A day later, Fintan saw the fox and a man in black chainmail return.

The regio pool sits atop a mundane pool, one of many formed from a small stream that runs down Mount Sandel, twisting and turning through the forest until it terminates in Dundrum Bay. Outside the regio, the pool is half the size of the magic pool. Although it is not as splendid as the magic pool, the mundane pool is pleasant, tranquil, and beautiful. It is so lovely that those who know of it come here for solitude and quiet contemplation.

TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE

Vafer's power to walk the boundaries of the Magic Realm leaves open the portals that he used, which has allowed the PCs to follow him. Both the Herbam and Aquam Provinces boundaries will remain open for four days before closing. If things went well, the PCs have three days before the Aquam Province boundary closes, shutting off the easy access back to their home. Nothing the PCs can do will reopen the boundary portals, although Vafer can do it any time he pleases.

Players won't know this, of course, although characters with Magic Lore might. An Intelligence + Magic Lore + simple die against an Ease Factor of 6 will indicate the odd nature of this occurrence, although this should be obvious. If the total is 9 or more the character will feel assured that the boundary portal is temporary, and it could again become impassable at any time.

FINTAN THE MAGIC SALMON

Magic Might: 5 (Aquam)

Characteristics: Int 0, Per -2, Pre -6, Com -6, Str -4, Sta +4, Dex 0, Qik 0

Size: -1

Season: Summer

Virtues and Flaws: Magic Animal; Improved Characteristics (x2), Intuition; Compassionate

(Animal) Qualities: Aquatic, Slippery

Qualities and Inferiorities: Gift of Speech, Ritual Power (x2); Large, Unaffected by Gift; Bound to Magic, Reduced Presence

Personality Traits: Compassionate +6

Combat:

Dodge: Init 0, Attack n/a, Defense +8, Damage n/a

Soak: +4

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-4), -3 (5-8), -5 (9-12), Incapacitated (13-16), Dead (17+)

Abilities: Awareness 5 (spying), Brawl 7 (dodge), Irish 3 (songs), Music 3 (singing), Stealth 3 (hiding), Survival 3 (home pool), Swim 5 (endurance)

Powers:

The Gift of Wisdom, 4 points, Init -14, Mentem. This power is exactly like the Hermetic spell, *Gift of Reason* (ArM5, page 148). Using it permanently drains 4 points from Fintan's Might score.

Vis: 1 pawn Aquam in right eye

Appearance: Fintan is a large, silver-scaled salmon, with large, lazy eyes and long drooping whiskers.

Fintan is content to live in his pool, lazily swimming at the bottom and watching any who come to partake of the pool's solitude. He will approach if beckoned, especially by a song, and chat with those interested. If presented with a problem, he will do his best to think out the best solution. Fintan is wise, although not especially smart. He'll urge the questioner to think back over all preceding events to help answer his question. This provides a tool for the storyguide to assist players who seem confused as to what they are supposed to do next.

Fintan pities those less intelligent than him, and will offer to increase a character's Intelligence if it is below 0. Since this power drains his Might Score, he will ask the intended recipient for 4 pawns of vis to replenish his Might. The vis can be of any type. Once it is eaten, Fintan will regain his lost Might in a week.

Into Ulster

The characters arrive in Ulster in the middle of a forest that lies to the west of Dundrum Bay and the east coast of Ireland. Aedh knows this forest well. His fian should be nearby, and he knows of other fianna in the area. He proceeds through the woods looking for his fian.

If the PCs are following Aedh and not traveling with him, they must wander the forest on their own. Tracking him is difficult, as he moves through his home territory with ease, but a successful Perception + Hunt + stress die roll against an Ease Factor of 15 locates him. If confronted with his theft, he explains his desperation and returns the stolen item, apologizing for the inconvenience he has caused the party. As an act of hospitality and remuneration, he invites the PCs to stay with him and his fian while they are in Ulster.

With or without Aedh's company, the first group the PCs happen upon are another *fian*, led by Conán mac Morna. Conán and his band of twenty warriors are stalking a group of fifteen Flemish soldiers through the woods. The soldiers are reinforcements from Dublin, heading to bolster the garrison at Dundrum. Conán has been embittered against Aedh by Muirgen, and while he won't become violent, he disparages his former friend in front of the PCs. He won't answer questions about why he is angry with Aedh, but his men know that "the wood witch" cursed him. Conán talks with the PCs to determine if they are friends or foes. If this interaction is positive, he asks the PCs for their help in ambushing the Flemish soldiers. Conán will not accept Aedh's aid. Aedh will sigh and defer to the PCs' decision. If they want to help Conán, he'll wait for them. If not, he'll lead them onwards.

Having the *fian* fight the soldiers is not crucial at this point in the scenario, but would give players a chance to use the skirmish rules. If the PCs help Conán defeat the Flemish, Aedh will guide them to Muirgen, hoping that she can explain why she has turned his captains against him.

The forest is home to several hundred Irish families, living in simple huts and separated from each other. Dundrum village, by the bay, houses the English families imported from England: farmers, craftsmen, and a few merchants. Somewhere in the area Muirgen is lurking, looking for the stones. She is watching the resident *fianna*, in one of her animal disguises, hoping to see one of them with the stones. The group that used to assist her does not know where the stones are, only that they disappeared from their hiding place. Eustace is also wandering the area, looking for Muirgen and the stones. He will be easier to find than Muirgen.

To give the players the most choice in the scenario, the PCs should eventually meet everyone. This could take a couple of days, and Aedh is willing to let them sleep with his *fian* at their campsite. He also offers to assist them if they search for the two NPC magi, by granting them a small entourage of *fénna*. He's willing to give them up to half of his forty-man-strong band.

If the storyguide would like a more-random pattern to who the PCs meet, she can roll a simple die and consult the following table. She should roll twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon.

SIMPLE DIE	ENCOUNTER
1	Muirgen transformed into a deer.
2-3	18 kerns (a warband of 3 groups of 6 men) looking for Aedh's father.
4	A <i>fian</i> of 20 <i>fénna</i> (a warband of 4 groups of 5 men, led by a <i>rífénnid</i>).
5-6	Nothing.

7	A band of 18 Flemish soldiers (a warband of 9 groups of 3 men) foraging .
8-9	24 Welsh bowmen reinforcements (a warband of 4 groups of 6 men) traveling to Dundrum.
10	Eustace.

MEETING WARRIORS

Several bands of warriors are on the move through the forest, anxious as de Lacy's invasion draws nearer. Although many have previous allegiances, the English-against-English invasion makes those allegiances questionable. Thus, groups parley before coming to blows, trying to determine who is allied to whom. Often it will boil down to who appears strongest, and if a group thinks they have the military advantage they attack.

Gifted individuals make warriors nervous. The Irish have tales of wizards, and reason to be afraid of them. Kerns most likely flee from a group containing a magus. A *fian* hesitates and hopes to escape without offending the wizard. The Ulster *fianna* are familiar with Muirgen and her power to make them fight each other, and assume any wizard has that power. If a wizard is not immediately obvious, meaning the PCs have taken pains to hide the Gifted within their group, a *fian* judges them according to strength. If the *fian* thinks it can beat the PCs, they walk away feigning indifference, then creep back and ambush the group.

The English deem any sorcerer a threat and react violently. The Irish are spreading tales that their armies are assisted by wizards, so the English shoot first and ask questions later. The exception is the garrison, who might talk with the PCs depending on their approach to the castle. The Gift makes de Maginnis edgy, and he refuses to admit anyone who so flusters him. He is very nervous, awaiting the Justiciar's reinforcements and hoping they arrive before de Lacy's army. If the PCs are persistent, he meets them outside the castle. Unless Eustace has agreed to help him, de Maginnis asks the PCs to side with him in the upcoming conflict. He is willing to make any sort of deal for their aid, including letting them search the stone piles and the new foundation for the gatehouse.

Running Skirmishes

"The Champion's Portion" has the potential for several large-scale combats, called "skirmishes" to differentiate them from fully pitched battles involving hundreds of men. Typically, a skirmish includes 20 to 40 warriors battling a like-sized force. Detailed mass combat rules

The Gaels

The Gaels are the Irish, a derivative of "Gaelic." It is not used derisively, and the Irish refer to themselves as Gaels in their chronicles. A standard Gael warrior fights unarmored, preferring to remain unencumbered. He considers wearing armor a sign of weakness, a notion that proved faulty when the iron-clad Normans stormed his shores. Even in the 1220's the Gaels do not take armor as spoils of war, leaving it to rust on the battlefield. Gaels prefer to fight in the forest, among the thick brambles and close-growing trees, where their fleetness serves them best. They are expert ambushers, and more than one Norman posse has given up the chase when the fleeing Gaels entered the woods.

A Gael fights with a short bow, light spear, and an axe, which was originally a Viking weapon but was adopted due to its effectiveness. He uses a horse but rides bareback, making him too weak to meet the Norman cavalry, who use stirrups and fight from horseback. Horses are used to move troops swiftly, and as a vantage point to view the field of battle, during those instances when the Gaels meet the English in open fields.

There are two types of Gael warrior, the "kern" and the *fénnid*. A kern is simply a member of the peasant levy, a semi-professional warrior who earns his living from another trade. Kerns are called up in times of strife by their chieftain, and serve for a few weeks until the trouble has ended. A *fénnid* (plural: *fénmeda*) is a member of a *fian* (plural: *fianna*), a group of young warriors, many nobles, who haven't inherited land yet. They roam the countryside raiding and plundering to make a name for themselves. They, too, can be summoned by their king and combined to form the king's army. The *fianna* have a much greater sense of self-identity, and many are more loyal to their personal leader, called the *rigfénnid* (king-fénnid), than their rightful king.

IRISH KERN

Characteristics: Int -1, Per +1, Pre 0, Com -1, Str +2, Sta +2, Dex +1, Qik +1

Size: 0

Age: 25 (25)

Virtues and Flaws: Peasant; Warrior; Dutybound

Personality Traits: Loyal -1

Combat:

Dodge: Init +1, Attack n/a, Defense +5, Damage n/a

Short spear: Init +3, Attack +7, Defense +5, Damage +7

Short spear thrown: Init: +1, Attack +7, Defense +5, Damage +7

Soak: +2

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Area Lore: Ulster 4 (pastures), Bargain 1 (cattle prices), Brawl 4 (fist), Carouse 2 (weddings), English 2 (cattle terminology), Folk Ken 2 (peasants), Hunt 3 (cows), Irish 5 (Ulster dialect), Leadership 3 (resisting authority), Music 2 (singing), Profession: Farmer 5 (cattle), Single Weapon 3 (short spear), Stealth 3 (ambushes), Survival 2 (forests), Thrown Weapon 3 (short spear), Swim 1 (rivers)

Equipment: Short spear

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: The typical kern looks like a dirty, tunic-wearing peasant holding a short spear or two.

Kerns can't fight in trained groups, although they will form an untrained group for combat. The maximum size of each group is six. They aren't especially loyal, nor determined when facing superior numbers or better-armed opponents.

FÉNNID

Characteristics: Int -1, Per -1, Pre 0, Com -1, Str +2, Sta +2, Dex +2, Qik +1

Size: 0

Age: 25 (25)

Virtues and Flaws: Outlaw; Puissant Single Weapon, Tough, Warrior

Personality Traits: Wrathful +2, Loyal +1

Combat:

Dodge: Init +1, Attack n/a, Defense +4, Damage n/a

Axe: Init +2, Attack +14, Defense +9, Damage +8

Javelin: Init +1, Attack +8, Defense +5, Damage +7

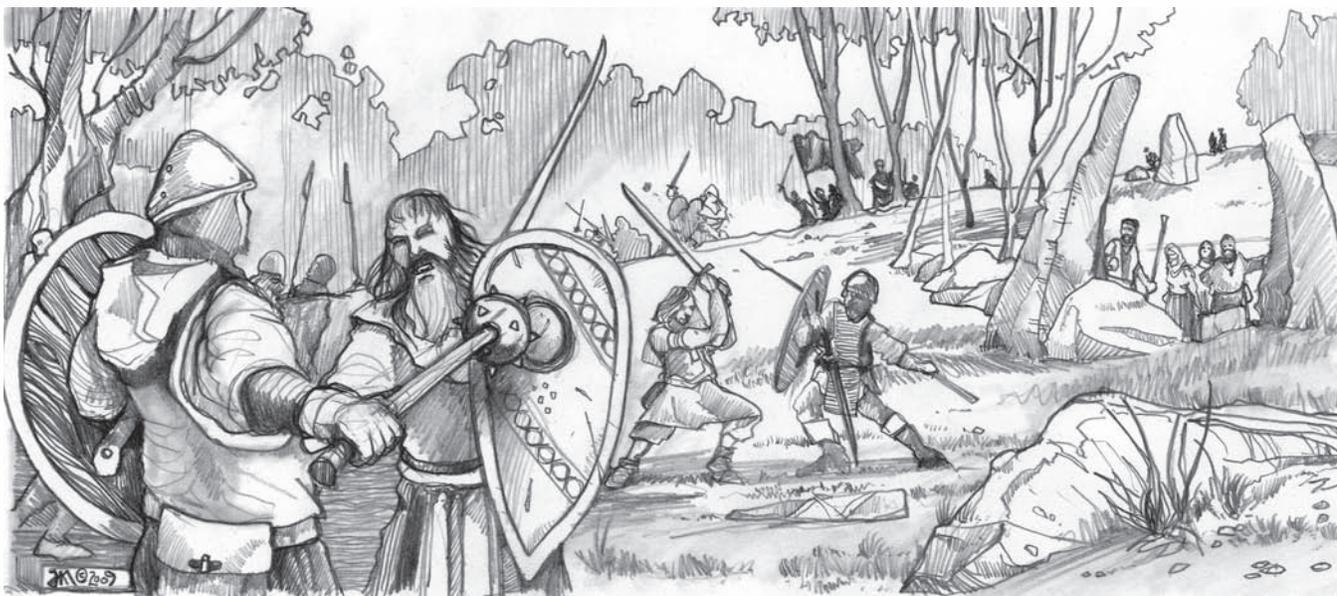
Short bow: Init 0, Attack +9, Defense +5, Damage +8

Soak: +5

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Area Lore: Ulster 3 (local kings), Athletics 2 (leaping), Brawl 3 (fist), Bows 3 (short bow), Carouse 2 (extended drinking sessions), English 3 (directions), Folk Ken 2 (fianna), French 3 (property terminology),



The Gaels (cont'd)

Hunt 3 (deer), Irish 5 (nobility), Leadership 4 (intimidating), Ride 4 (speed), Single Weapon 5+2 (axe), Stealth 1 (ambushing), Swim 1 (rivers), Thrown Weapon 3 (javelin)

Equipment: Besides the typical loose-fitting tunic, a fénnid carries his weapons: a javelin, an axe, and a short bow and arrows.

Encumbrance: 0 (2)

Appearance: The typical fénnid dresses simply, in an undyed tunic. He wears his hair long and has a bushy beard.

Fénneda can fight as trained groups; their maximum size is four members and the maximum combat advantage is +12. The Outlaw Flaw mirrors the idea of the fian, but without the resulting bad Reputation.

RÍGFÉNNID

Characteristics: Int 0, Per -1, Pre +1, Com -2, Str +2, Sta +2, Dex +3, Qik +1

Size: 0

Age: 28 (28)

Virtues and Flaws: Outlaw Leader; Improved Characteristics, Puissant Single Weapon, Warrior; Disfigured (scars and battle wounds), Reckless

Personality Traits: Reckless +3, Loyal -1

Combat:

Dodge: Init +1, Attack n/a, Defense +5, Damage n/a

Axe: Init +2, Attack +15, Defense +10, Damage +8

Javelin: Init +1, Attack +10, Defense +7, Damage +7

Short bow: Init 0, Attack +10, Defense +6, Damage +8

Soak: +2

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Area Lore: Ulster 3 (local kings), Athletics 2 (leaping), Brawl 3 (fist), Bows 3 (short bow), Carouse 2 (extended drinking sessions), English 3 (directions), Folk Ken 2 (fianna), French 3 (property terminology), Hunt 3 (deer), Irish 5 (nobility), Leadership 4 (his fian), Music 1 (singing), Ride 2 (speed), Single Weapon 5+2 (axe), Stealth 3 (ambushing), Swim 1 (rivers), Thrown Weapon 4 (javelin)

Equipment: Besides the typical loose-fitting tunic, a rígfénnid carries his weapons: a javelin, an axe, and a short bow and arrows.

Encumbrance: 0 (2)

Appearance: A rígfénnid dresses better than his followers, wearing a dyed tunic or embroidered shirt. Depending on his fortunes, he may have a silver or gold armband or torq.

A rígfénnid can lead a trained group, acting as leader and vanguard. Its maximum size is five members and the maximum combat advantage is +15.

The English

The English are knights and townsfolk from England, either the invaders themselves or simple country peasants imported to Ireland to cultivate its soil. Racially, they come from many backgrounds, and only the peasants are actually English people.

The knights are Norman, kin of the knights who originally conquered England with William the Conqueror in 1066. The knights who came to Ireland in 1169 hailed from Wales, and historians mark them as Norman-Welsh to distinguish them from the Normans who conquered Sicily and Jerusalem. The soldiers are predominately Flemish mercenaries and Welsh bowmen.

Their different backgrounds are evident; the knights' native language is French, the bowmen's Welsh, and the soldiers' Flemish. Only the transported farmers speak English. Despite this heterogeneous heritage, the Irish universally call the invaders "the English."

Both knights and soldiers are better armed than their Irish counterparts. The knights are clad head to toe in chainmail and often fight from their horses. A typical soldier's armor covers his neck, torso, and upper arms, and he carries a pike and short sword. Even the bowmen are lightly armored in partial leather armor. All prefer to fight in open fields, where they can use their horses and military formations to their advantage.

William de Maginnis is the constable of Dunderum castle. Statistically, treat him as an English Knight.

ENGLISH KNIGHT

Characteristics: Int 0, Per -1, Pre -1, Com 0, Str +3, Sta +2, Dex +2, Qik 0

Size: 0

Age: 26 (26)

Virtues and Flaws: Knight; Affinity with Single Weapon, Improved Characteristics, Avaricious

Personality Traits: Avaricious +3

Combat:

Dodge: Init +0, Attack n/a, Defense +5, Damage n/a

Lance and shield (mounted): Init +2, Attack +17, Defense +14, Damage +8

Long sword and shield (mounted): Init +2, Attack +16, Defense +14, Damage +9

Lance (dismounted): Init +3, Attack +8, Defense +4, Damage +10

Long sword and shield (dismounted): Init +2, Attack +13, Defense +11, Damage +9

Soak: +11

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Athletics 4 (armored), Area Lore: Ulster 2 (castles), Brawl 4 (Dodge), English 2 (commanding peasants), Etiquette 2 (court), Flemish 1 (military commands), French 5 (courtly conversation), Great Weapon 2 (lance, dismounted), Hunt 3 (boar), Intrigue 2 (alliances), Irish 1 (insults), Leadership 2 (Flemish soldiers), Ride 3 (battle), Single Weapon 7 (lance), Welsh 1 (military commands)

Equipment: War horse, full chainmail, lance, long sword, heater shield

Encumbrance: 1 (4)

Appearance: A typical armored knight.

English knights form trained groups. The maximum size is two and the maximum combat advantage is +6.

FLEMISH SOLDIER

Characteristics: Int +1, Per +1, Pre 0, Com 0, Str +1, Sta +2, Dex +1, Qik 0

Size: 0

Age: 21 (21)

Virtues and Flaws: Wanderer; Warrior; Simple-Minded

Personality Traits: Distracted +2, Loyal +1

Combat:

Dodge: Init +0, Attack n/a, Defense +4, Damage n/a

Pole arm: Init +2, Attack +11, Defense +7, Damage +9

Short sword: Init +0, Attack +8, Defense +5, Damage +6

Soak: +4

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Area Lore: Flanders 4 (the coast), Area Lore: Ulster 1 (forests), Athletics 2 (long marches), Awareness 2 (guarding), Bargain 1 (food), Brawl 3 (dodge), Carouse 3 (excessive drinking), English 2 (farming terminology), Flemish 5 (slang), French 3 (military orders), Great Weapon 5 (pole arm), Irish 1 (insults), Leadership 2 (Flemish soldiers), Single Weapon 3 (short sword), Survival 2 (sea coasts)

Equipment: Partial metal reinforced armor, pole arm, short sword

Encumbrance: 1 (2)

The English (cont'd)

Appearance: The typical Flemish soldier lives in his armor. He is dirty, far from home, and often bored.

Flemish soldiers can fight as a trained group. The group's maximum size is 3 (counting their specialty) and the maximum combat advantage is +9.

WELSH BOWMAN

Characteristics: Int -1, Per +2, Pre -1, Com 0, Str +2, Sta 0, Dex +2, Qik 0

Size: 0

Age: 21 (21)

Virtues and Flaws: Wanderer; Affinity with Bows, Warrior; Compulsion (gambling), Infamous

Personality Traits: Rambunctious +2, Loyal +1

Reputations: Invaders 4 (Irish natives)

Combat:

Dodge: Init +0, Attack n/a, Defense +3, Damage n/a

Dagger: Init +0, Attack +8, Defense +4, Damage +5

Long bow: Init -2, Attack +14, Defense +8, Damage +10

Soak: +2

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Area Lore: Wales 3 (mountains), Area Lore: Ulster 1 (Norman lords), Athletics 1 (jumping), Awareness 2 (keeping watch), Bows 7 (long bow), Brawl 3 (dagger), Carouse 2 (games of chance), Craft: Bow-making 2 (superior quality), Craft: Fletching 2 (superior quality), Folk Ken 2 (prostitutes), English 3 (slang), French 2 (military orders), Flemish 2 (gambling jargon), Stealth 3 (ambushes), Welsh 5 (storytelling)

Equipment: Heavy leather armor, dagger, plus long bow and arrows

Encumbrance: 0 (2)

Appearance: A Welsh bowman dresses similarly to an Irish kern, except he'll wear partial leather armor over his tunic. He goes barefoot, always has his bow, and seems to enjoy his time in Ulster more than his fellow Flemish mercenaries.

Welsh bowmen do not fight in trained groups, but usually form up as an untrained group. Their maximum size is six.

for *Ars Magica* will appear in a future supplement. In the interim, the following guidelines will help players conduct skirmishes.

First split the skirmishers into groups, using the rules provided on page 172 of *ArM5*. To facilitate play, the groups must all be the same type of generic soldier. Thus, a knight won't form with a group of bowmen, nor a fénnid with a group of kerns. For convenience, the leader should also be the vanguard (*ArM5*, page 175). The maximum size of each group is equal to the Leadership score of the leader, so you will have to split a force into several groups. A force of 22 fénneda, for example, can be split into 5 groups of 4 (the leader's Leadership score) and 1 group of 2. Untrained groups are limited in size to 6.

Men combine to form groups, either trained or untrained, and groups combine to form a **warband**. A warband is led by a captain, who can command as many groups as his Presence + Leadership score. The group that the leader leads counts as one of the groups. Aedh, for example, can lead a warband of 6 groups of his own fian, with each group consisting of 4 men. This warband of twenty four men acts as a single opponent in skirmish combat, making one Attack roll and one Defense roll for the entire assemblage. The same rules for a group of men apply to a warband of

groups. Warbands can be either trained or untrained. A trained warband adds the sum of its combat abilities as a bonus to the leader's Combat Totals. The maximum bonus is equal to the leader's Presence + Leadership total. Group damage is split as evenly as possible.

Combat should include some strategy, so a few rough rules are included to encourage the players to plan successful skirmishes. A warband can gain a **minor advantage** or a **major advantage** against another group depending on the situation. A minor advantage adds +3 to the warband's Attack and Defense rolls, and a major advantage adds +6. The storyguide should determine if an advantage exists, and whether it is minor or major. Some examples: The Irish are better in the woods, giving them a minor advantage against the English if fighting in a forest. The English receive a minor advantage if meeting an Irish force in an open field. Castle defenders have a major advantage over besiegers. Two to one odds grant a minor advantage, and superior numbers — more than five to one — grant a major advantage to the attacker, although castle walls would nullify this advantage.

MINOR ADVANTAGE: +3

MAJOR ADVANTAGE: +6

If a skirmish occurs, the storyguide should only run one side of the battle, handing the other side to a player who has the least to do to make the die rolls for that force. There is nothing more boring than watching a storyguide run both sides of a combat, so beware! Give the player the force that they are allied with, or at least most strongly attached to, and let him make the die rolls and decisions for that group.

Skirmish combat is kill or be killed, so other combat options (non-lethal combat) are prohibited. In large scale skirmishes, groups should not use the exertion rules, as that will add more computations to the combat formulas and slow down play. Giving one warband a minor or major advantage over another should suffice.

MEETING MUIRGEN

Muirgen roams the forest, using her spells to change into animal form, canvassing the local fianna looking for her stones. If she sees the PCs, she follows them, naturally assuming that they are somehow culpable. Her transformations are Muto spells, not Imaginem, so they cannot be seen through by someone with Second Sight. PCs might notice a diminutive animal shadowing them as they move through the woods. If hailed, Muirgen ends her transformation and speaks with the PCs.

While Muirgen definitely wants the champion's portion for its vis, she is ultimately concerned with maintaining the sustainability of the Magical regio. She believes it is a wonderful source of vis that must be maintained, both for its annual yield and for the continuous benefit to the Magic Realm, the Order of Hermes, and the overall balance of the magical universe. The PCs might be familiar with such concerns, as many magi of the Order want to restrict the expansion of the mundane population as it eats away at the hidden pockets of Magic regiones and auras. Muirgen doesn't object to Eustace's desire for the champion's portion, but she is mortified that the Flambeau wants to take Bricriu's tongue as a trophy, since such an act would almost certainly terminate the nature of the regio.

Muirgen is not a very dramatic speaker, despite her shouting, and her arguments would never sway someone who opposes her thoughts. She is passionate, however, and those who already believe as she does will accept her arguments as intrinsically logical and sound. Fence-sitters doubtless remain undecided, although they might be swayed by her speech if they can somehow emotionally identify with her. Listeners discern that she is steadfast in her beliefs, and might be somewhat worried about what actions she will take to maintain the regio's present status.

MEETING EUSTACE

Eustace is a much calmer character than Muirgen. He openly admits to his part in leading Aedh astray, saying that he wanted to prevent Aedh's attack against the garrison until after the stones are found. If the PCs say that he is involving himself in mundane affairs, he asks who he has hurt, and what magi have his involvement threatened. Though powerful, Eustace is not the brightest brand in the fire.

Eustace presents the other side of the Magic regio sustainability argument. He says that the spoils of such regiones are the rightful booty of those capable enough to take them. Eustace is unconcerned with the notion that regiones are disappearing, and claims that many exist, even in his mundane-saturated native soil of Normandy. Magic is a part of God's Creation, purposefully invented for magi to use to the best of their ability. He doubts Bricriu's regio will vanish with the death of its namesake, a conviction that will intensify once he enters the large regio and sees the plethora of magical humans and creatures that exist within it. If the PCs help him, he says, he will let them drain off the vis from Bricriu's tongue, keeping it for themselves while he keeps the actual trophy.

Despite his Blatant Gift, Eustace has had a few conversations with Dundrum's constable, de Maginnis. Fearing de Lacy more than the magus, de Maginnis asked Eustace for help. Knowing that this would violate the Code of Hermes, Eustace refused. As his efforts to find the stones continue to fail, the magus keeps rethinking his decision. If he learns that Muirgen does not have the portal stones, he will quickly deduce that the stone pile resting outside Dundrum may contain the stones. He then accepts de Maginnis' proposal, provided that the knight lets him search through the pile.

Eustace asks the PCs how they came so quickly to Ulster. If they explain their route, he will be mildly surprised. He knows that Vafer's passages into the Twilight Void linger for a while, but has never asked the fox how long they remain open. Eustace asks the PCs how they intend to get back to their home. If asked, Vafer will say that the passages stay open for a day or two before slowly closing. After a week, they are closed, but during that time they can be forced open if a large concentration of vis is used, acting as a magical lever to pry them open. The vis has to be contained in a single thing, and has to have at least five pawns of potency to actively open one of his diminishing passages. The only viable items in this scenario are the champion's portion and Bricriu's tongue. The PCs should suddenly be more interested in the regio, as it is probably the only way for them to go home as quickly as they came.

Dundrum

At some point, the PCs may wish to see the English stronghold. Dundrum castle sits atop a hill on the north-west side of Dundrum Bay, which opens on its east side to the Irish Sea. The hill is a shoulder of Mount Sandel, a rocky, forested highland to the rear of the castle. A small track leads down the hill, along the west side of the bay, to a small port village. It is situated to protect the southern roads leading from Ireland into Ulster.

The castle itself is a circular wall containing an area approximately 40 yards in diameter. The walls are only four feet thick and comparatively short, running only fifteen feet high. Atop the wall is a roofed, wooden walkway that protects the garrison from rain and missile fire. Two wooden halls sit inside the wall, one used as a stable and the other as housing for the garrison. A three-story tower stands in the middle of the courtyard, the last defense of Dundrum and home to the castle's constable and knights. (See the map at the beginning of this chapter.)

The main gate faces south, towards the village. Formerly a pair of iron-reinforced doors, it is now a gaping hole, surrounded by the beginnings of a gate house. The projected structure will stand two stories high, with a drawbridge and portcullis, but is currently little more than a foundation. Piles of stone lie to the side, which the villagers will use to build the gatehouse. As the masons toil, more stone is constantly sought.

Dundrum castle is commanded by the constable William de Maginnis and his militia. Dundrum's garrison includes: 9 knights, 16 soldiers, 5 bowmen, 1 chaplain, and 8 non-combatants.

Dundrum castle has a Dominion aura of 2, which equals the site's level 2 Magic aura. Since the power of the Divine is stronger than that of Magic, the Dominion aura wins out over the Magic aura. Auras fluctuate, depending on the time of year and other situations. At specified times, the Magic aura increases and overpowers the Dominion aura. Without the portal stones, the regio is accessible only four times a year: during the Celtic pagan holidays of Samhain (1 November), Imbolc (1 February), Beltaine (1 May), and Lughnasadh (1 August). During each of these holidays, the regio is accessible for three days, which is the traditional length of the holiday feast. If properly placed, the portal stones will always open the regio.

FINDING THE STONES

The missing portal stones are not difficult to find, and are sitting in front of the PCs' faces. They were found early

on in the rebuilding of Dundrum, and moved to the construction site. Muirgen and Eustace don't know that the stones have been broken up and resized. In their original form, each measured six feet high by two feet wide and deep, weighing nearly two tons, and was carved with a sweeping, continuous circle. Whenever Muirgen needed to move them, she changed their weight with a Muto Terram formulaic spell, so that her fian helpers could easily carry them to their hiding spot near the bay.

The stones were hauled away by the builders and cut into smaller sizes. Some of these are already in place in the foundation, and other smaller fragments lay in the pile of stones waiting to be used. Muirgen knows the stones are gone, and that the castle is being rebuilt, but she cannot put the two together because she has no idea how mundane society operates. She knows that people make things and that they don't use magic, but doesn't understand any of the connecting principles. Eustace thinks Muirgen still has the stones hidden somewhere.

The stones are not magical, although they bear traces of magic similar to an arcane connection. An Intellego Vim spell must have a base of 10 to be useful. Looking through the pile of rocks is time consuming, but yields pieces of the stones. A Perception + Awareness + stress die against an Ease Factor of 15 yields a single piece, with the search taking an hour. Successful characters notice remnants of the circular carving on the found pieces. Pieces of the stones already incorporated into the gatehouse are harder to find, and a searching character needs to succeed against an Ease Factor of 18. Only two pieces of stone are necessary to access the regio; the size of either stone is immaterial. But the soldiers standing guard do not let characters sift through the pile or inspect the finished part of the gatehouse, and will chase them off immediately.

Both the portal and the rest of the construction stones are sandstone. The portal stones, however, are not made from the local sandstone, and an Intellego Terram spell can differentiate between the two types of stones. Visually, they are too similar to tell apart, although a skilled mason can determine the difference.

Enough pieces of the stones are available that all interested parties – Muirgen, Eustace, and the PCs – can find a pair each.

THE PLAYERS' DECISION

Once the PCs have met everyone, they must decide what they are going to do. If negotiations with all the NPCs went well, everyone wants the PCs' help. However, nothing compels the players to assist anyone. Muirgen and

Eustace will not be bothered by the PCs' lack of assistance, and continue their search. But the Irish and the English do not accept their decision to remain bystanders so casually. If the PCs are not allies, they must be enemies. After being refused aid, both the Irish and English warriors will attack the PCs the next time they see them.

It is important that the players understand that the only way to get home as quickly as they came is for them to finish their business quickly, whatever they decide that business is. They have three days after arriving in Ulster before the Aquam Province boundary closes, a little more if they can get a large chunk of vis.

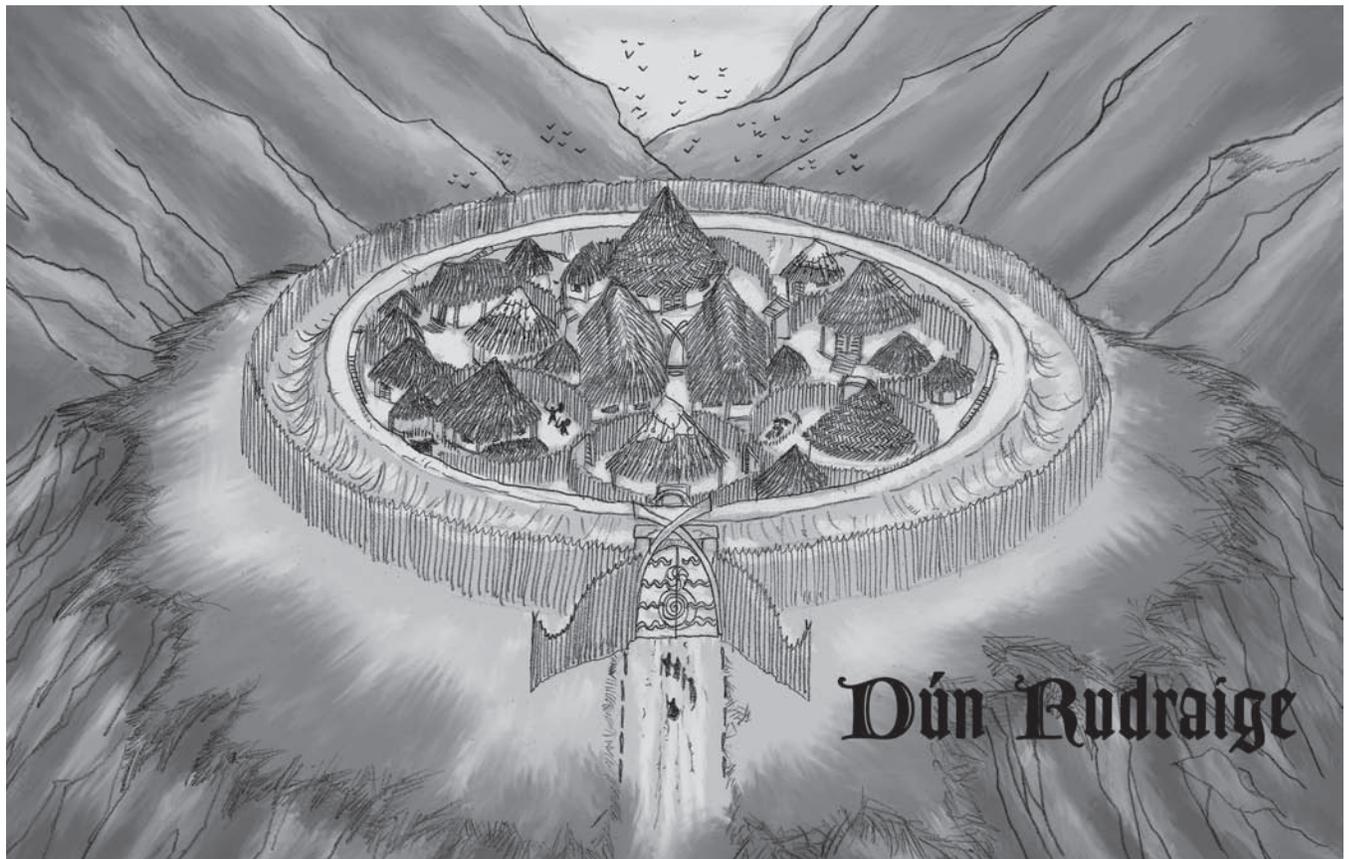
If the players are still not moved to intervene somehow, the storyguide should press the issue by having one of the NPC magi find the stones. This should be the magus who the PCs are least disposed to help. The losing wizard then rushes to them for aid, claiming that if they refuse to help something terrible will happen. Muirgen plans to lead a group of the Heroes of Ulster out of the regio and destroy Dundrum, after which she will destroy the stones and seal off Dún Rudraige forever. Eustace, having seen the number of magical humans inside the regio, plans to lead a troop of English knights inside to destroy everyone. Both of these plans are extreme, but Muirgen and Eustace are willing to carry them out.

Headstrong players may decline everyone's offers and search for the stones themselves. If they enter the regio alone, and enter into Bricriu's competitions, use Muirgen and Eustace to heighten the tension of the story, entering at a later time to muddy the players' well-laid plans.

Dún Rudraige

If the PCs have found two portal stones, they must properly place them to gain entrance to the regio. They must be set on the regio's border, which can be made visible with Intellego Vim magic, and be spaced widely enough for a cart to pass through them. They must be reverently placed, meaning that nothing else can be stacked near them, and a small patch of the vegetation must be cleared. The stones themselves can be any size. Once these steps are followed, a glowing archway appears in the air.

Walking through the portal stones' archway, the PCs arrive inside the Dún Rudraige regio directly in front of the ring fort's outer gates. Dún Rudraige (Rory's Fort) rests in the middle of a magic regio that sits on the hill overlooking Dundrum bay, and is superimposed over Dundrum castle in the mundane realm. The regio runs along the crown ridge of the hill. It is completely hidden and inaccessible when



The Champion's Portion

The champion's portion is the best cut of meat from the bull: a section of the hindquarters and the tail. It is worth 5 pawns of Animal vis. It also has a magical property that the wearer will be able to invoke if the tail is draped around the waist or shoulders and prominently displayed. Three times a day the wearer can cast an en-

hanced version of *Aura of Ennobled Presence* (ArM5, page 145), which has a Range of Voice and a Target of Group, augmented to include 100 individuals. While not as powerful as Aedh claims, the champion's portion does grant its owner the capability to lead 100 men. The champion's portion loses this power if its vis is drained off.

the hill's Dominion aura is stronger than the Magic aura, though. During times when the Magic aura is stronger, the regio boundary can be seen as a shimmering blue veil that surrounds the hill.

The regio is large, perhaps five square miles, in the center of which sits the fort. The landscape is hilly, covered with stunted trees and thickly growing brambles, the entire area filled with wispy mist that flows sporadically. A multitude of hidden ravines and toothy crags cover the landscape, which is overall a broken, rough place.

The fort is built of wood. A tall palisade rings the fort, each pole intricately carved with pictures of dragons, monsters, and battling warriors. Glossy black crows sit perched on the palisade, giving it a foreboding appearance. The fort has one gate — a large pair of decorated wooden doors. There are six concentric rings inside the fort, each marked off by a smaller wooden palisade breeched by another gate. In each of these circular courtyards is a feasting hall — a large, roofed, semi-circular structure that holds one hundred men. Other wooden buildings dot the courtyards: breweries, kitchens, servants' quarters, kennels, stables, and latrines.

Past the seven gates, in the center of the ring fort, are two large buildings: Bricriu's feasting hall and the heroes' feasting hall. Both are large, airy buildings, with skylights and balconies, filled with cushions and pillows for the guests. They are adjacent, so that Bricriu can gaze into the heroes' feasting hall from one of his balconies. (See the nearby map.)

The regio has a Magic aura of 6. Entering the regio is not difficult, although without the portal stone, it is impossible to find the ring fort. Characters can enter the regio as normal, using Second Sight or Hermetic spells, but if they do not have the stones then they enter the regio somewhere in the broken, rough landscape, and Dún Rudraige will not be in sight. Wandering characters have no chance of finding the fort, since this is a magical property of the regio. If the characters have placed the stones on the regio's boundary, entering between them will lead to Dún Rudraige's first gate.

Time runs differently in the regio than in the mundane

world. During the course of the feast, several days may seem to pass in the regio. These are important to the various challenges happening during the feast. PCs discover that ten days spent in the regio equal one day in the mundane world, though; Muirgen and Vafer can both tell the characters this, if they are friendly.

The regio is home to an incredible assortment of magical Irish monsters, some of which are detailed during Bricriu's challenges (see below). These monsters have homes somewhere in the regio, which the storyguide can detail if her players wish to explore the regio. Their lairs are not important to this scenario.

Bricriu's Feast

As the PCs approach the fort, sounds can be heard inside: music, laughter, and the clinking of drinking horns. As soon as they enter, the PCs see several Ulster Followers moving towards the center of the fort. They are jovial, and welcome the PCs, even offering to walk with them to the heroes' feasting hall. More Followers join them, until all are assembled in the center hall.

Ten Heroes and one hundred Followers sit about, drinking, laughing, and waiting for the feast to begin. They are a bellicose bunch, but their spirits are light and happy, as they enjoy their host's mead. In the center of the hall is a huge roasting pit, on which a steer is skewered on a spit. It is easily the largest bull the PCs have ever seen, and the savory aroma of its simmering meat smells delicious. Bricriu stands in a corner of the room, waiting for all to assemble. He immediately notices the PCs and introduces himself, welcoming them to his home. He asks if they will compete for the champion's portion. Bricriu encourages them. Personally, he has seen the ten Heroes compete many times, and while it is enjoyable, the PCs offer fresh entertainment.

Bricriu then visits each of the ten Heroes. Eavesdroppers hear him flatter the Heroes in turn, extolling each one's victories and merit, and stating that he is easily the most qualified to receive the champion's portion. Servant

Followers start carving the bull, with the rump and tail set aside as the champion's portion. Bricriu leaves the hall and walk to his balcony, which overlooks the assembly.

"That champion's portion, as it is, is not the portion of a fool's house," he will cry, pointing at the tail. "Give it to the Ulster Hero you prefer for valor." To further incite the crowd, he will use his Greater Powers to make a Hero or NPC desire the portion. Bricriu's *Extol the Champion* power has enough Penetration to affect both Muirgen and Eustace. The gathering usually has three Heroes competing, and once three have shouted out their claim, the rest will gladly judge. Ideally, one of the PCs should be in the running, but this decision should be left to the individual players. Bricriu will not use his powers to ensure that any PC enters the competition. Each Hero takes at least one Follower with him, for assistance, so a challenging PC can enlist the aid of his companions.

Once the champions are selected, they turn to the other Heroes and Followers to judge them. The challenge is made up of a series of contests. Judging these contests includes picking a specific task for the contestants to perform, then judging who performs the task the best. If none of the PCs nominated themselves as a champion, they are asked to be judges, probably one after another. The other Followers and Heroes will offer suggestions for contests if asked.

Ideally, the champions undertake a contest and a winner is decided and awarded the prize. The problem is that the two losing Heroes most likely do not accept the judge's decision, and demand another contest from another judge. Once a contest is finished, the losing Heroes must make a Proud Personality Trait + stress die roll against an Ease Factor of 9. If this roll is successful, the Hero's pride rises up and he demands another contest. Only one of the two losing Heroes needs to succeed to force another contest.

Bricriu anticipates that many challenges will happen before the champion's portion is awarded. He gives a gold or silver armband to the winner of every contest, removing one from his muscular arm and awarding it to the winner. The Heroes already have many armbands, and sometimes give them to the judge of the event they just won. The first six of these contain a pawn of raw Terram vis. Over the course of a year, the regio produces six pawns in this form. These armbands are the annual vis that Muirgen has collected in the past, using her Embitterment power to threatened holders into giving them to her. Bricriu recognizes that her power is close to his own, and does not allow his Heroes to hurt the maga.

Multiple contests will eventually dishearten even the most proud Hero. The Ease Factor for the Personality Trait

roll is increased by one for every contest the loser has lost. Thus, if a Hero has lost three contests, the Personality Trait roll's Ease Factor is 12 after the fourth contest. Player characters do not have to make this roll, and can keep denying the judges' victories indefinitely.

If at any time the challengers are tied with an equal number of victories, a fight erupts in the hall, as their supporters leap up brandishing swords to violently exclaim their approval of their champion. This is a wild melee, with everyone fighting someone else. Run individual combats, not group combat, with each PC facing a single opponent. The fight ends when someone shouts loudly enough for all to hear and come to their senses. For a PC to stop the fight the player must make a Communication + Leadership + stress die roll against an Ease Factor of 15. If this roll fails, the player can try again the next round. Botching this roll means that the fight continues for 1d10 more rounds before stopping, regardless of who shouts out for peace next. If the fight continues for ten rounds, without a PC stopping it, one of the Heroes will succeed in calming the assembly. Bricriu watches from his balcony, loving every blow.

THE CONTESTS

Many of the contests are simple feats of running, jumping, leaping, singing, and drinking. Most of these can be handled with contested Characteristic + Ability + stress die rolls, the highest total indicating the winner. The judge that selected the contest is the final arbiter, however, and may decide not to award the competition to the actual winner, preferring one of the other contestants over him. The Heroes and Followers have known each other for centuries, having made friends and enemies over the course of their existence. None of these existing relationships are severe enough to cause great strife, but although slight, they are enough to change a judge's decision. At the end of a close match, one in which the winner did not beat the other two by a margin of 3, the storyguide should roll a simple die. On a 1 the judge deems the second place winner the winner, and on a 10 he chooses the third place winner as the overall winner. This only applies to NPC judges; PCs can award a competition's victory to whoever they desire. While this will raise cries of protest in the crowd, it is an accepted practice, and none will interfere or naysay the judge.

The storyguide should use some poetic license in selecting the individual contests. For example, Heroes should not have to jump over tables, but over houses. Some sample contests and their required rolls are:

Contest: Being the first in the feasting hall in the morning.
Roll: Dexterity + Etiquette (it would be rude to just run)

Contest: Leaping over the palisade.
Roll: Dexterity + Athletics

Contest: Drinking a barrel of mead.
Roll: Stamina + Carouse

Contest: Being the best dressed attendant.
Roll: Presence + Etiquette

Contest: Throwing a rock at a crow.
Roll: Dexterity + Thrown Weapon

Contest: Recounting personal lineage.
Roll: Communication + Living Language (Irish)

Contest: Racing a chariot around the fort.
Roll: Dexterity + Animal Handling

Contest: Leaping a horse over the palisade.
Roll: Dexterity + Ride

Contest: Finding a hazel tree in the regio.
Roll: Perception + Awareness

Contest: Spending the night in the regio, outside the fort.
Roll: Intelligence + Survival

Contest: Catching a fish barehanded.
Roll: Dexterity + Brawl

Contest: Uprooting one of the posts that holds up the hall.
Roll: Strength + Athletics

Contest: Finding a wild bull living in the regio.
Roll: Perception + Hunt

Contest: Bringing back a wild bull from the regio.
Roll: Dexterity + Animal Handling or Strength + Brawl

Bricriu has some contests of his own, and periodically interrupts the proceedings with them. Pick one or two of the following contests that you think your players will most enjoy.

Defense of the Hall: One contest is to defend the hall during the night. The other Heroes and Followers leave, returning to their dwellings, and the three competitors wait in the feasting hall. In the middle of the night, three magical cats from the Cave of Cruachan enter the hall.

They attack anyone they meet. Use the statistics for the sea-cat, but do not let these creatures use their Ferocity as Confidence points or allow them to exert on attacks. The cats fight as an untrained group, attacking one contestant after another. The Heroes honor this scheme, letting the cats attack one contestant at a time. The Cats of Cruachan do not fight to the death, and flee after receiving a Medium Wound.

Survival in the Wilds: Another contest has the contestants sleep outside, making separate camps at a specific spot in the regio. During the night, a heavy mist overtakes the contestants. One by one, the giant Scáth visits each camp and tries to steal their gear. The giant's strategy is simple; strike first and pick up the goods after. The winner is he who returns to the fort unwounded. If all three contestants are wounded, the winner is the one with blood on his sword (the one who wounded the giant).

Test of Bravery: Bricriu's final contest is to send the three competitors to visit Uath mac Imomain, a magic human living in the regio. Uath offers to let a hero cut off his head, after which he will cut off the hero's head. If a hero accepts, Uath will hand over his axe and bare his neck. Once beheaded, an easy feat, Uath picks up his head and walks off, disappearing into a lake. He will return the next morning to strike off the hero's head. A contestant needs a Brave + stress die roll against an Ease Factor of 18 to offer his neck, refusing or flinching if the Ease Factor is not met. Player character magi and companions do not need to make this roll, although grog characters should. If a PC offers his neck, Uath reverses the axe on the down-stroke, so that the blunted end of the axe strikes the character, not the blade. Since a player magus or companion does not need to make the Brave check, a PC ought to win this contest.

SCÁTH: AN IRISH GIANT

Magic Might: 20 (Corpus)

Characteristics: Int -3, Per +2, Pre 0, Com -2, Str +10, Sta +5, Dex +1, Qik -5

Size: +5

Season: Summer

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Magic Human; Great Stamina (x2), Tough; Enemies (Heroes of Ulster)

Qualities and Inferiorities: Gigantic (x4); Increased Might (x5), Improved Fist Attack (x3)

Personality Traits: Stubborn +6, Proud +3

Combat:

Dodge: Init -5, Attack n/a, Defense +0, Damage n/a

Fist: Init -5, Attack +13, Defense +1, Damage +10

The Climax

Cudgel: Init -4, Attack +12, Defense +3, Damage +17
Thrown stone: Init -5, Attack +8, Defense +1, Damage +12
Soak: +8
Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious
Wound Penalties: -1 (1-10), -3 (11-20), -5 (21-30), Incapacitated (31-40), Dead (41+)
Abilities: Brawl 5 (fist), Irish 4 (insults), Great Weapon 6 (cudgel), Survival 4 (Ulster), Thrown Weapon 5 (stone), Swim 1 (lakes)
Equipment: A cudgel as thick as a mill's wheel-shaft.
Vis: 4 pawns Corpus in hair.

Appearance: Scáth is twenty feet tall and weights 5 tons. He is hideous looking, with an ugly, wrinkled face, bushy eyebrows, and a shorn patch of black hair atop his head. His arms and legs are fat and puffy, and he wears a dun-colored tunic that barely covers his ample rump.

This scenario most likely culminates during Bricriu's feast. The events are entertaining in their own fashion, but they merely set the stage for the final scene. Unless extreme measures have been taken to enter the regio clandestinely, both Muirgen and Eustace enter the regio after the PCs. Muirgen hopes to protect Bricriu, and cares more about where Eustace may be than what the PCs are doing. Unless, that is, they are aiding him. Eustace stands agape once he realizes that the regio is full of magic humans. Taken as either trophies or vis, he covets the head of every magic human inside Dún Rudraige. He realizes that he needs assistance, though. If the PCs will not aid him, he leaves the regio and recruits English knights and soldiers to help him raid Dún Rudraige. If Muirgen gets wind of this, she does the same and recruits either the PCs or a fian to defend



Scáth's favorite attack is to grab an individual and hurl him at another opponent. To grab an individual, Scáth must succeed with a fist attack, meaning he has to have an Attack Advantage over his opponent (see grappling, *ArM5*, page 174). This attack will not do damage to the grabbed individual. The next round, Scáth throws him, making a thrown stone attack against a second opponent. If the thrown individual hits the second target, apply the Damage generated by the attack to both thrown and struck individuals. If the attack misses, the thrown individual still takes +12 damage.

A grabbed character will be dropped if Scáth takes a Medium Wound while holding him. The grabbed character may make an attack, but at a penalty equal to the Attack Advantage of the attack that grabbed him.

Dún Rudraige. A very dramatic conclusion would be to have both NPC magi storm Dún Rudraige with soldiers, while the PCs are already occupied with one of Bricriu's more-dangerous contests.

Driven by blind ambition, Eustace might try to kill any magi who oppose him. Muirgen will do likewise, although her offensive spell power is much weaker than the Flambeau's. She will only break her Oath in response to Eustace's (or the PCs') actions.

The scenario could also end outside the walls of Dundrum, at a point after the player characters have run through Bricriu's challenges. Aedh has finally amassed enough warriors to attack Dundrum, and leads the charge just as the PCs leave the regio. This is a bit mean, because the PCs are instantly thrust between a charging army and the stone

wall of the defenders, but it is very dramatic. Depending on their interactions with the NPC magi before entering Dún Rudraige, the PCs could find Eustace supporting the defenders and Muirgen aiding the attackers.

A flamboyant end is not required, however, and the PCs might be able to ease the various tensions and not provoke a violent conclusion. Both Muirgen and Eustace have other interests that might sway them from their current determinations. Muirgen wants a longevity ritual, and Eustace desires an apprentice, for example.

Rewards

The most tangible reward of this scenario is *vis*. Winning challenges can net characters Terram *vis*, and the champion's portion is worth 5 pawns. Any slain magical creatures had *vis* that can be taken. The possibility for many pawns exists, depending on the bellicose nature of the PCs. If the PCs kill every magical inhabitant of Dún Rudraige, a gruesome ending indeed, they will collect over 150 pawns of *vis*, a truly staggering victory.

There could be legal consequences for the player characters, depending on what they do in Ulster. Details of the Hibernian Tribunal have deliberately been excluded from this scenario. If players want to take up legal action for any of Muirgen's or Eustace's actions, the storyguide will have to develop the Hibernian Tribunal herself. Keep in mind that neither NPC magus is a member of the Hibernian Tribunal, nor has any magus claimed the Dún Rudraige *vis* site. Muirgen is not interested in taking any long-term legal actions against the PCs, although Eustace might. Such a response would happen later, in the PC's home tribunal. Naturally, Eustace has to survive to make any claim against the characters.

Eustace is a frequent traveler through the Twilight Void, and he could be a recurring NPC for the troupe, depending on their interactions, acting as a friend or an enemy. He will continue his program of trophy hunting, and might rope the PCs into another adventure in the future. If he has become the PC's enemy, he'll ask his companion Flambeau magi, the Young Squires, to make life difficult for them.

The aura around the oak, back near the covenant, will ebb. While it is still slightly magical, it is not powerful enough to form a permanent aura. This prevents further attempts to enter the regio and the Herbam Province.

If everything goes well, this should be a violent, dangerous story that takes three to four playing sessions. Player characters should be rewarded 8 experience points for participating, 9 for entering Dún Rudraige, and 10 for the

PC who actually won the champion's portion. Confidence Points should be awarded after each session, not just the final session. Because this adventure is potentially lethal, each PC who can use Confidence Points (not grogs) should receive 3 per session. If they accomplished a specific goal for the session, increase the Confidence Point award to 4. The likely session goals are: travel the Twilight Void to Ulster, meet and interact with both NPC magi, find the portal stones, and compete in Bricriu's challenges.

Chapter Appendix: The Nemthengacha

The Nemthengacha (singular: Nemthenga) are a sect of Ex Miscellanea magi who have the ability to create animosity and dissent in their listeners. Their origins are clouded. Some claim the Irish poet/demigod Bricriu mac Carbada is the primogeniture of the line, while others say that the Welsh hero Efnisien is the first of the breed. Asserting an even more grandiose foundation, some Ex Miscellanea say that their tradition descends from Loki, the multifaceted and often malevolent Norse god. It is true that this tradition is only found in Celtic and Scandinavian sorcerers.

Nemthengacha, also known as "poison-tongues," "bitter-tongues," or "deceivers," were more prevalent before the advent of Christianity. In pre-Christian society, Nemthengacha held a devastating reputation. In a society where loyalty and family bonds are everything, a Nemthenga's ability to turn one man against his ally was devastating. People avoided Nemthengacha, but since many of them lived among the tribe, they could not be entirely ignored and were placated as best as the tribe could manage. While no more anti-clerical than any other Ex Miscellanea tradition, they suffered severely from interactions with Christian missionaries, perhaps due to their overt presence. The unGifted Nemthengacha did not need to hide from their tribesmen, and several held prominent social positions as shamans, wise men, and king's champions. Their tradition ebbed, and practitioners retreated to remote parts of their lands.

In the thirteenth century, Gifted Nemthengacha have been systematically accepted into the Order of Hermes, although some unGifted Nemthengacha still remain, living in the far hinterlands of Mythic Europe. Though stretched, they never severed their connections to their clans, so that many are still related to members of a local tribe or kin group. Nor have they abandoned their connection to royal society, with many Nemthengacha still serving their local king.

Powers

Like every Ex Miscellanea character, a magus of the Nemthengacha tradition receives a free Major non-Hermetic Virtue, a compulsory Major Flaw, and a free Minor Hermetic Virtue. The Major non-Hermetic Virtue is Embitterment, a new Major Supernatural Ability. Embitterment is similar to Entrancement (*ArM5*, page 65), but the effects are more specific and potent. Due to this focus, Nemthengacha find it difficult to control other emotions in a target's mind, which spills over into other aspects of Hermetic magic. Each has the Major Hermetic Flaw: Deficient Technique Rego. Since Embitterment depends solely on the Nemthenga's voice, his magic is less dependent on gestures than other Hermetic magi. He receives the Minor Hermetic Virtue: Subtle Magic at no cost.

Embitterment

Embitterment is a Major Supernatural Ability that allows the speaker to make a listener hostile to a target of the speaker's choice. This hostility can range from simple antagonism to murder. Through simple conversation, the speaker makes the listener dislike, resent, or hate a person formerly considered a friend. The conversation does not have to be long; a round is time enough for this effect to take place.

To embitter a target, the player states the exact specifications of how the target will act against the intended victim. He then rolls the character's Communication + Embitterment + a stress die and compares it to a variable Ease Factor, which depends on the level of aggression he wishes to instill, and the level of loyalty possessed between the target and the former ally. Since this is a Supernatural Ability, the roll always uses a stress die. The Embitterment power of the Nemthengacha is a Magic power for purposes of determining its interaction with the other realms of power; it seems likely that an Infernal version also exists.

EMBITTERMENT ROLL:

Communication + Embitterment + stress die

Consult the following chart to determine the Ease Factor for this roll.

EASE FACTOR	DESIRED EFFECT
6	Turn a man against his neighbor, business partner, or co-worker.
9	Turn a man against his wife, friend, or cousin (distant kin).
12	Turn a man against his kin (father, brother, and nuclear family).
15	Turn a man against his lord.
18	Turn a man against his king.

The base effect makes the victim dislike the target, leading to slander, resentment, and a refusal to cooperate with him. Increasing this animosity to hatred adds +3 to the Ease Factor. Victims made to hate the indicated target desire to do some kind of harm to him, but stop short of killing the person. Such a person would destroy someone's fields, ruin a business opportunity, wreck their marriage, or perhaps wound them in a duel. Increasing hatred to loathing adds another +3 to the Ease Factor (+6 in total), and makes the victim try to slay the intended target. For example, the Ease Factor is 18 to embitter a man to commit patricide (base 12 + 6), and 24 to commit regicide (base 18 + 6).

The Range of embitterment is Voice and the Target is always Individual. The Duration is Sun, although this can be increased to Moon by increasing Ease Factor by +3. Because embitterment acts through conversation, the caster must speak a language that the target comprehends.

A character so embittered cannot disobey the command. He is not allowed a Loyalty roll to see if he can ignore the emotional summons, or other quibbling based on the character's Personality Traits. Hermetic magic can cancel the embitterment with a *Perdo Vim* spell. Rego Mentem magic can replace the feelings of animosity with feelings of loyalty or compassion, *Creo Mentem* can create feelings of loyalty that supersede the effect, and *Perdo Mentem* could erase the feelings of animosity. To determine how powerful a Hermetic spell needs to be, consider the effective level of the embitterment to be equal to the Nemthenga's score in Embitterment times 5.

Chapter Three

The Ship of Desire

This story is designed for companion characters, allowing players to add depth to their characters through a variety of social and romantic interactions. Any type of companion character — martial, mystical, academic, or artistic — is suitable for this story. Grog characters can also be incorporated, and players should enjoy marching such characters through the intimate entanglements that await them. As storyguide, you will need to consider the power of magus characters before allowing them. The antagonist is not especially powerful and will need to be beefed up to present a challenge to magi. A beginning magus, fresh out of apprenticeship, would fit most easily, without requiring the storyguide to make great changes to the story.

This adventure deals with faeries, an enigmatic and whimsical group. What a faerie wants, mostly, is to be involved in human stories and feed off their emotions. From this perspective, “The Ship of Desire” is an automatic win for Cupid, the faerie antagonist.

Précis

This story takes place in the summer months of 1221, when historically the papal legate of England was recalled to Rome. Set so soon after the canonical start date of a saga, this scenario could easily be a companion character’s first story, allowing the player to explore the motivations and passions of his newly created companion.

For reasons determined by the saga, a group of player characters must cross the English Channel. They find passage aboard *La main blanche*, “The White Hand” in French, a Flemish vessel that will happily ferry them across. Accompanying them is a collection of storyguide characters, each with his own motivation for making the voyage. Cupid, a faerie stowaway, will make the voyage troublesome, causing the various characters to fall in love with each other solely for his own amusement.

Cupid is following Piccardo, a venditor of House Verditius escorting a faerie, Argosus, to Sardinia. Cupid plans to use his enchanted arrows to incite love in the various passengers, hoping that the emotionally charged consequences will increase his faerie vitality. After arriving in Dover, knowing Piccardo’s plans to cross the Channel, Cupid began looking for an appropriate vessel. He quickly discovered *La main blanche*, talked to the crew, and discovered that an important person was due, a fat merchant, and that they were leaving the next day. That evening, he encountered the two musicians playing in a tavern. They too planned to leave the next day, so Cupid told them about *La main blanche*. The next morning, as Piccardo and Argosus were heading to their previously booked ship, Cupid enchanted that ship’s captain, making him fall in love with a local woman. The captain decided to spend another few days in port. Posing as a passerby, Cupid informed Piccardo that *La main blanche* was leaving soon and that there was room aboard.

Having arranged for a full list of passengers, Cupid easily enchanted one of the crew members, making him fall in love with a stranger and rush off through the dockside crowd chasing her. Copying the crewman’s appearance, Cupid walked aboard and started preparing the ship for departure. He didn’t count on the PCs’ arrival, but figures that the more passengers there are the more potential for his merriment.

The important passenger is Pandulph, the papal legate to England, and his bodyguard/attaché, Arsizio, rushing across the Channel to get to Rome. Pandulph carries incriminating evidence against the scholars of the University of Cambridge, particularly a group of teachers at Schola Pythagoranis. If this evidence reaches Rome, it could seriously affect the teachers, who are in actuality Jerbiton magi, and so ultimately the Order of Hermes.

Finally, two female troubadours, Carelia and Elena, board the ship. They feel lucky to climb aboard *La main blanche*, and hope to entertain the others with their songs and tales. Little do they know that Cupid has plans for them.

The characters become Cupid's playthings, confined aboard *Le main blanche*, where love will run rampant, secrets will unfold, and unlikely alliances will rule the day. They have the chance to thwart Cupid, intercept Pandulph's evidence against the Jerbiton scholars, and/or assist Piccardo the Veriditus in escorting the faerie Argosus.

The passenger list is large, providing several companion-level characters for the PCs to interact with. Piccardo, Argosus, and Cupid are essential to the adventure, while the others could be omitted if you have a large group of players. Besides the three just mentioned, you must ensure that enough characters of both genders are present for the adventure to work. With this many NPCs, the storyguide will have her hands full portraying each different character. Alternatively, these characters could be used by other troupe members. If this scenario best fits only one or two of the players' characters, the other players could forego playing grogs and use the NPCs for the session. Besides lessening the burden on the storyguide, such a move would make the NPCs seem more real, and their agendas more important. Good choices for troupe play are Elena, Arsizio, Carelia, Piccardo, Pandulph, and Folpert, in that order.

Dramatis Personae

The eight storyguide characters are grouped together here for convenience. Piccardo is an Italian venditor escorting Argosus, a faerie watchman, to Sardinia. Pandulph is the former papal legate of England, and is rushing to Rome accompanied by an Italian knight, Arsizio. Carelia and

Elena are troubadours returning to their native county of Toulouse. Folpert Berlensis is the captain of the ship, and Cupid is the faerie stowaway, the cause of the upcoming magical liaisons.

Piccardo the Veriditus Venditor

Piccardo is a venditor, a selling agent working for House Verditius, providing a safe go-between with mundane clients to whom the Verditius magus would like to sell enchanted items. Piccardo works for Rycas, a magus living at Verdi on the island of Sardinia. Piccardo recently brokered a deal between Rycas and a Northumbrian faerie ruler, Lady Æthelburh. In exchange for a crafted magical device, Lady Æthelburh has traded her watchman, Argosus, to provide seven years of service to Rycas. Piccardo is escorting Argosus to Verdi.

Life is good for Piccardo, and he is very loyal to Rycas. Escorting Argosus is a challenge, but Piccardo does not believe it is beyond his capabilities. He does not openly display his connection to the Order and prefers to present himself as a merchant journeyman. He is ever watchful for new trading partners, however, and will be interested in the player characters once he learns of their connection to the Order of Hermes. Once problems arise, he will also look to them for aid during the voyage.

Characteristics: Int +2, Per -1, Pre -1, Com +2, Str 0, Sta +1, Dex +2, Qik -1

Size: 0

Age: 30 (30)

Decrepitude: 0



Warping Score: 0

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Venditor; Gossip, Venus' Blessing, Warrior, Well-Traveled; Enemies, Overconfident; Busybody

Personality Traits: Loyal (to his mission) +3, Overconfident +3, Inquisitive +2

Combat:

Dodge: Init -1, Attack n/a, Defense +1, Damage n/a

Dagger: Init -1, Attack +7, Defense +2, Damage +3

Short sword: Init -1, Attack +12, Defense +7, Damage +5

Throwing knife: Init -1, Attack +8, Defense +4, Damage +2

Soak: +1

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Artes Liberales 1 (geometry), Athletics 3 (running), Awareness 2 (searching), Bargain 4 (enchanted items), Brawl 2 (dagger), Carouse 1 (staying sober), Charm 4 (first impression), English 3 (vulgarity), Etiquette 3 (tribunal gatherings), French 3 (tavern jargon), Folk Ken 1 (magi), Guile 3 (lying to customers), Intrigue 2 (Verditius vendettas), Italian 5 (merchant terminology), Latin 3 (travel guides), Normandy Tribunal Lore 2 (covenants), Order of Hermes Lore 3 (personalities),

Sardinia Lore 3 (Verdi), Single Weapon 6 (short sword), Thrown Weapon 4 (throwing knife)

Equipment: Besides his clothing, Piccardo carries a sword, dagger, and throwing knife. Aboard ship he has his traveling gear, including a blanket, cloak, and other necessities for the road.

Encumbrance: 1 (1)

Vis: Piccardo carries an allotment of vis with him: 2 pawns of Muto (butterfly wings), 2 pawns of Rego (silkworm bodies), 3 pawns of Animal (boar teeth), 1 pawn of Herbam (white rose petal), 1 pawn of Mentem (gooseberry), and 1 pawn of Terram (obsidian sliver). He also carries a lesser enchanted device that can identify raw vis and indicate its number of pawns, called the Platter of Hermes. The Platter of Hermes is an enchanted ceramic plate with twelve gems set around its circumference. If an item that contains raw vis is placed on the platter, a number of gems will glow equal to the number of pawns contained within the item. If the item does not contain raw vis, no gems glow. If the item contains more than 12 pawns, all the gems glow. (Intellego Vim, base level 4, +1 Touch, +1 Requisites (Creo Ignem to make the gems glow), +3 (6 uses a day) equals a final effect level of 13.)

Changing the Story

All of the particulars of this story can be changed without affecting the essentials of the scenario. Water transport was a common mode of travel during the Middle Ages, making it easy enough to change the ports, voyage, and destinations of *La main blanche*. The ship is agile enough to sail up or down Europe's major rivers, so that the actual voyage could take place across a sea, along a coast, or on any of the watery arteries that thread the lands. Simply pick a waterway that is near the covenant and a destination along it, a city or large town. The PCs are sailing to or from the covenant, along the waterway, from or to the chosen location. Sailing upstream or downstream is immaterial, as the ship can do both easily.

You will have to change many NPCs' ultimate destinations, based on if your group is sailing toward

or away from Rome and Toulouse. The latter is the easy change; simply make someplace else Carelia's and Elena's homeland.

If your voyage is steering away from Rome, Pandulph could be gathering political allies before returning to the pope. Considering his heavy involvement in politics, this is not as odd as it first seems. Yes, he's rushing to Rome, but first he has to take care of some political business, ensuring an ally or placating an enemy. It doesn't ultimately matter; the action of the adventure is aboard the ship.

The alternative method is to change Pandulph into another NPC. You can use the same stats but might have to make subtle changes to his motivation. Papal legates are appointed throughout Mythic Europe, and their political might varies from a full legate to a mere messenger. His

evidence — a book he wishes to use to accuse a group of scholar magi of heresy — does not have to be from Cambridge, but any scholastic group that has significance for your saga.

Similarly, Piccardo does not have to be returning to Sardinia and the domus magna of House Verditius, but could be taking Argosus to any Verditius magus in any location. If adding a Verditius magus to your saga won't work, Piccardo could simply be a companion character working for any Hermetic magus.

Changing the date a few years will not cause undue problems, even if you wish your saga to follow European history. Historically, Pandulph was not replaced with another papal legate, and Stephen Langton, the archbishop of Canterbury, became the ecclesiastical leader of England. Langton died in 1228.

Appearance: Piccardo is portly, round-faced, and jovial. He is quick to smile and his blue eyes beam with an impish gleam. He is well dressed, wearing a striped jerkin of brown and green, dull yellow hose, and a wide-brimmed straw hat.

Argosus the Faerie Watchman

Argosus claims to be the son of Argos Panoptes, the hundred-eyed herdsman who protected Zeus's flocks and was slain by Hermes. It is hard to say if this is true, considering the mercurial nature of faeries, but Argosus certainly looks the part. He is nearly eight feet tall with fifty eyes set all about his head. Fearing that he wouldn't get ten paces across Mythic Europe with such a grotesque companion, Piccardo asked Lady Æthelburh to disguise Argosus's features. She complied, and a faerie illusion masks Argosus's fifty eyes, making him look like a mundane man with just two eyes. The illusion does not further alter his appearance. Piccardo has draped a grey cloak around Argosus, hoping not to draw attention to his great height and powerful build. He calls Argosus *Bue*, which is Italian for "ox".

Argosus is a watchman, and little else interests him. He is obliged to travel with Piccardo, and happy to follow his chaperone's orders. He is an incognizant faerie, meaning that he does not know that he gains his vitality from interacting with humans. He needs to guard, to receive the trust instilled in him from a mortal overlord. Without this, he is listless and morose, making him a docile traveling companion. Piccardo has no understanding of this, and just assumes that Argosus' languid nature is his natural state.

Faerie Might: 10 (Corpus)

Characteristics: Int -1, Per +5, Pre -3, Com -2, Str +2, Sta +3, Dex +1, Qik +1

Size: +1

Virtues and Flaws, Greater Power; Faerie Sight, Faerie Speech: Great Perception (x2), Humanoid Faerie, Increased Might, Large; Monstrous Appearance, Vulnerable to Iron; Incognizant, Reclusive, Simple-Minded, Traditional Ward (flute playing)

Personality Traits: Watchful +3, Withdrawn +3, Brooding +2

Combat:

Dodge: Init +1, Attack n/a, Defense +7, Damage n/a

Cudgel: Init +2, Attack +14, Defense +11, Damage +9

Soak: +3

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-6), -3 (7-12), -5 (13-18), Incapacitated (19-24), Dead (25+)

Pretenses: Animal Handling 1 (sheep), Awareness 6 (guarding), Brawl 5 (dodge), Concentration 4 (maintaining

power), Great Weapon 6 (cudgel), Penetration 2 (Faerie Speech), Survival 1 (mountain pastures)

Powers:

The Eyes of Argos, 3 points, Init -4, Imaginem: This power mimics a level-40 version of the Hermetic spell *Discern the Images of Truth and Falsehood*, (ArM5, page 144).

(Base effect 35, +1 Conc. Intricacy points reduce Might cost by 2.)

Equipment: Loincloth and a large shepherd's crook (this acts as a cudgel)

Vis: 2 pawns of Corpus, shepherd's crook

Appearance: Argosus is a monstrous giant. Eight feet tall and nearly 400 pounds, Argosus has fifty eyes set all about his head, although this is currently masked by Æthelburh's enchantment. He is normally dressed in a shaggy loincloth and holds a large shepherd's crook.

Argosus is a companion-equivalent faerie character. He has 10 points of balanced Virtues and Flaws and 360 points to buy Pretenses.

Pandulph the Papal Legate

Pandulph was the papal legate to England from 1211 until 1221, when he was recalled by Pope Honorius III. He was a key player in the convoluted political environment, which included the papal interdict of England (1207-1213), the rebellion of King John's barons, the threatened invasion of England by France, and the signing of the Magna Carta in 1215. Pandulph personally accepted King John's submission to the pope in 1213, relieving him of his excommunication. Historically, after being recalled, Pandulph continued to serve the pope in diplomatic affairs before dying in 1226.

Pandulph is dashing to Rome in hopes of changing the pope's mind, so that he can continue to be the pope's representative in England. Since the death of King John, during the minority of the boy king Henry III, Pandulph was the effective ruler of England, a very powerful and lucrative position. Pressure from Stephen Langton, archbishop of Canterbury, and some powerful barons motivated the pope to recall the legate, a decision Pandulph hopes to reverse. Pandulph has made several enemies during his tenure, including Louis, the son of King Philip of France, which forces him to travel incognito. Abandoning his horse and usual assortment of retainers, he is sailing with only his personal luggage and his warrior companion Arsizio to keep him safe.

Pandulph is furious at being recalled, both because of the implied loss of faith in him and the immense fortune that could have been culled from the English. As a papal

legate, he collected large sums of money for the Church. All this is left behind, a fact Pandulph cannot forget or forgive. His revenge is planned. He carries a letter that lists several educational errors practiced by the masters of Cambridge, the greatest being their reliance on the New Aristotle over the erudition of the Church Fathers. Aristotle's new translations are being gobbled up by the students, and he imagines that this could undermine the sanctity of the learning institution. Most of this written venom is aimed at the students of Schola Pythagoranic, a group of Jerbiton magi masquerading as scholars. Pandulph knows that at the University of Paris, similar copies of the New Aristotle are banned. If the Church has lost some of its grip on England, thinks Pandulph, censoring her students' reading material might regain some papal control. Only Arsizio is privy to this information. *Art & Academe* has much more information on the New Aristotle, and both the universities of Cambridge and Paris.

Although Pandulph is arrogant, he will engage in intellectual discussion with a learned scholar, preferring theology over politics.

Characteristics: Int +1, Per -2, Pre +4, Com +1, Str -1, Sta -4, Dex -2, Qik -2

Size: 0

Age: 60 (59)

Decrepitude: 2 (6)

Warping Score: 0

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Priest; Educated, Great Presence, Pious Leadership, Self-Confident, Social Contacts, Temporal Influence; Enemies, Enfeebled; Vow (of Chastity)

Personality Traits: Loyal (to his mission) +3, Greedy (for revenues for the Church) +3, Arrogant +2

Combat:

Dodge: Init -1, Attack n/a, Defense -1, Damage n/a

Soak: 0

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Artes Liberales 3 (grammar), Awareness 3 (alertness), Carouse 2 (staying sober), Charm 3 (diplomats), Church Lore 5 (papal curia), Canon Law 6 (legate authority), Common Law 2 (real estate law), English 3 (servants), Etiquette 4 (nobility), French 5 (nobility), Folk Ken 3 (clerics), Guile 4 (lying about motivations), Intrigue 4 (papal alliances), Italian 5 (nobility), Latin 5 (Biblical references), Leadership 8+2 (intimidation), Philosophiae (moral philosophy) 3, Theology 4 (heresy), Teaching 2 (canon law)

Equipment: Expensive clothes

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: Pandulph is a stick-thin man with a bald head and cadaverous skin. He dresses in a fur-collared cloak and expensive, tailored clothes. Taller than average, he presents a foreboding appearance, especially when angered.

Pandulph's evidence is a book written by Edward of Milton, the headmaster of Schola Pythagoranic and a Jerbiton archmage, to Robert Grosseteste, the recently appointed chancellor of the University of Oxford. Titled *Deus et magus* ("God and the Wizard"), it is a tractatus on Theology (Quality 7). In it, Edward makes several false assumptions about the interconnected relationship between magic and the divine. While certainly heretical by church standards, it was meant as an intellectual exercise from Edward to his friend, Robert. Pandulph hopes to use the book, which mentions the Order of Hermes several times, to prove that a collection of heretical wizards is attempting to subvert current teachings in the university. While not the original, it may be the only other copy, and it is certainly the only copy Pandulph has.

Arsizio the Legate's Bodyguard

Arsizio is a knight from northern Italy. He has been attached to Pandulph for some time, serving as the legate's messenger, confidant, and bodyguard. Arsizio is privy to Pandulph's schemes, including this current venture. In his mid-thirties, Arsizio ruthlessly follows Pandulph's directions, and has little compunction to restrain him from the most atrocious behavior. Pandulph knows Arsizio as a loyal supporter and faithful collaborator.

Ever the realist, Arsizio will question player characters to discover their origins, destination, and the current political scene. He never knows where his future travels will take him, and prefers to be prepared for any eventuality.

Characteristics: Int -1, Per -1, Pre 0, Com -2, Str +3, Sta +2, Dex +2, Qik +2

Size: 0

Age: 36 (36)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 0

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Knight; Affinity with Single Weapon, Improved Characteristics; No Sense of Direction, Poor Student, Proud

Personality Traits: Proud +3, Loyal (to Pandulph) +2, Mean +2

Combat:

Dodge: Init +2, Attack n/a, Defense +5, Damage n/a

The Flavor of Love

"The Ship of Desire" follows the attitudes of love found in medieval romances — characteristically a profound adherence to notions of chivalric love, with only hints of actual sexual congress between characters. Typically, a male character professes his unconditional love for an unattainable beloved, usually a noble lady who is married to a social superior of the character. To prove his love, the protagonist undergoes quests and emotional torment for his lady.

This adventure could take a more bawdy tone and still be completely

within medieval notions of love. Medieval audiences loved the risqué, from the evidence in fabliaux and other poetry. Chaucer's work, written in the mid-fourteenth century, is rife with lewd references, and paints an earthier, sexual picture of love. Running this scenario with a more explicit tone would still be perfectly within the paradigm of thirteenth century culture. The storyguide should use her assessment of her group in deciding how bawdy this adventure should be.

This scenario also assumes only

heterosexual attractions between characters, again following examples of actual medieval romances. This does not mean that homosexual attachments didn't exist, or that they can't be found or hinted at in the corpus of surviving medieval texts. If it is within the players' zone of comfort, Cupid could arouse romantic feelings between characters of the same sex. Again, a storyguide should use her sense of the group to determine exactly how feelings of romantic love will appear in the game.

Dagger: Init +2, Attack +8, Defense +6, Damage +6

Fist: Init +2, Attack +5, Defense +5, Damage +3

Long sword: Init +4, Attack +13, Defense +10, Damage +9

Soak: +11

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Animal Handling 3 (falcons), Athletics 3 (climbing), Awareness 2 (alertness), Brawl 3 (dagger), Church Lore 3 (papal legate responsibilities), English 5 (London dialect), Folk Ken 1 (knights), French 5 (vulgar language), Great Weapon 2 (flail), Guile 3 (lying about himself), Hunt 2 (deer), Intrigue 3 (plotting), Italian 5 (chivalric terms), Leadership 3 (soldiers), Ride 3 (battle), Single Weapon 6 (long sword)

Equipment: Arsizio wears full chainmail and carries a long sword and dagger at his hip.

Encumbrance: 0 (3)

Appearance: Arsizio has dark brown hair, cut short in the front and worn long in the back, and a dark mustache and goatee. He wears a piebald (many-colored) surcoat over his mail. Years of fighting have scarred his hands and arms, and a thin scar runs down the right side of his face.

Carelia the Traveling Troubadour

Carelia is a musician and traveler. She has abandoned the normal way of life associated with a woman in exchange for hardships on the road, suspicion, danger, even death at the hands of an unknown highwayman or drunken

knight. Yet she perseveres, unwilling to sink into the ranks of mothers, whores, and washerwomen. Love is a foreign emotion to her; love does not fit into schedules, practices, performances, and life on the move. Love, for her, is confined to her notion of independence — of not needing a man, lord, or savior — and to her idea of freeing herself from society's gender conventions.

Characteristics: Int +1, Per +2, Pre +1, Com +4, Str -2, Sta -2, Dex +2, Qik -1

Size: 0

Age: 30 (30)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 0

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Wanderer; Free Expression, Great Communication, Puissant Music, Second Sight, Well-Traveled; Dependent (Elena); Noncombatant, Offensive to Animals

Personality Traits: Loyal (to being independent) +3, Self-Sufficient +2

Reputation: Musician 5

Combat:

Dodge: Init -1, Attack n/a, Defense -1, Damage n/a

Soak: -2

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Athletics 1 (running), Awareness 3 (audience reactions), Bargain 3 (performance remuneration), Charm 3 (potential patrons), English 3 (poetry), Folk Ken 3 (audiences), French 4 (poetry), Languedoc Lore 3 (cit-

ies), Music 6 (recorder), Occitan 5 (poetry), Second Sight 3 (ghosts), Stealth 2 (hide), Survival 4 (hills), Swim 1 (rivers), Teaching 3 (music)

Equipment: Besides her clothing, Carelia carries a recorder, a thin reed instrument made of wood.

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: Carelia has an almost regal bearing, despite being born from the lower class of society. She wears a tight red dress under a maroon traveling cloak. Her hair is dark and streaked with gray, braided and worn atop her head under a plain white cap.

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 0

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Wanderer; Affinity with Enchanting Music, Enchanting Music; Fear (of forests), *Lame*

Personality Traits: Loyal (to getting home) +3, Shy +3, Inquisitive +2

Reputations: Musician 3

Combat:

Dodge: Init -2, Attack n/a, Defense -4, Damage n/a

Kick: Init -3, Attack +0, Defense -3, Damage +2



Elena the Junior Troubadour

Elena is young, twenty or so, and scared. Her love is music, which is also her protector, succor, and savior. She has seen terrible things already in her young life, and has been frightened like none other she knows. Carelia is her protector, but is often too stern to provide comfort or emotional support. That she finds in music. Where Carelia has built stone walls around her heart, Elena's is untried. She has not loved, and the stirrings in her heart will be too much for her to handle. She has no experience with romance, having been shielded from its snares by Carelia.

Characteristics: Int -2, Per -1, Pre +3, Com +3, Str -1, Sta 0, Dex +1, Qik -1

Size: 0

Age: 22 (22)

Soak: 0

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Awareness 2 (searching), Charm 1 (men), Concentration 2 (playing music), Enchanting Music 7 (making audiences sad), English 2 (curses), French 2 (dining), Music 4 (psaltery), Occitan 5 (poetry)

Equipment: Elena's sole possession of worth is her psaltery, a stringed instrument with a sounding board, like a small zither. It is easily portable and fits in her lap.

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: Elena wears a dark green dress under a gray traveling cloak. She has dark hair, worn in a single long braid down her back, and dark eyes. She wears a small cloth hat to cover her head, but her braid is visible, in defiance of convention. Her right leg is shorter than her left, making her limp when she moves.

Captain Folpert Berlensis

Folpert Berlensis is captain of *La main blanche*, which he has owned for ten years. Born in Oostkerke in Flanders, on the coastal plain near Bruges, Folpert grew up sailing ships and is an expert sailor. Lacking any national allegiance, Folpert transports cargo to suit his needs, and he is willing to skirt the local authorities in pursuing his business agenda. Pandulph has paid handsomely for discreet passage across the Channel, and Folpert is happy to oblige. Nothing in the negotiation said that other passengers weren't allowed, so Folpert has taken additional people aboard. Pandulph won't be happy about this, but is in little position to argue.

Folpert deals in vis, buying, selling, and even stealing it for important customers. He has a few Mercere contacts that use his services, but is a relatively minor player in the Hermetic vis trade. His life as a sailing merchant is the perfect cover for this trade, providing the means and the excuse to visit ports located near covenants. As the story begins, Folpert has ten pawns of raw vis in various items.

Characteristics: Int +2, Per 0, Pre -3, Com -2, Str +2, Sta +3, Dex +2, Qik +1

Size: 0

Age: 35 (35)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 0

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Merchant; Ways of the Sea; Arcane Lore, Educated, Warrior; Enemies, Overconfident

Personality Traits: Domineering (to crew) +3, Cheery (to passengers) +2, Loyal (transporting Pandulph) +1

Combat:

Dodge: Init +1, Attack n/a, Defense +4, Damage n/a

Fist: Init +1, Attack +5, Defense +4, Damage +2

Bludgeon: Init +1, Attack +8, Defense +5, Damage +4

Short sword: Init +2, Attack +9, Defense +6, Damage +7

Soak: +3

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Artes Liberales 1 (astronomy), Awareness 3 (weather), Bargain 4 (grains), Bows 3 (short bow), Brawl 3 (bludgeon), Carouse 2 (drinking songs), Dominion Lore 1 (saints), English 3 (navel terms), Faerie Lore 2 (water faeries), Flemish 5 (navel terms), Folk Ken 3 (port authorities), French 3 (navel terms), German 3 (market terminology), Guile 4 (lying about costs), Latin 4 (pagan authors), Leadership 2 (crewmen), Magic Lore 3 (vis), Normandy Lore 4 (covenants), Order of

Hermes Lore 2 (covenants), Profession: Sailor 5 (coast of Normandy), Single Weapon 3 (short sword), Stealth 2 (hiding), Swim 2 (oceans)

Equipment: Folpert usually carries his short sword in a scabbard at his side. He owns a full suit of chainmail, but keeps it in the hold with his other belongings. He has ten pawns of raw vis: 3 Ignem (rust-colored rocks), 3 Creo (dried rose petals), 2 Perdo (blackened fingernail), 1 Animal (rabbit ear), and 1 Imaginem (a small shoe).

He also has a Platter of Hermes. This item is almost identical to the item held by Piccardo, and could be mistaken for it very easily; a magus would realize that both were made from the same Lab Text. Folpert uses his Magic Lore to find vis, and the Platter (which he bought with vis) to confirm his finds and ensure that he is not cheated.

Encumbrance: 0 (1)

Appearance: Folpert is a tad shorter than average, with large bushy eyebrows and sandy blonde hair, worn long. His face and arms are sunburned. He usually wears a blue tunic and yellow hose.

The Faerie Cupid

Cupid is a faerie, styling himself after the Roman god, with appropriate powers to warrant his name. He is another member of Lady Æthelburh's faerie court. Unlike Argosus, Cupid is a fairly cognizant faerie, knowing that he gains vitality from human emotions. Having discovered Argosus' journey, he is secretly tagging along in hope of entwining new victims in his snares of love, ultimately to increase his own Might. Cupid is mischievous, and delights in the effects his arrows create among the passengers. He has a sense of irony and enjoys seeing the bittersweet results of his efforts. His Might increases if he can get two people to actually fall in love, or if a person kills himself or another due to unrequited love.

Faerie Might: 20 (Mentem)

Characteristics: Int +0, Per +1, Pre +5, Com +1, Str +1, Sta 0, Dex +1, Qik +1

Size: 0

Virtues and Flaws: Positive Folktales; Greater Power (Cause Love), Increased Faerie Might; Faerie Speech, Greater Presence (x2), Cognizant within Role, Humanoid Faerie, Increased Characteristics, Lesser Power (Flight), Personal Power (Disguise); Meddler; Traditional Ward (wax candles)

Personality Traits: Meddlesome +3, Mischievous +3, Amorous +2

Combat:

Hooks

This adventure is designed as a drop-in adventure, allowing a storyguide to insert it into a story she already has planned. She could take a break from his story, allowing a beta-storyguide to run this inserted story, before she continues with the main story. If this is not an inserted adventure, the storyguide might need a hook to draw the player char-

acters in. Several Story Flaws can be used to do this, especially those that grant a character a relationship with an NPC who can request their help. Close Family Ties and Mentor both work, with either a family member of the mentor requesting the character to visit or run some waterborne errand. A Dependent that does not live with the character could also re-

quest a visit, perhaps they are being threatened by some mundane force and require the character's presence. Any faerie-aligned Story Flaws are also appropriate hooks, with the faerie friend, nuisance, or plaguing entity guiding the character to the ship because he has somehow heard of Cupid's plan.

Dodge: Init +1, Attack n/a, Defense +1, Damage n/a

Short Bow: Init +0, Attack +11, Defense +8, Damage +7

Soak: +0

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Pretenses: Athletics 4 (flying), Bows 6 (short bow), Charm 5 (women), Faerie Lore 3 (wards), Penetration 4 (Cause Love), Stealth 4 (hide)

Powers:

Cause Love, 2 points, Init +1, Mentem: Cupid can cause any mortal to fall in love with a target of his choosing. This is not true love, but a temporary, enflaming passion for someone.

Costs 25 spell levels. (Base 4, +3 Sight, +2 Sun) Intricacy points used to decrease Might cost and increase Init.

Flight, 3 points, Init -7constant, Auram: Cupid can fly and can make others fly as well. He cannot carry anyone.

Costs 20 spell levels. (ReCo Base 4, +1 Touch, +2 Sun, +1 constant) Intricacy points used to decrease Might cost.

Disguise of the Transformed Image, 0 points, Init +1, Imaginem: A personal version of the Hermetic spell, *ArM5*, p.146.

Costs 10 spell levels. (Base 4, +2 Sun) Intricacy points used to decrease Might cost and increase Init.

Equipment: Cupid carries a golden bow and a quiver that's full of arrows.

Vis: 4 pawns of Mentem, a golden bow.

Appearance: Cupid naturally appears as a nude, eighteen-year-old man, with bright curly hair and gleaming eyes. For much of this adventure he is disguised as a sailor in his mid-twenties, with a face blotched from too much salt spray and alcohol.

Cupid is a magus-level character, meaning he gets 10 points of Virtues free and has to balance additional Virtues with an equal number of Flaws. He has 360 points to buy starting Pretenses.

Cupid is not a sailor. He knows his disguise will ulti-

mately fail if he spends too much time trying to do sailing things. Consequently, he makes himself look busy, rather than doing any actual work. He may try to assume another guise while aboard. To do so, he will need to get rid of the character he plans to mimic. The easy solution is to lure a character into the hold, overpower him, tie him up, then return to the deck looking like him.

Expected Sequence of Play

The story begins with the player characters looking for passage aboard a ship. Their reasons for traveling this route should be determined by the storyguide prior to this adventure. This leaves great latitude in deciding the "hook" used to lure the players to this scenario, and should be based on events and happenings in the players' saga. It could be as simple as a routine voyage, taken regularly to supply the covenant with annual provisions. Perhaps the group is returning home, after another adventure that has taken them far from the covenant. If a recently Gauntleted maga is among the group, the characters could be escorting her. "The Ship of Desire" is short and sweet, as adventures go, and a determined group could finish it in a single game session. Additionally, this scenario can be easily inserted within a larger adventure of the storyguide's own design, bridging events or providing a travel story between destinations.

Folpert plans to sail *La main blanche* from Dover to Harfleur. Most ships bound for France sail to Calais, the shortest route across the Channel, but Folpert is sailing further south. Although he is not averse to taking the shortest route, Pandulph would rather reach Harfleur, where he has

friends waiting for him. The voyage should take approximately three days, if the weather stays clear.

The Docks

Threading their way through the wharf, past the wattle and daub warehouses and the raucous dockside taverns, the characters find Folpert, who is eagerly awaiting the arrival of Pandulph. If negotiations have not previously been completed, he eagerly listens to the characters' request to board his ship. Both the troubadours and the vendor have already booked passage with him, and are waiting aboard the ship. Since there is plenty of room, Folpert doesn't mind how numerous the PCs' party may be. It should be an easy matter to agree a good price. Folpert seems amiable and trustworthy. He suggests that the party board, since, he claims, he is only waiting for the wind to shift before he sets sail.

Dover is the most accessible English port from the continent, lying only 20 miles from the shores of France. Flanked by the famous White Cliffs, it is bustling with activity. But despite its popularity, it is a dreary, ugly place, with cramped quarters, twisting streets, and dangerous alleys. Like all ports, Dover is home to a varied collection of people. The French and Flemish abound, as do the English, Scandinavians, and Germans. The docks are a sweltering knot of foreign tongues and sweating backs, as cargo is bought and sold, loaded and unloaded, and sent to distant ports. At Dover's perpetual market, merchants ply their trade and craftsmen sell goods from their stalls. Jewish moneylenders set their tents up near the dock's perimeter, eager to assist those with the collateral or good name required to ensure a loan.

Harfleur is a medium-sized port city sitting at the mouth of the Seine. It is the juncture between Paris and the rest of the ocean-bound north, along the Normandy coast to Spanish or Danish lands. Prospective travelers thread through the longshoremen and dockworkers, seeking passage aboard the various cogs and galleys. Ships are the only means of transporting people across the ocean, but

even those going inland look to book fare. Sailing up the Seine might take longer than riding a horse to Paris, but the dangers are noticeably lessened. Since most of the cargo is stowed below deck, ship captains are eager to accept passengers, whose fare easily outbalances the responsibility of carrying them.

There is no need to embroil characters in dockside entanglements, unless the storyguide wishes to extend "The Ship of Desire" into a longer story. After the stage is set, and the chaos of the docks described, move the characters directly to Captain Folpert and his ship, *La main blanche*. If the characters are acting for the covenant, it is reasonable to assume that passage aboard the ship has already been procured. If not, the characters could interview a handful of ship captains, inquiring as to the possibility of passage. In this case, the storyguide will have to create competing captains, but this will not derail the story. Change the name of the captain and the ship if need be; events will transpire despite the players' choice of ferry and they board the same ship that Cupid has secured for the rest of the NPC passengers.

From the docks, the group must climb into a small rowboat, called a "gig," to be ferried to *La main blanche*. The day dawned clear and pleasant weather makes this ride more thrilling than dangerous. The docks are crowded with ships, many cogs and smaller hulks, as well as southern galleys and Scandinavian longships. Cargo is being loaded with a long, dockside crane, so the gig is free to ferry passengers back and forth, under the steady hand of Folpert. Once aboard, Folpert will point out the characters' berths, a narrow space on the deck allocated to each passenger, where they will store their personal luggage and sleep.

The Ship

La main blanche is a medium-sized vessel, able to ply rivers and seacoasts as well as hazard the open sea. She is a cog, a flat-bottomed vessel common to the northern seas of Mythic Europe. In sailor's parlance, she is either a small

Die Rolls and Roleplaying

Players will naturally want to make Folk Ken, Guile, and Intrigue rolls as they interact with the NPCs. Extensive rules for using these Abilities can be found in *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*, page 24. After the player characters have interacted with an NPC, the storyguide should secretly roll a Perception + Folk Ken + stress die for each

player character. On a result of 9 or greater, inform the player that something does not seem quite right about the NPC. If the roll is 12 or greater, tell the player that the NPC is deliberately hiding something. Use these rolls to plant suspicion, not give away any secrets.

cog or a large hulk. Cogs are described on page 84 of *City & Guild*; a hulk is a smaller vessel, more streamlined and narrower than the tubby cog, although both types of ships are very similar. She measures 22 yards long from stem to stern (front to back), and her deck is 8 yards wide at its waist. Two raised decks or "castles" sit at stem and stern, which provide shelter for the passengers, who will spend the entire journey above deck. The forecastle is approximately 7 yards square and juts out over the bow. The stern castle is 9 yards square, extending slightly over the gunwales and stern. Both castles have closed wooden railings surrounding them, their names obviously taken from the fortress. Stairs allow access to both upper decks. The area underneath the decks is not closed in, only covered, making the sides open and exposed. While some privacy exists for passengers staying under the stern castle, it is minimal.

La main blanche has only one deck, below which lies the cargo hold. The deck does not run flush to the ship's sides, allowing water to drain from the deck to the hold. Everything stored below, from transported cargo and finished goods to the sailors' daily supply of biscuits and their personal goods, has to be stored in sealed wooden barrels. This is a rather inefficient, but standard practice. The hold is packed as full as the captain can make it, to maximize his profits. On this ship, the captain has 20 tons of finished wool cloth and grain.

She is steered by two rudders at the stern, one on either side. A pair of oars stationed at her middle aid in steering, but these oars are ineffectual for forward momentum. For this, she relies on her square sail atop a single mast. Folpert has four crewmen to assist him. In a pinch, he and two additional sailors could maneuver the ship.

The Sailors

La main blanche has four sailors, although one is actually Cupid in disguise. They are named Colbert, Emont (Cupid), Gerland, and Norbert. They have known each other for four or five months, as Folpert hires new crewmembers and fires troublesome ones. The sailors are grog-level NPCs.

Characteristics: Int -1, Per 0, Pre -1, Com -1, Str +1, Sta +2, Dex +2, Qik +1

Size: 0

Age: 25 (25)

Virtues and Flaws: Wanderer; Tough; Compulsion (various dockside vices)

Personality Traits: Vulgar +2, Brave +1, Loyal (to Folpert) +1

Combat:

Bludgeon: Init +1, Attack +8, Defense +5, Damage +3

Fist: Init +1, Attack +7, Defense +6, Damage +1

Dagger: Init +1, Attack +8, Defense +5, Damage +4

Soak: +5

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Athletics 2 (aboard ship), Awareness 3 (at sea), Brawl 4 (fists), Carouse 3 (getting drunk), English 3 (tavern talk), Flemish 5 (songs), Flemish Coast Lore 3 (coves), Folk Ken 2 (prostitutes), French 4 (tavern talk), Guile 2 (accountability), Profession: Sailing 4 (rough weather), Swim 3 (calm waters)

Equipment: Sailing clothes

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: The sailors all look like sailors: sunburned arms and faces, calloused hands, and weathered clothing.

Colbert, Gerland, and Norbert will certainly notice that Emont is not pulling his weight. Rather than suspect that Emont is really Cupid, they will merely think him lazy, and will complain to their captain. PCs could easily overhear such complaints.

Interacting with the Passengers

The troubadors and the venditor and his companion are happy to make the characters' acquaintance. They introduce themselves and exchange pleasantries while they arrange their gear in their allocated spots. Folpert is anxiously awaiting the legate, and will not spend much time helping the PCs make themselves comfortable. Just before noon, the legate and his party arrive. They leave their horses with the rest of their retainers, bidding them farewell. PCs noticing his arrival will rightly assume that he is a man of great means. Folpert ferries them to *La main blanche*, announces that the wind is finally blowing in the proper direction, and sets sail.

Arsizio introduces Pandulph as "Guglielmo Savelli," an Italian merchant banker who had been in England looking after his business interests, and is now returning to Rome. Anyone who noticed Pandulph's large entourage as he arrived, however, might be suspicious. Even for a very important banker, the livery and splendor of his men seemed extravagant. Pandulph and Arsizio demand berths under the rear deck, and insist that they do not share the space with anyone. Folpert agrees and moves his gear under the forecastle. The other NPCs and the players will have to

sleep on the open deck, unless they can somehow convince Pandulph that there is ample room beneath the rear deck to shelter everyone. Pandulph is not inclined to agree, and Arsizio silently reinforces Pandulph's decision with a bellicose swagger.

PCs may be curious about Bue, whom Piccardo keeps hooded. Piccardo dismisses their inquiries, saying that Bue is merely his escort, and not to pay the big man any attention. If the PCs mention that they are attached to a Hermetic covenant, Piccardo indicates his vocation, and says that Bue is merely a vassal of Piccardo's employer.

Unknown to all, Cupid has been aboard since dawn, arriving with the other sailors who spent the night at a nearby tavern. The sailors are hung over from a night of carousing, and do not notice that their companion is acting differently from normal. Cupid is thrilled at the prospect of this excursion, and spends the morning observing the various interactions between the travelers. It is important to make the PCs the focal point of this story. Cupid will become interested in the PC with the highest Presence Characteristic, although you should keep the PCs' Virtues and Flaws in mind when deciding Cupid's attention. He will unerringly notice any PC with the Flaw Curse of Venus, followed by anyone with the Virtue Venus's Blessing. He naturally gravitates toward any character with True Love, either the Virtue or the Flaw, although his arrows are powerless to affect such a character.

The Siege Begins

The assault of love begins later that evening. After the evening meal of biscuits, Cupid shoots arrows into two NPCs, making them fall in love with two player characters. These blossoming loves should seem natural, in that the storyguide should select NPCs and PCs who make the love interests believable. Targeting a member of each gender is preferred, but that depends on the particular PCs aboard. If, for example, you have an all-male party of PCs, and have decided against homosexual relationships, then Cupid will shoot Elena and Carelia with arrows.

The besotted are vastly interested in their new loves, and want to hear all about them. They are also willing, even eager, to talk about themselves. This is a good opportunity for two PCs to subtly interrogate the two love-struck NPCs. Probing questions will force a Love vs. Loyalty check, as described in the Mechanics of Love insert. Even if the NPC succeeds in maintaining his secret, he will still puff himself up and exaggerate his importance. For example, Arsizio will inform his love that he is protecting Pandulph, who is carrying a very important book to the pope, one that

will "put those intellectuals in their place." Piccardo will talk about his important mission, claiming that no one else could manage it. There is no privacy aboard the ship, and the lovers will not be shy. Anyone standing nearby these confessions of love will hear them.

Let the evening play out, with these two romantic attachments commanding most of the activities. Include untargeted PCs by having unaffected NPCs discuss the manifestations of love with them. Each NPC has a companion NPC with him or her, who will be somehow affected by that partner's romantic inclinations. For example, if Arsizio is chasing one PC, Pandulph will ask other PCs about her.

At sunset, those targeted by arrows will suddenly lose their infatuations, and after a few minutes of contemplation, will excuse themselves for bed. Embarrassment overrules suspicion, and rather than ponder why they so suddenly fell in love, they will retire, blaming their actions on the day's wine and the sun.

After dark, Piccardo and Folpert gamble on the stern forecandle. Illuminated by a sputtering candle, they will bet against the roll of the dice. The crewmen will join them, all except Cupid as Emont. The wax candle, his traditional faerie ward, keeps him from coming too close. This behavior will be noticed by the other crewmen. They are all very amiable gamblers, and ask any interested PC to join them.

THE CONTINUING ASSAULT

The previous day's play of love seems somewhat acceptable, but the next day's assault will not be. Cupid again targets the two NPCs from the day before, although this time the affected characters will fall in love with different PCs. Cupid's third arrow strikes a PC, making him fall in love with one of the NPCs not yet the object of anyone's attentions. Something odd is definitely going on, and even the densest PC will realize that love runs amok on the high seas.

Again, let events unfold and enjoy the romantic confusion. Unaffected NPCs will be concerned for their specific companion, and will ask for help in calming or protecting them, as the case may be. Pandulph, for example, might ask the PCs to help him restrain the love-struck Arsizio. Elena might ask the PCs to protect Carelia from an aggressive suitor, who just might be another PC. As the storyguide, you should keep the pressure on, moving back and forth from player to player and focusing on their character's particular entanglement. Spurned lovers from the day before should become involved, asking the new lovers what their intentions are, if they are honorable, and so on. Folpert will

become aware of any commotion. He could ask the PCs to help him handle any rambunctious passengers.

All the while, Cupid stands by, watching the drama unfold. He must physically shoot an arrow to infect someone with love, although when he is in his disguised form, the bow remains invisibly hidden by his disguise power. It looks like he is pantomiming shooting a bow.

On the third day, Cupid decides that a lovers' triangle is due, and shoots two different characters, who both fall in love with the same target. One of the shot characters will be a PC. The second is up to the storyguide. If the group can handle the tension of two of them vying for the same beloved, then shoot two PCs. Besides being merely tense, this could turn violent, so think this

The Mechanics of Love

Cupid's arrows make characters fall head over heels in love with other characters. His hope is that the spontaneous bursting of the heart will suppress a character's other agendas. If he is successful, characters act against their better judgment, making foolish decisions over sound ones. Instances will occur when the storyguide has to determine how a character reacts when under Cupid's influence.

The love induced by Cupid's arrows is not permanent, with the effect only lasting for the day. Once struck, an NPC victim receives a temporary Personality Trait of Love +3, targeted at someone of Cupid's choosing. Each NPC has a Loyal Personality Trait to determine how faithful he remains to his own cause. The target of this Loyalty is also indicated. For example, Pandulph is loyal to his revenge agenda, and Piccardo is loyal to his delivery errand. Each character's degree of loyalty, +1 to +3, is listed in the statistical information. Whenever an NPC faces the choice of following Cupid's induced love over his own self-interest, the storyguide should roll two stress dice and add the character's Loyalty score to one and his Love score to the second. If the Loyalty total is higher, the character is able to diffuse love's cravings and keep to his agenda. He is still enchanted, though, and this provides merely a temporary victory over foolishness. If the Love total is higher, the character abandons his

personal motivations to the raptures of love.

Cupid can increase a target's love for another by shooting him again with an arrow, continuing the effect for another day. If a character previously struck is hit again, preventing his amorous feelings from ceasing, his Love Personality Trait is increased to +4. By continuing this feat, Cupid can make a character's Love Personality Trait reach +6, but no higher. Additional arrows extend the feelings, but the character's Love Personality Trait will not increase. Also, Cupid is limited by his Faerie Might in the number of arrows he can fire. He uses them wisely.

PCs struck by an arrow do not get this chance to momentarily quell the pull of love. NPCs have this ability in order to prolong the mystery of their secrets, rather than having them blurt them out during the first conversation. The PCs do not have secrets intrinsic to the plot, and so must follow Cupid's love enchantments whole-heartedly. The storyguide should tell the player that his inflicted character is captivated with this new love, and cannot think of anything else. He is compelled to be near her love, craves his lover's attention, and hangs on his lover's every word and gesture. "Does she notice me? Is she thinking of me?" Plato called love a divine madness, and the storyguide should encourage a player to obsessively focus on his lover.

Not every lover should act the

same way, however. A bold lover will stride towards his love, while a shy lover might linger nearby and hope he is noticed. An insecure lover frets more than acts, and may prefer secret love notes to face-to-face meetings. Use a PC's most pronounced Personality Trait to help the player judge how best to act. Ignore a character's Brave Personality Trait when determining how a character might act. This introspection is designed to force a player to explore the personality of his character.

To help a player determine how his character might act, explain to him that what his character wants most is his new lover's undivided attention. He wants to know all about his new love — her past, her hopes, her future dreams and goals. Due to Cupid's arrow, the beloved already has the PC's attention, and he can't think of anything else except how to get near his love. The PC would like nothing better than to spend the day talking with his lover, walking with her, eating with her, requesting a favor — maybe a silk kerchief, a ring, or some other small, personal effect — and perhaps even stealing a kiss.

Since love is blind, and deaf and dumb, the PC disregards any warnings and good advice offered by his companions. He won't care, for example, that Elena seemed desperately in love with another PC the day before, and will easily construct any sort of reason to explain away her previous actions.

An Interlude of Gambling

Depending on the number of players, there may be some who aren't directly involved in Cupid's love play. Rather than relegating them to mere spectators, the storyguide can arrange a little sideline gambling for those not targeted by Cupid's arrows. An evening's gambling is another way for PCs to discuss the various NPCs, perhaps even discover through rumor and gossip some of the secrets. Piccardo is reluctant to discuss Bue, but if the gambling goes well, he may warm up to the idea.

The gamblers all have money to lose — a handful of English pennies and maybe a shilling or two. Folpert is fairly well-heeled, and afford to lose up to ten shillings. Piccardo has 3 shillings and 13 pennies to gamble with. Medieval money is covered in detail in *City and Guild*, page 143. A shilling is worth 12 pennies, and 20 shillings make a pound. Folpert makes casual conversation with the PCs during the game. He will subtly inquire as to the PCs' business. If he finds out they are heading to a Hermetic covenant, he will ask if would care to raise the stakes. He and Folpert sometimes gamble for vis. Do the PCs have any they'd like to gamble with? Folpert will let a PC borrow vis, sell him a pawn for 10 shillings, or buy a magic item from them. If they have vis, Piccardo will use his magic item, the Platter of Hermes, to detect whether it is real. Folpert will pay a PC 5 pawns of vis for any relic or lesser magical item he has. If the PC wins, he can always buy the item back.

There are several ways to handle the gambling. The easiest and quickest way is to make a single die roll that covers the whole evening, with each character rolling a Presence + Carouse + stress die. The highest total is the overall winner. Those with a result of 6 or higher break even, and the lowest total is the loser. Another, more protracted, method is to make this roll for each round of play. Characters place their bets, a number of pennies or shillings or pawns of vis, and then each player rolls a Presence + Carouse + stress die roll, with the winner taking the pot.

Several types of dice games were popular with medieval gamblers, and if the troupe seems to enjoy this, you could actually mimic a medieval dice game. A very popular game is called "Azar," and is similar to the modern day game of craps. Two six-sided dice are used. The player with the dice, called the "caster," rolls the dice. If he gets under a 5 or over a 9, the dice pass to the next player. If he rolls between a 5 and a 9, that roll is called the Azar, and bets are placed. After the betting, the caster rolls again. This second roll is called the Chance. To win, the caster's Chance roll must match his Azar roll. Some Azars

have additional Chances, based on the chart below. Any other roll means the caster has lost, and must match all the bets placed against him.

THE AZAR	THE CHANCE
5	5
6	6, 12
7	7, 11
8	8, 12
9	9

Azar is a very common dice game, and its rules will be compiled in 1283 in *Libro de los Juegos* ("The Book of Dice"), commissioned by Alphonso X, King of Leon and Castile. The game is called Hazard in English, *hasard* in French, *azzardo* in Italian, and *az zahr* in Arabic. The Azar rules presented here are a simplified version of the actual game.



Storyguide Advice

This is a very fluid scenario, heavily dependent on the particular PCs involved, especially their gender. The large number of NPCs should provide enough potential romantic attachments for all the PCs. If the storyguide is going to have her players run some of the NPCs, she should make sure that the handed-out NPCs provide suitable matches for those playing PCs. It is important to include every player, and some forethought as to possible romantic matches will make the scenario run more smoothly.

Cupid's agenda is a guideline only. If it becomes difficult to follow, due to the genders and specifics of the PCs, change it. The tension of the scenario should build during the journey. Essentially, Cupid will test the waters with a few arrows on the first day, and increase his efforts (and arrows) as the journey progresses. The storyguide should make the first assault odd but not unusual, heighten the tension with the second assault of love, and culminate Cupid's enchantments in a frenzy of love and jealousy. Do not let the suggested series of events limit your play.

through carefully. It is easier for the antagonist to be an NPC, so it might make more sense to shoot a PC and an NPC. Again, the storyguide should use her judgment. This game of love is more dangerous, and it is entirely possible that the two afflicted characters could come to blows over their beloved.

Since this is the last day of the voyage, Cupid will not spare his arrows, and will shoot all ten of them to create a wild melee of love. This should be a frantic explosion of emotion, pursuit, and lover's conquest. By this time, the PCs should be looking for the culprit of all this, and if he hasn't been discovered yet, Cupid will likely be found out on this day.

Love's Defeat

While love is Cupid's weapon, it is also his Achilles' heel. The troubadours both know love songs, and if they play them, Cupid may become infatuated with their performance. If a performer's Dexterity + Music + stress die roll beats an Ease Factor of 15, Cupid will not target the

performer with his arrows. This brief respite will only last a day.

Elena has the Supernatural Ability Enchanting Music, which she can use to counter the effects of Cupid's arrows. She won't figure this out for herself, and has to be instructed by a player character. If she becomes nervous during the voyage, which is likely during the second day, she plays her psaltery and hopes to enchant the listeners to calm them down. She needs to make a Communication + Enchanting Music + stress die roll against an Ease Factor of 9. To calm someone under the influence of Cupid's arrows, Elena's enchantment has to be more powerful than Cupid's. Compare Elena's Penetration total to Cupid's, which is 10. Calculate Elena's Penetration by subtracting the Ease Factor (9 in this case) from her Enchanting Music roll.

At some point, Cupid should be discovered. Any characters with Second Sight can see through his disguise on a Perception + Second Sight + stress die roll against an Ease Factor of 10. Characters with Magic Sensitivity will not see Cupid, but may feel his presence on a roll of Perception + Magic Sensitivity + stress die against an Ease Factor of 11. Even without these Supernatural Abilities, characters may notice that one of the crewmen is acting oddly, or invent other means of uncovering him. Finally, Argosus can see Cupid, using his Faerie Sight power to see the faerie's true glamour. He won't spontaneously announce this information, but will disclose it if asked.

Once found out, Cupid drops his disguise to claim the credit he feels he deserves. Hasn't he made the voyage interesting? Isn't life itself about love and nothing more? Cupid is not ashamed of his nature, and tells the players exactly what he has been up to. If confronted, he promises to stop. He won't, of course, and his arrows of love continue to fly. He will accept a bargain, however. If two characters agree to marry, and exchange betrothal vows, he will stop molesting the passengers. Cupid will consider this a victory, and his Might will eventually increase. During the scenario, however, it will not, and the spoils of Cupid's victory will happen offstage.

If accosted physically, Cupid will lose his mischievous demeanor and react violently. He flies up into the air and fires arrows at the offender. These arrows aren't enchanted, and can damage the target. Because of his faerie nature, Cupid can't be killed. If wounds reduce him to Incapacitated, he falls to the ground, seemingly dead. At the next sunrise or sunset, however, he will gain his composure, looking none the worse for his defeat.

Rewards

There are few short-term rewards for this scenario. Regardless of how the PCs fare, they cross the Channel, their intention from the beginning. If they have successfully prevented violence during the crossing, or have somehow assisted its progress, Folpert rewards them with a small gift of *vis*, or returns any property they lost to him while gambling.

There are potential long-term rewards, or consequences, depending on how the PCs performed. One of them could be returning to the covenant with a new husband or wife. If they uncovered and destroyed Pandulph's evidence, they have his unending animosity, incurring a new enemy for their covenant. This does not entirely remove Pandulph's

threat, but greatly diminishes it and postpones his plans. If they make their efforts known to Schola Pythagoranis, they could find new Jerbiton allies. If they assisted Piccardo, they have a new ally, one who rubs shoulders with powerful Verditius magi.

This is not a particularly dangerous story, nor do the consequences have any immediate effect on the covenant as a whole. The storyguide should award characters 5 experience points each, and 2 to 3 Confidence Points. A player who jumped into the story, adding complexity or willingly acting out his character's love-induced antics, should receive an additional Confidence Point. Finally, if a player accepted a marriage bargain to prevent Cupid's manipulations, he should receive an extra experience point and Confidence Point.

Chapter Four

Fall and Rise

This is the story of the fall, then rise, of the fortunes of a Tylalus magus due to the manipulation of a faerie. Severin of Tylalus, lost in Arcadia, has faced down the enemies that imprisoned him and has fled to the mortal realm to seek a weapon that can finally slay his tormentor. That tormentor, a faerie named Cruciator, is merely the agent of a more-powerful faerie. Her name is Peripeteia, and she plans for Severin to lose everything he holds dear, and then gain a semblance of it back.

Précis

Like all faeries, Peripeteia feeds on the vitality of humans: in her case, she feeds on the vitality humans release when they experience unexpectedly happy endings. Peripeteia, like many faeries, is effectively sterile. She can only have a child if she steals sufficient energy from mortals. She is making a small duplicate of herself, so the vitality must be the type that she finds particularly exquisite. In ancient times Peripeteia took this perfect flavor of mortal energy while acting as a guide to adventure. She found lost princes and raised them to kingship, in particular. In the modern era, she usually cannot do this, because kings are protected by the Dominion, a power she cannot counter.

What's a Peripeteia?

"Peripeteia" is a technical term for the turning point in a story. In tragedies, it is the moment of shocking realization when the protagonist comprehends how his own flaws and circumstances beyond his control have conspired to destroy him. In comedies, the peripeteia is the point where the path to a happy resolution, despite looming trouble, becomes clear.

Peripeteia has discovered an alternative way of gaining the energy she requires to create a child. She can take a powerful man, and strip him of everything he holds dear. After his life has been destroyed, he rebuilds it, rising from destitution to good fortune. To this end, Peripeteia has spent much of the time since Severin's capture patiently destroying everything Severin finds valuable.

In this she is aided by two principal minions. One is a faerie torturer called Cruciator, who she pretends is her rival. The other is Benedictus, a Merinita magus who became a faerie using the Becoming Mystery. Benedictus aided in the spiriting away of Severin, in exchange for help completing the Becoming. He has been Peripeteia's slave ever since, but Benedictus discovered that he had been tricked before he lost his humanity. This gave him a final chance at revenge on his new mistress.

Immediately following the construction of her child, Peripeteia is drained of mystical energy and vulnerable to attack. To restore herself, Peripeteia needs a second story of rags to riches, and she has prepared one to coincide with Severin's return. Peripeteia has already manipulated a series of events that have led to Eleanor, the Fair Maid of Brittany, arguably the true queen of England, losing her kingdom, her family, and her liberty. Peripeteia plans to use Eleanor's return to power to replenish herself after her child is made. Her minion, Benedictus, instead plans to betray the whole scheme to Severin and his player-character allies. This will allow Peripeteia's child to absorb the vitality her mother needs, and in the process steal her mother's role.

Dramatis Personae

The most important non-player characters in the scenario are all described in this section.

Severin of Tytalus

The Tytalus magus Severin was trapped in Arcadia during a war. (Select a conflict that suits the plot and theme of your saga.) Severin has recently escaped to the real world. Subjectively, he has been in Arcadia for eight months (though much longer has passed in the mortal realm), playing fiendish games of skill against a dark faerie lord called Cruciator. Severin has several goals, which form the waypoints in this scenario. They are described in detail in the Expected Sequence of Play section, later.

Severin does not have the advantage of whatever the Order has discovered about the use of magic since he fell into Faerie. Storyguides whose sagas contain player characters who perform research may use Severin to reinforce the importance of their work. For example, if longevity rituals that reduce apparent aging are only a recent invention, then Severin does not have one, and so is visibly different from other characters. His links to his familiar or talisman may be more primitive than those of modern magi, as well. Or, his Arts may be patchy, and the base levels of many of his spells may be higher than those of an equivalent character from the thirteenth century. The statistics below do not penalize Severin for being from a past century, however, because the modification should be tailored to suit individual sagas.

Similarly, Severin's Warping Score and Twilight scars have not been developed. These depend on how long he has been in Arcadia, and what conflict led him there, and should be tailored to each troupe's saga, or simply ignored.

Characteristics: Int +3, Per 0, Pre 0, Com 0, Str 0, Sta +1, Dex 0, Qik 0

Size: 0

Age: 62 (35)

Decrepitude: 0

Confidence Score: 2 (5)

Virtues and Flaws: The Gift; Death Prophecy*; Enduring Constitution, Self-Confident; Plagued By Supernatural Entity (Peripeteia); Overconfident

* Severin will be the final veteran of the Schism War/Corruption of House Tytalus/Local War that led him to be spirited away.

Personality Traits: Brave +3, Hates Faeries +2, Tired +2 (temporary)

Reputations: None anymore

Combat:

Single Weapon (staff): Init +2, Attack +7, Defense +7, Damage +2

Why the Characters Care

Storyguides need to find reasons that suit their individual troupes for the characters to assist Severin. Some suggestions are:

SEVERIN MIGHT PREDATE THE SCHISM WAR ...

If this is the case, he knows the location of fallen Diedne covenants, and is politically useful to those houses that destroyed the Diedne. The druids were notoriously secretive, so he does not know much about House Diedne's mysteries.

SEVERIN IS THE OLDEST MAGUS IN THE TRIBUNAL ...

He has the right to act as Praeco. A new and friendly Praeco is valuable in sagas with political stories.

SEVERIN IS A HIPPIAN ...

This is a type of Tytalus that is rare in the modern House. The Hippian were the stable, useful, socially-minded Tytalus magi who dominated the House briefly during the Schism War. Tytalus player characters may see some value in returning the Hippian faction to prominence, as a challenge for the House's current orthodoxy.

BENEDICTUS AND PERIPETEIA KNOW HOW VENAL AND GREEDY MAGI ARE ...

They can prompt the magi along with the usual bribes. Severin, similarly, has resources he can use to buy allies.

Soak: +1

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Artes Liberales 1 (geometry), Athletics 2 (walking long distances), Awareness 2 (ambush), Brawl 1 (bludgeon), Chirurgy 2 (self), Code of Hermes 1 (battle law), Dominion Lore 1 (avoiding trouble), Etiquette 2 (magi), (Fallen Covenant) Lore 3 (defenses), Faerie Lore 1 (efficient killing), Finesse 3 (Herbam), Folk Ken 1 (stealing from), Guile 2 (other Tytalus magi), Intrigue 4 (about magi), Infernal Lore 2 (fighting), Latin 5 (writing), Leadership 2 (grogs), Magic Lore 1 (combat),

Severin's Talisman

Severin's talisman is a wooden staff. It is only partially filled with magical effects. Currently, it has the following powers:

Leap of Homecoming (ReCo 35, 1 use per day), triggered if the holder collapses while touching the staff. This is meant to trigger if Severin is overcome by his enemies, but he can also trigger it consciously, by going limp and falling over.

Endurance of the Berserkers (ReCo15, 1 use per day), triggered by the holder biting his tongue. This is meant to give Severin the energy to flee if seriously harmed.

Severin's talisman has the following attunements, but these have not been included in his casting rolls, above, because he begins the scenario without his talisman: +4 control things at a distance, +4 affect dead wood.

Magic Theory 5 (human transformations into animals), French 5 (grogs – has weird accent due to ancientness), Order of Hermes Lore 3 (Tytalus)*, Parma Magica 5 (Terram), Penetration 5 (Herbam), Single Weapon (staff) 3, Stealth 3 (woodland), Survival 3 (desert), Swim 2 (rivers).

* This score cannot be used to answer questions about current members of the House.

Arts: Cr 8, In 0, Mu 6, Pe 6, Re 20; An 0, Aq 0, Au 0, Co 6, He 15, Ig 0, Im 0, Me 0, Te 8, Vi 0

Equipment: Damaged clothes, pouch of ancient yet new coins. Rapidly makes a staff once he returns to the mortal world.

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Spells Known:

Ward Against the Beasts of Legend (ReAn 30/+21) **ArM5**, page 120

Ward Against Rain (ReAu 10/+21), **ArM5**, page 128

Bridge of Wood (CrHe 20/+24) **ArM5**, page 135

Wall of Thorns (CrHe 20/+24) **ArM5**, page 135.

Intuition of the Forest (InHe 10/+16) **ArM5**, page 136

Interrogate Object (InHe 25/+16) This is *Converse With Plant and Tree* (**ArM5**, page 136), but renamed during the war and generally used to talk with human-made objects. Functionally the spells are identical.

Thaumaturgical Transformation of Plants to Iron (MuHe(Te) 20/+15)

Plant's Withering Bane (PeHe 20/+22) **ArM5**, page 137

The Great Rot (PeHe 25/+21) **ArM5**, page 138

Acorns For Amusement (ReHe 5/+40), Mastery 4 (Multiple Casting, Penetration, Quiet Casting, Still Casting)

Rickety Stack (ReHe 5/+36)

Enemies All Aquiver (ReHe 10/+36)

Repel the Wooden Shafts (ReHe10/+36)

Rough-Hewn Servant (ReHe 10/+36)

Tangle of Wood and Thorns (ReHe 15/+36)

Carved Assassin (ReHe 20/+36)

Tomb of Kaineus (ReHe 20/+40) Mastery 4 (Multiple Casting, Penetration, Silent Casting, Still Casting)

Ward Against the Faeries of the Wood (ReHe 20/+36) **ArM5**, page 138

The Treacherous Spear (ReHe 25/+36)

Carnivorous House (ReHe 35/+36)

Free The Striding Tree (ReHe 35/+36) Level is raised for Sun duration.

Chirurgeon's Healing Touch (CrCo20/+18), Mastery 3 (Fast Casting, Still Casting, Quiet Casting, **ArM5**, page 129

Purification of the Festering Wounds (CrCo20/+15) **ArM5**, page 129

The Earth Split Asunder (ReTe 30/+29) **ArM5**, page 156.

Circular Ward Against Demons (ReVi 25/+21) **ArM5**, page 162

Watching Ward (ReVi25/+21) **ArM5**, page 162

Appearance: Severin looks like a man who was once healthy, but has been harried and tortured for months. He is thin, pale, and has fresh scars on his limbs. His hair is blonde, but initially very short, since it has been shaved off by his tormentor. His cloak is still marked with the spiral of his House, but it is unusual. The spiral he wears is yellow, and he will replace it with gold when he can. It turns the opposite way of that usually seen by player characters. Characters who make an Intelligence + House Tytalus Lore roll against an Ease Factor of 6, or an Intelligence + Order of Hermes Lore roll against an Ease Factor of 9, know that his spiral shows he is a Hippian, a member of the small group of Tytalus magi who think that their basic impulses should be limited by sensible rules. If the player succeeds in the roll above by 6 points, then the character knows that the gold spiral was used only very briefly, during the appropriate historical period for the conflict in which Severin was taken. Severin's familiar is a woodpecker. They were bound when Severin was far younger, and so it has few powers. The cords have a Strength of +1 each. They have the Shared Senses (sight) and Mental Communication powers.

Severin's Spells

ACORNS FOR AMUSEMENT

ReHe 5

R: Voice, D: Mom, T: Ind

This spell, taught to apprentices initially as an amusing game that allows them to vandalize their immediate environment with acorns, becomes a surprisingly effective spell in adult combat. It allows the magus to fling at a target any single piece of wood that is within Voice range and that is smaller than a pace long, wide, and deep. The damage a piece wood does when it strikes a target ranges from +1, for small, blunt piece, right up to +10 for logs a yard across. Severin usually carries a special hip quiver of sharpened, unfletched arrow shafts, although he has lost this in faerie. An individual shaft does +4 Damage.

(Base 3, +2 Voice)

CARNIVOROUS HOUSE

ReHe 35

R: Touch, D: Sun T: Structure

This spell, designed to torment Severin's beloved rival and then discovered to be effective in combat, allows him to animate wooden buildings. The building can accept simple commands, and follow them with some intelligence, without the oversight of the magus. Animate houses can appear to be haunted, because they creak and shift, while doors slam and furniture moves around of its own volition. In battle, a building moves at half the walking pace of a human, but can absorb a great deal of damage if constructed properly. Severin often prepares the house by packing it with statues, using the *Rough-Hewn Servant* spell, also given here.

This spell also allows Severin

to animate other large wooden objects, like carriages, huge statues, and ships.

(Base 10, +2 Sun, +3 Structure)

CARVED ASSASSIN

ReHe 20

R: Touch, D: Sun T: Ind

This highly useful spell animates a wooden object so that it follows simple commands, and solves simple problems, without the direct oversight of the magus. The object must be wooden, and no larger than a pace square. Severin often makes statues that suit his needs with the *Rough-Hewn Servant* spell, also given here.

(Base 10, +2 Sun)

ENEMIES ALL AQUIVER

ReHe 10

R: Touch, D: Mom, T: Group

This spell flings the wooden contents of a container into a group of enemies. So that this spell does not require requisites, Severin usually carries a special hip quiver of sharpened, unfletched arrow shafts, although he has lost this in Faerie. A quiver-full of arrows does +8 Damage.

(Base 3, +1 Touch, +2 Group)

RICKETY STACK

ReHe 5

R: Voice, D: Mom, T: Ind

This is a very simple spell, designed to teach apprentices Finesse. It allows magi to toss about small pieces of wood, and when played as a game, the idea is to make the pieces land on their ends (to practice Finesse) or form rickety piles, with the loser being the apprentice whose added stick makes the pile collapse. After apprenticeship is over, magi can use

it to move wooden objects up to a pace across, at walking speed.

(Base 3, +2 Voice)

ROUGH-HEWN SERVANT

ReHe 10

R: Touch, D: Mom, T: Ind

This is a spell for carving a statue from a single block of wood. The piece of wood can be no larger than one cubic pace. This spell requires a Perception + Finesse roll. If this is botched the statue is ruined. If the roll exceeds the Ease Factor of 6, then the statue is serviceable, if not particularly pretty, and can be animated with the *Carved Assassin* spell. If the roll is not successful, then a statue is created, but it is too fragile or too blockish to use effectively with the *Carved Assassin* spell.

(Base 5 (see *Covenants*, page 50), +1 Touch)

TOMB OF KAINEUS

ReHe 20

R: Voice, D: Mom, T: Group

This spell collects a tremendous weight of wood, grass, straw, and other plant material and dumps it on the target, burying that target completely. This spell needs to be aimed, but has a +12 bonus on the Aiming roll because of the sheer quantity of material involved, at slightly over one hundred cubic paces. It is designed to immobilize enemies who cannot be hurt directly because of their Magic Resistance. The name of the spell refers to the death of an ancient Greek hero with unbreakable skin. His enemies defeated him by piling tree trunks upon him until he could not move, and he suffocated.

(Base 3, +2 Voice, +2 Group, +1 size of group)

Peripeteia the Faerie

Peripeteia has wanted a child for decades, and has worked toward that goal with the patience of a creature both immortal and fascinated by intricate games. She appears charming, but humans are an amusing form of prey to her, and she causes them harm without remorse.

Peripeteia is designed using the rules in *Realms of Power: Faerie*. For an overview of terms defined in that book, please see the introduction of this one.

Faerie Might: 45 (Vim)

Characteristics: Int +2, Per +1, Pre +2, Com 0, Str +2, Sta +3, Dex 0, Qik 0

Size: 0

Virtues and Flaws: External Vis Source (major – allows the



characters to keep a tame entanglement), (3 x Greater Faerie Power), Increased Faerie Might (2 major, 2 minor), Faerie Sight, Faerie Speech, Humanoid Faerie, Passes For Human, Highly Cognizant; Traditional Ward (Humans with royal blood)

Personality Traits: Calculating +3, Brave +2

Combat:

Peripeteia uses entanglements for physical combat, and draws them effortlessly from her spindle. Has the ability to allow her body to dissipate, fade into Arcadia, and then return after 5 months with a new body, which may look dissimilar to her previous one. This ability cannot be used in combat, but requires only a round of concentration.

Soak: +3

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Pretenses: Awareness 5 (human weaknesses), Carouse 3 (theatre), Charm 6 (ambitious mortals), Etiquette 5 (her victims), Faerie Speech 6 (to her victims), Intrigue 9 (to cause the fall and rise), Order of Hermes Lore 6 (causing the fall, then rise), Penetration 5 (current victim)

Powers:

Guide, 6 points, Init -3, Mentem.: Subtly influences a group of beings towards a specific course of action. Each time this power is used, it can subtly influence the actions of a group for a day. The storyguide should provide advice to the characters in a similar way to the Common Sense Virtue, except that the advice serves the faerie's agenda, not that of the character. There is no compulsion to follow this advice.

Costs 30 spell levels (ReMe Base 5, +2 Voice, +1 Conc, +2 Group)

Hound, 0 points, Init -2, Corpus (4 intricacy points spent on cost): Allows Peripeteia to know the direction and distance to Severin. She can overcome his Magic Resistance because her minion has Severin's talisman, which provides a Penetration multiplier of 4.

Costs 20 spell levels (InCo Base 3, +4 Arc, +1 Conc)

Spirit Away, Variable points, n/a, Vim: Allows the faerie to act as a threshold guardian. This role is too complicated to explain in this scenario (and is treated in depth in *Realms of Power: Faerie*), but it allowed Peripeteia to trap Severin in Arcadia. She will not use it during this scenario.

Costs 50 spell levels (Special)

Steal Judgment, 0 points, Init -2, (3 intricacy points on cost) Mentem: The target believes almost any lie that Peripeteia tells, although an Intelligence roll against an Ease Factor of 6 is permitted to resist, with easier rolls for truly incredible lies.

Costs 15 spell levels (Base 4 +1 Eye +2 Sun)

Equipment: Dresses as noblewoman, carries a spindle that she works when not engaged in other things,

from which she can spin a seemingly endless stream of entanglements. This costs her no Might.

Vis: 9 pawns Rego, spindle. Any character who holds the spindle can produce a small, tame entanglement each new moon. If the vis is extracted from the spindle it loses this property. If the spindle is not destroyed, Peripeteia reassembles her body. This takes (45 / Faerie Aura) weeks, after which time she returns with a convoluted plan and faerie allies to seek her spindle.

Appearance: A regal woman, apparently of Norman extraction, clad in an expensive white dress of the finest linen.

The Faerie Child Dénouement

Dénouement is the child of Peripeteia. She is born in the moment when the tragic constraints of Severin's life reach their tightest point. After his nadir, Severin's fortunes rise. As Severin rebuilds his life, Dénouement feeds on the energy this creates, becomes more powerful, and appears to age.

Cruciator the Faerie Minion

Cruciator's function is to allow Peripeteia to torture Severin until he has nothing left, without allowing him to identify her as the cause of his suffering. His form has been stolen from the nightmares of an insane artist. Benedictus made Cruciator for Peripeteia while he was still human, specifically for this task, which allows Cruciator to have specializations that suit Severin personally.

A horrific figure, designed to distract Severin while another, more powerful, faerie steals his life.

Faerie Might: 30 (Corpus)

Characteristics: Int 0, Per +2, Pre -3, Com -2, Str +1, Sta +3, Dex +1, Qik +3

Size: +1

Virtues and Flaws: Greater Faerie Power, Increased Faerie Might (major and 2 minor), Faerie Sight, Faerie Speech, Narrowly Cognizant, Improved Damage, Improved Initiative, Large, Lesser Faerie Powers, Monstrous Appearance, Traditional Ward (flowing water).

Personality Traits: Violent+3, Brave +3. Calculating +2

Combat:

*Single Weapon (flying whip):** Init +7, Attack +13, Defense +13, Damage +20

* Includes +1 Atk and Dfn for Single Weapon specialization, +3 Init for Increased Initiative Virtue, +5 Damage for Increased Damage Virtue, +5 for Damaging

Effect power.

Soak: +9 (cloak of faeries)

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-6), -3 (7-12), -5 (13-18), Incapacitated (19-24), Dead (25+)

Pretenses: Awareness 4 (Severin), Faerie Speech 5 (threats), Hunt 4 (Severin), Leadership 6 (entanglements) 5, Penetration 4 (Severin), Profession: Torturer (Severin) 6, Single Weapon (flying whip) 8

Powers:

Appear Human, 1 points, constant, Imaginem: Allows a humanoid faerie of size -2 to +2 to appear and feel human. This power is not required by humanoid faeries, only shapeshifters that spend the majority of their time in a non-human form.

Costs 5 spell levels (Base 2, +2 Sun, +1 constant)

Damaging Effect, 2 points, Init -2, Corpus: Flays skin from those struck by his whip, adding +5 Damage. Cruciator knows that using this power makes his whip slide off the Parma Magica, so he does not employ it against magicians.

Costs 15 spell levels (Base 5 +1 Part +1 Diameter)

Flight, 0 points, constant, Corpus: The character is capable of flight. The character may use the Athletics skill to simulate difficult maneuvers, but may not engage in combat while flying incredibly swiftly. The faerie may not fly when heavily encumbered, or with a passenger of its Size or more, unless assisted by another faerie that shares the load.

Costs 15 spell levels: (ReFo Base 4, +2 Sun, +1 constant)

Hound, 4 points, Init -2, Corpus: Allows Cruciator to know the direction and distance to Severin.

Costs 20 spell levels (InCo Base 3, +4 Arc, +1 Conc)

Shift Human Shapes, 1 point, Init -1, Corpus: Allows the character to change its appearance to any other human configuration, although this cannot be used to replicate the features of a specific person.

Costs 5 spell levels (Base 3 +2 Sun)

Equipment: Horde of faeries, dark cloak, leathery face, whip, flying knife.

Vis: 6 pawns Imaginem in the whip.

Appearance: Cruciator appears to be a human male, but his features are so deformed that he cannot be mistaken for a mortal. His most shocking feature is his face: clearly it has been peeled from a dead person and attached to the front of his head with gory staples. His skin is wan and hairless, as if he has been carved from pale, sickly wood. He wears a cloak of living entanglements, described below, similarly stapled. He carries a whip in one hand, and a squat, gory knife in the other. The knife vanishes in combat, when Cruciator uses both hands for his whip, but reappears whenever he wants it.

Entanglements

Entanglements are the servants of Cruciator, and through him Peripeteia. They make Severin's life increasingly abject, constrained, and painful.

Faerie Might: 5 (Varies by discarded mortal object at core.)

Characteristics: Int -2, Per +2, Pre 0, Com 0, Str 0, Sta +2, Dex +2, Qik +2

Size: Varies from -5 to -1. These statistics assume Size -1.

Virtues and Flaws: Faerie Beast, Faerie Sight, Faerie Speech, Lesser Faerie Power (Damaging Effect); Monstrous Appearance, Incognizant, Traditional Ward (running water)

Combat:*

Brawl (Teeth): Init +2, Attack +10, Defense +8, Damage +6

Brawl (Claws): Init +3, Attack +9, Defense +10, Damage +7

* All Attack and Defense scores include +1 for Brawl specialization and +5 Damage for Damaging Effect power. These faeries will not use the Damaging Effect power against wizards, since they know it makes their attacks slide off their magical defenses.

Soak: +4, pelt

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-4), -3 (5-8), -5 (9-12), Incapacitated (13-16), Dead (17+)

Pretenses: Athletics 6 (while in pursuit), Awareness 6 (Severin), Brawl 5 (humans), Faerie Speech 5 (threats), Hunt (Severin) 5.

Powers:

Damaging Effect, 0 points, -2 Init (2 intricacy points on cost): Adds +5 Damage to Brawl attacks by shredding the skin that the entanglement touches. This also destroys mundane possessions like clothing.

Costs 15 spell levels (Base 5 +1 Part +1 Diameter)

Invisibility, 2 points, Init -2, Imaginem: A personal version of Veil of Invisibility, as per ArM5, p.146.

Costs 15 spell levels. (Base 4 +2 Sun +1 for moving image)

Supernatural Agility, 3 points, constant: This power allows the character to perform minor supernatural feats when using its Athletics Pretense. These include swiftly scaling walls, leaping from the ground onto the back of a galloping horse, and dropping great distances to the ground without harm.

Costs 25 spell levels (Base 10 +2 Sun +1 constant).

Vis: 1 pawn, discarded mortal object at core, in the Form of the object.

Appearance: Entanglements are made predominantly of lint, dust, and discarded objects. Entanglements vary in size from a hand span to waist height. They are vaguely human in shape, but are reminiscent of porcupines. Their

eyes shine like bright pennies. They have teeth like lost needles and claws like broken pottery. They are able to converse, but prefer to taunt. Entanglements are made from the mortal things humans discard accidentally when they are frightened by other entanglements, so most entanglements contain a discarded mortal object at their core, like a bucket, a tooth, or sack of clothes.

Locations and Expected Sequence of Play

Severin's release from Arcadia is delayed until the last thing that ties him firmly to Hermetic society — his covenant — falls. In an earlier story, Severin's home covenant should appear as a weak Winter covenant with a glorious but faded history. Hints should be given that the covenant has trouble with faeries that goes back generations. If the storyguide wants to craft a story around the investigation of the fallen covenant's site, then the final crisis the covenant faced should be a pack of entanglements. If the covenant will dissolve without player character inspection, then it may just be mentioned as the result of an unrelated crisis. Peripeteia is patient, and knows that mortal institutions fail if you just wait long enough and cause them a series of tiny injuries.

Severin first comes to the Order's attention by attacking a covenant. If this is not the player covenant, then it should be foreshadowed, and an elderly Merinita magus placed within its membership.

Release

Severin's escape from Arcadia is unlikely to be witnessed by a player character, but he may relate the parts of it he knows to the player characters, if they develop an alliance. During a conflict, Severin strayed into a faerie kingdom. For the next eight months, his time, or hundreds of years, mortal time, he fought a series of battles with a cunning and ruthless opponent, the Cruciator.

During these battles he lost much that is of value to him. His talisman was claimed by the Cruciator. His familiar, left in the outside world, was turned to stone by a Merinita magus who was a pawn of Peripeteia's. This petrification spell has an Until duration. His Beloved Rival, Vivatus, is dead. His allies fell into Twilight, then, finally, his covenant fell. After all of this, Severin, subtly assisted by the faeries that imprisoned him, discovered Cruciator's

Sovereign Ward — flowing water — injured his captor, and fled to the real world.

Assault on a Covenant

After his escape, Severin continues with his wartime mission, not realizing how much time has passed. He immediately assaults a site once held by his enemies. He is unable to do serious damage to the central fortification — the *Aegis of the Hearth* is too strong and the defenders too skilled — but he does manage to cause havoc with the castle's sup-

plies and surrounding community. Then he retreats to eat and rest, to restore his drained fatigue. An entanglement finds him then and taunts him, telling him that he has been in Arcadia so long that this site has fallen to his allies, and that he was attacking them. He has been declared a traitor to the cause.

If this is not the covenant of the player characters, then a Merinita magus of this covenant reports the attack to the authorities. He is in league with Peripeteia, and has chosen to send word by Redcap, without stressing the urgency of the situation. This is to allow Peripeteia's plan to mature, before the hoplites and Quaesitores arrive.

Hooking In

The player characters need a way to connect with Severin's story. Storyguides should choose one of those below, before the story begins, and use the additional hooks only if the player characters refuse the bait on the first cast. The adventure, as written, assumes that the player characters meet Severin just before, or while, he rests at the resupply cache.

ASSAULT ON THE COVENANT

- The player-character covenant could be the one that is assaulted.
- The player characters could be at the covenant due to the conclusion of another story.
- The player characters may belong to a House that wants the assault investigated. For this hook, Severin's march north needs to be delayed. In this version of the story, he was badly injured in the attack, and spent several weeks camping in a desolate spot to recuperate. During this time he was taunted and tormented by a skein of entanglements, but once he had regained some of his strength, he was able to kill them and harvest their vis, allowing him to use permanent healing magic just before the player characters arrive.

SEVERIN'S COURSE

- On Severin's march to the resupply point he is conspicuous, since he stays close to human settlements, is Gifted, and has ancient money that he spends freely. Player characters may be alerted to his strange behavior by their spies in nearby communities. The coins he spends are odd: they are stamped with designs from centuries ago, and yet are unworn.

- Severin knows the location of several vis sources claimed by his opponents during the war. He makes some effort to harvest these. If the player characters own the source, or have arranged a trade of vis that will fall through because of the raid, they may be prompted to investigate.

THE SUPPLY CACHE

- The supply cache was sited in its current location because of the vis source that is found in the cave. Severin feels no compunction against taking this vis and using it for the war effort. Following the war, it was given into the ownership of a covenant, which might belong to the player characters, or might be an ally.
- During the war, a ghostly sentinel was tied to this site by House Tremere. When the cache is opened, this spirit flies to the local Tremere exarch and, after telling him what the cache is and that it is a sentinel, informs him that a magus opened the empty cache. The exarch sends the player characters to investigate.
- If the player characters contact Severin and make him aware that he has fallen through time, he asks them to accompany him to his home covenant. He can sense the active cords between himself and his familiar, and he wants to recover his familiar. He offers them a portion of anything he can claim from the resources that the covenant's site still contains. Severin is familiar with the covenant's oldest defenses and its hidden places, so there is some chance he will be able to uncover resources not pillaged by earlier prospectors.

The Stages of Severin's Rise

Severin's rise has three components. He must:

- Reclaim his familiar, by travelling to his former home covenant.
- Reclaim his talisman, by raiding Cruciator's lair in the mortal world.
- Reclaim his reputation as the final stage, by participating in a grand adventure.

A problem for Peripeteia is that she could not choose which magus to victimize: Severin was merely the best available. But he never had an exceptional reputation. This means that Peripeteia does not understand how to assist the final stage in Severin's rise.

Severin's Course

Severin kills the entanglement, but does not know if what it has said is true or not. He decides to fall back to a resupply point several days away, and then head to his sanctum to claim his familiar and restore his talisman. He prefers to follow roads through populated areas, despite his Gift, because the wild and waste belong to his enemies. If Severin did attack the PC covenant, then one of the vis sources he harvests while marching north, or one of the humans he steals from, belongs to the Merinita magus in league with Peripeteia. Severin's point of release was carefully calculated to make it easy for him to become a Hermetic outlaw.

The entanglements continue to hound Severin, but they avoid the Dominion in his presence. The entanglements, and their master, are injured by running water, so Severin camps by rivers when unable to rest in inhabited places. He is particularly keen to travel when the weather is bad, as the running water on the roads keeps his foes away.

Severin's travels within the Dominion soon make it clear to him that he has journeyed through time. He decides to continue to the cache, because it is between him and his home covenant, and might contain useful supplies. He knows that it is able to hold back the entanglements, which he hopes will allow him to recover from the long-term fatigue caused by his imprisonment. Characters tracking him may discover that they are close to his destination, because he buys a month's worth of food with his odd coins in the final village before the cache.

Characters pursuing Severin are impeded by the entanglements, who do not fear the Dominion nearly so much

as when facing Severin. The entanglements don't want the player characters helping him until he has lost everything, so they are allowing him to use the roads, and forcing the characters to avoid such direct routes. Entanglements can even be tricked into admitting that they are trying to prevent the characters from finding their victim, which makes it easy to find him by following the path of maximum resistance. If the characters lack the skill to find Severin in the wilderness, then the entanglements will make sure they are seen to mass a force near the cache. It is important to emphasize to players that the claws of the entanglements destroy non-magical possessions, like clothing.

The Supply Cache

The supply cache is in a cavern behind a waterfall. It contains a vis source, which is annually harvested by a distant covenant. A tunnel has been carved into the floor of the cavern, and its entrance boarded over and covered with soil. The valuable supplies stored here were removed when the theatre of conflict moved past this area. Less-valuable supplies were left to time and rust and rot. Severin finds no useful equipment here, although the site itself, protected by flowing water from the entanglements, allows him his first true respite in months.

This is where Severin's life hits bottom. This can be difficult to arrange with the player characters involved in the scene, but excessive force may prove telling. A great pack of entanglements patrols the ground outside the waterfall. Severin knows that he can rest for a time, regaining his

Dénouement's Birth and Growth

Dénouement is born when Severin falls into the river. If he climbs back to power, she will grow into a creature with the vast power of her mother. If his rise is impeded, she will be some lesser thing. From this moment, Severin has a supernatural sponsor, Peripeteia, who has prepared his rise for decades. The entanglements serve Cruciator, but he serves Peripeteia, so from this point on Cruciator and the entanglements want Severin to become increasingly powerful: they want his fortunes to rise.

As Severin completes each task, Dénouement ages to a toddler, a child, an adolescent, and a woman, respectively. Each time she ages, Dénouement gains 10 Might and many other powers. Peripeteia will send Dénouement into Arcadia if the characters attack them, so statistics at each age have not been provided.

The First Twist

If Severin has attacked the covenant of the player characters, or of their allies, then the players need a reason not to simply slay him. Peripeteia has prepared for this. She offers a reward, and, through her minion, Cruciator, she promises punishment to people who ruin her plan.

While the characters are pursuing Severin, they meet Peripeteia. She seems to be a regal woman, who is heavily pregnant. Peripeteia needs the characters to see her, and have some sort of emotional reaction to her presence, so that she can feed on their vitality if they, too, have a happy ending in this story.

She explains half of the story to the player characters: that Cruciator is a faerie that feeds on tragedy, and that he has stripped away everything that Severin has. Tricking him into attacking a covenant, so he loses his place in the Order, is the third to last part of his plan. Next he will take Severin's pathetic mundane possessions. Finally, he will take

Severin's life. Then, Cruciator will choose someone else, and do the same thing again.

Peripeteia says, truthfully, that she is a faerie who embraces happy endings. She lies and says that she and Cruciator are rivals. She suggests that if the characters truly want vengeance on Cruciator, they should save Severin. Cruciator saves trophies from his victims. He has had so many victims that he has built a great tower to hold his trophies in. His tower, then, is a symbol for his life. If the characters destroy the tower, Cruciator will die. Severin, Cruciator's newest and only surviving victim, has an Arcane Connection to his talisman — a staff that is at the top of Cruciator's tower. With Severin and some simple magic, the player characters can find the entrance to Cruciator's regio by following the Arcane Connection.

Peripeteia offers two further bits of useful, if self-serving, advice. She says that Cruciator knows that she

has become involved, and so he is likely to strike at Severin soon, before Peripeteia can find ways to aid him. She also says that Severin should return to his fallen covenant, and carefully examine it, because an ally of his discovered Cruciator's scheme, and made certain preparations to assist Severin, many centuries ago. She is vague beyond this point, claiming that the more help she gives, the sooner Cruciator will act.

As a final bribe, Peripeteia notes that if Cruciator's plan fails, she will be able to claim much that is his for her own. This includes wealth, vis, and his other prisoners, some of whom would be interesting servants for their liberating magi. She is unable to provide them with additional resources at this time. She says that it is because she is about to bear a child, and all of her energies are concentrated upon its successful birth. This isn't entirely true: she simply can't start giving Severin resources until his fall is complete.

strength while his supplies dwindle, but that eventually he needs to run the blockade. If the characters attack the entanglements, Severin seizes the opportunity to attempt a breakout. He fails. Beaten and naked, he falls into the river and is rescued by the player characters.

Travel to Severin's Home Covenant

Severin's link to his familiar provides an Arcane Connection that he can use minor InVi magics to see. Severin uses this as a navigation aid: he always knows precisely the direction in which his familiar lies. He guesses, correctly, that his familiar is at the site of his home covenant.

Severin's covenant has fallen, and the player characters may pick over it for spoils. Severin knows where its vis sources were, and can harvest them, providing vis to his allies to ensure their continuing assistance. His familiar is buried in the cenotaph of Benedictus of Merinita, whom Severin

considered an ally. Characters digging up the cenotaph may notice that, despite its tomblike appearance, it isn't a grave: there is no body in it. When Severin's woodpecker is dug up, the spell on it ends and it returns to animal form. It can then explain the nature of Benedictus's enchantment.

Thaddeus, the woodpecker, can communicate mentally with his magus and tells the characters to search the covenant's well, if they have not already done so. At the bottom of the well is a layer of trash and sediment, under which is a stone floor. One of the stones is marked with a woodpecker. Underneath the stone is a leather water skin.

The water skin is never empty, continuously creating a steady flow of fresh, clean water at the rate of about a cupful a minute. Characters who make an Intelligence + Magic Theory roll of 3 know that this is one of the most useless magic items in the history of the Order, because drinking water made by magic does not prevent a character dying of thirst. The water skin is a gift from Severin's old "ally," who was the agent who selected him for Peripeteia as a suitable victim.

Where is the Princess? Where is the Treasure?

Severin's Faerie Lore is poor, so when he destroys Cruciator, he doesn't see something that is glaringly obvious to characters who are more familiar with the structure of stories: this one hasn't ended properly. If the story that Severin was following was basically "defeat the monster," then at the end, when Cruciator is defeated, there should be a reward.

A character who makes an Intelligence + Faerie Lore roll against an Ease Factor of 6 knows that something is fundamentally wrong, and a roll against an Ease Factor of 9 makes it obvious that Severin's story isn't simply the hero defeating the monster: it must be something else. Only a roll of 21 or higher makes it clear that this is a rags to riches story that has started early, so that Severin has lost everything, even his enemy.

An Intelligence + Faerie Lore roll against an Ease Factor of 6 indicates to characters that the destruction of Cruciator's body may not kill him. Many faeries are able, with sufficient time, to generate fresh bodies. The trick is to kill the faerie in a symbolically correct way.

Even if the characters do not notice that the story has not finished properly, it rolls on regardless, with Peripeteia's next gambit being at the Tower of Downcast Faces.

Regardless of the characters' investigation of this site, on the first nightfall Cruciator appears with a force of entanglements and tells the player characters they are free to go if they only give him back his "toy." If the players offer to do so, Cruciator mocks Severin, saying that now he has lost his allies as well, so he has lost everything, and then attacks. The faerie playing the role of Cruciator expects to die in this battle: the destruction of his humiliator is important to Severin's reversal of fortune. It also allows Peripeteia to craft a scenario in which the return of his talisman seems possible.

Assailing the Tower of Downcast Faces

Peripeteia appears to the player characters soon after their victory over Cruciator's forces. She brings Dénouement with her, now a toddler. Peripeteia tells the player characters that she senses that her rival, Cruciator, has been

destroyed, and reminds them that his fortress remains. She cautions the player characters that his lair is the hatching place for his entanglements.

The Tower of Downcast Faces is in a Faerie regio with an aura of 2. It is three stories high and windowless. Its walls seem to be made of ash, or packed black sand, and its single entrance is a door that looks like a screaming human mouth. This is guarded by entanglements that have been poured around the bones of dead knights, complete with rusty armor and weapons.

The tower takes its name from its internal space. It is a single sloping walkway that corkscrews up through the center of the tower, creating a single, long room. The walls of the room are bedecked with leathery human faces. Before each face sits a mundane item on a mirror, and around each item, an entanglement is growing.



The entanglements closest to the entrance are too small and weak to leave their mirrors, although they stir as the characters pass. As the characters ascend the central slope, the entanglements become increasingly mature. Storyguides should make as many of them combat-worthy as suits the player character group. Each can be killed conventionally, but may also be destroyed by smashing its mirror. At the top of the slope, they find the mirror on which Severin's talisman rests. The entanglement on his mirror is small, but it carries a whip and knife identical to those of Cruciator.

If the characters climb to the roof of the tower and open the water skin, it begins to dissolve the tower as if it were a sand castle. If left for two days, the water skin destroys the castle utterly, leaving only a pile of shattered mirrors. If the player characters avoid fighting the entanglements and simply place the waterskin on the roof, perhaps by flying, then it does substantial damage to the tower, but eventually entanglements in suits of armor remove it. Well before this, the hole that has been pierced in the roof allows the characters to steal Severin's staff without facing more than a single entanglement.

If Severin rebuilding his reputation is tied to a climactic event in the saga, and the Storyguide does not wish to run that story for some time, then this is the appropriate point to wrap up this story. See the Rewards section, later. Otherwise, Peripeteia approaches the characters asking for the tale of the death of her rival, and asks for the waterskin as a memento of his destruction. In exchange she gives them a prop which, with sufficient ingenuity, will serve them well when restoring Severin's reputation. Dénouement, whom the characters see again, now looks like an adolescent.

Adventure ...

Severin cannot complete the final stage in the script that Peripeteia has designed for him, restoring his Reputation, because he had not developed one of sufficient strength before being spirited away. Characters who wish to help either the faerie to complete her story, or Severin to finally be rid of his new allies, may puzzle out what is required for the final stage of his rise. This can be done with an Intelligence + Faerie Lore roll against an Ease Factor of 9, or by consulting with a powerful Merinita magus. The Merinita magus' assistance can be gained with a side quest, or by allowing him to study Severin for a year.

The heroes of rags to riches stories usually seem unpleasant and childish at the beginning. The process by which they rise turns their attention to the outside world and to their role in groups greater than themselves. Tylalus magi are especially suited to rags to riches stories because,

This Isn't the Treasure, and This Isn't the Princess

A character who makes an Intelligence + Faerie Lore roll against an Ease Factor of 6 knows that a weapon is no kind of reward for a completed story. In most faerie stories, people earn magical weapons near the beginning, not the end. On a roll of 12 or more, it is clear that Peripeteia knows where Severin's story leads. If asked, she is happy to tell the characters that she predicts Severin will rise to great prominence among magi, and that he needs a great victory to enhance his Reputation.

from the perspective of Mythic Europeans, they fight so very hard to never grow up. They use their great magical power to prevent anyone from ever forcing them to care about anything other than their own impulses. To be rid of Peripeteia, Severin needs to find a cause in which he devoutly believes, and win a great victory for it.

This cause should be tied to other stories in the saga, but suggestions include:

- Founding a covenant to revive the fortunes of the Hippian faction in House Tylalus, reinvigorating it.
- Rising to the leadership of one of the Order's Mystery Cults, using his travail as a powerful initiation.
- Returning to Faerie and destroying Peripeteia, so that she cannot harm another magus.
- Leading an expedition to a distant land, and recovering an item of deep spiritual significance for the Order.
- Finding Tylalus, and bringing a new message from him to his followers.

... or Intrigue

This section describes an alternative ending to the story. The first ending allows the story to be tightly tied to continuing themes in the saga, but it may take years for the characters to complete. This second ending can follow directly on from the Tribunal story, or can be delayed indefinitely.

HOW SHARPER THAN A SERPENT'S TOOTH IT IS TO HAVE A THANKLESS CHILD

Benedictus of Merinita, the ancient betrayer of Severin, completed the Merinita Mystery of Becoming, and is now a

faerie. Peripeteia does not know what Severin needs to do, specifically, to complete his story because Benedictus chose Severin to cause this exact problem. While Peripeteia waits for Severin to finish rising, it gives her old pawn a chance to take revenge.

Dénouement appears to the characters, accompanied by Benedictus, whom she calls her “uncle.” She explains her mother’s plan to Severin and his allies, and points out that she looks like Severin’s daughter as proof of what she says. Benedictus apologizes to Severin, and claims that there was no way he could prevent Peripeteia’s plan from proceeding, but he did his best to ameliorate it, and now has a plan for revenge.

Dénouement isn’t willing to wait for Severin to work out what is going to make him famous. She is concerned that he might fail to rise to prominence, which would impair her growth. Even if Severin completes Peripeteia’s story, the story is still Peripeteia’s. Dénouement doesn’t want to be a supporting character anymore. Her uncle, who has been planning this since he was human, has convinced her that she deserves better.

Dénouement wants to stage a coup. She wants the characters to agree to destroy Peripeteia, and accept payment for the deed from Severin, so that he is mystically responsible for it. This forms the final part of Severin’s rise, and allows Dénouement to steal all of her mother’s glamour. Peripeteia will be unmade, and unable to return for revenge. If the characters have not previously figured out that the hazards they have faced are due to a scheme of Peripeteia’s, then this moment, when they are shown the way to be free of their manipulator, is a turning point, a peripeteia, which Dénouement can feed upon.

THE NATURE OF HER BETRAYAL

Creating Dénouement has cost Peripeteia a great deal: she has had to carve great chunks out of her glamour and pour her spiritual energy away. If she cannot restore this energy, then Dénouement can use the connection that still exists between them to drink the rest of her in. Dénouement wants the player characters to interfere in the story that Peripeteia is using to revitalize herself. It is, as always, a story in which a great person falls, and then rises.

The Fair Maid in the Tower

Henry III, the king of England, has his cousin Eleanor imprisoned in Corfe Castle. She is called the Fair Maid of Brittany, although less often recently, as she is in her mid-thirties. Eleanor is imprisoned because she arguably has a

better claim to the throne than Henry III does. Peripeteia is planning to spirit Eleanor away, hold her in Arcadia, and allow her to have a son. Peripeteia will then use the son as a savior for either England or Brittany, at an hour of crisis. This will cause a civil war in England, but Peripeteia doesn’t care, provided her prince wins.

Eleanor’s son will be called Arthur. Eleanor’s older brother, captured and probably put to death by King John, was also called Arthur. Eleanor’s grandmother — Eleanor of Aquitaine — popularized Arthurian legends in the parts of Britain and France ruled by her, or her husband, as a form of imperial propaganda. The return of Arthur, even symbolically, is a powerful rise in fortune, and will make Peripeteia more powerful than ever.

Whichever method the players select, they should be mindful of the limitations that the Code of Hermes place on interference with the mundanes. The characters can destroy Peripeteia’s plan in several ways.

- Kill Eleanor. It’s heartless, but effective, and unlikely to arouse the ire of the Quaestiores. Political reality has passed Eleanor by, though. Characters are far more likely to face investigation if one of her ladies-in-waiting dies.
- Kidnap Eleanor by raiding Corfe Castle. If there is any hint of magical involvement in her removal, then the Quaestiores will investigate. This is what Peripeteia plans to do. If her warriors loot the king’s treasury when they take Eleanor away, Eleanor’s son can return leading a large force of mercenaries without anyone wondering how a hidden rebel could pay for them.
- Kidnap Eleanor when she is traveling to another royal residence or castle. Again, if it is clear to mundane people that wizards have been involved, the characters will need to answer for their actions.

POISONING A LADY

Eleanor of Brittany is not closely guarded, only closely warded. That is, she is guarded to prevent her escaping, but is not guarded to prevent her from being assassinated. She has faded into political irrelevance. She cannot be permitted to marry a fractious nobleman, but there’s no-one who wants to kill her. The outcry after the murder of her brother by the current king’s father is enough to dissuade those of Henry III’s followers who would like to kill her. She isn’t worth the bother.

Any suitably cunning scheme will kill Eleanor. The characters need to gain the assistance of someone who has contact with her, give them a little poison, and the work is done with a Communication + Intrigue roll against an Ease

Factor of 9. A complicating factor is that Eleanor has high-born maids, or fellow prisoners, who keep her company. The deaths of any of these men or women will cause difficulty for Henry III, and might lead to Quaesitorial investigation. At worst, for a time Eleanor's two companions are daughters of the King of Scotland. Their deaths by poison will lead to war, not simply because their father wishes it, but because they have been promised as wives to the sons of two of England's great noble houses.

If the characters seek to kill Eleanor personally, then the material given here for rescuing her from the castle assists in running the story.

FREEING THE PRISONER OF CORFE

Corfe Castle is badly designed for the purpose of keeping prisoners in close constraint. The heart of the castle is the King's Tower, with its adjoining royal residence. Prisoners are kept well away from the sumptuous apartments of the king, in a tower on the far western edge of the castle. During a siege, valuable prisoners are brought into the King's Tower. If the player characters assail the castle unexpectedly, they need only breach the defenses of the Dungeon Tower. The Dungeon Tower is behind a curtain wall, which is two stories high. It is unusual in that it is octagonal, despite all of the other towers being either circular or square.

When the characters remove Eleanor it is useful, both to ruin Peripeteia and to ameliorate the Quaesitores, to

Making Things More Difficult

Historically, the Dungeon Tower was where prisoners of lesser worth were kept. To make the rescue more difficult, a storyguide could place Eleanor and the other prisoners of noble birth in more comfortable apartments attached to the Queen's Tower. Remember, the characters need to take or kill Eleanor without making it obvious that they are connected to the Order of Hermes. The additional guards and walls are added opportunities for characters to use magic in an unwise and public way.

leave behind a corpse that could be mistaken for hers. The Hermetic high crime involved derives from the obvious reaction the king will have to someone spiriting away a rival claimant for his throne. If his rival appears dead, he is unconcerned, and so the Code has not been broken. Peripeteia needs Eleanor alive to be able to return and rebuild her life, though. Convincing everyone that she is dead makes this impossible.

RAIDING THE CASTLE

The King's Tower at Corfe is four stories high, with a floor of basements. It is accessed by a walkway to the second story, which is reached by climbing a stairway

Historical Notes

The life of Eleanor is badly documented, but it is clear from the English pipe rolls, which recorded the expenditure of the monarch, that she was kept prisoner at various English castles including Corfe, Bristol, and Gloucester. Corfe has been chosen for this story.

Corfe is a great castle in 1220. It is used as one of the royal treasuries. The current king's father, John, strengthened the defenses considerably, and had a royal residence built within it. Players familiar with the modern Corfe castle should be aware that the massive gatehouse was added after this story is set. Liberties have also been taken

with Corfe's architectural features.

Parts of this site may have unusual auras due to historical events that occurred there. Divine auras may be found near the castle, at the sites of the death of Edward the Martyr — an ancient king — and Peter of Pomfret. Peter was a hermit who prophesied things unfavorable to King John. After his prophecies came true, John had him dragged by horse through a nearby town, then hung.

22 French knights, who supported Arthur of Brittany against John, were slowly starved to death in the dungeons here. If their burials were irregular, their ghosts may still haunt the dungeon, and may aid in

the rescue of Eleanor, the sister of their lord.

King John committed many terrible crimes, and lived for some time at Corfe, so Infernal auras might be found where those crimes took place. For example, when Mathilda de Brieuse accused John of killing Arthur of Brittany, John had her, and her four-year-old son, starved to death in one of the dungeons of Corfe. Mathilda, driven insane by the death of her son and by her hunger, gnawed at her son's flesh, starving to death only when it was gone. The bodies were not buried until the remaining flesh had putrefied from the bones.

The Sovereign Wards

Benedictus has a final piece of information that may help the player characters, but he is loath to give it. He knows the Sovereign Ward for both Peripeteia and Dénouement. Each is destroyed if she ever stands on the site of the murder of a king. Near Corfe, there is such a site: the location of the murder of Edward the Martyr. Edward was stabbed but escaped. He fainted in the saddle and was dragged by his horse, until it stopped on the bridge that crosses the small creek that flows at the foot

of the hill on which the castle stands. This bridge has a Divine Aura of 2.

Benedictus doesn't want the player characters to know Dénouement's weakness, so he lies. He gives the player characters a piece of paper, sealed with a woodpecker, and tells them that if they break the seal, they will know Peripeteia weakness; but she, in turn, will know what they are doing, and where, and why. The paper is merely a map, with a notation saying that if the characters get Eleanor to the indicated site,

the tiny sliver of Peripeteia's glamour that is in Eleanor will die, and Peripeteia will be unable to feed on her rise. This will leave Peripeteia unable to defend herself against Dénouement's attack.

Benedictus will later attempt to discern if the player characters realize that they know Dénouement's weakness. If they do, he will offer to buy their memories of the event from them, offering lucrative stories and large amounts of vis in exchange for the secret.

in a short building adjacent to it. Within the tower a spiral stair gives access to all levels. The basement level is where some of the king's treasure is kept, although sumptuous goods are scattered throughout this tower and Queen's Tower.

The Queen's Tower is the home of the constable of the castle, Peter de Maulay, and his family. Peter was a great favorite of King John's. Peter was given the hand of Isabella, the final daughter of the family that previously governed Corfe, to thank him for his role in the murder of Arthur of Brittany. Peter still agreed to pay John's customary fee for marrying, 7000 marks in this case, and seven of the most powerful men in England made guarantees for him.

When John died, Peter managed to get the kingdom's regents to agree not to accept the money until Henry is old enough to accept it himself. In 1220, Peter has a large portion of the amount in the castle. In sagas that follow real-world history, the debt will be canceled in 1221, for diverse services to the throne.

Peter is an elderly knight, but a veteran of John's wars with the barons. He is a major landholder, and part of the "alien" faction in court. Peter was born in between Poitou and Touraine, in land now claimed by the French, and speaks French as his native tongue. If he dies, every major landholder in England will wish to know how, and why, fearing that this is the first action in a baronial rebellion against the king's French ministers, similar to the war that led to Magna Carta. The Quaesitores will examine the situation very thoroughly.

The Corfe garrison is made up of 40 soldiers, 12 of whom are crossbowmen. Crossbowmen only have their missile weapons if given 15 minutes to prepare them; during a surprise attack within the castle, they fight with swords.

Most of the soldiers are stationed on the outer wall or asleep in the great hall, which serves as their barracks. The inner parts of the castle are considered easily defended, and so they only have a few guards.

PIGGYBACK RAID

Dénouement can signal the player characters on the night her mother's agent attacks the castle, allowing them to take Eleanor and the king's treasure by overpowering her rescuers. Dénouement cannot think of this for herself: her mother's design does not permit Dénouement to rebel. She is only able to turn on her mother because Benedictus supplied the idea. Similarly, turning Peripeteia's daughter against her is an idea Benedictus had when he was still Peripeteia's human pawn. Benedictus cannot think of piggybacking Peripeteia's rescue attempt, because it did not occur to him when he was mortal.

If the player characters provide the idea, then Dénouement can supply the mechanism. Peripeteia's plan is to have Eleanor rescued by a faerie knight, and then placed in an unaging Arcadian slumber. When Peripeteia finds the husband that is suitable for Eleanor, she will make him think he was the rescuer. She does this either by staging a story in Faerie, or sending a dream in which he dons faerie armor, breaks into a castle, and rescues Eleanor. He either then escapes Faerie with Eleanor, or if this is a dream he simply wakes up to find her in his bedchamber. If piggybacking Peripeteia's raid, the player characters need only wait for the faeries to defeat the garrison, then kill the faerie knight and his retainers as they return to a regio that leads to Arcadia.

Faerie Knight

Faerie Knights are more bound to the rules of chivalry than real knights, and so they do not use Damaging Effect powers on their weapons against worthy foes. Use the statistics of the Viking warriors in Chapter Eight: The Return of the Raiders for the knight's attendant men at arms, changing the physical descriptions of the faeries. Their Sovereign Ward is that they cannot harm noblewomen. The Damaging Effect for all of these faeries is that threadlike things unravel or snap when struck by the weapons of these faeries. This includes the fibres in muscles, ligaments, tendons. Being struck by one of these faeries also makes all of the victim's hair fall out, although it regrows.

Faerie Might: 10 (Terram in this case: the suit is hollow.)
Characteristics: Int 0, Per 0, Pre -2, Com -2, Str +3, Sta +2, Dex +2, Qik +1

Size: +1

Virtues and Flaws: Cognizant Within Role, Faerie Sight, Faerie Speech, Humanoid Faerie, Increased Might (minor), Large, 2 x Lesser Faerie Powers; Oath of Fealty, Overconfident, Sovereign Ward (the blood of women, in this case), Vow (Chivalrous conduct)

Personality Traits: Arrogant +3, Courteous +3

Combat:

Brawl (gauntlet): Init +1, Attack +10, Defense +10, Damage +5
Long sword and heater shield: Init +8, Attack +18, Defense +16, Damage +9

Mace and heater shield: Init +2, Attack +16, Defense +15, Damage +11

*Lance and heater Shield:** Init +3, Attack +17, Defense +15, Damage +9

* Does not include the +3 to Attack and Defense for being mounted.

Soak: +9*

* Faerie metal scale, made of glamour using the Shift Human Shapes Power.

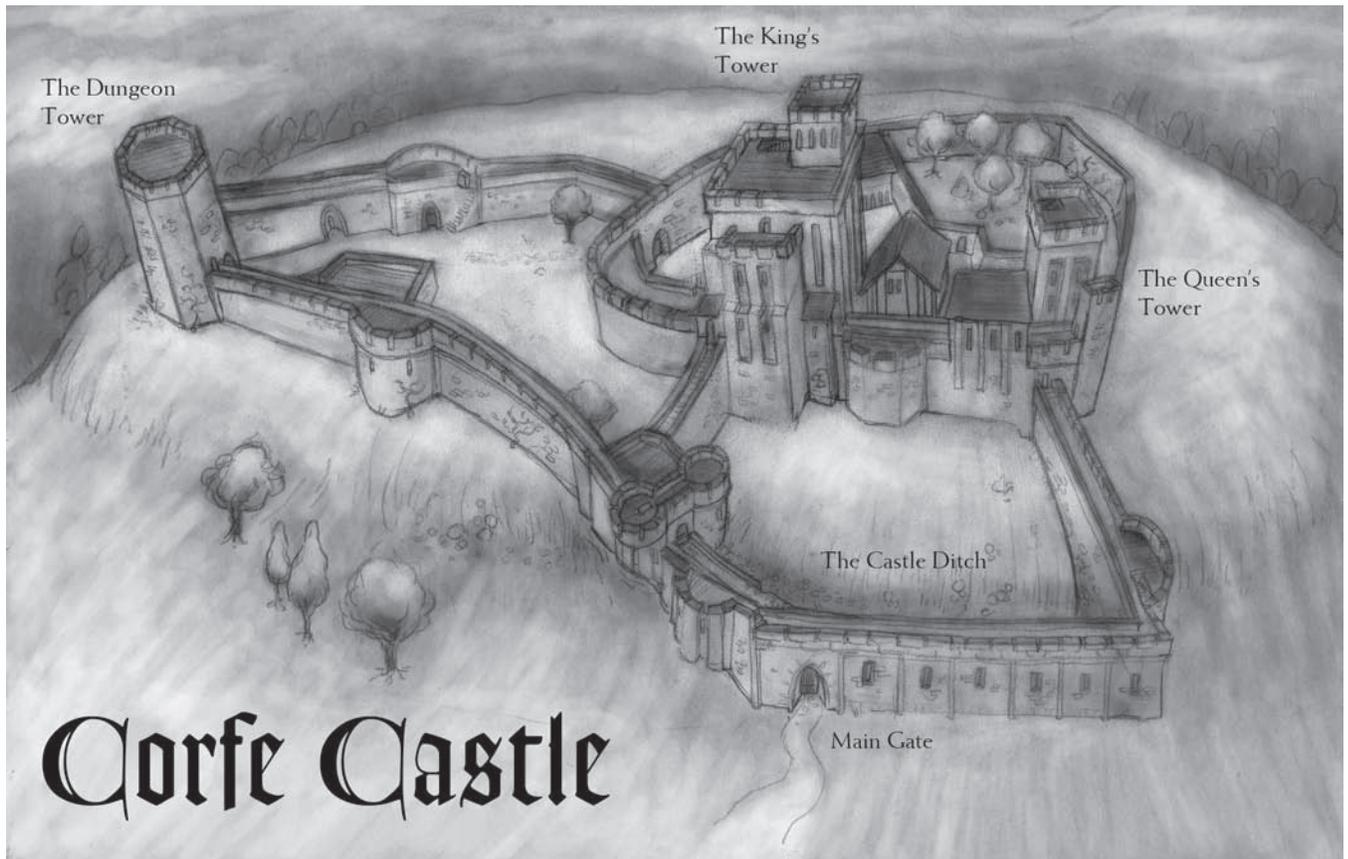
Wound Penalties: -1 (1-6), -3 (7-12), -5 (13-18), Incapacitated (19-25), Dead (26+)

Pretenses: Awareness 1 (enemies), Brawl 7 (knights), Carouse 3 (feasts), Charm 1 (ladies), Etiquette 3 (chivalrous combat), Faerie Speech 5 (boasting), Hunt 2 (humans), Leadership 2 (guards), Ride 3 (horses), Single Weapon 8 (long sword).

Powers:

Damaging Effect, 1 point, Init.+1, varies. (1 intricacy point on cost)

Flight, 1 point, Init +1, Terram (2 intricacy points on cost)



Equipment: Arms and armor. Has a faerie horse constructed of the knight's own glamour, so it flies when the knight does, and shares the knight's Magic Resistance.

Vis: 2 pawns Terram, a rusty piece of armor.

Appearance: A knight clad in silver leaves of metal, astride a fine horse. This knight displays a red fret on gold on his arms and saddle blanket.

ATTACKING A TRAVELING GROUP

Characters can wait until Eleanor is to be moved to another establishment, and attack the train of coaches that are to carry her. Any train that carries Eleanor is likely to have some other mission, for example escorting a prisoner to the payment of his parole, or moving some of the king's treasure. It will, therefore, have at least a dozen highly trained guards, sometimes many more. If magic is obviously used in the attack, the Quaesitores will investigate.

Characters may force a move by forging a royal order. A forger must study a royal order before he can forge one. Characters able to suborn an agent within the castellan's staff are able to procure a royal order that he has previously received, to act as a template for the forger. The forger

will also need expensive parchment, colored wax, and expensive inks, which can be procured from any large city. The forger must make a roll of Dexterity + Legerdemain against an Ease Factor of 15 (which is 6 + the Intelligence and Awareness of her most observant keeper) to successfully forge the order. If the forger fails, a player character other than the forger can make an Intelligence + Awareness check against an Ease Factor of (6+ forger's Dexterity + forger's Legerdemain) to note that the forgery is too seriously flawed for use.

THE PRINCESS AND THE TREASURE

Characters that complete this section of the story now have a princess and some treasure, but need to consider carefully how to dispose of each.

Eleanor of Brittany is in her mid-thirties and memorably beautiful. Her public presence, in any place, will draw an English army. Marrying her, in any public way, is a declaration of war on both the King of England and the Count, or Duke if you accept his preferences, of Brittany. It's best for Eleanor to be taken out of the country, and live either

Ease Factor Adjustments for Contents of Forgery

The phrasing of the order alters the Ease Factor of the Legerdemain roll, as follows.

ORDERS INVOLVING GUARDS

- A royal order that has Eleanor guarded as heavily as usual is not suspicious. (0)
- One requiring her to be guarded lightly is more so. (+3)
- One that requires only token guards is considered suspicious. (+6)

ORDERS INVOLVING THE ROUTE

- An order that specifies her route and the places her escort will rest is not suspicious. (0)
- Unless the route selected is an obscure route when a more practical one is available. (+3)

ORDERS INVOLVING ADDITIONAL ORDERS

- An order that includes moving Eleanor, but also includes some other more serious matter, like the movement of money, the rotation of soldiers, or the trans-

port of weapons, is usual. (0)

- An order solely about Eleanor is unusual. (+3)

ORDERS INVOLVING MONEY

- An order that includes moving Eleanor, but is really about disbursing small amounts of money for other causes is not suspicious. To make up suitable disbursements, the characters need either to view similar orders going back several years, to determine their pattern, or make skilled guesses concerning the affairs of the king. These guesses require both an Intelligence + England Lore roll against an Ease Factor of 15, or sufficient time to hear court gossip and an Intelligence + Intrigue roll against an Ease Factor of 6.
- An order that includes only Eleanor and her personal goods is highly unusual. (+6)
- An order that requests more than 10 pounds of money is unusual, unless accompanied by a person that the castellan knows personally. (+6)
- An order that requests more than 20 pounds of money, presented by a stranger lacking royal credentials, is unheard of. Examples of royal credentials are not held by the castellan.

A Side Story: Things Lost in the Wash

Eleanor is not the queen of England, but she has a great deal of magical potential as the rightful heir to the throne. Her mystical significance could be further enhanced if the characters were to find the royal regalia of England. King John lost much of his army's baggage train in a swamp between Norfolk and Lincoln. The lost supplies included the royal regalia of England, including the crown.

John's heir, the current Henry III,

was (and by some measures, still is in 1220) a child-monarch, crowned hurriedly after the death of his father. His ceremony was performed in Gloucester rather than Winchester, lacked the usual archbishop, and used a crown that had been left at Corfe. Some stories say it was an old, but minor, Saxon crown, others that it was one of Henry's mother's pieces of jewelry. The coronation was so shoddily done that the Pope sent instructions that it was invalid.

Henry III was re-crowned two years later with a modern replacement for the ancestral crown of England.

Eleanor, in possession of the crown, may not be able to take the throne of England, but she will certainly attract faeries, and is of interest to magi researching the link between royalty and Rego vis. For example, town charters contain Rego vis, but the process through which it forms is completely obscure.

in obscurity or with her appearance altered by magic. The difficulty is that Eleanor refuses, even after decades of imprisonment, to ever agree that she is not the rightful queen. Characters who ask her to utterly forsake her birthright will never have more than her grudging co-operation.

The treasure of Corfe includes sumptuous goods stolen from the royal or constabular residence, but much of the treasure is in coin. Barrels of pennies, carried with the army and used to pay soldiers, are salted away here. Characters who try to spend the king's pennies in large amounts will be noticed by both the mundane authorities and the Quaesitores. Characters can work around this complication by spending the money far away, by melting it down and re-minting it, or by trading it to Redcaps at a favorable rate.

Rewards

Some of the rewards of for this story are available regardless of which of the faeries is the victor.

- Severin, as its last survivor, is likely to own the site and contents of the fallen covenant. If he re-founds it, his covenant might be an ally, vassal, or chapterhouse of the player character covenant.
- The site of Cruciator's Tower has vis sources aside from the entanglements. The site itself may be on interest to Merinita magi.

- Peripeteia knows how humans value vis. The Tower of Cruciator is designed to give vis, of a variety of Forms, to the player characters as a reward for their participation. If the characters take this vis, but then do not see Severin's story through to the end, Peripeteia will feel she has been cheated and cause trouble until the characters have paid for what they have taken. If Dénouement defeats Peripeteia, she wants the players to consume all of the vis anyway, because it was her mother's and she wants to be free of its influence.

If Peripeteia succeeds, she gives rewards to the player characters who bring Severin's story to a successful conclusion. She does this by crafting stories in which the rewards are disproportionate to the trouble involved. As with Severin's story, by the conclusion of these reward stories, her victims know that she is the motivator of the events they are responding to. Peripeteia may also intervene in stories that she did not cause, in order to aid the player characters, until she feels that their assistance to her balances her usefulness to them.

Benedictus doesn't feel he owes the player characters anything, after offering them revenge, and so he makes no effort to pay them for their services. Both Benedictus and Dénouement will, however, honor any agreement made in advance with the player characters. If the player characters reach this ending, when Dénouement comes to give them their rewards she will be a grown woman. She has lost her similarity to Severin and looks like Benedictus, whom she now calls "Father."

Chapter Five

The Hospital's Due

The Knights Hospitaller, an order of crusading warrior monks, have confiscated something valuable belonging to your covenant. This scenario pits your troupe against one of the most powerful mundane institutions in Mythic Europe and a devious Venetian merchant to retrieve their possessions, without breaching the Code of Hermes.

The Hospitallers — also known as the Order of St. John of Jerusalem — are a powerful force, and have representatives all over Mythic Europe. Their order was one of the first international organizations, and by papal decree was given exemption from lay and ecclesiastic authority. Since the Hospitallers have priories and hospitals throughout Mythic Europe, this scenario can be set anywhere.

This scenario can be suitable for both magi and

companions. Key characters are afforded some measure of protection from magic, through possession of relics or their religious office, but a determined team of magi could easily overcome the obstacles presented here. Further, the scenario is not suitable if the covenant contains a competent Mentem specialist; such a magus could resolve the problems far too easily.

Précis

In a town near to the troupe's covenant, a Knights Hospitaller hospital, the Priory of St. Ubaldesca, has been established to both care for the sick and poor, and also to direct resources towards the crusade effort in the Holy Land. In the course of their fundraising activities to support the Fifth Crusade, the priory, led by Hermann of Cologne, seizes some valuable belongings of the covenant.

Potentially complicating matters are a duplicitous merchant, an ill Redcap receiving treatment at the priory's hospital, a belligerent bishop, and a Gifted young child who has been adopted by the Hospitallers.

The characters must navigate their way through the town, discover the whereabouts of their property, negotiate — or violently enforce — the return of their goods, and avoid adverse consequences. By the end of this scenario, the characters and their covenant could have a powerful new enemy, or a potential ally.

The Knights Hospitaller

By the early thirteenth century, the Knights of the Order of St John of Jerusalem were established throughout Mythic Europe, from Iberia to England, and from the Levant to the Holy Roman Empire and Italy. Formed as a monastic order dedicated to the care of the sick and the de-

Setup

This scenario requires some setup to establish the non-player characters prior to the start of play, particularly the Venetian merchant Enrico, and the story's location — a medium-sized town in the sphere of interaction with the player's covenant. For this scenario to occur, the covenant must previously have regular trade with a merchant from a major town.

Enrico's identity could be changed if there is already an existing suitable non-player character that provides specialist or rare goods for the covenant. Enrico should have been straightforward, unremarkable, and trusted until this scenario — one of the hooks is his betrayal.

Furthermore, the property seized by the Hospitallers must be of significant enough value that the player characters do not simply decide to write-off the loss and purchase more. For example, the property may be expensive or irreplaceable laboratory equipment, a copy of a rare and valuable book (even a Hermetic text), or ingredients for a longevity ritual. Players will care less about food or spices, or goods that could simply be re-purchased from another source.

How Much Do the Hospitallers Know About the Order?

The answer to this question depends a lot on the assumptions made for your individual saga. The Saga chapter in *ArM5* (pages 216-217) deals with this issue.

The Hospitallers (and other military orders) as an order could have quite formal links with the Order of Hermes, through the activities of House Jerbiton and the Quaesitors, perhaps even purchasing magical devices from magi in the Tribunal of

Rome to be used for the crusades. In this case, characters like Hermann and Prior Fulk may have a vague idea of the nature and capabilities of Hermetic magic.

Alternatively, the Order of Hermes could be a mystery to the Hospitallers, with the Hospital's leadership knowing only legends and misinformation about the goals and powers of Hermetic magi. The Priory would know almost nothing

about the powers of magi and would be unaware that magi are organized in an Order.

Your saga's decision can affect Constable Hermann's attitude towards whether Hermetic magi are suitably pious in their Christian faith or not; whether he considers them eccentric and fundamentally harmless magicians, or whether they are fearsome and powerful pagan sorcerers to be feared and guarded against.

fense of Christendom following the crusades, the Knights Hospitaller are chief among the defenders of the remaining Christian territories in the Holy Land and in Iberia. They stand alongside the Knights Templar and the Teutonic Knights as warrior monks, although the Hospitallers are unique in also being healers and carers for the poor.

To fund their thousands of hospitals throughout Europe and the Holy Land, as well as their constant war effort, the Hospitallers engage in massive fundraising activities. This relies on bequests left in wills, and on donations from churches, monasteries, and secular lords and individuals. The Hospitallers are also known to use more controversial methods to ensure that they have the supplies and funds they require to protect Christendom and care for the sick and injured.

AS CHRIST HIMSELF

Unique to the Hospitallers is the care they give to the sick and poor. Indeed, their primary reason for existing is to provide medical care to Christians. The Knights Hospitaller are seen among many commoners in Mythic Europe as the best part of the Church for their devotion to this aim.

To the Hospitallers, a poor person represents the person of Christ Himself and is due veneration as such. The sick and poor who come to the hospitals and priories of the Hospitallers receive not just good treatment, but the very best, most luxurious care possible. Servants of the Hospitallers even travel through cities to search for poor

Locating the Hospitallers

The Hospitallers had priories all over Europe, but were more concentrated in some areas than others. Hospitaller priories can be found throughout France, northern Iberia (such as Aragon), and southern England. In France and England they have large land holdings and horse-breeding stables. Horses, men, and money constantly stream from Europe to the Holy Land via Cyprus. In Italy, the Hospitallers recruit brother-sergeants and receive large donations from noble families — several of the priories in Italy also house magnificent relics and large convents of nuns. The Hospitallers

also have a priory in Constantinople, established after the Fourth Crusade. In Germany there are fewer priories, principally located in areas renowned for crusading; however they are out-recruited by the Teutons.

If you are running a historically accurate saga, and you are worried that the Hospitallers may not be present in your area, then you can easily substitute one of the other prominent crusading orders of monks — the Templars, Teutons, Order of Santiago (in Iberia), or Order of St. Thomas of Acre. Obviously, the Hospitallers are the only order that have large hospitals, so other

changes would need to be made to the scenario.

Similarly, if your saga is taking place at a different time to the default starting date of 1220, some changes may need to be made. The Hospitallers did not exist as a military order before around 1120, although there were public hospitals that eventually merged into the order from 1100. The Hospitallers continue to be active throughout Europe and the Holy Land through the thirteenth century and into the fourteenth. Their crusading and fundraising activities did not cease, even after they lost the Holy Land.

and sick Christians who are too weak to admit themselves to the hospital.

At a time when only the grandest lords (and of course, Hermetic magi) have beds to themselves, the patients of the Hospitallers are furnished with separate beds with feather mattresses. Every care and luxury is lavished upon the sick, from nutritious food to weekly barbers and almonds at Easter.

Using Story Flaws and Hooks

The following are just a few suggested ways to draw the players into this scenario.

STORY FLAWS

Black Sheep: Your prestigious family connives with Enrico to deprive you and your covenant of essential goods.

Difficult Underlings: Through ignorance, incompetence, or conspiracy, your underlings sell or give away the covenant's goods to the Hospitallers, or are bribed by Enrico into giving up the goods without a struggle.

Enemies: Your enemies have enlisted the help of Enrico, either willingly or through coercion. Alternatively, the Hospitaller Priory may be your enemy.

Favors: The confiscated goods belong to someone to whom you owe a boon, and they seek out your help to get the goods returned.

Feud: Brother Gilbert or some other influential Hospitaller is actually a family member of your rival family and uses Enrico's betrayal as a means to weaken you and your family.

Tormenting Master: Your former master conspires with Enrico and Brother Gilbert, or manipulates them, into confiscating your goods.

COVENANT HOOKS

Poverty: The goods taken by the Hospitallers are of little Hermetic value, but their loss would cause the covenant great stress, possibly even precipitating a collapse.

Rival: Your rival covenant is responsible for Enrico's change of loyalties, and may even be in cahoots with the Hospitaller Priory. Alternatively, Eleanor may be the agent of your covenant's rival, and is at the Priory to ensure that all goes according to plan.

Helping the Crusade

The Hospitallers of the Priory of St. Ubaldesca have confiscated the covenant's property to help fund the Hospital's crusading effort, the upkeep of Acre, and to repay the enormous debts incurred during the Fifth Crusade.

The Fifth Crusade was one of the largest commitments of Hospitaller resources in a generation, with over 2,000 Hospitallers and their soldiers on the crusade. The siege of Damietta dragged on for over a year before it fell to the crusaders on 5 November 1219. The enormous cost of this crusade means that the Hospitallers' resources are extremely stretched, and that the priory will continue to enthusiastically raise funds to pay off debts and help defend the crusader city of Acre, which is where the Hospitaller Central Convent is currently located.

The Knights Hospitaller were convinced by Enrico of Venice — a merchant known to the covenant — that the confiscated goods belonged to godless pagans and atheists. Assured that the goods were not the property of God-fearing Christians, the Hospitallers seized the property.

Dramatis Personae

This section gives information and statistics for the major characters in this adventure.

Individual Hospitallers

Those Hospitallers with unique roles in the adventure are given below.

PRIORY CONSTABLE HERMANN OF COLOGNE

Hermann, as the Priory Constable of the Knights Hospitaller, is a powerful, influential and much-revered figure in the local community. A brother-knight — one of the military elite of the Hospitallers — Hermann is responsible for ensuring that his comrades in the Holy Land receive the resources required to carry on the fight for Christendom.

As a Priory Constable, Hermann is a senior brother-knight, ranking only below the most exalted of ranks — Master, Grand Commander, and Marshal. With the Knights Hospitaller not subject to local lay or ecclesiastical authority, Hermann answers to only his superiors in the Order. Hermann is a talented commander, with a

zealous loyalty to the Hospitallers. He is a former front-line soldier and has demonstrated his bravery and leadership skills many times. His time in Acre and the other lands formerly controlled by the Order has given him a cosmopolitan outlook.

Originally from Cologne in Germany, Hermann is from a knightly family with a history of crusading. He joined the Hospitallers at a young age, and served most of his early career in Italy in and around Rome (where he was part of the Hospitaller's diplomatic detachment to the Pope), before being sent to the Central Convent in the Holy Land. Like many Germans attracted to a life of being a warrior monk, Hermann bears some resentment towards the Knights Templar, the rival crusading order to the Hospitallers. Hermann sees them as overly dominated by the French and too aligned with the French king, and regularly argued with them on tactical matters while stationed in the Holy Land.

Hermann is only peripherally aware that the priory recently came into a great deal of wealth by way of a tip-off from a Venetian merchant that valuable goods were about to be sent to some distant pagans. He will vigorously protect the priory, its inhabitants, and its possessions (including the confiscated property of the covenant). Hermann does not want to have a group of powerful wizards as his enemies, but he will also not give in to intimidation and threats.

Hermann is cosmopolitan, in both his outlook and his experiences. In his time as a leader with the Hospitallers he has experienced a range of supernatural events, met and dealt with wizards and sorcerers, and has heard of the Order of Hermes, although he knows almost nothing about it other than its members are very powerful. Any dealings that Hermann has with the player characters, including the observed extent of Hermetic magic, will be quickly communicated to his superiors via the Hospitallers' messenger network.

Hermann is protected by a potent relic, and has the favor of one of the Hospitallers' patron saints, St. Ubaldesca, who Hermann knew personally and to whom the priory is dedicated. He is a powerful crusader leader in his own right, and has many influential allies across Mythic Europe. Attempts to magically influence his mind will likely see the intervention of St. Ubaldesca, and he normally enjoys a high level of Magic Resistance due to carrying her relic.

Characteristics: Int +1, Per 0, Pre +1, Com +1, Str 0, Sta +1 (1), Dex +2 (1), Qik +2 (2)

Size: 0

Age: 40 (40)

Decrepitude: 0 (4)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Brother Knight; Powerful Relic; Improved Characteristics, Protection, Temporal Influence, Warrior; Monastic Vows, Pious (Major); Poor Hearing, Temperate

Personality Traits: Chaste +4, Pious +4, Brave +3, Indulgent -2

Reputations: Crusader leader +4 (local), Experienced commander +3 (Hospitallers)

Combat:

Lance and shield (mounted): Init +2, Attack +13, Defense +9, Damage +5

Long sword and shield (mounted): Init +2, Attack +13, Defense +13, Damage +6

Long sword and shield (on foot): Init +2, Attack +10, Defense +10, Damage +6

Faussar/pole arm (on foot): Init +5, Attack +10, Defense +7, Damage +8



Fist: Init +2, Attack +5, Defense +5, Damage +0
Soak: +10 (armor, Stamina)
Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious
Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)
Abilities: Animal Handling 2 (horses), Arabic 2 (negotiations), Artes Liberales 2 (writing), Athletics 4 (battle-field), Awareness 2 (ambushes), Bargain 2 (arms and armor), Bows 1 (crossbows), Brawl 4 (shield-charges), Chirurgy 2 (battle-fields), Church Lore 2 (Hospitallers), Dominion Lore 1 (miracles), Etiquette 3 (German courts), Folk Ken 3 (strangers), Great Weapon 4 (lance), Greek 2 (formal), Holy Land Lore 3 (Acre), Italian 3 (Papal courts), Leadership 5 (Hospitallers), Magic Lore 1 (Muslim sorcery), Medicine 2 (palliative care), Native Language: German

5 (clarity), Ride 5 (combat), Single Weapon 5 (swords), Survival 2 (desert).

Equipment: Full chain mail, long sword, heater shield, lance, two horses (on charger, one riding horse). Hermann also carries on his person a relic of St. Ubaldesca, a finger bone set into a small reliquary.

Encumbrance: 4 (4)

Appearance: Hermann usually appears dressed in the Hospitaller uniform, consisting of a black, tightly fitting monk habit with an eight-pointed white cross sewn on the breast and mantle. He also wears a white coif over his head, or on more formal occasions, a white skull-cap that covers his ears. When traveling or in cold weather, Hermann wears a black cloak with the white cross embroidered on the breast. Hermann is privileged to possess a full suit of mail armor; most of the brother-

St. Ubaldesca

Divine Might: 30

Characteristics: Int +5, Per +5, Pre +5, Com +5, Str n/a, Sta n/a, Dex n/a, Qik n/a

Confidence Score: 2 (10)

Personality Traits: Chaste +4, Penurious +4, Rebellious -3

Reputations: Patron of the Knights Hospitaller +4 (local and ecclesiastic)

Powers:

Grant of Serenity, 1 point, Init -10, Mentem: This power calms an agitated or worried mind, soothing fears and calming anxiety, as per the Hermetic spell *Enchantment of Detachment*. It also nullifies any malign Mentem (or similar) spell currently affecting the target.

Mass Healing, 5 points, Init +0, Corpus: Heals a crowd of people

from all their diseases, including wounds, blindness, lameness, deafness, and any afflictions caused by age or disease. It does not remove Decrepitude points or restore Characteristics lowered by aging.

Straighten the Cripple, 3 points, Init +10, Corpus: This power completely heals the lame or crippled, including those caused by a Flaw, although not from Decrepitude or Warping.

Water to Wine, 1 point, Init +0, Aquam: Turns an amount of water, equal to a pitcher or jug, into wine.

Appearance: St. Ubaldesca appears as a middle-aged nun with the Hospitaller cross on her breast. She carries a bowl of water and a palm leaf.

One of Knights Hospitallers' patron saints, St. Ubaldesca became a nun of the Order after she was visited by an angel at the age of fifteen. She performed a number of miracles during her life, including turning water to wine. Her soul was taken to heaven by a multitude of angels in 1207, and during her funeral procession 22 invalids were cured. Her feast day is the 28th of May, which was the day of her ascension to heaven.

St. Ubaldesca generally performs a miracle once a year on her feast day — typically healing someone who is lame. She is very protective of Constable Gerald, and often responds to his prayers.

The Finger Bone of St. Ubaldesca

The relic carried by Hermann of Cologne is a finger bone of St. Ubaldesca from the hand that first miraculously turned water into wine. As a major relic, it has a power that it can regularly bestow upon its owner. It has a True Faith score of 3 and a

Divine Might of 30, which grants Hermann a Magic Resistance score of 30 when he carries the relic. It also possesses the *Mass Healing* power of St. Ubaldesca. Like all relics, the finger bone radiates an aura that is anathema to infernal beings with a

radius of 30 feet. Infernal creatures with an Infernal Might of less than 30 are unable to enter the radius, and infernal creatures that can approach the relic take +30 damage each round that they remain close to the relic.

knights and brother-sergeants have only half-suits, since the best armor is sent to the Holy Land.

Hermann is a fearsome warrior, although now that he is aging, he is not as quick on his feet as he once was. A blow to the head during a skirmish in the Holy Land several years ago has severely impaired his hearing, although he is able to compensate by reading people's lips and body language. Hermann is a humble man, and is truly pious. His veneration of the poor is sincere, and he sees his own poverty as a holy thing.

Hermann also benefits from a Magic Resistance of 30 due to the relic of St. Ubaldesca he carries on his person (see nearby insert box for more details). He is aware of the relic's mass-healing power, but does not call upon it frivolously.

PRIOR FULK OF TYRE

Prior Fulk is the religious leader of the Priory of St. Ubaldesca, and co-equal in authority to Constable Hermann. Fulk, like Hermann, is an experienced leader and comes from a noble family. He served under the Conventual Prior in Acre, and has spent time with the Order's Grand Commander (the second-in-command of the entire Knights Hospitaller). Fulk spent some time imprisoned by the Arabs after the fall of Jerusalem and the battle of Hattin — a battle where the army of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, and most of the Hospitallers and Templars in the Holy Land, were massacred. Fulk, a close associate of the then-king of Jerusalem, Guy of Lusignan, was ransomed with many other nobles after the battle (as Fulk was a non-combatant, he was spared the beheading inflicted on his fellow brother-knights). Much of the rest of Fulk's time was spent at Tyre, one of the crusader cities. Now in his late fifties, Fulk has been given a retirement at the wealthy Priory of St. Ubaldesca.

Like many Hospitallers, Fulk does not hold entirely orthodox views, and regularly comes into conflict with local ecclesiastic authorities. To Fulk, the most veneration and respect is due to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and to St. John the Baptist — patron saints of the Knights Hospitaller. He holds the unusual view that women are equal to men, and treats all of the women and sisters serving in the priory with respect. Fulk regularly flouts the wishes of the local bishop, has given communion to menstruating women, and maintained friendships with excommunicates and accused heretics. However, nothing Prior Fulk has done so far would warrant a great deal of concern from his superiors, the Regional Prior, Conventual Prior, or Pope — and in any case, Fulk is close friends with the Conventual Prior.

Fulk has struck up a friendship with the Redcap Eleanor, who he sees as a remarkably intelligent and interesting woman. He does not know of her magical nature, but is impressed with her education and ability to speak Latin.

Brother Fulk's traits are represented using the brother-priest statistics listed later. Fulk's traits are modified by giving him a Speak Latin, Theology, Church Lore and Dominion Lore Abilities of level 5 (specialty in "invoking God's aid") respectively. Fulk also speaks Arabic and Greek with near fluency (Ability level 4). Fulk also has the Relic Virtue (a toe-bone from the foot of St. John the Baptist), and the Social Handicap Flaw (outspoken views on equality of the sexes). Fulk's relic grants him a Magic Resistance of 10, and protects him against Infernal creatures with an Infernal Might of 10 or less, in a radius of 10 feet, but grants no miraculous powers.

Appearance: Fulk wears the standard Hospitaller black habit and white skull cap. He has tanned skin and speckled hazel eyes. Deep lines frame his mouth and eyes, indicating both seriousness and a sense of humor.

BROTHER GILBERT OF VITRY, MASTER SERGEANT

Brother Gilbert is a career Hospitaller, a commoner who joined the priory to avoid poverty and ignominy. Unlike many brother-sergeants, Gilbert has spent his entire life in Europe. He believes in God and Christ, but is not as devout or as pious as his fellow brothers — while they pray, he is usually thinking of his day's tasks, or how he can improve his or the priory's status. People like Gilbert are not rare among Hospitallers, but are not common either.

Gilbert has a great deal of responsibility in the Priory of St. Ubaldesca. He is as influential as Constable Hermann or Prior Fulk, although they both outrank him. His primary role is to manage the other brother-sergeants and mercenaries, but he also has responsibility to oversee the activities of the civilian staff not directly attached to another brother. He is also in charge of the confraters (knights who live at and defend the priory, but have not taken vows). Finally, Gilbert is charged with the vital task of procuring weapons and armor, not only for the brothers in the priory, but also for the Central Convent in Acre, and the Hospitallers in Egypt and the rest of the Holy Land.

Due to his great ambition, Gilbert regularly interferes in the local affairs of the town, and advises Constable Hermann on most matters deemed "political." He also coordinates a lot of the priory's trade, and the administration of its various holdings. He works closely with the priory's Treasurer and Drapier, and often goes over their heads or

forces them to go along with what he wants.

Gilbert has conspired with Enrico to enrich the priory by confiscating the property of the characters' covenant — goods that Enrico convinced him belonged to godless wizards. Gilbert is thus likely to try to convince Constable Hermann and Prior Fulk to protect and side with Enrico.

Characteristics: Int +2, Per +1, Pre +1, Com +2, Str -1, Sta 0, Dex 0, Qik 0

Size: 0

Age: 45 (45)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Brother Sergeant; Clear Thinker, Temporal Influence; Ambitious (Major)

Personality Traits: Ambitious +3, Brave +1, Generous -1

Reputations: Influential +3 (local and ecclesiastic)

Combat:

Fist: Init 0, Attack +2, Defense +2, Damage 0

Soak: +0

Abilities: [Area] Lore 3, Artes Liberales 3 (grammar), Awareness 3, Bargain 5 (good deals), Brawl 1 (fists), Church Lore 3 (Hospitallers), Etiquette 5 (nobles), Folk Ken 5 (nobles), Guile 5 (elaborate lies), Intrigue 5 (alliances), Leadership 5 (intimidation), Profession: Administrator 5 (servants)

Equipment: Monk's habit.

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: Gilbert is middle-aged and overweight, with a receding hairline and white hair around his temples (although his head is normally covered by a white skull cap). His eyes are watery and pale. He wears a black monk's habit like all brothers, with the Hospitaller cross over his breast.

Note: These traits do not represent all of Gilbert's Abilities, only those relevant to the scenario.

HENRY THE NOVICE

Henry was orphaned at the tender age of five. He was brought to the Priory of St. Ubaldesca after being found on the street by one of the priory's servants. Henry's Gift made it very difficult for him at the priory — he was distrusted and mistreated for much of his early childhood by the other novices and servants, although most of them have grown accustomed to his Gift now. Nevertheless, Henry is miserable in the priory. If the characters are particularly nice to Henry, he may well want to leave with them; alternatively, if he sees they are particularly violent or terrifying, he would not want to go with them.

As a novice, Henry receives basic education, and some athletic and combat training. If he remained at the priory, he would have the opportunity to become a brother-sergeant, although because of his Gift it is likely he would be encouraged to leave the Hospitallers.

Henry's Gift has granted him the ability to communicate with animals. He is very popular in the stables with the Esquire due to his uncanny knack with getting the horses to do what he wants. He only rarely goes to the hospital as his presence unsettles the patients.

Characteristics: Int +1, Per +1, Pre +1, Com +1, Str 0, Sta +1, Dex +1, Qik +1

Size: -1

Age: 13 (13)

Confidence Score: 0 (0)

Virtues and Flaws: The Gift; Outcast; Animal Ken, Inoffensive to Animals; Low Self-Esteem

Personality Traits: Meek +3, Friendly +1

Reputations: None

Combat:

Fist: Init +1, Attack +3, Defense +3, Damage 0

Knife: Init +1, Attack +4, Defense +3, Damage +2

Soak: +1

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-4), -3 (5-8), -5 (9-12), Incapacitated (13-16), Dead (17+)

Abilities: Animal Handling 3 (horses), Animal Ken 2 (5) (horses), Athletics 2 (climbing), Awareness 2 (urban areas), Brawl 2 (dodging), Etiquette 1 (Hospitallers), Native Language 5 (excuses), Organisation Lore: Hospitallers 2 (prayers), Profession: Stable Boy 3 (grooming), Ride 1 (bareback), Stealth 2 (hiding), Survival 1 (urban areas)

Equipment: Simple clothes, and a small kitchen knife hidden on his person.

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: Henry is a mop-haired boy with a hang-dog expression and lonely eyes. He wears the priory uniform — a black tunic and white hose. The only time he seems happy is when he is in the stables with the horses.

Other Hospitallers

A Hospitaller priory requires a large number of support staff, priests, doctors, brother-sergeants-at-arms, administrators, craftsmen, and brother-sergeants-at-service. The number of Hospitallers who are not brother-knights is quite large, and the Priory of St. Ubaldesca relies on a significant number of mercenaries, confraters (nobles and knights who

have not taken vows but have agreed to defend the priory), donates (nobles wanting to join the Hospitallers but who still need to travel to the Holy Land at their own expense), and nuns to ensure its continued operation. There are also three brother-priests of equal rank to the brother-knights, who are responsible for caring for the souls of those housed in the priory.

There are some 20 brother-knights stationed at the Priory of St. Ubaldesca, with a similar number of brother-sergeants-at-arms. The priory also has five medical experts — two doctors, called *theorici*, and three surgeons, called *practici*. There are 15 sisters — Hospitaller nuns — living in a separate cloister to the Hospitaller brothers, and 20 or so other nurses, who are paid servants of the Order. Several confraters — experienced knights returned from crusades — also live in the priory, but they are not subject to the Hospitaller Rule. The confraters are middle-aged or elderly, but still formidable fighters if need calls (use the Knight companion template in *ArM5*, page 23).

Supporting all of these are 70 or so servants, most of whom are not Hospitallers. Only some ten of the servants are brother-sergeants-at-service — servants who have taken vows — and they are the administrative specialists in the priory.

BROTHER-KNIGHTS

There are 20 brother-knights housed at the priory, all of whom have served to a greater or lesser extent in the Holy Land. Many of the brother-knights are recovering from injuries sustained in battle, or receiving training on how to administer one of the many smaller Hospitaller commanderies or convents that makes up the continent-spanning network of houses and hospitals owned by the Order.

The life of the brother-knights (and the other brothers-at-arms and brother-priests) is governed by a monastic Rule, compiled by the Order's second Master, Raymond de Puy. It is based on the vows of poverty, chastity, obedience, and eating and sleeping communally. Each brother-knight at the priory observes a strict regime of religious services, charitable services, working in the priory's hospital, and military training three days a week.

Characteristics: Int 0, Per 0, Pre 0, Com 0, Str +1, Sta 0, Dex +2, Qik +2

Size: 0

Age: 25 (25)

Virtues and Flaws: Brother Knight; Warrior; Pious

Personality Traits: Pious +4, Brave +3, Chaste +3

Reputations: Crusader +2 (local)

Combat:

Lance and shield (mounted): Init +5, Attack +14, Defense +12, Damage +8

Long sword and shield (on foot): Init +3, Attack +11, Defense +11, Damage +7

Faussar/pole arm (on foot): Init +5, Attack +12, Defense +8, Damage +9

Soak: +6 (armor)

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (+21)

Abilities: Animal Handling 2 (horses), Arabic 2 (giving orders), Athletics 2 (dodging), Awareness 2 (hilly terrain), Bows 1 (crossbows), Brawl 3 (punching), Chirurgy 1 (sword wounds), Church Lore 2 (Hospitallers), Etiquette 3 (clergy), Folk Ken 1 (crusaders), Great Weapon 5 (lance), Holy Land Lore 2 (fortifications), Leadership 2 (during battle), Native Language 5, Ride 5 (combat), Single Weapon 4 (long sword and shield), Survival 2 (desert)

Equipment: Half-mail armor, long sword, lance, and two horses.

Encumbrance: 3 (4)

Appearance: Each brother-knight wears the distinctive black monk's habit of the Hospitallers, with the white eight-pointed cross emblazoned on their breast, and the white coif. When armored, they still wear the habit, but they wear a face-covering helmet instead of the coif.

All of the brother-knights at the Priory of St. Ubaldesca are experienced warriors with time served in the Holy Land or another crusader front (such as the Reconquista in Iberia). Most of the brother-knights have spent most of their adult life as a warrior-monk, having been trained in riding, the use of lance and shield, and the most grueling discipline. Many brother-knights are illiterate, although a significant number are able to read and write Latin, Greek, and Arabic. There are also three brother-knights who have a Leadership score of 4 (with the same speciality), so as to allow them to effectively operate as a trained group.

Crusading warfare is considerably more dangerous than the warfare of Mythic Europe's kings and lords, so the obedience and discipline of Hospitaller brother-knights is legendary. In friendly territory (such as near or in their priory), brother-knights are mostly unarmored, although they almost always wear leg armor. If an alarm sounds, the closest brother-knights to the attack take up arms immediately to await orders or repel the enemy. Those further away muster around the Master, Priory Constable, or chapel. When expecting danger, they put on full armor,

although unless they are under imminent attack they do not wear helmets.

Hospitallers fight in units of 20 to 40 men, with a mix of brother-knights, brother-sergeants, and other supporting soldiers. Most of these units include crossbowmen who fire in concentrated volleys. The most important weapon for brother-knights is the lance, and the mounted cavalry charge. Swords and the distinctive Hospitaller faussar (pole arm or glaive) are mainly used when on foot.

BROTHER-SERGEANTS-AT-ARMS

Brother-sergeants-at-arms are men who have made the same perpetual vows as brother-knights but do not come from a noble background. They live an identical conventual life, but are given considerably more responsibility than their brethren. There are 20 brother-sergeants-at-arms at the Priory of St. Ubaldesca.

Many of the brother-sergeants were brought up by the Hospitallers as novices, and have been trained all their lives to serve the Order. Others have joined due to religious convictions. Debtors and those trying to escape legal punishments have recently been forbidden from joining the Hospitallers, but some brother-sergeants may be former (now reformed) criminals or debtors.

Characteristics: Int 0, Per 0, Pre -1, Com 0, Str +1, Sta +1, Dex +2, Qik +2

Size: 0

Age: 35 (35)

Virtues and Flaws: Brother-sergeant; Warrior; Pious

Personality Traits: Brave +4, Disciplined +2

Reputations: None

Combat:

Sword and shield: Init +4, Attack +13, Defense +13, Damage +7

Faussar/pole arm: Init +5, Attack +10, Defense +7, Damage +9

Crossbow:* Init +7, Attack +12, Defense +2, Damage +7

* Takes 4 minutes to reload (10 combat rounds per minute).

Soak: +6

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (+21)

Abilities: Arabic 2 (mercenaries), Animal Handling 3 (horses), Athletics 4 (massed combat), Awareness 4 (sentry), Bows 4 (crossbows), Brawl 4 (daggers), Church Lore 1 (Hospitallers), Etiquette 3 (Hospitallers), Folk Ken 3 (lies), Great Weapon 4 (Long Spear), Holy Land Lore 2 (watering holes), Leadership 3 (in

combat), Native Language 5 (prayer), Ride 1 (long distance), Single Weapon 6 (long sword), Survival 3 (desert trails)

Equipment: Half-mail armor, long sword, axe, dagger

Encumbrance: 3 (4)

Appearance: Brother-sergeants-at-arms dress in identical black monk habits to brother-knights. The different uniforms for brother-sergeants and brother-knights will have to wait another 40 or so years.

Brother-sergeants-at-arms range in age from experienced veterans to untested, but highly trained, soldiers. Although all brother-knights and brother-sergeants are trained in the use of the crossbow, the priory's store of crossbows is kept under lock and key by the priory's treasurer and is only removed if an attack is expected, or if traveling to war. Note that at least three of the 20 brother-sergeants-at-arms have a Leadership score of 5 (with the same specialization) to allow them to operate in effective trained combat groups.

BROTHER-SERGEANTS-AT-SERVICE

The brother-sergeants-at-service are the specialists of the priory. They have taken the same vows as the brother-knights, but have no military or medical role. There are ten brother-sergeants-at-service, including the master of the stables (esquire), a drapier (in charge of the clothing store), a treasurer and his assistants, a master sergeant (who oversees the lay sergeants), and a master crossbowman. All of the brother-sergeants-at-service report to Hermann.

Although they are subordinate to the Priory Constable, and rank below all other brothers, some of the brothers-in-service are very influential. The Master Sergeant — Gilbert of Vitry — oversees all of the brother-sergeants, mercenaries, staff, and the confraters, although he is not a fighter himself. He is also responsible for seeing that there are sufficient arms and armor available for the priory's soldiers. The Esquire is much respected by the brother-knights for his great wisdom when dealing with horses. The treasurer and the drapier are jointly responsible for ensuring that the priory is supplied with food, medicine, cloth for clothes, bandages and bedding, and all of the other resources and provisions it needs to operate.

BROTHER-PRIESTS

There are three brother-priests in the priory, whose responsibility it is to oversee one of the hospital wards

with a fellow brother-knight, assign beds, and perform a wide range of religious services. Each brother-priest is assisted by five paid servants and a number of sisters to ensure that the physical and spiritual needs of the hospital's patients are seen to. They also assist the surgeons and doctors if needed, although the physicians generally have sole charge of the patients. The priests also administer confession and give communion to all patients as they enter the hospital, baptize babies, and ensure that as many patients as are safely able receive the sacrament on Sundays. Each night, the brother-priests spend an hour praying for the sick.

Characteristics: Int +2, Per 0, Pre +2, Com +2, Str 0, Sta -2, Dex 0, Qik +1

Size: 0

Age: 30 (30)

Virtues and Flaws: Brother Chaplain, Puissant Chirurgy, Pious, Vow

Personality Traits: Chaste +4, Pious +3

Reputations: None

Combat:

Dodge: Init +1, Attack +n/a, Defense +4, Damage n/a

Fist: Init +1, Attack +2, Defense +3, Damage +0

Soak: -2 (Stamina)

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (+21)

Abilities: Artes Liberales 2 (writing), Awareness 2 (ambushes), Brawl 2 (dodging), Charm 3 (patients), Church Lore 3 (Hospitaller Rule), Concentration (surgery), Chirurgy 4+2 (fevers), Etiquette 3 (crusader leaders), Folk Ken 3 (patients), Holy Land Lore 4 (Hospitals), Latin 3 (prayers), Leadership 4 (congregations), Medicine 2 (bleeding), Native Language 5 (religious use), Profession: Scribe 3 (medical texts), Theology 3 (justifying the crusades)

Equipment: None.

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: Brother-priests are subject to the same discipline as brother-knights. They therefore dress in identical black monk habits and white coifs to brother-knights, although they do not wear armor (except on battle-fronts) or carry weapons.

The brother-priests are directly accountable to the Hospitaller's regional Prior, then to the Conventual Prior, the Hospitaller's Master, and finally to the Pope. They can thus exercise spiritual authority over the Dominion Aura in the priory, and its surrounds.

SISTERS

There are some fifteen sisters of the Order — Hospitaller nuns — housed in a separate convent to the main priory complex. Most of the nuns are elderly widows, although there are some younger sisters. The primary activity of the nuns of the Priory of St. Ubaldesca is to live a contemplative life of prayer. Although they have some duties to assist the brother-priests in their duties, none of the nuns perform menial tasks, such as nursing, teaching, or labor of any kind. Their role is mainly to oversee the activities of the kitchen and hospital. Governing the nuns is the prioress Toscana, who answers to Prior Fulk.

PHYSICIANS

There are five physicians at the Priory of St. Ubaldesca — three surgeons and two doctors — and none of them are members of the Knights Hospitaller. All five live in the town, but are paid by the priory and are on permanent call in the case of an emergency with one of the patients — there are cells available if they need to sleep at the priory. The five physicians at the priory are quite skilled, and have been trained either in the Holy Land, Greece, or Iberia. For details of medical treatment, see *Art and Academe*.

The stats below are for the three priory surgeons. For the two doctors, simply swap Puissant Chirurgy and the Chirurgy Ability with Medicine.

Characteristics: Int +2, Per +2, Pre 0, Com 0, Str 0, Sta 0, Dex +1, Qik 0

Virtues and Flaws: Clerk, Puissant Chirurgy, Compassionate

Abilities: Artes Liberales 2 (humors), Awareness 3 (illnesses), Chirurgy 5+2 (boils), Medicine 2 (bleeding)

Equipment: Medical tools, bleeding cup, medical texts.

Appearance: The five physicians dress in simple black robes and white smocks when in the hospital. They are all middle-aged men of varying European nationalities.

NOVICES

The Hospitallers have charitably adopted abandoned and orphaned children, and also raise several children that have been attached to priory to become brother-sergeants or brother-knights. There are seven novices — children raised by the Order — who are known as the "children of St. John," three boys (including Henry) and four girls. All of the children, both boys and girls, are given a basic education, and when they reach the age of fifteen they

are given the opportunity to leave the priory, or stay as a brother or sister. The male novices wear black tunics and white leggings, while the girl novices wear black dresses. They all wear white head-coverings (coifs or wimples).

SERVANTS AND MERCENARIES

A small army of servants works in the priory — in the kitchens, stables, or hospital — assisting with the patients, preparing food, making or mending clothing and equipment, or keeping the priory clean. There are some 50 servants who work in the refectory and hospital, and a further ten mercenaries. One of the most respected groups of servants is the priory's five washerwomen, who receive a great deal of courtesy from brothers and servants alike. The priory often takes on additional servants if there is a rush of work, or if the number of patients increases. Most of the servants are women — middle-aged wives or widows who live in the town — although there are some men, particularly in the stables or working as more-educated support staff for the brother-sergeants-at-service. A few servants are lay members of the Hospitallers — they live at the priory and have taken a vow to support the Order — but most are not, and live in the town. These stats are for the mercenaries.

Characteristics: Int -1, Per 0, Pre 0, Com 0, Str +1, Sta +1, Dex +2, Qik +2

Size: 0

Age: 31 (31)

Virtues and Flaws: Wanderer; Warrior; Avaricious (Minor)

Personality Traits: Greedy +3, Brave +2

Combat:

Axe and shield: Init +3, Attack +11, Defense +9, Damage +7

Faussar/pole arm: Init +5, Attack +11, Defense +8, Damage +9

Fist: Init -1, Attack +7, Defense +7, Damage +1

Sword and shield: Init +4, Attack +12, Defense +11, Damage +7

Soak: +5 (armor, Stamina)

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: [Area] Lore 2 (war-zones), Athletics 3 (running), Awareness 3 (in combat), Bows 4 (crossbows), Brawl 4 (punching), Great Weapon 4 (pole arm), [Local] Language 2 (understanding orders), Native Language 5 (tall-tales), Single Weapon 5 (sword)

Equipment: Sword, reinforced leather armor.

Encumbrance: 1 (2)

Appearance: There is a remarkable diversity among the mercenaries serving the Hospitallers. They come



from all corners of Christendom, from England to Iberia, Germany to Greece. Mercenaries must arm and armor themselves, so their equipment is of a lower quality than the Hospitallers'. Most have axes and reinforced leather, although some may have better quality armor.

Townfolk

The most important characters from the town are described here.

BISHOP CRISTOFORO

The town's bishop is Cristoforo, a deeply conservative religious leader who was imposed on the town by Rome against the wishes of Lord Thomas. Cristoforo is often in dispute with the priory, particularly with Prior Fulk. A few years ago, after Fulk gave communion to a local who had been excommunicated by Cristoforo, there was an almost complete breakdown in relationships. As a result, the priory stopped funding the renovation of the town's church, which has seen all building works cease. Cristoforo is currently fundraising to complete the construction, and has increased the tithe owed by the townfolk to do so.

Cristoforo carries a relic on his person, which grants him a Magic Resistance of 10 and protects him against infernal creatures with an Infernal Might of 10 or less, in a radius of 10 feet, but grants no miraculous powers.

GEOFFREY THE JOLLY, TOWN MAYOR

The town's mayor — Geoffrey the Jolly — is elected by a council of the 50 wealthiest citizens. He has governed the town for almost a decade, and has presided over its rapid growth. He is closely allied to Lord Thomas — a relationship that helps ensure his regular re-election. Geoffrey also regularly requests the counsel of Constable Hermann on important matters, and is indebted to this assistance.

LORD THOMAS

Lord Thomas is the noble on whose land the town is built. He is happy for the town to govern itself, so long as he receives the rents he is due. Thomas has a great deal of ambition, and wants to climb the aristocratic ranks. He spends a great deal of the money he receives from his

lands currying favor with more-powerful lords, particularly in his search to find a new wife (his former wife died while giving birth).

ENRICO, THE MERCHANT FROM VENICE

Enrico is the merchant who is responsible for the covenant's goods being confiscated by the Knights Hospitaller. A Venetian merchant, his primary allegiance is to Venice and his family. Enrico has a prior relationship with the player covenant, as his Venetian connections allow him to access Mythic Europe's major trade routes — and procure rare and valuable goods that could be of great value to Hermetic covenants. He has contacts both among the wealthy townfolk and more unsavory types living there, although his relationship with the priory has put him at odds with the town's bishop.

Recently Enrico grew worried about his relationship with wizards, particularly as this has drawn the attention of rivals in Venice, who accused him of consorting with warlocks. So as to sever his ties with the covenant, Enrico offered the latest supply of the covenant's most precious items to the priory, by way of donation to the Hospitaller's crusader effort. He conspired with Brother Gilbert, the priory's supply master, saying that the goods were originally the property of pagans and atheists. Thus, he is able to betray the covenant, have the Hospitallers do his dirty-work, and avoid repercussions in Venice.

Having aided the Hospitallers in seizing the covenant's property, Enrico is now in the good graces of Brother Gilbert. The Venetian is using this good relationship to engineer a monopoly in trade and transport with the Hospitallers of the Priory of St Ubaldesca. He believes that his closeness with the priory will protect him from any repercussions from the covenant, and will also ensure his reputation in Venice is no longer besmirched.

Enrico lives in a large townhouse with attached warehouse near the market with his mistress and young illegitimate son (see map later). His wife and legitimate children still live in Venice. As a wealthy merchant, he has many servants, some of whom can double as guards if necessary (use the Hospitaller Mercenary statistics to represent the guards).

Characteristics: Int +2, Per +1, Pre +2, Com +1, Str -1, Sta 0, Dex -1, Qik 0

Size: 0

Age: 47 (47)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Merchant; Puissant Ability (Bargain), Social Contacts, Well Travelled; Ambitious (Major)

Personality Traits: Avaricious +3, Shrewd +3, Sociable +2

Reputations: Wealthy merchant +3 (local)

Combat:

Fist: Init 0, Attack +3, Defense +3, Damage -1

Soak: +0

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Arabic 2 (bargaining), [Area] Lore 2 (trade routes), Artes Liberales 3 (accounting), Awareness 3 (dodgy goods), Bargain 6+2 (foreigners), Brawl 2 (fists), Carouse 3 (gambling), Charm 3 (first impressions), Etiquette 3 (nobles), Folk Ken 6 (lies), German 2 (bargaining), Greek 2 (bargaining), Guile 4 (feigning surprise), Intrigue 4 (trade alliances), Italian [Venetian] 5 (gossip), Italy Lore 3 (Venice), Music 1 (songs), Profession: Merchant 6 (accounting), Swim 2 (marshes)

Equipment: Luxurious clothes.

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: Enrico wears expensive robes, made of colorful silks and embroidered cloths. He is middle-aged, and his black hair is thinning and greying, although his deep brown eyes are still bright.

Enrico's contacts in Venice give him access to all manner of exotic luxury items much prized by Hermetic magi. Enrico is a very wealthy merchant with a lot of disposable income — he does not have the Wealthy Virtue, however, because his wealth does not give him additional leisure time.

Hermetic Magi

Only one NPC magi is included in this scenario, and that is Eleanor of Mercere.

ELEANOR OF MERCERE

Eleanor is an unGifted Redcap, well known in the Tribunal. She fell ill with a fever while traveling near to the town where the Priory of St. Ubaldesca is located and almost died. She was found by the servants of the Hospitallers and brought to the hospital where she has spent a month regaining his strength. Eleanor has a great debt to pay to the Priory of St. Ubaldesca, which most certainly saved her life.

She has also struck up a friendship with a number of the priory's brothers and staff, including Prior Fulk and her physician. Eleanor is very impressed with the Hospitallers, the care they show for the weakest members of society, and the discipline and dignity of the Hospitallers themselves. She has a great deal of compassion for the poor and homeless — she spent her early years on the streets as a homeless orphan — and believes that the Hospitallers do a great deal of good.

While recovering at the hospital, Eleanor noticed that one of the novices, the orphaned child Henry, possesses all the characteristics of The Gift. She has started discussions with Prior Fulk about the possibility of adopting Henry, so that she can then ensure the Gifted boy is brought into the Order of Hermes. She has tried to befriend the boy, and years of experience as a Redcap mean that she is able to force herself to be nice to him, and ignore her disquiet.

Eleanor takes a dim view of any group of magi or their servants who outright attack the priory. She feels a sense of loyalty to the priory for the aid they have given her. She intervenes to protect the patients of the hospital, and the other inhabitants of the priory, if it appears that they are in danger. Eleanor is quietly religious — she believes in God and Christ, but has had little interaction with the Church.

Eleanor has the trust of a number of the Hospitallers, so

Eleanor's Magical Devices

Eleanor of Mercere carries the following items:

RING OF HIGHLAND KEN

InTe 25

Pen 0, constant effect

R: Touch, D: Sun, T: Vision

This ring, when worn, works as the Hermetic spell *Eyes of the Treacherous Terrain*, ArM5 page 153. This ring was a gift from her parents when she completed her Gauntlet.

ST. PETER'S RHOMBUS

PeVi 35

Pen 0, 1/day

R: Voice, D: Mom, T: Room

As per *Wind of Mundane Silence*, ArM5 page 161, with a level 15 effect. This magical device was named for St. Peter, who according to legend dispelled the magic of Simon Magus. The rhombus must be whirled or spun in the air to activate the device. It was given to Eleanor by a grateful arch-magus several months before she became ill.

could be a potential ally of the characters if they discover her presence and ask for her assistance. If told by the player characters of the confiscation of the covenant's property by the Hospitallers, she offers her help in trying negotiate a settlement. She can get the characters an audience with Prior Fulk for example. Whether, and how strongly, she takes the characters' side depends on their demeanor and attitude towards her and the priory. If they are particularly contemptuous of the poor or sick in the hospital, she is less likely to be sympathetic to the characters and their cause, and may even warn Prior Fulk.

Characteristics: Int +1 Per +2, Pre +1, Com +2, Str 0, Sta 0, Dex 0, Qik 0

Size: 0

Age: 30 (30)

Warping Score: 1 (4)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Redcap; Skinchanger (lynx), Faerie Blood: Sidhe (Minor), Magic Sensitivity, Second Sight; Greater Malediction (must always keep her word or disaster will strike her); Fear (being restrained), Lesser Malediction (must give away all wealth she cannot carry or suffer from debilitating trembling), Overconfident (Minor), Susceptibility to Faerie Power

Personality Traits: Compassionate +3, Overconfident +3, Friendly +2, Honorable +1

Reputations: Redcap +3 (Order of Hermes)

Combat:

Claws (as lynx): Init +1, Attack +7, Defense +8, Damage +2

Dagger: Init 0, Attack +4, Defense +2, Damage +3

Fist: Init 0, Attack +2, Defense +2, Damage +0

Soak: +0

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (+21)

Abilities: [Area] Lore 4 (interesting news), Artes Liberales 1 (sounding informed), Athletics 3 (running), Awareness 3 (traps), Bargain 2 (quick deals), Brawl 2 (claws), Charm 4 (peasants), Code of Hermes 2 (covenants), Etiquette 2 (superiors), Faerie Lore 2 (trods), Guile 2 (lying to magi), Latin 5 (long messages), Legerdemain 2 (filching), Magic Lore 3 (dangerous areas), Magic Sensitivity 3 (when concentrating), Native Language 5 (storytelling), Order of Hermes Lore 3 (covenant locations), Second Sight 3 (when concentrating), Stealth 2 (as lynx), Survival 4 (as lynx)

Equipment: Lynx belt, leather satchel, dagger, sling.

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: Eleanor is a sandy-haired young woman with a slender build and brilliant green eyes. She is usually

dressed as a man, in a short green tunic, dark pants, and sturdy leather boots. She wears a belt of tawny fur across her shoulder. In the priory hospital she is dressed in a white patient's gown, although she still wears the fur belt beneath the gown.

Eleanor can turn into a lynx thanks to her Skinchanger Virtue. Her traits when transformed as a lynx are modified as follows (for more details, see *Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*, pages 38-43): Increase Dex and Qik to +2, decrease Size to -1, gain a +3 bonus to all rolls involving jumping, when using the senses of smell and hearing, and gain a +2 to all Hunt rolls. Eleanor would only transform into a lynx while in an urban area if her life were severely threatened and she needed to escape.

Note that due to her illness, Eleanor is recovering from the equivalent of a Medium Wound. She is almost better, with only a few weeks left to her recovery, but still suffers from a -3 wound penalty.

Expected Sequence of Play

The following details the scenario's possible events.

Confiscation

To start the scenario, the covenant's property is confiscated by the Hospitallers. The Hospitallers are able to do so with the connivance of Enrico the merchant, who directs them to where the property is being transported or stored. Enrico does not personally guide the Hospitallers, however.

Depending on the storyguide's preference, the confiscation could take place at Enrico's warehouse, or en route to the covenant.

VIOLENT CONFISCATION

To involve the players in this stage, the troupe could play grogs who are charged with ensuring that the covenant's precious property safely reaches the magi. In this case, a group of brother-knights, brother-sergeants-at-arms, and mercenaries bursts upon the covenant's goods (the number

Scenario Options

There are five options presented in this scenario for the troupe to get their property back.

VISITING ENRICO

The characters may decide to focus on Enrico, and try to convince him that he should retrieve the goods from the Hospitallers, replace the goods, or assist the characters in dealing with the Hospitallers. Enrico is not inclined to assist magi or their companions any more, but appropriate magic, threats, or blackmail could ensure his cooperation.

NEGOTIATION

The characters can negotiate with the priory's leaders, Hermann and Fulk. The Hospitallers are not disposed to giving up something they

believe is the rightful property of the priory. However, if the characters are influential in their own right, are willing to offer something to the priory as compensation, or have silver tongues, then the priory would be willing to do a deal.

STEALTH

Hermetic magic can make people almost impossible to detect, and can facilitate easy access to even the most secure forts. The characters may decide to simply steal back their property under cover of magic.

BLACKMAIL

The Hospitallers have unusual views and practices, and Prior Fulk is known to hold less-than-orthodox views. With the local bishop in dispute with the priory, the characters

may find some influential support for getting their property back. They may try to blacken the priory's name, especially regarding the unusual status that women are accorded — accusations of fornication between the male and female Hospitallers could be enough for the priory's leaders to give over the characters' property.

ATTACK

If breaking the Code of Hermes is no barrier, or if the characters believe they can get away with it with few (or no) witnesses, they could attack the priory. The Hospitallers are formidable foes, even for magi. The consequences of this could extend beyond being Marched at the next Tribunal, and could potentially see the Hospitallers turn against the covenant, or even the entire Order of Hermes.

of Hospitallers should be determined by the storyguide). There is an opportunity for combat here, but the Hospitallers are heavily armed and armored, and should outnumber the grogs and so that they can quickly subdue them. The Hospitallers are not intending to kill anyone — merely to acquire the goods — but they are ruthless and efficient. They cannot be bargained or negotiated with at this point; no-one present has that sort of authority. The confiscated property is brought to the priory. The storyguide should ensure that the Hospitallers are more than a match for the grogs, if this part of the scenario is played through; if the grogs win, the players face a very different problem.

Grogs who are seriously injured (any grog sustaining a Heavy wound) are brought back to the priory's hospital and cared for. A surgeon accompanies the brother-knights and performs battlefield surgery on anyone that needs it, both grogs and Hospitallers. This may confuse the players — Hospitallers provide medical assistance to everyone, even enemies and non-Christians. Depending on the timeline for the recovery of any injured grogs, they may still be at the priory's hospital when the main group of characters come looking for their missing property.

CONFISCATION IN THE BACKGROUND

If the troupe decides not to play through this section, then the characters at the covenant receive news that a very precious shipment of laboratory equipment, or something else of great value to the covenant, has been taken by a group of Hospitallers. The messenger relays the details — that the Hospitallers suddenly burst in and seized the goods. Wounded covenfolk were tended to. No explanation was given by the Hospitallers for their actions.

Responding to the Theft

Having learned of their stolen goods, the characters must determine how to ensure their return. This will probably involve a team of companions and magi traveling to the priory. It is unlikely that the characters know much about these Knights Hospitaller, their agenda, or why they have confiscated the covenant's property, although they may well know a great deal about the order in general. Depending on the personalities involved, the characters may want

to investigate the motives of the Hospitallers, the extent of their defensive (or offensive) capabilities, or try to determine the location of their property. Alternatively, bellicose characters may want to go in with Pilums of Fire ablaze to teach the impudent Hospitallers not to meddle with magi of the Order of Hermes.

Visiting the Town

There are two or three main areas that are relevant to this scenario, as they relate to the covenant's lost property: Enrico the merchant's warehouse, and the town's docks or marketplace. A map is provided of the town earlier in this chapter, with the location of the priory and Enrico's warehouse marked.

Most of the town has a Dominion aura of 2. The church and its graveyard have a Dominion Aura of 3 (5 near the altar). The town's aura has a Loyal Temper with a +1 rating, which does not affect the priory; technically the auras of the priory and the town are in Schism (see *Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 41), although this has no impact on the scenario. The Loyal Temper promotes dedicated, faithful, humble, and trusting Personality Traits, and opposes those associated with Pride (such as arrogance, rebelliousness, suspiciousness, and vanity).

CUSTOMIZING THE TOWN

The assumption in this scenario is that the town is medium-sized with docks, a large market, and a cathedral. However, the details of the town can be changed significantly affecting the scenario. For example, Geoffrey the mayor may be merged with Lord Thomas if, in the area in Mythic Europe your saga is set, towns do not have

independence from direct aristocratic rule. Similarly, although many towns in the center of Mythic Europe, such as Italy or France, have bishops, many towns in England, Germany, or Iberia may not be important enough to have their own bishop (or may not be wealthy enough to have a cathedral). Bishop Christoforo thus may be demoted to simply being an influential priest, or even a powerful abbot. It is not necessary for Enrico to be Venetian. Although Venetians can be found on most Mediterranean trade routes, if the scenario is set inland or in the north, then Enrico's nationality may need to be changed. Finally, although the scenario is set in a coastal town, it could easily take place in a town on a river or major in-land trade route.

The Priory of St. Ubaldesca

The priory is generic enough to fit into most large medieval towns or small cities. Most cities and large towns would have had a Hospitaller priory, hospital, or convent, although the further away from the Holy Land (or Iberia) one travels, the less fortified the priory would be, and the fewer combat-ready troops would be present.

The Priory of St. Ubaldesca is a partly fortified complex near the center of town. Its primary purposes are to serve as a massive hospital for the town's poor, and to provide storage for the many horses, weapons, suits of armor, rolls of cloth, and other goods essential to the continued crusading effort. Because of this role, the defenses are not as sophisticated as some of the Hospitaller castles in the Holy Land, although Middle Eastern architectural knowledge is present in many of the newer parts of the priory.

The Priory of St. Ubaldesca is slightly unusual in the large number of brother-knights and brother-sergeants-at-arms. This is due to the high rank of Priory Constable

Time is Running Out

There is no inbuilt timeline to this scenario; the troupe could continue to talk and negotiate with Enrico, the townsfolk, and the priory for as long as they desire. At the storyguide's option, urgency can be added to the scenario to hurry along the action.

The Hospitallers could intend to destroy, split up, or sell the covenant's property. If the property is a collection of books, the priory could

intend to break up the collection and send them to different parts of Europe. Similarly, if the property is jewelry or precious metal, the priory could plan on melting it down to make bullion to pay off debts, or send to Acre.

Enrico could intend to return to Venice for the summer or winter months, thus placing himself outside the immediate reach of

the characters. By the time the characters reach the town, he could be hours away from boarding a ship that takes him far away.

Prior Fulk or another Hospitaller could be about to leave to travel to Acre, along with part or all of the covenant's property. Again, this could be just hours or days after the characters arrive at the town.

Hermann, which grants him the privilege of a combat-ready group of companion brother-knights and brother-sergeant-at-arms. Additionally, the size of the hospital, and the wealth of the priory's holdings, means that it employs more staff and mercenaries than most others would outside of the Holy Land.

The defensive strengths of the priory have been kept to a minimum to allay the fears of the local lay authorities. Nevertheless, Hermann's influence has meant that the priory is still a formidable defensive structure. The priory's keep — location of the Hospitaller's treasury — in particular is a heavily fortified structure.

The largest buildings in the complex are the refectory where patients' food is prepared, the hospital itself, and a huge stable. The dwellings for the brothers and other associates of the Hospitallers are modest. The complex is walled, although the gates are rarely closed. There are renovations currently taking place to expand the size of the hospital. There is also a private cemetery, reserved for brothers (and sisters) of the Order, and for wealthy donors.

The entire priory is one of the cleaner areas of the town — rubbish and refuse is removed from public areas, and there is a primitive sewer that flows out of the priory into a nearby stream. Numerous animals are kept near the refec-

tory — pigs, chickens and goats — to provide milk, eggs, and meat.

The Priory of St. Ubaldesca is supported by a large number of farms and industries around the town. Indeed, the Hospitallers are the third largest landowner after the local lord and bishop. They supplement this income by acting as the local bank and investing in trade, and they also run a long-distance communications service. The Hospitallers, as a centralized order, are in regular communication with priories and commanderies throughout Mythic Europe and the Holy Land. For a fee, they also carry the messages of others to these towns and cities.

The Dominion aura in the priory varies from 3 to 5. Most of the priory complex has a rating of 4, with the refectory and stables having a Dominion of 3, and the chapel having an aura of 5. The aura has a Kind Temper (see *Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 38-39), which invokes the feelings of love and goodwill in people. This has the effect of giving all people in the aura a "Divine Personality Trait" of "Kind" with a rating of +1, which adds to all Personality Trait rolls involving kindness, care, mercy, forgiveness, and generosity. It also acts as a penalty to all Personality Trait rolls that are associated with Envy (such as jealousy, cruelty, gossip, and gruffness).



REFECTORY

The largest building in the priory, the refectory is a massive kitchen and food-store capable of feeding hundreds of souls. The refectory has a high ceiling held aloft by arches and two chimneys, which stand over two massive ovens. The ovens burn day and night, baking hundreds of loaves of bread and cooking large cauldrons filled with wholesome stews. Scores of servants, cooks, and kitchen-hands constantly bustle in and around the refectory to prepare the meals of the Hospitallers and their patients.

In the refectory are several long tables — enough for 50 or so people to comfortably sit and eat. The Hospitaller brothers (knights and sergeants) gather here twice a day for their meals (although some brothers are occasionally granted the privilege of eating alone in their cell). The sisters eat at the same time as the brothers, although their eating area is demarcated from that of the brothers. This area is separate from the kitchens.

The menu staples for the Priory of St. Ubaldesca include cooked meat — pork, mutton, lamb, and chicken — fish, eggs, rye and chickpeas, bread, and wine. Also regularly served, depending on the season, are a range of fruits and vegetables, including imported delicacies such as cucumbers, figs, radishes, chestnuts, and lemons.

The refectory is divided between the kitchens and the storage areas. Two large ovens are installed in the ground, and are almost as deep as a fully-grown adult. Wooden tables and benches for preparing the food surround the ovens. There are baskets, barrels, and boxes of all shapes and sizes filled with all manner of foods, and herbs and vegetables hang on hooks from the ceiling. Most of the food, however, is stored in large rooms that are set into the earth, so as to keep things cool and out of the heat. There is enough food stored at the priory to feed a small army for months — and more than enough to feed the hundred or so Hospitallers, their servants, and their patients. Behind the refectory is an area used for slaughtering and butchering animals; the waste drains into the priory's sewer.

HOSPITAL

The priory's hospital is an enormous, remarkably decorated building, divided into several wards. There are separate wards for women, an obstetrics ward, a ward for delirious patients, for surgery, and for those recovering from surgery.

Over 300 patients are treated by the Priory of St. Ubaldesca each year, and at any given time there may be upwards of 50 patients in the hospital, including pregnant women,

infants, the poor and destitute, and injured peasants and craftsmen. The Priory of St. Ubaldesca is a very successful hospital, with only 15 or so patients dying each year on average (more during an epidemic).

Each of the patients is treated to his own bed, with a luxurious feather mattress and regularly changed sheets and blankets. Each patient has his own candle, and each ward is lit by three lamps that are kept burning by vigilant servants.

Recovering in the priory's hospital is Eleanor of Mercere, an unGifted Redcap, who recently fell sick with fever.

There is a subterranean passage leading from the hospital to the cells.

STABLES

There is room for over 100 horses in this stable, but there are less than 30 stabled here at any given time. Most of the horses suitable for battle are sent to the Holy Land, and only a small number are retained at the priory itself.

Of the 30 horses stabled, half are chargers (war horses) and half are hacks (riding horses). There are also a few pack animals — mules and ponies.

The stables are run by the Esquire, a brother-sergeant-in-service, who has a team of stable-boys and other servants to ensure that the chargers and riding horses are kept in peak condition.

The stable is where the characters are likely to meet Henry the novice.

CHAPEL

The spiritual centre of the priory, and also the first destination of all brothers-at-arms in the event of an attack, the chapel is a relatively modest chamber large enough to comfortably contain all the Hospitaller brothers and senior donates and confraters. At the eastern end of the chapel is the altar. There is a small bell in the chapel roof, which is rung twice a day by one of the brother-priests to summon the brothers to their meal.

The chapel is used for religious ceremonies such as funerals for deceased patients, for Mass, and for other significant events. It is where brothers gather if the priory is attacked (brothers close to the attackers first fend off the attackers, but retreat to the chapel).

The chapel bell has been blessed by the Hospitaller's supreme religious leader, the Conventual Prior, with the baptizing hand of St. John the Baptist. When it tolls, it forces all creatures with an Infernal Might score of 10 or less to flee the priory for an entire day.

HALL

The Hospitaller Hall is where the brothers and sisters gather several times a day for their communal prayers. It is a large room filled with benches for the brothers and sisters to sit on. There is a pedestal at the front of the hall (opposite the door) where the Prior or Constable stands to lead the prayers. Many of the brothers and sisters of the priory are illiterate, so they simply say their *paternosters* (the Lord's Prayer in Latin), which they have learned by rote.

CELLS

The communal sleeping quarters for the brother-knights and brother-sergeants, the cells consist of both a large sleeping area and several individual rooms. The building is attached to the hall and keep, and is very close to the chapel. Most brothers sleep together in a common dormitory. Only the Priory Constable and the Prior have their own sleeping cells. All brothers are required to be silent when in their cells and no brother may sleep naked.

There are several empty cells, to allow certain brothers the privilege of eating on their own. The empty cells are also used to imprison unruly brothers, or to house extra patients if the hospital becomes full. The brother-knights and brother-sergeants sleep separately, in different communal chambers.

The subterranean tunnel from the hospital leads to the cells. The tunnel is used by brothers to reach the hospital.

KEEP

The priory's keep is the storehouse and treasury. A small building, it is also the most heavily fortified, with thick walls and gates. Unlike most of the other buildings in the priory, the keep is two stories, with a basement.

Most of the priory's administrative work is done from the keep. The top story is used by the Constable and treasurer to manage the priory's accounts, properties, and other interests. The ground level is where most of the valuable belongings of the priory are stored. There is a small chamber where the priory's store of crossbows is kept under lock and key. The basement is very small, and is used to store the cash used by the priory to redeem bank-credit certificates that are issued by other Hospitaller priories.

The keep is where the covenant's property is being kept, until it can be sold, or traded for something useful to the priory.

Contrary to popular rumor, there is not a treasure-

trove of riches and wealth stored in the keep. There is enough cash — silver pennies — to guarantee most promissory notes from the Hospitallers' banking activities, but most of the wealth of the Knights Hospitaller exists in the assets they control: farms, businesses, property, arms and armor, horses, and trade-goods (such as spices, cloths and silk, sugar and other luxury items). These are difficult to liquidate, or are stored in warehouses near the town's docks and marketplace.

NUNNERY

The nunnery is simply a group of residential cells for the priory's sisters, separate from the cells of the brothers. Most of the sisters sleep communally, like the brothers, although there are individual cells for the Prioress Toscana and a few others. The sisters are most likely to be found in the nunnery if they are not performing their duties in the hospital or refectory. The priory's sisters have the same religious time-table as the brothers — they share common prayer and eating times.

INVESTIGATING THE PRIORY

Arriving in town, the characters can quickly find out where the Priory of St. Ubaldesca is located. The Hospitallers have a good reputation in the town and its surrounds for their charitable work in looking after the sick, poor, and orphans. A Perception + (local) Area Lore roll against an East Factor of 9 gives the characters some basic information about the Knights Hospitaller, and their activities. Detailed investigation at the town by talking to locals reveals more.

The priory is a major economic power in the town, and Priory Constable Hermann is very influential with the local lay and church authorities. A number of farms around the town, and many buildings in town, such as warehouses, belong to the priory. The priory acts as a bank for merchants and nobles, and there are rumors that the treasury holds chests of gold, precious gems, and rolls of silks. Of course, no one has ever successfully gained entrance to the treasury.

Like all Hospitaller priories, the Priory of St. Ubaldesca spends most of its time raising money to pay for horses, weapons, and armor to be sent to the Holy Land, and to pay for the exorbitant costs of running its hospital. Observation of the priory, or questioning of locals, reveals that there are roughly 20 brother-knights and a similar number of brother-sergeants. There are additional soldiers stationed at the priory, although they are not Hospitallers.

The priory is open all hours of daylight. Scores of

people go through the gates each hour, carting goods, assisting the sick or lame, or going about the many chores required for the priory to function. There are guards on the gates, but they are neither heavily armed nor particularly attentive. (Of course, if the Hospitallers are expecting something, such as an attack from the characters, then the guards are heavily armed and armored.)

EXPLORING THE PRIORY

If the characters try to walk through the gates, the guards are likely to stop them — especially so if they have The Gift — to ask them their business. A meeting with the Constable or other senior brother is unlikely unless the characters have a very good excuse. Gifted characters find this difficult. The Blatantly Gifted find it impossible, as the guards bar them from entering the priory, and send for the Master Sergeant to deal with them.

Of course, they immediately offer any sick members of the troupe a bed in the hospital; they also offer food or clothes to the characters if they appear tired, hungry, or poverty-stricken. Sick (or shamming) characters are taken to the hospital, where they are given confession and communion immediately by a brother-priest, who also assigns them to a bed. Servants see to their comfort immediately, and a physician visits them within several minutes of their arrival. Gifted (and Blatantly Gifted) characters are kept separate from other patients.

In the hospital, the characters meet the Redcap Eleanor (see ArM5 page 19 for rules on reputation, if they have not already met Eleanor). She may also recognize them, and in any case engages them in conversation to find out what they are doing at the priory.

When in the priory, the characters also notice the novice Henry. Companions or magi who do not have their Parma Magica active will notice The Gift in him. Henry is found in or around the stables, where he is tending to the horses. Observant characters notice that he seems to speak to the horses, and they appear to do what he asks.

Guards or servants prevent characters from entering

buildings that are not open to the public (every building except for the hospital and chapel). Trying to force their way in creates a stir, and several brother-in-arms (either knights or sergeants) and mercenaries quickly respond to a ruckus. If caught, the characters are asked to leave, and forcefully ejected if they refuse. Trying to enter private buildings, whether stealthily or not, causes the Hospitallers to be immediately distrustful of the characters if they are caught, and they will be watched by a servant or guard for the remaining time they spend in or near the priory.

Magically invisible characters are, of course, able to wander the priory at will.

Visiting Enrico

The characters may decide to visit Enrico, the merchant who supplied the covenant's luxury and specialist goods. Enrico can be found at his warehouse. If confronted by the characters he is terrified, but claims to know nothing of the covenant's stolen property, other than it was sent to the covenant as agreed.

ENRICO'S HOUSE & WAREHOUSE

Enrico's warehouse is also his residence — a richly decorated house with large storage rooms attached. It is located on the edge of the wealthier area of town. Enrico is rich enough to employ a number of servants and staff to manage his home and the warehouse, in addition to servants he hires to take his trade goods from town to town. His mistress and illegitimate son also live here. Most servants are for manual labor, but he also employs a number of ruffians for security.

THREATENING ENRICO

Mentem magic or sufficient threats (a Communication + Leadership + stress die versus Enrico's Avaricious Person-

Enrico's Motives

Enrico fears the repercussions of his relationship with the covenant for himself and his family in Venice. Rival merchants in Venice are starting to use his relationship with wizards to blacken his name. He has decided to cut off his relationship with the covenant, and simultaneously ingratiate himself with the Hospitallers

— a powerful ally in his family's political struggles in Venice. Assisting in the return of the covenant's goods would require him to admit to Gilbert and the Priory's leader that he lied to them and put the priory in danger. He is thus more willing to face the wrath of the covenant than the Hospitallers.

ality trait + a stress die) will extract from Enrico the truth — that he conspired to help the Hospitallers confiscate the covenant's property — although he is obviously loathe to risk his relationship with the priory. Enrico will first try to lie, claim ignorance, or suggest that the warriors who confiscated the covenant's property were impersonating Hospitallers. Intellego Mentem magic will reveal that Enrico is lying, and Rego Mentem magic can easily force him to tell the characters the truth if they cannot simply read it from his mind.

If the characters demand that Enrico replace the goods with equivalents, he protests that he is unable to do so — the specific goods will require many months to import (he has none in stock), and the characters will need to make another payment. The difficulty of replacing the goods should be genuine. Enrico also claims to not have any money to compensate the covenant for their loss. This is of course not true: Enrico is fabulously wealthy, and could easily compensate the covenant — although the majority of his assets are locked up in trade goods and investments in town and in Venice. The characters may alternatively try to force Enrico to buy back the confiscated property from the Hospitallers himself. If forced to, he will agree to this; however, he will again betray the characters to Brother Gilbert and the priory, and seek

their protection.

There is also a good chance that the characters will want to avenge their loss on Enrico. Although he is protected by a number of thugs, a determined assault will demoralize his bodyguards and make them flee. Enrico is at the mercy of the characters. He will plead for his life, and make any number of promises to try to escape.

When he is able, Enrico immediately sends a servant to warn the Hospitallers of what has transpired. The Hospitallers would certainly provide some protection to Enrico if he told them he was being threatened by wizards, although this would consist of housing him and his family in the priory until the threat went away.

Negotiation

There are several options available in negotiation with the Hospitallers, some more fruitful than others. The characters may, for example, seek assistance from the local secular authorities — the town's mayor or lord — or the bishop. Alternatively, they may try to seek an audience with Priory Constable Hermann to see if they can bargain back their property.



Gilbert's Motives

Gilbert, as an ambitious Hospitaller, is unwilling to return the covenant's goods. He has already impressed his masters in the Priory and in the Hospitaller Order more widely with the acquisition of the valuable goods in the first place. If he is required to return them, it would be

embarrassing for him. He is more interested in protecting his career and influence than helping the covenant, and he sees his alliance with the Venetian merchant as very beneficial to the priory.

NEGOTIATING WITH THE PRIORY

The characters could go directly to Priory Constable Hermann, to Brother Gilbert the Master Sergeant, or to Prior Fulk. Characters who are, or appear to be, influential or wealthy will find it relatively easy to get an audience with the Hospitaller leadership.

Gifted characters find an audience more difficult to obtain (and Blatantly Gifted characters are refused entrance to the priory, unless they are sick or wounded, in which case they are taken to the hospital and watched at all times).

Excuses such as making a donation or carrying impor-

tant news from the Holy Land or Fifth Crusade will likely get either Hermann or Gilbert to meet with them. If the characters seem important — for example, one of the characters is a noble, or a priest, or has a similar Status Virtue — then they are also given an audience with Hermann.

Neither Hermann nor Gilbert is sympathetic to the characters if they bring up the confiscated property, unless the characters are clearly Christians. Hermann is only vaguely aware of the issue. Gilbert tries to convince Hermann that the property rightly belongs to the priory. If the characters protest that they are good Christians, then Hermann will be more agreeable, but will insist that this is

The Characters are Infidels

If the characters are clearly non-Christians, or openly scornful towards the Church and related institutions, then their relations with the Hospitallers and other townfolk will be difficult. One of their natural allies — Bishop Christoforo — will be disinclined to associate with non-Christians, even against the Hospitallers. Likewise, most of the Hospitallers will be unlikely to want to assist the characters. Troupes may need to rely on covenfolk with

a more-Christian demeanor to get their property back.

Of course, although many Hermetic magi and their covenfolk are not practicing or devout Christians, they may be able to give a good impression of being so. Educated or wealthy characters are still treated with respect, as will those with an obviously noble or ecclesiastic appearance. The Hospitallers have been known to deal with non-Christians to achieve

their aims, and Constable Hermann could be convinced that friendship with a powerful and wealthy covenant could aid the crusade effort. Likewise, Brother Fulk is open and ecumenical in his attitude, particularly towards the educated or intelligent. If the characters are not openly hostile, even if they are unorthodox in appearance or behavior, they may still be able to have cordial relations with the Hospitallers.

The Characters are Christians

Many Hermetic magi are practicing Christians, and may even be pious and God-fearing. Some covenants may have priests, friars, or monks as covenfolk, companions, or allies. The Hospitallers are definitely better disposed to people they see as their ideological or religious friends. Christian magi are more likely to be able to get an audience with

Constable Hermann or Brother Fulk.

Furthermore, if the characters can demonstrate that they are good Christians, then the Hospitallers may apologize for taking their property and seek recompense from the merchant Enrico. Stealing from Christians is a sin, even when committed in ignorance, so the Hospitallers will be contrite —

unless the characters are bellicose and antagonistic, in which case the Hospitallers hedge their bets and try to keep the property.

Christian characters will also be able to rely much more on the support of Bishop Christoforo, if they have not been able to get what they want directly from the Hospitallers.

the fault of Enrico, not the priory. Gilbert will also try to protect Enrico. It will take some convincing for the Hospitallers to agree to give the property back.

If the characters are respectable, the Hospitallers may also be disposed to agree to let them adopt Henry, if the characters are aware of him.

Attempts to use magic (such as *Mentem* spells) on Hermann need to penetrate his *Magic Resistance*, and contend with the *Dominion*. If the characters do so, and try to use their magic to force Hermann to give orders that are obviously damaging to the priory community, it is possible that St. Ubaldesca will intervene on Hermann's behalf. Each time Hermann is magically compelled to do something impious or against the interests of the priory, roll a stress die + *Dominion Aura* + Hermann's *Pious Personality Trait* against an *Ease Factor* of 15 + a simple die. Hermann gets a +2 bonus for each additional act he is forced to perform past the first. If the total exceeds the *Ease Factor*, then St. Ubaldesca intervenes with her *Grant Serenity* power to dispel any *Mentem* effects. Brother Gilbert, of course, has no such *Magic Resistance*.

The characters may also be introduced to Prior Fulk, through the Redcap Eleanor, asking to meet him, or through happenstance. Fulk has a similar attitude and reaction towards the covenant's property and the characters as does Hermann and Gilbert, but if introduced to the characters by Eleanor he will be more helpful. However, the final decision on matters relating to property of the priory is made by Hermann.

NEGOTIATING WITH TOWNSFOLK

The town's lord, Lord Thomas, is almost entirely powerless to assist the characters. Hospitallers have papal exemption from all spiritual and lay authority, so even if the town's lord was inclined to help the characters, he has no power to demand that they return the covenant's property. Furthermore, Lord Thomas is unlikely to want conflict with the powerful Hospitallers, who maintain a sizable armed force within the bounds of the town and possess a great deal of popularity with the town's population.

Geoffrey, the mayor, could also be approached by the characters for aid. Again, he is unable to give much assistance against the Hospitallers, and would not be inclined to cause the priory any trouble, as they are a wealthy and powerful organization in the town. If approached, he is likely to send a message to Constable Hermann about his conversation with the characters. This will tip off the Hospitallers that the characters are in town and are a potential source of trouble. If the characters speak to Geoffrey before

approaching the priory, then Hermann will have a full description of the characters (or at least the ones who spoke to Geoffrey) and their activities. If the characters mention the stolen property to Geoffrey, then this will also be transmitted to Constable Hermann, who will take the precaution of securing the property (located in the priory's keep). Depending on the actions of the characters, the priory will be appropriately ready to respond.

BRINGING IN BISHOP CHRISTOFORO

Bishop Christoforo is most sympathetic with the characters — he harbors a grudge against Prior Fulk and the Priory of St. Ubaldesca more generally. He has heard that the priory has come into great wealth from Enrico. If the characters or their servants are asking around about Enrico or the priory, his many servants and parishioners hear of this and bring it to his attention. Christoforo thus may ask to meet with the characters.

Christoforo would only help the characters if they appear to be faithful Christians — outlandish characters, or magi with *The Blatant Gift* will not be given an audience with the bishop — although he will grudgingly help mages with *The Gift*, as his suspicions of them are outweighed by his view that an enemy of his enemy is his friend.

Although he has no direct authority over the priory, he is looking for an excuse to bring them into disrepute. He would also readily tell the characters of the unorthodox behavior of Brother Fulk — treating women equally, maintaining friendships with heretics and other similarly unchristian activity, etc. The bishop is also looking to spread rumors that Brother Fulk and the other Hospitallers are sinfully fornicating with the nuns or servant women of the priory.

Stealth

The priory has no defenses against characters who are able to turn invisible, infiltrate the priory complex, and steal back the confiscated property from the keep. There are few locks in the priory, although most doors are barred from the inside. There are people awake in the priory most hours of the day and night, with at least two mercenaries acting as sentries and patrolling the grounds. There are also servants who check on the health of patients throughout the night. The brothers and sisters are also wake during the night for prayers and other activities. These obstacles could be easily overcome by a perceptive group of characters that has studied the routine of the priory.

If the characters have given anyone in the town reason to warn the priory, then the Hospitallers have taken the precaution of securing the property in the keep, which is regularly checked upon by guards. Likewise, Hermann increases the number of mercenaries or brothers involved in the patrols, if he suspects that there will be trouble.

Blackmail

Brother Fulk is in dispute with Bishop Christoforo, and behaves in an unorthodox manner. For most Christian inhabitants of Mythic Europe, his views would be considered outlandish or even dangerous. The Hospitallers also give a great deal of status to their Order's sisters; in all other religious orders, it is highly unusual for brothers and sisters to eat together, and although they sleep in separate cells, their proximity is the cause of some criticism.

Fulk's beliefs on the status of women are not seen by many of the leadership of the Hospitallers as heretical, but Fulk is a vocal proponent on the equality of the sexes (which makes him very popular with many, but not all, of the town's women). Fulk has also maintained friendships with excommunicates, and avowed heretics, which has enraged the town's bishop and is a clear breach of canon law. Brother Fulk is able to get away with this because he is close friends with the Conventual Prior; the independent status of the Hospitallers, their popularity with most townsfolk, their wealth, and their military power also means that Brother Fulk can mostly get away with his views. Brother Hermann is broad minded, not an expert in canon law, and dislikes the bishop.

The Hospitallers are not completely immune to scandal, however. Bishop Christoforo is eager to spread rumours that Brother Fulk and other Hospitallers are fornicators, regularly breaking their vow of chastity with the priory's nuns and servant women. Fulk's growing friendship with Eleanor has also been noticed by Christoforo. Characters who need leverage in their negotiations with the priory could use impropriety between them as a line of persuasion.

Additionally, if the characters are Christians, then the fact that the Hospitallers stole their property is a major scandal (as well as a sin).

The priory relies on regular donations and bequests from wealthy townsfolk and nobles. A sustained attack on the priory's reputation could undermine the Hospital's income base. If Constable Hermann has been previously unwilling to return the covenant's property, the serious threat of damaging slander may see him willing to return the goods so as to avoid the scandal. Brother Gilbert will want to avoid any kind of scandal. Since he is very concerned with the influence and success of the priory, he will want to sweep away any indiscretions.

Of course, if the characters continue their attack, the Hospitallers, particularly Brother Gilbert, will look for their own dirt on the covenant or the individual characters.

Attack

The characters may decide to rush into the priory to seize back their property, or lose patience with a more cautious approach. If the Hospitallers have any reason to suspect that they are under threat, they are on guard; the brothers-at-arms are dressed in their armor, and the brother-sergeants are armed with crossbows. An unaware priory is still a formidable target — if attacked, the brothers quickly arm themselves, and gather at the chapel to receive orders and a blessing from Prior Fulk (whose Dominion Lore specialty is invoking God's aid) that grants them a +2 Divine Aid bonus to all rolls made in defense of the priory, its patients, and its property.

Attacking or infiltrating the priory at night, or in the early hours of the morning, is unlikely to see its inhabitants in bed or taken unawares. All of the brothers awake at Matins (2 am) for a spiritual reading, where they gather in the Hall for close to an hour. The brothers then rise again at Lauds (5 am), and assemble in the Hall at Prime (5:30 am). They have breakfast in the refectory after Mass at Terce (8 am). They retire at Compline (6:30 pm). For the rest of the day, they are engaged in their duties. Even when the brothers are in their cells, there are still guards who stand watch all night, as well as servants who patrol the hospital in case of an emergency. There are lamps and candles burning throughout the night, lighting the priory complex, the hospital, and the cells.

The Hospitallers are a disciplined group of fighters. They quickly form trained groups of around five brothers and mercenaries, with a group of crossbowmen protected in the middle of the group. If there is room, they form larger untrained groups of 20 men (each group a mix of brother-knights, brother-sergeants, and mercenaries). Hospitallers fight to the death when they believe they are fighting infidels (although, of course, the mercenaries do not). Unless something in the behavior of the characters suggests to the Hospitallers that they are Muslims or diabolically led, the Hospitallers surrender or seek to parlay when half or more of them have suffered a Heavy Wound or greater. If the characters are attacking indiscriminately (for example, collateral damage is threatening the priory's patients, nuns, or servants), the Hospitallers try to evacuate civilians to the safety of the keep. The keep is the refuge of last resort.

Should a great many Hospitallers be suddenly or savagely wounded or incapacitated (for example, if the characters unleash a *Ball of Abysmal Flame* or a similarly destructive



hospital's patients and other civilians from any collateral damage. If she is injured by any of the characters in the attack, she will prosecute them at the next Tribunal (and receives a great deal of support from House Mercere). If she is killed, House Mercere puts a great deal of effort into learning who was responsible, and the covenant is likely to face serious repercussions.

A group of determined magi, or companions with the aid of destructive magical devices, should be able to make short work of the Hospitallers. Only Priory Constable Hermann and Prior Fulk are awarded any measure of protection from magic, and their first aim will be to protect or aid fallen brothers, rather than go into a suicidal rush against their attackers.

Consequences

The following issues might result from this scenario.

Enrico

Enrico can continue to be a thorn in the side of the covenant. If he was badly treated by the characters, he turns on them, trying to get influential mundanes to become antagonistic towards the covenant. For example, he could spread rumors about their godlessness or pagan beliefs, try to spoil relationships the covenant develops with other merchants and otherwise act as the Rival covenant Hook (see *ArM5*, page 73-74).

The Priory

The priory's attitude towards the characters and the covenant depends on their actions. Their positive attitude is described under Rewards. If the characters end up with bad relations with the priory, then they could easily act as the Rival covenant Hook, like Enrico.

Bishop Christoforo

The bishop wants to regain his preeminent position within the town, and take down Prior Fulk and Constable Hermann in the eyes of the townsfolk. He can thus potentially be an ally of the characters, especially if they are in dispute with the priory.

spell), Hermann will pray to St. Ubaldesca for assistance. This prayer has the effect of activating his relic's *Mass Healing* power, which miraculously restores to health any injured Hospitallers and civilians (although not wounded player characters or their allies). If there is no single moment where a large number of Hospitallers are injured, Hermann waits until after the battle to make a similar prayer, so it has no effect on the combat.

There is also the complication of the presence of the Redcap Eleanor, who is recovering in the hospital. Eleanor is afforded some measure of protection from magic thanks to her magical device. If the characters enter the hospital, they may recognize her or know her through reputation (see *ArM5*, page 19). Likewise, Eleanor may recognize the characters; if so, she tries to stop the characters from continuing the attack, or, failing that, she helps protect the

Rewards

There are three possible beneficial outcomes from this scenario: the return of the covenant's confiscated property, a potential apprentice, and the good will of the Hospitallers.

Henry would be an ideal apprentice. He has only learned his one Supernatural Ability to a basic level, and is intelligent. If he does become an apprentice, he should be given additional Virtues and Flaws relating to Hermetic magic and his apprenticeship, at the discretion of the storyguide (or troupe, if he becomes a player's character). If the characters end up on good terms with the priory, they may be able to formally adopt Henry, so long as they promise to ensure his education and well being. Alterna-

tively, the characters could abduct Henry and take him to the covenant. Since Eleanor planned on taking Henry for trade to another House, this could be the source of stories in the future.

Finally, the characters may negotiate well with Hermann or Fulk (or both), and make a good impression. The Hospitallers are not automatically hostile to magicians, although they are suspicious of their motives. The priory is pragmatic enough to consider using magical aid in their crusade efforts — so long as they are assured that it is not in any way diabolical — and would be willing to pay handsomely. It can also source a great number of rare and valuable items from the Holy Land. Of course, the characters would need to carefully navigate the Code of Hermes with any aid they gave the Hospitallers.

Chapter Six

Loyalty and Law

This scenario sets up a situation for the characters to resolve by whatever means they can make work, which may not involve much *blatant* magic. There's little in the way of a fixed plot; they simply have to deal with obstacles, come up with plans, and avoid offending powerful individuals. The need for subtlety rather than force makes it suitable for use with characters of almost any power level, possibly meaning companions or grogs rather than magi.

Précis

Events start when a fairly powerful magus, Tholin of Jerbiton, asks that the characters assist a cousin of his — a mundane aristocrat named Lady Martha of Plessis. Tholin has plausible reasons for not attending to this himself, and offers reasonable payment for the favor. What he doesn't mention is that he's got other motives. He's been a little too prone to intervention in mundane affairs recently, and he now has a Quaesitor, Asmorn of Guernicus, taking an interest. Asmorn learns that Tholin has visited the characters, finds out enough to become worried, and sets out to keep an eye on matters.

Lady Martha herself is a widow, with no sons but three daughters. Two of them have been married off; the third is approaching marriageable age. Her problem is that her claim to her husband's lands is shaky, being based on sympathetic readings of their marriage contract and his will, and she's running out of allies, while various neighbors are trying to lay claim to her land, or to bully her into an unwelcome marital alliance. They may also send minions to attack her tenants and damage her property, undermining and weakening her. So the characters have to help her legal case, deter her neighbors, see off ruffians in the night, and maybe find a suitable husband for her last unmarried daughter — all with a Quaesitor breathing down their necks.

Dramatis Personae

Three socially significant figures play crucial roles in this scenario, although the first of them doesn't take much part in the action. Several others may also appear, or at least send minions to interfere. As the scenario is designed so that the storyguide can set it anywhere in Mythic Europe, characters' native languages have been left undefined, and the "local areas" with which they are familiar can be set to whatever fits the saga. Names too can be changed to suit the locality.

Tholin of Jerbiton

Tholin was recruited to the Order of Hermes when his parents heard a rumor of a younger son of a knightly family who was regarded as inexplicably annoying, and who was having trouble trying to pursue a scholarly career. Correctly identifying all this as a sign of an emerging Gift, the senior magus located and recruited the child. Unfortunately, unlike that of some Jerbitons, Tholin's Gift never settled down to become Gentle, and his magical talents are generally a little quirkish. Nonetheless, with his parents' encouragement, he was able to remain on fair terms with his mundane family. This association is quite enough of a relationship with the mundane world for Tholin, although he's happy with the Jerbiton philosophy generally. His personal interests are more abstract; actually, his long-term aim is to unify Hermetic theory and Aristotle's *Poetics*.

Unfortunately for him, though, family associations and Hermetic political dabbling often take him away from his books, and his efforts regarding the former have attracted the attention of Asmorn. So now, he's taken to employing dupes. Fortunately, despite his visible Gift, Tholin has a certain amount of charm (Pre +1, Com +2, Charm 2 (first impressions), Etiquette 3 (nobility), Guile 4 (elaborate lies), Intrigue 3 (alliances)), and the covenant of which he is a member provides him with adequate resources, including vis.

Asmorn of Guernicus

When first encountered, Asmorn of Guernicus may seem quite reasonable, as Quaesitors go, a little stiff and formal in his speech, but rarely overtly threatening or discourteous, and seemingly not *unduly* worried about minor points of Hermetic law. He's neat, tidy, and polite, and even thoughtful to grogs and others who lack The Gift.

But all this is merely a surface over as obsessive a personality as the Order of Hermes often produces. In Asmorn's case, the obsession is with *tidiness*. In his opinion, there's a place for everything, and everything should *remain* in its place. The place of a Hermetic magus is in a laboratory or covenant meeting-hall, refining and perfecting the Art, and not interacting too much with mundanes, who have their own places somewhere different. Jerbitons and others who want to muddle these categories *irritate* Asmorn, though he's usually too restrained to show it; Tholin is merely his latest project in a long career of *restoring* things.

He first encountered this often-misplaced wizard when one of Tholin's schemes annoyed a prominent churchman, who began preaching against the evils of sorcery. Rumors reached the Quaesitores, and Asmorn was assigned to investigate. He was unsurprised to discover a Jerbiton at the root of the trouble, and persuaded Tholin to resolve matters with the implicit threat of a Hermetic trial. Tholin's "frivolous but grudging" attitude set Asmorn's nerves on edge, though, and ever since then, he's been monitoring the Jerbiton as closely as is possible without violating the Code of Hermes himself.

Characteristics: Int +3, Per +2, Pre +1, Com 0, Str 0, Sta +1, Dex -1, Qik 0

Size: 0

Age: 47 (45)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 3 (14)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: The Gift, Hermetic Magus, Cautious Sorcerer, Clear Thinker, Hermetic Prestige (free Virtue), Improved Characteristics, Method Caster; Difficult Spontaneous Magic, Incompatible Arts (InAq and InIg), Meddler (Minor), Temperate.

Personality Traits: Tidy-Minded +3, Fair +1, Formally Polite +1

Reputations: Meticulous Judge +3 (Hermetic magi)

Combat:

Fist: Init +0, Attack +0, Defense +1, Damage +0

Kick: Init -1, Attack +0, Defense +0, Damage +3

Soak: +1

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Area Lore: Home Area 1 (geography), Artes Liberales 4 (logic), Awareness 4 (searching), Brawl 1 (grapples), Code of Hermes 6 (mundane relations), Concentration 4 (spell concentration), Etiquette 1 (the Church), Folk Ken 2 (townsfolk), Intrigue 2 (alliances), Latin 4 (Hermetic usage), Magic Lore 1 (regiones), Magic Theory 5 (Rego), Native Language 5 (expansive vocabulary), Organization Lore: Order of Hermes 3 (personalities), Organization Lore: Tailors' Guild 2 (history), Parma Magica 5 (Ignem), Penetration 2 (Rego), Profession (Scribe) 3 (document preservation), Stealth 2 (hide)

Arts: Cr 5, In 7, Mu 5, Pe 5, Re 12, An 5, Aq 5, Au 5, Co 7, He 5, Ig 5, Im 5, Me 7, Te 5, Vi 7

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Spells Known:*

Cloak of the Duck's Feathers (ReAq 5/+21)

Bind Wound (CrCo 10/+16)

Sight of the True Form (InCo 15/+18)

Whispers Through the Black Gate (InCo 15/+18)

Strings of the Unwilling Marionette (ReCo 25/+23)

Intuition of the Forest (InHe 10/+16)

Tangle of Wood and Thorns (ReHe 15/+21)

Winter's Icy Touch (PeIg 10/+14)

Restore the Moved Image (Relm 10/+21)

Sight of the Transparent Motive (InMe 10/+18)

Frosty Breath of the Spoken Lie (InMe 20/+18)

Aura of Rightful Authority (ReMe 10/+23)

The Invisible Eye Revealed (InVi 16/+18)

Demon's Eternal Oblivion (PeVi 16/+16)

Circular Ward Against Demons (ReVi 16/+23)

* Casting bonuses include +1 for Stamina and +3 for Method Caster.

Appearance: A tall, straight-backed, slender figure with sparse, straw-colored hair and a sharp, prominent Roman nose, clean shaven and usually dressed in plain but immaculate clothes.

Asmorn's magic reflects his personality, with a distinctive sigil; its visible effects are invariably linear or geometric, and the consequences are formal and precise. If he threw a lightning bolt, it would take the form of a straight line or a symmetrical branching fork; if he moved things by magic, they'd end up neatly aligned and evenly spaced; if he controlled someone's mind, that person would move and talk like a well-drilled soldier.

Asmorn is under the influence of a +5 Longevity Ritual of his own creation — generally sufficient to prevent loss of Characteristics, but not to eliminate apparent aging. So far, he's been lucky with aging effects, but he may need to create or purchase a better Ritual quite soon.

Lady Martha of Plessis

Lady Martha is a very minor aristocrat — a younger daughter of a junior family. However, her parents were shrewd, thoughtful, and fond; they could afford a reasonable dowry and had enough political standing that they could find her a husband of quite respectable status. She was, after all, a charming if slightly sharp-tongued and over-active girl, bright enough to manage a household well. Some said she was spoiled, having learned whatever she chose to ask about around the estate, but she was rarely obnoxious. The marriage was genuinely affectionate, even when Martha gave birth to three girl-children in succession, leaving her husband without a male heir.

Unfortunately, before they could make a fourth attempt, Martha's husband suffered a bad riding accident, and after that, no more children were forthcoming. (Speculation on the precise nature of that injury is a good way to make Martha's loyal retainers angry.) She nursed him for some years, before he died still relatively young, and the problem of the heir turned septic.

The trouble is that it's questionable, in law, whether women can hold property with attached feudal obligations. Her husband's will leaves the estate "in her hands," but that could be taken to mean that she should find a male lord to hold it, and in any case a will can't override established law. On the other hand, widows *can* and often do hold some property, and there are no males with very strong claims, so her situation isn't totally untenable. Two of Martha's daughters were already married at the time of their father's death, to husbands some distance away, meaning that they're fairly safe, but also limiting the influence that they can exert on Martha's behalf. The third is now reaching an age when some arrangement is necessary, and Martha is determined to do well for her, and not, say, put her in a nunnery. Martha's own father is long dead, and most of her other family are badly placed to help her, or simply refuse, with one peculiar exception — her cousin Tholin.

Martha could resolve things by marrying someone of reasonable feudal standing and thus establishing her new husband in the position of lord, and not a few knights and lordlings have come sniffing around. The snag is, this would leave Martha without direct control of resources and without a political position of her own. And she still wants to arrange a decent dowry for her third daughter, as well as to be able to support the older two and their families politically — she has debts of honor to them, all else aside. The suitors who've shown up so far have shown little interest in supporting a stepdaughter as Martha thinks would be fit, and all have clashing political allegiances of their own. Also, the lord from whom the es-

tate is held wouldn't be too happy letting the holding go to some of these individuals, and it's becoming clear that Martha herself isn't keen to surrender her independence or to replace the husband of whom she was fond. Hence, she remains single, but the only way that she's been able to preserve her position is by a great deal of legal maneuvering and a *lot* of favor-trading; her obligations to various clerks, lawyers, and minor nobles are becoming increasingly pressing. Martha's conviction that she can deal with the situation by herself has finally wavered.

Also, because she's been dealing with each difficulty as it arises, Martha actually lacks any clear idea of her ultimate objective. If she remains unmarried for the rest of her life, the estate will most likely pass to her eldest daughter's husband, which she would consider an acceptable result, *provided* that her other two daughters were well provided for. This fact has of course crossed the mind of the husband in question, but Martha looks set to survive for some years yet, and he wishes her no ill as he has estates and political concerns of his own. Still, it might be a useful bargaining point to use with him. An even better result would be to find an amicable suitor who could both marry her third daughter and be assigned as heir to the holding — but that would demand a *lot* of legal maneuvering, as such a suitor would have no clear claim to the position. If anyone could arrange this, though, Martha would be grateful. For now, simply persuading her neighbors to back down and stop making trouble would be victory enough for her.

Martha is cousin by blood to Tholin of Jerbiton, and Tholin's sense of duty to family has led him to seek to aid her. The fact that he's some kind of wizard is an open secret in the family, although they keep it quiet from the world at large; it could be socially tricky. Martha is unsure exactly what Tholin can accomplish, though. The fact that he sometimes writes promising aid, but never actually *does* much that she can see, leads her to suspect that magic is overrated and perhaps downright useless. She'll be perfectly polite and hospitable to anyone claiming to be Tholin's ally — she has her own sense of family loyalty — but *vague* offers of help will merely annoy her. She refers to Tholin by his mundane birth-name, Thomas; she is aware that he uses "some peculiar title" as a wizard, but she assumes that this is pretentiousness, rather feeling that it shows a lack of familial pride.

Characteristics: Int +2, Per +2 (2), Pre +2, Com +1 (1), Str -2 (2), Sta 0, Dex 0, Qik -1

Size: 0

Age: 44 (44)

Decrepitude: 1 (1)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Landed Noble; Cautious With Guile, Clear Thinker, Gossip, Privileged Upbringing, Puissant Folk Ken, Puissant Guile, Strong-Willed; Enemies, Favors, Overconfident; Obsessed (security of her daughters).

Personality Traits: Determinedly Independent +3, Brave +2, Loyal +1

Combat:

Fist: Init -1, Attack +1, Defense +0, Damage -2

Kick: Init -2, Attack +1, Defense -1, Damage +1

Knife: Init -1, Attack +3, Defense +1, Damage +0

Thrown Knife: Init -1, Attack +4, Defense +2, Damage +0

Soak: +0

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Animal Handling 2 (falconry), Area Lore: Home Area 2 (personalities), Area Lore: Own Estates 5 (agricultural resources), Artes Liberales 1 (rhetoric), Athletics 1 (grace), Awareness 4 (searching), Bargain 2 (agricultural produce), Brawl 1 (knives), Charm 4 (formal dealings), Chirurgy 1 (setting bones), Civil and Canon Law 2 (Laws of Home Area), Etiquette 5 (nobles), Folk Ken 5+2 (nobles), Guile 5+2 (half-truths), Intrigue 4 (alliances), Latin 1 (church usage), Leadership 3 (inspiration), Native Language 5 (farming vocabulary), Profession (Scribe) 1 (legal records), Profession (Steward) 4 (keeping accounts), Ride 3 (the hunt), Stealth 2 (quiet exits), Thrown Weapons 2 (knives)

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: A well-dressed noblewoman, slender and not unattractive but often stern, with her dark-iron-grey hair combed hard back. Aside from an ordinary (but sharp) eating knife, Martha often carries a second, concealed blade, and perhaps even a third; this gives her an option with her Thrown Weapon skill that doesn't leave her disarmed.

If this scenario is being run as set in England, change Martha's Civil and Canon Law to Common Law. Note that she has sworn an Oath of Fealty, as required by her position, but at the moment the stories arising from that are subsumed in her Enemies Story Flaw. If the problems with her neighbors are resolved, the Oath itself will return to importance.

Martha's Household

Lady Martha naturally has a feudal household. Some of its members are quite capable, and Martha has a knack for commanding loyalty. Unfortunately for her, these

people lack strong initiative, and have limited social influence; they can't help her much with her big problems, and may get under the player characters' feet, especially if the characters behave too furtively or attract suspicion because of The Gift. Her men-at-arms are decently trained, but only reasonably armed; Lady Martha doesn't have a warrior-noble's obsession with shiny weapons. Harming any of her people would, of course, be highly counterproductive.

SIR EBERHARDT

If anyone questions Martha's ability to meet her feudal military obligations, she points to her man Sir Eberhardt. He was previously a mercenary whose travels took him to



the house of Lord Michael (see later). A game of chance led to a disagreement, the disagreement turned violent, and suddenly, Eberhardt's small band were riding for their lives. They unknowingly ran into Lady Martha's territory; Martha met them, determined what had happened, and bet Eberhardt that she could send the pursuers away without more violence, the stake being his oath of service against aid in the fight that would otherwise ensue. She then faced down Michael's band, pointing out that they were trespassing on her land and threatening them with legal complications. Since then, Eberhardt's grudging service has turned to personal loyalty. He and Michael dislike each other heartily, and both have transmitted their attitudes to their men. He makes a point of assessing any warriors who visit the household, so grogs are likely to meet him and find themselves being questioned.

If you need character details for Eberhardt, base them on the Knight Companion template, though he's as much a mercenary captain as a knight, and not all that wealthy; his extra abilities come more from greater age (he's in his 30s) than from free time. Replace Relic with Reserves of Strength, make his Flaws Compulsion (Gambling), Oath of Fealty, and Enemies (Lord Michael), and add Carouse 2 (Games of Chance).

CHARLES THE BODYGUARD

Martha also has a personal bodyguard, Charles, previously a forester on her estate. He's gruff and shaggy, sentimental and intensely loyal. His game details, if required, can be based on the Grizzled Veteran template, replacing his Flaw with Weakness (Protecting the Defenseless) and rearranging his Abilities (and especially the specializations) to reflect a more mundane personal history. Lady Martha knows about his Weakness, and takes care that he usually thinks of her as the most defenseless person around.

SERVANTS AND TENANTS

Most of Martha's other servants and tenants are fairly typical rural residents, with Attributes close to the average and Abilities reflecting moderate competence in their work. They include a capable steward, a priest, a couple of grooms, and a large number of peasants. They're generally as well fed and healthy as most members of their respective social classes (other than residents of a covenant, perhaps); visitors should receive the impression of a well-run estate.

THE DAUGHTERS

Martha's daughters may not have major speaking roles in this scenario, but they are central to the plot. The oldest two, Marguerite and Maria, aren't even in the area, being married to moderately powerful lords elsewhere. Martha maintains a correspondence with them, having made sure that both are literate. Their husbands provide her with some political support, but they aren't *quite* as devoted to her as she is to their interests. If a legal case reaches the royal court, their husbands' agents may assist Martha, but that aid may depend on them receiving support or assistance in return.

The youngest of the three, Catherine, is a 13-year-old girl still living with her mother. She's generally quiet and obedient, and recently somewhat overwhelmed by the sense that her mother is involved in a life-and-death struggle that she doesn't understand but which involves her own future. On the other hand, she isn't stupid, is rather proud that her mother has brought her up to be literate, and is used to her mother looking to her comfort. She's slender and pale — making her quite attractive by the aristocratic standards of the age — and visitors may at first take her for something of a mouse. However, she can match her mother's determination when pushed, while combining this with a certain amount of childish romanticism; she assumes that she's entitled to the privileges of her status, which must eventually include a rich husband. She takes it for granted that she'll have to marry in the next few years, but anyone suggesting an unattractive or unappealing suitor will have an angry, temperamental girl to deal with. While she's conventionally religious, she has no interest in a cloistered life; any suggestion that she might end up in a convent would startle, then terrify, then outrage her.

The Jealous Neighbors

Lady Martha has several neighbors who take a passing interest in her affairs, in the routine way of feudal equals in close proximity, but two of them in particular are important in this scenario.

LORD MICHAEL

Lord Michael is the more ostentatiously difficult of these two. A graying warrior with an estate slightly smaller than Martha's, he has a simple opinion; she's a mere woman, which gives her no right at all to property, and her claim-

Dealing with the Neighbors

The two hostile lords both command significant military forces, so direct assault isn't likely to work against either of them, and wouldn't be wise. Even if the characters could muster sufficient strength, a direct attack by mundane forces that injures or kills an acknowledged local lord will trigger a response from his overlord, other lords, and maybe even the crown; it looks like insurrection, and feudal lords are supposed to aid their vassals. If there's any hint of magic involved, the response will receive very effective aid from the church, and Asmorn won't be the only Quaesitor to show up asking pointed questions. If anyone mentions such

ideas, Martha dismisses them as *stupid*. Characters who look set on such a course should hear grumbling from allies; the storyguide may also have Asmorn appear before the characters do anything too final, and explicitly warn them off.

Michael and Roger might be deterred or even eliminated by more subtle means, including magic, but this could still be dangerous; Michael is tough and bull-headed, while Roger is shrewd, and neither is a coward. They also both have heirs, friends, or cronies who would seek to avenge them. A blatant magical attack would probably be catastrophic for Martha's

cause; a plausible accusation of sorcery could destroy her, and no one would believe that the assault wasn't her idea. And *any* magic risks drawing the ire of Asmorn.

Of course, Michael and Roger don't like or trust *each other*. They may ally to deal with a shared problem, but they may also be played off. The idea that Martha was using sorcery would definitely unite them, though. Each hopes that the other will weaken and distract Martha without achieving anything conclusive, so they're unwilling to act against each other unless one of them looks close to final victory.

ing that estate is a bad joke. A man ought to be assigned to take care of it, and it might as well be himself. Months of brooding have transformed this opinion into something even simpler; a ruthless sense of entitlement. And Michael believes in doing whatever is necessary to claim what he deserves, which usually means something violent.

In short, he's an intellectually unremarkable ruffian in the clothes of a nobleman. He has clerks and lawyers working to undermine Martha's position, but their lack of immediate success and lengthy explanations merely make him more impatient. Anyone seeming to work against his claim will trigger his anger, though he can keep it in check for a short period, and he has a number of thuggish soldiers at his command.

LORD ROGER

It may take the characters a while to realize that their larger problem is elsewhere, though Lady Martha may eventually point the fact out. Lord Roger is cooler and more courteous than Michael, but even more ambitious and *smarter*. For him, claiming Martha's lands would merely be another step on a path to ever greater wealth and power — but a nice big step. He isn't especially hostile to her, but he's even less inclined to put up with obstructions. However, he favors subtle and indirect schemes; the

sort of violence that so appeals to Michael gives a devious woman like Martha the chance to spin a sob story in court, and damages property and peasants that could otherwise be squeezed for nice fat rents. (His tenants like him less than Michael's like their lord; Michael is easier to fool and employs more corruptible bailiffs.)

His main scheme is to construct a comprehensive legal case that would give him effective control of Martha's estate, where that leaves Martha is *her* problem. This involves tracing back the feudal history of the region to establish that his family have broad rights across the whole area (which is arguably true, given some *very* stretched legal arguments), bribing various clerks to put his case in front of the right people while losing letters or pleas from Martha, and persuading the overlord that he, as a trusted and competent vassal, is the obvious person to tidy up this unfortunate problem, if he is just given the appropriate powers, such as control of the disputed estate.

He also has an infant son, and it's crossed his mind that a marital alliance would surely resolve the issue and make everyone happy; Martha has to step carefully round this topic, as every time she refuses, Roger argues before their overlord that she's being unreasonable and irrational. However, the terms Roger offers involve him taking over her estate immediately as a dowry on behalf of his son, and the chances of him being haggled down to anything acceptable to her are nil.

Lady Martha's Domain

Martha controls a holding of moderate size. Storyguides should set the details according to what's typical in the general geographical area of their saga, but note that it can support at least a small group of warrior knights, complete with adequate retainues.

Its center is a substantial village with the usual features of such a community — a mill, a church, and so on — and also Martha's manor house, which is lightly fortified with a small moat, and well able to hold off minor non-magical attacks. There are also a number of outlying villages and hamlets, all connected to the main manor by adequate roads. The inhabitants are reasonably loyal to Martha, some, mostly those with whom she's made an effort, are *fiercely* loyal. On the other hand, they're completely unaccustomed to magic; Gifted visitors unnerve them, and if Lady Martha is seen to be associating with such people too much, she may have some difficulties keeping her peasants in line.

The exact layout of this holding is unlikely to become important in play, unless the storyguide chooses to play up the combative elements of the scenario. In that case, with raiders coming in the night to torch hayricks and cottages, scurrying between cover as Martha's men-at-arms and the player characters play hide-and-seek with them, the storyguide should sketch out a rough map for reference.

Expected Sequence of Play

The story begins when Tholin arrives at the characters' covenant's gate with a handful of bodyguards, requesting Hermetic hospitality. He's friendly and seemingly straightforward, talking technicalities and exchanging gossip with everyone; he also gives a pawn of vis in the form of an alchemical fluid as a gift to the covenant. However, he admits that he's here to ask a favor, and at some point, preferably when all the resident magi are present, he'll explain.

He has a cousin, he says, a mundane noblewoman named Lady Martha, who holds an estate not too far from here. (Int + appropriate Area Lore rolls against an Ease Factor of 6 will confirm that there is a noblewoman with a holding over that way; rolls of 12+ will give fragments of the background to this plot.) He owes her a family debt of honor, and she currently has some problems with which he

doesn't feel he can help personally — so he'd be very grateful if anyone else could lend a hand. Perhaps his sodales could do something for her? He's prepared to recompense them for their time and trouble.

Tholin's stated reasons for not attending to this himself are, firstly, that Lady Martha's holding is close enough to the characters' covenant that they might reasonably complain that he was trespassing on their territory, and secondly, that he's very busy at present. He'll offer very reasonable payment for the favor, though — say, a rook or two of vis, or aid in some Hermetic political matter. The problem, as Tholin describes it, is that some of Martha's neighbors are making trouble for her in some kind of legal matter, and may be trying to bully her into making an inexpedient match for her daughter. It's possible (Tholin says) that all this could be resolved by a simple show of support from some people who look convincingly formidable, and maybe a few well-placed words in the right ears.

The storyguide should work to make Tholin's offer effective, or the scenario won't last long, unless it changes into a political plot in which Tholin stirs up trouble for the characters while one of Martha's neighbors grabs her land and then starts making trouble for everyone in a wider area. If the characters have superiors in the covenant with authority over them (i.e. if the covenant has the Superiors Hook), they can, of course, simply accept Tholin's offer and order the characters to deal with the matter, while Flaws such as Avaricious or Hooks such as Politics or Poverty can make Tholin's offers especially tempting. Tholin may even be able to persuade third parties outside the covenant to influence the characters to help him, invoking the Close Family Ties, Favors, Mentor, or Oath of Fealty Flaws, or a Beholden or Politics Hook. It's also possible that characters will discover that they have personal reasons of their own to offer aid; some of the people causing trouble for Martha may also be Enemies of theirs, engaged in a Feud with their own families, subjects of their Hatred, or opponents of their covenant (probably through a Politics or Rival Hook) — and anyone with the Meddler Flaw is likely to find this situation very interesting.

When playing out this conversation, it's important that Tholin never suggests that the characters should violate the Code of Hermes. Indeed, if challenged directly on this, he'll claim to be shocked (while smiling slightly). He'll even specifically mutter something about "working within the Code," albeit only in passing and without emphasis. His request is actually legal in Hermetic terms, though slightly dubious; *helping* a mundane in small ways is generally regarded as quite harmless. Of course, annoying mundane lords is likely to cause trouble and endanger the Order, but only if the perpetrator is identified as a magus; likewise,

nobody is likely to take actual service with Lady Martha, so nobody will be accused of becoming a "court magician."

The Watcher

Not long after Tholin leaves the covenant, Asmorn locates him for an interview. Tholin squirms, admits much of what he's done, but declares that he specifically told the player characters that they shouldn't violate the Code, and hints that, if these essentially neutral parties take particular actions in such matters, any similar actions he ever takes could hardly be considered unreasonable. Asmorn grudgingly admits to himself that Tholin has a point.

He *could* warn the characters off, but that might be politically inexpedient; a Quaesitor who interferes in the legitimate business of other magi can suffer censure. Furthermore, Asmorn is curious; he wants to know how untidy and annoying the characters may be in future. So he decides to watch, albeit from close by. He takes a few grogs and establishes himself in a travelers' inn just outside Lady Martha's estates — on Lord Roger's land, in fact. He doesn't use magic to observe the characters; he obeys the letter and the spirit of the Code. However, he can set his grogs to listening to local gossip; some of them are experienced at this, and wander round the area, often posing as pilgrims or peddlers.

Whether and when the characters realize that they're being watched depends how alert they are. Asmorn attracts some attention, of course, but he keeps his head down, and is a little way off, while his grogs are more subtle. They may be noticed as possible outsider troublemakers, but the characters would have to be quite sharp to become aware of them. The storyguide should assess the possibilities here, but basically, if the characters are especially attentive to rumors, or specifically watch out for anyone watching them, they may pick up word of an "unpleasant stranger" and "unknown vagabonds."

Conversely, Asmorn and his grogs are shrewd and alert; anything out of the ordinary that suggests magic, such as a radical change of behavior in a local noble, will attract their notice. Asmorn needs solid evidence before he can bring anyone before a tribunal, but he's good at piecing together clues, and he won't need solid proof to gain the support of other Quaesitors for a strict investigation, perhaps even with magical compulsion. If the character covenant delegates this problem to mundane companions and grogs, he'll be a lot more cautious, but even non-magical activity that could draw the anger of powerful mundanes against the Order can be treated as a Hermetic crime.

If at any point the characters look like they're set on

violating the Code, Asmorn will show himself and start issuing warnings or even charges. This can happen *before* anyone does anything too unlawful, Asmorn is idealistic enough that he wants primarily to see the Code obeyed, not merely to trap anyone in error. He's also quite open about his reasons for being present, in a taciturn way.

Developments

From here on, much depends on how the characters choose to act, how well they handle various antagonists, and how complicated the storyguide wants to make things. Note that it's perfectly possible to run more than one of the plots suggested below in parallel. Aside from forcing the players to divide their forces, this can provide opportunities for dramatic cross-cutting, with, say, evidence obtained from interrogation of a captured raider being used to humiliate Lord Michael in court, or young Catherine being taken along when Martha goes to plead her case before her overlord and forming a romantic attachment with someone she meets.

COURT DRAMA

For a subtle game, especially if any of the characters have high society influence or legal skills, the storyguide can concentrate on legal issues. In that case, Lord Roger will be the primary foe, with Michael's bullies and verbal explosions providing extra worries or comic relief.

First, some characters have to travel to the relevant overlord's court and involve themselves with the case. The journey isn't trivial, but needn't be too long — probably just as far as a major castle or manor in the same region. However, if the overlord bases himself at the royal court, or has widely dispersed holdings and is currently dwelling on, say, the other side of the English Channel, the storyguide has an excuse for transport difficulties, bandits, ships with Cupid stowed away on board, and suchlike. Martha might come in person, which could help in court but may lead to her arguing with the characters' schemes while leaving her estate less well managed.

On arrival, at least some of the player characters need to use Etiquette to appear acceptable. They can contact Martha's allies, but find that they lack much influence, and in any case, those allies mostly consider the favors they owed Martha paid off by now. Martha's older daughters' husbands, or their agents, *may* be around, but need persuasion to lend any substantial help; they know that Martha's resources are limited, but might, say, be interested in prom-

ises of wizardly assistance, though those would have to be very convincing and carefully phrased. The characters also have to talk with court clerks, some of them actually in Roger's pay, to determine the state of the case. At this point, they should realize that someone has been delaying and *losing* Martha's own communications; the storyguide might require a Per + Intrigue roll against an Ease Factor of 6 to see this, but it's really quite obvious once anyone asks the right questions.

Once they've identified a reasonably trustworthy official, or one they themselves can buy, simply bringing the substance of Martha's case to his attention can strengthen her position considerably. Alternatively, skilled player characters can make her case directly to the overlord. A roll with Int + the relevant Law against an Ease Factor of 9 assembles the facts neatly, requiring only a Com + Language

roll against an Ease Factor of 6, or even use of Intrigue or Charm, to present the argument; using pure rhetoric with minimal legal logic, a Pre + Language roll of against an Ease Factor of 12 will carry the day. The storyguide can make things harder or easier if the characters come up with notably bad or good ideas.

If any of this is done competently, the overlord eventually shifts from favoring Roger to a more even-handed view, declaring himself open to further arguments; a really clever speech will make him look distinctly favorably on Martha, while mishandling matters might lead him to declare for Roger, forcing the characters to scabble to recover their position.

At this point, the characters should try to assemble a reasonable proposal for resolving the difficulty, which may involve arranging a marriage, involving the local bishop (see the "Church Options" sidebar; this may mean more journeys or messages, if he isn't in the same area), or simply persuading the overlord that Martha is a useful counterbalance to the ambitions of two overweening local lords. (The last will work best if Michael and Roger have been acting boorishly.) Players may well come up with other ideas. Their characters may also have to deal with Martha's stubbornness; patience and calm are needed there, as she isn't especially susceptible to charm. Attempted use of magic on the overlord or his clerks would be unwise, especially if Asmorn is around, but using it for fast transport or delivery of messages, or subtly to detect corruption among officials, could be very helpful. Good ideas and diplomatic skill advance Martha's case by stages; deadlocked debates slow things down and maybe cause the overlord to consider options which inconvenience everyone equally (see, for example, the sidebar), and failures advance Roger's case, or maybe even Michael's. *Proving* that her neighbors have been attacking Martha's estates would help her, but mere unsubstantiated accusations will be disregarded. Eventually, enough victories or failures lead to a good or bad ruling.

For more excitement, an opponent might attempt to intimidate or even assassinate someone who's being too successful on Martha's behalf. Michael and Roger probably seek to blame each other for this, whoever is responsible. If Michael is present, he *might* be induced to attack Roger's lawyers, as they have a worryingly strong position, but in that case, Martha's supporters might find themselves being blamed!

Asmorn also shows up at some point. He would, of course, be viewed with intense suspicion by mundane clerks, thanks to The Gift, but once again, he can use his own grogs to learn what's going on. *Any* sign of the characters using magic leads him to warn them, and could quickly cause him to start issuing charges and summoning them to



tribunal; he regards even the most subtle supernatural meddling at a high noble's court as beyond the pale.

DEFENDING THE ESTATE

For a short, violent, *Seven Samurai*-style story, concentrate on Michael's attempts to damage Martha's income and prestige by sending bullies and ruffians to harass and burn out her tenants. This can lead to a series of fight scenes until the characters and Martha can accumulate enough evidence to take him to law or blackmail him with the threat, or inflict enough damage to his forces to force him to back off. Counterattacks are also possible, but risk escalating the conflict.

YOUNG LOVE

There's also the possibility of a marriage for Catherine. The player characters may think of persuading Roger to accept a much less onerous dowry for his son, but by now, he's probably alienated Martha too far. Finding an alternative suitor can be as simple or as complex as the storyguide wishes.

The ideal suitor would be a capable, gentle young knight or aristocratic younger son with the intelligence to manage the estate to Martha's satisfaction. Finding such a paragon would be quite an accomplishment; the characters might have to comb the castles and tourneys of the land, and then make a convincing sales pitch.

A reasonable suitor would be older, poorer, or less capable, but not tied to any faction, and happy to accept this role. He might need grooming to make him acceptable to Catherine. There might actually be two or three possible candidates known to the characters or hanging around the overlord's court; the characters, Martha, and Catherine would then have to choose between them.

A marginal suitor would be someone unattractive to Catherine, Martha, or Martha's overlord, perhaps being tied to some faction or even related to Michael or Roger. However, so long as he wasn't too problematic, he could be presented as a least-bad choice, and might respond to intensive, maybe magically augmented grooming; the characters could play fairy godmothers to a male Cinderella.

Persuading the overlord to accept Martha's leaving the holding to a "newcomer" would be tricky, but not impossible if the suitor has enough status and feudal connections, or even if it simply resolves an intractable headache. Martha would hope that the suitor would either accept the prospect of inheriting the land as dowry enough, or be

Church Options

If Martha's overlord or his appointed judges find the case too tiresome, a neat legal sidestep would be to grant her lands to the church, with a requirement that Martha should retain them for life as a ward of the local bishop. This would annoy Michael and Roger, of course, but there would be very little they could do about it. Martha would appreciate that, but would find the idea of having to answer to the bishop uncomfortable, and, of course, this would leave Catherine without support. Martha would fear that the bishop would force the girl into a convent to remove a drain on the church's new possession; certainly, it might be hard to extract her a decent dowry. Still, if Catherine can be found a good husband first, or if the bishop can be induced to make some generous public guarantees of security for the girl, the trick would be quite appealing.

Also, one of Martha's trump cards is a threat to enter a nunnery and give her property to the church. She hasn't made this explicit yet, as she actually hates the idea, and she would certainly only ever carry through on it if Catherine was safely married, but it *would* scare her opponents.

Characters who get involved with church affairs should tread very carefully; causing a bishop to take any sort of interest in the Order is a significant violation of the Code in Asmorn's eyes.

from a rich enough family to accept a daughter-in-law with strings attached.

Further complications can include Catherine (or a suitor) developing affections for someone else; characters with the Curse of Venus can trigger huge problems here! On the other hand, if the characters can set a companion character up as an acceptable suitor, they'll have reason to be pleased with themselves.

Rewards

If everything goes well, the characters can expect the reward they were promised. Tholin may be devious, but he's not going to defraud his sodales over a few pawns of vis; likewise, Asmorn may be irritated, but he's sincerely law abiding.

The characters might also engineer a reward that *wasn't* agreed in advance.

Lady Martha is a landed noblewoman, based not very far from their covenant, who would be willing to form an alliance with Gifted magi if approached carefully. Her determination to hold onto her rights and protect her daughters' interests leaves her prepared to bend what others might see as moral principles. She's designed as a companion, and could be handed off to a player in this role. As noted in her game statistics, her Flaws may change if the characters are particularly successful, replacing her Enemies with the normal obligations of her Oath of Fealty.

If things *don't* go well, the consequences can range from Tholin's sarcasm and petty enmity to a formal trial for infractions of the Code of Hermes; if anyone has really offended Asmorn's sense of propriety, they're in trouble. It's also possible that clumsy actions will have left Martha's neighbors with a grudge against the player characters; Michael might try to whip up a miniature crusade against the covenant, while Roger would probably arrange political/social problems for them.

A Musical Murder Mystery

What follows is a murder mystery scenario that demonstrates that mysteries are not incompatible with powerful wizards. It follows a familiar pattern for murder mysteries: the murders are committed, an investigation takes place, and the story culminates in a confrontation with the murderer. Although this scenario is suitable for magi characters, it is also appropriate for companions or apprentices.

Précis

Several months ago, the minstrel Bartholomew stumbled across an ancient flute of unusual craftsmanship. He played the flute and released ancient magic that warped his mind and drove him insane. Bartholomew became obsessed with this melody, but try though he might, he could not recreate the song he played on that day.

Time passed and Bartholomew grew increasingly agitated and distraught. He soon grew to loathe all music other than his memory of that magical music. Then, one day while listening to the performance of another minstrel, he came to the realization that it was the music of others that was drowning out his memory of the magical music. Bartholomew, desperately desiring to hear again this otherworldly refrain, decided that the other musicians, and their music, must be silenced.

Bartholomew decided that he had to silence all other sources of music — permanently. By the start of the scenario, Bartholomew has already struck, killing a local balladeer named Paul. Anyone with a known talent for music is a target. Bartholomew kills his victims using the flute's magical music, which drives people insane and can even cause physical harm.

Should Bartholomew succeed in his goal of silencing all other sources of music, he will play his flute again, which summons a destructive magical spirit.

Dramatis Personae

The primary characters in this scenario are detailed here.

Bartholomew, the Murderous Minstrel

Bartholomew is the antagonist for this scenario; he murdering other musically talented people in the area. Bartholomew was driven mad by a magical flute that has created an overwhelming hatred of all music not created by the magical flute. Furthermore, this hatred has made him obsessed with silencing all other musicians. Bartholomew's ultimate goal is to summon a music spirit connected to the flute, although he does not know this — it is a subconscious goal instilled by the magic of the flute.

Originally, Bartholomew was a talented and respected musician, who performed for lords and peasants alike. He can play all manner of instruments, and is well known for his skill and charm. He is liked by most of the locals. Bartholomew has friends, including other musicians such as Baldwin, the local lord Philip's entertainer, and regularly performs at festivals. Many locals can vouch for him, as do respected people from neighboring lands.

Bartholomew is driven to kill by the magical music from his flute and does not know what would happen if he finally succeeded in killing all of the musicians. His murders are crimes of magically induced insanity, over which he has little or no control, although he is entirely aware of what he is doing, and makes plans in a calculating manner. However, he feels no guilt, and does not feel responsible for his actions — afterwards he remembers the murders as though he were a witness rather than participant. He holds deep feelings of hatred towards other musicians and their music, but has enough presence of mind to not openly show these feelings. Bartholomew does not play his magical flute in public, since he is keenly aware that its music is harmful to people and animals who listen to it. He does always carry the flute with him, however, and will vigorously resist at-

New Duration: Performance

The spell lasts as long as the caster performs the Performance Ability. Performance is equivalent to Concentration Duration.

To cast a Performance Duration spell, the magus must succeed in a roll (simple or stress die, according to circumstances) of Characteristic

(varies with Ability) + Ability against an Ease Factor of 3.

The spell fails if this fails, and botches if the roll botches. The spell ends when the magus ceases to perform the Ability, but no Concentration or Ability rolls are needed to maintain the spell while

the performance continues.

Performance Abilities include: Music, Charm, Guile, and Carouse (see *The Mysteries Revised Edition*, page 29 for more information).

This originally appeared in *The Mysteries Revised Edition*, page 29-30.

tempts to take it away from him.

Day to day, Bartholomew's insanity is not noticeable — he can interact normally most of the time, although prolonged exposure to music of any kind (whistling, instruments, singing, etc.) will cause him visible distress. Although he does not play music anymore, he still can entertain through storytelling and poetry recitations. When he is driven to murder, Bartholomew has enough forethought to target victims when they are alone and vulnerable, and when there are no witnesses. In this insane, murderous state of mind, he lures, or stalks, his victims to a remote place, and uses the magic of the flute to kill them.

Characteristics: Int 0, Per 0, Pre +1, Com +2, Str +1, Sta +1, Dex +1, Qik +0

Size: 0

Age: 30s (30s)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 6 (5)

Confidence Score: 1 (5)

Virtues and Flaws: Wanderer; Free Expression, Tough*; Hatred (music)*; Driven (destroy all music)*, Obsessed (magical flute's music)*

* Virtues and Flaws due to Warping

The Flute

The flute has several unique non-Hermetic magical powers, and it is a potent magical device. All of its powers are automatically and simultaneously activated when it is played. To activate the flute, its owner must possess some musical skill (which is represented by at least one experience point in the Music Ability), although no Ability roll is required (except for Performance duration abilities, see the nearby insert). The flute's powers only activate when the flutist is playing, and Concentration rolls are needed to keep playing if the flutist is wounded or distracted.

Storyguides should use their discretion to change the number of rounds the flute needs to work. There are also several optional powers that the storyguide may decide to use. Storyguides should

also vary the Penetration of the flute's powers according to the Magic Resistance of the characters involved with this scenario, so as to increase or decrease the lethality of its powers as appropriate.

CACOPHONIC ARMOR

PeVi 58

Pen +5, Unlimited

R: Touch, D: Performance, T: Ind

Due to the distorting effects of the flute's music, any person who plays the flute is granted a limited form of Magic Resistance. This effect is similar to the Hermetic spell *Unravelling the Fabric of (Form)* (ArM5, page 161), except that it affects all forms, and will cancel spells of level 20 or less. This power will only protect the flutist from one spell per round.

(Effect: Non-Hermetic, base 40, +1 Performance)

DISHARMONY

CrVi 78

Pen +35, Unlimited

R: Voice, D: Mom, T: Group

The music created by the flute causes mystical disruptions in its targets by inflicting Warping. For beings with Magic Resistance, this power must first Penetrate. If it does, it inflicts one Warping Point per ten rounds that the target is exposed to the flute's music. This power also affects the player of the flute; the Flaws inflicted by the Warping relate to the flute's Madness power.

(Effect: Non-Hermetic, base 20, +3 Voice, +3 Group)

The Flute (cont'd)

FRENZIED FORTITUDE (OPTIONAL)

ReCo 25

Pen 0, Unlimited

R: Touch, D: Performance, T: Ind

This optional power causes the flute player to gain an unnatural resistance to pain and injury. The flute player suffers no penalties from Wounds or lost Fatigue levels, meaning that the player can physically exert himself for extended periods, such as when running or fighting. The flutist is still wounded however, and can be incapacitated or killed by damage inflicted in a battle.

(Effect: Non-Hermetic, base 10, +1 Touch, +1 Performance)

MADNESS

PeMe(An) 73

Pen +35, Unlimited

R: Voice, D: Mom, T: Group

This power causes all who hear the music to be driven irrevocably mad. The madness caused by this power is cumulative, and it takes a short time of listening for the full effects to manifest. Hearing the flute's music for only a moment causes dread. Listening for longer than ten rounds creates a morbid fascination with the music, creating a permanent Personality Trait of "Obsessed with the flute's music" +1. Every ten rounds thereafter, the Obsessed Personality Trait increases by 1. After a minute, the listener becomes repulsed and terrified by the music, as though he were permanently affected by the spell *Black Whisper* (ArM5, page 150). This power affects both animals and people. Deaf targets are completely unaffected by this power.

The player of the flute suffers from the obsessions created by this

power and is also driven insane. The flutist, however, is not driven suicidally insane, but rather develops a pathological hatred of all music other than that of the flute (this effect becomes a part of the flutist's essential nature through the Warping effects of the Disharmony power).

(Effect: Non-Hermetic, base 15, +3 Voice, +3 Group)

OBSESSION

MuMe 48

Pen +5, Unlimited

R: Sight, D: Moon, T: Ind

This power creates an overwhelming obsession in the mind of anyone with a musical aptitude who sees the flute. If affected by this power, a person with an experience point in Music Ability, or Virtue such as Free Expression, Enchanting Music, or a similar characteristic, becomes obsessed with possessing and playing the flute. This obsession is not permanent, and gradually subsides over the course of a month or so if the target does not see the flute for that time. This power only comes into effect if the flute is not in the possession of someone with a musical ability, Virtue, or Flaw, and when in effect is constant. (For example, if separated from Bartholomew, this power will activate; in his possession the power is dormant.)

(Effect: Non-Hermetic, base 4, +4 Sight, +2 Moon)

STRENGTH OF THE INSANE (OPTIONAL)

MuCo 45

Pen 0, Unlimited

R: Touch, D: Performance, T: Ind

This optional power grants the

flutist supernatural strength, granting a +5 bonus to Strength- and Stamina-related totals. It further allows the flute player to act as if he had the Reserves of Strength Virtue (ArM5, page 48).

(Effect: Non-Hermetic, base 25, +1 Touch, +1 Performance)

SUMMON MUSIC SPIRIT

ReVi 75

Pen +30, Unlimited

R: Arc, D: Mom, T: Ind

Using this power is only possible once all other sources of music are silent for many leagues surrounding the flute. It requires that the flutist play a unique song on the flute, after which the Music Spirit is summoned (see Music Spirit insert near the end of this chapter).

(Effect: Non-Hermetic, base 30, +4 Arcane Connection)

UNDULATION

PeCo(An) 58

Pen +5, Unlimited

R: Voice, D: Mom, T: Group

The music of the flute causes unnatural sounds that react violently with the bodies and humors of living creatures. After 3 rounds of being exposed to the music, the targets begin to be physically harmed by the magical sounds, suffering a Light Wound, as their internal organs begin to rupture. For every 5 rounds, this damage increases one category — rising up to a Medium Wound, then a Heavy Wound, and so on. This power affects all those in earshot, animal and human alike, but does not affect the player of the flute.

(Effect: Non-Hermetic, base 15, +3 Voice, +3 Group)

Personality Traits: Obsessed with flute and its music +5,
 Hatred of music +4
Reputations: Talented minstrel +3 (local)
Combat:
Fist: Init 0, Attack +4, Defense +4, Damage +1
Soak: +4
Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious
Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15),
 Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)
Abilities: Awareness 2 (audiences), Brawl 2 (fist), Charm
 4 (potential patrons), Etiquette 2 (while performing),
 Guile 3 (women), Music 5 (flute), Profession (minstrel)
 5 (new hires), Stealth 3 (hiding)
Equipment: An old, battered flute, and a set of colorful
 entertainer's clothing.
Encumbrance: 0 (0)
Appearance: A well-traveled minstrel, Bartholomew appears

in brightly colored clothing suitable for performing in a market or a lord's hall. He is in his thirties with a friendly but preoccupied expression, as if something important is on his mind.

Bartholomew has been severely Warped by the magic of the flute. From the flute, he gains several supernatural powers, including Magic Resistance, inhuman strength, and resistance to pain (see the nearby The Flute insert box). Spiritually, his soul has also been Warped dramatically by the flute, leaving little of the man he once was.

The Victims

There are numerous potential victims for Bartholomew, all of whom have some kind of musical talent. Most of the victims come from the village, but one or more may come from the covenant. The storyguide should also consider whether the covenant (or even a player's character) has a known musical talent that Bartholomew may have heard of; if so, they also become his targets.

PAUL, THE BALLADEER

Paul is a wandering musician from a nearby large village who specializes in love songs from Southern France, and in adoration tunes for the nobility. He has many tales of far-off places, such as Jerusalem, Rome, Constantinople, and the cathedral cities of the Germanic principalities. He delights locals with his tales of these places, and of his adventures — he claims to have traveled with French kings, rescued trapped maidens, and escaped from faerie lords. Whether or not his tales, or his descriptions of those far away places, are accurate is another matter.

BALDWIN, THE LORD'S ENTERTAINER

An old man with decades of experience in telling tales, legends, and ribald accounts of the local noble family's great deeds, Baldwin is a respected, well-known and well-liked entertainer. He most commonly plays during the lord's mealtimes. Baldwin is a great source of information about legends and tales of the area. He is also good friends with Bartholomew, whom he sees as something of a protégé. Baldwin lives on a farm on the edge of the village, where his wife is responsible for most of the day-to-day operation. In harvest seasons, Baldwin is wealthy enough to pay day laborers to work his fields.



OLIVIA, THE ENTERTAINER'S DAUGHTER

Olivia is Baldwin and Mary's daughter. She is a pretty girl, and has attracted many suitors from within the village (notably Benedict, the village blacksmith) and from surrounding villages. She has no real desire to get married, and wants to leave the village to explore the wider world. Olivia has none of her father's musical talents, but is an excellent dancer. Olivia is an accidental victim of Bartholomew's murder of her father — she is driven mad, but not killed, by Bartholomew's flute.

HORACE, THE PRECENTOR

Horace is a layman who sings at religious festivals. He is known to have a marvelous voice, but several years ago he was chastised by the bishop for altering the style in which the psalms were recited, although he has since done his penance. Horace often has disputes with the village priest, Father Richard, often over minor matters, but also the role of music in church services and whether instruments should be used. Horace would like to introduce instruments into the singing of psalms and other religious music, but Father Richard is strongly opposed. Horace has a wife, Joan, and several children, and lives in a modest house in the village, where he is a laborer.

GUSTAV, THE TALENTED SOLDIER

A soldier in the service of the local lord, Gustav is a middle-aged, gruff man who is well respected for both his martial skill and his musical ability. Not only does he know many ballads and poems, but he can play a number of musical instruments, and can juggle. Gustav is well known for his heavy drinking during festivities. He has a number of illegitimate children in the area, including in the village. It is rumored that he possesses a holy relic.

JEREMIAH, THE SHEPHERD

A young boy, Jeremiah looks after a large sheep herd for Philip, the local lord. He is known to have an enchanting voice, and it is rumored that his father is a mysterious stranger from the woods, with bewitching eyes and a captivating voice.

Villagers and Locals

Murder victims have families and friends, people who the characters can question, or who ask the characters for assistance in solving the murders. They can aid or hinder the investigation. Here are some of the characters who the characters are most likely to interact with, or who have useful information.

FATHER RICHARD, THE VILLAGE PRIEST

Father Richard is a dour and serious man who discharges his duties with great solemnity and stoicism. Not particularly educated, he does have a great deal of experience in a range of matters, from theology to managing local politics, and basic medicine. Richard is an unsophisticated but intelligent man, with a firm grasp of his role, and a good knowledge of his flock. He is also known to loudly disapprove of folk music and its various incarnations — he believes it is a remnant of paganism and idolatry, and forbids instruments to be used in his church ceremonies. Father Richard has argued publicly with several people in the village about the role of music, particularly Baldwin and Horace.

The village priest will deal in some way or another with the murder victims, as they will all be buried. If the characters do not see the bodies of Bartholomew's victims before they are taken to the church, then they need to negotiate with Richard to inspect or otherwise deal with the bodies — he may be useful in helping the characters determine the cause of death. Richard knows most of the potential victims personally, and feels their deaths with great sorrow. He will act to make sure that none of their bodies are mistreated.

His attitude towards magic is undetermined — he has never encountered magic, and his experience and training have not prepared him to make any judgments. The conduct of the first magicians he meets will likely color all future opinions he has towards magic and wizards. If the magic-using characters are courteous and use their magic for good ends, then he will be a useful ally; if they are arrogant or destructive, he will be an annoying foil.

PHILIP, THE LOCAL LORD

No ruler likes murders to take place in his territory, and Philip is no different. Philip is a young and ambitious lord, with his eyes on his neighbors' lands, and his mind turned towards how he can improve his station. He is already using his land's surplus to increase the number of soldiers and

knights in his service, and he extensively donates land and money to influential church leaders.

Philip will be a likely foil to the characters, with suspicions that repeated murders are the fault (somehow) of the covenant. He is likely to demand that they stop the murders, or prove that they are not responsible. He has a number of warriors in his service — sheriffs and bailiffs, as well as knights installed in manors throughout his lands.

BENEDICT, THE BLACKSMITH

Benedict is a heavy-set man with a lot of brawn and not much else. As the blacksmith, he is a wealthy villager, but is mostly disliked by the villagers for his violent temper and arrogant attitude towards those who he thinks are weaker than he is. Benedict is keen on getting a wife, since his last one died in childbirth several years ago, leaving him with a daughter. He is particularly attracted to Baldwin's daughter Olivia, but has gotten into several violent arguments with Baldwin over this (Baldwin refuses to consider Olivia marrying Benedict).

MARY, THE TEARFUL WIFE

Mary is Baldwin's wife, and suffers from the affliction of terrible visions. Before his death, she has had several bad dreams that something terrible will befall him. Mary and Baldwin also have a daughter, Olivia. Mary is deeply distressed at his death, and tries to help track down the cause. She suspects that Benedict is responsible somehow.

ELIZABETH, THE GOSSIP

A local busy-body, Elizabeth is a great source of stories and rumors about the victims and of theories as to who suspects should be. Elizabeth is as likely to be the source of red-herrings as she is to provide useful information, though. She can relay most of the general information about the characters to the characters, although she obviously does not know who is truly responsible for the murders.

THOMAS, THE HERMIT

On the edges of the village lands lives Thomas, a reclusive hermit with a vow of poverty and chastity. Thomas has almost no contact with the villagers, only occasionally seeing them when he travels close to a farm. He lives by

hunting and gathering in the woods that surround the village. Thomas is a skilled huntsman and herbalist.

OTTO, THE HOSTELLER

Otto owns a house with a large main room for visitors to the village to stay in, for a small fee. Most visitors, particularly the representatives of Lord Philip like Gustav, stay with Otto, as do visiting entertainers such as Bartholomew and Paul. Otto has a large family — a wife and five children of varying ages — and supports himself and his family by laboring during harvest seasons, and brewing beer.

Expected Sequence of Play

To start the scenario, the characters learn of the murder of a number of musicians in the area around their covenant. Most of the murders happen at the start of the scenario, with one or two towards the end.

By the time the characters get involved, at least two murders have taken place — those of Paul and Baldwin. The characters have the opportunity to search the murder scenes, examine the bodies, and speak to the villagers.

Bartholomew's Murderous Refrain

Bartholomew uses his flute to kill his victims. He first discovered that its music could kill when he was playing softly to himself while traveling to the village. A brigand who had been following Bartholomew overheard the music. Bartholomew was alerted to the brigand when the outlaw began to thrash about and cry madly. He followed the brigand's mad stumbling until eventually he threw himself off a ledge and broke his neck. Bartholomew later submitted the flute's music to a test with some animals. Like the brigand, they reacted dramatically to the music — their bodies were twisted by the flute's unnatural music and they died. It was at this point that the idea of using the flute itself to silence all other music came to Bartholomew.

The magic of the flute's music causes madness, and its harmonics causes damaging disruption to the body's humors and organs, to those who hear it for more than a few minutes. For those of weaker constitutions, the flute's unnatural resonance might physically kill them, as their unbalanced humors cause

Getting Started

By the start of the first act, only two murders need to have taken place — those of Paul and Baldwin — so these ideas are aimed at giving the characters impetus to become involved after the later murders.

- The characters know one of the victims, who perhaps lived in the covenant, or is a relative, friend, acquaintance, or ally of the characters;
- The characters (or the covenant's magi) are suspected by locals for the murders and must clear their names;
- The characters are asked by the local priest, lord, or someone from the covenant to investigate the village murders;
- One of the characters is known for his or her musical talent and fears being the next victim.
- The characters stumble across the village during a vis hunt or while on another errand.

organ failure. Those of stronger physique are eventually driven mad; they eventually hurt themselves or take their own lives, if they do not suffer from an accident first.

To murder each victim, Bartholomew stands some distance from his target, but within earshot. He always strikes when he thinks they are alone, and at sunset or sunrise, when he can easily hide. As the victim passes unsuspectingly, he begins to play the flute. After a minute or two, the flute's dreadful spell take hold; the music has wormed its way into the mind and begins to attack both sanity and constitution — death is only moments away at that point.

The Murders

Bartholomew's potential victims are listed in the Dramatis Personae section in the order that they are murdered: Paul, then Baldwin, Horace, and so on. The characters can get involved in the scenario at any stage after the first murder. Not all the murders listed below necessarily need to occur — the characters may solve the mystery after the first or second.

As more murders are committed, the villagers become more suspicious about being alone, or traveling to remote or isolated areas, particularly outside the village. Furthermore, interspersed between the murders, other events occur — Gustav arrives, and the characters find Olivia, Baldwin's daughter. Bartholomew becomes more desperate as the number of victims increase.

The Village

The murders take place in and around a village associated with the covenant. The village is relatively isolated from other major settlements, and is surrounded by a large forest. It is far from civilization, and law and order.

In this village, there is a sense of isolation and suffocation. There are approximately 60 people — men, women and children — who live in and around the village. Everyone knows everyone else, and most villagers are related somehow, either by blood or marriage. Grudges and feuds go back for generations. All of the buildings — the church and the village houses — are old and crumbling. There is limited contact with the outside world, other than visiting entertainers and the representatives of the local lord, Philip. The locals are myopic and not receptive to outsiders; they are fearful or wary of the outside world.

There are several important areas in the village and surroundings: a small church where Father Richard lives;

Using Story Flaws and Hooks

These ideas may help get your players involved in the story.

CHARACTER STORY FLAWS

Close Family Ties: One of the victims is a distant (or close) family member, or alternatively the friend, ally, or servant of a family member, with the family member requesting help.

Curse of Venus: Bartholomew was your character's former, current, or would-be lover.

Difficult Underlings: Your underlings are accused of one or more of the murders while traveling through the village, and you must clear their names.

Faerie Friend: Your faerie friend warns you of a terrible threat growing near the village, possibly relating to music or musicians.

Monastic Vows: Your senior asks you to visit Father Richard on some errand — and while there you stumble upon the murders.

Visions: You receive a vision of the destructive rampage of the music spirit, or of the murders.

COVENANT HOOKS

Protector: Your covenant protects this village, and is asked for help in solving the murders.

The Deadly Tune

Characters who can summon spirits or ghosts of those murdered by Bartholomew, using either *Corpus* or *Mentem* spells, will find that the victims, even in death, have been driven insane. They cry, moan, or scream in terror and dread. One unifying factor, however, is that they all mindlessly hum, whistle, or sing an identical tune — the same tune used by Bartholomew on his flute. Similarly, if the characters locate Olivia, Baldwin's daughter, they will find that she hums and sings the same tune.

Otto's hostel where Bartholomew, the murderous minstrel, stays, and the thick woods that surround and isolate the village, where several murders take place. A map is nearby.

Most of the village and surrounding lands have a Dominion aura of 1. The Dominion rises to level 2 in the church grounds, 3 inside the church, and 4 at the altar. The forest is a mix of low-level Faerie and Magic auras, ranging from 1 to 2.

An Untimely Fete

This scene — Baldwin's funeral — starts the scenario. The funeral fete introduces the characters to the other future victims, and the murderer, Bartholomew. By the time the characters arrive on the scene, two murders have already taken place: first Paul the balladeer and now Baldwin the local lord's entertainer.

Despite the solemn occasion, medieval funerals are exciting times, with all sorts of activities and entertainment provided, as well as small stalls selling local produce. The entire village has come out to mourn the death of a popular and respected entertainer. The funeral is a highly charged religious ceremony in which all members of the village are involved. The burial is scheduled to occur at midday.

Baldwin's death is the subject of considerable gossip. Any untimely death is grounds for conjecture, and the circumstances of this victim's death are unusual, particularly so close to Paul's, and added to the disappearance of his daughter, Olivia. There are several rumors around his death, including that Olivia was responsible for it, either directly or that he died of a broken heart after she smashed all of his precious instruments. No rumors directly connect the deaths of Paul and Baldwin.

Baldwin's wife Mary is notably grieving and distressed. If approached by the characters, she tells them that she found her husband dead a few days ago. It appeared as if there had been a fight or commotion, and he had a terrible

grimace. Their daughter, Olivia, was also missing. She suspects that someone or something is responsible for both Baldwin's death and Olivia's disappearance.

Bartholomew and all of his future victims are present at the funeral, and the characters may well interact with them, although nothing about Bartholomew should give him away — he appears (and genuinely is) sad at the passing of his friend Baldwin.

Starting the Investigation

There are two deaths to investigate: the death of Paul the traveling balladeer, and of Baldwin the lord's entertainer.

WHAT THE VILLAGERS SAY ABOUT PAUL

Paul's body was found by one of the village laborers a week ago, on one of the paths leading to a nearby village. He had left the village two days before. When he was found he was a little off the track, and had a broken neck. His face was contorted into a terrible grimace, as though he was feeling intense pain when he died. The village priest and several villagers retrieved the body and took it to the church where it was laid out. Paul's funeral was held three days ago. A few villagers say that the Devil (or a malicious faerie) killed him out of jealousy of his talent.

WHAT THE VILLAGERS SAY ABOUT BALDWIN

Baldwin was found by his wife, surrounded by his broken instruments, and with his daughter Olivia missing. When he was found, he was clutching his chest. Mary, his wife, was away from the village when Baldwin died, because she had to deliver some farm produce to her family that lives in a neighboring village. Some villagers report hearing haunting music coming from his house the night he died, which suddenly stopped. Many villagers believe Olivia was responsible for Baldwin's death, and that she fled to avoid punishment.

Paul's Murder

Paul was murdered first because he was an easy target — he had no close friends or family from the village, and was a wanderer. He comes and goes from the village at irregular intervals, so his disappearance should not have been noticed for some time.

Bartholomew followed Paul as he left to travel to another village or town. He struck when the village was well out of sight and earshot, and hid in the woods along the road. When he started playing his flute, Paul left the road to uncover its source. By the time he came close to Bartholomew, the flute's music overwhelmed him. Driven mad, Paul ran through the woods until he stumbled over a root and broke his neck. Bartholomew meanwhile rushed back to the village.

MUNDANE INVESTIGATION AT THE MURDER SCENE

To uncover clues at Paul's murder scene requires a Perception + Ability + stress die roll. Characters can use Awareness, Hunt, or Survival to find clues.

Total 6 or above: There are many tracks leading to and from where Paul died, which seem to have been made by the villagers recovering his body, and by curious onlookers.

Total 9 or above: Several dead forest animals, such as foxes, rabbits, and owls, are in the area around where Paul died. There is no obvious cause of death.

Total 12 or above: Tracks show that Paul was walking along the track, then suddenly ran off the path into the forest, stumbled and fell.

Total 15 or above: A second set of tracks are found, separate from and older than those of the villagers, which are deeper in the woods and some way off from where Paul was. (These are Bartholomew's, though the tracks do not reveal this.) The tracks lead from the village and return there, but once at the village they are covered by many other tracks and can no longer be followed. The animals died from internal injuries.

Total 18 or above: The character could identify the kind of boot the maker of the second set of tracks was wearing if he was able to examine a number of boots and sizes.

Total 24 or above: The second set of tracks lead to and from Otto's hostel.

MUNDANE INVESTIGATION OF PAUL'S BODY

Paul has already been buried. Father Richard, and the villager who found Paul's body, can give a description of how they found him. The villager says that he saw some tracks leaving the road, followed them, and found Paul's body. He quickly ran back to the village to get Father Richard, and both of them carried Paul back to the village. There he was laid in the church, and buried two days later. Father Richard concurs with this story, and

says that he believes that Paul died of a broken neck. The priest will also say that Paul's face was contorted, as though he was screaming, but while he was laying in the church, Father Richard set his features to an expression of peace.

If the characters decide to dig up his body, a Perception + Chirurgy or Medicine + stress die roll against an Ease Factor of 9 will reveal that Paul died of a broken neck. Paul's body was washed before being buried, so there are no other clues.

SUPERNATURAL INVESTIGATION

Magical investigation is made difficult because of the time that has passed since Paul died.



Baldwin's Murder

INTELLEGO ANIMAL

Spells such as *Opening the Tome of the Animal's Mind* (see **ArM5**, page 118) reveal a hazy memory of terrifying music coming from where Paul died. Most animals remember fleeing the area. If the characters succeed in the Perception + Finesse roll, they get an image of a man playing a flute, but the memories were too long ago for the animals to remember other details. Animal spells using the base level 20 guideline ("thoroughly probe the mind of a beast") also show a man in a plain dark cloak and hood playing a flute. The animal flees after hearing the music, so can reveal no other details. If the animal being spoken to is a predator, then it also remembers the man's scent.

INTELLEGO AURAM

Spells using the base level 15 guideline ("speak with air", **ArM5** page 127) cast in the area where Paul died reveal only a memory of the music from the flute. The poor memory of the air means that the music does not affect the spellcasting character who hears it. It sounds like a haunting and eerie whistle.

INTELLEGO CORPUS

Intellego Corpus spells are stymied by the fact that Paul has received a church burial — *Whispers Through the Black Gate* and similar spells fail. *Revealed Flaws of Mortal Flesh* reveals that Paul died of a broken neck, but also that his humors were dangerously unbalanced just before he died. An Intelligence + Medicine (or Chirurgy) + simple die against an Ease Factor of 9 reveals that Paul would have died very soon afterwards if he had not broken his neck.

INTELLEGO HERBAM

Spells such as *Converse with Plant and Tree* (and others using the base level 15 guideline, **ArM5** page 136) are not very helpful — a great deal of time has passed since the murder took place. The trees near where Paul fell remember him running madly through the woods and falling, while those a distance away remember a second man (Bartholomew, though the footprints do not reveal this) walking and making terrible sounds. Smaller plants have no memory of what occurred.

INTELLEGO TERRAM

Casting the spell *Stone Tell of the Mind that Sits* or Intellego Terram spells using the base level 20 guideline (see **ArM5**, page 153) reveals that Paul wandered off the track, madly ran through the forest, and stumbled over a root and fell. Casting this spell a distance away will give more details — the second man's weight (average for an adult man) and that he stood still there for several minutes while Paul was running about.

The second victim is the lord's entertainer, Baldwin. Although he spends much of his time at Lord Philip's fortress, Philip travels often to neighboring lands, politicking with other lords and clergy. During these times, which can last seasons at a time, Baldwin lives in the village, where he has a wife. Baldwin was good friends with Bartholomew.

Bartholomew visited Baldwin early one morning, under the ruse of discussing a broken instrument. When he arrived, he offered to play a song on his new flute for Baldwin, who agreed. The song's magic caused Baldwin to go into frenzy, smashing his many musical instruments before suffering a heart attack. Bartholomew fled as soon as the madness struck Baldwin.

Unknown to Bartholomew, Baldwin's daughter Olivia overheard some of the music, and was also driven mad. Olivia ran from the village, until she was knocked unconscious by a low-hanging branch and was discovered by Thomas, the hermit.

MUNDANE INVESTIGATION OF THE MURDER SCENE

Baldwin was murdered in his home, in the house's main room. A Perception + Awareness + stress die roll is required to find clues.

Total 6 or greater: There appears to have been a fight in the main room, with all of Baldwin's musical instruments smashed. Some have been cleaned up by Mary, Baldwin's wife.

Total 9 or greater: Most of the instruments are scattered around a single area, suggesting that only one person smashed them — possibly Baldwin. Footprints in the next room show that someone (Olivia, but the footprints do not reveal this) was listening, and then fled — possibly at around the same time Baldwin died.

Total 12 or greater: There was a second person in the room with Baldwin when he died (Bartholomew, though again the prints do not reveal this). He left before the person in the next room did, and went back into the village, where his tracks have been covered up by several days of traffic. There is no sign of a forced entry, and the second person entered through the main entrance. The tracks of the listener in the other room lead to the woods around the village (but in a different direction to where Paul was found).

Total 15 or greater: The visitor left a boot-print in the house, which could be identified if the characters closely examine other boots. There is also a trace of dried blood where

the listener's head struck while fleeing the building.
Total 24 or greater: The visitor's tracks lead from Otto's hostel to Baldwin's house.

MUNDANE INVESTIGATION OF BALDWIN'S BODY

Baldwin's body is laid out in the church. Because he has not been buried yet, the characters can examine it, assuming they convince Father Richard that they mean no harm. A Perception + Medicine + stress die against an Ease Factor of 12 reveals that Baldwin died from an extreme imbalance in his humors, which caused heart failure. There are also bruises and abrasions on Baldwin's hands and arms. A Perception + Chirurgy + stress die roll against an Ease Factor of 9 reveals that these were caused as he smashed his musical instruments.

SUPERNATURAL INVESTIGATION

Because Baldwin has not been buried yet, Intellego Corpus and Mentem spells can be cast on his body. If the characters ask to perform the spells while Father Richard is near, they need to convince him that they are not desecrating Baldwin's body, which requires a Communication + Charm or Leadership + stress die roll against an Ease Factor of 12 (or 15 if they want to take the body out of the church).

INTELLEGO AURAM

Casting Intellego Auram spells in Baldwin's house us-

ing the base level 15 guideline reveals that several nights ago frightening music was played in the house. The air in the house also remembers a conversation between Baldwin and someone else. The characters may be able to determine whose voice it is if they hear Bartholomew's voice, or use Intellego Imaginem to remember the voice exactly (see the Intellego Imaginem base level 1 guidelines, ArM5 page 45). Baldwin addresses the guest as his friend, but does not name him.

INTELLEGO CORPUS

Casting *Whispers Through the Black Gate* on Baldwin's body summons his spirit, which has been driven irrevocably insane (short of a miracle). Baldwin's spirit only mindlessly hums the tune performed by his visitor, and cries and screams. The sight of an insane spirit may require a Brave Personality Trait roll to avoid being unnerved. Spells such as *Revealed Flaws of the Mortal Flesh* show that Baldwin died of massive humor imbalances that caused his heart to fail; lesser spells such as *Physician's Eye* show only that he is dead.

If the characters found the blood on the doorway, they can use it as an Arcane Connection to find where Olivia is. This requires the spell *The Inexorable Search* or *The Eye of the Sage*, or equivalent. Olivia is in the woods outside the village, where she is being cared for by Thomas the hermit.

INTELLEGO HERBAM

Intellego Herbam spells only work if cast on the furniture, broken instruments, or wooden parts of the house itself, such as the roof beams or the wooden door. Us-

And the Murderer is ...

It is possible that the characters convince the villagers to undergo magical investigation (or cast it on them without their knowledge), and cast an Intellego Mentem spell on everyone in the village to discover who the murderer is. This would require a spell using the base level 25 guideline (ArM5 page 149) to uncover, since Bartholomew does not reflect on his murders. If each villager is individually questioned, it only requires a base level 15 spell to uncover that he is responsible. The question needs to be specific however (such as "Did you kill Paul

or Baldwin?"). Mentem magic will not detect any guilt from Bartholomew, since he feels none. He also does not think about his murders more than a few hours in advance, so using magic to sense motive will also not work.

In any case, it is entirely possible that the characters discover Bartholomew. If they take him to justice, they need to prove that it was him — he will not admit to it (unless controlled by magic, or threatened with death), and he is well liked by the villagers, local priest, and lord.

If the characters have not discovered how Bartholomew kills his victims,

then they may also be in danger, as Bartholomew may try to use his magic to kill or frighten the characters.

Even if the characters convince everyone that Bartholomew is the murderer, or deal with him themselves, the characters still have to contend with the flute. Storyguides should try to ensure that the flute remains out of the hands of the characters, or that if they capture it, that a companion, grog, or apprentice takes charge of it. This allows, after a small period of downtime, for the murders to continue as the flute drives another person mad.

ing the base level 15 guideline requires an extra magnitude because the wood is worked. The *Converse with Plant and Tree* spell or equivalent reveals a cloaked and hooded man of average build entering the house. Because of the limitations of the awareness of wood and plants, the details of the visitor are indistinct, but if the spell is cast on the door, it reveals that the man has very fine hands, and if cast on the chair that the visitor sat on, it reveals the cut of his tunic and breeches. If cast on the broken instruments, then the spell shows Baldwin madly smashing them, before dying.

The characters may also use Intellego Herbam on Baldwin's clothes, which are fashioned from plant products. The *Converse with Plant and Tree* spell or equivalent in this case only reveals information about Baldwin, and his side of the conversation. He makes pleasant small talk about music and performances with someone he calls a friend, before he suddenly goes into a rage.

REGO MENTEM

Calling up Baldwin's ghost can be achieved through the spell *Incantation of Summoning the Dead*, and can be cast either at his house where he died, or with his body. Baldwin's ghost has a Magic Resistance of 5. Using Rego Mentem to summon his ghost has the same result as speaking to his spirit using Intellego Corpus — the ghost is insane. Baldwin's ghost has no desire to help, and mindlessly hums and sings the tune that drove him mad.

Finding Olivia

Olivia was witness to Bartholomew's murder of her father, and was also driven to madness by the flute. Because she fled before being completely overwhelmed by the flute's music, only her mind has been affected. Olivia fled Baldwin's house and ran from the village in terror, where she was found by Thomas the hermit. Thomas has been caring for her in his hut, where she has been reduced to half-conscious madness due to both the flute's music and her concussion.

The characters may well have found Olivia's blood, or her tracks leading to Thomas' hut in the woods around the village. A Perception + Awareness, Survival or Hunt + stress die against an Ease Factor of 12 is required to track her down.

Thomas' hut is a one-room shack, where Olivia sits on a straw mattress, rocking back and forth, humming tunelessly. Thomas has been feeding her, but she is growing weaker and weaker, partly due to her madness and partly due to the disruption of her humors by the flute's music. Thomas

explains that he found her unconscious in the woods and brought her to his hut to nurse her back to health — when she awoke, she was in a poor mental state.

The characters may also use magic to interrogate Olivia's mind directly. This is a risky prospect. She is mad, so the information gathered from even a powerful Intellego Mentem spell, such as *Peering into the Mortal Mind*, will be difficult (although not impossible) to decipher. She remembers her father talking to a musician, and although who is unclear, her mind can recall what Bartholomew looked like, so the characters could get an image of him entering the house. She then remembers him playing his flute. After this, her mind starts to fail and from then on is swamped by the flute's music. She did not see Baldwin die.

The characters could use Creo Mentem magic to try to restore her mind, which requires a base Creo Mentem level of 35 (equivalent to healing an Incapacitating Wound); for the effect to be permanent the spell must be a ritual. If she is restored to sanity, Olivia can recount Bartholomew visiting her father, and then playing his flute. She then remembers being overwhelmed by madness, and fleeing the house.

Horace's Murder

Horace is murdered after he has a loud and public argument with Richard, the village priest. The argument, over Richard's attitude towards Paul and Baldwin's deaths, causes Horace to storm out of the church. The murder happens the day after Baldwin's funeral.

Later that day, Bartholomew approaches Horace and suggests that he has a suspicion about the cause of Baldwin's death. The two plan to meet later that night at a storage shack used by the church on the outskirts of the village. While waiting for the minstrel, Horace is assailed by Bartholomew's music, as the murderer plays the magical flute from a hiding place outside the shack. Horace madly runs from the shack towards the church, where a stumble at the church door sees him crack his head. Again, Bartholomew flees the scene.

THE VILLAGE CHURCH

The church is in near-ruin, and was clearly built centuries ago, with only a few repairs done in the intervening decades. There is a stone foundation, and thick, but rotting, wooden walls. Father Richard sleeps in the nave — there are no rooms in the church except for the nave (where the congregation stands) and the sanctuary (where the altar is situated).

MUNDANE INVESTIGATION OF THE MURDER SCENE

Horace's body is found by Father Richard two mornings after Baldwin's funeral on the steps of the church. This causes a great deal of ruckus in the village, since it is widely known that the two argued the day before.

A Perception + Awareness or Hunt + simple die versus an Ease Factor of 9 is required to find clues.

Total 6 or greater: Horace died at the doors of the church, which he seems to have run to. There are no other tracks leading to or from Horace's body, except for those of Father Richard, from when he opened the church doors in the morning to find the body.

Total 9 or greater: Horace left his house in the village at night and went to a shack on the edge of the church's grounds, waited there for some time, and then ran from there to the church doors, where he died. There are tracks of someone (Bartholomew, which isn't apparent from the tracks) who laid in wait in the shack.

Total 15 or greater: The second person's tracks lead from the village to the shack and then back again. Countless other tracks from the comings and goings of the villagers have covered them.

Total 24 or greater: The second person's tracks lead from the shack to Otto's hostel.

MUNDANE INVESTIGATION OF BALDWIN'S BODY

A Perception + Chirurgy or Medicine + simple die roll against an Ease Factor of 6 will show that Horace died from head trauma. As he was running, he smashed his head against the church's stone wall.

SUPERNATURAL INVESTIGATION

INTELLEGO CORPUS

Intellego Corpus spells such as *Revealed Flaws of the Mortal Flesh* show that Horace died from smashing his head. However, it also shows that, like the other victims, Horace's humors were dangerously out of balance, and that he would have died shortly afterwards if he had not hit his head.

INTELLEGO HERBAM

Interrogating the wooden structure of the hut requires using the base level 15 guideline with an extra magnitude for worked wood. Since the event is recent, the information is much clearer than when investigating the other events. Casting this spell shows Horace entering and

waiting. After some time, he seems to hear something, then suddenly clutches his ears and runs from the shack. The spell also reveals a cloaked and hooded man (Bartholomew, which isn't apparent from the spell) hiding outside of the shack, who arrives an hour before Horace does, and starts to play a flute after Horace enters the shack. The hooded man then flees the area. The shack's wall against which the hooded man rested clearly perceived the flute he played.

INTELLEGO TERRAM

There are a number of gravestones near the shack, casting an Intellego Terram spell to speak to the stones shows the hooded man hiding behind the shack late at night, and after a while, Horace leaving the church to going to the shack. After Horace runs from the shack back to the church, the hooded man leaves and goes back to the village.

Gustav Arrives

Gustav, one of Lord Philip's loyal soldiers, is sent to the village to investigate the three recent deaths. Philip does not want the church to think that he cannot protect their members, and is also angered over Baldwin's death, and so Gustav is charged principally with finding out details for those two. Philip, and therefore Gustav, is not concerned with Paul's death.

Gustav arrives several days after Horace's death, with two ruffians in tow. He has arrived on behalf of Lord Philip to see if he can find out why Horace and Baldwin died. He immediately suspects Benedict, and has his ruffians arrest the blacksmith. Gustav and his retainers stay in Otto's hostel with Bartholomew, where they drinks heavily each night, singing loudly and drunkenly late into the night. He also spends some time with his village mistress and illegitimate children.

Over the next few days, Benedict is ruthlessly beaten and then released when it becomes clear that Gustav cannot prove that he committed the murders. Gustav also suspects Father Richard, but does not want to risk accusing a priest of murder (and he can't think of any reason why Richard would kill Baldwin).

Gustav is ambivalent to another group of people — magi or not — also asking questions about the deaths of Baldwin and Horace. He has no new information himself, so he tries to grill the characters for what they know. If the characters have found Olivia, he tries to question her, and if he finds out about Thomas, he has the hermit dragged to the village and brutally questioned.

OTTO'S HOSTEL

Otto runs the village's hostel — in reality a large barn connected to his house — where he provides lodging to the local lord's men when they stay, and where he accommodates visitors to the village. The hostel is a large open space, with a small private room; the floor is covered in straw. Otto keeps some of his animals in the barn, and will often store other villagers' animals for a small fee. When important people stay at the village, Otto and his wife will stay in the barn and give their house over to the dignitary.

Gustav's Murder

On his last evening after spending several days in the village, Gustav asks Bartholomew to play a tune for him to sing along. Towards the end of the evening, Gustav sings again, this time to the music of Bartholomew's flute. In his madness, Gustav throws himself onto his sword. Bartholomew flees the hostel and runs into the woods to hide.

Gustav's body is found by his two retainers and Otto, who see someone running from the building. Gustav's retainers try to follow the fleeing person, but lose him once they reach the woods outside the village. Upon their return, they awaken many of the villagers.

MUNDANE INVESTIGATION OF THE MURDER SCENE

Gustav died in Otto's hostel. Otto affirms that Gustav was alone with Bartholomew, but the two retainers are not sure who they saw. A Perception + Awareness + stress die is needed to find clues. The characters may also search for Arcane Connections to Bartholomew; these are easy to find and do not require a roll. Bartholomew has left clothes and musical instruments behind, which can be used as Arcane Connections in Intellego spells to locate him.

Total 6 or greater: By the half-drunk flasks and wine skins, Gustav was drinking heavily. There are musical instruments (such as flutes and mandolins) lying around the hostel, out of their cases or covers, suggesting that they had been used.

Total 9 or greater: By the layout of the few pieces of furniture and sleeping mats in the hostel, there was another person in the room. The other person in the room was someone who had stayed in the room previously — another guest or occupant of the hostel, such as one of the retainers or Bartholomew.

MUNDANE INVESTIGATION OF BALDWIN'S BODY

A Perception + Chirurgy + stress die versus an Ease Factor of 3 shows that he died from being impaled on his own sword (on a failure, characters think that the sword wound was inflicted after death); an Ease Factor of 12 shows that certainly he died by his own hand (there are no defensive wounds).

SUPERNATURAL INVESTIGATION

Most of the information gained from Intellego spells is very current. Therefore, if the right spells are used, the characters learn Bartholomew's identity and the method he uses to murder his victims.

INTELLEGO AURAM, HERBAM AND TERRAM

Intellego spells cast on the air, wooden and stone structures, or metal objects in Otto's hostel show the scene as described earlier. Gustav and Bartholomew were singing and playing music (Bartholomew does not use his flute at this point), and Gustav was drinking. Towards the end of the evening, Bartholomew produced a flute and started playing; after a few minutes, Gustav went into a rage and clutched at his ears. Bartholomew ran from the hostel, and in his rage, Gustav threw himself on his own sword. Because the murder happened recently, the air, wood, stone, and metal objects have a fresh memory of what occurred in the room.

INTELLEGO CORPUS

Summoning Gustav's spirit through the spell *Whispers Through the Black Gate* has an identical result to talking to the spirits of the other victims — the spirit is insane. Spells such as *Revealed Flaws of the Mortal Flesh* show that he died from being impaled by his sword, and again, that his humors were lethally unbalanced.

Jeremiah's Murder

Jeremiah is responsible for a flock of sheep that forms one of the village's chief tradable resources: wool. Each morning he takes them out to graze, and each evening he brings them back.

On the morning after Gustav's death, Bartholomew waits for Jeremiah near where the sheep graze, and as the shepherd boy sits watching his flock, he strikes. Jeremiah, after hearing the music, is paralysed with fear and dies from the imbalance in his humors. This causes not only

Jeremiah's death, but also that of many nearby sheep that did not flee the music fast enough. Jeremiah's body is found the next day, after his mother and the owner of the sheep become worried at his disappearance, and the two bring his body back to the village.

MUNDANE INVESTIGATION OF THE MURDER SCENE

Jeremiah died in the fields surrounding the village, which are rocky and hilly. A Perception + Awareness, Hunt, or Survival + stress die roll is needed to find clues.

Total 6 or greater: Jeremiah did not run or try to run when he died, but rather stayed still and did not move. Many of the sheep fled the area, but there are also many dead ones around where he died.

Total 9 or greater: Tracks lead from the woods where someone (Bartholomew, though this isn't apparent from the tracks) hid overnight, to the outskirts of the village, then follow Jeremiah to the fields and his hiding place.

Total 12 or greater: Tracks lead from the murder place.

MUNDANE INVESTIGATION OF JEREMIAH'S BODY

Jeremiah's body is taken by his mother to the church, where he is laid out before the altar. His mother is distraught, and will not leave her son's body or let anyone tamper with it. It will require a Communication + Charm or Leadership + stress die against an Ease Factor of 15 to convince her to leave strangers or Gifted characters alone with Jeremiah's body. A Perception + Medicine + stress die

against an Ease Factor of 12 shows he died from organ failure caused by imbalanced humors.

SUPERNATURAL INVESTIGATION

Like supernatural investigation of Gustav's murder, the information gained from Intellego magic is detailed, as it is fresh in the memory of the beasts and inanimate objects nearby.

INTELLEGO ANIMAL

Intellego Animal spells cast on the sheep that were in Jeremiah's care, using the base level 15 guideline ("read the recent memories of a beast"), reveal that the sheep saw a man in a hooded cloak and holding a flute approach Jeremiah where he was sitting. When the man began to play music, most of the sheep fled in terror. Some of the sheep are partly deranged and sick due to some exposure to the music.

INTELLEGO AURAM, HERBAM AND TERRAM

There are several prominent rocks and trees in the field where Jeremiah died. Intellego spells that allow characters to talk to any of these relay to them the circumstances in which Jeremiah was murdered, as laid out earlier. Additionally, the character also finds out the direction in which the flutist ran after murdering Jeremiah.

INTELLEGO CORPUS

Jeremiah's spirit and ghost, like the other victims, has been driven mad by the music of the flute. Spells to determine his cause of death show that it was through a massive imbalance of humors.

When Bad Rolls Spoil Investigations

What if the players roll terribly when trying to find clues? This is common roadblock in mystery roleplaying games. Investigations grind to a halt, players come up with increasingly imaginative uses for alternative skills in order to find a clue, or the storyguide fudges things.

Storyguides can avoid this roadblock in several different ways:

AVOID THE ROLLS

Describe the scene and the clues. If the characters are competent, with high Awareness or relevant skills, then they may automatically notice crucial facts such as that

there are tracks leading away from the body, or that there was a third person present.

ONLY HAVE ROLLS FOR ADDITIONAL CLUES

This assumes that the characters automatically find a set of basic clues, and that the rolls will uncover additional information, rather than the basic clues needed to help lead the characters to the next scene.

ENCOURAGE SPENDING OF CONFIDENCE POINTS

A Confidence Point can help ensure that the players and their characters succeed in finding the clues.

Confronting Bartholomew

At some point, the characters will have pieced together enough information to realize that Bartholomew is the murderer. If they do so before he kills Jeremiah, then Bartholomew will not have the opportunity to try to summon the music spirit. If Bartholomew has killed Jeremiah (and any other musicians in the area), then he tries to summon the music spirit.

Bartholomew has left tracks and Arcane Connections all over the village. The Intellego Corpus base level 3 guideline can be used to pinpoint his location, as can a Perception + Awareness, Hunt, or Survival + stress die against an Ease Factor of 9 in order to find his tracks.



... Before Jeremiah's Murder

If confronted before he has completed his killing spree, Bartholomew tries to flee rather than be caught. He tries to use his flute to wound or kill anyone who attempts violence against him. Forced to fight, Bartholomew struggles madly, with frothing lips, rolling eyes, and terrible moaning. Any combat should be chaotic, desperate, and brutal — he is mad after all — and may cause collateral damage.

However, he can also be negotiated with. If challenged about the murders, Bartholomew denies being the murderer if he thinks he can still achieve his goal, or confirm it if he believes doing so will benefit him. He may also try to trick the characters and his intended victims into listening to the deadly music. However, because he is insane, Bartholomew will not give up the flute and will not cease in trying to kill musicians.

If the characters are not openly hostile, he explains his motive: to play his flute free of the musical pollution of others.

Should the characters try to dissuade him or try to take away his flute, he tries to harm or kill them by playing the flute.

... After Jeremiah's Murder

Having killed Jeremiah, Bartholomew hides in the woods for some time to sense whether he has been successful in silencing other sources of music. The next day, after realizing that he was successful, he makes his way to a spot overlooking the village and surrounding area at sunset to play the flute. If the characters arrive too late to stop him from playing the flute, his performance summons the music spirit.

THE MUSIC SPIRIT

If summoned, the music spirit goes on a mindless rampage. The spirit only spends a short time (approximately an hour) manifested before returning to the Realm of Magic.

In that time, however, there is considerable damage that it can do. Its mere presence causes death or madness in all who hear it, animal and human alike, and its mindless wanderers will take it to the village, and potentially the covenant if it is close.

If there are any sources of music, such as someone who sings a song, plays a musical instrument, or otherwise makes even one musical sound (this excludes animal noises), the music spirit will home in on the source and try to destroy it if it is within a day's walk (about 30 miles).

Magic Might: 30 (Mentem)

Characteristics: Int n/a, Per 0, Pre n/a, Com NA, Str +3, Sta +3, Dex -3, Qik -3

Size: +3

Confidence Score: 0 (0)

Personality Traits: Hatred of all other music +5

Combat:

Sound blast: Init -3, Attack 0, Defense 0, Damage (see Powers below)

Soak: +0

Wound Penalties: -0 (1-8), -0 (9-16), -1 (17-24), -2 (25-32), Banished (33+)

Powers:

Sound Blast, 1 point, Init -3, Corpus: As per the flute's Undulation power.

Madness, 1 point, Init -3, Mentem: As per the flute's Madness power.

Disharmony, 1 point, Init -3, Vim: As per the flute's Disharmony power.

Vis: 6 pawns of Mentem vis.

Appearance: The music spirit is a great morass of chaotic, swirling sound in material form. It is visible only through its distortion of things around it, and the terrible music that emanates from it. Note: the music spirit moves as fast as a running person, but is neither dexterous nor nimble.

Capture

The characters may capture and neutralize Bartholomew, bring him to justice, or mete out their own punishment.

In Mythic Europe, justice relies a great deal on testimony and witnesses. Olivia, made magically sane, would provide the evidence that the characters need for mundane authorities to condemn Bartholomew, as would Gustav's two retainers and Otto. The characters could try to rely on mystical evidence, assuming that relevant authorities were willing to cooperate with the characters. Bartholomew himself could also be a factor in prosecuting a conviction. He may be made to confess, and depending on the severity of his madness, his sheer insanity may convince the authorities that he is guilty.

Conclusion

Murder stories often end with serious consequences — murders leave a trail of devastation for the relatives,

friends or covenant-mates of those murdered. Few of those involved in a murder, let alone multiple murders, walk away physically or emotionally unscathed.

This scenario hopefully ends with the triumph of the players' characters. Having foiled Bartholomew and secured the flute, either through subduing or killing him, the characters can relish the gratitude of the villagers for having stopped the murders, or alternatively quietly know the truth while the mundanes continue in ignorance.

Bartholomew's Fate

In the case of his survival and separation from the flute, Bartholomew degenerates into complete insanity, humming and whistling without thought. There is little hope for Bartholomew — no redemption or restoration to sanity is possible as the Warping has altered his mind beyond even Hermetic magic. He is doomed to mindless, destructive lunacy.

What to Do With the Flute?

The only thing left unscathed by the events of this story is the flute. The characters may realize its danger, or may wish to unlock its secrets. Disposing of the flute by locking it away or casting it into an inaccessible place effectively ends the scenario. Laboratory investigation, unless the investigating magus has an effective means to prevent its Obsession power, leaves open the opportunity for the madness of the flute to strike again. An inquisitive apprentice or nosy servant need only play the flute and the cycle of murders starts over.

Rewards

Stopping the murders and finding the murderer brings gratitude from the villagers — especially from the family and friends of the victims, the village priest, and the local lord.

The characters may also have acquired the flute. This powerful magical device is not only of use to magi interested in non-Hermetic magic, but it is also an Arcane Connection to a powerful magical spirit. Potent Hermetic magi could try to bind or trap the spirit; it could potentially be used against enemies as a weapon.

Origins of the Flute

The precise nature of the flute is shrouded in mystery. There are several possibilities, and the storyguide can decide which of the following three possibilities she prefers.

THE UNGODLY BROTHER

A decayed tome recalls, in a trembling hand written years ago by a terrified monk, that a brother uncovered an ungodly flute whose music sent the abbot and the monastery's preacher (the monk in charge of the library) into mad fits of insanity. Eventually the brother climbed to the highest point of the monastery and played his dreadful song, while the monks lay trembling with their hands fastened over their ears. In the morning, they found no sign of the brother, but the stones upon which he stood were blackened and twisted as if by some unearthly force, and nearby lay the flute. Unable to destroy it, the monks hid it deep in the monastery so that it would never be found.

THE FARMER'S FATE

A legend recalled in the gloss of a centuries-old summa speaks of a farmer who followed the path of a falling star, and there found a flute. Upon returning home, he told his neighbor. The neighbor returned the next day to find the farmer, his family, and all his animals apparently driven to

death by some unseen hand. The earth and trees around the farmer were so horribly twisted and distorted that the neighbor believed a terrible curse had struck the farm. Clasped in the fist of the farmer was the flute, which the neighbor took and buried at a crossroads, believing it had caused the farmer's awful fate.

A COVENANT'S INSANITY

A little-used Hermetic history tractatus mentions a covenant near to the troupe's home that was known for its mastery of Pythagorean music and its Hermetic uses. A terrible fate befell the covenant when its most intelligent and promising members fell into a deep Twilight and returned with a magical flute. No accurate record remains of what happened afterwards, but is believed that this instrument was the cause of the covenant entering into a deep and fatal Winter. The first time the magus played his instrument to his sodales, they also seem to have entered a deep Twilight from which none returned unscathed. Crippled by Twilight-inspired insanity, the covenant was abandoned by its covenfolk, who spread the story among the Order of the last moments of the instrument and its player, who was dragged triumphantly into a dreadful vortex of pure, tangible and incomprehensible sound. Only the flute, which none of the grogs dared touch, was left behind.

Chapter Eight

Return of the Raiders

This scenario uses faerie antagonists who are pretending to be ghosts. This aids the inclusion of anachronisms, like Viking warriors, in stories set in the thirteenth century. It also allows the use of historically inaccurate folklore in single stories, in this example the equipment and behavior of Viking raiders. Finally, it allows players to explore the destructive potential of Hermetic magic without the usual moral constraints implicit in the setting.

Précis

Every century, a mass of faeries re-enact a Viking raid on a village that is significant to the magi. The faeries follow the river, then wade ashore in the role of ghostly Norsemen, to attack the town. They torture some of the inhabitants to death and then steal anything valuable. The raid is due soon, but the player characters have enough time to prepare defenses for the town.

The player characters have this time because a rival group of faeries wants the resistance the raiders face to be greater than on previous raids. This story is played out only once a century, and last time it was senseless butchery, lacking any heroism on the part of the defenders. The rival group of faeries wants to hijack the story, to feed on the gratitude of the locals. A faerie infiltrator has been sent to make sure that powerful humans, preferably from the Order of Hermes, repel the raid.

The new group sends a shill among the characters to make sure they find records of the last time the "Vikings" came ashore — records planted by sympathetic bards that mention treasure, and magic items, and that the ghosts can be hurt by mortal weapons.

The village is made up of a series of spaces in which characters can plan ambushes against the raiders. There are a sufficient number of raiders to terrify the locals, and for each magus to feel concern that thaws to triumph. Both

groups of faeries feed on these emotions. When each magus has used his or her unique skills to defeat a cluster of opponents, at the emotional apex of the story, both sides of faeries contrive a violent climax. That is, both groups of faeries seek to raise the magi to the highest pitch of emotion, then conclude the story in a rapid and bloody way.

IF THE PLAYERS WRECK THE RE-ENACTMENT IT DOESN'T MATTER

The stories that the two groups of faeries are trying to tell are likely to be ruined by the player characters. This favors the group of faeries that seek the defense of the town. Storyguides should be unconcerned if the players entirely derail the plans of one or both factions of faeries. This scenario is designed as a change of pace from the other stories in this book. It's not about simulating a realistic, mystical European society. It's about having an in-game excuse to hit people and blow things up.

Hooks

Characters might become involved in this story for several reasons:

- They could just be in the area, on the way to or from another story.
- The ghosts that are going to raid the town presumably contain vis.
- The town might be the home of a player character, or might be the home of a Dependant. This is particularly suited for stories that contain no magi: the characters aren't, insofar as they are aware, on an expedition.
- The covenant might control a vis source near the town, and be unwilling to risk it being damaged.

- The covenant may have one of the many hooks based on the past coming back to haunt its members.

Storyguides should not be concerned about the verisimilitude of a Viking raid in most Tribunals. The Vikings are known to have raided in the Novgorod, Rhine, Normandy, Iberian, Stonehenge, Hiberian, and Loch Leglean Tribunals. Their descendants conquered Sicily, and folklore there supports Viking raids. Vikings traveled down the rivers of Eastern Europe and raided the coasts of the Black Sea, including attacking Constantinople itself. Some Vikings even reached Jerusalem. Although they were pilgrims and didn't raid it, their presence in an area, and need for money to continue their travels, might be parlayed into plausibility for this story.

Dramatis Personae

Characters who realize they are facing faeries rather than ghosts — and can communicate this to their colleagues — have a distinct advantage during this scenario

Pellew: The Faerie Tinker

Pellew appears to be a human tinker, a poor sort of traveling merchant who also does odd jobs, like harvesting and craftwork, to earn extra money. His mission is to spread stories of the ghostly attack that occurs every hundred years at the village, giving the precise date. He understands that it is important he never contact powerful people — priests, nobles, magi — by himself. He wants to pass the story to their servants and retainers, then send a message to similar faeries in other communities, so that no more than a single band of rescuers appears.

Storyguides should place Pellew as background color in earlier stories, or include him as the source of useful folklore. Pellew's group of faeries has been planning to steal this story for many years, but must act covertly. Faeries treasure human vitality, which is harvested when humans express passionate emotions. Pellew's group cannot merely fight the other band of faeries with a human audience: they need humans to feel a passionate connection to the outcome of the battle.

Pellew's faeries want the Viking raiders to be driven off, after a battle filled with terror and heroism and blood. They feed on the thrill of victory felt by the humans on the winning side. Pellew, personally, favors the relish humans

feel when they kill their enemies in creative ways. There's little he can do to encourage this directly, but a character spending any amount of time near him will find that he is fervently concerned with safety. He is continually warning about the dangers inherent in medieval industry, in the hope that this will lead people to kill their rivals in unnecessarily complicated ways.

Faerie Might: 10 (Corpus)

Characteristics: Int +1, Per 0, Pre +1, Com +2, Str +1, Sta +1, Dex 0, Qik 0

Size: 0

Virtues and Flaws: Greater Faerie Powers (Guide and Send Message), Cognizant Within Role, Faerie Sight, Faerie Speech, Humanoid Faerie, Increased Might (minor), Infiltrator (minor – prosperous tinker); Traditional Ward (fire from a hearth).

Personality Traits: Deceptive +3, Jovial +3

Combat:

Brawl (fist): Init +0, Attack +1, Defense +1, Damage +1

Single Weapon (staff): Init +2, Attack +6, Defense +6, Damage +3.

Soak: 0

Wound Penalties: -1 (1–5), -3 (6–10), -5 (11–15), Incapacitated (16–20), Dead (21+)

Pretenses: Athletics 4 (walking), Awareness 2 (opportunities to "steal"), Brawl 1 (fist), Carouse 3 (feasts), Faerie Speech 5, Folk Ken 3 (trading), Profession: Tinker 6 (bargaining), Great Weapon 2 (staff), Swim 1 (fords), Trading Route Lore (food and shelter) 3

Powers:

Guide, 5 points, Init -3, Mentem, 1 intricacy point spent on cost: Subtly influences a group of beings towards a specific course of action. Some creatures can use this power to direct the movement of a group, taking it to a desired location. Other creatures can guide humans towards rash or brave or wise actions. Each time this power is used, it can subtly influence the actions of a single person for a day. The storyguide provides advice to the player in a similar way to the Common Sense Virtue, except that the advice serves the creature's agenda, not that of the character. There is no compulsion to follow this advice.

Send Message, 3 points, Init -2, Imaginem: This power allows the faerie to send short verbal messages to beings for which it has Arcane Connections.

Equipment: Poor tinkers, Pellew's role models, carry their tools and wares in a backpack. His clothes are sturdy and well made, but of undyed wool. He wears cheap shoes. Highly perceptive humans (Awareness + Faerie Lore of against an Ease Factor of 15+, after seeing Pellew over a period of months) may detect his faerie nature because

his clothes never wear out. He carries a staff, and uses it as a weapon, but this is mostly for show.

Vis: 1 pawn Terram, a tarnished spoon; and 1 pawn Corpus, a tooth.

Appearance: He appears to be of middle age, with a full beard for warmth on the road. He is stooped, but wiry.

The Raiders

The raiders look like the ghosts of drowned people, but are incarnate and may be fought with conventional weapons. The number of raiders should be tailored to the combat effectiveness of the player characters. If the covenant sends a single magus and a handful of grogs to deal with this problem, then a couple of small boats of raiders suffice. If the covenant sends several combat-capable magi, then they require more warriors as targets for their spells, and more berserkers and bodyguards, to provide sufficient danger.

Faeries base their roles on the popular stories rather than actual history, so characters, or players, who are familiar with Vikings may note that their behavior and equipment are not historically accurate. These Vikings have horns on their helmets, large axes, and a tendency to sacrifice people to Odin by torturing them to death. They pile the carefully groomed heads of their victims into pyramids. Their ships have dragon prows even when facing the beach. This insults the local faeries, which is why real Vikings may not have done it, and why Pellew's faction has decided to steal this story.

The Vikings have "church bells" as their ward, because during the real raid, the villagers made a successful stand in the church. This Flaw prevents the faeries entering the church grounds or regenerating Might while in sight of the church, if the bell is being rung. Vikings that are taken into the church while the bell rings flake away, turning into sea foam. The faeries are aware of this taboo and its restrictions. They are, however, able to entice humans to leave the grounds, for example by throwing burning javelins in through the church windows. They cannot directly damage the bell.

Most of the raiders look like waterlogged corpses. To attack a raider, any human character needs to make a Brave check against an Ease Factor of 3 if facing a single raider, and of 6 if facing the raiders as a group. After a successful check at each level, the character is free to act for the rest of the scenario. If a check is failed, the character attempts to find safety. For the peasants of the village, this usually means fleeing to the church.

In their role as Viking ghosts, the faeries do not fear death: indeed they seek it out. This means that they will not retreat, even in the face of terrible casualties.

UNTESTED BOY

Faerie Might: 5 (Corpus)

Characteristics: Int 0, Per 0, Pre 0, Com 0, Str +2, Sta +2, Dex 0, Qik +1

Size: -1

Virtues and Flaws: Cognizant Within Role, Faerie Sight, Faerie Speech, Humanoid Faerie, Lesser Faerie Power (Damaging Effect), Oath of Fealty (chieftain); Small Frame, Traditional Ward (church bells)

Personality Traits: Violent +3, Brave +2, Undisciplined +1

Combat:

Brawl (dagger): Init +1, Attack +3, Defense +2, Damage +5

Single Weapon (axe and shield): Init +2, Attack +6, Defense +5, Damage +13*

(short spear and shield): Init +3, Attack +4, Defense +5, Damage +12*

(longsword and shield): Init +3, Attack +4, Defense +4, Damage +15*

Great Weapon (pole axe): Init +2, Attack +6, Defense +2, Damage +18*

Thrown Weapon (javelin): Init +1, Attack +4, Defense +3, Damage +12*

* Includes +5 for Damaging Effect power. Each faerie only has this power with a single weapon. All statistics include +1 for Pretence specialization.

Soak: +6 (chain mail shirts, or fuller leather armor)

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-4), -3 (5-8), -5 (9-12), Incapacitated (13-16), Dead (17+)

Pretenses: Athletics (rowing) 3, Awareness 2 (treasure), Brawl 3 (dagger), Carouse 5 (in the Viking way), Faerie Speech 5, Hunt (humans) 2, Profession (Sailing) 3, Ride (horse) 2, Swim 2 (underwater), Single Weapon (chose one from combat table) or Great Weapon (Pole Axe) 1, Thrown Weapon (javelin) 1

Powers:

Damaging Effect, 0 points, -2 Init (2 intricacy points on cost): Adds +5 to the damage of the Viking's primary weapon, in a clearly unnatural way. These Vikings have weapons made of sea ice and human bones.

Equipment: Weapon, round shield, shirt of mail or leather armor. Pointed helm, with horns if the players will tolerate it.

Vis: 1 pawn Corpus, bones of a dead child.

Appearance: Untested boys look like the ghosts of drowned male children. Individual untested boys cannot stand against even inexperienced grogs, but undead children with huge axes and homicidal intentions are useful markers of mood.

YOUNG WARRIOR

Young warriors are the shock troops of a Viking assault. If the players characters choose not to lay traps through the streets and buildings of the village, and instead form up the defenders on the shore, they face the young warriors first.

These faeries have little Magic Resistance, and serve as a threat only through their numbers. Magi who demonstrate the ability to kill at a distance with their spells trigger the instinct these faeries have to form a wedge and charge the threat. These lesser faeries fatigue magi and spring traps, softening the defenses for the powerful faeries that follow.

Faerie Might: 5 (Corpus)

Characteristics: Int 0, Per 0, Pre 0, Com 0, Str +2, Sta +2, Dex 0, Qik +1

Size: 0



Virtues and Flaws: Cognizant Within Role, Faerie Sight, Faerie Speech, Humanoid Faerie, Lesser Faerie Power (Damaging Effect); Oath of Fealty (chieftain), Traditional Ward (church bells)

Personality Traits: Violent +3, Brave +2, Undisciplined +1

Combat:

Brawl (dagger): Init +1, Attack +6, Defense +5, Damage +5

Single Weapon (axe and shield): Init +2, Attack +9, Defense +8, Damage +13*

(short spear and shield): Init +3, Attack +7, Defense +8, Damage +12*

(longsword and shield): Init +3, Attack +7 Defense +7, Damage +15*

Great Weapon (pole axe): Init +2, Attack +8, Defense +4, Damage +18*

Thrown Weapon (javelin): Init +1, Attack +6, Defense +5, Damage +12*

* Includes +5 for Damaging Effect power. Each faerie only has this power with a single weapon. All statistics include +1 for Pretence specialization.

Soak: +6 (chain mail shirts, or fuller leather armor)

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Pretenses: Athletics (rowing) 3, Awareness 2 (treasure), Brawl 3 (dagger), Carouse 5 (in the Viking way), Faerie Speech 5, Hunt (humans) 2, Profession (Sailing) 3, Ride (horse) 2, Swim 2 (underwater), Single Weapon (chose one from combat table) or Great Weapon (Pole Axe) 4, Thrown Weapon (javelin) 3.

Powers:

Damaging Effect, 0 points, -2 Init (2 intricacy points on cost): Adds +5 to the damage of the Viking's primary weapon, in a clearly unnatural way. These Vikings have weapons made of sea ice and human bones.

Equipment: Weapon, round shield, shirt of mail or leather armor. Pointed helm, with horns if the players will tolerate it.

Vis: 1 pawn Corpus, briny human bone.

Appearance: Corpses of fit young men, with ghoulish weapons.

SEASONED WARRIORS

Faerie Might: 10 (Corpus)

Characteristics: Int 0, Per 0, Pre 0, Com 0, Str +2, Sta +2, Dex 0, Qik +1

Size: 0

Virtues and Flaws: Cognizant Within Role, Faerie Sight, Faerie Speech, Humanoid Faerie, Increased Faerie Might (minor), Lesser Faerie Power (Damaging Effect), Oath of Fealty (chieftain), Puissant Pretense (one weapon); Traditional Ward (church bells)

Personality Traits: Brave +3, Violent +3

Combat:

Brawl (dagger): Init +1, Attack +10, Defense +9, Damage +5

Single Weapon (axe and shield): Init +2, Attack +13, Defense +12, Damage +13*

(short spear and shield): Init +3, Attack +11, Defense +12, Damage +12*

(longsword and shield): Init +3, Attack +11, Defense +11, Damage +15*

Great Weapon (pole axe): Init +2, Attack +12, Defense +8, Damage +18*

Thrown Weapon (javelin): Init +1, Attack +6, Defense +5, Damage +12*

* Includes +5 for Damaging Effect power. Each faerie only has this power with a single weapon. All statistics include +1 for Pretence specialization.

Soak: +6 (chain mail shirts, or fuller leather armor)

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Pretenses: Athletics (rowing) 3, Awareness 2 (treasure), Brawl 3 (dagger), Carouse 5 (in the Viking way), Faerie Speech 5, Hunt (humans) 2, Profession (Sailing) 3, Ride (horse) 2, Swim 2 (underwater), Single Weapon (chose one from combat table) or Great Weapon (Pole Axe) 6+2, Thrown Weapon (javelin) 3

Powers:

Damaging Effect, 0 points, -2 Init (2 intricacy points on cost): Adds +5 to the damage of the Viking's primary weapon, in a clearly unnatural way. These Vikings have weapons made of sea ice and human bones.

Equipment: Weapon, round shield, shirt of mail or leather armor. Pointed helm, with horns if the players will tolerate it.

Vis: 2 pawn Corpus, bone in the heart of the weapon

Appearance: Seasoned warriors are similar to young warriors, but have forms that appear older. These faeries have what seem to be terrible death wounds about the head or chest. These apparent injuries, while disfiguring and frightening, are superficial and do not affect combat performance.

CHIEFTAIN'S BODYGUARDS

Faerie Might: 15 (Corpus)

Characteristics: Int 0, Per 0, Pre 0, Com 0, Str +2, Sta +2, Dex 0, Qik +1

Size: +1

Virtues and Flaws: Cognizant Within Role, Faerie Sight, Faerie Speech, Humanoid Faerie, Improved Damage, Lesser Faerie Power (Damaging Effect), Puissant Pretense, Oath of Fealty (chieftain), Traditional Ward (church bells)

Personality Traits: Brave +4, Violent +3

Combat:

Brawl (dagger): Init +1, Attack +10, Defense +9, Damage +10.

Single Weapon (axe and shield): Init +2, Attack +13, Defense +12, Damage +18*

(short spear and shield): Init +3, Attack +11, Defense +12, Damage +17*

(longsword and shield): Init +3, Attack +11, Defense +11, Damage +20*

Great Weapon (pole axe): Init +2, Attack +12, Defense +8, Damage +22*

* Includes +5 for Damaging Effect power and +5 for Improved Damage. Each faerie only has this bonus with a single weapon. All statistics include +1 for Pretense specialization.

Soak: +6 (chain mail shirts or fuller leather armor)

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-6), -3 (7-12), -5 (13-18), Incapacitated (19-25), Dead (26+)

Pretenses: Athletics (rowing) 3, Awareness 2 (treasure), Brawl 3 (dagger), Carouse 5 (in the Viking way), Faerie Speech 5, Hunt (humans) 2, Profession (Sailing) 3, Ride (horse) 2, Swim 2 (underwater), Single Weapon (chose one from combat table) or Great Weapon (Pole Axe) 6+2.

Powers:

Damaging Effect, 0 points, -2 Init (2 intricacy points on cost): Adds +5 to the damage of the Viking's primary weapon, in a clearly unnatural way. These Vikings have weapons made of sea ice and human bones.

Equipment: Weapon, round shield, shirt of mail or leather armor. Pointed helm, with horns if the players will tolerate it.

Vis: 3 pawn Corpus, tarnished jewelry.

Appearance: The drowned bodies of large, well-groomed Vikings with excellent equipment and jewelry, most of which turns into sea foam when they die. Bodyguards have apparent injuries that are even more hideous than those of the remaining faeries.

BERSERKERS

Berserkers are warriors dedicated to the Odin cult who enter battle so crazed that they do not recognize friend, foe, pain, or orders. Some berserkers lose track of which shape they should be in, and fight as bears, wolves, or human-animal hybrids. Berserkers do not attack each other, so they can fight in groups, but only with other berserkers. The faeries playing berserkers are exaggerating them to the hilt: they roll their eyes, chant nonsense, and some run into battle nude. If met with an army in the field, the Viking chieftain keeps his berserkers for a separate attack, or uses them in a preliminary charge, so they do not compromise his main formation.

Faerie Might: 25 (Corpus)

Characteristics: Int 0, Per 0, Pre 0, Com 0, Str +3, Sta +3, Dex 0, Qik +1

Size: 0

Virtues and Flaws: Berserk, Faerie Sight, Faerie Speech, Humanoid Faerie, 2 x Improved Characteristics, Lesser Faerie Powers (Damaging Effect and Shift Shape), Increased Faerie Might (major and minor), Puissant Pretense (Brawl); Sovereign Ward (silver, for storyguides wanting these creatures to be less formidable only), Incognizant, Traditional Ward (church bells)

Personality Traits: Violent+5, Brave +5, Angry +3

Combat:*

Brawl (bludgeon): Init +1, Attack +13, Defense +12, Damage +10*

(large teeth): Init +1, Attack +15, Defense +13, Damage +6

(large claws): Init +1, Attack +16, Defense +15, Damage +14*

* All Attack and Defense scores include +1 for Brawl specialization, and +2 for Puissant Pretense. Damages with asterisks include +5 for Damaging Effect power. When berserk adjust by +2 Attack and -2 Defense.

Soak: +3 if naked, +5 for pelts, +8 for chain mail shirts, or fuller leather armor. Add +2 if berserk.

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Pretenses: Athletics (rowing) 5, Awareness 2 (treasure), Brawl 8 (with humans), Carouse 5 (in the Viking way), Faerie Speech 5, Hunt (humans) 2, Theology (weird version of Odin worship) 5, Ride (horse) 2, Swim 2 (underwater)

Powers:

Damaging Effect, 0 points, -2 Init (2 intricacy points on cost): Adds +5 to the damage of the Viking's bludgeon or claws, and leaves salted rime ice on everything struck.

Shift Shapes, 0 points, Init -2 (2 intricacy spent on cost): This power transforms the character from human into a hybrid human-bear or human-wolf form. This change is essentially cosmetic, altering only the weapons available to the berserker. These faeries do not consciously control their changes of form, and seem unaware that they are able to change shape.

Equipment: Animal pelts or armor, Alcohol.

Vis: 5 pawns Animal, sodden pelt.

Appearance: Berserkers look like drowned wild men, draped in sodden animal skins until they become angry. Then they change into strange creatures that are half man and half bear, or into werewolves.

THE CHIEFTAIN

The chieftain is the leader of the raiding faeries, but chieftain is also a role. If this particular faerie is destroyed, and the storyguide needs a commanding figure for a little longer,

his role may pass to any of his bodyguards. If they grasp his sword, they take his role, transforming into far larger versions of themselves, and then begin to use his statistics.

The chieftain is tremendously dangerous, and groups lacking skilled warriors or powerful magi should use the statistics for a bodyguard instead. Note that the ship of the chieftain, as one of his personal possessions, has his Magic Resistance due to Might. This will usually ensure that at least one group of raiders land, even if the raiders are ambushed by Hermetic magi.

Faerie Might: 30 (Corpus)

Characteristics: Int +2, Per +2, Pre +2, Com 0, Str +7, Sta +3, Dex 0, Qik -1

Size: +2

Virtues and Flaws: Gigantic, Cognizant Within Role, Faerie Sight, Faerie Speech, External Vis (grants Puissant Pretense in Leadership), Humanoid Faerie, 5 x Improved Characteristics, Lesser Faerie Power (Damaging Effect), Increased Faerie Might (major and 2 minor); Traditional Ward (church bells)

Personality Traits: Violent+3, Brave +3. Calculating +2

Combat:*

Single Weapon (Long Sword and Round Shield): Init +1, Attack +13, Defense +9, Damage +18*

* All Attack and Defense scores include +1 for Single Weapon specialization. Damage includes +5 for Damaging Effect power.

Soak: +9 (metal scale armor, covered in furs).

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-7), -3 (8-14), -5 (15-21), Incapacitated (22-29), Dead (30+)

Pretenses: Awareness 2 (treasure), Carouse 5 (in the Viking way), Faerie Speech 5, Hunt (humans) 2, Leadership 8 (Vikings) 5, Profession: Captain (navigation) 5, Ride (horse) 2, Single Weapon (long sword) 8, Swim 2 (underwater)

Powers:

Damaging Effect, 0 points, -2 Init (2 intricacy points on cost): Adds +5 Damage to long sword attacks. Freezes the blood of those struck with the sword, so that it falls like colored glass on the earth. Adds +5 damage.

Equipment: Horde of faeries who think they are Vikings, armor, signaling horn, huge banner held by a bodyguard.

Vis: 6 pawns Mentem, sword. Any character who holds the sword knows immediately that he is able to command troops. He gain the Puissant Pretense in Leadership, which adds +2 to all Leadership rolls, while he retains ownership of the sword. If the vis is extracted from the sword, it loses this property. If the sword is not destroyed, the chieftain can begin to reassemble his body. This takes 30 months, and then he spends six

months assembling forces to attack the character who took it and reclaim his sword.

Appearance: A man about eight feet tall, who seems to have been slit from the throat to the groin. The chieftain is not inconvenienced by his injury, which, because of his faerie nature, is cosmetic.

ADVISOR

The advisor takes the form of a black-robed priest of Odin, disfigured by the loss of his left eye. He takes no part in combat, and flees if it seems likely he will be harmed. He acts as an adviser to the chieftain, and is usually within the chieftain's ring of bodyguards. The advisor is, mystically, the most powerful faerie present, but he is unwilling to use that power to harm the player characters, so he seems feeble.

The advisor is the leader of this group of faeries, because it has the Highly Cognizant Virtue. That is, the advisor knows that it is a faerie and understands that it is addicted to human pain. It understands that its own group has been ambushed by another faction, and it continually adjusts the script that the other raiding faeries are following, to maximize the harm they cause.

The advisor makes sure that the characters see and interact with it, so that it becomes part of their life story. It then retreats to plan future massacres, and construct scenarios that seem like revenge. It doesn't hate the player characters for disrupting its plans, but they have demonstrated that if the advisor threatens them, they will respond with courage and pain, which it can feed upon. The advisor is inconvenienced, but not harmed, by the destruction of this body. When the player characters next see it, it may have a completely different form, but it will make sure the characters suspect that it is the same faerie by repeating a key phrase, or by wearing an obvious motif, like its missing eye.

COMBAT GROUP STATISTICS

Small ships are crewed by 25 men, and large ships are crewed by 50 men. In *Ars Magica*, fighting groups may have no more than six members: the following abstractions model the groups that characters will encounter in this scenario. The storyguide should select as many groups of attackers as are required to make the story interesting for the players, given their characters' skill at combat. Note that these faeries do not take a round without fighting to join groups together, or to shuffle roles in their groups — this is another example of them not impersonating humans accurately.

Five untested boys or young warriors under the leadership of a seasoned warrior: This is an untrained group, with the seasoned warrior as vanguard.

A group of six seasoned warriors: This is a trained group. Assume the leader has a Leadership score of 4 (combat). This allows the vanguard, who is a seasoned warrior, a +15 bonus on Attack or Defense each round. This bonus falls to +12 after the first three members of the group are killed, then by 6 for each subsequent death.

A group of six berserkers: This is an untrained group.

A group of six bodyguards, guarding the command group: This is an untrained group that acts as reserves for the group below.

The command group contains the chieftain and his five bodyguards: This is a trained group. It allows the vanguard to claim a +24 bonus to Attack or Defense each round. This bonus falls by 6 when each member of the guard, not including the first, dies.

The Locals

The village is unprepared for a Viking raid, since one hasn't occurred in generations, but the defending faeries have made preparations that may assist the player characters.

THE VILLAGE AND VILLAGERS

The village is made up of 41 families, some of whom flee at the first sign of trouble. Each family has a cottage, a small garden area, and a long, thin field that they plant in strips of rotated crops. There are around 70 adults capable of hard manual labor, but only a handful of these have any skill at combat. These can be simulated with the generic statistics for grogs given in the core rulebook. The village also has a large number of children. When the raiders appear, the older women of the village make it their priority to get the children to the church, which represents the village's place of final refuge. The village has a Divine aura of 2.

The village lies along a river, on the side with the larger embankment. The far side of the river is not settled, because the ground is marshy and unstable. The villagers take full advantage of their location, by controlling a bridge near the tannery and fishing. There are small sheds used to store fishing equipment along the riverbank, and other minor buildings. The village is about one and a half miles from the sea, following the river northward.

The landward side of the village is protected by a low, unmortared stone wall, which keeps wild animals from

prowl the streets at night, but it lacks other defenses. It is pierced by two roads, which are closed with gates of wicker. The grain grown locally is milled on an artificial island separated from the rest of the village by the mill race. The hides of butchered animals are processed into leather at a tanner slightly out of, and downwind of, the village.

Most of the buildings in the village are constructed of wood, with thatch roofs. The exceptions are the church and mill, which have stone walls, and the homes belonging to the richest handful of families, which have stone reinforcing in their frames. The raiders know that stone walls signal the potential for superior booty, and so they prefer to sack these, more durable, buildings first. These buildings are, generally, clustered closer to the church.

THE CHILDREN OF THE DROWNED

The faeries aiding the defenders have been planning to take control of this story for a century, and one of their preparations shows the strange patience of faeries. It is a widely held local belief that when a husband dies at sea, particularly if a couple is childless, that his ghost might visit his wife in a dream, so that she wakes pregnant. The half-dozen people in the village who are the children of drowned sailors vary in age from sixty to five, and have Strong Faerie Blood (Children of the Drowned). They have the virtue Faerie Sight, which at its simplest allows them to see faerie and magical things, even if they are invisible or disguised.

The storyguide can use the Children to focus the story. Most have been visited by the ghosts of their fathers in dreams, and given information or items that the player characters will find useful in their defense of the village. These items or pieces of information have not, for the most part, been detailed in this scenario, because their usefulness is dependent on the abilities of the player characters.

LOCAL LORD

Pellew's group of faeries doesn't want the Vikings to be defeated too easily: they want the villagers to win, but to be terrified and heroic first. They only involve the local lord if the player characters respond with feeble forces. If the faeries allow the lord to respond personally, and he has a small retinue, just use the template for a knight companion on page 23 of *ArM5*, supported by a handful of grogs from pages 21 and 22. A more-powerful lord may send several knights.

The reeve for the village, the local man who acts as the

lord's overseer in his absence, has already tried to reach the lord. He has been diverted into Faerie by Pellew's faction. They release him if they think it useful that he reach his lord. The defending faeries have no interest in opposing magi if they attempt to contact the lord. They can spirit away the lord easily if the magi and the lord separate, even for a moment.

LOCAL PRIEST

Father Thomas lacks sufficient Faith to save the player characters with a convenient miracle. He can, however, be used by the storyguide as a method of pacing the story. When the Vikings are first sighted, he retreats to the church and begins to ring the bell. This may reveal that the attackers are faeries, but it will certainly draw the remaining potential victims together as the raid progresses. When the priest ceases to ring the bell, after virtually all of the surviving humans have been concentrated in a single area, he provokes the climactic battle of the scenario.

Locations

In this scenario, certain locations are included in the village specifically to give magi opportunities to lay ambushes for Viking warriors. The map in this chapter is intended for storyguides short on time: troupes will enjoy this scenario more if the storyguide tailors the geography and industries of the village to maximize the opportunities for player characters to cause spectacular mayhem.

Specific Locations

Specific locations, described here, are unique buildings in the village that are likely to serve as points of resistance when the player characters fortify the village.

CHURCH AND CHURCHYARD

The church stands at the highest point of the village, a small hillock that overlooks the river. The side of the hill that faces the water is a graveyard. The church is in the Norman style. Its tower, which is blocky and similar to that of a castle, is three stories high. Its roof can be used as a watch post, signaling point, or sniper's nest for up to six

archers. There is a Divine aura of 3 in the churchyard and 5 inside the church.

Early in the battle, the youngest of the Children of the Drowned is carried by his mother to the church. If the battle seems to be going spectacularly badly, the defending faeries intervene. They will cause a faerie glow to emanate through the cracks around the stones that cover the grave of the village's founder. If these are lifted away, a magical weapon is found there. This is a fake, planted by the defending faeries, but the attacking faeries are constrained, by their nature, to play along with the story and act as if the weapon really were what it claims to be.

RIVERSIDE

This is a thin strip of land between the river and the road. This area is dotted with shacks that are used to store fishing gear.

Dangers in This Area

The area can also provide material for the construction of traps in other parts of the town. It contains:

Several Anchors: These are heavy stones with holes drilled in them to take a rope. An anchor dropped on a person from at least six feet in height does +10 damage.

Half a Mile of Fishing Nets: A character caught in a net is immobilized until he makes a Strength roll against an Ease Factor of 12, or cuts himself free. This requires an edged weapon and two rounds.

Barrels of Pitch: This material is used to waterproof boats and gear. It is sticky and burns easily. It has an intensity of +6 using the Heat and Corrosion Damage Rules.

Ropes: As many as needed.

Smokehouse Equipment: Those sealed inside an active smokehouse suffer Air Deprivation as per ArM5 page 180. Though the Vikings are unlikely to be tricked into entering a fish smoke hut, characters can use the equipment in the huts to create similar environments in other places. As an example, the richest cottage in town has a cellar, where its owner stores wine and beer. A group of Vikings barricaded into the cellar could be killed with smoking equipment ignited with a fuse of tarred rope.

MILL

It is possible for the raiders to simply pass by the mill and continue to the centre of the town, but they will not



The Advisor's Counter-Gambit

The advisor, the faerie that is guiding the raiders, may play a trick that aids the characters at the expense of the defending faeries. When he realizes that a different band of faeries is attempting to claim the story, the advisor attempts to use the player characters to force the representatives of the other side to take the form of those who died defending the village from the initial raid. This allows the raiding faeries to rout the defending faeries, completing a version of the current story. And this prevents the defending faeries from stealing the story for another hundred years.

The advisor's problem is that he can only force the defending faeries into material form by having a creative human evoke them, and define their role. If there is a suitable player character, the advisor tries to subtly hint that the humans should pray to their ancestors in the churchyard. The advisor does this by temporarily taking on the semblance of one of the people who has been killed by his faction and, using this appearance, speaking to as many of

the peasants as possible, encouraging them to pray to their ancestors for a miraculous deliverance. If the villagers do this, aided by a human with Free Expression, then the faeries that oppose the raiders have no choice but to come forth from the churchyard and attack, taking the roles of the villagers from hundreds of years ago.

These faeries use the statistics for young warriors, above, but lack the Damaging Effect power and are harmed by immersion in seawater, not the church bells. Without the aid of the player characters, who can change the story, they are massacred by the Vikings, as most of the original villagers were. This does, however, leave the humans cowering in the church safe. They take the role of the survivors of the original raid, rebuilding the village so that the two sides can terrorize them again in a hundred years.

The defending faeries consider this a failure, because it means they have not stolen the story from the raiders. Sallying forth, to deliberately recreate the original

massacre, is the worst possible outcome for the defending faeries. There is no fundamental difference, to these faeries, between any of the endings where they do not capture the progress of the story. This ending is less pleasant than the Vikings slaughtering everyone in the village because that would not hurt the faeries at all, while sallying forth may lead to incidental pain and has a chance of permanent destruction.

Player characters who hear this report, that a ghost of one of the recently dead has suggested the locals must pray to their ancestors, may be alarmed by it. Characters who make an Intelligence + (Theology or Dominion Lore) roll against an ease Factor of 3 or more will know that praying to the human dead for miracles is an impious act, and that acts of impiety may harm the Divine aura around the church. If the characters raise this concern with the priest, he is able to prevent his people from praying to their dead. This prevents the defending faction of faeries from being slaughtered.

do so if it is clear that enemy soldiers are harbored within it. The raiders could simply bottle the defenders inside, by placing javelineers about the mill. Fortunately, because these are faeries who are more interested in valor and fear than in success, they confront the defenders. This is another clue, to the defenders, that they are not facing Magical undead.

The mill is two stories high, and rests on a race — a narrow artificial waterway that connects the village's stream to the sea by a swifter path. The narrowness of the race forces water to wash along it more swiftly, and with more force, than in the stream, which allows water power to supply some of the force for milling. It is very dangerous to swim in a race or the millpond that feeds it.

The race also acts as a narrow moat, helping the miller to discourage burglaries. To attack the mill, the raiders must select one of the following strategies. They could use missile weapons, but these are unlikely to hurt people in-

side the mill, or, given that it is one of the few stone and slate buildings in the village, set it on fire. They can approach one at a time over a narrow bridge, but even a single skilled warrior, with the aid of some friendly archers, could hold the bridge path while his Stamina and skill lasted. The raiders can pull apart nearby houses to get timbers to stretch across the race, or re-board one of their ships and attack the mill from the stream. These two strategies allow them to swarm their enemies, which are preferred tactics, but holding the bridge is a particularly heroic thing for a human to do, and the faeries would like to present that opportunity, at least for a time.

A character holding the bridge can force the Viking raiders attempting to cross to fight as single individuals, rather than as members of a combat group. A character holding the race who becomes tired can fall back to the mill, but this is made easier if accomplices in the mill

provide missile cover. The raiders will not throw spears at someone who is holding the bridge: their role allows them to accept this as a series of personal duels, with which they should not interfere, while their faerie nature makes allowances for humans who wish to do glorious things. If the defending side is not honoring the situation in the same way — for example, if they are using magic or missiles to kill the spectators to the duel on the race — then the Vikings withdraw and use more effective tactics.

The fine dust that accumulates in a mill, and in the granary that shares the lower floor of the building, is incredibly hazardous. Millers water down the flour they store, to prevent the dust filling the air. If the dusty air comes into contact with a spark, then it ignites as a cloud of flame, which can cause the building to explode. Hermetic magi have tried to create the fine power that causes explosions before, but the Finesse required is too high to make it a practical weapon outside a working mill.

All characters automatically understand that if they fire the mill, they cause famine in the town this winter, unless they have a Flaw that makes them unable to understand basic elements of society, like Sheltered Upbringing. An Ignem specialist of sufficient skill can determine how much flour can be saved from the mill, while still providing the necessary amount of dust to trigger the explosion. This is an Intelligence + (Ignem/5) roll against an Ease Factor of 12. On a botched roll, too little flour is left in the mill, and the explosion does not occur. On a failed roll, too much flour is left in the mill, causing unnecessary hardship in the village at winter.

The mill belongs to the distant liege of the local lord. If this remote potentate discovers that the player characters set one of his mills on fire, even in good cause, he demands compensation. If it is not paid, he becomes the covenant's enemy. Locals aiding the player characters inform them of the mill's ownership if a plan to destroy it is discussed.

Player characters know that mills are owned by influential people automatically if they have the Common Sense Virtue, or if they make an Intelligence + Folk Ken roll against an Ease Factor of 3. If they make an Intelligence + Area Lore roll against an Ease Factor of 9, they know who this particular mill belongs to.

Dangers in This Area

Flour: Aside from serving as the fuel for explosions, flour can also be stirred up, to create an obscuring cloud that lasts five combat rounds in enclosed spaces with still air. It can also be added to water to create a paste that, if boiled, adheres to the victims so that they suffer heat damage for two rounds longer than if doused with boiling water.

Granary Explosions: If the granary explodes, it does +15 damage to everyone in the building, and +3 to people outside hit by debris. The building then catches fire, doing +5 Heat Damage for several minutes. Storyguides are reminded that people walking through low fires take double this damage. The building will not collapse unless the player characters have deliberately sabotaged it, but if it does, it causes +21 damage to all inside.

The Race: Characters who fall into the race drown unless they make a Dexterity + Swim roll against an Ease Factor of 9. This includes the raiding faeries, which technically do not need to breathe.

Working Parts of the Mill: A character thrown into the working parts of the mill takes +5 Damage per round, until he is pulled clear with a Strength roll against an Ease Factor of 9. The trapped character may add his Strength to this roll.

SEXTON'S COVE

The role of sexton, or gravedigger, of the village is passed from father to son, and the current sexton's mother has information that may interest magi skilled in Mentem or Corpus magic; she knows where the real Vikings were buried. The villagers chose not give them Christian burial in the hallowed ground of the cemetery, but to bury them on a pebbly, unused beach several miles from the village.

The original Vikings are useful to the player characters in several ways, particularly if they believed the story Pellew spread, and sent a magus skilled in dealing with ghosts. Their ghosts, who hate the idea of impostors, will advise the characters on the strategy that their duplicates will employ. If the characters can call up the ghosts of the Vikings, they use the statistics given above for seasoned warriors, except they have Magical rather than Faerie Might, don't have any sort of traditional ward, and don't have the Damaging Effect power, which reduces their damage by 5.

TANNERY

Medieval villages use a lot of animal products, but the most dangerous and disgusting are in the tannery. The tannery is where leather is made, by placing animal hides into pits filled with lime, dog excrement, and other even less pleasant things. The slurry of excrement, lime, and animal fats can be controlled with Animal magic, as can the hides, bones, and other animal detritus in the area.

The tannery is outside the village, and upwind. If there is a large group of raiders, the tannery will be one of the first buildings that the raiders pass.

Dangers in This Area

Falling into a Tannery Pit: This is disgusting, but not immediately lethal for humans. A faerie warrior held in one for more than few moments will subconsciously choose to drown, give up its role, and fade back into Arcadia.

Lye: Lye is a caustic liquid made from the ash of hardwood trees. Small amounts of lye can be found in the richer homes of the village: it is used to clean clothes. The tanner uses it to strip the flesh and hair from skins, so he has it in larger quantities. Contact with lye does +3 Corrosion damage. Lye loses its caustic properties only very slowly if correctly stored, so it can evaporated into a white powder and coat non-reactive surfaces, eating away the skin of those that touch them.

Generic Locations

Scattered around the town are also various houses where the peasants live.

PEASANT HOUSES

The peasants of this village are poor, and the village is of only moderate size, lacking skilled tradesmen who make houses. Typical houses in this village are a single story high, and are constructed of wattled panels supported by a wooden frame. That is, the sections of the wall that do not bear weight are made of woven sticks that have been coated in a layer of clay, dung, and fat. The internal walls are washed with lime, partially as decoration but also to discourage insects from colonizing the house. Poorer houses are huts, triangular in cross-section, made by their owners of sticks, with mud and straw for walls.

Most houses are a single room. They lack chimneys, the smoke that circles up through the thatch being useful for keeping the roofing material free of vermin. Windows are uncommon, and small. Furniture is sparse.

The few richer families in the village have houses that have stone framing about the corners, doors, and windows. They have chimneys, and their houses may have a second floor. The lower floor is used for the family's craft, and for cooking. The upper floor is used for sleeping. These houses are better furnished than those of their neighbors, but are far from luxurious: they are simply less poor.

Expected Sequence of Play

Pellew and the village should be foreshadowed.

The player characters become aware that the raid will occur between two weeks and eight weeks from the current date, depending on how long it will take them to travel to the site and prepare it. Pellew's masters have had contact with Hermetic magi, and want to limit the timeframe sufficiently that the characters cannot craft new magical devices before the story begins. They worry that a sufficiently powerful device could destroy the story at the beginning, preventing them from harvesting the terror and courage they so crave.

The player characters find the locals surprisingly receptive of their aid. This is because the eldest of the Children of the Drowned has been telling his family, and their friends, that there is trouble coming but help on the way. He has been warned by the ghost of his father, who is one of the defending faeries in disguise.

The player characters may prepare the ground for the raid, but they are limited by the manpower of the village, and the brief time allotted them by Pellew's side. The magi may also investigate the graves of the Vikings, as described in the section on the sexton's cove, earlier. If the faeries have involved the local lord, he arrives with his retinue slightly after the magi do, and then tries to take command of the situation. The faeries guide the story back to the control of the player characters, if they can, because they expect the magi to provide the strategy, and the lord merely to provide muscle.

The raiders send a single, small vessel in first, as a scout. The resistance the scout meets determines how many faeries manifest and attempt to come ashore as Vikings. A desperate struggle to hold off the first boat inspires a raid that has only one vessel, while a scout ship incinerated distant from the village by powerful magic summons up to at least two large ships, each with a crew of 50.

If the Vikings face massed resistance, the young warriors form a shield wall. If the presence of the force makes this impossible, the berserkers are ordered to attack the defenders, to give the young warriors time to form up. The chieftain then throws a spear over the enemy, to dedicate them to Odin as sacrifices, meaning that none will be taken alive. A shower of javelins follows. As each faerie's attention wanders, these thrown javelins vanish, but any injuries or damage they have caused remain. Each faerie finds itself rearmed and probably unaware of how strange that seems to a human.

The young warriors then change to the boar formation, which is a wedge, and run toward the enemy, attempting to kill their leaders. Seasoned warriors, or those fighting with two-handed axes, exploit any weakness in the defenders' formation that the charge opens. The young warriors then fight with little discipline until the battle ends.

If the raiders do not face an opposing massed force, or defeat such a garrison, they spread out, seeking things to steal, drink, or burn. They stop to engage points of resistance, and then commence with house-to-house fighting even though it is an inefficient way to raid. For these faerie vikings, stolen goods are only props; what they really want is to feed on the emotions of the people they are grinding down. This lasts until the church bell stops tolling, and the Vikings concentrate their attack there.

If the players keep the church bell ringing the entire time, or simply relocate the population, then the raiding faeries slowly burn down the entire town, kill all of the livestock, and raze the fields. This destroys the village, because it needs its buildings and fields to survive: their lack will lead the lord to move these people to other villages. The defending faeries, through their human pawns, attempt to prevent this by spurring the player characters to action.

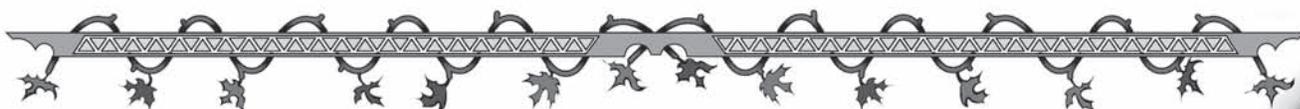
They also have one of their human dupes cut the bell rope if necessary.

Rewards

The covenant gains vis from the fallen faeries, but cannot use their equipment. At the conclusion of the story their boats, weapons, and bodies disintegrate into sea foam, which evaporates away.

The player characters may have earned the goodwill of the villagers, the mundane lord, and the defending faeries. In coming months the defending faeries will appear to locals as the ghosts of villagers who died in the battle, and even more of the Children of the Drowned will be born. These make excellent companions and grogs.

The youngest Child of the Drowned has The Gift. The faeries selected him as the one to find the ancestral weapon because they have high hopes for his career, and personal legend. They subtly assist the fortunes of the covenant, if it is the home of their protégé. Pellew will be sent to involve the characters in further stories.



Chapter Nine

Warring Families

Sixteen years ago, a crusader stole a reliquary from a church, inside which was trapped a powerful demon. Now, years later, the demon is working its way free of its prison, and its hellish powers are tainting everything around it. This scenario pits your troupe against the diabolical workings of a sinister demon and a group of infernalists who have been drawn to its power, and gives the troupe access to powerful tools to fight against the forces of Hell.

Although the infernalists do have access to some diabolical powers, an experienced group of magi and companions would easily overwhelm them. If your troupe has access to *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, storyguides should feel free to increase their power to match the players' characters.

Précis

Peter is a former crusader who lives in a village near the characters' covenant. He traveled as a sergeant-at-arms on the ill-fated Fourth Crusade — a crusade that ended with the sacking and burning to the ground of Constantinople, Christendom's greatest city. While on crusade, Peter participated in the looting of a church, and returned home with his prize. He, and the village priest to whom he gifted it, believed it was an ancient reliquary (a decorated container for a holy relic).

The reliquary was, in fact, an Hermetic device created to trap a powerful Greek demon. The prison was stored beneath the altar of an ancient church with a history of combating devils and demons. While stored in a holy place, the demon was trapped and could not influence the outside world. Once removed, however, it began to fight against its bonds, and now, decades later, it has begun to loosen them. The magical bonds that trap it are weakening — thanks to the interference of a clumsy priest — and the Divine aura of the village church is not great enough to weaken it substantially.

A diabolical taint has begun to infect the village and its lands, and a small group of infernalists has been drawn to the growing hellish power. A pall has been cast over the village by the infernal aura that has grown around the church — brother is turning against brother, fights and arguments are common, wounds and injuries seem to fester, illness is rife, and cooperation and good will are fading. To make matters worse, the infernalists have kidnapped one of the villagers.

It is up to your troupe to fight off the infernalists, restore the strength of the bonds imprisoning the demon, and eradicate the taint from the village.

Dramatis Personae

The following are the major characters who are featured in this adventure, along with their stats.

Villagers

Peter, Father Herbert, and Baldwin are the three most influential people in the village.

PETER THE CRUSADER

Peter is a bastard son of a local noble, has never been acknowledged, and lives as an influential peasant. Two decades ago, at the age of twenty, Peter decided to leave his home to join the Fourth Crusade. In the course of his expedition, he came into possession of a powerful Hermetic device. Mistaking it for the container of a magnificent relic, Peter returned to his home village with the pillaged device. Once home, Peter gifted the reliquary to the village's church, where it was ceremonially placed in a position of great honor.

Peter's prestige was greatly increased by this gift, and by

the other riches he returned with from the crusade. He is now a middle-aged man, with a wife and several children, and occupies an influential position in the village. His chief rival in the village is the Baldwin, a proud elder whose family was traditionally the most important and authoritative.

Although Peter was once quite wealthy, most of the treasure he brought back from the Holy Land is now gone. He now has little free time, although he does control more land than the other families in the village.

Characteristics: Int 0, Per 0, Pre 0, Com -1, Str +1, Sta +1, Dex +1, Qik +2 (2)

Size: 0

Age: 41 (41)

Decrepitude: 0

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Peasant; Warrior, Well-traveled; Close Family Ties, Meddler (Minor), Proud (Minor)

Personality Traits: Brave +3, Honest +3, Loyal +2

Reputations: Honorable Crusader +3 (local), Influential Villager +3 (local)

Combat:

Axe: Init +3, Attack +11, Defense +7, Damage +7

Soak: +1

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Animal Handling 5 (horses), Area Lore: Local 3 (farms), Area Lore: Crusader Routes 2 (Fourth Crusade), Athletics 3 (climbing), Awareness 3 (dinner table), Bargain 4 (sheep), Bows 2 (sieges), Brawl 3 (multiple opponents), Carouse 4 (speedy eating), Charm 4 (family), Etiquette 2 (armies), Folk Ken 4 (family), Great Weapon 3 (pole-arm), Greek 3 (ordering food), Music 2 (food hall songs), Native Language 5 (compliments), Profession: Farming 5 (large farms), Single Weapon 5 (axe), Survival 2 (armies), Swim 1 (rivers)

Equipment: Axe, farming tools, leather armor.

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: Peter is a middle-aged, balding man, his once-dark brown hair now mostly grey. His face is deeply lined and tanned. Peter covers his head in a leather cap, and wears well-crafted but simple clothes — a tunic and leggings.

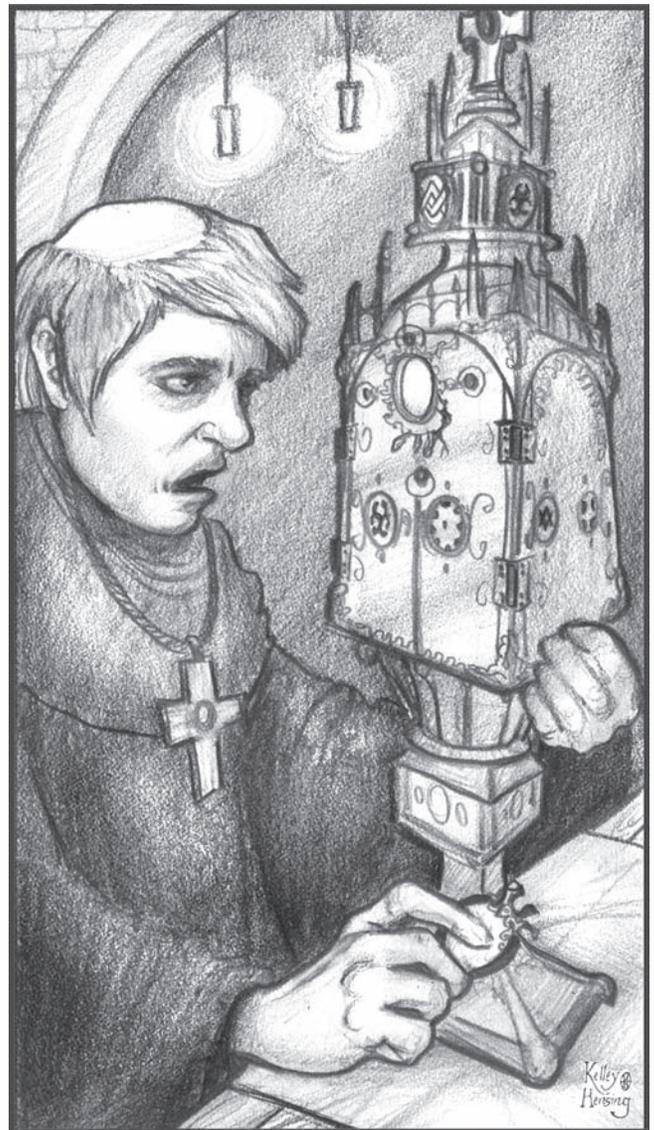
FATHER HERBERT, THE VILLAGE PRIEST

Herbert is only recently arrived at the village, replacing the previous priest who died five years ago. Herbert is relatively young, and is still finding his way around the village. Originally from a cathedral school in a distant town, Herbert

resents his posting in the village, which he sees as a dead end. This view means that he takes his duties with only a grain of seriousness, and is starting to despair that he will never leave.

Not long ago, he embarrassed himself by getting involved in an interfamily feud — he broke the confidence of village elder Baldwin to Peter, and then to make it up to Baldwin, revealed a secret of Peter's to Baldwin. This resulted in both Peter's and Baldwin's extended families boycotting his sermons for almost a year. In order to better find a niche, he has befriended Peter, who has started to champion Father Herbert with the villagers. This has resulted in the villagers slowly coming to see him as a figure of some authority and respect.

The one thing that Herbert finds remarkable and worthwhile in the village is the church's reliquary. He is immensely proud that his church has such a valuable item in it, and one of his very few joys is to polish and clean it every week.



Setup

This scenario requires that there be a suitably sized village close to the covenant, or within the covenant's sphere of influence and interest. Nevertheless, the action could take place in larger villages, or even a town, with some changes.

Similarly, Peter's background and involvement in the Fourth Crusade is not necessary, especially if the troupe's saga is set at an alternative time to the standard *Ars Magica* date of 1220. If set earlier, Peter could be a crusader returned from one of the earlier crusades. Similarly, Peter could have been a participant in the Reconquista so that the reliquary could be the magical device of a Muslim wizard, or he might have been a soldier in the Albigensian Crusade so the reliquary could come from a magus in the Provençal Tribunal.

Several months ago, Herbert accidentally dropped the reliquary, which broke off a valuable jewel fixed prominently on top. He tried to reattach it, but has since hidden the gem and hides the damaged face of the reliquary. He is too afraid to seek anyone's help to fix it, since he believes that the villagers would be furious with him. The gem itself is hidden under his mattress.

Characteristics: Int +1, Per +2, Pre 0, Com +1, Str -1, Sta 0, Dex 0, Qik 0

Size: 0

Age: 32 (32)

Warping Score: 0 (4)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Priest; Privileged Upbringing, Student of the Divine; Depressed, Meddler, Vow

Personality Traits: Depressed +4, Self-conscious +3, Pious +2, Talkative +2

Reputations: Village priest +3 (local), Blabbermouth +2 (local)

Combat:

Fist: Init 0, Attack +1, Defense +1, Damage -1

Soak: +0

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: [Area] Lore 3 (geography), Artes Liberales 4 (logic), Awareness 3 (bored parishioners), Brawl 1 (dodging), Charm 3 (clergy), Church Lore 4 (history), Concentration 3 (reading), Dominion Lore 3+2 (miracles), Etiquette 3 (the Church), Folk Ken 4 (villagers),

Latin 4 (sermons), Leadership 2 (inspiring guilt), Music 1 (psalms), Native Language 5 (gossip), Teaching 3 (teaching Theology), Theology 4 (sermons)

Equipment: An old, bound copy of the Book of Matthew, scruffy priest's robe, ornate crucifix carved from ivory.

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: Herbert dresses in scruffy black robes and wears an ornate cross around his neck.

BALDWIN THE VILLAGE ELDER

Baldwin is the rival village elder to Peter, and is a minor officer of the local lord (such as a reeve or similar appropriate position). Until Peter's return from the Fourth Crusade, Baldwin's father was the most respected and influential man in the village; Baldwin inherited that position when his father passed away. Following the death of the previous village priest, Peter's influence and authority over the village increased, to Baldwin's detriment.

Baldwin and Peter are in a bitter dispute over the boundary of some land that both claim to own. The plot runs along a small stream, which recently dramatically changed its course after a flood burst its banks and diverted it for several miles. This is the same stream that runs through the village, although the land is a mile or so away from the village proper.

Baldwin is a grumpy old man, approximately sixty years old, with a large extended family — several sons and daughters and a veritable army of grandchildren and great-grandchildren. There is an air of bitterness and resentment held by Baldwin and his children towards Peter, and also towards Father Herbert.

One of Baldwin's nephews, Conrad, has been kidnapped by the infernalists.

Characteristics: Int 0, Per -1, Pre +1, Com 0, Str +1, Sta +0, Dex +0, Qik -1

Size: 0

Age: 64 (70)

Decrepitude: 2

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Peasant; Temporal Influence; Gossip; Enfeebled, Envious (Minor), Poor Eyesight

Personality Traits: Meddler +3, Honest +3, Loyal +2

Reputations: Influential Villager +3 (local)

Combat:

Fist: Init -1, Attack +3, Defense +3, Damage +1

Soak: +1

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Animal Handling 3 (sheep), Area Lore: Local 6 (farms), Athletics 3 (climbing), Awareness 5 (fields), Bargain 4 (villagers), Brawl 3, Carouse 1 (festivals), Charm 4 (family), Etiquette 2 (superiors), Folk Ken 6 (villagers), Music 2 (festivals), Native Language 5 (farming), Profession: Farming 7 (large farms), Single Weapon 1 (axe), Survival 2 (fields)

Equipment: Farming tools, tunic, cloth cloak.

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: Baldwin is an aging and balding man, with a wrinkled face, squinting eyes, and slightly trembling hands. He wears well-made but simple clothes, although he shows some ostentation with a magnificent silver belt buckle.

VILLAGERS

There are approximately 70 villagers, with just over half of adult working age. The remainder are old and feeble or children. Three large families dominate the village. The family of Peter is the most influential, due to his prestige as a returned Crusader and the riches he once had. Baldwin's family is the second most influential, due to Baldwin's hereditary position, and has suffered a loss of prestige due to Peter's rise to prominence.

Infernalists

There are three cultists who have been attracted to the village by the diabolical taint emanating from the reliquary. Michael, the cult leader, is a sadistic and ruthless practitioner of the dark arts. Benedict is Michael's enthusiastic accomplice and loyal bodyguard. Maria is a victim of the cult — she was kidnapped by Michael and Benedict and is now too terrified to run away.

MICHAEL, CULT LEADER

Michael was drawn to the village after the banishment of his former demonic master, whose plot in a village in a neighboring kingdom was foiled. Although he managed to escape, Michael's powers have been somewhat diminished now that he no longer has the guidance of a more powerful demon. He is looking for a new demonic patron, and has heard the call of the Infernal taint emerging around the village. Michael knows that there is a powerful demon trapped somewhere near the village, but does not know that it is locked in the reliquary. An experienced infernalist, Michael is steeped in sin and debauchery. He

is entirely enthralled by the powers of Hell, and seeks to rise in its ranks. He sees the trapped demon as a means to that end.

Little is known of Michael's background — he purports to be of noble blood and cheated of his rightful inheritance, but he betrays the mannerisms of a commoner, and has little of the knowledge that someone of noble birth is taught from a young age. He is haughty and imperious, but is prone to losing his temper, and tries to flee when he does not have the upper hand. He has no qualms about leaving his lackeys to their doom.

At night he searches with Maria throughout the village and the land surrounding it for signs of the infernal. He originally suspected that it was trapped in the grotto where he has made his lair, but he now believes that it is somewhere in the village. He has avoided the church so far, but the longer he spends searching, the closer he will get to the reliquary.

Michael knows little about Hermetic magic or the powers of magi. He knows that wizards are powerful and are to be feared and avoided, but no more.

Characteristics: Int 0, Per 0, Pre +1, Com +2, Str 0, Sta +3,

Dex +1, Qik -1

Size: 0

Age: 36 (50)

Decrepitude: 1

Warping Score: 1 (4)

Confidence Score: 2 (12)

Virtues and Flaws: Outcast; Debauchery, Effusion; Improved

Characteristics, Infernal Blessing (Infernal Protection, Infernal Confidence, Minor); Envious; Proud, Offensive to Animals, Tainted with Evil, Visions, Witch Marks

Personality Traits: Cruel +3, Haughty +2, Altruistic -2

Reputations: Masterless +1 (Infernal)

Combat:

Fist: Init -1, Attack +2, Defense +2, Damage 0

Dagger: Init -1, Attack +4, Defense +2, Damage +3

Soak: +3

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: [Area] Lore 2, Awareness 3, Brawl 1, Charm 4, Concentration 2, Debauchery 5, Effusion 4, Folk Ken 4, Guile 4, Infernal Lore 3, Latin 3, Leadership 3, Native Language 5, Penetration 4, Stealth 2, Survival 2

Equipment: Animal-skin cloak, ceremonial dagger (hidden beneath his cloak), leather cap, poorly made clothes.

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: Michael has greasy shoulder-length hair, which is prematurely gray. Michael dresses in rough,

homespun clothes, and a black leather cap, with his hair sticking out from underneath. He has a sour expression. His witch mark is a large purple mark in the shape of a howling wolf, which runs down his neck beneath his shirt. He often wears an animal skin cloak to hide it.

See the nearby insert for explanations of Michael's Infernal Powers. Due to his Infernal Blessing Virtue, Michael has a Magic Resistance of 15. Michael's Witch Marks Flaw is the cause of his older appearance.

BENEDICT, CULTIST

Brought up on the streets of a nearby city, Benedict was an orphan who fell into the company of a desperate group of city thugs and thieves. He quickly became a heavy drinker and is prone to fits of rage. He committed his first murder over a misunderstanding, after finding his then-partner in the room of a fellow gang-member, killing them both. Since that day, he has sunk even lower; he became one of the leading heavies for an extortionist, who was being enthralled by a demon. Benedict was himself drawn into the demon's influence.

Michael's Maleficia

Michael's infernal powers — called maleficia — focus on controlling the weather and making bad weather worse. Although Michael's powers are diverse (they are similar to Hermetic spontaneous magic), he does have a few maleficia that he relies on regularly. Troupes with access to *Realms of Power: The Infernal* should refer to page 108 for more details.

In order to use any of these powers, Michael must roll: **stress die + Stamina + Debauchery + Effusion + aura**, against an Ease Factor equal to the level of the power below. Any failure in a Debauchery roll is considered a botch (1 botch for every 10 levels or fraction thereof the roll failed by). This form of magic is slow, as it requires the infernalist to perform an evil ritual, corrupting his own body and thus suffering a long-term Fatigue level (this takes approximately 2 minutes). The infernalist can speed this up by suffering a wound, such as by cutting himself (and inflicting a Light Wound), which makes it even faster than Hermetic magic.

Infernalists can also perform ritual sacrifices to increase the potency of their maleficia. Sacrificing an animal grants a +4 to his total, sacrificing a black animal grants a +6 bonus, sacrificing a human grants a +8 bonus, and sacrificing an innocent human

grants a +10 bonus.

Maleficia are like other supernatural powers for the purposes of Magic Resistance, and are considered Vim effects for the purposes of Form bonuses. Maleficia are also affected by Realm Interaction modifiers (see *ArM5*, page 183).

FLYING ON THE DEVIL'S BREATH

Debauchery/Effusion, Level 20
R: Sight, D: Conc, T: Ind

This power summons powerful winds, great enough to lift a person through the air at high speed. The character must concentrate to control the winds, and cannot do so if they are out of his sight. Michael uses this power on himself to fly around, but can also use it on others. Using this power on himself and another person simultaneously requires Concentration rolls.

(Base 4, +3 Sight, +1 Conc)

HELL'S BELLOWS

Debauchery/Effusion, Level 15
R: Voice, D: Conc, T: Ind

This power causes a fire to increase in heat, which increases the damage caused by the fire by +4.

(Base 4, +2 Voice, +1 Conc)

LUCIFER'S TONGS

Debauchery/Effusion, Level 20
R: Sight, D: Diam, T: Ind

Metal objects become red hot when this power is used, causing +6 damage per round to characters touching the metal.

(Base 4, +3 Sight, +1 Diam)

RUIN CROPS

Debauchery/Effusion, Level 20
R: Sight, D: Sun, T: Ind

This power turns rain into hail, which causes a great deal of damage to crops and property. People caught in the hail take +2 damage per round they are directly exposed to the hail.

(Base 1, +3 Sight, +2 Sun, +2 size)

SHROUD OF THE FORSAKEN

Debauchery/Effusion, Level 25
R: Touch, D: Sun, T: Boundary

With this power, the light of the moon and starlight at night is darkened to almost nothing, shrouding the land in darkness. With all natural light mostly extinguished, only artificial light can illuminate the affected land.

(Base 2, +1 Touch, +2 Sun, +4 Boundary)

Benedict met Michael after the extortionist was executed by the city authorities, and he was forced to flee the city. Michael needed muscle, and Benedict needed money. Soon, Michael was relying on Benedict to carry out the wishes of his demonic master. When the demon was banished, both Benedict and Michael fled again, and have since come to the village, drawn by the taint coming from the reliquary.

Characteristics: Int -2, Per 0, Pre 0, Com -2, Str +3, Sta +2, Dex +1, Qik +1

Size: 0

Age: 29 (29)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 1 (1)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Greater Immunity (iron); Depraved, Outcast, Tainted with Evil

Personality Traits: Cruel +3, Erratic +3, Loyal +2

Reputations: Violent +2 (nearby town)

Combat:

Axe: Init +2, Attack +9, Defense +5, Damage +9

Dagger: Init +1, Attack +8, Defense +6, Damage +6

Fist: Init +1, Attack +6, Defense +6, Damage +3

Soak: +2

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: [Area] Lore 3 (roads and paths), Athletics 4 (acts of strength), Awareness 4 (alleys), Brawl 5 (dirty fighting), Charm 1 (tavern wenches), Folk Ken 2 (detecting threats), Great Weapon 3 (spears), Guile 3 (lies), Infernal Lore 1 (demonic hierarchies), Leadership 3 (intimidation), Legerdemain 1 (cut-purse), Native Language 5 (threats), Single Weapon 5 (axe), Survival 2 (traps), Swim 1 (rivers)

Equipment: Dagger, axe, leather clothes, satchel.

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: Benedict is a hulking brute, with a bald head and tiny, close-set eyes. He wears dirty and torn leather clothing. A leer is on his thin-lipped mouth, showing his many missing teeth.

Note that due to his immunity to iron, iron weapons cannot pierce Benedict's skin or cause him any damage whatsoever.

MARIA, CULTIST

Maria is a street urchin who was kidnapped by Michael and Benedict and forced into their service. Mi-

chael uses her talent to sense Divine and Infernal auras, objects, and people in order to search for the trapped demon. She is deeply terrified of both of the other infernalists, but she is too afraid to run away or to disobey them. Slowly, Maria is being corrupted. She plays a role in the cult's rituals, and helps Benedict and Michael in their activities.

Fear and despair rule Maria's life, and she would jump at the opportunity to escape Michael's clutches. Unfortunately, she has lost hope, and is more than likely to betray any would-be rescuers, unless she can be convinced that there is a real chance that she could be saved. When Michael and Benedict are not within earshot, Maria will often be overwhelmed with despair and cry; she does not cry when they are near because they beat her.

Maria

Characteristics: Int +1, Per +2, Pre 0, Com +1, Str 0, Sta +1, Dex 0, Qik +1

Size: -1

Age: 16 (16)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 0 (2)

Confidence Score: 1 (1)

Virtues and Flaws: Keen Vision, Light Touch, Sense Holiness and Unholiness; Depressed, Pessimistic, Susceptibility to Infernal Power

Personality Traits: Desperate +3, Bold -1

Reputations: None

Combat:

Fist: Init +1, Attack +2, Defense +3, Damage +0

Soak: +1

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-4), -3 (5-8), -5 (9-12), Incapacitated (13-16), Dead (17+)

Abilities: [Area] Lore 2, Athletics 3, Bargain 2, Brawl 1, Charm 2, Folk Ken 3, Guile 2, Legerdemain 2, Native Language 5, Sense Holiness and Unholiness 3, Survival 2

Equipment: None

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: Maria is a small, pale girl with dirty hair and a sorrowful expression. She is not a pretty girl, having watery eyes and several warts on her face. She dresses in rags and is kept warm by a sheepskin.

Maria's Sense Holiness and Unholiness is granted by the Infernal Realm.

Expected Sequence of Play

This part of the chapter describes how the scenario is likely to play out, with advice for the story guide on timelines and how different NPCs are likely to react.

Discovering the Taint

Below are three options for the troupe to get started with this scenario. None of the options are exclusive — you could use one, two, or all of them.

GRADUAL CREEP

An Infernal aura is gradually seeping out of the reliquary, tainting the lands around it for miles. The taint is causing the villagers to act in less-pious ways, incites con-

flict, encourages lies and makes the people, animals, and crops sickly.

The aura is strongest around the reliquary, but has spread out to the village and is starting to gain its own momentum, as the villagers descend into argument and conflict. Originally, the Dominion aura in the village was level 2, and level 1 in the surrounding fields. In the church it increased to level 3, and level 4 around the altar.

However, the Infernal aura is starting to overwhelm the Dominion. In the village and fields surrounding the village, the Infernal aura is level 2 (for as far as you can see the church). In the church the Infernal aura is level 3. At night, the Infernal auras increase by 1.

This means that, during the day, the village and church have a Dominion aura, as that aura dominates, but the fields have an Infernal aura of 2. At night, however, everywhere except for the area around the altar has an Infernal aura, as the higher-level Infernal aura overpowers the Dominion aura.

For the last few months, the taint has been growing and spreading. As the demon trapped in the reliquary first began to break free, the Infernal aura was unnoticeable. However, the taint spread beneath the Dominion aura, into the

Using Story Flaws and Hooks

Use these flaws and hooks to involve the players in the story.

CHARACTER STORY FLAWS

Close Family Ties: A companion, or even a magus, has family in the village (perhaps related to Peter or Baldwin) and is drawn into the conflict between the two villagers.

Dark Secret: Your Hermetic lineage may trace back to John Philo-symeon (suitable for Verditius characters only), the creator of the reliquary, and a rumor emerges that one of his devices has been sighted in a village.

Dependent: Your dependent gets caught or injured by the infernalists drawn to the village, and requires your assistance.

Diabolic Past: Your infernal past links you to Michael the infernalist, who either seeks out your assistance in uncovering the trapped

demon, or learns that your covenant is close to the village he has been drawn to.

Difficult Underlings: Your servants, in their dealings with the village, are either drawn into the internecine conflict, are cheated by the villagers (who are influenced by the Perfidious Aura), or are blamed for the village's troubles and are attacked.

Favors: You owe a favor to someone who has an interest in resolving the conflict in the village — the local lord, bishop, or even a magus — who requests that you mediate between Peter and Baldwin.

Heir: The village is located in the lands that you will one day inherit, and you can help secure your place as heir by ensuring that the village returns to peace and quiet.

Mentor: Your mentor asks you to investigate possible infernal activity or the presence of a lost Her-

metic device in the village.

Monastic Vows: Your monastic senior asks that you assist Father Herbert in finding a solution to the village's conflicts. Alternatively, your superior asks that you ascertain to which saint the relic belongs.

Oath of Fealty: Your liege lord requests that you investigate the missing villager.

COVENANT HOOKS

Beholden: The person or group the covenant is beholden to requests that the village be investigated, or that the covenant assist in returning the village to peace and harmony.

Protector: Your covenant is responsible for the safety of the village.

Superiors: The player characters' superiors have one of the Story Flaws above, but orders (or requests) that the player characters resolve the problem.

The Perfidious Aura

Perfidious auras are a unique kind of Infernal aura that embody the sins that betray trust. A Perfidious aura forms in areas so steeped in sin that they are particularly powerful domains of evil — they are never weaker than level 3, and have unique effects on those within the aura.

This kind of aura forms in places where deceit has triumphed over trust, or where great lies and betrayals are committed. They are also

found where the Infernal has manifested directly on earth. A Perfidious aura is most commonly found in Dominion auras, where they undermine the good work of the Divine.

In addition to the normal effect of an Infernal aura, the Perfidious aura that surrounds the village makes lies and betrayal easier to commit and harder to spot, especially bribery. All lies become more believable, with all attempts to detect lies adding the

level of the aura to the Ease Factor (making it more difficult). Furthermore, personality traits associated with trust and loyalty are decreased by the level of the aura. This affects characters with Magic Resistance as well. Finally, all healing and recovery rolls suffer a penalty equal to the level of the Infernal aura; wounds, illness, and deprivation are aggravated by the aura (this effects all humans, even the infernalists).

village, and at night as the villagers slept. By the time it was strong enough to overwhelm the Dominion, the Infernal aura had spread for miles, promoting lies and petty hatreds, inflating pride and fostering deceit.

The covenant may have a pre-existing relationship with the village or one of the villagers, and notice a change in personality and behavior. People affected by the Infernal aura start telling lies, are insolent towards authority, or betray trusts. The villagers (or an individual villager) could break an agreement with the covenant — perhaps the village normally sells some crops or animals to the covenant, but this season unusually short-shrifts the covenant.

If the covenant has no pre-existing relationship with the village or any of the villagers, then the growing infernal aura may be brought to their attention by a passing Redcap with the Sense Holiness and Unholiness Virtue, or by a grog or companion who passes through the village and notices the diabolical characteristics of the aura.

INFERNALISTS STRIKE

Michael is a desperate man, and wants to hurry the escape of the demon. Although he does not know exactly where it is, he suspects (correctly) that the stronger the Infernal aura becomes, the stronger the demon becomes. In order to increase the strength of the Infernal aura, Michael kidnaps and ritually murders one of the villagers — from the family of Baldwin. This grisly act in the vicinity of the trapped demon has a chance of increasing the Infernal aura.

This can involve the characters and the covenant through the villagers (likely to be Baldwin or one of his

sons) beseeching the covenant's help in trying to solve the kidnapping of Conrad.

Michael and Benedict do not hide their tracks particularly well. The trail leads to the village — a Survival or Hunt roll against an Ease Factor of 9 shows the way there. Once at the village, the tracks are harder to follow. Michael and Benedict dragged their victim through the outskirts of the village, and their tracks have since been walked over by villagers. Survival or Hunt rolls against an Ease Factor of 21 uncover the tracks leading to the cult's lair under the nearby hill. The characters will most likely need to talk to the villagers to learn more.

Intellego magic also reveals Michael's victim being attacked and overwhelmed by Michael and Benedict, and also their path to and through the village.

Once at the village, the characters have the opportunity to learn of the Infernal aura, track down Michael, and uncover the existence of the trapped demon.

DIVINE INTERVENTION

Some covenants or characters may be pious worshippers of the Divine. If so, then they may be visited by a divinely inspired vision — an angelic visitation or dream — that warns of a terrible infernal threat. An angel or other servant of the Divine could also appear in less-supernatural garb; an angel could take the form of a villager, requesting the help of the covenant. Alternatively, the Divine could appear to Father Herbert or another villager to advise him to seek out the help of the characters.

This is the simplest way for storyguides to get their troupe involved in the story, and is obviously only appropriate if the characters are suitably pious.

Traveling to the Village

When traveling to the village, there is a noticeable change several miles from the center of the Infernal aura. Natural plant growth is stunted and sickly, trees twist in an unnatural and disturbing fashion, and animals are aggressive. Minor infernal spirits, such as those of sickness or misfortune, also flit around, unseen to all but those with Second Sight or Sense Holiness and Unholiness (or those with appropriate Intellego spells). Spending a significant period of time in the aura may well see characters with no Magic Resistance fall ill, or suffer an unlikely accident. Characters with the Sense Holiness and Unholiness Ability may sense the Infernal aura, with an Ease Factor of 9 (see *ArM5*, page 67).

Upon entering the aura, the characters find lies easily coming to their lips. Personality Traits such as Loyal, Humble, and Trusting are reduced by the level of the aura. Rebellious or treacherous grogs or companions may be inspired to betray the covenant or the characters (or betray their trust somehow; for example, by not doing their bidding, stealing money, or revealing the magi to the villagers).

Characters with Second Sight or Sense Holiness and

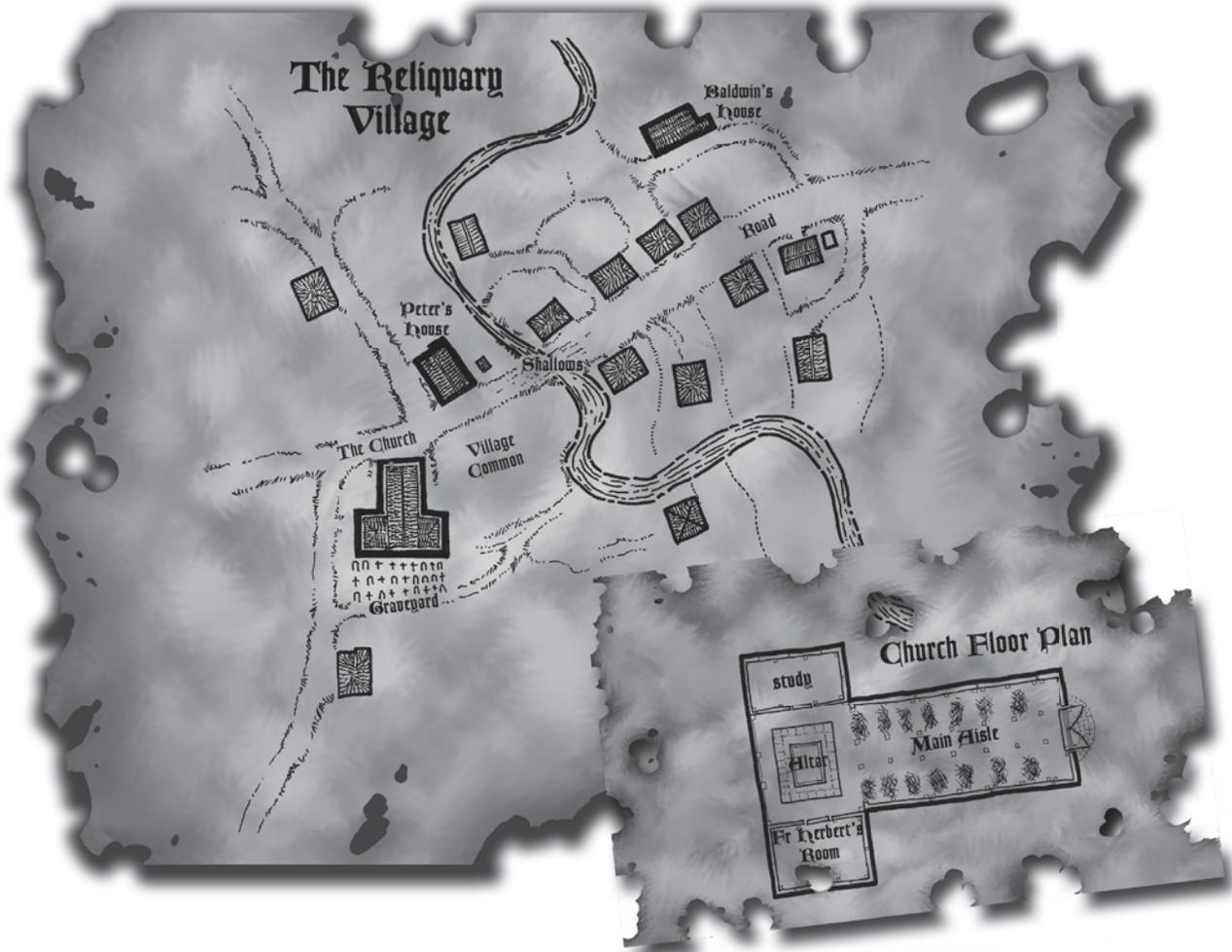
Unholiness may detect infernal spirits in the village whispering malevolent thoughts, hiding in wait for unsuspecting villagers to cause some misfortune, or trying to possess the villagers and cause sickness. See *ArM5*, page 67 for the details of how these Abilities work.

Exploring the Village

The village is small, with a modest church and a slow-moving stream winding through it. Most of the houses are spaced out, with plots of land surrounding them. The closeness of the stream makes the roads muddy most of the year, except in winter when the mud freezes. The road crosses the stream at a shallow area — a boggy thoroughfare where the water is only a few inches deep. In front of the church is the village common, and next to it is a graveyard.

There are two houses that are larger than most of the others. The first one, recently expanded, belongs to Peter and his family. The second one is older and belongs to Baldwin.

Animals roam the land around the villagers' houses, and children play in the streets with dogs most days, when they



Magic, The Gift, and Mundanes

The villagers' reaction to *The Gift* is exacerbated by the effects of the Infernal aura. Already suspicious and fractious, the villagers treat Gifted characters with extreme suspicion. Even villagers who are likely to want the characters' help, such as Baldwin's family, still view them poorly and will be uncooperative. Polite characters are still able to receive help, but the villagers are more likely to lie, so the characters may not be able to trust any answers they receive.

Open magical acts are likely to frighten the villagers, and make them uncooperative and hostile. The exception to this is if the magic performed is beneficial in nature, such as a healing spell, or a spell that revitalizes the nearby crops.

are not working the fields that surround the village.

Within sight of the village is a small hill that was once the site of a pagan place of worship. Generations ago it was blessed by the local bishop, and the pagan stones torn up and smashed. No trace remains of its pagan past, but the villagers avoid the hill.

The village has a Dominion aura of between 1 and 2, rising to 3 at the church. The Dominion extends as far as the church bells can be heard; the church bells cannot be heard at the nearby hill.

Talking to the Villagers

Upon arriving at the village, the characters probably want to investigate, either the source of the Infernal aura, or the trail leading to the cult's lair. If they have arrived during the day, they are able to speak to any number of villagers who are not working in the fields.

The villagers are noticeably argumentative. Characters entering the village find groups of two or three villagers engaged in an argument or fight. The villagers also slander each other, particularly either Peter's or Baldwin's family. Half the village suspects that Peter is behind the disappearance of Baldwin's family member.

If asked about infernalists or other suspicious characters, the villagers mention that there has been a series of misfortunes recently — heavy hail, damaged crops, strong winds, and very dark nights, as well as missing sheep. A few villagers claim to have seen dark shapes sneaking through or around the village. None have really connected the nearby hill — the lair of the infernalists — to these misfortunes, and most are more concerned with the feud between Peter and Baldwin.

TALKING TO PETER

Peter and his family are very defensive — many other villagers suspect them of being behind the recent misfortunes. Peter has responded by spreading gossip that Baldwin cheats people out of rents and over-prices his produce. Peter denies that he has anything to do with the disappearance of Baldwin's kinsman — this can be verified by *Mentem* magic. He is very angry at Baldwin for spreading this malicious rumor.

Peter owns the land that is adjacent to the hill where the cult is hiding, and has lost several sheep over the last month or two. He suspects that Baldwin has been stealing them, but will admit that he has no proof if pressed. He can show the characters where they went missing, which takes the characters to the hill.

TALKING TO BALDWIN

Baldwin and his family strongly believe that Peter or one of his family members was responsible for the disappearance of their kinsman, Conrad. Baldwin accuses Peter directly to the characters, and requests that they help bring him to justice. Baldwin takes the characters to where Conrad went missing — some way out of the village in one of Baldwin's fields. He is also willing to give the characters one of his kinsman's belongings to use as an Arcane Connection (unless the characters give him good reason to suspect they will do ill with it). Baldwin also recounts the various misfortunes that have befallen the village — hail, illness, and increased hostility. Baldwin is also hostile towards Father Herbert, who he believes has done nothing to help the situation.

The Lord's Authority

Like nearly all villages in Mythic Europe, this one is under the authority of a local lord. Few lords like disappearances and disputes in their territories. It is up to the storyguide to detail the village's liege lord (there are numerous examples given in other chapters). In any case, as neither Peter nor Baldwin can agree on what to do, and are suspicious of each other and potential ramifications if they involve the local lord, they wait for as long as possible before sending word to the lord of the village's troubles. Both Peter and Baldwin would prefer to sort out the situation without appealing to the lord, although other third parties (such as the covenant) may be more acceptable, as they have no direct authority.

Visiting the Church

Built away from the stream, the village church is a dilapidated wooden building with a simple dirt floor, and rusty hinges for the ornate timber doors. There are signs that, years ago, work was done to try to repair and beautify the church, but little work has been done in recent years.

The church is made up of several rooms: the main nave is covered in straw, and is where the villagers sit when in church; and the living area for Father Herbert consists of a sleeping area and a small study.

The only remarkable feature of the church is its altar, on which stands the magnificent reliquary gifted to the church by Peter. The reliquary is usually displayed at religious occasions, and most of the villagers are also very proud of it — particularly Peter's family.

INVESTIGATING THE CHURCH

Hermetic magi and characters with Order of Hermes Lore make a Perception + Order of Hermes Lore + simple die against an Ease Factor of 9 when they see the reliquary. Those who succeed notice that the reliquary has several distinctive features characteristic of Hermetic magical devices. Characters with Philosophiae can make a Perception + Philosophiae + simple die roll against an Ease Factor of 12 to notice that the symbols and images on the reliquary relate to warding off or trapping a demon (and some are in fact Verditius Runes, disguised as Christian symbols). The symbols (although not the Runes) are entirely orthodox in nature, although they are Eastern Orthodox, rather than Western.

Characters with Sense Holiness and Unholiness can sense a great evil power emanating from the reliquary, with a Perception + Sense Holiness and Unholiness + aura stress roll against an Ease Factor of 15. If standing within a few feet, the Ease Factor drops to 9, and if the character touches the reliquary, the Ease Factor is only 1. There is no need to Penetrate the Magic Resistance of the trapped demon in this case, due to the nature of the demon's corrupting power. (Note that the Sense Holiness and Unholiness is affected by Realm Interaction modifiers; see *ArM5*, page 183).

Intellego Vim magic reveals that the reliquary is magical, although it cannot reveal its invested powers (see *ArM5*, page 158). Characters who examine the reliquary will need to spend a season in the laboratory investigating it to find out its properties (see *ArM5*, page 100).

TALKING TO FATHER HERBERT

Father Herbert is at his wits' end. Protected from the Infernal aura during the day due to spending most of his time

in the Dominion aura in the church, his dreams are filled with suspicions and dark thoughts towards the villagers (night is when the Infernal aura overwhelms the Dominion). He believes that he is contributing somehow to the village's misfortune, and feels a great sense of guilt about damaging the reliquary.

Any offer of help, particularly to help find the missing villager or more generally to help bring the villagers back to piety and god-fearing behavior, is readily accepted — provided of course the characters do not themselves appear to be agents of the Devil. Father Herbert is more than willing to speak to the characters alone, and to give them some background on the village, its inhabitants, and his own situation. However, he may suspect outlandish characters, or characters who are pagan in appearance, of being involved in the disappearance of the villager.

Herbert does not suspect that the reliquary is the cause of his problems, and does not want anyone to know that it is damaged. Despite this, he is very proud of it, and happily shows it to the characters, explaining its origin — so long as they do not touch it (the reliquary is positioned so that the missing gem cannot be seen). Attempts to handle or remove the reliquary will be opposed, unless the characters convince him that it is necessary, or that they can fix the broken gem. A Communication + Charm or Leadership + stress die against an Ease Factor of 18 is sufficient to convince him. If the characters appear particularly wealthy, he will ask if they can help replace or repair the gem and reliquary. This may give the characters a clue that they must repair the reliquary to stop the trapped demon.

Father Herbert will not agree to any action that damages the reliquary, including any attempts to open it.

If asked which saint's relics the reliquary contains, Father Herbert dithers. Peter never knew, and was not sure of the name of the church that he stole it from. Most of the villagers, including Father Herbert, assume that it contains the relic of one of the Apostles, such as a finger bone or knuckle. Peter maintains that the relic is larger — the size of a hand or foot. The reliquary itself has never been opened, as the latch on the small door is bent. Herbert likes to think it is a relic of the Apostle Peter.

INVESTIGATIONS BY STEALTH

The characters may decide to sneak into the church to investigate the reliquary without the interference of Father Herbert. Gaining entrance to the church can be accomplished without much effort. The doors are not locked or barred, even at night, and the thick stone walls make it difficult for Father Herbert to hear anyone enter if he is sleeping

in the room off the aisle. A successful Quickness + Stealth + simple die versus an Ease Factor of 6 means that Father Herbert remains unaware of the characters entering the church.

THE BROKEN JEWEL

The broken reliquary gem is key to halting the demon's corrupting powers. In order to find out that the gem is missing, the characters must have either examined the reliquary — it is obvious that a gem has been broken off — or have been confided in by Father Herbert.

The gem is hidden under Father Herbert's bed; the characters have several opportunities to try to get it. First, they could have convinced Father Herbert to let them examine or fix the reliquary, in which case he will retrieve the gem

for them. Second, they could use Mentem magic to read his mind and discover his role in damaging the reliquary and hiding the gem. Third, they could search the church while he is away from the church. If the characters search for the gem, a Perception + Awareness + simple die against an Ease Factor of 9 uncovers it beneath his bed.

THE ALTAR AND RELIQUARY

The altar is unremarkable. It is made of polished wood, and has several tarnished pewter candle sticks resting on it.

The reliquary, which sits on the church's altar, is about two feet tall and a foot wide. It is square, its four sides covered in intricate carvings and metal work. Most of the metal appears to be gold or silver, and there are gems and carved

The Reliquary

The object that is venerated as a reliquary is actually a powerful Hermetic device crafted to trap spirits, in particular demons.

The reliquary has been enchanted into two parts — the main reliquary that traps the demon (Ensorcell the Luciferian Spirit) and a large gemstone embedded on its front (Pious Veil of Hermetic Might), and now broken off by Father Herbert, designed to suppress the demon's powerful corruptive powers.

Simply trapping this demon in the reliquary has greatly hindered it, as its weakness prevents it from affecting anything that is sealed or tied up. This means that, even with the loss of the gem, it cannot use its powers to open the reliquary. Note that the demon is trapped, not "bound" — it is merely physically restrained, rather than mystically linked to the reliquary.

ENSORCELL THE LUCIFERIAN SPIRIT

ReVi 45
 Pen +42, Constant Effect
 R: Special, D: Sun, T: Ind
 This magical device traps any one

Infernal spirit within the reliquary, making it unable to move beyond the boundaries of the box. The effect is activated when the door is closed, and ended if the door is reopened. This effect cannot draw a spirit into the reliquary; the item's creator used a spell for that. The effect must Penetrate, and thus can, normally, affect a creature with an Infernal Might of 41 or lower. However, both Magic Resistance and Penetration are affected by the local aura (ArM5, page 183); in a Divine or Magic aura, the affected Might is effectively increased by twice the aura, while in an Infernal aura it is decreased by twice the aura. The demon currently held is weak enough to be restrained in any Infernal aura, but the crafter was not sure of that.

(Base 4 (by analogy with ReCo), +2 Special (based on Touch), +2 Sun; +1 2/day, +3 environmental trigger, +21 Penetration)

PIOUS VEIL OF HERMETIC MIGHT

PeVi 60
 Pen +22, Constant Effect
 R: Touch, D: Sun, T: Ind

This enchanted gem suppresses the supernatural powers of a single infernal creature touching it, up to level 20 (or powers from creatures with a Might score of 20 or less; see ArM5, page 191). The gem actually reaches the inside of the reliquary, through a tiny hole, thus touching the demon within.

(Base 30, +1 Touch, +2 Sun; +1 2/day, +3 environmental trigger, +11 Penetration)

SEAL EVIL WITHIN

ReTe 4
 Pen 0, 1/day
 R: Per, D: Mom, T: Ind

This effect moves the metal of the reliquary, as if worked by a metalsmith, to seal the door shut. A Perception + Finesse roll by the person using the reliquary determines how elegant the seal appears. Although the magic is momentary, the metal remains sealed after it ends. The seal must be broken by mundane means, but the magic can seal it again. It is activated by closing the reliquary's door and closing the latch.

(Base 4)

ivory inlaid into it. It has Hermetic symbols of Rego, Perdo, and Vim worked into the intricate decorations, and also bears Christian symbols and iconography, which is why Father Herbert and many others believe it to be a reliquary.

If the reliquary is moved from the village, the Infernal aura begins to slowly subside, at a rate of 1 level after a number of years equal to the level of the Infernal aura. This means that soon after the reliquary leaves the area, the Infernal aura diminishes to be equal to or less than the Dominion, and the effects of the Infernal aura cease.

Getting Possession of the Reliquary

The characters must gain possession of the reliquary before they can reattach the broken gem. Father Herbert wants the reliquary repaired, but also wants assurances that it will be returned safely and quickly. Peter, however, will

not want the reliquary to leave the church or village, especially not in the hands of wizards. They are not receptive to the notion that the reliquary is the source of the village's troubles — after all, it has been in the village for twenty years with no problem.

THEFT

The characters could steal the reliquary from the church. This would be easily accomplished with the aid of magic, particularly invisibility spells. A missing reliquary is likely to raise the attention of others, as the villagers want it back, and because the reliquary is a particularly magnificent object. Father Herbert would raise the matter with his superior (and blame the thieves for the reliquary's damage), and Peter may ask the local lord for assistance. There is a great deal of relic theft between churches and monasteries in Mythic Eu-

The Demon

Order: Vessel of Iniquity

Infernal Might: 20 (Mentem)

Characteristics: Int +1, Per -1, Pre -3, Com -2, Str +2, Sta +2, Dex 0, Qik 0

Size: +1

Confidence Score: 3 (15)

Virtues and Flaws: Puissant Guile, Hatred (Minor, Hermetic magi)

Personality Traits: Hateful +6, Depraved +6, Treacherous +5, Deceptive +4

Reputations: Taint of Fields +1 (Infernal)

Hierarchy: 1

Combat:

Fist: Init +0, Attack +0, Defense +0, Damage +2

Soak: +2

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-6), -3 (7-12), -5 (13-18), Incapacitated (19-24), Dead (25+)

Abilities: Awareness 6 (spirits), Guile 8+2 (betrayal)

Powers:

Form of Man, 0 points, Init 0, Corpus: The demon may shapeshift into

any human form it desires, and may even mimic people.

Form of Wickedness, 3 points, Init 0, Mentem: This power allows the demon to materially embody lies and betrayal, causing the nearest 10 people to immediately succumb to the sin of Avarice. The affected people must make a Stamina roll against an Ease Factor of 6 to end the power's hold (they may make one roll each hour). This form can only be maintained for 1 round (although the power lasts beyond that time).

Taint the Lands of Adam, 10 points, Init +10, Vim: This power allows the demon to create Infernal auras around itself, and slowly spread that aura to the surrounding lands. The taint spreads five miles every month, and stops after two years. It cannot cross major landmarks, such as rivers, forests, mountains, or city walls (although streams and woods pose no hindrance). The Infernal aura also increases its rating slowly, starting at its center and increasing by 1 each month to a maximum of 4. Unlike most

Infernal auras, the aura created by the demon is a Perfidious aura, even in low rating areas. In other respects the aura acts as a normal Infernal aura, and can be increased (or decreased) through human agency; it increases at night, and decreases during religious events.

Weakness: Ordering (the demon has no power over anything that is sealed or tied up, although it must be tightly and deliberately sealed).

Vis: 4 pawns Mentem vis that coagulates as an oily, fatty lump about the size of a fist.

Appearance: If it appears in its physical form, the demon appears as pure lies and deceit. This is simply a morass of matter and emotion (see *Form of Wickedness* power). The demon can also take the form of any person it desires (see *Form of Man* power).

These traits are included in the event that the characters release the demon from the reliquary. See *Realms of Power: The Infernal* for more information on the demon's other powers.

rope however, so the characters could try to frame a nearby church or monastery. The characters may also leave a replica behind, so that the villagers believe that the reliquary is not missing. Again, Hermetic magic, such as *Creo* or *Rego Imaginem*, makes this easy, at least for a temporary solution.

NEGOTIATION

The characters could try to convince Father Herbert to give up the reliquary. This could involve convincing him that the reliquary is the cause of the village's troubles, or that the characters only want to repair the reliquary, or could involve *Rego Mentem* magic. Father Herbert does not want to give up the reliquary without good reason, but if the characters can demonstrate that repairing the reliquary is necessary, then Herbert consents. He may also consent to having the reliquary replaced by a similarly impressive item.

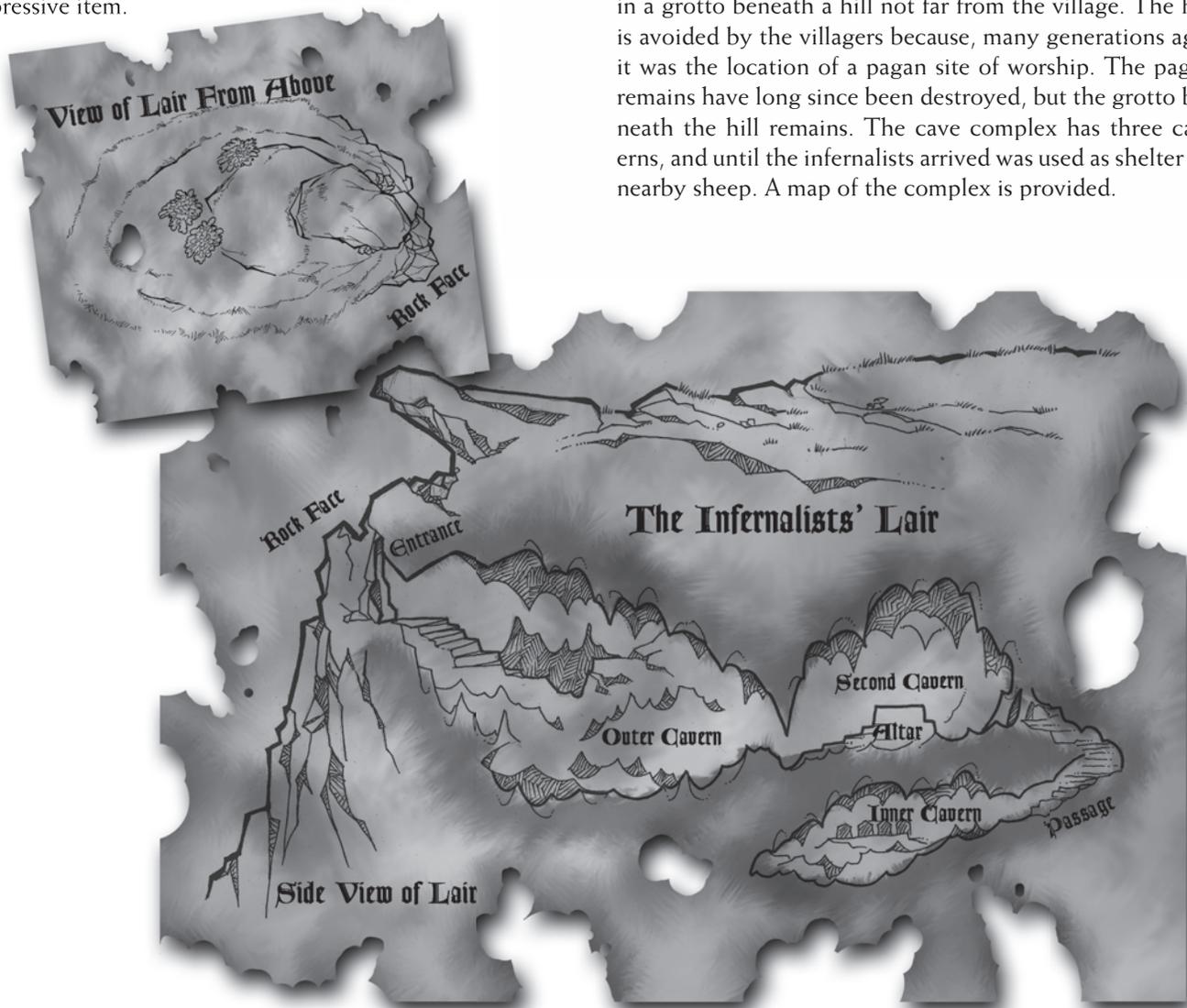
Opening the Reliquary

The characters may decide to try to open the reliquary. Attempts to open it are initially fruitless, and a Perception + Craft: Woodwork or Metalwork + stress die roll against an Ease Factor of 9 reveals that, although it looks like the reliquary has a door, the metal decoration seals it shut; the latch is largely for show. Opening the box would require breaking it open.

Doing so would destroy the item and release the demon, so characters with Common Sense, Intuition, or Visions receive a warning that this would be a bad idea.

The Cult's Lair

Michael and his infernal servants have set up their lair in a grotto beneath a hill not far from the village. The hill is avoided by the villagers because, many generations ago, it was the location of a pagan site of worship. The pagan remains have long since been destroyed, but the grotto beneath the hill remains. The cave complex has three caverns, and until the infernalists arrived was used as shelter by nearby sheep. A map of the complex is provided.



Option: Saving Conrad

At the storyguide's option, the players' characters may be able to race against time to save the kidnapped Conrad. The villager is being held by Michael in preparation for a sacrifice to the trapped demon. With this option, Conrad is tied up in the inner chamber of the cave. He has been badly beaten, with several Light and Medium Wounds, and suffers a -15 penalty to his actions.

The outer cavern is largely empty. The entry to the next cavern requires some climbing up the rock face, and a tight squeeze through a hole (characters with Size +1 are able to uncomfortably enter, but not while wearing bulky equipment or armor).

The second cavern is much smaller than the outer one, and is where the cult performs their infernal rituals. Sheep and other animal carcasses litter the floor, and there are other trappings of rituals – a debased altar, dried blood and gore, and grubby cloths on the wall marked with diabolical symbols.

The inner chamber leads down further under the hill. A winding passage leads to the inner cavern, a cramped space devoid of all natural light. Animal fat candles burn most of the time, and animal skins and straw cover the floor. This is where the cult sleeps, with Benedict and Maria sleeping closest to the entry, to block the wind.

The infernal aura in the first chamber is level 2, and in the second and inner chambers it is level 3.

SEARCHING FOR THE CULT'S LAIR

The characters may search for the cult's lair to find the missing villager, or suspect that they are the source of the Infernal aura. They may have been led by Peter or another villager, or be following tracks. If the characters have an Arcane Connection to the villager, an appropriate spontaneous Intellego Corpus spell unerringly locates him, in the cult's lair.

The outer grotto is partly hidden by the vegetation, and Michael has made no real effort to hide it. A Perception + Awareness, Hunt, or Survival + simple die roll against an Ease Factor of 9 will find it. If the characters are following tracks, then they need only beat an Ease Factor of 6. Climbing to the lair's entrance is simple and requires no roll.

Should the characters fail the roll and not find the opening to the outer cavern, they may be able to use magic

— Intellego Terram, for example, reveals the rough layout of the grotto complex. Abilities like Dowsing are also useful; a Perception + Dowsing + aura + stress die against an Ease Factor of 9 reveals the grotto's entrance.

THE VICTIM...

For the villager, kidnapped by Michael, it is too late. Michael already killed Conrad in a grisly ritual shortly after kidnapping him. The ritual has helped strengthen the Infernal aura in the caves, which has risen to level 3 (from level 2). If the characters have an Arcane Connection to the victim, and use Intellego Corpus magic to detect whether he is still alive, they discover that he is alive until the early morning of the day that the characters arrive in the village, after which he is killed.

FINDING MARIA

On entering the grotto, the characters find Maria — Michael and Benedict are not there. If the players' rolls are unsuccessful, or if the storyguide wants to avoid the possibility of a failed roll bringing the scenario to a halt, then the characters hear a sound from within the hill that leads them to the entrance. The sound comes from Maria's crying, as she weeps from desperation.

She is terrified of the characters initially, particularly if they are violent or appear frightening, or have The Gift. If the characters are friendly towards her, she tells them that she is herself the victim of Michael and Benedict. She readily betrays them, explaining who they are, what they look like, and why they are in the area. She knows that they are looking for a powerful demon trapped nearby, and are using her ability to sense holiness and unholiness to find it. If the characters are hostile or violent towards her, she tries to escape, and will not give them any information.

WHERE ARE MICHAEL AND BENEDICT?

Michael and Benedict meanwhile have been sneaking around nearby, searching for a sheep to steal, sacrifice, and eat. They are also using the opportunity to scout out the village to identify another villager to kidnap. Both infernalists have seen the characters approach the hill, unless the characters have traveled stealthily (in which case, compare the cultist's Awareness total against the player's characters' Stealth total), or used magic to become invisible.

CONFRONTING THE INFERNALISTS

With Maria's help, the characters should be able to track down Michael and Benedict. If Michael and Benedict saw the characters enter the grotto, they are on their guard. They wait to see what the characters do, hiding some way off. A Perception + Awareness + stress die against Michael and Benedict's Quickness + Stealth + stress die reveals their hiding location. If the characters are being stealthy, then Maria does her best to betray the characters and reveal their location to her tormentors.

If Michael is given a reason to suspect the characters are wizards, he does his best to avoid a confrontation that he does not believe he can win. However, he has no qualms about sending Benedict to his death. If the characters give chase, then Benedict tries to hold the characters off while Michael summons his malefic winds to make an escape. If the characters are able to give chase with their own flying magic, then there could well be an impressive battle in the skies above the village. If the characters look innocuous or vulnerable, both Michael and Benedict attack them, in the hope of overwhelming and subduing them.

Michael does not want to anger powerful wizards, so is conciliatory if given reason to believe that the characters

are such. Unfortunately for Michael, he bears the taint of evil, so most characters who interact with him will see him as being diabolically aligned.

Should Michael escape, he returns to the village a few nights later to continue trying to kidnap villagers to sacrifice, so as to raise the Infernal aura.

LEADING TO THE RELIQUARY

Maria possesses an ability to detect evil, and if she is taken close to the church and the reliquary, she senses the presence of the trapped demon. Maria may have revealed to the characters that she has been used by Michael to find the demon, or Michael may have revealed this. Appropriate Mentem magic also reveals this.

Repairing the Reliquary

Hermetic characters who see the reliquary notice its Hermetic nature sooner or later. They are likely to guess that it is linked to the Infernal aura in some manner, although they may not guess immediately. The reliquary is inscribed with

Researching the Reliquary's History

Characters who get the chance to examine the reliquary in a Hermetic laboratory are almost certain to become suspicious. Any magus who could create the effect that suppresses the demon's powers could easily destroy the demon with *Demon's Eternal Oblivion*, and even if he had to create the spell it would take less time than enchanting the object. Even characters who do not examine the reliquary in such detail could make worrying inferences from their knowledge of Magic Theory. They may, therefore, want to research the item's background.

To research this information, the character must make an Intelligence + Order of Hermes Lore + simple dice against an Ease Factor of 21. This total can be modified depending on the size of the covenant's library: +5 for a peerless collection on

Order of Hermes Lore; +4 for a specialized collection; +3 for a collection with a particular interest in the history of the Order of Hermes; +2 for a library with no particular interest in the Order of Hermes; and +1 for a library with few books on the subject. (See *Covenants*, page 98 for more information on research.)

The results of the research, should the character succeed against the Ease Factor, reveals that the reliquary was crafted a hundred years ago, by a Verditius magus called John Philosymeon, famed for his pugilistic attitude towards the Infernal and mastery of the Art of Rego. There is, however, no mention of this reliquary; the characters must rely on descriptions of John's sigil and the like.

The magus himself does not appear in many records because towards the end of his life he became

corrupted by the Infernal — John's own filia, Irene, Marched him — and his Hermetic descendants wanted to blot out the stain on their lineage. The reliquary was stored in a church near Constantinople, surrounded by holy relics, because Irene had no idea what sort of demon he had trapped in it. If she had known, she would have prepared *Perdo Vim* magics and destroyed the creature.

The creator's Hermetic descendants — the Confraternity of Irene — still exist in the Tribunal of Thebes, where they have given up most of the anti-infernal lore and focused instead on crafting beautiful art of unparalleled quality (see *Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*, page 122 for details on this confraternity). Bringing up John Philosymeon's creations and history with the Irenians could invite bitter retribution.

Hermetic symbols of Rego, Perdo, and Vim.

The reliquary was damaged when Father Herbert dropped it and broke off the gem that suppressed the trapped demon's corrupting aura. This alone would not have mattered had not the reliquary been moved from the high-Dominion aura where it was originally hidden, to the low-Dominion aura in the village. This has allowed the seeping Infernal aura to build up beneath the Dominion, and eventually overwhelm it.

If the gem is replaced in the reliquary, the demon's power is suppressed once more, and the aura begins to dissipate. Rego Terram craft magic can fix the problem easily, although the characters might be nervous about leaving such an item in the village. If someone skilled in metalwork examines the gem and the place it came from, they realize that, although it really has been broken, it was originally designed to be removed and replaced at will. It hadn't been removed for decades, however, which may be why another part of the setting broke. It would take a mundane craftsman a few days to repair the damage; doing it with Hermetic magic requires a Perception + Finesse roll against an Ease Factor of 12, higher if the characters want the repair to be elegant, 18 if they want it to look like it was never broken. It is trivial to fix the gem so that it cannot be removed as part of the normal process of repair.

Conclusion

A few elements of this story can have larger consequences for your saga.

WHAT TO DO WITH THE RELIQUARY?

The characters may have removed the reliquary from the village, investigated it, and discovered its purpose as a prison. However, they have no more idea as to the nature of the demon within than Irene did, and messing with an item made by an infernalist magus could be very dangerous. Although, in fact, the characters probably can destroy the demon, they do not necessarily know that. If they do, however, this problem can be resolved fairly easily.

Even if they have not had a chance to investigate it, they are aware of its link to Hermetic magic and the Infernal, and may be reluctant to leave it on the altar in a village church. They might also be, wisely, reluctant to keep it in the cov-

enant. Thus, even once the immediate problem is solved, the reliquary can still cause the characters significant trouble.

DEALING WITH THE INFERNALISTS

If the infernalists plaguing the village haven't been dealt with, they may come back to haunt the covenant. Michael is after the power of the imprisoned demon, and may follow the reliquary to the covenant. He could become a recurring villain, and cause continuing problems at the covenant.

Alternatively, Michael may remain at the village to torment the villagers. He can prevent the decrease of the Infernal aura through further corrupting acts, such as ritual murders or other heinous sins. This would keep the high Infernal aura intact, perpetuating the village's problems. Michael has the dark knowledge to keep the powers of Hell satiated, and may even attract other diabolical powers to the village if he is not stopped.

Rewards

The following benefits might result from this scenario.

The Reliquary

The reliquary is a powerful invested device, and the characters may end up with control of it. Despite the trouble it may cause, creative characters could parley it into political advantage of some sort.

Good Relations with the Village

The villagers, particularly Father Herbert, will be grateful for assistance in resolving their many problems. If the characters have found the kidnapped villager and returned his body for a Christian burial, the characters also receive gratitude from Baldwin and his family. Although the good will of a village of peasants may not rate highly, a village that is sympathetic to the covenant may be a good source of future food supplies.

Chapter Ten

What Lies Beneath

This is a story of weakness and corruption, and of what can happen when that corruption feeds off man's need to acquire land. It provides an opportunity for the players to interact with a little history, both in the form of working to reclaim marshland, a process called "inning", and by coming into contact with William the Conqueror's legacy.

The nature of the story allows a broad mix of characters to take part. Magic may uncover the role of the Infernal, but diplomacy and intrigue may win the day.

from his own patron demon, which is content to let his corruption spread more slowly.

The covenant becomes involved when word reaches it that a lucrative vis source out in the marsh is due to be destroyed by the abbey's drainage efforts. Their aim is to find out why the work has suddenly changed course, discover the Infernal threats both out in the marsh and in the abbey, and carefully tread the line of the Hermetic Code when attempting to deal with it.

Précis

The monastery at Battle, near the site where William seized the English Crown, has been draining marshland for generations in order to expand its estates. But the newly arrived Tobias Mahl, a respected engineer from Flanders, has changed the course of these drainage efforts and the work is now heading towards a vis source claimed and harvested by the covenant.

Tobias' secret reason for redirecting the work is an ancient pagan site out beneath the marsh, heavy with votive offerings and murdered prisoners; victims who died without the beneficence of Christ. And their pain and anguish rages on, turned to Infernal malice by centuries of impotent hatred.

Tobias Mahl is in league with demons who have promised him wealth, renown, and all other earthly rewards he can name in return for spreading their corrupting influence. Once the reclamation work reaches the Infernal burial ground, he will build his dark chapel. He will use it to spread disease from the marsh, and establish his chapel as the source of the cure. His own glory and wealth will grow as the fearful exchange faith for safety.

But Tobias is not alone. It was Brother Daniel, slight and unnoticed, who poisoned Prior Michael, former master of the works, and suggested the abbey employ Tobias. Daniel suffers under his own corruption and has heard promises

Introducing the Story

You have a number of options for making the story more immediate for your troupe, but the easiest is for the covenant to have a vis source in the marsh (see Nelda's La-

Marsh Inning

The process of draining marsh land, reclaiming it for use as agricultural land, is called "inning." Teams of men build dykes — great walls of earth and clay piled over a wooden core — connecting with other dykes to form enclosures. Water is then drained from this enclosed land by a network of channels or sewers, and sluices. The wetlands are inned a strip at a time. The reclaimed land is rich and fertile, vital for supporting a booming population. The fields in this reclaimed land are surrounded by ditches, known as "wet walls," and these are spanned by small simple bridges.

The common laws surrounding marsh inning were already well-defined by the thirteenth century, codified in the *Lex Marisci* (Laws of the Marsh). In south-east England, administration of these laws was given to the Jurats of the Level of Romney Marsh (described as "four and twenty lawful men of Romney Marsh").

Locating the Scenario

This story is set in the Stonehenge Tribunal and assumes the troupe's covenant is located near to both Romney Marsh and Battle Abbey in the southeast. These add local color and historical flavor, but the names and locations can be changed to suit.

The main events of this story are driven by the marsh inning, a complex project employing scores of men. Projects of similar scale, such as irrigation works or forest clearance, could be substituted where it better suits your saga.

The threatened vis source (see Nelda's Lament, below) is tied to the marsh, but Nelda's story can be adapted in order to move the source somewhere more convenient for your saga.

As for the overt threat, the Infernal spirits buried out beneath the marsh can originate from any historical conflict or may be entirely different if you choose.

ment, below). You could run a separate story to establish a source if the covenant doesn't have one. Alternatively, the covenant could find its own populace pressed into service on the marsh under some obscure feudal obligation.

The nature of this story also allows for events to be played out over time, perhaps picking up other stories between the events described here.

Dramatis Personae

The following characters are instrumental to the story.

Brother Daniel, Clerk of Battle Abbey

Brother Daniel is a quiet man with a nervous disposition. He is self-critical, brooding, and resentful of others. It was this resentment that the demon Gabrimael, Servant of the Weak, seized upon, offering Daniel the chance to be heard. And the demon seemed as good as his word, as Daniel has been given more responsibility and his station has risen.

Daniel is wracked with regret about poisoning Michael, but believes it to have been necessary. His demonic patron reassures him that it was courage, not cowardice, that gave him the strength to kill.

Despite his years of servitude to the demon, Daniel does not see himself as truly sinful, but rather as taking what should rightfully have been his from the start. Even when Daniel poisoned Michael he sat with him while he died, taking his last confession so that his soul at least would be received by God.

Daniel has taken to using a rosary, something novel in 1220. Some of the other monks may be suspicious of this device and Daniel's overt piety.

Characteristics: Int +1, Per 0, Pre -1, Com +2, Str 0, Sta +1, Dex 0, Qik 0

Size: 0

Age: 30 (30)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 0 (0)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Educated, Clerk, Student of Infernal, Sense Holiness and Unholiness, Dark Secret (Infernally corrupted), Judged Unfairly, Monastic Vows, Weak Characteristics

Personality Traits: Nervous +1, Resentful +2, Self-Critical +2, Curious about the Infernal +1

Reputations: Easily Corrupted (Infernal) 1

Combat:

Dodge: Init +0, Attack N/A, Defense +1, Damage N/A

Fist: Init +0, Attack +1, Defense +1, Damage 0

Soak: +1

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Romney Marsh Lore 3 (geography), Artes Liberales 4 (arithmetic), Awareness 2 (noticing people talking about him), Brawl 1 (bludgeon), Church Lore 3 (abbeys), Civil and Canon Law 3 (Lex Marisci), Concentration 1 (rituals), English 5 (Sussex dialect), Etiquette 2 (the church), Folk Ken 3 (clergy), Guile 3 (elaborate lies), Infernal Lore 2+2 (demons), Latin 4 (church ceremonies), Medicine 2 (apothecary), Norman French 2 (expansive vocabulary), Philosophiae 2 (natural philosophy), Profession: Clerk 3 (finances), Profession: Scribe 3 (copying), Sense Holiness and Unholiness 2 (auras), Theology 4 (heresy)

Equipment: Rosary beads and crucifix, and a black Benedictine habit.

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: Daniel is taller than his cowed posture suggests, with an apologetic face beneath his dark tonsure. He has recently taken to wearing a short beard, much to his abbot's irritation, but Daniel feels secure behind it, believing that it hides his shame.

Tobias Mahl, New Master of the Works

Born in Bruges, Tobias learned his letters and was ordained at the cathedral school at Noyon. But he was intent on the worldly life of money and soon returned to Bruges to work the marshes and learn his trade as an engineer.

It was then that the demon Mammon sent one of his many minions to take human form and make himself a rival to Tobias. The rival belittled and humiliated Tobias at every turn. But soon, despairing at ever beating his mortal enemy, Tobias was happy to be ruled by his pride and he accepted Mammon's dark guidance. Of course, with the pact made and his rival bested, Tobias' name once more began to spread and his coffers swelled.

Tobias has been in the grip of the Infernal for the last seven years. In that time, Tobias has studied the Goetic Arts, becoming a summoner of Infernal spirits.

Tobias Mahl is calculatingly affable and confident, and makes for easy company. He is practical and pragmatic and exudes reliability. But he uses corrupt blessings (mixing urine with the communion wine or holy water) and his personal influence to slowly corrupt the laborers working in the marsh. Over time, they develop an Arrogant +1 personality trait.

Characteristics: Int +1, Per 0, Pre +2, Com +1, Str 0, Sta +1, Dex +1, Qik 0

Size: 0

Age: 34 (34)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 2 (15)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Priest; Summoner, Summoning, Commanding, Educated, Student of Infernal, Strong-Willed, Dark Secret (diabolist), Corrupted Abilities (Engineer), Avaricious, Vow (Celibacy)

Personality Traits: Affable +2, Confident +1, Avaricious +2

Reputations: Fine Engineer +3 (Flanders), Fine Engineer +1 (Northern Europe), Avaricious +2 (Infernal)

Hierarchy: 2

Combat:

Dodge: Init +0, Attack N/A, Defense +0, Damage N/A

Fist: Init +0, Attack +1, Defense +0, Damage -1

Knife: Init +0, Attack +2, Defense +0, Damage +2

Soak: +1

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Area Lore: Romney Marsh 1 (geography), Area Lore: Flanders 3 (Bruges), Artes Liberales 1 (arithmetic), Charm

2 (first impressions), Church Lore 2 (engineering works), Civil and Canon Law 1 (Lex Marisci), Concentration 3 (summoning), Engineer 4 (marsh innng), Etiquette 2 (the church), Flemish 5 (Bruges), Folk Ken 3 (clergy), French 3 (laborers), Infernal Lore 4 (demons), Intrigue 3 (plotting), Latin 4 (academic usage), Leadership 2 (inspiration), Penetration 2 (summoning), Philosophiae 1 (metaphysics), Teaching 2 (Summoning), Theology 3 (heresy)

Goetic Arts: Commanding 9, Summoning 10

Equipment: Fine clothes and various note books on past engineering works.

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: A good-looking man who carries himself with confidence. He has fair hair that he does not tonsure. Since arriving at Battle, he has taken to wearing robes of black velvet; clearly expensive but respectfully close to the garb of his Benedictine hosts.



The Corrupting Demons

The demonic patrons served by Daniel and Tobias do not appear in this story. They forsake their servants when Mammon's plan seems doomed to failure. They may, however, reappear in later stories, seeking revenge or furthering some other plot.

Should Tobias need information, he has the ability to summon one of Mammon's servants and command it to tell him what he needs to know. Assume that, given time, the demons will be able to answer any question that could be known by a man with Intelligence +2 and the appropriate knowledge Ability at 5.

Willem, Foreman of the Works

Willem has been foreman of the the inning project in the marsh since his father died. As well as the job, he has inherited his father's loud and direct manner, and sees nothing wrong with bolstering his instructions with language unsuitable for noble ears. He has an infamously short temper and doesn't suffer shirkers lightly. He is loyal to the abbey and deferential to the monks to the exclusion of all else, except perhaps the well being of his men.

Knowing no better, Willem believes Tobias' unusual blessings to be some kind of continental fad, distasteful perhaps but no worse than any other medicine. All he knows is that the illness that afflicted his men has stopped, and that's enough reason for him to carry on.

Willem would make a good ally. If he can be persuaded that Tobias' rituals are are harming his men, he will stand by his men over Tobias Mahl.

Use Willem's combat statistics for the other laborers if you need them.

Characteristics: Int +1, Per 0, Pre +1, Com -1, Str +1, Sta +3, Dex 0, Qik -1

Size: 0

Age: 33 (33)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 0 (0)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Laborer; Ways of the Marsh; Wrathful, Infamous, Arthritis

Personality Traits: Blunt +2, Loyal to his men +2, Obedient to the Abbey +1

Reputations: Ill-tempered 4

Combat:

Dodge: Init -1, Attack N/A, Defense +3, Damage N/A

Fist: Init -1, Attack +4, Defense +6, Damage +1

Hatchet: Init -1, Attack +6, Defense +2, Damage +5

Soak: +3

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Romney Marsh Lore 4 (geography), Awareness 4 (searching), Brawl 4 (Bludgeon), Carouse 3 (avoiding hangovers), Concentration 1 (keeping his mind on the job), English 5 (giving instructions), Folk Ken 4 (clergy), Hunt 3 (fishing), Laborer 4 (inning), Leadership 5 (laborers), Sailing 3 (on the marsh), Single Weapon (hatchet) 2, Survival 2 (on the marsh), Teaching 2 (Laborer)

Equipment: Sheepskin jacket, heavy boots, strong gloves, shovel, leather cap.

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: Willem looks every inch the sour mood he carries around with him. He is burly and tanned and has the thick neck and shoulders of a man who spends all day every day moving things. Heavy things.

Richard, Abbot of Battle Abbey

By 1220, Richard has been abbot for five years, an experience that has brought with it a long-standing enmity with successive Bishops of Chichester (Richard Poore from 1215, Ranulf of Wareham from 1218, and Ralph Neville from 1222) over Battle's independence from the Chichester diocese.

He is a steely man in his mid-forties, even tempered and measured, open to arguments, but expecting his word to be followed.

There are a few ways to reach Richard and bring him on the characters' side. On a professional level, his concern is for the abbey, specifically its independence and its wealth. He also takes a direct interest in the progress of the new hall currently being built at the abbey. On a more personal level, he enjoys music and poetry, though he has not played for many years and his workload leaves little time for entertainment. Those who visit his office may notice a dusty flute of some age sitting on the mantle above the fireplace.

Richard will not easily believe accusations against members of his abbey.

Characteristics: Int +2, Per +1, Pre +2, Com +1, Str -1, Sta 0, Dex 0, Qik 0

Size: 0

Age: 45 (45)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 0 (0)

Confidence Score: 1 (10)

Virtues and Flaws: Senior Clergy; Clear Thinker, Temporal Influence; Monastic Vows; Higher Purpose (retaining Battle's independence), Ability Block (Martial)

Personality Traits: Industrious 1, Loyal to Battle Abbey 2, Measured 2

Reputations: Abbot of Battle Abbey (Sussex) 4, Troublesome (Ecclesiastic circles) 2

Combat:

Dodge: Init +0, Attack N/A, Defense 0, Damage N/A

Fist: Init +0, Attack +0, Defense 0, Damage -1

Soak: +0

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Area Lore: Battle Estates 3 (politics), Artes Liberales 3 (rhetoric), Bargain 5 (hard sell), Battle Abbey Lore 3 (the dispute with Chichester), Church Lore 3 (holy orders), Civil and Canon Law 3 (Lex Marisci), Dutch 3 (written), English 5 (Sussex), Etiquette 2 (receiving visitors), Flemish 3 (written), Folk Ken 4 (supplicants), Intrigue 4 (alliances), Latin 4 (church ceremonies), Leadership 5 (impressing his authority), Music 1 (flute), Norman French 4 (poetry), Philosophiae 2 (moral philosophy), Theology 4 (biblical knowledge)

Equipment: Benedictine robes, gold crucifix, ring of office.

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: Stern and unapologetic, Richard is a tall man with thinning gray hair long past any form of tonsure. Richard has deep searching eyes and a strong brow that gives him an intelligent aspect.

Marsh Crows, Spirits of Illness

These spirits of illness have a power, Diseased Possession (described in the nearby insert box), that inflicts an illness on their victim. They are able to suspend the symptoms of the disease if the host curses God or Christ for his bad luck. In this way, the host is taught to take the Lord's name in vain, and the tiny demon achieves a small victory over God.

Marsh Crows are cowardly, and obey if commanded by a more-powerful demon or its agent. They have an incredible knowledge of Medicine and are, if controlled, superb teachers of the subject. Becoming the student of a Marsh Crow, however, corrupts the student's Medicine Ability (*Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 87).

New Power: Diseased Possession

Diseased Possession, 4 points, Init +2, Mentem: If this power penetrates, the Might points spent from the demon's Might Pool enter the possessed target. The victim receives a Disease Avoidance roll, which, if successful, immediately expels the demon. The symptoms of the demon's disease manifest immediately, but otherwise it progresses and is treated like a natural disease. These demons of disease must use all of their Might when possessing a target, as the demon must retain at least 1 point of Might in reserve to maintain possession of the victim. The demon cannot refresh the Might points used to possess the victim from its usual Might pool. If the demon is exorcized or destroyed with magic, the symptoms of the disease cease immediately, although any damage caused by the disease remains. The demon is expelled if the victim is cured of the disease by medical or magical means. See *Art & Academe*, page 45 for more details.

Characteristics: Int -1, Per +1, Pre -3, Com 0, Str -3, Sta +1, Dex +3, Qik +3

Order: Tempters

Infernal Might: 5

Size: -5

Virtues and Flaws: Lightning Reflexes (Initiative on Surprise Attack: +9), Puissant Teaching; Cruel, Weak-Willed

Personality Traits: Brave -2, Selfish +5, Spiteful +3

Reputations: Cowardly (Infernal) 1

Hierarchy: 1

Combat:

Dodge: Init +3, Attack N/A, Defense +7, Damage N/A

Bite: Init +3, Attack +6, Defense +6, Damage -3

Soak: +1

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: Dead (1+)

Abilities: Brawl 3 (dodge), English 5, Guile 4 (elaborate lies), Latin 4 (medical terms), Medicine 5 (disease), Stealth 3 (hide), Teaching 5 +2 (Medicine)

Powers:

Diseased Possession, 4 points, Init +2, Mentem (-15 base penetration): See insert.

Weakness: They cannot stand the taste of Sea Wormwood (a plant found on the marsh).

Vis: The left claw of a Marsh Crow provides 1 pawn of Corpus vis.

Appearance: Ragged crows with leering human eyes, they are never seen individually. They prefer to remain at a distance when in physical form, and are often seen as dark shapes flitting in the distance. Their presence on the marsh is unusual, as they usually remain close to Infernal auras. On an Intelligence + Area (Romney Marsh) Lore + Simple Die against an Ease Factor of 9, characters will find the presence of the crows strange as they are not natural marsh birds.

The Vengeful Dead

These spirits are not true demons, but are instead ghosts that have long since embraced the Infernal out of a desire for vengeance on the world that left them behind. They have been summoned and bound by Tobias, and have taken control of their own corpses.

Characteristics: Int 0, Per 0, Pre -2, Com -1, Str +1, Sta +1, Dex +2, Qik +3

Infernal Might: 10

Size: 0

Age: N/A

Decrepitude: N/A

Warping Score: N/A

Confidence Score: 0 (0)

Virtues and Flaws: Tough, Puissant Single Weapon, Piercing Gaze

Personality Traits: Feral +1, Violent +2, Bitter +3

Reputations: None

Hierarchy: 0

Combat:

Dodge: Init +3, Attack N/A, Defense +6, Damage N/A

Claws: Init +3, Attack +6, Defense +7, Damage +1

Spear, Short: Init +5, Attack +11, Defense +10, Damage +6

Sword, Long: Init +5, Attack +14, Defense +12, Damage +7

Soak: +4

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Athletics (running) 3, Brawl (claws) 3, Romney Marsh Lore (geography) 2, Single Weapon (long sword) 5

Powers:

The Forgiving Earth, 2 points, Init +0, Terram: This power allows the body hosting the vengeful dead to move beneath the ground unhindered by the earth. The power ends when the host body surfaces.

A Watery Grave, 1 point, Init +3, Terram: This power rapidly moves the earth aside from under the feet of a target.

The space fills with water and the target drops into the marsh. The vengeful dead use this power when they are under their target, after traveling beneath the surface. When the target falls into the marsh, the vengeful dead grapples him, attempting to drown him.

Vis: 2 pawn of Corpus, in its eyes.

Appearance: These cadaverous foes have bright white eyes that shine out from their stretched skin, naturally tanned by centuries submerged in the marsh. They wield their broken and bent swords with proficiency that belies their condition. Their movements are both fluid and ragged, as though some invisible controlling spirit controls their limbs, leaving their bodies to follow.

Expected Sequence of Play

There is no definitive course through this story. Instead, there are three main "acts:" Introductions, Investigations, and Confrontations. Each of the sections below suggest a number of potential "scenes" representing actions the players may want to pursue.

For atmosphere, aim to run the marsh-related scenes in the autumn or winter seasons. This will allow you to play upon the short, dark days, the cold, and the near-constant rain and drizzle. The marsh should be a cold and miserable place, all the better to hide the effects of the Infernal.

Introductions

The aim of this section is to draw the covenant into Tobias' plans for the marsh.

THE MARSH CROWS GATHER

As members of the covenant approach Nelda's Lament to collect vis, they disturb a number of birds — marsh crows — which fly off and rapidly disappear into the marsh. They then find the body of Oswald, a local drunkard killed by the crows and their infernal powers.

Oswald's spirit (Brave -, Drunk +2) can still be reached, but he only remembers being called to from the marsh and then feeling ill. He does not know how long he wandered. The marsh crows report this incident to Tobias.

Story Event Timing

If the covenant chooses to do nothing about the innig, the vis source eventually succumbs to the abbey as the marsh is reclaimed, and Tobias moves relentlessly on to the burial ground. The list below shows when the events leading up to the story took place, and suggests timing for when future events will take place.

TIME	EVENT
Three months ago	Daniel poisoned Prior Michael, former master of the work.
One month ago	Tobias Mahl arrived in Battle to become the new master of the innig works.
Now	The story begins.
Next season	The innig reaches the vis source in the marsh.
In three seasons	The innig reaches the burial site in the marsh.
In five seasons	Tobias breaks ground on his Infernal chapel.
In eight seasons	Tobias completes his chapel.
In nine seasons	Illness spreads throughout the marsh and beyond.

A LETTER FROM THE ABBEY

Shortly after Oswald's body is found, the covenant receives a letter from the abbey, signed by Tobias Mahl, explaining that "the scholars" will no longer be permitted to collect their "herbs and other such roots" from land "held by this abbey under the Lex Marisci." The letter is direct and leaves little room for negotiation; the abbey is exercising its rights effective immediately.

Investigations

This part of the story aims to reveal the Infernal leanings of both Tobias Mahl and Brother Daniel, and uncover the threat out in the marsh.

Discovering the burial ground and its Infernal nature comes down to detective work: asking why Tobias changed the innig's direction, accessing the new plans, and then searching the right areas. Finding the burial ground should then lead to suspicions that Tobias is in league with dark forces.

Discovering Daniel's corruption is much harder, and the covenant may not find it out even after this story is done. In that case, treat it as a hook into further stories.

RUMORS

Before they commit to any action, the covenant members may first want to unearth any rumors about the abbey, the new arrival, the marsh work, and the death of Prior Michael.

Depending on where the rumors are sought, Communication + Carouse or Intrigue are appropriate.

RESULT	INFORMATION
6+	The innig work had to be suspended for a week last month through illness.
6+	Prior Michael died a season ago.
9+	The new master of the works is from Flanders and he speaks no English.
12+	The new master of the works is called Tobias Mahl and he's a priest.
15+	The foreman of the works isn't happy that they've changed the plans.
15+	Prior Michael died within two nights of being taken ill.
18+	Brother Daniel took Prior Michael's last confession before he died.

Nelda's Lament

Magic: Level 3

The story goes that Nelda was the daughter of a powerful and rich chieftain. She fled his house and his riches in order to marry a lowly shepherd. They were happy until the chieftain's men found them and chased the shepherd out into the marsh. Nelda followed swiftly but lost, alone, and despairing she slipped into a stream and was drowned, never knowing if her beloved husband had lived or died.

Now, when autumn turns to winter, the place where she died seems to remember her. It starts with echoes of her voice, calling out again and again for Eadgar, her husband. The echoes can be followed to the place where Nelda drowned, and there she appears, bent double on her knees, grasping at the earth, wailing and crying with a despair like no other.

Those without Magic Resistance or supernatural abilities experience a temporary +1 Despair Personality Trait. Those affected by the trait who break down and cry with Nelda's spirit find that their tears contain Mentem vis.

Six pawns of Mentem vis can be collected on the night that Nelda returns.

Marsh Sickness

Serious Sanguine Disease, Severity 11

Stable: 9, Improve: 12, Interval: Month

Marsh Sickness (malaria) is caused by the body reacting to the unhealthy waters of the marsh.

Symptoms: Bouts of high fever, chills, and sweating accompanied by nausea, abdominal cramps, fatigue, and muscle pain.

Marsh sickness has been described above in accordance with the disease rules in *Art & Academe*. If you do not have those on hand, use the disease rules in the core rulebook (*ArM5*, page 180) and treat this disease as a Medium Wound.

To avoid contracting the disease, the character must make a Disease Avoidance roll.

DISEASE AVOIDANCE:

**Stamina + Living Conditions Modifier + (Corpus/5)
+ Wound Penalty + stress die**

EASE FACTOR: Stable Ease Factor of the disease

If the character fails the roll, he starts to suffer the effects. If the Disease Avoidance roll botches, then the disease is contracted at one step (for each 0 on the botch dice) more serious than usual.

It is assumed that any character who has some basic knowledge of the area will know about the abbey and its connection with the marsh. Those with a little Civil and Canon Lore may also know of the Lex Marisci (on a result of 6 or more) and may know (on a result of 9 or more) that the abbey has a strong property claim to much of the marsh.

SEARCHING THE MARSH

On searching the marsh, the covenant's agents will find the burial ground if they have access to Tobias' paperwork, or if they use Intellego Vim magic (to detect the Infernal aura) and make a successful Intelligence + Romney Marsh Lore roll against an Ease Factor of 12. The covenant's group can attempt a roll every two weeks of searching.

The Marsh

The Romney Marsh is a large open expanse of waterlogged flatlands, run through with waterways and boggy reed beds. Play upon the cold and the wet and the way the wind carries people's voices away. The marsh should be an uncomfortable place, and should be as palpable a character as Brother Daniel or Tobias Mahl.

Any characters with Ways of the Marsh (*ArM5*, page 50) gain the usual +3 bonus on many rolls throughout this story.

TRAVELING AND WORKING IN THE WETLANDS

Each day, those traveling the marsh by foot automatically lose a long-term Fatigue level and must also make a Stamina + Athletics + simple die against an Ease Factor of 9 or lose a second. Beasts of burden used in the marsh also suffer the fatigue.

The few roads that cross the marsh run along the tops of natural ridges. Most travel in the marsh itself is by waterway in small flat-bottomed boats, and many local peasants scratch a meagre living as ferrymen, taking what few passengers there are up and down the waterways.

As it is so difficult to get carts, wagons, or even draft animals onto the marsh, hand carts are used in their place where goods need to be moved overland.

Combatants fighting in the marsh suffer two extra botch dice and a -3 penalty to attack and defense rolls. This is in addition to any penalties due to Infernal auras or effects. Botches likely involve stumbling or slipping on the wet and uneven ground.

Those working in the marsh for season or more receive a -2 living conditions penalty for that year.

VISITING THE ABBEY

The monks are cordial, if a little unprepared for unannounced visitors. For notes on how those with The Gift are received, refer to *ArM5*, page 76. If the nature of the covenant is known to the abbey, assume that Daniel and Tobias are also aware of it.

Visitors concerned with the marsh are led to the common room and asked to wait. After a while Daniel will bustle in, dropping wax tablets in his wake. The other monks look on with derision as Daniel stoops to clear up after himself.

Daniel will appear shocked by any talk of dangers (though a successful Communication + Folk Ken + simple roll against an Ease Factor of 12 suggests he's not being truthful). He comes across as ineffectual, but promises to

record the covenant's concerns and to pass them on. And he does; to Tobias Mahl.

Talk of Prior Michael will elicit a nervous accident from Daniel — perhaps a spilled drink, or a dropped tablet. He will try to use this to change the subject. A successful Perception + Folk Ken roll against an Ease Factor of 9 suggests he's hiding something. If pushed, he simply apologizes and claims that he is needed elsewhere.

The covenant members will find it hard to gain access to the abbot. If they visit again on the same business, they are met by Tobias, who takes them to his office. He bluffs that he is currently drawing up alternate plans (he has prepared drawings to prove it) and regrets that things have taken so long.

Requesting an audience in connection with the building work will be successful, as the abbot is taking a personal interest in its progress.

The Abbey of St. Martin at the Place of Battle

Dominion (Just): Level 5 (6 on Martinmas, November 11)

Battle Abbey was founded on the spot where Harold Godwinson died in battle against William. There has been a population of around 50 brothers ever since the original Benedictine monks arrived from Marmoutier in Normandy. The abbey is now a wealthy power in the region as it owns great swathes of the land all about, much of it, like Romney Marsh, many miles distant from the abbey itself.

In 1220, the current abbot is Richard. He will hold the position until his death in 1235 (when Ralph de Covintre is elected).

The abbey is currently building a new hall, and so the air is thick with ropes and pulleys and the sound, smell, and dust of stone being worked. Work will not be complete for some years, so the sights and sounds of building will dominate most visits to the abbey.

Brother Daniel serves as clerk to this building project, as well as to the work in the marsh.

THE COMMON ROOM

Visitors to the abbey are invited to wait in the common room, a long chamber with cloisters at either side and two rows of pillars running its length supporting a vaulted ceiling. Many of the monks will be found here reading, talking, or simply contemplating.

THE DORMITORY

Most of the brothers at the abbey, including Daniel, sleep in the dormitory. Beds line the walls, all the same except one. Beneath Daniel's bed there is a loose board concealing two infernal texts — the *De Operatione Daemonum* and *Liber Apologeticus* — and a bottle of poison. It takes a Perception + Awareness Simple Roll against an Ease Factor of 6 to find the board.

Infernal Texts

The following infernal texts are hidden beneath Daniel's bed.

DE OPERATIONE DAEMONUM

Tractatus on Infernal Lore with a Source Quality of 7.

This tractatus by the Byzantine Michael Psellus purports to be a classification of demons, but Psellus' hand was guided by the very demons he writes of, so few of the details may be relied upon with any certainty.

This copy is a somewhat small book, clearly very old, and apparently written by many different hands (a strange affliction that affects any copy made of this book).

LIBER APOLOGETICUS

Tractatus on Infernal Lore with a Source Quality of 8.

On casual inspection, this tractatus by the Manichaeon preacher Priscillian of Ávila appears to be a book on Christian Theology. The orthodox content has been corrupted, however, and the many allusions to magic and misleading theological ideas it actually contains may be studied towards understanding of the Infernal.

Some pages appear to have been cut from the book. None of the Infernal content is missing, so this does not impair study, but it does plant the seed of curiosity in the mind of the reader. Treat a season studying the Apologeticus as a season of personal influence (*Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 23) with a total of 8 + the characters worst "negative" personality trait. For Daniel, this is his "Resentful +2" for a total of 10. This provides a further "Curious about the Infernal" personality trait.

PROBLEMS FOR THE ABBEY

The abbey is famous not only for its great wealth, but also for its long-running dispute with the Bishop of Chichester. When William ordered the founding of the abbey, he decreed that it would be exempt from ecclesiastic control. It has remained so ever since, despite the efforts of the diocese of Chichester to bring it under its authority.

Successive Bishops have tried to overturn William's ruling, and have proven dedicated enemies. Recently (1211), the abbey (under John de Dubra) was able to buy privilege from King John for the sum of 1500 marks, confirming the monks' right to appoint their own abbots, a move that further angered the then Bishop of Chichester, Simon Fitz Robert.

In 1222, Ralph Neville is appointed Bishop of Chich-

ester, and the next year he appeals to Rome for help in bringing the abbey into line. It is not until 1235 that Rome grants certain rights to the Bishop of Chichester, but rights that may only be exercised with the agreement of the abbot; an apparent victory for the abbey.

This story is assumed to take place between Ralph Neville's political play to Rome and the death of Abbot Richard. During that time, the abbey, and Richard in particular, is sensitive to anything that might affect its case with Rome.

Tobias Mahl knows this, and if he senses that Richard is being swayed by the covenant, he will set his intrigue to work and attempt to persuade Richard that the abbey cannot be seen to be commanded from without (especially if the true nature of the covenant is known).

VISITING THE INNING WORK

Willem is in charge when the player characters arrive at the marsh, and Tobias is not present, though he will arrive with unnatural haste. There are plans and rough maps here that show both the old course of the inning and the new. The new course involves more work (though Willem will not admit it for fear of being thought a shirker).

If the covenant puts any of its men into the workforce, they are worked hard by Willem but, if Tobias believes them to be working for the covenant, they may quickly succumb to illness. Tobias instructs the spirits of illness to lay them low (see *Diseased Possession*, earlier) while Daniel lays Maledictions upon them to make their condition worse.

The Burial Ground

Infernal: Level 3

Waterways and wetlands had special significance for the ancient pagan tribes of Britain, as places that connected the world of the living to the worlds beyond; powerful spirits accepted their votive offerings of ritually broken goods in return for blessings.

But there were also times when humans were killed and left in the marsh. In some cases they were special people destined for such a fate, but in others they were criminals or prisoners captured in battle.

With the coming of the word of Christ, the pagan ways disappeared and with their passing, many of the spirits of the waterways left the mundane world, and the Infernal was quick to fill the resulting vacuum.



As this place will eventually hold his chapel, Tobias has made sure that the site is protected. In his earliest visits he summoned the ghosts he found there into their own preserved bodies. He commanded them to watch and wait and kill those who took steps to harm the place.

BEFORE THE INNING STARTS

From the surface, by mundane means, there is nothing to see, but magic can detect the centuries of power distilled in the roots of the reeds and sedges as ten pawns of *Corpus vis*. The preserved bodies of the dead can also be found all around, apparently following the line of an old, now-submerged stream.

Characters succeeding in a Perception + Awareness + simple die against an Ease Factor of 9 discover traces of Tobias' summoning circles in the ground, some marked with salt and dotted with candle wax.

A single group of five vengeful dead have been left here to protect the site.

WHILE THE INNING IS IN PROGRESS

There is a constant workforce of around twenty men at the inning works. They spend their days digging ditches, fetching planks for the retaining walls, piling sodden earth to form the dykes, and laying down simple wooden walkways. It's a dangerous place as walls can collapse, axes and saws may slip, and the marsh claims the unwary.

By this time the ground has been drained and work is going on apace to build up the land into a mound that will support the chapel.

If needed, the workmen (split them into untrained groups, one with Willem acting as vanguard) attempt to see off any who come to disrupt their work. But they are not suicidal, and Willem ultimately gives way rather than see his men killed. In this case, they defend valiantly and then try to disengage and flee.

Tobias' bodily ghosts will only rise in the night to defend the burial ground. There should be enough groups to give your troupe a contest; one group for any grogs present and another group for every two magi.

BUILDING WORK

Unless stopped early, the building of his chapel occupies Tobias' time over the next two years. In this time, the marsh inning progresses as before.

A gang of twenty laborers from nearby Winchelsea will be on site on any given day, and there is a steady stream of materials and men going to the chapel site.

The abbot knows of the chapel, and has agreed to its building, though its true nature is, of course, unknown to him.

Confrontations

The covenant members may simply decide to come to some arrangement with the abbey about specific areas of the marsh, and protect both their vis source and the burial ground; they may decide to reveal Tobias Mahl as a corrupting influence; they could attempt to win back Brother Daniel's forfeit soul; or they might decide on more-direct measures.

How the confrontation plays out depends on how long the covenant decides to leave matters.

CONFRONTING TOBIAS

Tobias' pride and confidence are fuelled by the Infernal, and he employs them in any direct confrontation. If the nature of the covenant is known, then Tobias has discovered that their oath prohibits the magi from interfering with mundane affairs. He will gladly point out that the inning work is being done by the abbey, and is firmly outside the influence of the Order.

He does, however, offer an accommodation. If he is made aware of the vis source that the marsh work threatens, he agrees to preserve it and ensure it is kept free of any "unwanted influence." He will also ensure that the covenant enjoys the "beneficence of his chapel," without any obligation being owed in either direction.

If the covenant stands firm, Tobias will lie, saying he needs to "reconsider his position" with the abbey in light of threats to his safety. This is untrue and is simply a ploy in order to buy him time. If he survives this confrontation, he starts working against the covenant from within the abbey, commanding the Marsh Crows to bring sickness to those who come and go from the covenant.

NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE ABBOT

Money may be the simplest way in which the covenant can not only safeguard their vis source in the marsh, but also prevent the Infernal area falling into evil hands. The abbey may be willing to negotiate a price for the land, essentially leasing the land to the covenant.

Richard is a shrewd negotiator and ensures that the land is leased, with all right and titles, for a period of 70 years and no more. Richard is looking to the long game, ensuring that the land returns to the abbey in a few generations.

Richard will start the negotiations on 20 pounds of silver each year for the land (half a Lesser Income Source if using the rules in *Covenants*, page 56). He will accept no less than 10 pounds, but expects to settle somewhere in between. Richard also views the accommodation as a favor to the covenant and will make it clear that they owe him more than just silver.

If the covenant manages to lease the land from the abbey, Tobias remains at Battle, working against the covenant, intent on finding some way to make it forfeit the land.

DISRUPTING THE WORK BY FORCE

If the covenant decides to disrupt the inning, let the players use their ingenuity but remember that there are dark spirits at work. These spirits will probably be impotent against the Parma Magica, so they target any grogs, servants, or hired men instead of magi. The covenant may soon find its population succumbing to disease faster than the magi can cope with it.

Those taking direct action against the inning work are set upon by Marsh Crows who attempt to lay them low with their disease. The vengeful dead rise to protect their land, as well.

This options is the one that most contravenes the Code of Hermes, and experienced magi know enough to skirt the code or to avoid being caught. Despite its current Infernal taint, the inning work is part of the mundane world, and to disrupt it by force would be a direct challenge to the abbey's authority that could have ramifications beyond the marsh.

EXPOSING THE INFERNAL

It is one thing to accuse a cleric of diabolism, but another to prove it. Any forced confessions with magi behind them will seem, in themselves, unnatural. The problem here for the covenant is to find the evidence that will convict Tobias, Daniel, or both.

Willem is a credible witness to Tobias' "blessings," if he can be persuaded of their true intent. Tobias will deny all accusations and will make a show of being affronted. He threatens the abbot with his departure, hoping to force Richard to side with him.

While Tobias' own corruption leaves few physical clues, Daniel will confess and throw himself on Richard's mercy if he is presented with the Infernal texts and the poison.

It is worth noting that Gabrimael has been coerced into helping his fellow demon Mammon, and would enjoy nothing better than seeing Mammon humiliated by failure. Daniel does not know this at the start, but if Gabrimael senses that the covenant is closing in on Tobias, he plants new seeds of resentment towards Tobias.

THE CONSECRATION OF THE CHURCH

If the covenant leaves the inning work to continue, after two years Tobias will be able to build his small chapel on the burial ground, which he then uses to conduct his dark rites and bring malice to the region.

Illness spreads from the marsh to the nearby towns of Rye and Winchelsea. At this point, Tobias' congregation start spreading the word that they have a cure for the illness, if only the afflicted do as they say.

The Infernal Chapel

Infernal (Perfidious aura tainted with Hypocrisy):
Level 4

When complete, the chapel is a small two-story stone building, with a bell tower three stories high. The second level of the chapel, which is kept locked to visitors, is where Tobias practices his Infernal rituals in seclusion.

Once the disease starts spreading to nearby villages, a stream of supplicants comes to the chapel seeking respite from the illness. Tobias, aided by Daniel, is only too happy to give them his blessing.

Those attacking the chapel now find two groups of the vengeful dead to face any grogs, and one additional

group per magus. The odds should feel overwhelming, but also provide opportunities for heroic play.

THE CHAPEL BELL

Tobias commissioned the chapel bell from the bellfounder Hugh of Gloucester, one of the demon Mammon's other devotees. Hugh's craft aligned the bell to the Infernal, with the result that infernal spirits hear the voice of Hell in its chimes and may be drawn to the sound. Characters with Sense Holiness and Unholiness (*ArM5*, page 67) may hear the ringing of the bell as an Unholy sound, discordant and unGodly.

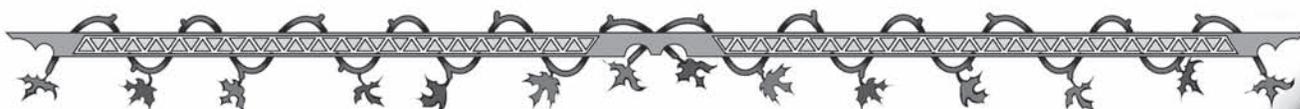
Rewards and Consequences

Apart from suitable Confidence and experience points for each character taking part (5 to 10 experience points should be available depending on how many sessions the story took), the covenant itself may pick up various rewards. If handled well, the abbey itself may become a Local

Ally (*Covenants*, page 21).

If the covenant chooses to use Chichester as leverage against the abbey, they will find the Bishop of Chichester eager to use his new friends again, and will have gained the antipathy of Battle Abbey.

If the chapel is built, it will become a lodestone for the Infernal, and the nearby covenant will have to deal with its evil influence for years to come. But the worst of this will be the great illness that falls on the surrounding countryside, cured only by Tobias' unholy blessing.



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