# UBERSREIK Adventures I

## FISHROOK RETURNS •

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Special thanks: Games Workshop

Published by: Cubicle 7 Entertainment Ltd, Unit 6, Block 3, City North Business Campus, Co. Meath, Ireland

Release: vl.0 October 2020

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## UBERSREIK ADVENTURES THE FISHROOK RETURNS



#### Adventure Summary

An innocent coach is stopped on the road from Bögenhafen. A horse rears, a pistol is cocked, and a voice rings out: 'Stand and deliver, your money or your life!' Unfortunate, but hardly out of the ordinary — such wastrel bandits are known to plague the Empire's highways. This, however, is no ordinary highwayman, but the legendary Fishrook. Known for his flamboyant mask, his dashing robberies, the swooning victims left in his wake and — of course — for being hanged over a century ago. Is there a pretender to the title of Fishrook, or has his grave spat up his handsome ghost? One way or another, one young woman is determined to find out the true reason for Fishrook's Return.

**Ubersreik Adventures: Fishrook Returns** is an adventure that explores what it is to be a legend, and what that legend might do to a less than romantic truth. The adventure takes place in and around Ubersreik, but could be moved to any sizable town where a daydreaming noble might long for a more exciting life. The adventure is suitable for four to six Characters in their 2nd Career, and should take about four to five hours to complete.

#### GETTING STARTED

Before playing this adventure, read it from start to finish at least once. It may also prove useful to read **A Guide to Ubersreik** in the **Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay Starter Set**, which provides additional information about the town where the action takes place. Once you feel comfortable with the material, you're ready to begin.

The Characters are hired by a Ubersreik noble, Gutele Von Bruner, to investigate the true identity and escapades of a bandit claiming to be The Fishrook, a pseudo-historical figure whose exploits were heavily romanticised in a well-known novel. Gutele claims to have been robbed by the Fishrook, and a handful of other travellers confirm this. In fact, Gutele has taken on the persona of The Fishrook, to satisfy her own thirst for adventure — dragging in a group of investigators to add to the myth. Unfortunately for Gutele, her endeavour has taken on a life of its own, with local disaffected youth joining in and causing havoc throughout the region dressed in flamboyant feathered costumes. The Characters must uncover the truth without alienating a prominent Noble family, or become willing accomplices in a series of crimes that would see most perpetrators hanged....

#### THE FISHROOK DALLIANCE

#### CHAPTER 4 - GUNPOWDER AND GARTERS

on through the night, not sparing for a single second any thought as to the welfare of the indomitable Black Betty, but urging her on to even greater effort. And soon, as the light of day broke across the looming peaks of the Grey, now golden, Mountains, Montfort spied the inn at last. Its ivy-covered gatehouse barring the way to the busy courtyard, two coaches by the stables, already being prepared for an early start. And the sprawling rooms of the old inn itself, beginning to wake.

It was situated just off the Bögenhafen Road behind a row of tall beeches. It was not three miles from the village of Hulz, but far enough away that the simple villagers need care not for the comings and goings of strangers, nor for the activity of one Walter Ulric Montfort, otherwise known as 'the Fishrook'. Montfort knew, as he knew anything in this world, that he could find safety at the Griffon and Hammer. Old Abe, the Landlord, would put him up, no questions asked, and not tell a soul. And his daughter Gretchen, would do likewise, were he to trouble himself to ask.

Still, Montfort knew he could find no respite until he was safely within the inn complex. The Baron's men who had been hot on his trail were now utterly confused by his ruse of nailing Black Betty's shoes on backwards. But Montfort knew that would not keep them off the scent for long. He spurred his steed on one more time, diving into the valley and along the Bögenhafen Road. Black Betty responded eagerly, her nostrils flaring. He had gone not two furlongs

#### BACKGROUND

Over one hundred years ago, before Grom the Paunch's horde of Greenskins slaughtered everything in its path, the Vorbergland was one of the most prosperous regions of the Empire. The wide swathe of fertile land between the foothills of the Grey Mountains and the tall bowers of the Reikwald forest was tightly packed with bountiful farms and prosperous towns. Their wealth swiftly grew, making the region one of the richest in the Empire, and the local noble Houses, including the Falkenhayns, Jungfreuds, Saponatheims, and the Drakenburgs, rose to significant prominence.

It was in that era of affluence that a famous highwayman, known only as 'the Fishrook', terrorised the Bögenhafen–Ubersreik road. He wore a mask designed after a local bird, the Fishrook, and, if the legend is to be believed, stole as many hearts as he did jewels. After two adventure-filled years evading the authorities, the Fishrook was eventually cornered at *The Griffon and Hammer* inn where he was captured and hanged.

The Fishrook Dalliance was published 50 years ago. It tells a romanticised account of the Fishrook, his gang, and a number of local ladies. While its popularity has waxed and waned in the intervening decades, the book remains a fixture of most sizable libraries, which is precisely where Gutele found it.

Gutele von Bruner is a young noble of Ubersreik. She has become captivated by the legend of the Fishrook and the dashing anti-hero of *The Fishrook Dalliance*. Restless and a little bored, she made up a story about being waylaid by the highwayman, which was, quite sensibly, disbelieved by most.

However, her imagination has now taken on a life of its own as Gutele has decided to become the Fishrook herself and relive his adventures as a masked marauder. Dressed in a similar disguise, she has already robbed four stagecoaches on the Bögenhafen– Ubersreik road.

All of Ubersreik is talking about the Fishrook, wondering whether the highwayman is a mere man or the ghost of the original Fishrook. Now, old copies of *The Fishrook Dalliance* are being dusted off and re-read. Everyone is trying to guess the dashing highwayman's identity. There are even tales of him disappearing before his victims' eyes, of leaping the width of the river on his horse, and even of him removing his mask to reveal the features of the bird after which he is named!

Not content with reanimating the Fishrook, Gutele has decided this will be even more fun if there is a band of adventurers hot on the Fishrook's heels, trying to track 'him' down and bring 'him' to justice. It just so happens that the Characters are the perfect fit to help Gutele continue her charade.

#### FISHROOKS

The Fishrook is a rook-like corvid common across the Empire. It favours wooded river valleys, especially the quieter tributaries around the Reik basin. It is a skilful fisher, known for biding its time and then diving into the water and skewering its prey. It is all black, like many corvids, save for its long yellow beak and a bright-red crest. It is very distinctive, as is the Fishrook's costume.

#### THE FISHROOK DALLIANCE

The Fishrook Dalliance is a popular novel penned by Robart Ludlheim some 50 years ago, based on the facts of the original Fishrook, but embellished into an action-packed tale of daring crimes and passionate, bodice-ripping romance. It's the inspiration for Gutele's appropriation of the Fishrook persona. It was out of fashion — but the events of the last few weeks mean it is now the hottest property in town. The Characters should be able to find a copy, but if they buy it from a bookshop they are likely to get price-gouged unless they pass a Hard (-10) Charm Test.

#### MEET THE FAMILY

House von Bruner is one of Ubersreik's oldest noble houses. It vies with Houses Jungfreud and Aschaffenberg for preeminence in the city. Members of the family, even minor ones, are afforded the utmost respect everywhere they go in Ubersreik and its environs. Surely no right-thinking citizen would ever dare to even contemplate crossing them.

The twins Gutele and Boniel are under the charge of their grandmother, the formidable Lady Kisaiya von Bruner. She is famously the iron-willed matriarch of the family. What she says goes in Ubersreik, though the official head of the household in the city is her second son Heinrich. Gutele and Boniel are the children of her youngest son Sigislieb.

Gutele makes sure that no hint of her misbehaviour gets back to Lady Kisaiya or Graf Heinrich, and has used their longsuffering servant Moritz to cover for her on several occasions.

I swear, as Verena is my witness, it's the truth! I'd just spent a month with my horrendous cousins in Bögenhafen. They have a rundown townhouse that the locals refer to as a 'mansion'. Darlings, they are so backwards! If it hadn't been for all the hunting, I would have died of boredom. I didn't even have Boniel with me for company! It was the worst! So, obviously, I had to come home.

So, we had just gone through one of those dull villages you find over there. One of the ones on the main road. Halts, or Hols, or some-such-a-place. Terribly agricultural. I'd persuaded this little merchant to give me a ride home — tedious company and bad breath, but more than willing to give "Lady Bruner' the benefit of his meagre conveyance... and, let me tell you, it was meagre. It would have been fine, but rather annoyingly, he had brought his pig-faced, whiny son. I presume in the hope he'd catch my eye. No chance of that! Really, how many stops can one boy need? I prefer a man with some stamina, you know what I mean!

'Anyway, it was evening, and I was just drifting off, lulled by the swaying of the carriage, when suddenly — I swear — there was this silhouette in the moonlight. You will never believe what I saw! A glorious black horse, rearing, its rider swiping his blade through the air as his cloak flew in the wind. It was breathtaking, like one of the Fishrook stories of old!

'Honestly, ladies, I have never been so excited! But I was also scared. What if it actually was a highwayman! Well, I was soon to find out because the horseman galloped straight towards us. In no time, a rather rugged man wearing — and you'll never believe this — a Fishrook Mask! Feathers glistening in the light. Well, he levelled a pistol at our coachman — that stopped our coach in its tracks. I'd clearly chosen the wrong conveyance — the coachman had a spine of an amoeba. The highwayman then called out in this wonderful voice, so gruff and resonant: 'Stand and deliver, your money or your life!'

Of course, the merchant scrambled around in his pockets for all his coins and then quickly stripped off his rings and golden brooch. Tediously, his son immediately burst into tears, his hands shaking as he tugged at his jewellery. Me, well, I wanted to know who he was!

First, I caught his attention by revealing my purse, which, naturally, I keep secreted in my bodice, as I find prudent. I swear, the brute gave me this most dastardly of sneers! But, in for a pfennig, in for a crown! 'Good sir,' I called, 'if you are to demand my precious valuables, then surely I should have the honour of your name!'

'Well, he didn't take that well! His dark, smouldering eyes bored into mine from behind his elaborate mask. I swear, a thrill of terror chased down my spine! Had I gone too far? Well, his response told me everything I needed to know!

'My lady,' he said in unexpectedly refined tones, 1 must apologise. I did not know you were travelling with this horrible man! Of course, let me introduce myself. I am the Fishrook. I take what I want, and I want what I take.'

Well! Could it be? The Fishrook! Like some spectre risen from the grave? He was certainly well schooled on the legend. Before I could make sense of it all, he wheeled in close, removed a black glove from his hand, and reached out for me. I was frozen in terror as his dark, smouldering eyes bored into mine. It was exhilarating. In that moment, we understood each other completely: he was Taal, and I was his innocent Rhya. As that terrible knowledge overtook me, his hand plunged into my bodice. I couldn't even blink. Our eyes were locked. His touch was electrifying. Then, his fist balled, and he ripped my purse free.

I gasped. What else could I do? In a panic, I offered a shaking hand, revealing what you see here, the Aarlajan Diamond, a gift from my uncle. The ring is easily worth more than the sum of everything else the highwayman took that evening. But do you know what he said? You'll never believe it.

'Mademoiselle,' his voice was almost ... breathless as he looked deep into my soul, 'such a beautiful ring should only adorn a beautiful hand.' And then he was gone, disappearing into the night.

Gutele von Bruner Scribed on behalf of Lady Gutele

Scribed on behalf of Lady Gutele von Bruner



#### THE JOB OFFER

Gutele has decided that as the Fishrook's supposed first victim, she should hire some adventurers to bring the villain to justice. This keeps her in the spotlight and demonstrates her innocence. She is confident she can run rings around these adventurers, and this will show just how clever the Fishrook is.

The Characters, with their growing reputation — or, perhaps, their infamy — are perfect for her plans. Their previous activities in Ubersreik mean that their involvement with the Fishrook is guaranteed to garner the attention she craves. On the other hand, if they have just arrived in town then perhaps Gutele has chosen them as something of a blank canvas, free to mould into precisely the element that The Fishrook legend requires. Finally, if the Characters reputation is for failure and incompetence not impossible depending on the group — then Gutele may have hired them just because she is certain they won't be able to keep up with her, or the Fishrook's, antics.

Wherever the Characters are in Ubersreik, Gutele will send Moritz to find them and invite them back to the Bruner Estate.

MORITZ – SERVANT (SILVER 3)											
Μ	ws	BS	S	Т	Ι	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	35	30	25	35	40	35	35	40	40	35	13
-	. 17	7	/T		``	_	-				1.10

Traits: Weapon (Dagger) +5

**Skills:** Athletics 40, Climb 40, Drive 40, Dodge 40, Endurance 45, Gossip 40, Haggle 65, Intuition 45, Perception 50, Stealth (Urban) 40

Talents: Beneath Notice, Doomed (*Beware the offered cup!*), Etiquette (Nobles, Servants), Read/Write

Trappings: Dagger, Von Bruner Livery, Extremely Condescending Tone, 1d10 Silver Shillings

#### Moritz

Moritz is the von Bruner servant who will act for Gutele and approach the Characters on her behalf. He is an older, greyhaired chap who has served the von Bruners for at least 50 years. He has that world-weary look of having seen everything but not liking much of it. It has taken him years to master saying 'Sir' and 'Madame' without any hint of respect whatsoever.

He dislikes Gutele but is too loyal to the family, and too polite, to mention this, though it is possible to get a whiff of his disdain from watching how he interacts with her. Gutele only uses him to run her errands because she knows it grates, and that amuses her.

Moritz might affect the air of someone who finds all this tedious and who finds Gutele's antics juvenile, but he would certainly never make such thoughts explicit.

#### **MEETING GUTELE**

Gutele receives the Characters in one of the opulent receptions of the Bruner Estate in Morgenseite. Moritz shows them in and takes some pleasure in their embarrassment, if the Characters show that they are not at home in such an environment.

Gutele, a young woman in her 20s, is the very picture of a striking noblewoman. She dresses in the finest delicate fashions of Altdorf and Parravon, and wears a large diamond ring on one finger. She reclines upon a chaise longue while telling the Characters her story, sipping something sophisticated from a fine-glass flute, but does not even think to offer the Characters a drink.

Gutele tells the Characters all about her encounter with the supposed Fishrook. The gist of her account can be found at the start of this adventure — in fact, Gutele has had a scribe write it up exactly as presented, purportedly as part of a future memoir. Despite her air of sophisticated nonchalance, Gutele insists on chipping in with additional details as the Characters make their way through her account. She becomes noticeably more excited towards the end, and her contributions may even diverge a little from what is written as Gutele gets caught up in her own imaginings. The Characters might expect her to swoon upon her chair at any moment, though Characters succeeding on an **Average (+20) Intuition** Test will realise that Gutele is exaggerating this response.

It should be obvious to any listeners that Gutele is captivated by the Fishrook, and they might wonder exactly why she is trying to hunt him down. It would be easy to imagine that she wants him caught just so that she can meet him again, rather than bring him to justice. If the Characters have cause to hear Gutele's account of her meeting with the Fishrook on more than one occasion, they notice that she continues to change and embellish it with every re-telling. UBERSREIK ADVENTURES: THE FISHROOK RETURNS



Gutele offers the Characters the job of catching the Fishrook on her behalf, paying a crown a day, with a bonus of ten crowns if they capture him alive. She insists she does not want him dead — just in case. If the Characters accept the job, Gutele expects them to work tirelessly until they capture him, or until she releases them from their obligation. The Characters might be able to negotiate the wages or terms of employment, but Characters of Brass or Silver status are aware that excessive haggling with the nobility can be a hazardous pursuit.

If pressed for the precise location of her meeting with the Fishrook, Gutele says that she isn't sure, but knows it was a short time after they passed through Sigmartempel. Should the Character's wish to interview others present - such as the merchant or the coachman - Gutele will inform them that they have long since returned to Bogenhafen 'or wherever it was they were from.'

GUTELE     VON     BRUNER     SCION     GOLD     I       M     WS     BS     S     T     I     Agi     Dex     Int     WP     Fel     W       5     35     40     35     35     40     30     35     35     40     12											
М	WS	BS	S	Т	Ι	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
5	35	40	35	35	35	40	30	35	35	40	12
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	pping ervar						tmer C	it			
and	Legg	gings	, Pist	col w	ith 1	2 sho	d): L ots, R	apie	r, 1d1	10	

Silver Shillings, Assorted Stolen Jewellery worth 1d10 GC, A Bad Plan and a Fast Horse.



#### ENTER BONIEL

At some point during the discussion with Gutele, Boniel, her twin brother, interrupts. He reminds Gutele about 'the game,' insisting she should come as soon as possible, as she promised.

If the Characters enquire about this, Gutele gives them a look that it is clearly none of their business, and tells them it is only a silly pistol contest, but she has to do something to pass the time. She does not bother to introduce Boniel, unless the Characters insist.

Boniel is quite clearly Gutele's brother. Despite being different sexes, and his shorter hair, they look remarkably alike, and it would be easy to guess that they are twins.

	WS										
5	30	35	30	35	35	35	30	40	30	35	12
Tra	its: R	lange	ed (P	istol)	) +9,	Wea	pon (	Rap	ier) +	7	
	e (He v (Lu						cing)	31,			
	ents: quette										
	<b>ppin</b> ervar							it			

#### THE VICTIMS

The Characters may wish to talk to other victims of the Fishrook. As the rumours of the bandit have taken hold, accounts have been exaggerated and even lied about. From listening to the rumours anyone might think the Fishrook had committed dozens of robberies over the last few weeks. The 'real' Fishrook has only actually performed the four robberies listed below.

As well as the four legitimate accounts below, there is also Willie and Max's testimony, which is included because the supposed victims are easy enough to track down. Some rumours concern victims travelling far away, but they are impractical to pursue. All the other rumours are so vague that they are impossible to investigate. Any attempt leads the Characters to conclude that it was typically a friend of a friend who said the thing.

#### FISHROOK RETURNS: GUTELE VON BRUNER

Gutele makes up the story about being waylaid by the Fishrook. This 'robbery' takes place before any of the others, a few weeks before the Characters become involved. You may decide upon specific dates for these events if you wish, but it is otherwise fine to be somewhat vague. Fishrook goes on to commit approximately one true robbery each week after Gutele's purported 'encounter'.

#### WEEK 1: THE DUCHAMPS

Having made up the story, and having become terribly enamoured with her own creativity, Gutele decided to make the Fishrook's return that bit more genuine. She creates her Fishrook costume, and wears it as she robs a Four Seasons coach on the way from Bögenhafen to Ubersreik. She chooses the location for this to be close to *The Griffon and Hammer*, the traditional heart of the Fishrook tales.

Despite not really knowing what she is doing, and even dropping a pistol at one point, Gutele pulls the robbery off successfully. It is, in fact, the single most exciting moment of her life up to this point.

The victims were Charles and Eugenie Duchamp, and their three children. This is well known and the family can be found staying at the *Travellers' Rest*. They are due to travel back to Bögenhafen in the next few days, but are considering delaying the journey for fear of another attack. They will be very grateful if the case is solved.

Their description of events is largely the same as any other witnesses except they can mention the robber dropped their pistol. They might admit that while that could have been a good opportunity to turn the tables on the Fishrook, they are no soldiers and just wished to survive the incident. Since the initial event, the Duchamps have heard endless rumpus about Fishrook, including that he might be a spectre of some sort! Given that, they are quite certain that making a grab for the pistol would have been a terrible idea, and are quick to point this out if they feel they are being belittled.

## WEEK 2: TOSTIG HALSTROM AND ENTOURAGE

By all accounts, the Fishrook managed to purloin the personal valuables of this wealthy merchant and his entourage near Geissbach, but missed the cache of treasure in his luggage. Any Rogues in the party, and especially any Highwaymen, recognise this to be a foolish and amateur oversight indeed. In fact, in the Fishrook stories at least, the highway was known to be a particularly dab hand at discovering such hidden caches, and would often test his victims 'honesty' by asking them to point out where some box or crate he had already spotted was hidden. Those who told him the truth would be allowed to keep their own possessions. Any Character who has taken the time to read about Fishrook will be familiar with this, as the trope was frightfully overused throughout the story.

#### WEEK 3 (PURPORTEDLY): WILLIE HUMBERT AND MAXIMILIAN KREUTZER

Willie and Max are two young products of the landed gentry who have come to Ubersreik to seek their fortune, attempting to set up some sort of mercantile business. In fact, they were not robbed by Fishrook/Gutele at all, and have made up the story as it seemed like a good tale to tell to make them some friends in the 'big city'. They claim they had taken a Four Seasons coach but are vague on the location of the incident, stating about half way from Karstadt to Ubersreik.

The pair are quick to add any embellishment to the story that makes them seem more dashing, Fishrook more dangerous, or which they feel would appeal to the listener. If they feel their interrogators think Fishrook is a normal man reviving the old legend, their account is tailored to support that. If they feel that a supernatural Fishrook is more interesting to the listener, Willie happily sprinkles his account with some strange lights, shimmering mists, and ghostly howls, with the Fishrook eventually disappearing into the night as if it were a ghost.

The ruse is Willie's idea and he can be quite convincing, but Max is unsure and reluctant to go with the story. It is not difficult to trip this pair up. If the Characters lean on them, they eventually admit that they made the whole story up, and offer to give the Characters some money to not oust them to the locals. It requires an **Opposed Cool/Perception** Test to discover their lies, which is Challenging for all involved except Max, whose poor lying results in the roll being **Hard (-20)** for him.

## WEEK 3 (ACTUALLY): GRETCHEN SOLLANDER

Gretchen heard about the rumours of the Fishrook's ghostly return before making her journey up from Bögenhafenby Ratchet Lines, and she is credulous in any case. She spent the whole journey fretting that the ghost might strike again. Unfortunately for Gretchen's frayed nerves, the Fishrook did indeed hold up her carriage. Gutele initially enjoyed this robbery quite a bit, as poor Gretchen was in a daze, convinced the highwayman before her was a supernatural creature of some kind. However, Gretchen's insistent pleas for Fishrook not to 'strike me down with your dreadful fish powers,' ultimately left Gutele faintly embarrassed for the woman.

Gretchen is entirely convinced the Fishrook is a ghost. Her memories have been shaped by her conviction. She appears completely convinced of what she is saying. If pressed on the details, however, she admits to finding many things, such as the Fishrook's physical appearance or whether or not 'he' was armed, quite difficult to recall. She is quick to write this off, however, as yet more evidence of the Fishrook's supernatural nature.

#### WEEK 4: BROTHER ERASMUS

Brother Erasmus, a minor officer in the Ubersreik cult of Sigmar, was travelling back from an ecumenical council in Carroburg, via Bögenhafen. He was with three other travellers on a Ratchet Lines coach but can't remember much about them. He does distinctly remember thinking that the Fishrook looked almost waifish, and could do with a good meal.

Erasmus reveals that he begged in Sigmar's name that he be spared from robbery because he was travelling in the service of the God-King. But the rogue simply scoffed at the notion. Erasmus shows Sigmar's mercy whenever possible, but believes that 'the scrawny lad should be hanged from the nearest empty gallows.'

The main difference between Erasmus's account and the others' is the addition of the Fishrook's gang. These are a bunch of scruffy, masked, ne'er-do-wells who seem to have joined up with the Fishrook. The Brother recalls that they stood around looking menacing but did not actually do very much. This 'gang' are Fishrook's Branchers (see page 11), and additional detail of the Fishrook legend. Of course, they are little more than hired toughs that Gutele has ordered to stand around and look menacing. She is quite pleased by their addition, certain that it will spice up her performance as Fishrook.

If asked about the highwayman's ghostly qualities, Erasmus is categorical that the fellow was flesh and blood. In fact, he remembers Fishrook smelling faintly of perfume, no doubt the scent belonging to his latest victim.

Erasmus knows the road well, and the location of the ruined *The Griffon and Hammer*. He knows that the robbery took place only a few hundred yards from that notorious inn.

#### INTERVIEWING THE COACHMEN

The Characters can reach the coachmen of the Four Seasons and Ratchet Lines coaches at their respective stables in town. If the Characters wish to interview the drivers of the relevant coaches, then they may have to wait a few days as the coachmen are in and out of town on often unpredictable rotations.

If they are interviewed, the drivers always inflate the Fishrook. They speak of him with a sort of grudging admiration for his bravery and ferocity. After all, no self-respecting coachman is going to admit to being robbed by an unimpressive highwayman. None will claim they were robbed by a ghost, as most are quite experienced with being robbed and know a highwayman of flesh and blood when they see one. Come to that, most are experienced individuals who would probably know an actual ghost if they saw one, too.

Even those coachmen not involved in the robberies are able to give very precise locations for all the robberies, as that is exactly the sort of information that gets passed around with urgency within their profession.





#### THE ROAD TO SIGMARTEMPEL

The Characters should soon find themselves looking to Sigmartempel and *The Griffon and Hammer* in their search for the Fishrook. Both places are named in the excerpt from *The Fishrook Dalliance* and Gutele mentions the village. Many of the Fishrook's victims' accounts mention Sigmartempel, and Brother Erasmus mentions the inn. Sigmartempel is the only settlement near the Fishrook's hunting ground, making it an obvious start.

If the Characters are struggling to make this connection, one of the coachmen may approach them directly. The Coachman didn't want to earlier confess to anything that might be seen as supernatural, 'I 'ave a reputation to uphold!', but will admit to having seen strange lights coming from the ruins of the inn.

The Griffon and Hammer was famously the highwayman's hang out. But equally, if not more, it is renowned as the place he was hanged. Anyone who believes the Fishrook is a ghost believes that he must be haunting *The Griffon and Hammer*.

#### WELCOME TO SIGMARTEMPEL

Sigmartempel is a settlement of about 50 dwellings aside the Bögenhafen–Ubersreik road. It is on an important Imperial highway between two of the largest settlements in the Reikland, yet none of the sophistication and colour of those cities seems to have reached this quiet village. With the demise of the nearby *The Griffon and Hammer* inn, no coach company stops within ten miles of the village.

There is not much to say about the place, and little reason for anyone to want to stay here. There is a small shrine to Sigmar by the side of the road, just a simple statue beneath a slate roof. The locals keep it up together but it is not impressive enough for anyone to interrupt their journey to come see.

The people of the village, or the adults at least, have enough to do with their farming and forestry without concerning themselves with outsiders. Everyone here has heard of the Fishrook, and his mysterious return, but no one is wealthy enough to be frightened of him.

Any villager the Characters ask about the highwayman makes it very clear that they don't appreciate being drawn into the fancy activities of big-city folk — Sigmartempel is a small village, and little good has ever arrived there with outsiders.

#### UBERSREIK ADVENTURES: THE FISHROOK RETURNS



#### THE BRANCHERS

Although the historical Fishrook worked alone, in *The Fishrook Dalliance*, Ludlheim invented a group of stout peasants who worked on the marauder's behalf. He called them '*Branchers*' after the name given to Fishrook young. Gutele has replicated this by roping in eight youngsters from Sigmartempel as her private army. They too wear masks, although theirs are bags with eye-holes cut into them rather than the ornate bird-mask Gutele uses. They have already assisted the Fishrook in robbing Brother Erasmus, the Sigmarite priest. They have armed themselves with all the sorts of things one would expect from a bucolic rabble — knives, pitchforks, clubs, and spears. One of them even has his grandfather's old blunderbuss.

The Branchers have begun to join the Fishrook on her robberies, but you can use them in various other ways. If the Characters poke around Sigmartempel for a while and make it obvious they are investigating the Fishrook, the Branchers band together to

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try to scare them off. Similarly, they can arrive at the inn at a vital moment to be used against the Characters. They can also come across the Characters while they are patrolling the road and confront them. Should the Characters manage to capture The Fishrook, the Branchers will do their utmost to free 'him'.

This is, perhaps, the most important aspect about the Branchers, and one which Gutele does not appreciate. The youths have become quite caught up in the legend, perhaps more so than Gutele herself, and believe they are serving the real Fishrook, or a copycat so similar that it makes no difference. While Gutele has no real intention of harming anyone she robs, her benign view is not shared by the Branchers, who are certain that every brass penny is being collected as part of some larger plan that the Fishrook will no doubt reveal to them in due course.

Of course, none of the Branchers suspect the truth about 'Fishrook'. They know that 'he' is based at the inn, and they have been ordered to stop anyone snooping around in Sigmartempel and the inn. But the Fishrook's real identity is as mysterious to the Branchers as everyone else. In truth, they are not terribly concerned with the details, content for the moment with the role they have been assigned.

Gutele pays the Branchers a few pennies a day. The young Branchers see this as a fortune, but it is really a derisory sum, especially considering that were they caught, they would all surely hang.



#### THE GRIFFON AND HAMMER

Sooner or later the Characters are likely to come to *The Griffon* and Hammer. The complex is dilapidated and potentially dangerous; much of the inn is covered in plant life as the forest gradually reclaims it. The Characters might be unsure whether the Fishrook is a man or a ghost at this point; use this uncertainty to frame the inn as haunted, playing on the Characters' (and players') paranoia. If possible, have the Characters reach the inn at night. If not, then an eerie mist will suddenly set in with a truly uncanny sense of timing.

The abandoned inn lies a hundred yards or so off the Bögenhafen road on a squat hillock. It was originally surrounded entirely with stone walls, but these have fallen into disrepair. In addition, a minor tremor a few decades ago caused a whole corner of the compound to fall away. The walls are all choked with vines and weeds.

#### Gallows

The first thing those who approach from the road will come across is the gallows. It is the gallows that hanged the original Fishrook, and it still stands. A tattered rope is still swinging from the arm, though surely this is just the breeze

#### Gatehouse

The gatehouse is as rickety and rundown as the rest of the complex. The heavy green doors drag along the ground and one of the hinges has rusted. They need some shoving to open, an indication no one has come this way for a long time. Though it is easy enough to simply gain access through the many breaches in the ruined walls.

Opening the gates causes some of the slates on the gatehouse roof to dislodge and fall. There is a chance that they might hit someone below, which would be painful, but their main effect is to puncture the eerie silence as they shatter on the cobbles. An unsuspecting interloper can dodge a plummeting roof tile with a **Difficult (-10) Dodge** Test, suffering 1 Wound of damage if they were not wearing a helmet.

#### Stables

The stable is one of the better preserved buildings. It has lost its doors and the odd shaft of light pierces the darkness through the occasional hole in the roof. An old coach rests in here, rotting away. Someone long ago jacked it up on piles of stones and made off with the wheels. A pair of wild boars have recently made their home in a corner of the stable, and they have just had a litter. They defend their piglets ferociously. Anyone entering the stable may be able to hear the sound of heavy breathing coming from the other end of the building. If they continue further, they may even be able to see the steaming breath rising, and perhaps a flash of light from glinting eyes. If left alone, the boars keep warily to themselves, but once a fight starts they go to the bitter end. (Use the stats for a Boar found on **WFRP** page 314.)

#### Weirdroot

A patch of weirdroot has grown up near one wall of the inn. This is likely to go unnoticed. But anyone with a professional knowledge, or practical need, for the plant can recognise it. Any Characters who take it regularly may need to make a Test in order to resist stopping to gather some. This could require a **Challenging (+0) Willpower** Test.

#### Inn

The inn was clearly once a substantial structure, well defended and capable of hosting several coach parties at once. Now age, neglect, and the tremor has left it ruined. Only a portion of the upper storey remains, and that is nearly all open to the elements. Much of the upper storey and the roof have fallen through to ground level. Most of the useful stone has been carted off by opportunistic builders, but much detritus remains. The locals have had 50 years to strip the building of anything worth taking.

Behind the bar, a mostly rotten trapdoor leads down to the cellar. It requires an **Average (+20) Perception** Test to notice. Anyone standing on it falls straight through to the cellar, a fall of 3 yards.

#### **Upper Floor**

There is little of interest on the upper floor, but it can be accessed by a mostly intact staircase. Any number of loose floorboards makes exploring this level extremely treacherous. At random times while exploiting this floor have a randomly chosen Character of average size make a **Challenging (+0) Perception** Test. Should they fail, a floorboard beneath them snaps, sending them plunging into the room below! If the Character can make a **Challenging (+0) Initiative** Test, they can quickly grab something to stop themselves falling, allowing a helping hand to drag them to safety. If they fail, they fall the 3 yd to the floor below, taking damage accordingly.

A colony of martins inhabits one of the bedrooms, which any ornithologist worth their salt would know looks nothing like a Fishrook. The birds fly off if disturbed, bringing an opportunity to scare any tentative explorer.

#### Cellar

The cellar still holds the unmistakable tang of stale alcohol but anything worth drinking is long gone. Most of the barrels are intact but they are empty or disgustingly spoiled. Some scratching and skittering noises can be heard coming from the deepest corners of the cellar — a pair of rats that stay out of sight, even though their presence is always felt. The Fishrook has dragged a large empty barrel across the cellar, hiding one corner of the room. This should require a **Hard (-20) Perception** Test to notice in the darkness, but anyone inspecting the cellar under good lighting only needs to pass an **Average** (+20) **Perception Test** to notice the drag marks upon the dirty flagstones. Characters with the *Night Vision* Talent can use the moonlight filtering through the floorboards above to see clearly.

Gutele hides her Fishrook disguise in a nook in the hidden corner, and it is also where she stashes her finer clothes while she is posing as the Fishrook. Which they find depends on when they came to the Inn. If the Characters have unduly delayed in coming to the Inn, and especially if they required a lot of prodding to locate it, then Gutele will have completed her most recent activities as the Fishrook and returned home for a time. In this case, they locate the Fishrook costume.

However, if the Characters were swift to come to the Inn then Gutele will likely be abroad as Fishrook, and they will discover her clothes. She dresses down deliberately when travelling to *The Griffon and Hammer* as she does not want to be recognised around Sigmartempel. She is happy to be recognised leaving or returning to Ubersreik as she often goes riding in any case. The clothes stashed here are a plain but very fine quality lady's riding coat and a smart riding hat. The Characters will have no immediate clue that these are Gutele's clothes, though a faint smell of her perfume does pervade them.



If the Characters were delayed, they find the Fishrook disguise. The most important item is the black, yellow, and red bird mask. This is well made by one of the best haberdashers in Ubersreik, who was commissioned by Moritz and told it was for a masquerade ball. Mortiz paid the artisan a crown to leave off their maker's mark. There is a pair of men's dark riding trousers, a black riding cloak, and a pair of tan leather gloves vaguely reminiscent of bird talons. The costume is completed by a pair of worn, black men's riding boots. If the Characters inspect the boots, they find wooden inserts wedged into them; the boots are much too big for Gutele to wear comfortably.

The other things the Fishrook might need, like her brace of pistols, horn of blackpowder, and sword, Gutele brings with her. Gutele has the sense to always approach the inn from the rear, and if the Characters check around the back of the inn and pass a **Challenging (+0) Perception** Test, they find a number of hoof prints, and closer to the inn, Gutele's footprints. These tracks loop around through the forest and then head south, joining the Ubersreik–Bögenhafen road, where they become impossible to follow.

Of course, while they are following the footprints, it is an excellent time for the Branchers to surround the unwary Characters and prepare to deal with whoever has been poking around the Fishrook's old haunt.

#### THE HUNT IS ON

It is up to the Characters how they go about hunting down the Fishrook. A few potential ideas are discussed below, but more inventive and original plans should be rewarded.

#### Lying in Wait

If the Characters discover the Fishrook's base in the cellar of the inn, then they might decide to simply lie in wait in the cellar or around the ruined inn until her inevitable return. This is a reasonable plan; the Fishrook is not stupid and goes to some trouble to make sure she is not being pursued and to check her base has not been compromised. Despite these precautions, a carefully positioned observer or a well-timed ambush at the inn is likely to succeed. After all, the Fishrook really does not believe anyone is clever enough to outwit her.

If Gutele is travelling as Fishrook, she will simply ride up to the Inn from the rear to retrieve her belongings. She has ordered the Branchers not to come too close to the Inn, so any travelling with her will remain at some distance.

If Gutele is not in her Fishrook disguise she will be more wary — she doesn't really believe anyone is quite clever enough to have tracked her to the Inn, but she won't want any of the Branchers to see her in her riding dress. If the Characters are not careful, there is a good chance that Gutele spots them as she approaches the inn. This will require an **Opposed Perception/Stealth** Test between Gutele and any Character's not hidden in the cellar.

This roll is **Challenging (+0)** for both parties if Gutele is not disguised as Fishrook, or **Difficult (-10)** for Gutele if she is, as she will be paying less attention. If she does spot anyone, then she rides off quickly. She will have to rethink her plans, perhaps making a new base somewhere in the forest, or even in Sigmartempel. This is all part of the game 'Fishrook' wishes to play, staying one step ahead of the Characters at every turn.

#### **Patrolling the Road**

The Characters may decide simply to patrol the road. This is the sort of thing Gutele is expecting them to do and is less likely to be successful. There is little chance of running into her by chance, and as Gutele expects them to be around, she has every opportunity of avoiding them, if they do.

With a sense for the dramatic, Gutele may contrive to have the Characters view her from a distance. She rears her horse up into the classical highwayman pose, making sure she is framed as a silhouette in the moonlight, and then rides off before they can react. This may give the Characters a fighting chance of tracking her down.



#### **Setting Some Bait**

The Characters may decide to pose as innocent travellers in the hope of getting waylaid. There are two main ways of doing this — book passage on an existing coach route, or create the charade of a coach journey from scratch. This is most likely to work if they can arrange things to look as dramatic as possible. A night when at least one of the moons is full, a fancy looking coach, a dashing, apparently noble lord or lady visible in the carriage — the more romantic the potential robbery, the less likely Gutele will be able to resist.

If the Characters go to the effort of procuring a coach and horses, and manage to ride it through the forest tracks at a convincing speed, reward them for their endeavour. Perhaps Fishrook will attempt to rob them, or perhaps they come crashing into the Brancher's camp at break-neck speed, causing quite the chaotic scene.



#### A BIRD IN THE HAND

If the Characters manage to get the better of Gutele, and she cannot flee in reasonable safety, she surrenders. After all, this was just a bit of fun.

The Branchers, on the other hand, are not in on Gutele's 'joke', and are highly unlikely to back down simply because she has surrendered. They are fully committed to the myth that Gutele has worked so hard to recreate, and will not go down without a fight. Only if the Fishrook is exposed as a toffish noble before their very eyes are they likely to back down, or even turn on her.

It should be noted that simply exposing Gutele as a woman will have little effect on the youths, as several have already figured out that the current iteration of 'Fishrook' is somewhat different than in the stories, and care not one bit. To them, Fishrook is both their employer as well as a larger than life hero lifted right from the folktales they heard as children. In the heat of the moment, the romance of a fight to the death at their idol's side seems like not at all a bad way to go out.

Youth and idealism are a dangerous combination, and it is quite possible that a horrified Gutele will have to look on as a lethal combat goes on around her between the Branchers and the Characters. If this occurs, Gutele will be shocked by the violence, and quickly agree to go with the victorious Characters.

If the Characters lose the combat, Gutele will be quick to adopt the guise of Fishrook once more and have her young wards take the Characters captive. Later that night Gutele will come to her 'captives' begging them to get her out of the situation in which she has found herself! If they can manage this, Gutele will happily pay her promised fee and more — if they can get her safely back to Ubersreik.

Of course, anything can go wrong, and the Characters might well end up with Gutele's corpse on their hands. If this happens, they should be very careful what they do next. Boasting in Ubersreik that they have killed the young kin of a wealthy noble is almost certain to end badly for them. Best to wash their hands of the whole affair. This is likely the most disappointing ending to the Fishrook's dramatic tale, and you should work to avoid it. If, however, overzealous Characters do strike Fishrook dead, be sure to describe their discovery that it was Gutele all along with appropriate dramatic flair.

If the Characters do manage to capture Gutele alive, willingly or otherwise, their troubles have just begun. They are likely to be surprised when they finally unmask her to discover that it was their noble employer all along. Be sure that Gutele makes it clear that she would have got away with it, too, if it hadn't been for the meddling Characters.

#### THE SHORT ARM OF THE LAW

Learning the Fishrook's real identity creates a problem for the Characters. Gutele is a robber who arguably deserves to be hanged; on the other hand, she is just a bored rich kid having some fun. Bringing her to justice may be the right thing to do, but it comes with its own problems, and the Characters are sure to make some powerful enemies along the way. Gutele may even tell them to take her to the watch immediately, insisting that the authorities would never dare to act against her. If the Characters assume that they can simply bring her in and hand her over to the law, they are in for a surprise.

Lowly organisations like the city watch or the road wardens are not interested in taking responsibility for Gutele: they know when to look the other way, and this is exactly that time. The current power vacuum in Ubersreik means that the Town Council is the only body prepared to even look at the situation, and their authority is dubious. If the Characters push the case as against Gutele as far as they can take it, providing evidence of her misdeeds, including her 'corruption' of the local youth, then a case may eventually be found against her. The Characters should have to address the council themselves, although if they have thought to procure the services of a lawyer, reward them by foregoing any Tests. If the Characters do not make a decent case, Gutele is immediately let off. Successfully presenting their case requires a **Difficult (-10) Charm** or **Entertain (Speeches)** Test.

On the other hand, the people are watching, and justice must at least appear evenhanded. Therefore, if the Characters make a good case, and the people approve, the council will be put in a difficult position. They rule that Gutele indeed broke the law, but charge her with 'unlawful impersonation of deceased or fictional person', rather than robbery, or even murder. She will be 'sentenced' to a sizable fine, and have to spend a few weeks away from Ubersreik while things settle down. Such is justice when it comes to the nobility of the Empire.

However, as this sentence is being handed down, her brother Boniel is all but certain to intervene on her behalf — see **Boniel Intervenes** below.

#### THE FINAL CURTAIN

If the Characters simply let her off, then they may have gained an important ally. As has been mentioned in previous adventures in this series, connections to influential families in Ubersreik may well prove to be useful. Gutele may insist on staging a final, dramatic end for Fishrook. If the Characters play along with her 'show', Gutele will be extremely grateful for their assistance in bringing to a suitability romantic end the eminently exciting diversion of the last few weeks. A duel on a public bridge, with the 'wounded' Fishrook jumping into the river to make 'his' escape would be a fine capstone moment indeed.

#### FAMILY MATTERS

An obvious way to get rid of their problem is to simply take Gutele back to her family. Appalled at the potential shame her actions could bring upon them, her family are quick to both thank the Characters, and pay them a substantial sum for their silence. Several gold crowns a head, at least. Of course, Gutele will face nothing resembling justice in this case, and will be back to boasting of her encounters with Fishrook the very next night. This may grate with some Characters. Their only consolation might be that Kisaiya von Bruner will be absolutely livid, and she makes Gutele's life very difficult for the foreseeable future.

The Characters, however, should be careful how they deal with the von Bruners. If they show that they are subservient and prepared to work for the family in the future, and do their bidding without question, then they might be able to come out of this quite well. If they think they will get real power out of the situation, if they lean on the family, or overplay their hand, then the von Bruners are likely to want to get rid of the Characters as soon as possible, and the von Bruners usually get what they want.

#### PERPUGILLIAM MAURE

If the Characters need some legal advice, or even need to hire a lawyer long-term during this section of the adventure, then the only one they will be able to get is Peri Maurer. She is the only lawyer in town who does not worry about her career or other repercussions of standing up for a load of adventurers against one of the city's most powerful families.

Peri is a Halfling who makes a point of 'Standing up for the little person'. She refuses to be cowed or intimidated by the rich and powerful, which explains why she has very little money and a terribly cramped office some way from the legal district.

Peri should be there to help the Characters out with some advice on the legal situation, but not to actually do their work for them. She will be quick to inform them that they have very little hope of actually winning the case, but this does little to dissuade Peri herself, who loves a good lost cause.

#### **BONIEL INTERVENES**

Boniel, Gutele's twin brother, had no idea what Gutele was up to. She had hinted that she was having adventures, and he had noticed she had a spring in her step and was gone more often than usual, but he thought this was perhaps because of some sort of romantic interest. If the Characters bring Gutele into town, word spreads quickly enough that she is being accused of being the Fishrook.

While everyone else might be shocked, to Boniel all Gutele's recent behaviour will suddenly make sense. She has been talking about the Fishrook incessantly, and was poring over a copy of *The Fishrook Dalliance* a good while before it came back in vogue. She has been coming home at odd hours, sometimes covered in mud, and refusing to explain herself. She even gave Boniel a couple of gifts of expensive jewellery.

Boniel believes that Gutele could be in big trouble — she may even be hanged! His family is rich and powerful, of course, but can he rely on that? In any case, there is a massive scandal, and Boniel resolves to 'prove' his sister's innocence. Quickly assembling a somewhat foolish but passable Fishrook costume, Boniel dashes to his sister's aid.

This will likely occur if the Characters have dragged Gutele in front of the Town Council, but any other public display and shaming of his sister is likely to spur Boniel to intervene. He puts his plan into action. Wherever they are, Boniel suddenly emerges dressed as the Fishrook, to theatrically demonstrate Gutele could not possibly be the infamous highwayman.

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Boniel is not the shootin' and ridin' expert that his sister is. He hopes to just appear as the Fishrook, let everyone see him, do something the Fishrook might do — he has not really decided what — and make a swift exit.

You good people, you claim to have captured the Fishrook. If that were true then I would doff my cap to you all. But as you can see, you are labouring under a grave misapprehension, for I am the Fishrook!

As a famous highwayman, I would not usually concern myself with happenings in Ubersreik, but I have taken the trouble to put you right because I could not bear to see an innocent hanged in my place. Also, I have heard that Gutele von Bruner is a very nice person. And with that, I must be gone. Adieu!

If this goes well, then he will have saved his sister, and the Characters will be left with egg on their faces. Of course, if they challenge them, the Characters will find this Fishrook much easier to capture. With both of the Von Bruner twins captured, the stakes will have effectively doubled. If all this happens in public, there will be little hope of salvaging the situation to the Characters' benefit. The Von Bruners will be apoplectic with rage at the damage to their family name, while the increasingly farcical nature of the entire affair will make the authorities even more keen to sweep the entire thing under a good sized rug.

#### THE AFTERMATH

While things will be brought to close one way or another, depending on how things pan out some lasting repercussions are unavoidable.

#### **ONE MORE VICTIM**

If the Characters publicly shame one, or both, of the Von Bruner twins, then a swift visit from the family will ensue. Moritz calls on the Characters. He explains how they have damaged the von Bruner name, but graciously concedes that the situation has not been entirely their fault. Therefore, he offers them a chance to put right what they have done. He also offers at least twice what Gutele has already paid them.

The plan is simple enough. The Characters need to return to Sigmartempel, then find and hang the 'genuine' Fishrook. It should be quite plain what Moritz means by 'genuine' but he stops short of defining his intentions. If the Characters have met the Branchers, then one of them would be perfect for this. But really, anyone will do — the locals love a good execution. While morally reprehensible, failure to at least appear to go through with this will enrage Moritz, who will pointedly inform the Characters that **someone** is certain to be hanged, regardless.



#### THE LAST LAUGH

Some of the issues the Characters have faced in this adventure can spill over into other adventures. The blatantly corrupt treatment by the Town Council may to some highlight the fact that a new Lord of Ubersreik is desperately needed. Perhaps wary of what might become of their wayward child should that occur, the von Bruners may try to stop this from happening.

For their part, the council may see this case as a perfect one for weakening the nobility's power, and for asserting its own case to stay in power. Ernst Maler is likely to be backed in this by Father Gutenberg of Verena, who would approve of the natural justice of making the nobility submit to the rule of law. Should this occur, much of the nobility of the city will be up in arms, though notably the powerful merchant families such as the Kardst-Stampfs will be quick to lend their support to any expansion of the councils influence.

Despite their bickering and rivalry, the nobility comes together remarkably promptly whenever their privilege and power is threatened. The cult of Sigmar will join them as it always supports the autonomy of nobles and the respect of Imperial Law. Even the Imperial Herald in Ubersreik may be brought into the argument. Lady Emmanuelle Nacht will block any attempt to bring Gutele to justice as her trial will implicitly support the assertion that the Town Council has inherent power beyond that granted by the Emperor through His nobility.

The people of Ubersreik, public opinion generally, and the mob specifically, could be baying for a trial, seeing the arrogance of the young von Bruner as a perfect example of what can go wrong with the ruling classes once they lose sight of their duties. Alternatively, and depending on how the Characters and Gutele acquitted themselves both before and during the trial, the people may be out in the streets in support of 'Fishrook'. After all, nobody (important) died, and wasn't it all in good fun?

All these tensions are likely to come to a head as angry citizens spill into the streets demanding justice, one way or another. The Town Council will tolerate this as far as they can but sooner or later law and order will need to be imposed before it becomes a disaster for the city.

None of this would have happened, of course, if the Characters had just left well alone, or done the sensible thing. Nevertheless, they could well be seen as upholders of natural justice and the champions of the people. This will make them heroes to some, but could place them in great danger. Who knows what a hornet's nest the Characters have unwittingly stirred up, and what adventures this may lead to in the future?

#### REWARDS

The following Experience Points should be awarded at the end of the adventure, plus the standard awards you would offer at the end of each session:

- 50 points for capturing Gutele and turning her in.
- 25 points if Gutele, Moritz, and Boniel survive.
- 25 points for clearing Gutele's name and pinning the blame on a ghost.
- 25 points if the Characters aid Gutele in staging the Fishrooks 'death'.
- 10 points if only Gutele is saved.
- 10 points if Gutele is killed.
- 10 points if the 'real' Fishrook is captured for Mortiz.
- 10 points if the 'real' Fishrook is killed.





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