



Dawn of the Duke

**An Adventure for Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay
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Foreword

The story of the Red Duke is told in many different ways, with different details, and in some stories the Red Duke is not the heartless villain, as he is presented in others. But it is always a sad, a tragic story.

Even if the events reported in the following are entwined by the veil of time and were distorted by legends, a conscientious scholar can reconstruct even today the actual circumstances and separate the facts from the flowery paraphrases of the traditional chansons and ballads of Bretonnian minnesingers. What follows is supposed to be the truth...

It was the time of the crusades, while Louis the Righteous ruled as the fifteenth king over Bretonnia, that the hot-blooded arabs, led by their thrice cursed sultan Darius-i-Quabir, later also called Jaffar, made war upon Estalia and endangered the freedom of the remaining world.

Under the knights, which opposed the intruders, was also the current Duke of Aquitaine with his following. An impressive, powerful man, far and broadly known as a capable and skillful swordsman and knight. As the sons of Bretonnia raised their swords against the unbelievers, he was one of the first, all the time ready to defend Bretonnia's honour.

During the war, which in the end liberated the Estalian Kingdoms and ended the evil dominion of Jaffars, he attained a lot of fame. Many songs were composed, which sang of his victorious fights against the warriors of the sultan. Then disaster struck.

During the siege of Lashiek, shortly after the walls had fallen, the Duke of Aquitaine disappeared traceless and was seen as lost. For days rumours and speculations about his fate went through the encampment of the crusaders, until he was finally found, heavily wounded and in delirium, but alive. The faithful followers of the duke looked after him, and even as he fell into a deep coma, they didn't give up the hope. They drew back home instead, through scorching deserts and Orc ambushes. The whole time over they carried their dying sovereign on a shady stretcher with them.

Finally they reached their home and bedded their lord to the deathbed. Darkness fell over the castle as the fallen duke succumbed to his fever. His knights mourned for him and swore without a thought, to serve him beyond death - words, which caused their own doom. They buried the duke under his castle, as it was usual in those times, and sang a hymn for his soul long into the night.

He rested three days in his vault, and then in the midst of a dark stormy night, he awoke. He had become a repulsive vampire, depraved from an unknown torture, but nevertheless he was the Duke of Aquitaine, a mighty feudal lord whom dozens of vassals had sworn allegiance. If he was an arrogant and relentless sovereign in life, who saw the peasants drudging on his fields solely as cattle, which none the less he cared for like a farmer does; he was in undeath even crueler and saw in the common people just game, which he hunted and slaughtered for pleasure like fair game in his forests years ago. He ordered his soldiers to carry off maidens from the many villages of his dukedom to his castle, which were then never seen again.

His true name wasn't used anymore only shortly afterwards - instead most people called him the Red Duke from then on, referring thereby to the blood that his actions adhered. Hundreds fled northwards to escape from the horrors of their home, only to get into slavery or serfdom at other places in Bretonnia. The duke himself seemingly never left his castle, only during the night he was seen in his carriage leaving the castle but even then only with drawn windows. Despite all invitations to balls and banquets at the courts of other noble houses, the duke was never seen on these social events.

Visitors and messengers visiting the duke's court always reported of an unreal sight. The castle guards are clad in black robes and never show their faces. They move with measured tread and hold their weapons in a strange rigid way. The castle is a place of darkness without being lit up by any daylight, but the interior is as if illuminated by pale moonlight. The multiple invitation to the court of the king were also not pursued by him, this however is valued as disregard of the king's authority in Bretonnia and counts as high treason. Therefore it didn't last long for a herald of the king to appear at the duke's court and demand from him to comply to the king's order, and thus make the accusations against him ineffective. In his arrogance the duke killed all of the heralds' followers and sent the herald, blinded and drained of blood, back to his king.

The king was in rage, how could one of his vassals dare to put his authority in question to such an extent and refuse a direct order in this way. He commanded one of his faithful vassals, the Duke of Bordeaux to raise an army and to send it against the Red Duke, his former vassal. The objective was to take the duke in custody and to bring him to the king, nobody knew to this time, that the rebellious duke was in fact a vampire. Duke Blanché of Bordeaux planned to occupy the land and possibly to set the castle in a state of siege, and secretly hoped to be able to annex part of the dukedom Aquitaine to his territory this way.

The Red Duke was aware of the king's power and asked a mighty sorceress, living in a tower in the forest of Chalons at the foot of the Orcal Massif mountain range, for help. The tower was a very old, decayed ruin, which lay at a focus point of magical force and had been left by the elves millennia ago. The Red Duke asked the sorceress Isabeau for an alliance, with the hope to be able to challenge the royal troops with her help. Isabeau ostensibly agreed. She recognized his megalomania and saw the Red Duke as what he was - an inhuman monstrosity from the realm of death. Nevertheless Isabeau tried to subject the half-daemon with enchantments to her will for her own purposes. She realised however, that the duke already had pulled the attention of about half the kingdom on himself and in so far wasn't such a good subject, let alone ally. Isabeau finally tried to bind the bloodsucker to her will, and underestimated thereby the magical abilities of the duke, who became aware of Isabeau's plan and sent his undead servants to her tower in prospect of killing her. He avoided the direct confrontation with the sorceress, he was arrogant and megalomaniac, but not careless. There were moments when he was considering to make her his companion, in conclusion however he did not thought her to be worthy spending the eternity with him.

As the servants of the Red Duke reached the tower, Isabeau was in trance, as she prepared to enslave the duke with her enchantments. She did not suspect the danger, but awakened just seconds before the undead creatures reached her tower. Weakened due to the spell preparation, Isabeau fled, only to be torn to pieces a few hundred meters away from the tower in the forest of Chalons by the duke's dire wolves. As the Red Duke arrived on the scene she was only barely alive, blood ran from her throat and dozens of other wounds. Her torn up body lay in an unnatural twisted position and the last thing she perceived in life was the Red Duke's harsh voice: "If you refuse to serve me in life, you won't in death."

It did not last long for the royal army, led by Duke Blanché to march into the dukedom of Aquitaine. The Red Duke's force marched with his army against them, because he wanted to evade a siege. The peasant levies marched alongside their master, fighting for him, as they would for any other overlord. These degenerates were accompanied by ghouls and wights and other darker things. The Duke of Bordeleaux ordered his troops to attack in the moment as he discerned the abnormal horde and a dreadful battle erupted over the fields of Ceren. Little is known about this battle, in the end however the Chevaliers d'Honneur broke through the center of the troops from Aquitaine. The Red Duke was heavily wounded, pierced by dozens of lances and arrows from the royal army. He fled to his castle, where he was destroyed only shortly afterwards as three pious locals chased him to his crypt and staked him. Along with him, the fate of his unholy army was sealed, his followers were destroyed, his castle burned to the ground and salt was scattered over the smashed ruins.

It would have surely been advisable to burn the remains of the Red Duke, as it was demanded by the duke's clergy. Despite everything this wouldn't be appropriate for a Bretonnian of noble blood, was the opinion of the nobility. In spite of the recent events, they still saw him as one of their own and didn't want to degrade him with a cremation. In death the Red Duke appeared as during lifetime, like the other noblemen knew him and any suspicion, he could be a creature of darkness, was instantly disregarded. He was buried in befitting style in a vault, which was sealed with holy symbols on pressure from the clergy. After that the true name of the duke was deleted from all records, so that this incident of rebellion has officially never occurred.

However the Red Duke was not dead. His body might be torn up and his will temporarily broken, but he had made plans for such an occurrence. He had taken care that part of his essence was bedded in a crimson red jewel, created with the blood of innocents and pure black magic. Long were the years, which he required for the regeneration of his body, however he finally awoke once more and prepared himself to smash the stony portals of his vault. However this time the Red Duke was the one left standing. The magic seals held the heavy flagstones in place and the Red Duke locked in the interior. For years he raged in anger through the vault, which had become his prison. Whenever he tried to open the flagstones with his supernatural strength, the holy signs and protective seals burnt into his hands. He cast countless magic, to free himself and used his whole subtlety, to call upon unholy creatures from the realm of death, which could help him, but nothing could move the seals, which had been placed on the doors. The protective spells, which held him in place, were much too powerful.

Even though the red jewel preserved his unholy life, his thirst for the blood of mortals increased, until it drove him into a state of insanity, from which no escape seemed possible. He could do nothing besides calling out his anger loudly and swearing bloody revenge, until he finally fell into a cataleptic state.

So the centuries passed, and the people gradually forgot the legend of the Red Duke, until one day...

Introduction

The PC's get into the wake of the following events, as they cross the duchy of Aquitaine on their way to Bordeaux. Stopover is a village named Mercal. Here is a ferry, which leads over the Morceaux, a river taking its course from the Massif Orcal through the Aquitanian hill country into the direction of the ocean.

Just as the adventurers have quartered themselves in the local inn, begin the omens of a reascending horror. A storm starts to whack the region, and the Morceaux breaking its banks forces locals like travellers to remain in the village, while the mischief takes its course.

A headless herald, who should not exist, is galloping through the village, graves are broken open, and the first vampire victims announce the renewed arrival of the allegedly centuries ago staked Red Duke. What kind of old curse are the sinister villagers trying to hide? And what kind of goal pursue the strange guests in the tavern? What dismal mystery lies in truth upon Mercal?

Dawn of the Duke is sort of an investigative adventure with a sinister brooding atmosphere suited to characters in their first or second career, but it can in fact be used for characters with any level of experience. The adventure combines elements of intrigue, conflict and suspense as well as the undead and the supernatural.

Prologue

After the dukes former mentioned mysterious recovering from his deathbed after the crusades, things changed drastically from bad to worse. Respectively around the winter and the summer solstice the duke kidnapped a maiden from the many villages of his dukedom to his castle, which were then never to be seen again. At the same time many travellers disappeared in the wooded surroundings, and nobody knew to say, whether they had become victim of the duke or the ever increasing wolf packs.

After only about two years the fourth maiden disappearing was the daughter of the then local bailiff and knight Pierre d'Arden. The man was full of sorrow, being only hardly able to remain composed. Since the death of his wife ten years ago, he counted his whole love to this girl. Thus Pierre rode westwards to meet with the royal army being in encampment at the dukedoms border and made a deal with Duke Blanché. Pierre led the army through his homeland straight into the direction of castle Chantrau, but met with the Red Dukes horde. The story of this battle is told elsewhere. However in the end the Red Duke fled heavily wounded from the field of battle to his castle, only to be chased by Pierre and two companions, the Morr priestess Emanuel and the young knight errant Henri.

So the fate then took its course. With the courage of despair the three ventured at dawn into the castle following the trail of the duke and surprised his three first feminine victims, all of them vampires lying in dark oak-coffins.

All three had a golden key around their necks, their meaning was learned only shortly afterwards. The Red Duke itself lay in a vault, which was to be reached only through a magic door with three locks. Owning all three keys was the only possibility of advancing to the duke itself. The three also took this obstacle and surprised the duke in his stony sarcophagus and rammed Pierre's enchanted blade into the chest of the vampire.

The reaction was indescribable. The wounded duke howled in agony, and it appeared as if the dying duke wanted to take his tormentors with him into the grave. Fires flared up at all places of the castle, stones broke from the masonry, however the three managed to leave the place of mischief behind. Solely a ruin was remaining on the next day where the castle had been. Nevertheless it wasn't a delightful victory. The bailiff had found his daughter lying beside the duke and had taken her along, however two unmistakable bite-marks on her throat thereupon pointed to the fact, that his daughter had irretrievably become a vampire. A cruel staking of his own daughter was out of question for the father, and so they agreed onto another solution. Still at the same evening the girl was buried on the local cemetery. Around her neck is a strong amulet of banishment from Emanuel since this time. Until today it prevented her awakening from the unholy sleep.

It is said the time heals all wounds. Each of the three took one of the keys. In part as memory of these ghastly episode in their life and in part to prevent others from finding the entrance to the Red Dukes remnants. Henri moved a year later into a neighbouring village on the other side of the river Morceaux and became the local knight bailiff, he had a peaceful life and was buried 40 years later. Along into his grave was put a strange golden key, which he had wore his whole life. Emanuel moved to Luccini in Tilea four years later as she became an appointment at the great Morr cathedral there and wasn't seen anymore from then on. Only Pierre remained faithful to his home. He remained for twenty years as the bailiff and then died too. On his deathbed he gave the key to his grandson, who in turn did the same on his death and so the key went down through many generation. Today it is in the possession of Pierre's great-great-great-...-great-granddaughter Latitia, who is 90 years old. However the adventurers will find that out later.

The dukedom Aquitaine, which had been ruled by the Red Duke was since this time without a direct sovereign. No nobleman dared to challenge Duke Blanché as he annexed the former dukedom to his domain, thus it was controlled and inherited by the Lord of Gascogne reigning from his palace in Bordeaux since.

Once each year they pay their tax to the lord, who didn't care himself much about this particular part of his realm, as it was quite poor to this time.

Since the death of the bloodthirsty vampire centuries ago, only few remember the old mythos and even fewer believe it to be true. But anyway the legend describes, that the Red Duke had threatened his three opponents revenge for their deed. At some time or other so the account, he will be resurrected; his arrival will be announced by his headless herald and initiate an era of fear. Nobody could foresee, that this prophecy would start to begin already so soon ...

The whole scenario begins about a year before the appearance of the PC's. On a walk in southern Aquitaine the young Necromancer Renar made the acquaintance of the ageing Morr priest from Mercal, who was on his yearly pilgrimage to the Bordeleaux temple. Because the Necromancer had his destination in the same direction he pretended to be a pilgrim himself and joined the priest.

On the way both were exchanging stories, and as Renar heard the legend of the Red Duke, his interest in Mercal suddenly awoke. Since his youth he dreamt to find one day a way to immortality. As he had won a deep insight in the world of darkness due to his obscure studies, the thought did not frighten him to reach this goal through lycanthropy or vampirism. On the contrary - the thought fascinated him more and more. He was given more information by the priest about, where Mercal was to be found, and promised with false kindness, that he would visit him once. Then the ways of these unequal persons separated. Renar made inquiries and saw the reports of the priest confirmed. The Red Duke apparently seem to have been a mighty vampire indeed. The Necromancer concluded to revive the myth - and that in the truest sense of the word. Renars goal: To reach immortality through the bite of the Red Duke!

A couple of weeks later he travelled unrecognised to Mercal and waited for a favourable point in time, to start his sinister plan. Since he knew from the priest, that in the Morr temple were some documents about the vampire and its castle to be found, he summoned a small invisible imp, which he sent into the temple. There a fair was conducted in honour of the God. In the moment, when the old priest admonished his congregation, to remain pious and virtuous, so that Morr do not admit an adversity like that of the Red Duke once more, the fragile old one received a push from behind, and the priest fell, to the horror of the persons present, down the steps to the pulpit and broke his neck.

The PC's will certainly meet one or the other villager describing this mysterious occurrence. The inhabitants sent a report to Bordeleaux at the next opportunity and asked therein for a new priest for their village. Exact this was Renars plan however. The young priests, who was sent some weeks later to Mercal, never arrived there. Renar ambushed him and took over his role.

About four months ago he arrived in Mercal and mimes the dutiful Morr priest. In truth he searches through the notes in the temple since this time, as he had to ascertain in the past, that the access to the castle and especially to the burial chamber of the Red Dukes is restricted with a couple of obstacles. A month ago he had found a reference to a hidden secret entrance to the grave chamber. A passageway making it possible, to enter the vault from a well camouflaged lead-in in the forest.

It's a day before the arrival of the PC's in the village, when the false priest at full Mannslieb begins with the resurrection ceremony in the castle vault. From now on he requires the blood of three maidens, which must be added to the dust of the vampire in the rhythm of 24 hours, beginning with the first night after the uncanny invocation of dark forces. Then the conjurer has reached his goal. Then Duke re-awakens to unholy life. The PC's therefore have - the evening of their arrival not calculated - a period of two days and nights, to thwart the sinister plan of the false priest.

At the same time one of the strange guests of the only local tavern, has plans of a similar kind. The inconspicuous adventurer Gerard. His mystery: He is a relative of the long ago emigrated Emanuel, one of the three, who once have destroyed the duke. Indeed Gerard is of completely different character then his long dead relative. He earns his money through grave robbery. Since he heard at the deathbed of his old grandfather of the vampire story, his thoughts incessantly circle around the treasures, which could still be hidden in the castle. Emanuel bequeathed his granddaughter the golden key, which she had in his care. In property of this heirloom Gerard set out to Aquitaine, to get the other keys. Two days before arrival of the PC's in Mercal, he broke open the grave of Henri in the neighbouring village on the other side of the Morceaux. So he also gained the second of three keys. He hopes to get the third one in a similar way. Then nothing would stand in the way to the expected treasure ...

The Arrival

It is late afternoon. The PC's are on a small path through the forest, which should lead, according to the information of a helpful peasant, directly to Mercal. They want to reach the village-ferry, which should transport them over the Morceaux. To their regret a cold wind is roaring over the treetops for quite some time now, so that one or the other of them is tightening the coat against the chill. As the companions finally after two hours of difficult walking reach an elevation, one of them notices the ruin of a castle on a hill in the distance. Mercal can't

be that far away now. Dark clouds gather in the sky and in the distance the shuddering howl of a wolf can be heard, as the PC's take on the last few steps to Mercal.

Mercal

Mercal lies in a hollow bedded in wooded surroundings and flanked in the north by the Morceaux, a river having its source somewhere in the Massif Orcal. The next inhabited village is Dijon, which is a day's journey on the other side of the river. Mercal itself is a small, 300 souls counting nest. The most strikingly buildings are grouped together in the village centre. The Morr temple, including the cemetery behind – one of the few made of stone; the smithy, where the tough smith Jaques and his assistant Francois work and the two storey inn 'The Calf Inn' led by the heavyweight Jean Clochard and his wife Miriam. The inn is certainly the most interesting at the moment the PC's arrive.

which is.

The locals in the village live primarily from sheep breeding and viniculture. Other minor sources of income are agriculture as well as timber industry and charcoal burning in the surrounding forest.

The streets are deserted when the PC's arrive at the village in the late evening.

'The Calf Inn'

Wind and weather left their traces on this on this building. From the outside the inn makes a somewhat askew impression. A wooden sign with hard to read letters is waving in the wind squeaking on cast-iron hinges back and forth above the entrance. As the PC's arrive, a warm light falls on the road. Not a moment to late, as suddenly a loud thunder can be heard in the sky and cold downpour sets a in.

First Floor

Bar Room (1)

In this room are, apart from the bar on the left side, four round tables with a couple of wooden stools grouped around them. On the tables are simple wax-candles, which are lighted at dusk by Jeanette the daughter of the landlord. Oil-lamps on the walls care for the remaining light. To the right of the entrance is a wooden staircase leading to the 2nd floor, and thus to the guest rooms. The entrance behind a carpet to the left of the bar leads to the private quarters of the family and personnel.

To every time of the day guests and locals can be found in the bar room. All guests are in the bar room, when the PC's arrive at the inn. And they may get first impressions and can start conversations without any problems. The only local currently present, is the old Louis lapping his soup.

Lobby and Corridor (2)

Room and passageway are only sparsely illuminated through a narrow window. Besides brooms, cloths and pails there is nothing exciting here to find.

Back Room (3)

Apart from particular events stands this room is only open for members of the family, which eat their meals here on holidays or when receiving personal guests. The arrangement exists thus solely of a table, some comfortable chairs as well as a closet with dish, candlesticks etc. Both doors to this room are always bolted.

Kitchen (4)

This is the realm of Nanette, who cares here along with her daughter Claudia and the maid Jeanette for the bodily welfare of the guests. The kitchen differs in its appearance in no way from other tavern kitchens. Numerous pots and pans hang on the walls, bowls and cutlery are housed in numerous shelves, and during the day a delicious meal is often cooking on the stove, which smell expands to into the bar room.

Chamber of the maid (5)

This is the room of the maid Jeanette, who only has a short guest performance in this adventure. The small room is arranged quite tawdry. Embroideries adorn the walls, and in a shelf are found wooden puppets from Jeanette's childhood. Under a loose plank on the floor is a golden ring, whose origin cannot be explained even by the landlord/lady - it is in fact a present the from the false 'priest'.

Staircase (6)

Next to a side door, through which one can leave the lodging on this side, are two wooden stairs, one leading into the cellar and the other to the 2nd floor. All doors getting off from the staircase are usually locked.

Second Floor

Passageway (7)

The landing joins the two staircases leading to the upper floor with each other. All rooms, including those of the landlord/lady, are to be reached through it. In the evening two oil-lamps on the walls care for sufficient lighting.

Claudias rooms (8)

Beside the bed and closet a chest is found here along with a small mirror. Its contents are brushes and for this area rare make up utensils point to the fact, that Claudia is quite aware of her handsome appearance. The fragrance of a flask with perfume essence is blending with the intense 'smell' of a garlic wreath hanging at the window. In a stocking hidden under the mattress some gold crowns, silver shillings and copper pennies can be found.

Bedrooms of the landlord/lady (9)

The arrangement of this room is more sumptuous than the other rooms. At the front of the room stands a double-bed with colourful rural motives. Similarly splendidly is the large oaken closet with the garments of the landlord/lady. The heavy oaken trunk beside has a difficult to pick (CR20) lock. It contains some jewelry of the landlady a box with about 60 gold crowns and silver shillings. Beside that the holiday dishes of the family is found here. The windows of this room is also supplied with a garlic wreath.

Dormitory (10)

This room is only sparsely furnished. Apart from four simple beds and four small trunks (each next to a bed), the room contains nothing – besides a small oil lamp on the wall. As no one of the guests is sleeping here, it can be completely taken over by the PC's. Garlic adorns the window here too.

Guest Room (11)

The arrangement of the room is simple. Apart from chimney, bed, table, chair, trunk, chamber pot and wash-bowl, nothing special is to be found. This is the only single room rentable for a PC, the others are already occupied by the other guests.

Guest Room (12)

The arrangement is like in (1). In this room sleeps Abdul Al'Hazred (see NPC's) from distant Araby. Next to his bed is a small hookah and a rolled up prayer rug leans on the wall. The lock of the trunk is magically reinforced by a spell from Abdul, so it is more resistant against illegal picking attempts.

In the trunk are a couple of valuable hallucinogenic herbs, which Abdul needs for his job. Next to the herbs lies a precious leather bound book – title: 'The seven realms of Dreamland'.

Guest Room (13)

Arrangement like as described in (1). This is the room the of Harun, the silently man-servant of the oriental from room (2). Nothing of interest is in here.

Guest Room (14)

Arrangement like as described in (1). This is the room of the mysterious minstrel Stephan Chaupin. If a PC enters unseen, he/she will find nothing of interest besides dozens of paper slips scribbled with notes. The music texts however confirm the impression, that the minstrel is completely insane!

Guest Room (15)

Arrangement like as described in (1). Here lives the from time to the time letters of indulgence selling mendicant Lazarus. Apart from unwashed garments and some indication, which point to the fact that the monk produces his letters of indulgence himself. Furthermore nothing of interest can be found here, which stands into connection with the mysterious events in the village.

Guest Room (16)

Arrangement like as described in (1). This is the quarter of Perdita, who prepares here in the disguise of a garrulous dealer from Estalia her burglaries. The room has a particularity: It has exactly as guest room (7) a skylight, through which the thief enters unseen into the rooms of the other guests. A PC entering here in absence of the thief, can expose her quickly, as all proofs (stolen property and tools) can be found in the trunk beside the bed.

Guest Room (17)

Arrangement like as described in (1). Also this room has a skylight, over which the grave robber Gerard leaves his room. That the thief from room (6) and Gerard never meet each other during their nightly activities, can be put down to incredible chance - the ways of the gods of destiny are hard to understand for a mortal. PC's entering here will find clues, that Gerard is the grave robber: Dirtied boots and trousers, spade and a pickaxe should be proof enough. Gerard abseils himself behind the house. Even when the PC's have not yet considered a possible skylight, they should at least get the opportunity to find the rope hanging behind the house, in the night when Gerard becomes the victim of the feminine vampire, so that they have the possibility to be the first at the crime scene.

Cellar Room (18)

In this vault is a large wash-tub, a wooden stool as well as a towel, which is exchanged by the maid not until repeated use. Against a few shillings one can get soap and hot water from the kitchen.

Cellar Room (19)

In this at any time well locked vault the reserves of the tavern store. Beside several barrels of wine here are countless bottles of Brandy as well as bags with flour, potatoes, beans and diverse other types of vegetable. In the shelves to the right of the door preserved fruits store.

Stable and barns

In this stable the horses of the present guests are housed. For this purpose the servant ... from a neighbouring farm helps from time to time. The remaining works are made by Claudia and Jeanette. To the time a magnificent black stallion is found here only, which belongs Abdul Al'Hezrad.

Morr-Temple

The small stone building, surrounded by a grave-yard, is proverbially a refuge of quietness. Actually the overgrown 'god's acre' with its partially in the earth sunken gravestones (especially at night and storm) doesn't inspire confidence, however the temple makes a well cared impression. To the time the 'priest' David performs here his duties.

Holy hall

In this room the mass is said, burials undertaken (therefore in the later course of the adventure also the dead are laid out) and weddings executed. The hall has seats for about 30 believers. At the front of the room is a large pulpit is found, behind which a statue of Morr stands. The simple population prefer the stylised symbol of the dove, a simple cross.

Each visitor triggers with the opening the entrance portal a bell through a wire in the living space of the priest, so that he can always intercept anyone coming into the temple...

Vestry

Here only relatively few objects are found. So a container for holy water along with whisks, a ceremonial robe, a valuable illustrated Morr-bible and various further religious utensils.

Living space of the priest

The room is only of modest arrangement and besides a bed, closet, Morr-painting and a table with wash-tub and pertinent pitcher nothing particular else. Under a board in the floor a cavity is found however, which contains some informative things, as there would be: magic chalk, a furnished cloth with black magic signs, a ritual dagger and a book with notes from the Necromancer, from whose content conclusions can be taken on the sinister plan of the false priest. From equal interest for the PC's might be an under it lying volume. It is several

hundred years old, originates from a priest named Etienne Periond and describes the castle of the duke. A passage is underlined, which mentions an escape-tunnel to the west of the castle. It should become clear however, that a search would last at least a week due to the inaccurate description

Working Room

This room is filled out before all due to a large desk under the window of the room. In the interior parchment and writing utensils can be found. Also the false priest writes here his speeches, which he must read in front of the locals. Additionally a large fund of works from the time of his predecessor is at his disposal, rolled up in some shelves. Principal item of the left behind notes is the written down village chronicle, in which all dates of birth, wedding and death of the locals – and that over a period of many hundred years – are written down. The 'priest' will give it to the PC's, if they ask for it. All passages however, which could become dangerous to the Necromancer, and/or passages betraying too much to the adventurers too early are of course paled up to illegibility, and/or were simply torn out by the Necromancer. Especially the latter is inexplicable to the 'priest' and is led back to the time, when the temple was unattended for some months ...

Events – a timetable

Night 0 (Full Mannslieb)

The false priest has completed all preparations and calls for the dark powers, so that they support him in his project. After that he looks for an innocent peasant girl as a sacrifice, murders her and drains her blood, which he requires for the conjuring at the next evening.

The prophecy begins itself to fulfill. The announced headless herald thunders the first time into the village, remains in the market place for a couple of moments and rushes then in the direction of the castle ruin. The locals are paralysed with fear and fatalistic begin to prepare themselves for a dark time.

Day 0

The girl is discovered dead in the village. The corpse displays clear bite marks of a vampire and is almost bloodless. The 'priest' let the alleged vampire being staked and cares for a fast burial. The tavern fills with guests in the afternoon.

Night 1

Arrival of the PC's. As the ferry doesn't cross the river this late, the PC's are forced to go into the inn. The whole evening over they have the chance to get into contact with the other guests. Present is also the village elder, the old Louis, who instructs the companions about the events on the eve, tell them further about the legend of the Red Duke and maybe even other rumours from the list.

The storm becomes worse all the time, the landlord/-lady increasingly more restless, when at midnight almost every window of the bar room crash open due to a mighty gust and the thundering of hooves become hearable through the storm (the false priest further his conjuring). An uncanny heat lightening covers the horizon, and clearly visible lightnings strike the castle ruin above the village. Meanwhile the eerie horseman is near and remains some moments well visibly in the village center. Then the neighing of a horse resounds, and the rider thunders further into the direction of the ruin.

The old Louis sees and hears nothing of the excitement. He has fallen asleep over the wine, which he became spent for his stories. Since he cannot be send home, the maid Jeanette leads him into her room, where he stays the remainder of the night.

When also in the remaining tavern it becomes quiet, the nightly activities of different figures begin. The false priest attracts Jeanette from her room and kills her, to get her blood. The fearless grave-robber Gerard proceeds secretly to the cemetery and breaks open the grave of the former mayor Pierre in the hope, to find here the last of the three keys. However against his expectation the grave is, apart from the corpse of the man, empty. The third figure, which progresses in the darkness, is the thief in the tavern. He breaks into both the monks room as well as into the dormitory, where he facilitates his victims of a good part of their cash. Meanwhile the storm rages especially in the western part of the country so greatly, that the Mercal steps over the banks and cannot be crossed by ferry the next days, because of the rapid current.

Day 1

The day begins this time with two awful incidents: The maid Jeanette is discovered bled white in the barn, and in the cemetery is to be mourned an opened grave. If the adventurers show interest in the incidents, the locals, including the 'priest', will be gratefully about their support.

Latter just because to hear what the foreigners will find out and undertake. Additionally he, as well as the adventurers, doesn't know who could have broken open the grave.

In the afternoon, possibly when the PC's progress on the way to the castle ruin, they should make the acquaintance of the firewood collecting girl Julia. Due to Julia they can come into contact with her mother Laura, who is the village midwife, secretly however she is feared as a witch, which "is in league with the wolves".

Night 2

While the storm begins to rage again, the eerie events of yesterday's night repeat themselves. Heat lightening covers the horizon, lightnings strike into the silhouette of the castle ruin, the headless herald approaches from nowhere and rages off into the direction of the ruin (the false "priest" executes the next to the last act of the conjuring).

Gerard, still convinced, that the key lies in a grave of a member of the died out family d'Arden, has been able to find out in the meanwhile, that the daughter of the former mayor was also buried on the cemetery.

As he opens the grave in the protection of the night and quite amazingly finds the completely preserved corpse of a girl, he is already finished. He greedily tears off the chain with the silver cross from the neck of the supposed corpse and in this way speaks his death sentence!

The starved vampire Nanette awakens from her long unholy slumber, jumps upon the Gerard and drains him of the last drop of blood. After that she takes both in his property located golden key and proceeds to the castle ruin, where she will expect the renewed arrival of her master.

Shortly before that the false priest has arrived in the village again and looks for a third girl, whom he can tap the necessary blood. He dedicates the cemetery no attention, so that he does not notice the renewed events in the cemetery. GM's with a sense for drama could, if it can be made logically somehow, determine Julia as the third sacrifice. The chance for the priest to take a random local girl are by far higher however.

Day 2

Just as the adventurers have perceived, that the river is not yet passable, they here the new bad news: A further grave was broken open, besides a further girl became the victim of the supposedly revived Red Duke. Regardless of this a real vampire haunts now through the locality (the bitten Gerard) - presupposed the PC's didn't get on him in the meantime

The events might capsize on this day, and it lies from now in the activities of the PC's, whether the resurrection of the Duke can be prevented. At the latest to this point the GM should give the players the means in the hand, with which their characters can overcome the castle haunt (see below).

Now the point in time has come also, when the old Louis from itself tell about the old ... relative of the ex-bailiff. From this the PC's can get the third key. If they overcome the freed vampire Nanette, the remaining keys will also fall into their hands – nothing stands in the way of an advance into the vault of the Duke. The players should not yet have uncovered the doings of the 'priest', for he will try in his false kindness to put some rotten eggs in the PC's nest. Besides he is still required for the following showdown.

Night 3

The night of decision: If the characters do not forestall the conjurer, the once more roused to life Red Duke will hold a bloody crop under the locals. It is to be feared, that the adventurers don't have the power to oppose the arch-vampire and his minions.

Rumours and Clues

The work of the PC's will exist to a large element therein to find out what is up with the strange doings in the village. They must recognise, that first of all two entirely different acts occur in the village, which later fuse together into a large symbiosis. Some rumours and signs for found clues are follow:

Rumours

- The 'Headless Herald' announces the renewed arrival of the Red Duke (*see also above-mentioned legend / true*)
- The castle ruin is haunted by the spirit of Caroline. She was the sister of the Red Duke and plunged herself in despair from the battlements, when her brother wanted to make her to a creature of the night. She will haunt the ruin until her brother is forever banished into the realm of death (*true*).
- Laura is especially helpfully to women and priests (*wrong*).
- The servant Francois is the greatest casanova in the village (*true – even though he never had a date with the Jeanette*)

- Two days ago a grave was broken open in the neighbouring village Dumar on the other side of the Morceaux (*true*).
- Only by direct inquiry: The midwife is a powerful witch, wooing with the dire wolves. It is rumoured, that her daughter is the unholy offspring of a contact with such a beast: And even that she herself is a werewolf (*true and wrong*).
- Only by direct inquiry: The former mayor and bailiff has a still living relative. The old Christine is now with about 90 years by far the oldest living local in the village (*true*).
- The wolves in the surroundings band together and become more aggressive all the time (*true*).

Clues

- The PC's should notice (at the latest) at the second female 'vampire-victim', that something is wrong. As the 'bite-marks' at the throat of the victims are made by a metal instrument (kind of a two-prong knife), which the 'priest' uses to deceit and frighten the villagers), the girls are indeed not genuine vampires. Neither increase the corpses pointed eyeteeth, nor do they crumble to dust in the daylight. Even if the dead are staked as a precaution, there is no reaction to perceive - completely unlike the true vampire (see Gerard). As the corpses nevertheless show a high loss of blood, the PC's should get the thought, that perhaps another person is interested in the blood.
- The graves: Here it is important, that the PC's recognise, that the first grave was evidently searched (cuts of the spade, scattered bones etc.). Also at the second grave the robber was surely looking for something - was then surprised however. Knowledge herewith: There is one (or several) object(s) to find. The (hopefully soon real) dead Gerard shows, in addition to the punctured bite-marks, welts at the neck, which point to the fact that some kind of chain or the like was torn off him. It was the leather string holding the two golden keys, which Gerard had collected meanwhile. Tracks of bare feet, which lead over the cemetery, point to the fact that the 'corpse' has moved evidently in direction of the castle ruin. It should be clear by now, that there is at least one true vampire.
- If the PC's get wind of the likewise broken open a grave in the neighbouring village Dijon, it limits the possible culprits exceedingly, if the PC's inquire, who of the strange guests in the inn came from the other side of the river. The ferryman Leon can give information here. Four persons came from the other side: the arabian Abdul Al'Hezrad, his servant Harun, the minstrel Stephan as well as the adventurer Gerard.
- As the old Louis slept in the maids chamber during 'night 1', he can tell, that he awoke sometime in the night due to a knock at the window. Totally intoxicated by the liquor however, he fell asleep again. A clue, that Jeanette knew her murderer...

The castle ruin

Approximately two kilometres from the village, once looming above Mercal, stand the remnants of castle Chantrau. The castle from where the Red Duke terrorised the area, was once constructed on a huge Rock. Chantrau was seen as almost impregnable. Only one side was to be reached over a drawbridge, behind the remaining walls yawned the abyss.

Strangely enough the condition of the ruin is better, as it would be expected after over a millennium. It appears as if the ruin is also incapable to die, as long as the Red Duke is not destroyed completely. The mystical mist surrounding the ruin seems to keep it out of real time and for PC's entering the ruin time runs slower, too. From the castle only the foundations are still remaining. They are blackened due to the burning and almost all wooden constructions collapsed into themselves. Weed meanwhile spread a way through the ruins of the castle, however even at the surface the sparse plant growing doesn't get much sunlight. A mysterious mist lies over the landscape, which withstands even the strongest winds.

Castle track

The old track can only be hardly recognised as such, since the adjacent forest grew over the terrain within the past centuries. The more frightening is the trail, which can be found in front of the moat: About 20 meters ahead of the castle ruin clear tracks of a horseman can be seen. However directly in front of the moat they end as abruptly as they started. One has almost the feeling, as if the horseman has emerged from nowhere and then disappeared to nowhere...

Moat (A)

There is no other possibility for the PC's then to force their way through the about five meters deep ditch, which is stuffed with debris and the remnants of the old drawbridge.

Forecourt (B)

The once quite stately forecourt with his three meter high walls offers a scene of desolation. On the left side of the fallen apart gate-house stands the collapsed remnants of a burned wooden building. The outer wall is sooty and has like the inner wall numerous damaged parts. The yard leads with rising level to the former servant's house and from the rubble loom here and there blackened beam-stumps. In the back part of the forecourt are the remnants of the old storage as well as a burned out watchtower.

As soon as the PC's enter the castle ruin, a mysterious veil of mist begins to thicken before their eyes. Simultaneously an icy breath of wind begins, which abates as the mist allows a visual range of only a few meters. Suddenly a softened frisking and cheeping is to be heard from the masonry - then the PC's are attacked by a swarm of rats.

Under the ruins of the burned out tower one of the entrances to the underground vaults remains. In fact it would require at least three hours work to clear away all the rubble and to clear the entrance.

Internal defences (C)

As the PC's step through the decayed main gate, they can see the eerie shadows of more rubble looming on the right and on the left side out of the mist. These were the former stables and the burned down barracks. Only weakly recognisable is the sinister silhouette of the former main building, as the fog hinders the view heavily. More clearly, because in better condition, visible is the dark shadow of the keep, which towers threatening into the sky.

As the PC's still consider in which direction to proceed, they suddenly hear a threatening whispering voice somewhere in the mist: "Brrooooootherrr...!" Simultaneously a pale white glowing can be perceived at the level of the main building, with two red-hot glowing points at the head. Before the PC's can undertake anything, the uncanny spook hovers to the party. It is the eerie transparent apparition of a woman, hovering in the intruders direction with in the mist fluttering long hair and stretched out hands. Like glowing coals shine the insane flickering eyes of the spectre in the hollow-cheeked, dead-pale face. "Brooooootherrr!" resounds again the despair and horror causing wail. It is the spirit of Caroline, the sister of the duke.

If the PC's have any means to expel or banish (it will reappear at the next dusk) the spirit (ie. magic weapons or protective charms (see NPC)), there is nothing standing in the way of further investigation. Somewhere in the ruins the main building another is another buried entrance to the underground realm of the duke (see forecourt). In this regard the PC's can find an easier way inside the keep.

If one of the PC's pays attention to tracks from the vampire Nanette (who fled from the cemetery), he can find bare footprints leading in direction of the keep. The about 2 m high lying entrance is of course hard to reach, because of the fallen in stair. However the vampire has taken the work off the PC's, clearing away the rubble above a hidden trapdoor. This entrance has to be entered cautiously. In the remnants of the former mezzanines have nested two dozen large bats in the meantime, which will dive down onto the party and attack as if due to a secret command, as soon as they open the stony trapdoor.

The domain of the vampire

Under the stony trapdoor is a wooden staircase. It will crash, if more than two persons step onto it (3 yard drop). This basement has no other exit. In the room are wooden chests with decomposed arrows and bolts as well as clay amphoras with pitch and oil. In a corner several rocks the size of a head were stacked one on the other and next to it a stack of firewood. It is pitch black in the room, the air smells mustily.

The tracks of the vampire get lost on the bare stone floor. After some search and rapping of the walls however it is possible to find a secret entrance in the eastern wall.

Secret entrance (2)

It is sort of a tunnel 1,50 m high and of equal width. The air is damp and stale. The passageway was recently used by a person and ends at a secret door in an above-mentioned pattern.

Store room (3)

This circular room appears to have no certain purpose. In the light of the torches old torches, chests and pots with an indefinable black coloured content (long ago decomposed food) are recognisable. Behind a warped wooden door a staircase leads upwards.

Everywhere on the floor are numerous cockroaches, which will flee before the gleam of light from the torches. Nevertheless the PC's cannot avoid that their steps are now and then accompanied by a repulsive cracking...

Corridor (4)

The stony corridor has a height of 1,80 m and a width of 1,50 m and two more stable wooden doors. At its end a stony stair is found, which leads to the buried entrance of the burned out watchtower in the forecourt.

Common room(5)

Next to a table and two chairs, there are two burned down torches in this chamber in fixtures at the wall. Under the table lies an old wine pitcher.

Torture chamber (6)

If the PC's climb down the stony steps of the vault, they make acquaintance with the torture chamber. Beside the obligatory stretch bench the torch light tears other cruel instruments of torture out of the darkness: an iron maiden standing in the corner, estalian boots, head- and thumbscrew, a basin with black coal pieces, curling tongs and some others.

The iron maiden is anchored firmly at the rear wall. With a spring in the internal of this instrument of horror the entire rear wall can be tipped back, and a further secret passageway is revealed.

Another door in this vault leads into the cell section. All the cell doors are wide open and the cells are empty apart from some rotten straw pieces.

Secret passageway (7)

This passage is also very low; the air smells stale. After a few meters the way forks. One way ends in front of a black door and the other leads to a further secret door, which leads into the old wine cellar of the castle.

Laboratory (8)

As the PC's push open this door, they look into an alchemistical lab, which was built by the ancestor of the Red Duke. On warped oaken tables are numerous alchemistical tools, which are altogether covered by a thick layer of dust. There are retorts, glass pistons, serpentine bent metal pipes, three-legs and oil-burners. On shelves stand diverse mortars, bottles, glasses and boxes; the few old volumes and yellowed parchments, which can be found here, decay to dust at the first touch.

From all the ingredients in the lab none has endured the ravages of time. The PC's might discover only little useful things. A wizard or alchemist PC can find out however, that there was done research in black magic.

Wine cellar (9)

Beside shelves with countless dusty bottles of aquitainian wine, there are three large barrels set up here, of which one is hollow. In it the entrance to the just described secret passage is found in classic manner. Two burned down torch stumps are in iron fixtures at the walls. The whole vault is streaked by veil like spider webs, which were torn apart in great haste in the direction of the single door.

Passageway (10)

The passage has the same extents as already described (see corridor). Two iron doors branch off, one of them is the magically locked door with the three locks, which can only be opened with the three golden keys. At the end (or beginning) of the passage is a stony staircase, whose entrance once lay in the mansion and lies now buried under the rubble of the building. The opposite passage side leads to the door to the wine cellar, through which the PC's will probably enter this part of the castle basement.

Vault (11)

The door can be pushed open without problems. Behind it is a four meter high vault, from which ceiling uncanny cobwebs mysteriously cover the whole vault. In the walls niches are found, in which the mummies of the members of the family is buried. Above each is a metal sign with names, date of birth and death. Principal items of the vault are however three dark coffins, situated on granite blocks. Two of the coffins are open, the lids lie since an evidently long time beside them. In their inside are the decayed remnants of two vampires, who were staked many centuries ago by the three courageous villagers from Mercal. The lid of the third coffin is closed.

On the floor lie the scattered bones and dust of the third vampire, cast out of the coffin in apparent haste. In said coffin the vampire Nanatte lies, waiting there till dusk. The GM should avoid a big fight here, but rather give the PC's the chance, to surprise and stake a vampire in its coffin in the classic manner. Of course she will rage in defense, however she will certainly have no chance against the combined might of the PC's!

In the back part of the vault a well camouflaged secret door can be discovered, however it can only be opened from the other side. With the two keys carried by the vampire, the PC's are in the position to open the door with the three locks in the passageway in front of the vault.

The thrice locked door (12)

This strange door is composed of pitch-black oak. Three iron bands enclose the door, each having a large gilded lock on the left side. The door is protected with a strong magic spell, which averts any tries to open, which are not made with the three magic golden keys. The passage behind the door is of the extents. If possible the GM should arrange, that the PC's arrive here shortly before midnight. If they approach the bend of the passage they perceive a summoning voice from the room lying before them. Hurry now...

The hiding-place of the Red Duke (13)

This strangely laid out vault full of corners has only a single item of furniture; the sarcophagus of the Red Duke. In the moment the PC's push open the door, the Necromancer pours the steaming content of a cup into the opened coffin; the last third of the required blood for the vampires resurrection. The false priest drops any masquerade and, according to the situation, plays amused or incensed his dirty tricks. He begins with the activation of his amulet (see NPC's) and puts itself hereafter prepares to do battle against the remaining PC's with his sword and poisoned dagger.

In the interim the dust in the sarcophagus gets simmering blisters: The Red Duke awakens to life. It does not last long and a bloody hand with long sharp fingernails gropes its way scratching over one of the sides of the sarcophagus ...

In a corner of the vault lies the magical silver stake, with which the vampire was already killed once. The PC's task is to pierce the vampire with this stake again - possibly before the Duke has completed his resurrection fully. The Necromancer will do everything to hinder the PC's from destroying the resurrecting Vampire.

Besides the door, from where the PC's came, the vault has more secret doors. One leads into the family vault, one into the treasure vault and the last into the secret escape tunnel, which ends deep inside the forest. Through it the Necromancer has entered the hiding-place of the Duke.

Treasure vault (14)

As Gerard, the pounded grave robber, supposed, there actually exists a still undetected treasure vault under the castle. There are only few valuables, as the ruling dynasty of the Dukes ancestors impoverished quite early. The chamber contains three large, with iron bands strengthened chests, which are mostly empty. The PC's can find two cups of solid gold, a diadem with jewels, some silvery rings and a handful of coins worth altogether about 600 GCs.

In a simple weapon stock at the end wall of the room is next to all kinds of useless, rusted weapons the enchanted blade of the duke. His scarlet armour is set up here likewise.

A biting remark to the end:

The GM should read through plot scenes and NPC descriptions a couple of times before starting to play. The adventure lives among other things from making the characters uncertain due to the many sub-plots. Every time the PC's line a certain suspect up for the kill, the GM should pull the next trump from his sleeve. Is the insane minstrel the secret adversary? What kind of game plays the arabian? Is his servant Harun a person at all? Is the monk really so harmless, as he seems? And what makes the estalian trader in this area? The intention of these events is it, to divert first of all from Gerard, which behaves as quietly and inconspicuously as possible. At the latest if the players have looked through Gerards motives, it will become clear, that there is still a second person in the background pulling the threads.

To preserve the true identity of the false priest to the end, very good role-play in the truest sense of the word is necessary. The best for the GM embodying the Necromancer is to imagine him to be really a friendly and helpful priest, who frankly strive to help the characters. Despite all concerns and clues pointing to the priest (oracle of the witch, no local etc.), he should not be suspected. In case of emergency it is possible to scatter the concerns of the PC's with distractions from other NPC's or that the 'priest' reacts in certain situations absolutely not as would be expected by the PC's. Consider the devilish cleverness of the man. For him the appearance of the PC's is solely an entertaining interlude. As far as he behaves credible, absolutely nothing can happen to - on the contrary, he is always a few steps ahead of the PC's, he has the upper hand of the 'game' at any time. By the way, Renar can rely upon the villagers at any given time. They will oppose any PC's trying to assault their 'priest'.

Dramatis Personae

Jean and Miriam Clochard Innkeeper (Servant)

The two owners of the lodging are quite 'tough' built Bretonnians doing their duties duly. While Jean is a more silent contemporary, who worries before all about the quietness in his lodging, Miriam always likes to chat with the patrons. When she has grown fond of someone, the one often gets an extra portion of her savory meals. Jean is by the way the current mayor of Mercal - an office, that doesn't require much engagement until now. The times are long gone, in which the office of the mayor and bailiff was taken over by a knight (like Pierre).

Jean:

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	32	32	3	4*	7	38	1	43	36	34	33	36	36

Alignment: Neutral

Skills: Animal Care, Brewing, Cook, Drive Cart, Ride – Horse, Very Resilient*

Miriam:

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	29	32	3	3	6	40	1	44	29	37	32	37	38

Alignment: Neutral

Skills: Animal Care, Blather, Cook, Identify Plant

Jeanette Clochard Barmaid (Servant)

Jeanette, the landlords daughter with the smouldering eyes is quite a mystery for most of the villagers. They can't make her out. Under normal circumstances the young waitress should already be married for long, however Jeanette is very choosy. Perhaps one of the adventurers attains her favour ...

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	29	29	3	2	6	38	1	38	29	33	31	36	38

Alignment: Neutral

Skills: Animal Care, Cook, Identify Plants

The maid Claudia Barmaid (Servant)

Claudia has only a short guest performance in this story. Soon already she will rest in the arms of Morr ... Claudias undoing is her love for the new eloquent 'priest' of the village. She knows this love is forbidden, however the Necromancer cared in time for the impression, that he returns her affection. In the night of her death the both had been arranged a rendezvous in the barn. Only few minutes later Claudia becomes the second victim of the satanic Necromancer.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	29	32	3	3	6	36	1	42	29	32	29	34	36

Alignment: Neutral

Skills: Animal Care, Cook, Identify Plants

Stephan Chaupin Entertainer - Troubadour

The dark-haired bard with the insane flickering look carries to each time of the day a pitch-black lute with him. The only thing fascinating him, are 'songs getting into your blood ...'. Other themes do not interest him, and paradoxically no one hears him – even when requested – playing his lute a single time.

Stephan is insane. Due to an unknown circumstance he is possessed, to find a certain song. A song, which exists only in his imagination. Stephan is frightening and dangerous at the same time. Repeatedly he will approach one of the PC's unseen from behind and address him/her softly whispering about the 'song of blood'. This may present the one or other only goose pimples – he/she is warned against making fun of bard. In this case his sick brain is even capable to murder ...

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	34	32	3	3	7	42*	1	42	34	32	29	34	34

Alignment: Insane

Skills: Acute Hearing, Lightning Reflexes*, Musicianship, Read/Write, Sing

Trappings: Lute, dagger

Lazarus, from the order of the blessed Simon Embezzler (ex-Thief)

The mendicant is an absolute dear. With his stomach hanging over the belt and the plait hair round the head, he nowhere rouses great excitement. Especially since his belief exists only in the imagination – he is in truth a clever crook. He lies like mad and is always prepared, to sell letters of indulgence ('issued by the holy mother herself...') – if he doesn't go from table to table with his collection bag. He faces the events in the village timorous.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	32	29	2	4	6	34	1	45	32	34	30	32	38

Alignment: Neutral

Skills: Concealment – Urban, Evaluate, Palm Object, Read/Write, Secret Language – Thieves' Tongue, Secret Signs – Thieves' Signs, Silent Move – Rural, Silent Move – Urban

Trappings: Staff, Sack, Writing Equipment, falsified letters of indulgence, Collection Bag, Robes, Religious Symbol, dagger

Abdul Al'Hazred Illusionist lvl.1 (ex-Wizard lvl.1, ex-Wizards Apprentice)

Abdul comes from the caliphate Al-Haikk in remote Araby and looks like a typical man of his country: carefully wrapped turban, dark skin, stinging look, light caftan. He is for (perhaps too high fantasy, but anyway most of the spell ingredients are of this calibre) a particular reason in this godforsaken area: He is interested in vampire tooth and will pay an appropriate price. Abdul needs the tooth as a spell ingredient for a rare spell. He found ancient notes in his homeland from the time of the crusades and after some further investigations got onto the events surrounding the Duke. Since Abdul is an intelligent and learned wizard, he quickly realised what kind of fate overtook the Duke and travelled to Aquitaine.

Beside the magic, Abdul is also a master of rare herbs and drugs. He always has his hookah with him and can sell mind altering substances to the PC's (possibly even Potions) or exchange them. But also customary medicinal herbs are found in his repertoire.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	32	30	3	3	8	38	1	40	34	48	36	40	33

Alignment: Neutral

MP: 10

Skills: Arcane Language – Illusionist/Magick, Astronomy, Cast Spells-Illusionist Battle Magic lvl.1, Evaluate, Etiquette, Herb Lore, Identify Plants, Magic Sense, Rune Lore, Scroll Lore, Secret Language – Classical, Speak Additional Language – Old Worlder

Spells: Marsh Lights, Sounds, Immunity from Poison, Steal Mind, Bewilder Foe, Camouflage Illusion, Clone Image

Trappings: Caftan, Turban, hookah, dagger, sabre

Harun Servant

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	42	30	4*	3	8	44	1	40	34	33	34	44	30

Alignment: Neutral

Skills: Animal Care, Cook, Dodge Blow, Drive Cart, Etiquette, Ride – Horse, Very Strong*

Trappings: Caftan, Turban, hookah, dagger, club

Perdita Doncello Burglar (ex-Thief)

The wiry woman with the raven-black hair pose as an estalian trader, who was sent to Bretonnia by her father, to set up new trade relations here. In truth she is an expelled member of the thieves-guild in Bilbali trying to make her fortune in Bretonnia. Her plan: To gather as much gold from the other patrons as possible.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	34	37	3	3	7	36	1	46	32	34	35	35	36

Alignment: Neutral

Skills: Concealment – Urban, Evaluate, Pick Lock, Scale Sheer Surface, Secret Language – Thieves’ Tongue, Secret Signs – Thieves’ Signs, Silent Move – Rural, Silent Move – Urban, Spot Trap

Trappings: Club, Sack, Black-hooded tunic, Lockpicking tools, Rope – 10 yards, dagger

Gerard, the adventurer Grave Robber (ex-Rat Catcher)

The grave-robber is mentioned sufficiently in the adventure. He will behave as inconspicuous as possible, to not endanger his plan. Gerard wears rough leather clothing and is armed at any given time with a short-sword. If bitten by Nanette and not staked thereafter, he will change into a vampire likewise.

Human profile:

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
5	37	32	3	2	7	42	1	38	34	34	42	34	36

Vampire profile:

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
5	57	52	6	5	22	62	2	48	54	54	52	54	56

Alignment: Neutral/Evil

Skills: Animal Trainer – dog, Concealment Urban, Immunity to Disease, Immunity to Poison, Set Trap, Silent Move Rural, Silent Move Urban, Specialist Weapon – Sling, Spot Trap

Trappings: Black Cloak, Short-Sword, Large Sack, Lantern, Spade, Leather Jerkin

Nanette Vampire

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	65	62	6	6	23	64	3	49	52	56	54	56	62

Alignment: Evil

Skills: Charm; Dodge Blow; Etiquette; Heraldry; Magic Sense; Seduction

Renar Tranchée

The false priest of the god Morr is in truth a sorcerer, who has interrupted his study quite early. Since then he has dedicated himself exclusively to necromancy, wherein he has developed to a master of the subject. Despite his specialisation, there are still a few traditional spells in his repertoire, which can be of great use in his plan. He will give the seemingly most dangerous PC a medallion on the way, which was allegedly given to him by a magician of his home-city. It is a silvery pane, which displays a pentagram and some indefinable runes. His effect lies, according to the words of this magician, therein to avert creatures of the darkness. In truth a single command from his mouth is enough, to trigger a stored 'Hand of Dust' spell on the wearer.

In his property is in addition a dagger, which is prepared with 3 doses Black Lotus blade-venom, as well as a short-sword. Renar is perfectly able to fight with two weapons simultaneously (short-sword and dagger [thus he gains at extra Attack, which he may use either to parry or to attack]).

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	38	36	4	4	9	42	1	42	42	54	38	44	32

Alignment: Evil

MP: 21

Penalties: Animal Aversion (Step1), Morbidity, 3 Insanity Points

Skills: Arcane Language – Magick; Arcane Language – Necromancy; Blather; Cast Spells – Necromantic Battle Magic level 1&2; Charm; Demon Lore; Etiquette; Heraldry; Herb Lore; Identify Plants; Identify Undead; Magical Awareness; Magic Sense; Meditation; Read/Write; Rune Lore; Scroll Lore; Secret Language – Classical; Undead Lore

Spells: Petty: Gift of Tongues, Glowing Light, Magic Alarm, Marsh Lights, Produce Small Creature, Sleep
Ba. 1: Aura of R., Fire Ball, Steal Mind, Strength of Combat, Dispirit, Detect Magic, Leg Breaking
Ba. 2: Cause Frenzy, Cause Hatred, Cause Panic
Ne. 1: Summon Skeletons, Summon Skeleton Champion, Hand of Death
Ne. 2: Control Undead, Extend Control, Stop Instability, Summon Skeleton Minor Hero

Trappings:

Short-sword, dagger, 3doses of Black Lotus blade venom, dark cloak

Spell Jewel: 'Raise Dead'

Liber-har-ak-Iman:

Renar carries the legendary Liber-har-ak-Iman. This book is the reason why Renar fell from grace and began his study of the dark art of Necromancy. The book is written in Arcane Language – Necromancy and counts as an Grimoire containing the following spells: Summon Skeleton Champion, Summon Skeletons, Control Undead, Extend Control, Stop Instability, Life in Death, Summon Skeleton Horde, Total Control.

If the GM uses the rules from Warpstone Issue 12, the following applies:

Background: This tome was written by the Arabian Necromancer Har'ak Iman, said to be the most depraved man to have ever lived. His vileness radiates from the book and sickens all readers.

Description: The book measure 12 by 10 inches. It is about 500 pages long, and has an encumbrance value of 60.

Language: A.L. – Necromancy / Nehekhâran / Ancient Arabian

Complexity: -15

Insanity Rating: 5

Disorders: Alignment Change – One step towards Chaos, Cannibalism, Depressions, Megalomania, Morbidity, Necrophilia, Necrophobia, Nightmares, Paranoia.

Contents:

D100 Lore

01-25 School of Necromancy

26-50 Skills: Demon Lore, History – Nehekhâra / Ancient Araby, Identify Undead, Manufacture Drugs, Theology – Nehekhâra / Ancient Araby, Undead Lore

51-75 1D3 randomly generated Necromantic Magic spell (level 1-4)

76-90 1D3 randomly generated Battle Magic spell (level 1-3)

91-00 School of Battle Magic – maximum level 2

The old Louis

With his 85 years the cranky Louis is the village elder of Mercal, for the locals distinguish between the male and the female elder ...

The GM should present the whimsical old one with his snarling voice, his love for rumours and legends and before all liquor as a genuine and stereotypical villager. Even if he should not be taken for serious by the PC's in the beginning, he is one of the most important sources of information for the PC's. Additionally he 'nearly' becomes witness, as the maid Claudia is addressed by her murderer.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
3	24	27	2	3	6	34	1	36	32	36	32	34	36

Alignment: Neutral

Skills: Consume Alcohol, Story Telling

The old Christine Villager

The last surviving relative of the former mayor Pierre is this 90 year old woman. She is sick and bound to the house of her widowed daughter-in-law. In their property is the third golden key. She knows of the door with the three locks and can give the PC's some interesting information in this regard. She will give them the artefact, if the PC's behave well and inspire confidence.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
2	17	19	1	2	5	32	1	33	34	40	32	44	40

Alignment: Neutral

Skills: Animal Care, Cook, History, Identify Plants

Laura and Julia Coucheuse Druidic Priest lvl.1 (ex-Druid, ex-Herbalist)

Laura is a 40 year old herb woman, who earns her living among other things as a midwife, healer and fortune teller. Indeed she is afraid to show her abilities openly in front of the locals. Together with her daughter Julia she lives lone, drawn back life in an askew cottage near the forest.

Twelve years ago some robber knights settled in the forest, terrorising the village and raping Julia. The witch cast a spell, binding the wolves of the surroundings to herself and incited them on the band of scoundrels, who were killed altogether. Julia originates from this rape, from which nobody in the village knows. The herb woman is the 'witch dancing with wolves' for the locals.

In truth Laura loses day by day more influence, which she recently still had over the wolves. She is assured, that the Red Duke indeed revives again. She further knows more about Caroline the castle haunt, than the villagers. If the PC's ask her kindly for it, she will give them a once working amulet, that expels the spook for a day (until next dusk). The PC's can learn the following, if they agree to have their fortune read (same result if one of the PC's successfully uses the Divining Skill): 'Sometimes a young pigeon/crow flies to the place of his determination, however often hides under his plumage a black dragon!' (allusion to the false priest in the village).

Laura:

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	32	32	3	4	8	38	1	43	34	48	38	46	44

Alignment: Neutral

MP: 9 (Wolf Familiar)

Skills: Animal Care, Arcane Language - Druidic/Magick, Cast Spells, Charm Animal (wolves only), Concealment Rural, Divination, Heal Wounds, Herb Lore, Identify Plant, Magical Awareness, Palmistry, Prepare Poisons, Secret Signs - Druid

Spells: Curse, Glowing Light, Remove Curse, Sleep, Cure Light Injury, Zone of Hiding, Animal Mastery, Cure Poison, Heal Animal

Julia:

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	23	28	2	3	4	36	1	46	29	38	28	35	38

Alignment: Good

Skills: Animal Care, Concealment Rural, Flee!, Identify Plant

Caroline, the castle haunt

Caroline is actually the former sister the Red Duke. She plunged herself off the castle battlements, as her brother wanted to make her to a creature of the night. Shortly before the jump she swore revenge: She will only rest, when her brother is forever swept from the face of the Old World. If the spirit was first of all a warning voice for all the ignorant guests, who were invited by the Duke, this changed quite soon. Carolines spirit became more and more confused – since then she sees each intruder in the castle as her brother and attacks. A touch of the spook is equal to a shower of ice-cold water. Caroline will be only be released from her torment, if the dust of the Red Duke is scattered in all directions.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
6	33	0	0	4	17	30	2	-	18	18	18	18	24

Physique: The haunt appears as a spectral, translucent humanoid figure often looking similar to a specter or banshee. A pale white, misty illumination always surrounds this ethereal being, which can approach with frightening speed.

Psychological Traits: Haunts are *subject to instability* outside their bounded area, but are immune to all other psychology rules and cannot be forced to leave combat. They cause *fear* in living creatures.

Alignment: Neutral

Special Rules: Haunts cannot be damaged by non-magical weapons. In combat, they do not cause Wound damage, but a character hit by a Haunt has to take a *terror* test or flee from combat. Haunts may pass through solid objects, such as walls, without penalty. It is said there exist haunts, which can project a cry that causes pain to other creatures, usually terrifying or enraging unintelligent victims.

Lord Falk, the Headless Herald

The uncanny horseman is Lord Falk of Castle Reces, once a powerful knight in the service of the Baron Louis, until one day in fit of jealousy he murdered a priestess of Myrmidia. His retainers beheaded him while asleep and burned his castle to the ground, but his armour survived, horribly blackened and animated by his ferocious will. Now as a wight he is the captain and herald of the Red Duke, cursed to fight an eternal battle for him. At the beginning of the adventure he is fully ethereal (magic points and Strength zero) and carries his head in one of his hands, however when the point of the Red Dukes resurrection comes, he and his horse will again assume a corporeal form with head upon his shoulders. In his ethereal form he will not attack, except in self defence. If he is slain in this state he is banished until next midnight, when he will reappear to haunt the village.

Profile in ethereal state (steed and rider count as one creature):

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
8*	44	0	0	4	17	40	3	18	66	29	66	66	-

Profile in corporeal state (steed and rider count as different creatures):

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	57	0	5	5	17	40	3	18	66	29	66	66	-
8	17	0	3	3	5	20	1	-	18	18	18	18	-

Psychological Traits: As a Wight, The ‘Headless Herald’ is *subject to instability* outside his bounded area (the road from Mercal to the castle ruin), but is immune to all other psychology rules and cannot be forced to leave combat. The ‘Headless Herald’ causes *fear* in living creatures. (All rules count for ethereal and corporeal state).

Alignment: Evil

MP: 0

Special Rules: The ‘Headless Herald’ cannot be damaged by non-magical weapons and cannot cause Wound damage, while in ethereal form. In ethereal form deduct 1 point from the Strength of any combat opponent hit by

the herald and add 1 to its own strength and D10 to its magic point total. A victim reduced to zero Strength is slain. Lord Falk will assume corporeal form, when the Strength profile reaches (max.)5, the magic point total reaches 25 or the Red Duke is resurrected (whatever happens first). As long as the Red Duke is not resurrected, Falk has to spend magic points to remain in corporeal form: 1 point per day for just being active and 1 point per round of combat. If reduced to zero magic points Falk will become fully ethereal again and loses all his collected strength points. In any state Falks attacks count as magical, and can affect creatures which are immune to normal weapons. It causes normal Wounds against magical creatures like Undead, Daemons, Elementals and other non-living creatures in any state. In corporeal state it attacks with its enchanted sword 'Ghost Blade', which ignores armour points on successful hits, but otherwise does normal damage. In corporeal form his armour also becomes substantial again (Full plate armour + shield (3AP)).

If the Red Duke is slain, Lord Falk becomes *subject to instability* everywhere.

The Red Duke(Vampire)

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
6	73	52	7	6	23	90	4	43	89	66	89	89	66

Psychological Traits: The Red Duke can cause *fear* in living creatures, if he chooses to do so.

Alignment: Evil **MP:** 32

Special Rules:

The Red Duke is a Vampire, so all the special rules for Vampires apply to him.

The Armour of Blood: The Red Duke wears the Armour of Blood, a suit of armour with mystic properties. It gives 2AP on all locations, just like full plate armour and does not inhibit the Red Duke's ability to cast spells.

Skills: Arcane Language – Magick/Necromancy; Blather; Cast Spells – Necromantic Battle Magic level 1,2&3; Charm; Consume Blood; Court Intrigue; Cryptography; Disarm; Dodge Blow; Dynastic Knowledge; Etiquette; Evaluate; Gamble; Game Hunting (!); Heraldry; Hypnotise; Identify Plant; Identify Undead; Influence; Intimidate; Law; Luck; Magical Awareness; Magic Sense; Manufacture Drugs; Musicianship; Public Speaking; Read/Write; Ride; Rune Lore; Scroll Lore; Secret Language – Classical; Seduction; Sing; Specialist Weapon – Fencing Weapon; Specialist Weapon – Lance; Specialist Weapon – Parrying Weapon; Specialist Weapon – Double-handed Weapons; Stewardship; Story Telling; Theology; Undead Lore; Wit

Trappings: The Red Duke wears the Armour of Blood, a suit of armour with mystic properties. It counts as a full plate armour (2AP) and does not inhibit the Red Duke's ability to cast spells.

Spells: Petty: Magic Flame, Sleep, Zone of Cold

Ba. 1: Flight, Steal Mind, Dispirit, Wind Blast

Ba. 2: Cause Panic, Lightning Bolt, Mystic Mist

Ne. 1: Summon Skeletons, Summon Skeleton Champion, Hand of Death

Ne. 2: Hand of Dust, Summon Skeleton Minor Hero

New Monsters

Haunt

The haunt is a spirit compelled to stay in the world of the living often due to an uncompleted task or duty it did not fulfill while living or due to an oath it took before dying (very often in an unnatural way, usually suicide). The haunt apparently defends against and avenges "wrongful" death, or death by violence. As an spectral being, the haunt does not require sustenance in its bounded environment and is always solitary as well as mostly nocturnal.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
6	33	0	0	4	17	30	2	-	18	18	18	18	24

Physique

The haunt appears as a spectral, translucent humanoid figure often looking similar to a specter or banshee. A pale white, misty illumination always surrounds this ethereal being, which can approach with frightening speed.

Alignment

Neutral

Psychological Traits

Haunts are *subject to instability* outside their bounded area, but are immune to all other psychology rules and cannot be forced to leave combat. They cause *fear* in living creatures.

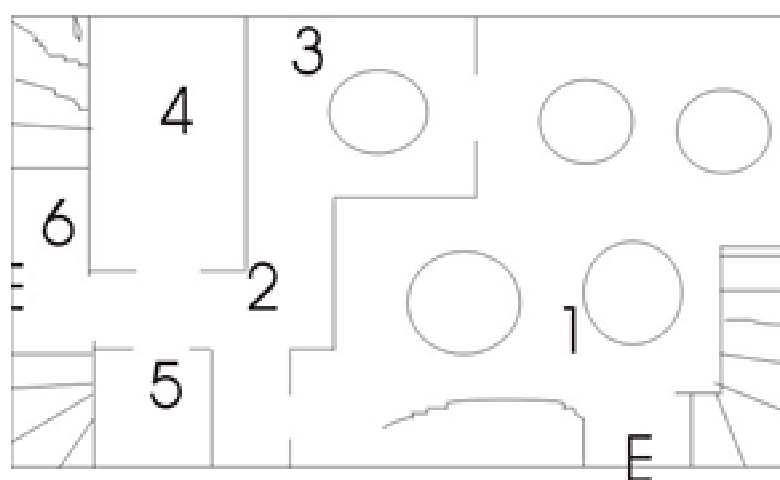
Special Rules

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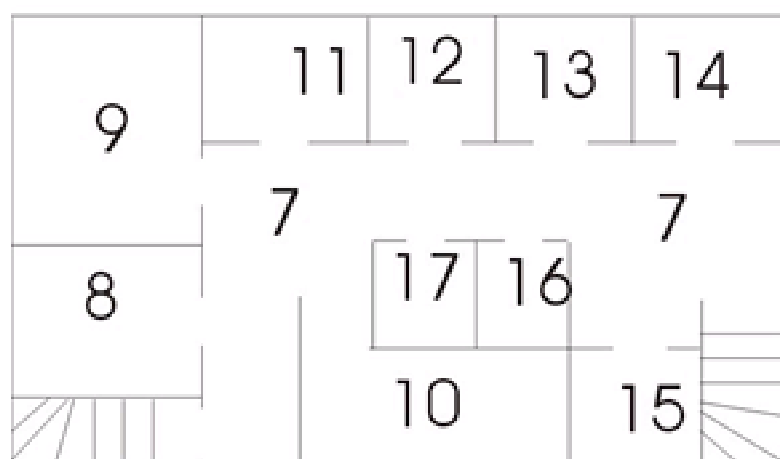
by Claas Cassens

(CommanderCax@aol.com; Claas@strike-to-stun.com)

Ground Floor



1st Floor



Cellar

