



The Pact of Pasaquine



by Carl Schnurr

 **WHITEWOLF**
A Renaissance in Games

To Carla—Editor, friend and wife.

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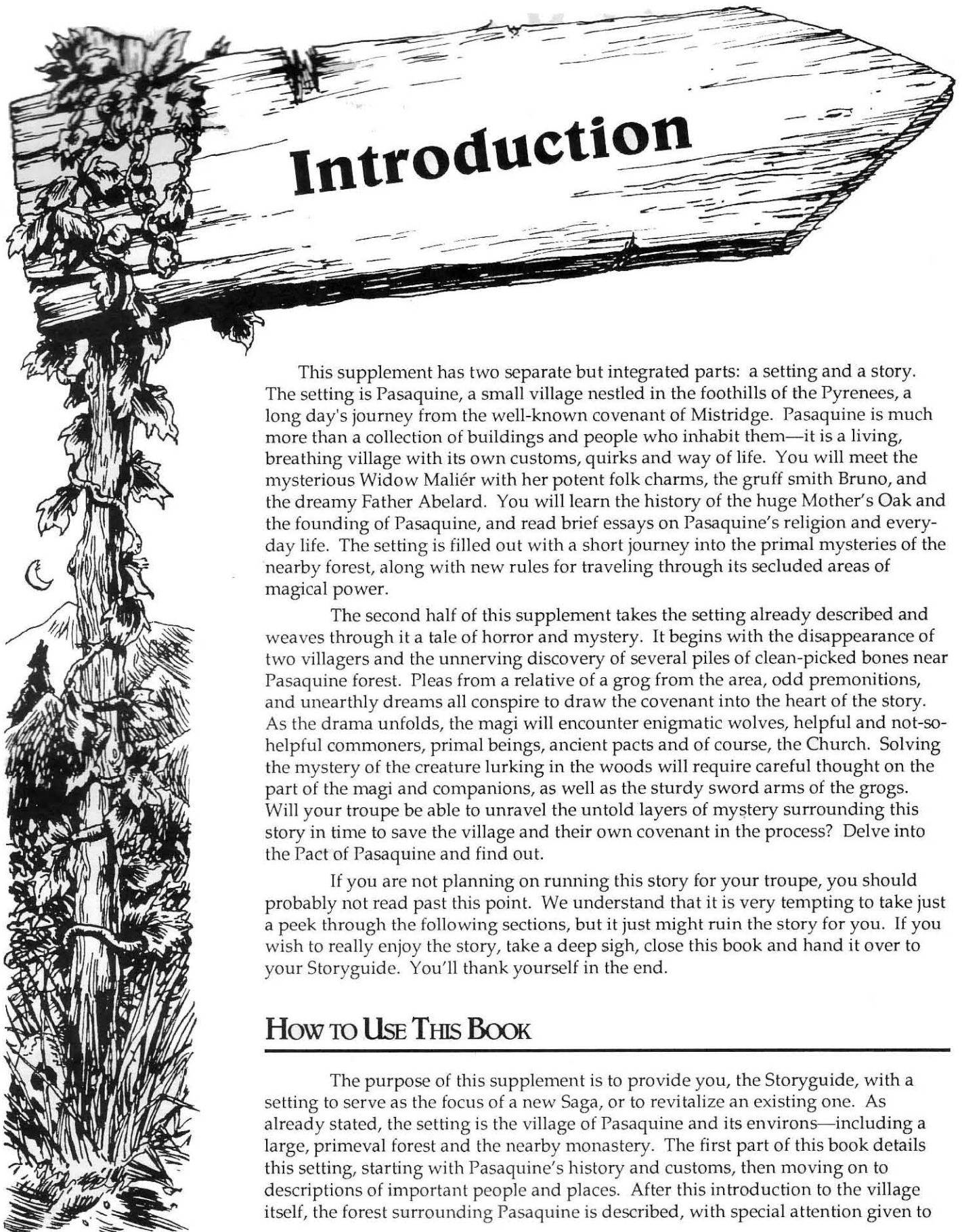
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Introduction

This supplement has two separate but integrated parts: a setting and a story. The setting is Pasaquine, a small village nestled in the foothills of the Pyrenees, a long day's journey from the well-known covenant of Mistridge. Pasaquine is much more than a collection of buildings and people who inhabit them—it is a living, breathing village with its own customs, quirks and way of life. You will meet the mysterious Widow Maliér with her potent folk charms, the gruff smith Bruno, and the dreamy Father Abelard. You will learn the history of the huge Mother's Oak and the founding of Pasaquine, and read brief essays on Pasaquine's religion and everyday life. The setting is filled out with a short journey into the primal mysteries of the nearby forest, along with new rules for traveling through its secluded areas of magical power.

The second half of this supplement takes the setting already described and weaves through it a tale of horror and mystery. It begins with the disappearance of two villagers and the unnerving discovery of several piles of clean-picked bones near Pasaquine forest. Pleas from a relative of a grog from the area, odd premonitions, and unearthly dreams all conspire to draw the covenant into the heart of the story. As the drama unfolds, the magi will encounter enigmatic wolves, helpful and not-so-helpful commoners, primal beings, ancient pacts and of course, the Church. Solving the mystery of the creature lurking in the woods will require careful thought on the part of the magi and companions, as well as the sturdy sword arms of the grogs. Will your troupe be able to unravel the untold layers of mystery surrounding this story in time to save the village and their own covenant in the process? Delve into the Pact of Pasaquine and find out.

If you are not planning on running this story for your troupe, you should probably not read past this point. We understand that it is very tempting to take just a peek through the following sections, but it just might ruin the story for you. If you wish to really enjoy the story, take a deep sigh, close this book and hand it over to your Storyguide. You'll thank yourself in the end.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The purpose of this supplement is to provide you, the Storyguide, with a setting to serve as the focus of a new Saga, or to revitalize an existing one. As already stated, the setting is the village of Pasaquine and its environs—including a large, primeval forest and the nearby monastery. The first part of this book details this setting, starting with Pasaquine's history and customs, then moving on to descriptions of important people and places. After this introduction to the village itself, the forest surrounding Pasaquine is described, with special attention given to

its numerous areas of magical and Faerie power. If you are planning to introduce your troupe to Pasaquine, you should probably familiarize yourself with this material and make any additions or changes needed to make Pasaquine fit perfectly within your Saga.

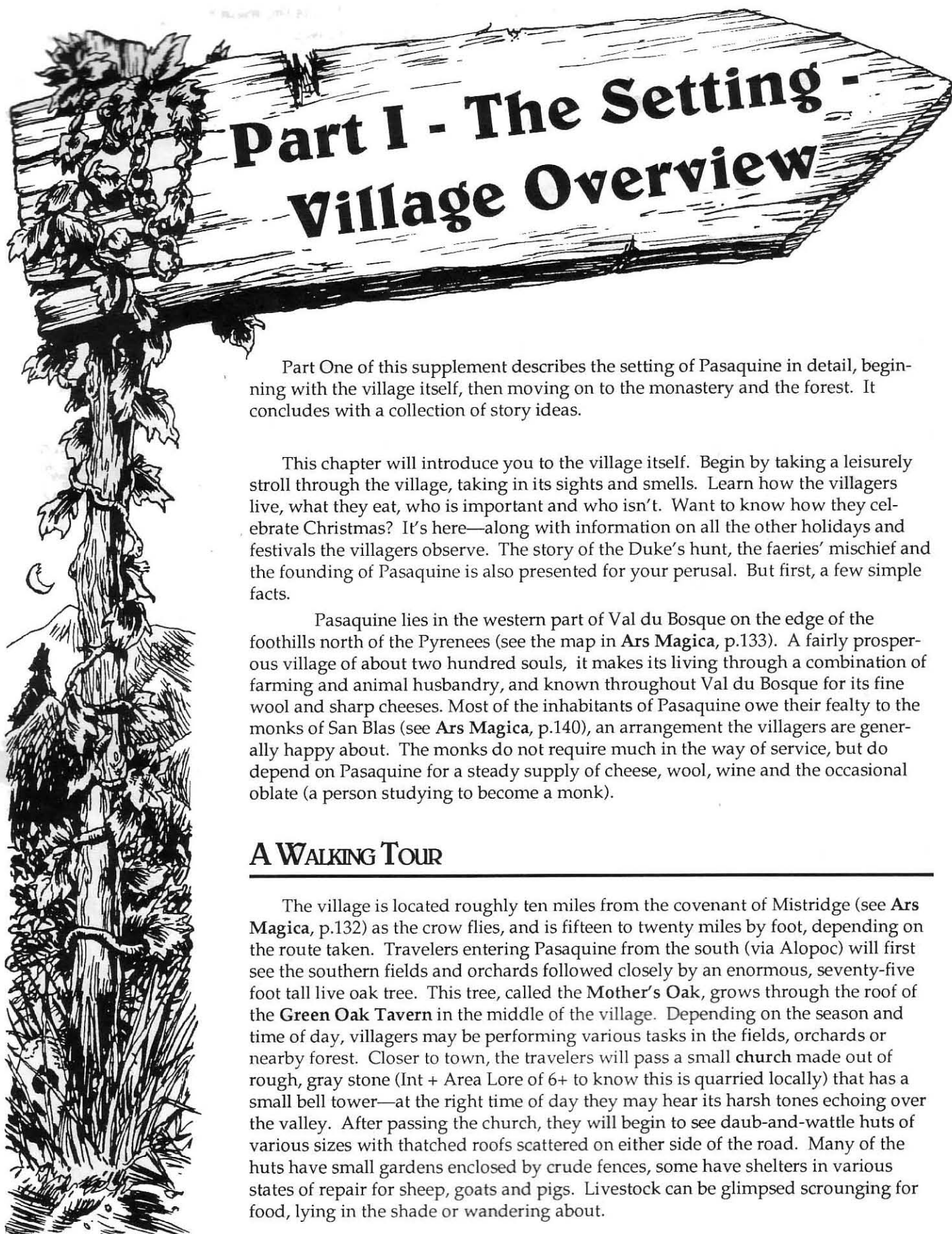
Once that is done, you should move on to the next step—stories that involve Pasaquine. Many story ideas are located at the end of Part I and if one or two catch your fancy, or if the setting has inspired you to come up with your own, simply expand them out to full-fledged stories and begin play. If, however, you are stymied for ideas or don't have time to flesh out adventures on your own, Part II of this book contains a full-length, completely-detailed story that can be run with minimal effort on your part. This story can serve as an excellent introduction to Pasaquine and the jumping-off point for a new Saga.

In the end, of course, you know best what your troupe's needs are and how this supplement can best serve them. Some troupes may wish to use the village as is, while others may simply use parts of it to fill out existing villages. The characters detailed in the village could easily be transported to another village, town, city or even used as covenfolk if desired. The forest can be used with or without the village, and could be placed almost anywhere in the world with little effort as well. In fact, the only part of this supplement that really needs

the setting intact is the main story, though with some effort and creativity it might be used without Pasaquine and its forest. Whether you decide to use this supplement completely as-is, make major changes, or just use it piecemeal, we think you'll find something within these pages to both challenge and inspire your troupe.

TIME AND LOCATION

Pasaquine lies within a day's journey northwest of the famous covenant of Mistridge (see *Ars Magica*, p.133 for a map showing its exact location) in southern France, just north of the Pyrenees. This setting takes place in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, but could easily be translated in time over a few centuries with few changes. The village could likewise be moved to almost anywhere within **Mythic Europe™** with minor modifications. If you do decide to use Pasaquine in a different setting, however, it should be placed on the edges of civilization, next to a large and mysterious forest that is largely unexplored by the troupe. Everyone encountered will speak French, or the local language of choice if the story is moved elsewhere. It is also assumed that the grogs, companions and magi speak the local language as well—at least it is recommended for both the Storyguide's and the group's enjoyment (and sanity).



Part I - The Setting - Village Overview

Part One of this supplement describes the setting of Pasaquine in detail, beginning with the village itself, then moving on to the monastery and the forest. It concludes with a collection of story ideas.

This chapter will introduce you to the village itself. Begin by taking a leisurely stroll through the village, taking in its sights and smells. Learn how the villagers live, what they eat, who is important and who isn't. Want to know how they celebrate Christmas? It's here—along with information on all the other holidays and festivals the villagers observe. The story of the Duke's hunt, the faeries' mischief and the founding of Pasaquine is also presented for your perusal. But first, a few simple facts.

Pasaquine lies in the western part of Val du Bosque on the edge of the foothills north of the Pyrenees (see the map in *Ars Magica*, p.133). A fairly prosperous village of about two hundred souls, it makes its living through a combination of farming and animal husbandry, and known throughout Val du Bosque for its fine wool and sharp cheeses. Most of the inhabitants of Pasaquine owe their fealty to the monks of San Blas (see *Ars Magica*, p.140), an arrangement the villagers are generally happy about. The monks do not require much in the way of service, but do depend on Pasaquine for a steady supply of cheese, wool, wine and the occasional oblate (a person studying to become a monk).

A WALKING TOUR

The village is located roughly ten miles from the covenant of Mistridge (see *Ars Magica*, p.132) as the crow flies, and is fifteen to twenty miles by foot, depending on the route taken. Travelers entering Pasaquine from the south (via Alopoc) will first see the southern fields and orchards followed closely by an enormous, seventy-five foot tall live oak tree. This tree, called the **Mother's Oak**, grows through the roof of the **Green Oak Tavern** in the middle of the village. Depending on the season and time of day, villagers may be performing various tasks in the fields, orchards or nearby forest. Closer to town, the travelers will pass a small church made out of rough, gray stone (Int + Area Lore of 6+ to know this is quarried locally) that has a small bell tower—at the right time of day they may hear its harsh tones echoing over the valley. After passing the church, they will begin to see daub-and-wattle huts of various sizes with thatched roofs scattered on either side of the road. Many of the huts have small gardens enclosed by crude fences, some have shelters in various states of repair for sheep, goats and pigs. Livestock can be glimpsed scrounging for food, lying in the shade or wandering about.

EVERYDAY LIFE

Near the center of the village our travelers will come upon the **Green Oak Tavern** to the right and the village green to the left. In nice weather, a few peasants can be seen passing the time of day with a mug of bitter in the shade of the Green Oak's large porch. The village green is used as common pasturage and as a gathering place in nice weather. Depending on the season, it may contain a woman or two deftly spinning thread using a distaff and spindle while they watch grazing sheep, or it might contain a group of village children at play.

From their position in the center of Pasaquine, our travelers can see the top of the **millhouse** in the distance to the north and hear the sound of the village **blacksmith** coming from the low hills to the west. Here, the main road continues on past the tavern to the right, passing the **Mariien sisters'** house on the left — a two-room house with a large enclosed yard that has been cropped clean by the sisters' flock of sheep and goats. Continuing to follow the main road towards Xanec, perceptive folk (on a Per + Alertness roll of 7+) will hear the grunt and snuffles of pigs as they forage for nuts in the forest south of the road, while to the north they will see a broad expanse of patchwork fields.

Returning to the center of town and heading west, our visitors will pass north of the fields they passed on the way in and after crossing a good sized stream will soon find themselves at the village **blacksmith**. Here, they can have iron and steel items repaired by the hulking **Bruno**, though he may be too busy making plow tips. Past the blacksmiths, nestled securely in the foothills is the **forester's** house, a nice two-room dwelling made entirely of wood (albeit with chunks of mud and moss in the cracks). They may see **Róbert** the forester on his way back from the nearby forest, leading a horse loaded down with bundles of wood and dragging the longer branches behind him. Shortly after the forester's, the path turns north to the **Widow Malier's** dwelling, a tidy hut with a large, chaotic garden of flowers, herbs and vegetables. Curious and friendly travelers will be welcomed by her three cats, **Hippin**, **Tippin** and **Pippin**.

Moving on past the widow's and yet another field will bring our travelers to the vineyards located in the rolling hills northwest of Pasaquine. Here also they will join up with the road going north through the village, intersecting at the **Millhouse**. Here lives **Bernard**, the miller, a fairly decent fellow but made unpopular by his position as a servant of the monks. Above the dam for the mill is the fishpond which Bernard also oversees. The path narrows considerably beyond the mill and continues past the fishpond out of town to the north, eventually leading to the village of Marifel. From there, the monastery of San Blas is but a short distance away.

Most of the inhabitants of Pasaquine are serfs who work and live off land owned by the monastery of San Blas. The monk's rule is not harsh but also doesn't allow for many peasants to live in anything approaching luxury. A normal peasant household consists of a married couple with two to five children living in a one-room daub-and-wattle hut with rush-covered earthen floors and a thatched roof. About a quarter of the peasants are wealthy enough to own a two-room house; larger dwellings are usually owned by freemen. Some houses have lofts above the main room which are reachable by a ladder.

Typical possessions might include a trestle table with a few benches and stools, a sturdy bed, a chest or two, wooden bowls, cups and spoons, a few iron pots and pans, assorted pottery ware, linen towels, wool blankets, some iron tools and the ever important livestock. Many of the villagers own two plow oxen and a few other animals; chickens and goats are fairly common, while sheep, hogs and geese are more rare. Clothes are rough wool, sometimes with linen underclothes, and are passed from person to person in the family as needed, often outlasting the original owners by several generations.

The village is surrounded by the three main crop fields. Crops are rotated through the fields on a yearly basis so that one is always fallow, one is sown with a winter crop such as wheat or rye, and the last is sown with a spring crop of oats, barley, beans, or peas. Most of the villagers own at least an acre of each field, with the richest holding twenty to thirty acres and the poorest having nothing beyond a small household plot near their hut. These poor and almost landless villagers, known as *cottars*, often hire themselves out as day-laborers to their wealthier neighbors in order to feed and clothe their families. Everyone, no matter how poor, has a small family garden near their house to grow vegetables and other foodstuffs for their own table.

Almost all food must be processed in some way to keep it from going bad. Meat and fish are smoked or salted, grain is baked into bread or brewed into ale, and milk is made into butter or cheese. Ale, wine, and other alcoholic beverages are drunk almost exclusively; the water is considered unhealthy and milk (if it's available) is for children only, and even then, it's usually turned into buttermilk first. Traditionally, commoners in France favor wine over ale, but in Pasaquine, ale is king. Two things ensure this: one, the monks receive half of all wine produced and two, the ale in Pasaquine is much better than the wine, so the villagers produce the absolute minimum amount of wine necessary to please the monks (and make it so bad that the brethren don't ask for more) and make large quantities of ale for daily consumption.

THE VILLAGE YEAR

As villagers depend upon the land for their livelihood, it is not surprising that their calendar also revolves around the agricultural cycle. Almost all important holidays are centered around the beginning or ending of an important agricultural event. In time, the Church made most of these pagan holidays their own in name, but in practice, the villagers merely added a few Christian trappings to the pagan rites they knew and had practiced for centuries. This melding of Christian and pagan traditions is especially noticeable in small villages like Pasaquine (see insert).

Pagan versus Christian Beliefs

*Often the commoners have only vague notions of what Christianity really entails, as a result both of masses being performed in Latin and their own illiteracy. They learn religion in bits and pieces over the years from friendly monks, friars and laymen, and their understanding isn't helped by the heretics (the Catharists and Waldensians, see *Ars Magica*, p.137) that wander the countryside preaching their own versions of Christianity. The villagers of Pasaquine know a bit more than the average peasant about religion, because of Father Abelard's easygoing nature and his lack of desire to stumble through masses in broken Latin. On the other hand, they also have many strong pagan traditions kept alive by the Widow and the Marien sisters. So, they change their own holidays slightly to make the Church happy, while gladly accepting any new holidays that the Church brings forth. For example, the commoners saw no problem with modifying their All-Hallows day, a pagan holiday to propitiate the dead, to include dead Saints when the Church declared the same day All Saints Day.*

In addition to breaking up the monotony of day-to-day life, festivals and holidays play many other important roles in Pasaquine. Many simply give the villagers an excuse to vent their frustrations harmlessly in song, food, drink and dance, while other occasions serve to remind the villagers of their ties to the church (i.e., the monks). Almost all holidays mean little or no work, a few good meals and perhaps a special treat or two in the form of specially brewed ales, small, hand-carved wooden toys or dolls, bits of candy, or pieces of colored ribbon.

Winter officially begins with Michaelmas (September 29th). At this time livestock are allowed in the harvested fields to graze on the stubble before the ground is plowed and harrowed for the winter crops. The first day of November is known as both All-Hallows (to the peasants) and All Saints day (to the Church). The

villagers spend this holiday appeasing the dead so they won't trouble the living in the following year. This is followed by the recently introduced Church holiday, All Souls' Day, a day for remembrance of the dead. The villagers typically spend the day tending their loved one's graves and telling stories about those who have passed on. This often turns into a large storytelling session on the town green that begins in the early afternoon and continues until dark (this would be an excellent opportunity for players to learn a lot about the village). Some families place extra settings at the table to accommodate the dead who are believed to visit this day.

In November, much of the livestock is slaughtered and salted or smoked to ensure the village's survival. Because of this, November is called the "blood-month" (this might serve as a source of confusion to visiting magi). The only other holiday of import in November is Martinmas; the Feast of the Plowman. occurs after the winter plowing is completed and lasts two days.

December brings the dead of winter and Christmas, the beginning of the longest holiday of the year. From Christmas Eve to Twelfth Day the serfs are relieved of all duties and are allowed to behave in ways usually looked down upon in other times of the year. On Christmas morning, a large cart from San Blas accompanied by several monks enters the town in preparation for the Christmas feast, to which everyone is invited. After dinner, each person is given a piece of an enormous cake for dessert. Inside this cake a single bean is hidden, and the person who finds the bean is crowned the "King (or Queen) of Beans" and lords over the festivities for the remainder of the holidays. The monks also bring a small gift for everyone, usually in the form of permission to gather an extra load of wood from the forest.

On New Year's Day roles are traditionally reversed throughout the village. That evening, Father Abelard leads the Feast of Fools at the church, in which he conducts mass in Provençal while wearing a silly mask (made by the King of Beans), leads the congregation in singing wanton songs, and burns incense made from old shoes. For the rest of the holidays the villagers amuse themselves by gaming, drinking, dancing, or performing impromptu comical plays about village life, or their masters, the monks.

The Monday following Twelfth Day is Plow Monday and consists of plow races among the older plowmen and the drawing of the "fool-plow" through the village by the younger men. Led by a boy dressed as a woman, and accompanied by another wearing a fox's head and skin, the village boys progress throughout the village, stopping at every door. They ask for a few pennies from the person at the door, and if the villager doesn't comply, the boys plow up the ground in front of

their door. The rest of the season is filled with plowing and sowing the spring crops.

In February, Candlemass is celebrated with a procession of lit candles and torches through the village. Shortly thereafter follows Shrove Tuesday, a pagan holiday set aside for wild dancing, singing, drinking and sports. During Lent the church's cross is veiled, and on Good Friday it is unveiled, kissed by each villager, then buried. On Easter morning the cross is exhumed and Easter service is held. Easter morning also brings the monks back with their cart to give the villagers a feast in return for baskets of eggs. The week following Easter is another time when the villagers are required to do no work, and serves to mark the end of spring and the beginning of summer.

The next major holiday is Mayday, a time during which the villagers relax quite a bit. After dark on Mayday eve, most of the young villagers and many of the adults enter the western forest to begin the celebration. After dancing till midnight to the sounds of the Widow's cymbals, most of the villagers spend the night in the forest and then get up before daybreak to gather wildflowers and greenery. At dawn the villagers "bring in the May" by parading through the village and decorating the buildings with their greenery. A lord and lady May are selected by the Widow to preside over the

festivities. This holiday is usually marked by several faerie sightings in the woods and perhaps even a brief, but long-remembered encounter with parts of the faerie kingdom itself. It is thought of as the most mysterious and magical holiday.

A few weeks later, three "gangdays" are celebrated. On the first gangday, Father Abelard (accompanied by the Widow) leads a procession of bell and ribbon-carrying villagers around town in ever-widening circles, with the villagers beating the ground and surroundings with switches and wands. They stop near important landmarks while the father blesses the area, and then continue on. They continue beating and blessing in widening circles through the village until they walk once completely around the perimeter of the village. Traditionally, the trek stops by the miller's fishpond after all the growing crops have been blessed. There, the elders throw all the young boys into the pond (to "acquaint them" with this important landmark). Invariably, this turns into a giant swimming party with everyone getting thrown in the water, including the Father, who then blesses the pond and its fish.

In June, the sheep are sheared, followed closely by the celebration of Midsummer. On that day a large wagon wheel covered with greenery is set afire and rolled down a hill to connote the beginning of the sun's descent into winter. Hay is harvested between midsummer and Lammas (August 1st).

On Lammas, the Feast of First Fruits, Father Abelard blesses the first loaves of bread made from new wheat. After Lammas, all other crops are harvested. The last day of reaping is usually filled with contests to see who can reap the fastest. The villagers traditionally leave one row standing, which is reaped by throwing sickles at it from ten paces. When only one stalk is left standing, the prettiest girl in the village (selected by popular acclamation) ceremoniously cuts it with a special knife. The stalk is wrapped with ribbons and is carried in a procession through the village to the green, which marks the beginning of a long celebration that usually lasts long into the night. The next morning, a small party of villagers travels to San Blas and presents the sheaf in a short ceremony filled with song.

After this holiday comes Michaelmas once again, and the year of agriculture begins anew.



HISTORY

Pasaquine began its humble existence a hundred and fifty years ago as a hunting lodge for the Count of Foix. The Count desired a secluded spot, a place where he could escape momentarily from the trials of ruling, and hunt for days without seeing another soul beyond a few close companions. The hilly terrain and dense

forests in the Pasaquine area seemed perfect. A site was chosen near a small, quickly flowing stream, and a sturdy wooden structure was built large enough to house a few nobles and their horses. Of course, the faeries and the forest itself watched the preparations with interest.

The Count used the lodge frequently at first, in spite of the bad luck that seemed to plague the camp. Dogs barked at nothing, horses spooked continually, trinkets disappeared, the food spoiled and the servants complained of strange bugs that bit but couldn't be seen. The first hunt was spectacularly unsuccessful; the bedraggled hunters returned in twos and threes from a tiring day of chasing a most elusive boar. They complained of a trail that looped and doubled and twisted beyond belief, dogs that lost all discipline and treed squirrels or chased butterflies, squires that lost spears, nettles that punctured wineskins, strange echoes that made horns and calls useless, and though it was not readily admitted, many heard strange voices or high, tittering laughs carried faintly on the wind. When successive hunts proved even bigger failures than the first, the Count finally gave up, declared the forest infested with demons, and left, never to return.

The lodge fell into disrepair, and though land farther north and east became sparsely settled, the area around Pasaquine remained clear of human intrusion. Rumors began circulating quietly through nearby villages and towns. Travelers whispered of strange sightings near the forest; few were those who actually braved its borders. Unnatural creatures were said to inhabit the area, and people foolish or ignorant enough to spend a night within its reach came away with strange dreams — or didn't come away at all.

Eventually, as was the fashion with undesirable land, it found its way into the Church's hands. The pragmatic monks who surveyed the area paid little attention to local superstitions, and began building a monastery north and slightly west of present day Pasaquine. At first, the craftsmen complained of strange sounds and missing or broken equipment, but as the foundation grew their troubles diminished. Timbers were cut from the local forest, rock carried in from distant quarries, and precious books borrowed for copying; thus was born the monastery of San Blas. A

period of slow but steady growth followed; villages came into being nearby and work began on Sir d'Uverre's castle (see *Ars Magica*, p.139).

As the years passed and the woods thinned, disturbing rumors about them slowed to a trickle and almost stopped altogether. Once again, people ventured into the edges of the forest. The old hunting lodge was discovered and claimed by an enterprising soul. Land was cleared, huts were built near strips of land filled with growing rows of wheat and peas, and sheep and pigs foraged in the nearby forest for acorns and beech-nuts. The monastery took an interest in the burgeoning village and, in spite of strong interference from the baron, erected a mill and gave them a millstone in return for their vassalage. Thus, Pasaquine became a true village.

THE MONKS

The monks, though seldom seen in Pasaquine, are central to its way of life. Much of the year's crops make their way to San Blas in the form of loose grain or bread, and tithes on livestock, fields, and other taxes stream into the Abbey year-round. In return, the monks provide a working mill (of course, one must pay for its use), a land free of robbers, protection in times of war, and food in times of famine. Given the combination of a fair Abbot (see *Vincent* below) and a generally happy populace, the system works well; a peaceful coexistence has been the rule for many decades.

The monastery of San Blas lies some eight miles north-northwest of Pasaquine, along a narrow and deeply rutted cart path. At a good pace it takes some three or four hours to cover the distance, while those riding horses can expect to cut that time in half. In wet weather, the path becomes a miserable quagmire, so what few travelers there are during the rainy months take the roundabout route through Siernami and Xanec.

A map showing the location of San Blas can be found in *Ars Magica*, p.133, and a short description of the monastery and its inhabitants follows on p.140.



Chapter 2 - Village Locations

This chapter will bring to life the most important parts of Pasaquine. This includes the Green Oak Tavern with its enormous live oak, the quaint little church near the outskirts of town and the Widow Maliér's jumbled cottage in the Forest. But places aren't everything, and you get a complete description of the most important villagers as well — from the cantankerous smithy to the friendly village Reeve, Cohat. Step inside and enjoy!

THE GREEN OAK (INN & TAVERN)

The Green Oak is Pasaquine's inn, tavern and general meeting place when the weather is bad. Originally built by the Count of Foix nearly one hundred and fifty years ago as a hunting lodge, it was abandoned to the elements until people returned to the area after the founding of the monastery of San Blas. As Pasaquine grew, the lodge served as the natural center to village activities and eventually became the town tavern.

The Mother's Oak

The Green Oak's name stems from the large live oak that was found growing through the rotting floor boards. Now the Oak is over seventy-five feet tall and still going strong. Players making a Per roll of 9+ will know that this is almost unnaturally large. The villagers have great respect for the tree and routinely pour offerings of wine or ale on its roots when visiting the tavern. It has become an integral part of village life; many believe that the spirit of the village resides in it. The villagers would be outraged if any harm came to the oak, and would see it as an omen of the worst sort if it were to die or be destroyed.

Actually, the oak was sent by the Earth Mother to reclaim the area of land disturbed by the Count. Now it serves as a focus for her power in the village. Through it, she knows vaguely of the villagers plans, hopes and dreams. It also serves to lower the dominion in the immediate area to zero. Herbam and Creo spells cast within thirty feet of its presence gain a bonus of +2, while Ignem and Perdo spells suffer a -2 penalty. The tree itself contains 25 pawns of Herbam vis. If anyone was so bold as to cut down the tree, the Earth Mother would be deeply offended and the villagers would become a wild mob. Wooden hafted weapons used against the tree will warp or crack on a simple roll of 7+. At the Storyguide's discretion, the tree can awaken if it is harmed (a stress roll of 9+ is needed, with a modifier of +1 for every resistance level taken. Soak +20, 20 resistance levels).

Lorris' Stats

INT	+0	PER	+1
STR	+2	STM	+1
PRS	+1	COM	+0
DEX	-2	QIK	-3
Confidence:	+2	Age:	42

Personality Traits:

Proud +3
 Open-minded +2
 Talkative about self -2
 Reserved +1

Important Skills:

Folk Ken (peasants) 4
 Brew Ale (Green Oak Ale) 5
 Alertness (while sleeping) 2
 Storytelling (anecdotes) 2
 Intimidation (while in tavern) 3
 Holy Land Lore (strange customs) 1
 Brawl (punch) 3
 Thrown Hand Axe (inside) 2

Reputations:

Mysterious Past/Pasaquine (2)
 Good Ale-Brewer/Western Val du Bosque (2)
 Fair-minded/Pasaquine (1)
 Uncaring/Christi (3)

The Green Oak has a fairly large common room that serves as a tavern by day and as a sleeping area for the occasional traveler by night. A large, seventy-five foot live oak tree called the **Mother's Oak** (if asked, no one is quite sure why) grows from the reed-covered floor in the middle of the common room through a hole in the thatched roof above (see insert). Most of the time a few peasants can be found drinking ale around trestle tables scattered throughout the room. They are not likely to start any conversations with strangers, especially those of different social classes, though their tongues may loosen after a few rounds of free ale. The food is crude but palatable, the wine just plain bad, and the dark, bitter ale remarkably good. Unknown to anyone, the quality of the ale is due in part to the presence of the live oak itself.

The innkeeper, **Lorris**, lives with his wife, **Christi** (see inserts), in the one adjoining room to the common room. Travelers requesting a private room with money up front (2-5 silver pennies each, including breakfast) can sleep in their room, while Lorris and



Christi sleep on a table in the common room. Make sure that players who want a private room realize that they are kicking the poor innkeepers out of their own room. It costs one silver penny to stay the night in the common room, unless someone rubs Lorris the wrong way — then it costs as much as it looks like the traveler can afford.

The Inn has a low, sloping roof that extends a good fifteen feet past the walls in the front. This serves as a stable for travelers with horses and occasionally as a makeshift shelter during storms for animals pastured in the nearby common green. In the warmer months, tables and benches may be moved outside to take advantage of cool breezes.

The kitchen is a separate building located behind the inn. Below the kitchen is a good sized cellar. This is where Lorris makes and stores his famous ale. The cellar also contains a small selection of wines and a few hard liqueurs that Lorris is experimenting with. At night, the kitchen is guarded by Lorris' huge mutt, **Rupert**. Rupert is good at what he does, though he is getting old. Use the dog stats (see *Ars Magica*, p. 117), only with +3 Per and an additional -3 body level.

Lorris, the Innkeeper

Description: Lorris is a stout, grizzled man in his early forties. He has a thick head of dark hair that is speckled with gray and wide, and angular cheekbones that are highlighted by a short salt-and-pepper beard. His nose was broken several times in his youth giving him a rough visage. He walks with a slight limp, a result of a wound received while on the crusade.

He has seen much more of the world than most, having traveled to the Holy Land on crusade some twenty-five years ago. As a result, he will be much more forgiving of strange customs or behavior than the other villagers, though he will be careful not to show too much tolerance in the presence of his regular customers. Why he went on crusade is the source of much speculation in the village; some say it was atonement for an evil deed, others say he's simply a good Christian doing his duty, while others state that he was just plain stupid. He is a quiet, personable man and enjoys hearing a good tale. He will be especially interested in any tales of strange places from travelers. He does not appreciate questions concerning his private life, and will quickly change the subject.

Lorris runs a clean tavern and doesn't allow any shenanigans on its grounds. Gaming is allowed as long as it's quiet. He is exceptionally proud of his ale and will quietly ask newcomers their opinions of it, responding to praise with a barely suppressed grin and a hearty backslap. Those critical of his ale receive a cold stare and poor, overcharged service. He is extremely sensitive to comparisons of his ale to that of the Mariien sisters' (see p. 16 for more).

Roleplaying Tips: Be hospitable and efficient without seeming subservient. Puff up your chest, square your shoulders and speak brusquely to newcomers (that's what the villagers expect). Allow the players to catch you watching them closely during their stay. Eventually, if the players are genial and not demanding, warm up some and ask questions concerning their travels. If they rub you the wrong way, let them know it to the point of kicking the offenders out.

Note: The villagers have come to enjoy Lorris' occasional tirades towards rude strangers, and sometimes make a game of feeding strangers information guaranteed to make Lorris mad. Such information may be that the bar-maid (Lorris' wife) is available or that the Mariien sisters made the excellent ale they are drinking.

Christi, the Innkeeper's Wife

Description: Christi is young (eighteen) and has been married to Lorris for three years now. She is fairly homely, with broad features and coarse brown hair. She was married to Lorris five years after his first wife, whom Lorris loved deeply, died. This marriage is more

Christi's Stats			
INT	+3	PER	+3
STR	+0	STM	+1
PRS	-2	COM	-1
DEX	+2	QIK	+2
Confidence:	+2	Age:	18
Personality Traits:			
Efficient +3			
Dreamer +2			
Happy -1			
Important Skills:			
Dodge (hands) 3			
Charm (customers) 2			
Pretend (cheerfulness) 2			
Meditation (day-dreaming) 3			
Diplomacy (drunks) 3			
Pasaquine Lore (gossip) 5			
Brawl (kick) 1			
Scan (hearing) 4			
Brew Ale (Green Oak) 1			
Reputations:			
Hard-working/Lorris (3)			
Undeserving/Female Serfs (2)			

one of necessity — Lorris needs someone to help around the Tavern, and Christi was of marriageable age with no likely prospects. Christi's parents were quite happy to have their daughter marry a freeman, though Christi would have been happier marrying another farmer closer to her own age. As it is, she is fairly isolated from the rest of the women in town. Completely false rumors (started by bored and slightly jealous serf women) circulate every so often about a dalliance between Christi and travelers staying at the inn.

She does a good job of what Lorris requires of her: cooking the stew, mush and bread; serving tables when it's busy; along with cleaning, mending clothes and watching the chickens. She works hard out of a desire to do a good job, not out of any love for Lorris. She knows that Lorris doesn't love her (she certainly doesn't love him), but they do respect each other and are slowly becoming friends. Christi would never think of leaving Lorris while he was still alive. Early in her marriage, Christi just wanted to be like the other women in the village and worried quite a bit about what they said; now, she is beginning to enjoy her independence. She has vague notions of keeping the tavern open after his death with the help of the Mariien sisters, an idea she doesn't dare share with Lorris.

Bernard's Stats

INT	+1	PER	+1
STR	+0	STM	+1
PRS	-2	COM	-1
DEX	+0	QIK	+0
Confidence: +2	Age:	34	

Personality Traits:

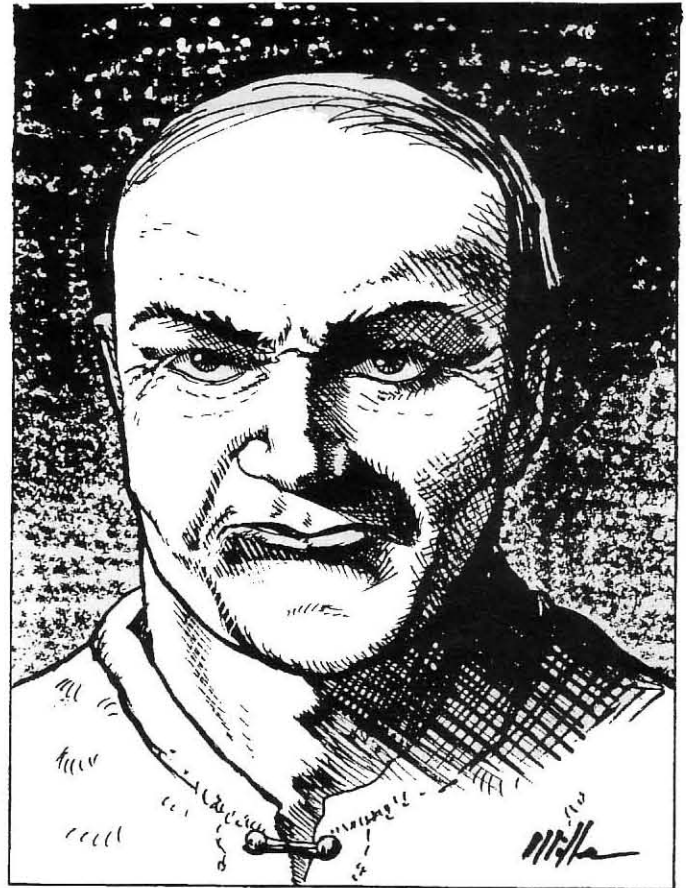
Defensive +4
 Suspicious of Kindness +2
 Gullible -1

Important Skills:

Milling (winter grains) 5
 Evaluate Grain (quantities) 4
 Guile (confusing) 2
 Charm (nobles) -2
 Folk Ken (peasants) 2
 Legerdemain (weighing) 2
 Scribe Latin (records) 1

Reputations:

Deceitful/Pasaquine (4)
 Amiable/Monks of San Blas (1)



If players come to the inn during a busy time, they will probably be served by Christi. She will be efficient and business-like and is uncomfortable with small talk or flirtation, though she realizes that it is good for business. She knows a surprising amount of town gossip and is willing to share it with outsiders who treat her with respect — as long as no other townsfolk are around. She can often be caught daydreaming behind the kitchen or humming under her breath while cleaning.

Roleplaying Tips: Assume a busy and subservient air, but be attentive — not slow-witted. Show a minimum of emotion to others. When people talk about interesting things, try to position yourself so you can hear. If players harass you, try to ignore it or nervously smile it off. Call for Rupert if things get out of hand, and Lorris isn't around.

THE MILL

The mill, though essential to the peasant's way of life, is not loved. Erected by the monks of San Blas some seventy-five years ago, it is a constant reminder to the serfs that they are not free. The two-story wooden mill-house rises above the other daub-and-wattle huts like a small keep; the only things taller are the live oak and the steeple. The ground floor contains the mill itself and a

storeroom; both have thick doors that are barred at night. The miller, **Bernard**, and his family live in the two upstairs rooms. Their valuables are hidden in a small iron box in the rafters (Per roll of 9+ to spot, Dex + Pick Locks roll of 4+ to pick).

No one in the village much likes Bernard — not because of his personality as much as because of his profession. By law, the peasants must grind all of their grain at the mill and pay the miller for its use. Since Bernard does all the measuring himself, he is often suspected of cheating the farmers of hard earned grain (which he does every once in a while). He also patrols the village occasionally looking for hand mills, or *querns*, which are illegal.

Lying in the yard behind the mill is a large, overgrown pile of stones from a quarry near Foix. The previous miller brought them to Pasaquine with the intention of adding a chimney to the mill-house, but work was never started. The current miller brags about his soon-to-be chimney to anyone who will listen. It is the source of many a joke in the village — sometimes young boys even dare to steal a block or two and throw them in the fishpond. The miller has an extremely mangy and friendly dog named **Gribby** who is supposed to guard the mill from thieves. Instead he spends

most of his time wagging his tail, following Bernard about his business, and looking expectantly at visitors. The villagers make a great show of being friendly to Gribby — this infuriates Bernard to no end. Sometimes the villagers even tell unsuspecting visitors that the mill is run by Gribby the Miller. ("The Miller? Oh, you'll be meanin' Gribby. You can't miss him. Short, hairy and loves a good biscuit, that's him. Take him a handful or two if you want to get on his good side.")

Bernard is also in charge of the fishpond above the mill dam. He makes sure that no fishing occurs except during the prescribed times. He is also responsible for collecting every third fish caught to give to the monks. On holidays, the monks sometimes declare a free fishing day, a cause for much celebration.

Bernard, the Miller

Description: Bernard is of medium height, slightly balding and nearing his mid-thirties. His comparative wealth shows in his slight paunch, untanned skin and nice clothing. His thumbs are stained golden yellow from rubbing the meal as it falls from between the millstones.

Bernard is a nice man at heart, but years of exercising power over the other peasants and being the object of their dislike has made him somewhat cold and extremely defensive. He dreams of being friends with the villagers but gave up trying long ago. When in a good mood he comes across as a nice, amiable fellow who is concerned for everyone's well-being. When confronted with an argumentative or surly person below his station, however, his eyes squint, his brow wrinkles with scorn and he becomes completely defensive and unreasonable. Bernard is so unused to goodwill that he will be suspicious of any signs of friendship (he has been the butt of many a joke), though if he perceives that someone truly means it, he will jump at the chance and become overly attentive and helpful—he would love to have a close friend.

Roleplaying Tips: Stick out your jaw and dart your eyes from person to person when they speak. Be friendly until the players begin asking questions, then take them in the worst possible way. Everyone hates you. Don't believe it if someone is friendly; they're just setting you up or trying to get a good deal at the mill.

THE CHURCH

The church, located across the road from the orchards, was originally built of wood. Twenty years ago, it burned down and was rebuilt with rough, gray stone by the monks of San Blas. It has a small sanctuary capable of seating most of the villagers on rough

wooden benches. During special occasions when crowding is a problem, the benches are moved outside and everyone stands. The church has little in the way of adornment or riches; the communion cup and plate are pewter, and the silver cross over the wooden altar is plain. A small side altar holds a rough wooden statue of the patron saint of Val du Bosque, Sante Fabia. The windows have no glass, but do have rather stout shutters that can be barred from the inside, as can the door. A rickety ladder just inside the main door leads to the small bell tower. The bell is rung four times a day by **Father Abelard** (once at six am, noon, six pm and midnight) and is also rung in times of emergency to warn the villagers.

Father Abelard (see insert) lives behind the church in a small, wooden house. The villagers like the Father for the most part, though he doesn't command the same respect as the monks. He does a good job of reaching these simple people and sometimes even performs mass in Provençal. Father Abelard encourages singing in church, so if strangers approach Pasaquine on a Sunday morning, they are likely to be greeted by the sound of loud, out of tune, but enthusiastic voices raised in song.

The Father likes to wander the village and surrounding countryside when his duties permit. Sometimes he sits in quiet meditation of a flower or bug, while other times he can be found telling a story to enthralled children. He will be open and friendly to outsiders, as long as they don't represent any formal authority. He will be tolerant of visitors' beliefs and actions as long as they are not blatantly heretical.

Father Abelard

Description: The young Father Abelard is a tall but slightly built man. His rounded shoulders barely fill his coarse brown robes. Carrying himself quietly, he can often be found wandering about the village or fields with hands folded in front of his stomach, and with bright, wandering eyes. He has thick, sandy-blond hair that usually sticks up in all directions.

Some years ago, he left his native village to become an oblate (someone studying to become a monk) at the monastery of San Blas. He worked hard, but his mind wandered too much to absorb the necessary lessons. When he was twenty-two, the previous father of Pasaquine died and he was chosen as the replacement. Father Abelard knows enough Latin to perform mass and fumble his way through other ceremonies, but lacks a deep knowledge of church doctrine and lore. Because of this, he often houses wandering friars and priests without realizing that some of them are heretics, members of the church of unbelievers.

Father Abelard's Stats

INT	+1	PER	+1
STR	-2	STM	-2
PRS	+2	COM	+2
DEX	+1	QIK	+0
Confidence:	+2	Age:	25

Personality Traits:

Unsure +3
 Open-minded +2
 Curious +1
 Outspoken -2

Important Skills:

Charm (commoners) 4
 Folk Ken (peasants) 3
 Meditation (while walking) 2
 Humanities (philosophy) 2
 Sing (psalms) 3
 Church Lore (hymns) 1
 Storytelling (to kids) 2
 Pasaquine Lore (quiet places) 3
 Speak Latin (mass) 2
 Scribe Latin (poems) 1

Reputations:

Unfocused/San Blas (4)
 Strange but nice/Pasaquine (2)

He is lenient of the villagers' few pagan traditions, though he knows his masters at San Blas would strongly disapprove if they knew. In fact, his curiosity often drives him to study these rituals from a distance. His closest friend in the village is the widow Malière, the leader of the spring dances (see p.20). Father Abelard has whiled away many an evening philosophizing about religion with her. This causes some muttering and shaking of heads amongst the older and more conservative villagers. He dislikes the fact that the miller reports his activities to the Abbot.

Roleplaying Tips: Smile faintly all the time, even if the rest of your face is frowning. Speak in a quiet and melodious voice. Be friendly and courteous to strangers; if they seem educated and are not too officious or loud, invite them to share some wine and discuss music or religion. Break into soft song occasionally to stress your points.



THE SMITHY

The smith is located near the stream as it leaves the western forest. The building itself is made of thick wood with numerous windows. Bruno, the smith (see insert) lives in an adjacent building with his family. Two of their three children are old enough to help around the smithy, and usually they can be found tending the charcoal pit or working the bellows. The smithy contains the usual equipment: forge, bellows, anvil, crucible, tongs, and hammers, along with raw stock.

When not working in the smithy, Bruno helps his wife in the family garden. They have quite a reputation for growing good, hearty vegetables which are in high demand among other villagers. Bruno used to travel abroad regularly to secure his supply of iron; now he disappears into the forest every few months for a week or two, usually returning with a pack full of iron. Most assume that he has found a rare source of raw iron in the hills, but there are others who say he has made a pact with strange beings in the forest to ensure his supply.

Bruno is a busy man and won't be willing to stop work to talk to strangers unless it is important or they have a job for him. He is knowledgeable about his

Bruno's Stats

INT	+1	PER	+1
STR	+5	STM	+4
PRS	+1	COM	+0
DEX	+0	QIK	-1
Confidence:	+3	Age:	34

Personality Traits:

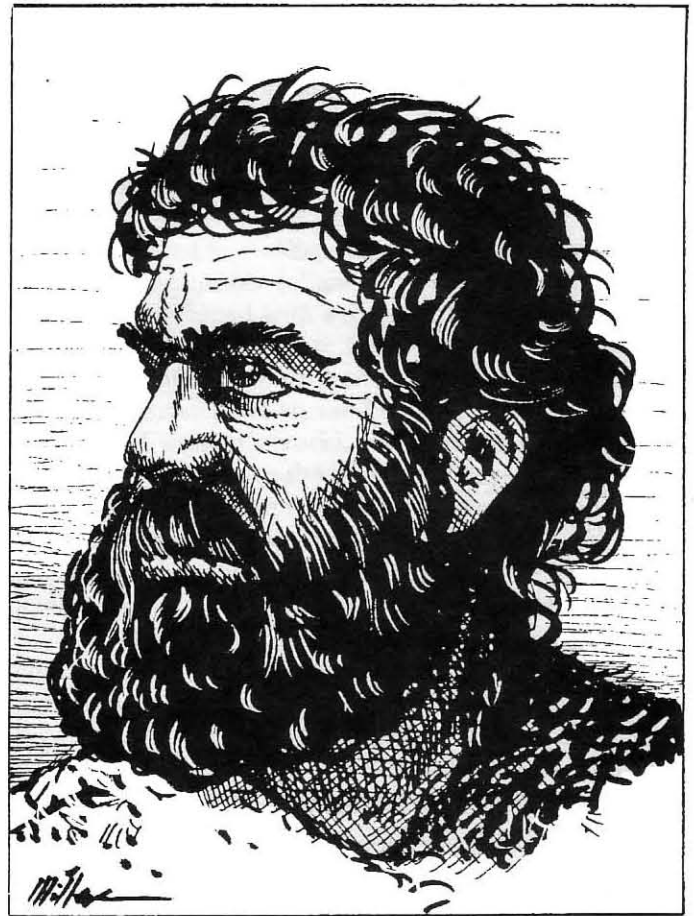
Brusque +3
Hot-Headed when Threatened +2
Fair +2
Distrustful of Strangers +1

Important Skills:

Smith (farm implements) 5
Evaluate Iron (raw) 3
Athletics (wrestling) 4
Survival (forests) 2
Brawl (punch) 2
Intimidation (strangers) 3
Pasaquine Lore (forest) 3
Faerie Lore (likes/dislikes) 1
Alertness (while smithing) 2

Reputations:

Loving/Family (3)
Fair/Pasaquine (2)



When you do talk, glare at them and don't be afraid to say what's on your mind.

craft, and is looking for an apprentice, as his last just achieved journeyman status and moved to the city of Foix. The villagers respect this powerfully built man for his skill and fairness in business.

Bruno, the Smith

Description: Bruno is an earthy man of few words. Of medium height, he has rich chestnut hair and a scraggly beard. He is, of course, barrel chested, and he's never lost an arm-wrestling match to anyone in the village (if he has lost to anyone outside of the village, he has never spoken of it). He is blunt, sometimes cruelly so. He has great respect for practical men, i.e., farmers, ale-makers, fellow craftsmen and the like, but little respect for men of learning and nobles. He keeps his own council and doesn't take part in village politics.

Roleplaying Tips: Be brusque and make sure the players know you are a busy man. Speak with a low, gravelly voice. Act out pounding on something with a hammer while you talk to them. (If you like, clang two pots together to simulate the noise.) Don't stop working unless the intruders have something important to say.

THE FORESTER'S

The forester, **Róbert** (see insert), lives on the western outskirts of Pasaquine near the forest. The small, tidy, two-room house he lives in is made of wood, with wooden floors (quite a luxury!) and a newly-thatched roof. Behind the house are several sheds partially filled with wood sorted by type and state of preparedness. Another shed built into the side of the house contains his tools, along with a high-quality grindstone for keeping them sharp. Róbert happily lives with his young wife and three children (two girls and a boy). The oldest girl is nearing marrying age. He also owns one of the few horses in the village. He doesn't ride it often, but rather uses it to carry or drag loads of wood from the forest as well as renting it to farmers in the spring and fall.

Róbert inherited his position from his father, who in turn inherited the position from his father, who was appointed forester by the monks of San Blas. His job consists of cutting enough wood to make charcoal for the smith and the smoking of fish, as well as supervising

Róbert's Stats

INT	+0	PER	+1
STR	+1	STM	+1
PRS	-1	COM	-2
DEX	+2	QIK	+1
Confidence:	+2	Age:	29

Personality Traits:

Friendly +1
 God-fearing +2
 Brave -1
 Curious -2

Important Skills:

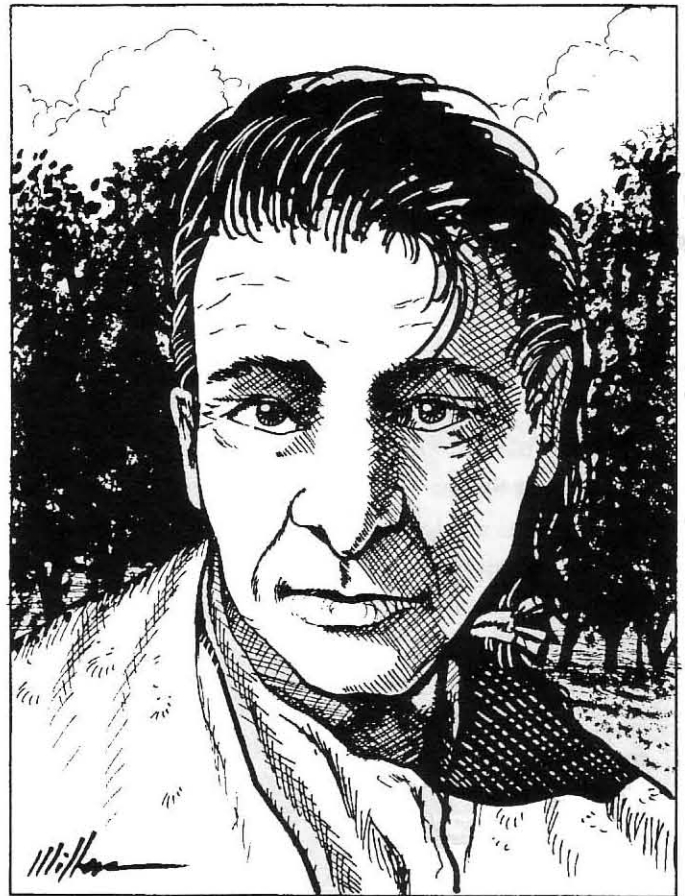
Alertness (in woods) 1
 Scan (find good wood) 4
 Climb (trees) 3
 Survival (in woods) 2
 Evaluate Trees (deciduous) 3
 Hand Axe (wood) 3
 Forest Lore (paths) 4
 Faerie Lore (safeguards against) 2
 Church Lore (protections) 2
 Carpentry (furnishings) 3
 Subterfuge (bargaining) -1

Reputations:

Bad Bargainer/Commoners (2)
 Pious/Pasaquine (2)
 No Fun/Faeries of Pasaquine(3)

peasants when they cut wood in the forest for their own use. No live trees may be cut down without the express permission of the monks. Róbert is allowed to cut dead wood or prune branches under three handspans wide from live trees with his billhook as he wishes.

Róbert knows that the peasants make infrequent wood-gathering forays into the woods, and tolerates it as long as they don't take too much. He patrols the woods a few times a week to keep appearances up. When not performing his duties, Róbert helps tend the garden or works at his second occupation, that of carpenter. He makes much of the villagers' furniture (trestle tables, chairs, benches, and chests) in return for money, food, or services. On the one hand, the villagers like Róbert because he is a fairly good carpenter and never drives hard bargains for his work. On the other hand, they have a mild dislike of him because of his role as forester — every so often he arrests a peasant for unlawful removal of wood from the monks' forest. The peasant so arrested has to make the long trek to San Blas



to stand trial. Usually the trial results in a minor fine or a few days of working in the monks' fields.

Róbert, the Forester

Description: Róbert is a nice guy who wishes to be happy. He is of medium build, with well-muscled legs and shoulders. His long, dark hair is gathered loosely at the back of neck with a leather thong. His eyes are brown, and his nose hawklike. He loves his family, and likes wandering the forest by himself as well as making things with his hands. The part of his job he doesn't care for is arresting commoners, so he goes as easy on them as he can.

Through the years, Róbert has become aware that strange beings inhabit the forests and that the woods seem aware of his thoughts. On days when he is just out for a walk, the paths seem smooth and easy to find. When he takes his billhook and axe, however, brambles tear at his clothes and more than once he has lost his way. At first he attributed this to an overactive imagination, but now he treats the woods with a healthy respect and rarely strays from known paths. One day, after following a faint sound of laughter in circles for over an hour, he struck an ancient tree in anger with his axe; the tree quivered mightily and a dead branch fell from its upper reaches, knocking him unconscious. He

will not speak of what happened when he woke up in the dead of night, alone in the heart of the forest. After returning from the forest, he went straight to the smith and wouldn't leave until Bruno had fashioned an iron cross for him to wear. He wears it to this day, and has become an almost fanatical Christian (saying a prayer in the church each morning before he enters the forest). Now, he never wanders deep in the forest without good reason, and never enters the woods at night. Despite his newfound Christian beliefs, Róbert still holds stock in more ancient protections; a sprig of Rowan can always be found tied to his jacket with red thread.

Róbert will be friendly if approached by strangers from the direction of the village; if they come from the forest, however, he will cross himself and bar his door. Once talking, he will answer questions readily enough unless they touch on the mysteries of the forest, then he will clam up. He might be convinced to guide someone through or to strange areas of the forest if they pay well and appear to him to provide adequate protection. If he doesn't go himself and has taken a liking to the strangers, he may suggest wearing an iron cross or a sprig of Rowan, or the like. He has no interest at all in finding more out about the forest — he knows quite enough as it is. One way players might get information from him is by offering him drink; he has a weakness for it and occasionally gets quite drunk.

Roleplaying Tips: Wear some kind of cross and stroke it occasionally. Be friendly and congenial until the forest, faeries, spirits or similar things are mentioned. Become silent, cross yourself and try to excuse yourself from the conversation. If you must stray off known paths, or enter the woods at night, hold your cross tightly and mumble prayers under your breath. If, however, things become dangerous and you are really needed, take a deep breath and do what is needed regardless.

Note: Róbert really does have something to worry about. More than once he has stumbled onto strange regions of the forest and seen things he shouldn't have. The faeries used to take great pleasure in teasing and pestering him while he worked, but now they are unable to since he began wearing his cross and other protections. They watch him carefully whenever he enters the forest, looking for a way past his charms.

THE MARIEN SISTERS' HOUSE

The Marien sisters, Jehanne and Génévieve (see inserts), live with their aged father in a two-room hut near the eastern forest of Pasaquine. Their home is unremarkable, with wattle-and-daub walls, thatched roof and packed earth floors. One room is the domain of their semi-invalid father, Jorlin; the other is theirs. The roof extends a good five paces past the back of the

house, and is used to shelter their many sheep during bad weather. Surrounded by a crude bracken-and-stone fence, their small plot was cropped bare long ago by hungry sheep and goats. A few chickens can usually be seen hunting for stray bugs or seed.

The Marien sisters derive most of their income from wool and weaving, keeping a good-sized flock of sheep pastured in and around the fields and nearby forests of Pasaquine. Jehanne or Génévieve can often be seen making thread with a distaff and spindle while watching over their sheep. Sometimes they also watch other peasants' sheep for a small fee or a few loaves of bread. The sheep are sheared in the Spring (this is considered women's work), and the wool is slowly woven into cloth over the course of the year. Much of the cloth is sold at the weekly market or bartered for foodstuffs with the local villagers. A portion of the wool is given to the monks as payment for the use of their grazing land.

The Marien sisters' home is a center of activity for the village womenfolk year round. They gather for company in pleasant weather to spin, knit, dye, and weave while the men do more physical labor (or gather at the tavern). During the cold winter months a pot of hot tea or ale warms over the fire, and many stop by just to relieve their boredom and catch up on the latest gossip.

Ale brewed by the Marien sisters is quite good, being much sweeter than the bitter ale of the Green Oak. In the past few years they have begun brewing enough for sale at the market and trade in the village. As a result, quite a competition has sprung up between the sisters and Lorris (see p. 10) as to who can brew the best ale. The competition is quite healthy and is the source of many a pleasant argument in Pasaquine. Friendly travelers will almost certainly be asked their opinion of the two ales if they stay in Pasaquine for any length of time; men and women will gather around, watching the taster's every expression as he or she drinks. Afterwards, it will become obvious that the men favor Green Oak's brew while the females tend toward the sisters'. Cheers will resound from the men or women upon the verdict, while the losing ale's supporters will accuse the taster of being daft and having a tongue that couldn't tell the difference between an apple and an onion. Actually, both men and women in the village are quite proud of the ale their village produces.

Most of the villagers like the Marien sisters, though many think it odd that they haven't married yet and show no desire to — this is a frequent topic among the gossipers of Pasaquine. Most accept the sisters' desires to remain unwed and, except for the yearly visit by an elderly matron attempting to marry them off or the occasional attentions of a young hot-head, they live in peace.

Jehanne's Stats

INT	+3	PER	+2
STR	+2	STM	+1
PRS	+1	COM	+0
DEX	0	QIK	-1
Confidence:	+3	Age:	25

Personality Traits:

Confident +3

Kind +2

Leader +1

Important Skills:

Scan (predators) 3

Quarterstaff (animals) 2

Weather Sense (storms) 2

Charisma (womenfolk) 4

Folk Ken (peasants) 3

Subterfuge (business) 2

Sing (funny songs) 2

Brewing (Meri-brew) 4

Pasaquine Lore (goods & possessions) 4

Scribe Latin (records) 1

Weaving (carding) 3

Animal Handling (sheep) 3

Reputations:

Shrewd/Pasaquine (3)

Good Brewer/Pasaquine (2)

Bossy/Généviève (1)



Jehanne and Généviève, the Mariien Sisters

Description: Jehanne, the eldest, is of medium height and strong build. Her long, light-brown tresses are often loosely braided and tied with colored ribbons. Her face is pleasant and clear, and though it has received the attention of many a hopeful man, it is not striking at first. Her eyes are a deep brown, with a hint of gold around the pupils.

Jehanne carries herself solidly with an air of quiet authority. Being the eldest of the two sisters, it initially fell upon her shoulders to care for her father and younger sister, as well as make a living for them all. She discovered her business sense and quickly combined her talent at ale-making with her sister's for weaving into a comfortable means of support. She would be more than happy to do business with visitors to Pasaquine.

Généviève balances Jehanne's solidness by being light and thin. She is above average in height, with

auburn hair usually caught up in a delicately knitted, natural wool snood. Her large, lively eyes are also dark brown, with a hint of gold radiating from her pupils. Généviève likes to adorn her plain wool dresses with short pieces of colored cloth; her prize possession is a strip of scarlet cloth (a very rare color) that she claims to have found while wandering in the forest. Généviève has an uncanny knack with the animals she tends and a natural talent for weaving, two skills which have served her family well. She enjoys them both and often spins thread in the field while watching her flock, her well-worn spindle spinning gracefully round and round.

The sisters work well together in social situations, with Jehanne's pragmatism and common sense complementing Généviève's bubbly outpourings.

Together, they command the respect and friendship of most of the villagers. Jehanne is ambitious and hopes to eventually bring herself and her sister into positions of power in the village, perhaps becoming Reeve, Ale-taster, or dance-leader. The sisters realize they have gifts beyond the understanding of most people (Jehanne's weather sense and Généviève's animal ken) but do not think they are unnatural. As a result, they strongly believe in the old ways and rituals, and reverently follow them in a manner much untainted by Christian beliefs.

Généviève's Stats

INT	-1	PER	-2
STR	+0	STM	-1
PRS	+2	COM	+2
DEX	+3	QIK	+1
Confidence:	+2	Age:	23

Personality Traits:

Friendly +3

Bubbly +2

Trusting +1

Important Skills:

Scan (predators) 2

Quarterstaff (animals) 3

Animal Ken (herd animals) 3

Athletics (chase) 2

Charm (small talk) 4

Storytelling (anecdotes) 2

Animal Handling (sheep) 3

Intrigue (gossip) 3

Weaving (fine) 4

Pasaquine Lore (relationships) 3

Reputations:

Flighty/Pasaquine (3)

Good Weaver/Monks and Villagers (2)

Charming/Men of Pasaquine (2)



THE REEVE'S HOUSE

The village Reeve, Cohat (see insert), lives in a small hut near the village green with his wife, Francis, and their five children. As Reeve, he acts as liaison between the monks and the villagers who owe them fealty. His duties include collecting the monks' share of the harvest and livestock, overseeing the making of wine, sampling any bread bound for the monastery, and representing the village's interest in monthly meetings at San Blas. He also presents any complaints to the monks at that time and returns to Pasaquine with word of the monks approval or displeasure.

The Reeve is elected yearly at a village-wide moot (gathering), with each serf receiving one vote; freemen are allowed to take part in debates about who should be Reeve, but are not allowed to partake in the actual voting. Cohat has held the position for six years now, and most of the villagers are happy to keep it that way. In fact, most of the villagers would balk if elected Reeve because of the unpopularity associated with the position; some have even paid fines when elected, in order to resign and have new votes cast. The Reeve walks a thin line between representing the villagers and

Jehanne and Généviève will be friendly to outsiders, inviting them in for ale, soup, or a bit of bread if the mood strikes them. Généviève will talk up a storm, alternating between amusing anecdotes of village life and probing questions directed at the visitors. Jehanne will listen and watch intently, interrupting when Généviève wanders too far astray, or to ask for clarification of a response. Between the two of them, Jehanne and Généviève know an enormous amount of information about the village, and can be an invaluable resource to characters who know how to ask for it. Jehanne will bargain dearly for any information given out, especially if it seems important. One common method of payment is to purchase a quantity of Marien sisters' ale (you can have a lot of fun with this one).

Roleplaying Tips: When playing Généviève, be friendly and childlike — raise your eyebrows and tilt your head to one side when talking. Keep your body constantly in motion; sway back and forth, play with your hair, or hum a tune under your breath. Play Jehanne with a lower voice and more practical air. She likes to be in charge, and won't take lightly to being pushed around on her own turf.

Cohat's Stats

INT	+2	PER	+1
STR	+0	STM	-1
PRS	+2	COM	+3
DEX	-1	QIK	-4
Confidence:	+2	Age:	32

Personality Traits:

Friendly +3
Inquisitive +2
Open +2

Important Skills:

Alertness (trouble) 3
Charisma (politics) 2
Charm (calming) 3
Folk Ken (those in need) 4
Sing (local songs) 2
Ride (control) 3
Diplomacy (persuade) 2
Carving (toys) 2
Pasaquine Lore (troubles) 4
Val du Bosque Lore (politics) 1

Reputations:

Fair, Honest/Pasaquine 3
Shrewd/Monks 2

enforcing the monks' desires. If the monks make unfavorable demands, the Reeve often receives the undeserved blame.

Cohat's hut is a standard one-room dwelling, if a bit neater than most. He can often be seen sitting under the front awning talking earnestly to other serfs, or playing with one of his five children. Cohat lost his right foot ten years ago when a small cut became infected and the limb had to be amputated. After becoming Reeve, the monks gave him a horse to ease his travels between Pasaquine and San Blas; now he rides it everywhere. When not in use, it is pastured on the village green or stabled under the Green Oak's front awning.

Overall, Cohat does an excellent job as Reeve, at least from the villagers' point of view. He relates well with them and manages to present the monks' wishes in a manner that says they're his problem too. His handicap keeps the hotter heads in the village from feeling threatened, and his gently persuasive talks clear up many a problem with a stubborn serf before they become serious. The monks see Cohat as a shrewd bargainer, and have learned to respect his quiet comments in the monthly meetings.



Players running into Cohat will find him friendly and curious about travelers to Pasaquine, especially if they plan on staying overnight. He will try to gather as much news as possible about the outside world, and will be particularly interested in items of a political or economic nature that might affect Pasaquine. He might, for example, ask players how the crops looked in fields along the way, or if they had any news of Sir Guifré (see *Ars Magica*, p.138).

Cohat, the Reeve

Description: Cohat has a friendly face with prominent laugh lines around his eyes and mouth. His curly, dark brown hair reaches just below his broad shoulders. Visitors will notice his missing right foot almost immediately, but usually forget his disability after a few moments. Cohat uses a crutch to get around the closer parts of the village and rides his horse everywhere else. He likes to touch people when he talks, ordinarily on the arm or shoulder.

Cohat likes visitors to Pasaquine as long as they are well-behaved and observe the basic rules of conduct. He makes a conscious effort to seek out travelers, so players traveling to Pasaquine will be approached by

Cohat within a few hours of entering the village, unless he's busy at San Blas. Rude visitors will be tolerated, but any breaches of the peace or obvious crimes will be reported to him eventually (depending on the crime) and, based on the severity of the infraction, a mob may be formed or a rider dispatched to San Blas.

Roleplaying Tips: Be friendly and curious and endlessly cheerful, but become cold, business-like and burn with a slow rage if "your" village is threatened or maligned. Roleplay having a crutch, but wave off any help or shows of pity in a friendly way. Remember that you were elected to this position, and don't have the power to make decisions for the whole village. If events require it, feel free to call a town meeting to discuss important issues.

THE WIDOW'S HOUSE

The widow **Maliér** (see insert) lives in a tidy hut near the western forest of Pasaquine with her three cats, **Hippin**, **Tippin** and **Pippin** (Hip, Tip and Pip for short; see below for more). She makes her living selling candles, herbal remedies and advice to the villagers. Her husband disappeared under strange circumstances some fifteen years ago, and of the two children (one boy, one girl) little is known, except that they left home shortly after their father's death and haven't come back. The widow does quite well by herself, though she often has villagers run errands for her. **Généviève**, for example (see p.16), likes the widow's company and often does favors for her in return for an interesting story or bit of lore. Living as she does on the edge of the woods, the widow is the subject of much gossip. Most of it is harmless, though every once in a while it becomes vindictive, usually as a result of the Widow refusing to make a love balm for some young lover.

Visitors to her house will first notice the wild profusion of strange plants which surround it, enclosed by a dilapidated rail fence. Stout thorn bushes grow between the worst gaps in the fence, keeping out unwanted goats, other animal scavengers and the occasional curious child. In the mornings and evenings, she can usually be found in her large garden tending her herbs, vegetables and flowers, which are arranged in a chaotic pattern only she seems to understand.

Inside, the house is neat and tidy with simple, unadorned furnishings. She owns all the proper equipment for the making of medicinal salves, oils, powders, unguents, potions, poultices and candles, not to mention some very nice teas and perfumes. This equipment is stored away in a large, rich-hued, well-oiled chest made of aged walnut. She only removes things from the chest when she is working. In the bottom of the chest are three small leatherbound volumes wrapped in worn gray silk.

The first volume is a treatise on Faeries entitled, "On Faeries and Thyr Kynd." Treat this as a mundane book of Faerie Lore (3). The next book is in her handwriting, and contains her observations and notes on potion manufacture. Those spending a season studying this book can add a +2 to their lab totals when making potions related to healing or restoration of the body or mind; the bonus received for making any other kind of potion is +1. The final book is a travelogue written in a strong but elegant script by her lost husband (see below). It describes his frequent travels in the nearby forests and contains his musings on the nature of Faerie and its connections to the earth. Unfortunately, it is written in a form of shorthand and requires a season and Int + Scribe Latin roll of 9+ to translate. Those studying it diligently for a further season receive +1 to their Faerie Lore if it is already 3+, and find it incomprehensible otherwise. At the Storyguide's option, it can give a bonus to players wishing to find a way into magical places such as Faerie.

The Widow will not show these books to anyone, especially villagers, unless they express a specific and dire need, or have developed a friendship with the Widow over a period of time. She would rather keep their existence her own little secret.

Maliér is the leader of the village with regard to all things concerning the old ways. She leads the spring dances with a small brass bell in each hand, dancing with surprising energy for one so old. The monks respect her wisdom and wits and long ago gave up trying to get her baptized. Some of the villagers fear her knowledge and strangeness, but almost all have requested her aid in some way at one time or another.

Ms. Malière, the Widow

Description: The Widow is above average height for a woman and has slightly stooped shoulders. Her white hair, usually covered by a green and white knit scarf, is held in a bun by a simple silver pin. Though she is in her sixties, she is still quite active and her hands are surprisingly strong (Per + Scan of 9+ to also notice that the skin on her hands is surprisingly unwrinkled and young-looking, though calloused).

The Widow's past prior to settling in Pasaquine is a tale too long to tell in its entirety. Suffice it to say that her husband (then lover) was a noble of Toulouse as well as being a heretic, and he fled to the country with her to avoid religious prosecution. She became happy in Pasaquine, but her husband became restless after a few years and began exploring the mysteries of the nearby forest. One day he left on a day hike, never to come back. She knows he is still alive but isn't sure how to reach him. At first, she was too afraid and didn't know how to try and follow; now, she has the knowledge to

The Widow's Stats

INT	+4	PER	+4
STR	-3	STM	-2
PRS	+3	COM	+2
DEX	-3	QIK	-3
Confidence:	+4	Age:	68

Personality Traits:

Strong +4

Stubborn +3

Kind +2

Happy -1

Important Skills:

Search (herbs) 5

Magic Sensitivity (places) 4

Charm (*visitors*) 3

Folk Ken (peasants) 4

Pretend (surprise) 2

Subterfuge (misdirection) 3

Storytelling (fables) 2

Chirurgy (diagnose) 2

Pasaquine Lore (forest) 4

Faerie Lore (earth faeries) 4

Humanities (science) 2

Medicine (apothecary) 6

Scribe Latin (neatly) 3

Gardening (exotic plants) 3

Reputations:

Healer/Val du Bosque (3)

Mysterious/Pasaquine (2)

Intriguing/Father Abelard (4)

Fascinating/Children of Pasaquine (2)

search, but is afraid of what she will find. Shortly after his departure she sent her children to stay with friends near Toulouse and be brought up as befitted their station.

These events have scarred her otherwise happy demeanor with a deep sadness that is normally hidden and sometimes forgotten in the busy work of day-to-day life. Surprise visitors may catch her staring longingly into the woods while fingering a small, silver locket (it contains a lock of his hair). People getting close enough to her to get the full story (so far no one in the village has) may be asked to look for him or her two children.

She enjoys visitors as long as they don't pester her and don't stay past their welcome. She will respect magi because of their education, but will reserve judgment until she sees how they use their powers. She will



be willing to share her knowledge with those needing it, but will charge for her services. The price depends on how worthy and/or selfish it is in her eyes; e.g., making a love potion for a brash woman would cost dearly, while asking information concerning the safety of Pasaquine might well be free. She enjoys discussing philosophy with the young Father Abelard.

Roleplaying Tips: Be friendly and hospitable to strangers as long as they aren't rude. Talk with a raspy alto voice with a slight waver — but don't overdo it. Smile and act knowingly when asked questions, even if you don't know the answer. Be sure and ask Tippin's opinion about important things (see below).

Hippin, Tippin, and Pippin

Hippin, Tippin, and Pippin (Hip, Tip, and Pip for short) are the widow's three cats. Hippin, a vibrant calico, is getting on in years and spends most of his time sleeping in sunny spots in or near the house. He will regard any visitors by coolly raising his head from his regal sprawl, then disregard them entirely and return to his nap.

At first glance Tippin looks like a young lynx or bobcat, but his friendly and curious nature will soon put visitors at ease. He will run to greet visitors and, after

fixing them with a long, strangely intelligent stare, proceed to rub against their leg and wait impatiently to be petted.

Pippin, the youngest, is solid black except for a small white star low on his belly. He is the largest by far, weighing nearly twenty pounds, but usually responds to anything strange by running to the house and hiding. Pip will come out only after everything settles down; then he is quite a friendly lap cat.

Each of these cats was adopted by the Widow for companionship some time after her husband and children left. She loves them deeply and talks to them, even when other people are present, asking their opinions on various topics. Tip is very vocal and often seems to answer her questions with meows and body language. She has learned to watch him closely when dealing with people, and trusts his reactions. She has also found that Hip seems to know when visitors will arrive, and will meow when they are several minutes away. Sometimes she can even tell who it is by his tone. Pip seems to help calm people; when he is present, everyone seems to relax and become more at ease. Players making a Per + Animal Handling roll of 6+ will know that these cats are unusually intelligent and appear to understand human speech. Players making a Per + Animal Ken roll of 9+ will be able to roughly interpret their responses. Someone using Tongue of the Beasts will be able to carry on an almost normal conversation with them — if they are treated right (perhaps with the promise of a juicy fish).

The widow knows they are magical and has guessed — but is not sure — at their origin. In fact, the cats were sent to watch over her by her long-missing husband from Faerie. For their stats, use the standard cat (see *Ars Magica*, p.117) with the following changes:

Hippin: Stm -2, Per +7, Soak -3. On a Per roll of 9+ Hip can tell when anyone mundane passes within 25

yards. The same roll tells Hip when a magical being (including magi) passes within 50 yards.

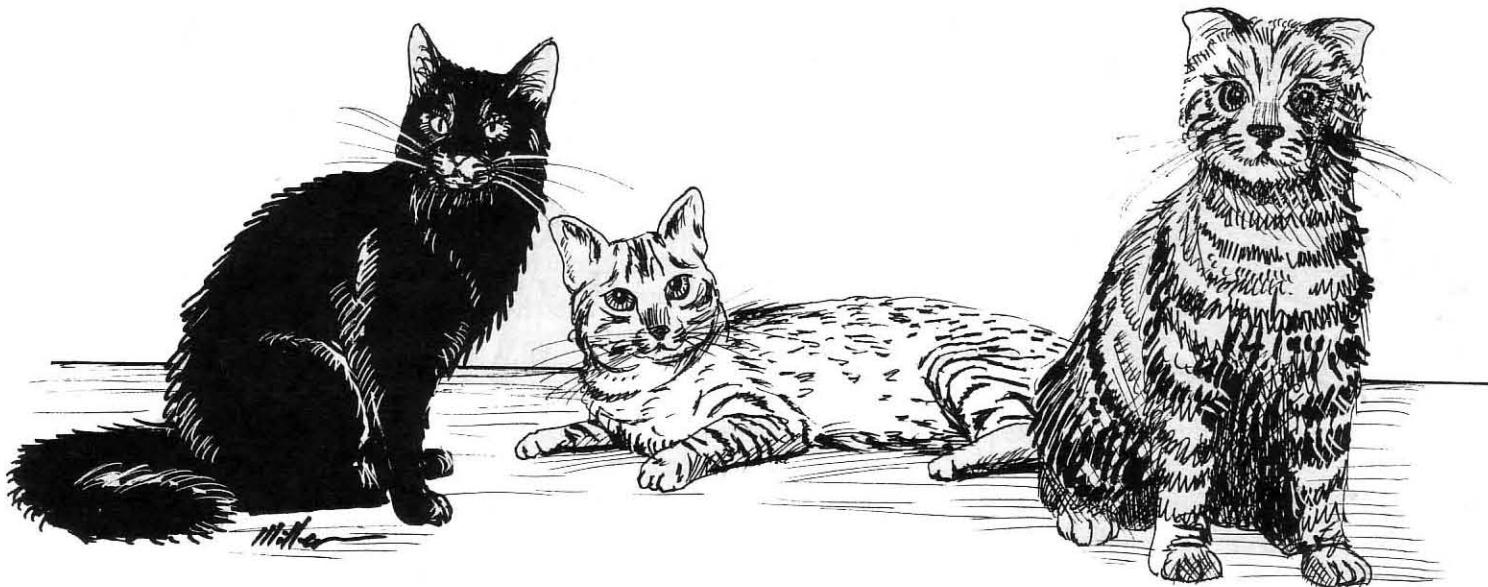
Tippin: Per +6, Int +3. Tip is an extremely good judge of character as well as a person's intentions. If someone lies to the widow or is generally untrustworthy, he will know on a Per roll of 9+.

Pippin: Per +4, Int 0, Stm +2, Fat +2, Soak +1, and a -1 body level. Pip can cause people to relax when he purrs within three feet of them. Reduce all appropriate personality traits by 2.

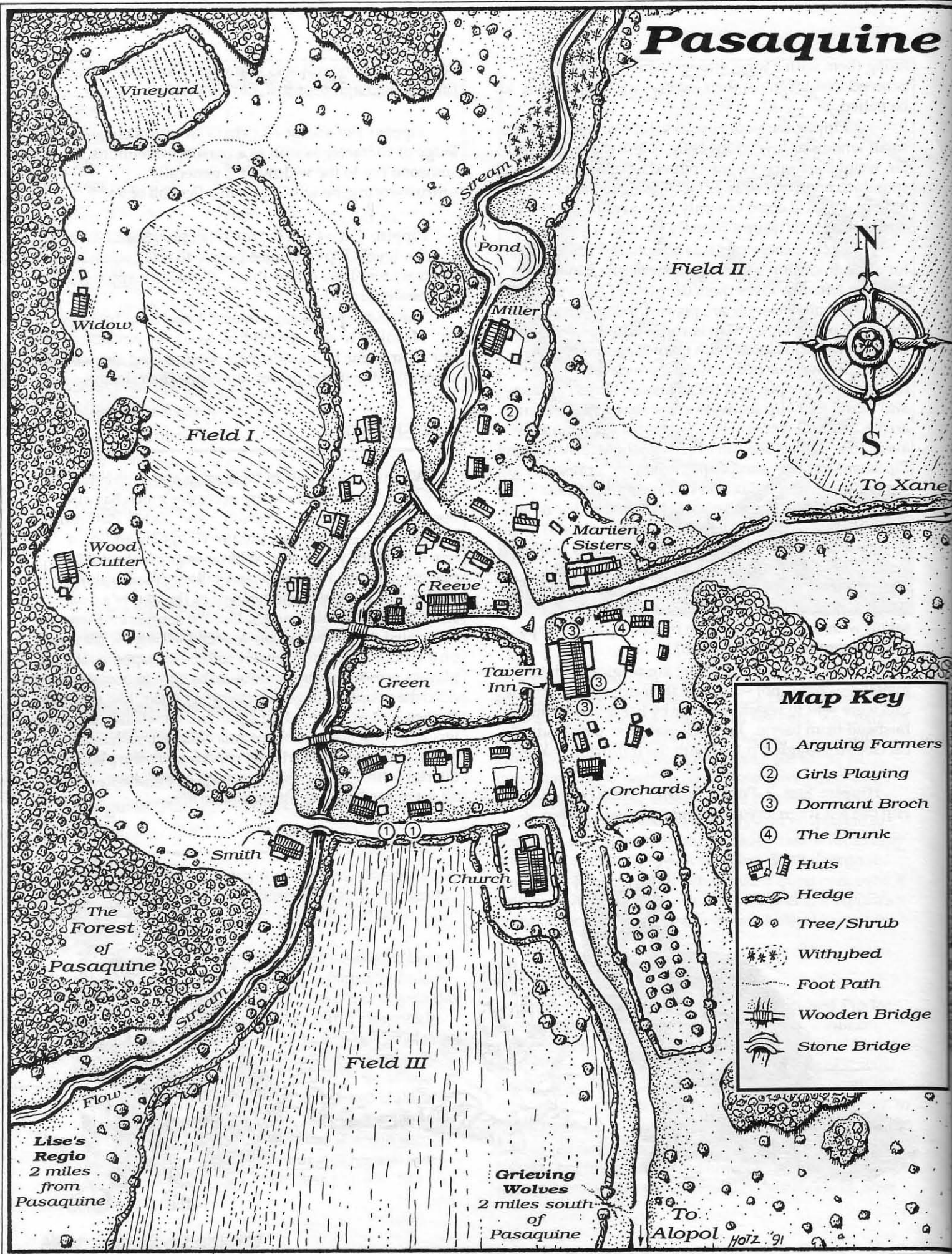
The body of each cat contains 4 pawns of *Intéllego vis*. Needless to say, the Widow would be devastated if any harm came to her dear companions, and she would do everything in her power to avenge their deaths.

LOOSE ENDS

While many details of Pasaquine and its inhabitants have been presented here, by necessity much has also been omitted. Feel free to change and add to Pasaquine as you see fit — make it a unique village by adding a few touches of your own. What is important is that the players perceive Pasaquine as a village filled with real people leading lives independent of the player's existence. Adding small touches, like the sounds and smells associated with a pair of plow oxen passing the players on a road, can add immensely to the atmosphere. As the players wander about Pasaquine, be sure to occasionally describe people engaged in everyday tasks, like washing clothes, eating, or weeding a garden. Small side encounters with mischievous or curious children, sullen *cottars*, or interested village girls can prod wandering players in the right direction as well as giving atmosphere. Above all, have fun bringing Pasaquine to life.



Pasaquine

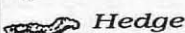


Map Key

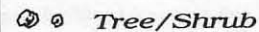
- ① Arguing Farmers
- ② Girls Playing
- ③ Dormant Broch
- ④ The Drunk



Huts



Hedge



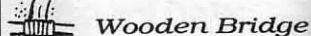
Tree/Shrub



Withybed



Foot Path



Wooden Bridge



Stone Bridge



Chapter 3 - The Forest

This chapter provides a glimpse into the heart of the primal forest bordering Pasaquine to the west. After reading a brief introduction to the forest, you will learn the strange history of the beautiful wood, and conclude with a description of the relationship between the Forest and Pasaquine.

INTRODUCTION

Though extremely beautiful, the forest bordering Pasaquine seems completely mundane, at least on the surface. Consisting chiefly of hardwoods such as oak, beech and maple, it stretches from Pasaquine in the east, ten miles westward across the rolling foothills of the Pyrenees. The forest ends just north of the village of Alopoc in the south and stops short of the monastery of San Blas by some five miles to the north. No major rivers flow through the forest, though many streams, some of considerable strength and vitality, wind their way through its shaded expanse.

The flora and fauna are as one would expect for an established forest in southern France. Squirrels and birds inhabit the trees, while bears, bobcats, deer, wild pigs, badgers and wolves walk the earth, along with numerous mice, rabbits, weasels, foxes, shrews and the occasional hedgehog or mole. Many of the trees are very old and show an amazing health for their age. The trees near the center of the forest tower above the countryside, their thick, gnarled branches blocking out nearly all the sun's light before it reaches the moss-covered floor below. Game paths wander in and about the forest, connecting glades to shallow streams and secluded ponds. The outer edges of the forest contain younger trees with correspondingly more undergrowth; nettles and thornbushes often make entrance to the central forest difficult.

The forest is fairly untouched by civilized man. The Count of Foix made a lodge from its trees, the monks used its timber for their monastery, and the villages of Pasaquine and Alopoc are allowed to gather wood from its borders under the watchful eyes of appointed Foresters. Domestic pigs and goats are not allowed to wander the forest west of Pasaquine; only in the copse east of Pasaquine can they freely scrounge for nuts and roots.

Despite its seemingly normal appearances, the forest has another, less mundane side. Many magical areas can be found within its ancient borders, though these are usually hidden from the eyes of man. Once in a long while, someone stumbles into one of these areas by accident, returning to the village babbling of faeries, primal forests of indescribable beauty, and strange creatures — or they never return at all. Most of the villagers know deep in their heart that something is special about their forest, though most couldn't say why and would probably refuse to

discuss the matter if asked. These magical areas, of course, will be of prime interest to the players.

HISTORY

Perhaps even more important than the story of the founding of the village of Pasaquine is the tale of its immediate surroundings — the land itself. Long before the coming of civilized man to Val du Bosque, a primal forest of oaks, firs and pines covered its western hills. Though nothing could be said about this forest that couldn't be said about thousands of others (except perhaps its alpine beauty), it managed to catch the full attention of the Earth Mother for a short moment. In that moment, the land blossomed as never before; fresh trees, flowers, and grasses sprang up, new springs forced themselves to the surface, and wild creatures came forth to live on its bounty. Satisfied with her work, the Earth Mother then turned her thoughts elsewhere.

The effects of her brief attentions had more than physical results. An aura was left behind, and the lingering traces of her presence settled deeply into the roots of the land. Her spirit continued to guide the growth of this small forest and her occasional direct attention assured its health and well-being.

In time, faeries and other magical creatures found their way to this forest and either flourished under the Earth Mother's faint influence or moved on, made uncomfortable by some quality they couldn't quite fathom. It became known in Faerie that this forest was special in some way and, though many wished to hold court there, no one faerie ever felt sure enough to declare itself absolute ruler of the primal wood. In fact, many faerie leaders were known to wander the woods when wrestling with some particularly tough problem, and commoner faeries often wandered its paths seeking solace when troubled. The woods seemed to comfort some and bring them closer to their roots, while they frightened other magical creatures enough that they never returned.

By the time primitive man appeared nearby, the forest was filled with an eclectic mix of creatures, both magical and mundane. Most were solitary, though a few roving bands of faeries made the woods their home, too. Early man found his way into the forest as well. Guided by dreams and visions accumulated over many centuries, their belief in the Earth Mother intensified and became integral to their way of life. They worshiped her as best they could — usually without conscious thought — with small prayers before taking a life in the hunt, by spilling drink upon the ground before meals, or with simple runes left on trees or stones. Man and the faeries coexisted for the most part in peace — the faeries avoided the humans if they wished, and the humans in turn accepted the faeries and other magical creatures as

they did the forest itself. Intermingling occurred between man and faerie over the years, with the result that some men became longer-lived or gained strange abilities, while others joined the ranks of the faeries.

When "modern" man appeared and brought Christianity to the region, its influence was felt throughout the forest. As the Church and its believers moved closer, the ties binding the Earth Mother to the area weakened, her visits became more infrequent and her spirit began to fade. Bewildered and confused by the growing absence of a force central to their everyday lives, the forest's inhabitants responded in various ways. Some became even more solitary and never ventured forth from secluded caves or glens, some left the forest and eventually joined others of their type elsewhere, and others filled the void within themselves with anger. These embittered few looked for some way to vent their rage, and took to harassing creatures visiting or new to the area, especially if they were humans from areas where the Dominion held sway.

Thus, when the Duke and his entourage appeared one spring to hunt in the forest itself, the inhabitants of the forest (and some say the forest itself) took great pleasure in leading them astray and making them all look the fool. After much fun and games, the humans were driven off and the Forest began reclaiming the land cleared by the Count. For a time, the Forest was left in peace; it received such a bad reputation that humans shied away, and faeries from local courts stopped visiting. The Earth Mother's spirit ceased its slow withdrawal, and signs appeared to indicate that she was indeed returning.

Then a group of monks were given title to the land by the Count of Foix, and while the efforts of the Forest and its keepers kept the monks from building within its confines, a monastery was built on the outskirts of the forest to the north. This strong influx of intense religious belief and associated artifacts once again began driving the spirit of the Earth Mother from the land. When the monks sanctified the main chapel of San Blas, the Dominion increased beyond the ability of the Earth Mother's lingering spirit to withstand comfortably. Her last act before retreating was to veil a large part of the Forest from the eyes of man, and make it so that these areas could only be entered by those possessing certain magical talents, by the current Forest dwellers, or by simple animals.

To the Forest's long-time inhabitants, nothing appeared to change except that the world beyond the Forest became distant and unclear — as if seen through a rippling sheet of water. Humanity ceased to intrude directly upon these areas, though sometimes vague feelings of its presence could be felt. However, the Earth Mother's presence was weakened considerably even in these hidden places, her previous consciousness reduced to a mere glimmer. At first, the animals, magical crea-

tures, faeries and other beings living in the Forest often traveled between the boundaries of the two realities as they wished. But as time passed, they found themselves tied more strongly to their secluded Forest homes and eventually, all but the most adventuresome became content to remain entirely within the bounds of the Earth Mother's protected realm.

Currently, the Earth Mother's memory is kept alive by a few villagers, such as the Widow and the Marien Sisters who honor the old traditions.

THE MUNDANE FOREST

Pasaquine depends upon the Forest in many ways. First, its timber is used for the frames of their huts, for all their household furnishings and much of their farm equipment. Brush cleared from the Forest is burned for cooking and heat, or mixed with mud to make hut walls. All of the charcoal needed by the local smith is made from wood gathered by the forester, Róbert. The villagers are allowed to gather berries, nuts, and herbs within its borders — a vital addition to their staple diet of bread, cheese and ale. During certain times of the year, the village hunter (detailed in Part II of this supplement) is allowed to hunt specific animals within its boundaries, which provides a small source of fresh meat and furs during the long winter months.

Travelers through the Forest of Pasaquine will see a variety of wildlife and game, as well as some beautiful scenery. This hardwood Forest has some of the finest specimens of oak, cedar and elm and will be of interest to any natural philosopher or magi that specialize in Herbam. Scholars studying the plants and animals for more than a week, making a Per + appropriate Lore roll of 9+, will note that the Forest is special in some way they can't quite put their finger on. Everything seems to be richer, more vivid, the plants heartier and the animals more healthy. At the Storyguide's option, those studying the animals and their environs extensively will discover minute differences between these specimens and ones hailing from other forests.

Visitors to the Forest will find themselves alone for the most part, though they may run into Róbert, who will question their presence or, closer to Pasaquine, a small party of serfs gathering brush. The serfs may or may not be friendly depending on if they were gathering wood illegally. Players may also encounter wildlife, of course, which can spice up an otherwise mundane journey. Wild boars, magnificent stags, waddling porcupines or curious squirrels and birds can easily provide spontaneous encounters that help bring the Forest to life.

THE FOREST IN PLAY

As you will discover in the following chapters, the Forest of Pasaquine is a strange and marvelous place. It is vast, and most of its dark interior is unexplored and mysterious—even to those who dwell nearby or make their living treading its paths and byways. The villagers know of the Forest's magical side as passed on through countless stories, but most have never experienced it directly. Few crude maps of the Forest exist, and no road larger than a narrow footpath crosses its borders. In short, the Forest is primal, unexplored, and untamed—the perfect setting for stories.

This setting is not detailed as the village was, for to fill its borders with specific creatures, beings, landmarks, and *regio* (see the next chapter) would entail a much larger supplement. Instead, this chapter and the next focus on giving you the *feel* of the Forest — its history, its relationship to Pasaquine, and something of its flora and fauna, so that you can populate the Forest with creatures and things that suite your particular troupe and style of play. If you like, place an ancient Roman fort within a hidden glade (this is alluded to on p.132 of *Ars Magica*), put a crazed but knowledgeable hedge-wizard within its bounds, or create a series of underground caverns with strange paintings on their walls and the remnants of an ancient culture in their depths. Anything is possible; be limited only by your imagination.



Chapter 4 - The Magical Forest

Within Pasaquine Forest are innumerable *regio*, limited only by the Storyguide's imagination. *Regio* can be large, small, powerful, weak, uninhabited, or peopled with the remnants of an entire culture. Because of this enormous variety, most of the specifics of each *regio* are left for each individual troupe to create and explore. The following chapter provides a few guidelines to help you on your way. (*Regio* themselves are described in the Appendix.)

OVERVIEW

To some extent, the Forest of Pasaquine can be considered to be a large level-one *regio*, with islands of higher strength scattered throughout. Thus, a person entering the Forest and crossing into the first level of the *regio* can travel throughout the Forest on this level. As they travel, they might encounter other, individual *regio* which have higher strengths, in which case they would have to roll to enter them. Travelers in the Forest often do this very thing without realizing it, for the first level of the *regio* is not very far removed from the mundane world.

In addition, all of the *regio* which have levels with strengths higher than six are connected to each other. These connections are not always apparent, and often involve a gate or doorway of some kind. Whether or not this gate is physical varies. Sometimes the gates are obvious, like a rune-inscribed marble arch standing at the center of the *regio*; while at other times, the gate may be nothing more than a certain place between two trees, requiring elaborate rituals to activate. These gates are not necessarily known to all inhabitants of the *regio*. Some individuals may travel between *regio* extensively, while others remain ignorant of the existence of anything beyond their own *regio*.

Thus, all *regio* are connected at the "bottom" by having level one in common, and higher level *regio* are connected at the "top" via gates.

INHABITANTS

As mentioned before, almost anything can inhabit a *regio*, though beings who do often fall into specific categories. *Outcasts* are common. They can be Faerie, human, or other. *Loners* are also common, for they like the autonomy offered by the *regio*. This isn't to say that social groups don't form; rather, such groups are rare and are often quite informal. An example of a social group that might exist in a *regio* would be a tribe of primitive humans or druids.

Formal social structures, like Faerie courts, don't exist within the *regio* for one reason: ego. The great Faerie leaders like to think of themselves as above all other things and become uncomfortable when in the Forest, where echoes of the Earth Mother's presence still sound and constantly remind them that something

unfathomable — something out of their control — does indeed exist. So, the Faeries that do come to the Forest are rogues, outcasts, wanderers, poets and those who don't mind more than a little mystery.

Usually, Faeries or other beings enter the Forest and explore a bit before settling down, or they enter from the top of a *regio* directly from Faerie. Once established in a particular *regio*, they often become tied to it and usually are unable to leave it without aid of some form. Others never settle down, and wander freely through all the *regio* until their deaths. They all have one thing in common, however, and that is their inability to enter the mundane world.

Most of the creatures inhabiting *regio* are tied to them so strongly that, though they might be able to go to a different *regio* or enter Faerie proper, they cannot contact the mundane world directly. This restriction is lifted on certain special nights, such as Midsummer's Eve, when the boundaries between *regio* and everyday lands are weakened. Usually, Faerie nobility or other powerful beings can choose to wander mundane lands if they wish; however, there are times when the boundaries are exceptionally strong, and even the royalty cannot leave.

SHAPES

Regio come in all shapes, sizes and strengths. The levels can be simple concentric rings, complicated interwoven spirals, or chaotic patterns that shift from day to day. Just keep in mind that each level must be entered *in sequence* in order to travel from lowest to highest. Thus, shape can make it easy (simple rings) or difficult (spirals) to enter and stay in the *regio*. It is possible, for example, to construct a *regio* that forces one to travel in a specific pattern to reach the center. Above all, remember that the *regio* are places of mystery—no matter how much players explore them, they should always find something new: borders that drift, entire *regio* that move from day to day, or ones that pop in and out of contact with the “world.” Above all, have fun and be as creative as you can.

SAMPLE REGIO

This section details some *regio* that can be found in the Forest. Feel free to use, relocate, or discard them as you wish.

The Hill of Mushrooms

Northwest of Pasaquine on the edge of the Forest lies a small magical area within a grove of gnarled cedars (see *Ars Magica*, p.135). Once a year on Midsummer's Eve the magi of Mistridge make the long

trip to this enchanted grove to collect the magical mushrooms that sprout from the silvery moss that grows beneath the trees.

This *regio* has a strength of three with two levels, one of aura strength 1 and one of aura strength 3. In the mundane world, the *regio* appears as a small clearing that is surrounded by twisted and aged cedar trees. Small patches of unremarkable moss grow on the roots of the trees. On Midsummer's Eve mushrooms do sprout in the mundane world, but they are non-magical (at the Storyguide's option they could have other properties, like being poisonous). Woe to the apprentice who mistakenly gathers these mushrooms instead!

The highest level of the *regio* (level three) looks much like the mundane one with the following differences: the cedar trees are slightly larger, and are even more gnarled and twisted (perceptive people will notice their distinctive cedar aroma is much stronger as well), and a silvery moss all but covers the roots of the trees like a deep, lush carpet which seems to glow in moonlight. Each Midsummer's Eve at midnight, *vis*-filled mushrooms sprout from the moss (a total of seven pawns of *Herbam vis*).

The magi usually don't have any trouble entering or leaving the highest level (they need a stress roll of 12+ and get a +10 for the time and +3 for the season) and so may not have even realized the nature of the magical area because they only visit it on Midsummer's Eve. If the magi ever travel to the grove during another part of the year, however, they may stay in the mundane world and notice the subtle differences. Remember that magi, companions and grogs that have entered the *regio* before, get a bonus on their entering and leaving rolls.

The Troll's Tree

Near the southeastern edge of the Forest lies a small clearing. On the edge of this clearing stands an ancient, dead maple with sprawling, bare limbs. The prominent feature of this *regio* is the presence of a hermit-like, wood-troll who makes his home in the large hollow of the maple.

The *regio* has three levels of strength 1, 4, and 6. It is quite small, with level 6 barely stretching across the thirty-foot wide clearing. The mundane level is unremarkable, with the exception of the dead maple which juts some fifty feet into the air. The clearing is filled with an assortment of wild grasses, and the edges are ringed with healthy, young trees. Seven knobby, unclassifiable shrubs are scattered throughout the clearing. Interested magi or scholars might notice that these are of not a local variety (Per + Area Lore roll of 9+). They have twisted, thick cores from which sprout an uneven profusion of small, prickly leaves. They stand three to four feet high and have an unappealing and sickly appearance. Any magi casting *Converse* with

Plants and Trees (InHe, Lvl 25) on these plants will be in for quite a surprise (see below).

The dead maple itself is somewhat grander, with its reaching, moss-covered limbs and slight, stately lean towards the center of the clearing. Those approaching closely will find the maple hollow, with a three foot wide split starting at ground level that rises and narrows to close to halfway up the tree. The inside is clean and spacious and could hold several people comfortably. Perceptive characters may notice two things: the absence of any rot on the tree, and the complete lack of insects anywhere on its surface. (Per + Survival roll of 9+).

The highest level of the *regio* is the home of Daubble, the wood-troll (see insert). He lives in the hollow tree and tends the shrubs in the clearing. When resting, he nestles inside the tree with his arms extended out two convenient knotholes, swaying gently in the breeze. The shadow of this powerful troll is sometimes cast almost unchanged into the mundane world, causing a few knowledgeable villagers to wonder at the dead tree which sometimes sprouts new branches.

DAUBBLE, THE WOOD TROLL

Description: Daubble is a curious sight and at first might be mistaken for a large, misshapen tree. He easily clears ten feet, and his long gangly arms hang almost to the ground. His head looks something like a strange tree-stump with eyes, a broad, flat nose and a wide, creaking mouth. Daubble's entire body is sparsely covered with leaves in various stages; some are fresh from the bud, while others have changed color in anticipation of dropping off. Small patches of green moss adhere to the few smooth spots of his craggy skin.

Daubble, the Wood Troll

Faerie Might 18

Size +4

Int +3 Per -2

Str +6 Stm +5

Prs +2

Club: 1st +4 Atk +7 Dam +19

Bash: 1st +2 Atk +9 Dam +14

Fat +7 Def +3 Soak +24*

Body Levels: OK, 0/0/0, -1/-1/-1, -3/-3, -5, Incap.

* Daubble's soak total is reduced to 14 for fire-based attacks, and to 19 for attacks by axes of any kind.

Personality Traits:

Shy +4

Gruff +3

Likable +2

Daubble lives in the hollow tree, which also happens to be a gate to high-level *regio* elsewhere in the Forest. He hates to be disturbed, for he enjoys his solitude and won't hesitate to tell that to everyone he sees. Sometimes, he has thought of moving to a different *regio* — one without a gate — but can't stand the thought of leaving his charges and his "work."

Daubble, being a wood-troll, is very attuned to the Forest. There is little he doesn't know about it if you can get him to answer a question without first taking your head off. He spends much of his time standing quietly and absorbing information from all corners of the Forest, or puttering around, muttering this knowledge to his strange shrubs while he carefully tends them. A hidden observer might note that he seems to carry on complete conversations with these shrubs—sometimes arguing, marking his points with wild flailings of his great arms, or by kicking deep furrows in the ground, but mostly, he just stoops quietly over the odd plants and mutters, his spindly fingers darting here and there, preening his charges.

This is his obsession: gathering knowledge of the Forest. He can't remember it all, so he shares this information with his shrubs, who are quite intelligent in their own way. Between Daubble and the seven shrubs, they know *vast* amounts about the Forest and its inhabitants, though it can take hours or days to get it out of them. Daubble's existence is well-known by the powerful denizens of the Forest, and they occasionally stop by when they need information badly enough to risk his fury.



Daubble hates company, and his standard response to newcomers is to first stand quietly, hoping they won't notice him and go away, and if that doesn't work, to cajole, swear, and threaten the interlopers while pounding a huge club repeatedly on the ground. If approached properly, perhaps with offers of knowledge about foreign forests or plants, he might be convinced to answer a short question or two. Regular visitors know of this, and often come prepared with clippings of strange plants or unusual flowers as peace offerings. Daubble will not hesitate to drive off persistent intruders with his club or mace-like fists, and has no qualms about killing impudent fools who take up too much of his time.

Roleplaying Tips: You don't have time for anyone; your work is *important* and can't stop for anything—unless, of course, they have something interesting to show you. Talk loud, and slowly when speaking to strangers. After all, they're *stupid*. Mutter under your breath constantly while you work and don't be afraid to bash some heads to get some peace and quiet.

The Mask People:

Note: This *regio* is included chiefly as an example of creative *regio* design, and while not completely detailed, should give Storyguides a glimpse of what can be done.

The Mask People's *regio* lies deep within the Forest, and is quite difficult to find because of its unique shape. Unlike most *regio* in which the lowest level is the largest and the highest level the smallest, the Mask People's *regio* has a bottom level only a few yards across, and a top level covering over a hundred square miles. In order to enter the *regio* at all, one must first find and enter successfully the lowest level—not an easy task—then walk outward from the center to cross into the higher regions. The Mask People live in level five of the *regio*, which consists of four total layers of strength one, three, five, and nine.

This *regio* has extremely weak ties to the real world, a function of its inverted shape. It comes in contact with the Forest between five squat, oblong stones the size of young children, that are placed in a circular pattern some fifteen feet across. Just beyond the circle of moss-covered stones lies a dense thicket of almost impenetrable sticker-bushes. Level one of the *regio* touches the world in the center of the stone-ring, and is only ten feet across.

Level three of the *regio* is much larger, almost a mile in diameter. It is filled with wild woods and wandering game-paths; no signs of human intrusion can be found with the exception of a few strange runes to be found on particularly stately trees.

Level five stretches almost twenty miles from side to side and is the home of the primitive Mask

People. This level's Forest is quite impressive but brooding, filled with towering oaks, beech and maple that form a dense, dark canopy high above. Few direct rays of sunlight actually make it to the Forest floor, resulting in a profusion of shadows and muted colors. Animals can be heard in abundance, though rarely seen. A few smooth trails can be found weaving through the woods which eventually lead to one of the Mask People's five camps.

The Mask People are simple hunter-gatherers with a semi-nomadic way of life. They wear little in the way of clothes, but are never found without masks covering their faces. Each person has several masks; one made by their mother during pregnancy, one made by the tribal chief at birth, another made by themselves at puberty, and one made by each sibling, lover, or wife. When a person comes of age, they are allowed to make a mask for themselves as part of a rite of passage. The masks are made from bark or hardened clay, with bits of feather, moss, or fur providing decoration and come in an astounding variety of sizes, shapes and colors. The Mask People switch masks to present different moods and aspects of their personalities, with unworn masks hanging from nearby trees or on a sling hung over one shoulder. Some of the masks confer magical abilities upon the wearer, such as shape-shifting, flight, prescient visions or keen hearing and eyesight.

The tribe, now numbering twenty, is led by Abbat, an ancient, gnarled old shaman who spends much of his time caring for his blind daughter, Cabbat. Cabbat in turn acts as an oracle for the tribe, predicting births, deaths, and the future of the tribe in a harsh, sing-song voice. The tribe relies much on her prophecy to order and give meaning to their day-to-day lives. The Mask People also place great emphasis on dreams and often bring strange ones to the attention of Abbat for interpretation. Each child of the tribe, upon reaching puberty, must make a foray into Level nine of the *regio* to find themselves and the shape of their own, true mask. This is the only time that this level may be entered without the permission of Abbat.

Level nine of this *regio* is only slightly larger than level five, and is quite far removed from reality as most people know it. When first entered, this level seems much like the last: a vast, primal Forest. After spending a few days there, however, the person will encounter the fears, dreams and hopes of their own self in the form of omens, beings and images. They cascade past the person as they move through the Forest in a dream-like sequence. Sometimes these things are real, and can harm or even kill the seeker; at other times, they are insubstantial ghosts, only affecting the mind. In the end, each person must face some vital aspect of who they truly are before being able to leave the level.



Chapter 5 - Story Ideas

No matter how complete and detailed the setting, the players can not experience Pasaquine without stories to draw them there in the first place. You can make them up yourself, run the detailed story presented in Part II, or use a few of these story ideas as the kernel of a full-fledged story.

The short ideas presented below are just that: interesting observations, questions and possibilities concerning the characters and locations that could be turned into a story with some work on your part. Hopefully, a small handful will jump out and demand to be told by your troupe.

Please also note that, while you might not like the idea of running a story about the death of Lorris (the innkeeper), you might use it as an event that occurs between stories. The players might show up in Pasaquine, for example, to find the Green Oak being run by Christi and the Marien sisters. Everyday events like these can be an important part of maintaining the illusion of Pasaquine as a living, breathing entity with a life of its own.

Each entry begins with a basic statement or question that addresses the core idea, then continues with examples of stories that might arise from it.

THE GREEN OAK (LORRIS AND CHRISTI)

- The Mother's Oak contains a fair amount of *vis*; this might be appealing to a rogue wizard or rival covenant. And then, of course, the characters get blamed.

Example: The magi hear through friendly sources that the covenant of Windgraven covets the *vis* contained in the Mother's Oak and plans to take it soon. The players must thwart their plans, but how? Or, perhaps the *vis* has already been taken and the players' covenant is blamed for it. This could be the source of debate at a tribunal, with the covenant being blamed for stirring up the locals.

- Lorris has a mysterious past, does he have something to hide? Why did he go on the crusade?

Example: One explanation for this would be a criminal past. Perhaps old "friends" show up and try to blackmail him. Another explanation might be past dealings with diabolists, a sin for which he atoned for by traveling to Palestine. Perhaps some diabolists wish to set up base in the forest and want his help?

- Upon Lorris' death, Christi and/or the Marien sisters take charge of the inn.

Example: Lorris' death was surrounded by strange circumstances (maybe linked to the example above?) and the magi are called in to investigate. Or perhaps some of the villagers don't like the idea of "womenfolk" running the tavern on their own.

- Lorris has a sacred relic from the crusades which has strange powers.

Example: This holy relic inadvertently disenchant nearby magic items and causes spells to fail. The magi discover some items which have failed inexplicably and must discover the cause. Or, the item has Muslim origins and is fiercely hunted for by a band of Saracens.

THE MILL (BERNARD)

- Bernard accidentally kills someone while punishing them for owning a hand mill.

Example: This person could be important to the covenant somehow (perhaps a relative of a grog). Do the magi risk the wrath of the Abbot by seeking revenge or justice?

- The monks tire of Cohat's politics and declare Bernard Reeve.

Example: This would have major effects on the relationship between the covenant and the village, since Bernard is very friendly with the Church. This could be a political story as the players try to influence the Abbot to keep Cohat in power.

THE CHURCH (FATHER ABELARD)

- The Father does not persecute heretics with the zeal that the Abbot desires, in a time of crisis he himself is accused.

Example: A companion or grog friendly to the Father was paying a visit when he, the Father, and some other guests were arrested by a Papal inquisitor. A trial for heresy ensues — a touchy situation, considering the magi must support the Father to prove the innocence of their coven member. If the magi aren't careful, they also might attract the unwanted attention of an inquisitor upon their covenant.

- The Father gets a little too caught up in studying pagan rites and disappears into a *regio*. Perhaps he is somewhat transformed when he returns?

Example: The Father disappears into a *regio* containing the remnants of an ancient, shamanistic tribe and comes to understand their way of life (perhaps even

falling in love with a tribe member). His views of the Church are shattered completely. When he returns to Pasaquine he asks the magi for sanctuary.

- A conservative faction in the village (angered because of something the magi were involved in) tries to remove Abelard. The magi may well wish to fight this, as their relationship with the Father is fairly friendly.

- A magi learns that the Father's melodies and songs have a hint of magic to them. Intense study of this phenomena might lead to discovering that a magi of Pendule (see **The Order of Hermes**, p.34) has taught the Father at some point. Who was this, and where are they now? This may cause the Father to become enamored of magic and asks to become a magi's apprentice.

THE SMITHY (BRUNO)

- How and where does Bruno get his iron? He might know quite a bit about the *regio* and have some kind of pact with creatures there.

Example: Some burly, earth-creatures appear one day and disappear with the smith's family. The smith himself is gone on one of his trips and the Widow approaches the magi with her worries about the situation. Unknowingly, the smith has angered a faction of earth-creatures on his iron-collecting expeditions and they have stolen his family.

- Bruno is extremely strong and burly — maybe he has some troll or ogre blood?

Example: During some strange solar phenomena (perhaps just after an eclipse) the sun's rays are particularly intense. On that day, the smith's family finds Bruno standing outside their cottage, turned to stone. They come to the magi for help. This story could lead the magi through numerous *regio* while collecting herbs and items for a counterspell.

THE FORESTER'S (RÓBERT)

- If Father Abelard is removed from office, perhaps Róbert will be made village priest. This could be bad for the covenant, as Róbert is quite pious.

- Róbert becomes drunk and wanders into the Forest one evening, forgetting his charms. When (or if) he returns, he is crazy or possessed.

Example: One day Róbert's family is shocked as they watch Róbert crumble into a pile of twigs, earth, and moss. The real Róbert is trapped in Faerie somewhere. The magi are asked for help.

- The Faeries play an elaborate joke on Róbert by exchanging his youngest child with a faerie.

Example: The faerie-changling arranges to visit the covenant with the pretense of measuring some rooms for some new furniture. He either steals something of importance while there, or gathers enough information while there to allow other faeries to get through the covenant's defenses.

- Róbert accidentally kills an important Faerie; they seek retribution from the villagers and make the Forest impassible to humans.

Example: The magi are on their way to collect their yearly *vis* from the magic mushrooms when they find themselves lost, then tormented by a host of faeries. When the magi finally get to their destination they find the mushrooms gone. In order to get the mushrooms, the magi will have to deal with the faeries and appease them for Róbert's actions.

THE MARIEN SISTERS' HOUSE (JEHANNE AND GÉNÉVÈVE)

- A large number of Lorris' kegs of ale go bad. The Sisters are prime suspects.

- A group of grogs or companions might be invited to be impartial judges at an ale-tasting contest.

Example: While in Pasaquine on a routine supply-buying trip, the group (all grogs or companions) is asked to be judges at an ale-tasting contest. This can provide the grogs with a story of their own, and can be quite a lot of fun. To what lengths will Lorris and the Marien sisters (to two main contenders) go to win? Bribes, favors, and other forms of persuasion might be used. The grogs had better play the game carefully, though, if they don't wish to make lifelong enemies. And what will the magi think when the grogs are late or return drunk from their mission?

- A companion or grog falls in love with Génévève, or is the object of her attentions. While not the subject of a story itself, this could happen over a period of time, with them meeting in one, becoming friends in another, and so on.

- Where did Génévève get her piece of scarlet cloth? Perhaps she has a lover in the woods (either Faerie or mundane)? Or, someone comes out of the Forest one day to claim it. It also might have magical powers.

Example: One day Génévève shows up at the covenant in tears. She explains that when she was a child, she made a promise to a faerie in the woods in return for a piece of bright red cloth. Now the faerie has called in her promise and Génévève is scared—for the promise was to live with him in Faerie for a year.

- Where did Jehanne and Génévève's magical abilities and gold-flecked eyes come from? Maybe their convalescent father is part faerie or was once a magi of some renown that is in an extended period of temporary twilight (see **The Order of Hermes**). This could be the Pendule wizard who taught Father Abelard some slightly magical songs (see above).

THE REEVE'S HOUSE (COHAT)

- Cohat's leg is mysteriously made whole. How? Perhaps he bargained with some demons, diabolists or powerful faeries.

Example: A group from the covenant arrive in Pasaquine to find it bleak and dispirited, with the people unsmiling and unwilling to discuss what has happened. Cohat made a deal with a powerful demon (disguised, of course) to regain his leg. In return, the demon is busily working at stealing the souls of everyone else in Pasaquine. Cohat is torn between his loyalty to his people, and his fear of the Demon.

- Cohat arrests a grog or companion for breaking laws in Pasaquine.

Example: A grog is arrested in Pasaquine for heresy (merely an excuse—he was being really obnoxious or troublesome to Cohat). The grog is being held in San Blas and the magi must deal with the Abbot to get him back. Perhaps Sir Guifre is involved.

THE WIDOW'S HOUSE (MALIÉR)

- The Widow is arrested for witchcraft by an inquisitor and found guilty.

Example: The inquisitors know that her husband was a heretic and have finally tracked her down. She is a good friend to the covenant, and has saved a grog from certain death more than once with her healing powers. Will the magi risk the attention of the inquisitors to save the Widow?

- Strange nobles from her past come to Pasaquine and make trouble.

Example: A line of succession is in question, and the nobles claim the widow to have pertinent records. The Widow refuses to show them, is abducted, and her house burned to the ground. One of the cats shows up at the covenant and relates the story to the astonished magi.

- Some important noble turns out to be one of the Widow's children. They could be especially evil or particularly kind.

- The Widow's children are involved in a political struggle and seek sanctuary in Pasaquine (or the covenant), or require the Widow's assistance. This could draw the covenant into a political struggle that they are ill-prepared for.

- The Widow asks the magi's help in finding her lost husband. In return she offers to let the magi read her books.

Example - The Widow's husband is trapped in a particularly powerful *regio*, deep in the heart of the Forest. He is the captive of a faerie queen, who will not let him go, though he has managed to send the cats to his wife. Recently, he has managed to escape from the queen, but is still lost within the *regio*. Can the magi and the Widow find him before the faerie queen? This could be a very dangerous, but profitable story for the magi.

- The new hard-nosed leader of the monks forces Maliér to be baptized. She loses her powers.

- The magi require the Widow's medical expertise to cure a strange disease which has struck the covenant.

- An evil hedge-wizard steals or kills her cats for their *vis*.

- The widow disappears, and Tip, Hip, and Pip arrive at the covenant to ask for the magi's help in finding her.

Example - The three cats arrive at the covenant one day, and manage to relate the story of the Widow's disappearance. They offer to help lead the magi through some strange *regio* in search of her. The Widow has been kidnapped by the same faerie queen who has her husband captive. She places the Widow in an elaborate maze of *regio*, which will be quite difficult to find and

escape from. This story could easily be merged with the one concerning finding the Widow's husband.

GENERAL (THE VILLAGE)

- A few pigs in Pasaquine eat some magical berries. The meat makes its way to Mistridge where it is consumed, causing a variety of strange side-effects. Besides dealing with this problem—where did the magical berries come from? This could be a whimsical story.

- A scholarly companion, while listening to the storytelling on the village green during All Soul's Day, hears a legend that leads to a story.

Example - A companion hears a story told on All Soul's Day about a treacherous ghost which leads unwary prey to their death in the mountains. After some research, it is found that the ghost was killed in a salt-mine cave-in. If the covenant can find the salt mine, it might be able to open it up again.

- A mischievous faerie replaces the bean in the Christmas cake with a magical stone. Someone swallows it with unpredictable results.

Example: As a result of eating this magical bean, an unfortunate villager is turned into a goat. The magi are consulted about this strange occurrence and are led on a wild chase through numerous *regio* for a cure.

- A group travels to Pasaquine to collect the magical mushrooms on Midsummer's Eve and gets caught up in the local festivities.

- A companion or grog gets lost in a *regio* during the yearly trip to Pasaquine.

- A holiday in Pasaquine takes an unexpected turn.

Example: During All Souls Day, the spirits of the villagers ancestors are supposed to visit the living. On this particular day, the spirits actually appear, then won't leave for some reason. It is driving the villagers mad with fright. The magi are consulted to help resolve the problem, which leads them to wonder, why the spirits are disturbed. Perhaps some diabolists have done something heinous nearby, or a demon has possessed someone in the village and the spirits are trying to warn them.



Part II - The Story Introduction

The Pact of Pasaquine is a story for one or two magi, a few companions, and a handful of grogs. Magi specializing in Terram, Herbam and to a lesser degree, Intéllego will be especially helpful. Companions or grogs having knowledge of Faerie, Legends and Pasaquine in general will also be useful. The story will probably take two sessions, perhaps more, depending on each troupe's style of play.

TIME AND LOCATION

This story is designed for use in the Mistridge Saga (see *Ars Magica*, pp.132-44). The actual story takes place in and around Pasaquine, the medium-sized village described in the first half of this supplement. The time can be anywhere near the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. If you wish to set the story elsewhere, simply replace Pasaquine with another village that borders on a forest at least a day's journey from the character's covenant. The forest is central to the story, and should be largely unexplored by the characters and more than a little mysterious.

SYNOPSIS OF THE PLOT

The Pact of Pasaquine proceeds in a fairly linear fashion until the characters reach Pasaquine. Then the encounters become much more freeform, with the flow and ordering of the story set by the players' actions and the Storyguide's personal style. The story has no set ending, but rather comes to a close after the players have explored the three main plot elements to their satisfaction. Though each troupe will play the story differently, a brief synopsis of a *likely* storypath is presented below to aid the Storyguide. Possible storypaths are discussed in more detail in **Chapter 4 - Interludes**.

The story begins when the magi hear of strange goings on in the forest near Pasaquine from a boy named Jortz, half-brother to a grog at the covenant. Something has been killing forest creatures and leaving behind nothing but a pile of their clean-picked bones. Recently, some villagers have disappeared, and whatever the thing in the Forest is, it has started eating livestock. In addition, several covenfolk have had strange dreams and premonitions concerning Pasaquine and the bone-piles.

The magi decide to investigate and depart from Mistridge the next morning. Just short of Pasaquine, they briefly encounter some enraged wolves who attack without reason. Oddly enough, the characters discover that the wolves were carrying wolf bones in their mouths and that the bones came from a nearby clearing.

Continuing onward, the group reaches Pasaquine and settles down for the night at the Green Oak Inn, possibly gathering some information about the strange

events before retiring for the evening. Their sleep is disturbed in the early morning hours by the return of the previously encountered wolves, led by a powerful faerie wolf named Hrulgar. In a brief time, the players learn of an ancient pact between the wolves and the villagers, which was recently broken when Hrulgar's son was killed near the village. Hrulgar demands restitution in the form of a human child.

Hopefully buying some time from the wolves through diplomacy, the magi begin to gather clues to help solve the mystery of the bone-piles. After much thought and potentially dangerous exploration, the magi discover that the bone piles are created by the Broch, strange little earth faeries that look like small clay figures. Digging deeper, the magi find that the Broch are led by Lise, a slightly insane, self-taught priestess of the Earth Mother who corrupted the Broch in order to fight her personal war against the Dominion. In a final confrontation with Lise, the magi must decide who to support, if anyone: Lise against the Dominion or vice versa. Through diplomacy or combat, the situation is resolved and the players return to Pasaquine. Shortly thereafter the wolves return to collect their restitution, and learn from the magi that the Broch were responsible for the death of Hrulgar's son, thus bringing the story to a close.

An additional subplot also resolved during the story involves the boy Jortz (from the beginning of the story), and his half-brother Bix, a covenant grog. Their father, Jehan, has come under the sway of Lise's power and is helping to corrupt the Broch, resulting in the destruction of his family life. By the story's conclusion, Jehan should be freed from her power and the family restored.

THE THREE STORYLINES

As the players explore the story presented in The Pact of Pasaquine and work their way from initial confusion to final understanding, they will encounter three interrelated storylines. The players are expected to be a bit lost at first (this *is* a mystery after all) but you, the Storyguide, should be sure that you clearly understand each individual storyline and the relations between them. To help you on your way, each storyline is briefly summarized below. For more detail on any single one, see the individual sections.

The main plot centers on Lise, the misguided priestess of the Earth Mother. She has a deep hatred of the Church, and has a long standing dream of driving the Church from the land to allow the return of the Earth Mother. To begin the process she ritually corrupts a type of simple earth faerie, the Broch, to do her will. Wherever the faeries tread, the dominion weakens, and when they meet a lone animal, they reduce it magically

to a pile of bones. With the less-than-willing help of a villager, Jehan, she creates more and more of these Broch and distributes them throughout the village to do her bidding. If she is not stopped, the Dominion's influence will disappear, to be replaced by a tainted Faerie aura that will slowly twist and corrupt anything living within it.

The second plot involves a family caught in the middle of Lise's plans. Lise requires assistance in her rituals in the form of freely given blood, sweat, and tears from a mortal. To this end, she ensnared a simple hunter named Jehan. She appears to him as his deeply loved previous wife, now dead for some years. Jehan's dreamlike memories of his nightly activities with his previous wife haunt his waking hours, and have all but destroyed his once happy family. The players might not explore this storyline except for the fact that Jehan's eldest son, Bix, is a grog at the covenant (and should be played as a PC for this story). If Jehan is not kept from visiting Lise, or shown that she is not his previous wife soon, he will eventually disappear into the forest and never return.

The last storyline brings to light an ancient pact made by the villagers of Pasaquine to not harm any wolves in the nearby forest. When the Lord of the Wolves finds his son reduced to a pile of bones, he turns to the village and seeks recompense for his loss. The villagers must give him a human child to do with as he pleases, or the pact will be broken and the village destroyed in his wrath. If presented with evidence that the villagers are not responsible, the wolves will leave peacefully.

THEME

This story explores the many relationships between parents and their children. They are manifest in and tied together in each of the storylines: Lise and her warped connection to the Earth Mother, Lise and Jehan as "parents" to the Broch, the family problems of Bix and Jortz with their father Jehan, the loss of a son and accompanying grief felt by the faerie wolf, Hrulgar, and his demands upon the villagers for a replacement son. Each of these storylines presents a different aspect of parent-child relationships for the players to consider and discover during the course of the story.

Aspects of the parent-child relationship exist within the covenant as well. Each covenant can be likened to a family, with their own distinct personalities, problems, weaknesses and strengths. The magi, as the leaders of the covenant, often act in a parental role towards the other members, while important companions, such as grog sergeants or apprentices, may be seen as older, more knowledgeable siblings. In addition, each group that leaves the covenant on a mission can be seen

as a family with parents (the magi and older companions or grogs) and children. Or it might be much more scrambled than that, with an absent-minded magus and a grizzled grog serjeant switching the stereotypical roles.

Encourage the players to investigate this theme through interactions with non-player characters and group members. Emotions and issues to explore include: love within a family, strife or hatred within a family, privacy (how does the family act differently when others are around?), how parents and children support each other, and how they need each other (perhaps without knowing or wishing to admit it).

Subthemes

Two minor themes also play an important part in the story. The first is the conflict between man and nature, as exemplified in the struggle of Lise against the Dominion. As the magi uncover the mystery and discover this theme, they will have to make a basic decision: to support Lise and possibly be partially responsible for the deaths of villagers, or to support the Dominion, their traditional enemy. There is no right way to resolve this issue, but try and make the magi agonize over their choice—it should be as real and immediate a dilemma as possible. If the magi have no moral compunctions, then at least make it a politically difficult decision with the potential for making long-lasting enemies either way.

The second minor theme explores the nature of reality, deception and the breaching of trust. Hrulgar (the Faerie wolf) believes his trust has been broken, but has been deceived; Lise deceives Jehan by manipulating his reality; Jehan certainly deceives his family, and breaches vows made to his wife Carlota; the villagers are partially deceived by the nature of the Broch; Lise breaks her trust with the Earth Mother to twist the Broch; and even Bix and Jortz may resort to lying to get the magi to Pasaquine. Of course, the entire story wouldn't be a mystery if the players weren't deceived, at least for a short time.

POWER BALANCE

Each Storyguide should feel free to tailor the story to his troupe's strengths and weaknesses. This is accomplished most easily by adjusting the strength of opponents in possible fighting encounters (like Lise and the Broch), but may also be done by giving the players information or the help of a few friendly characters (the Father and the Widow). The important thing is to make the story challenging enough to give the players a sense of danger and real accomplishment upon completion of the story without overly discouraging them from their goal. As Storyguide, you will have to adjust the story as

you go along to provide the most enjoyment, though you should always let players feel the effects of rash decisions or bad judgment, even if it means complete failure.

ATMOSPHERE

Part of the fun in playing a mystery-based story like *The Pact of Pasaquine* is creating the proper atmosphere. Describe encounters with this in mind, lingering on details when the group explores the Forest on a moonlit night or sneaks into a stranger's house. Build tension with lots of Perception rolls, and sightings of strange shadows or figures—be sure and make a few of them real so that the group takes them seriously. It may help to think back on what scares *you* in any given situation, and build on that.

Music, setting, and simple props can also play a big part in creating an atmosphere. Dimming the lights during appropriate parts of the story or even using candles can heighten tension in a fun way. A few props, like a real clay Broch or an actual mysterious note for the players to examine can add a sense a "reality" to the story and give players something to do when their characters aren't actually interacting with the Storyguide.

Another important facet of atmosphere is maintaining the player's attention as much as possible. If players get bored, their minds will wander to mundane things, and it will be difficult to get them back "into" the story. If they are interested, the story will flow much faster and the tension level will rise and fall naturally throughout the story. Try to keep them busy from the beginning and be aware of how much time you spend with each player. If you find yourself paying too much attention to one player (or one player hogs your time), put that player on hold and engage the other players for a while—make sure each player feels as though their actions and input counts.

PREPARATIONS

Though this story is fairly complex, it should not prove difficult to run if you are properly prepared. Most Storyguides find it helpful to begin with a quick—but complete—read-through of the entire story to get the "big picture." This is often followed with a more careful reading to absorb anything you might have missed the first time. Though careful preparation takes time, we think you'll find the extra effort worth it—it can make the difference between just another gaming session and one that your troupe will remember for years to come.

THE GROG (IMPORTANT!)

Before the story begins, you need to make an important decision concerning a grog at the players' covenant. Unlike many stories in which the magi's activities overshadow those of the grogs and companions, a particular grog plays an integral part of this one. Thus, it is important to carefully choose both the grog, and the player who will play him.

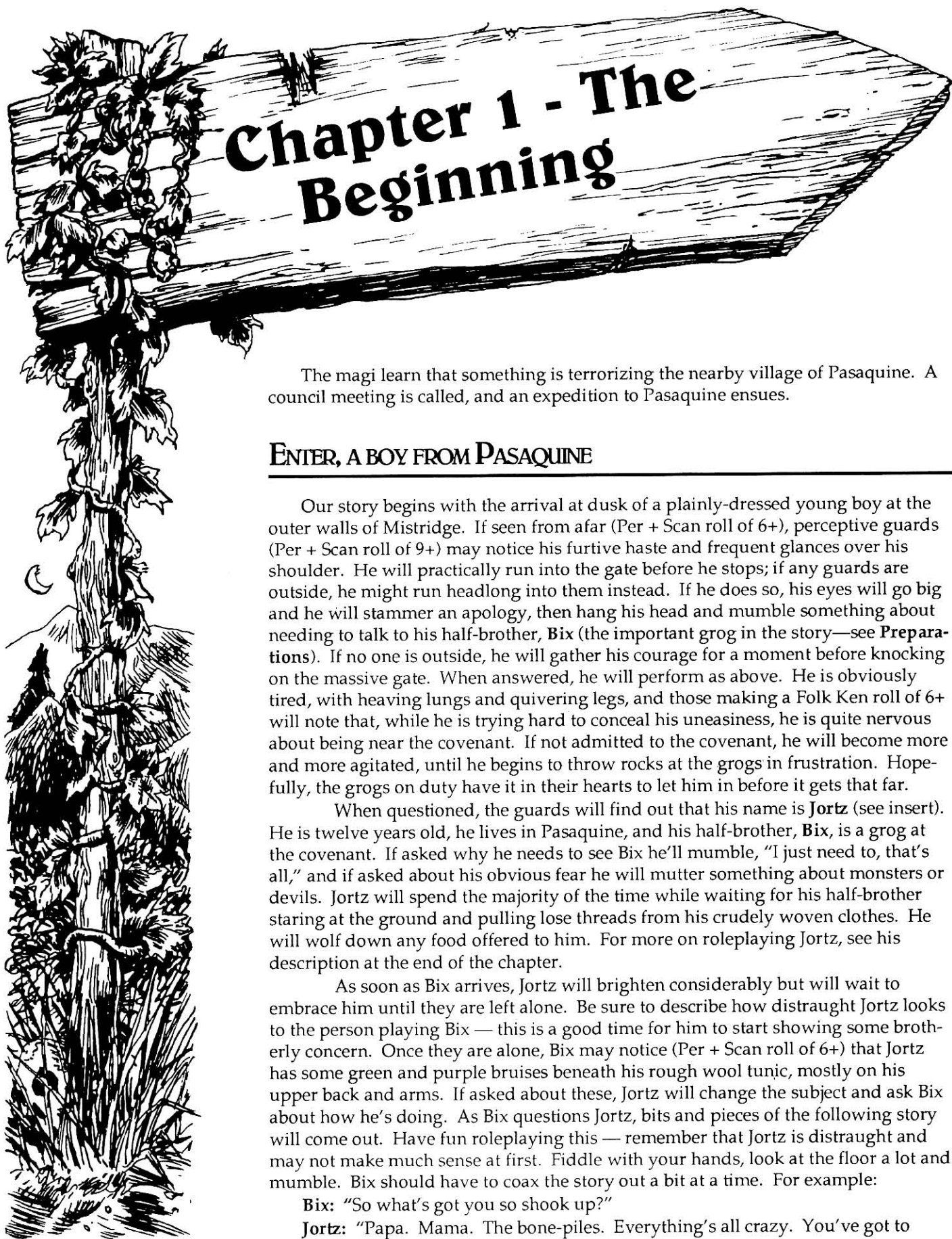
For maximum effect, this grog should have been played several times before, or is at least one whose personality is well-known. The grog should be male, kind-hearted, brave, and fairly loyal to the covenant. His skill as a warrior is unimportant, though it will make more sense in the story if it is not overly spectacular. If one particular player normally roleplays this grog and does a good job, he (or she) should probably be

convinced to play that grog for the duration of the story. If the grog is played by several different people, use your best judgment and give the grog to the player who can and will roleplay the character to the fullest, giving careful thought to the grog's feelings and corresponding actions. For more on this grog, see the end of **Chapter 1**.

Once you have decided which grog will be played, and who will play him, you should give that person a copy of the grog's background notes, located at the end of **Chapter 1**. Be sure to carefully look over these notes beforehand and make any changes necessary to personalize them.

Because it would be awkward to refer to the grog as "that grog" or "the grog" throughout the text, we have chosen the name of **Bix** to indicate the grog in question. Thus, whenever you see the name **Bix**, it really means "the grog from your covenant who plays an important part in the story."





The magi learn that something is terrorizing the nearby village of Pasaquine. A council meeting is called, and an expedition to Pasaquine ensues.

ENTER, A BOY FROM PASAQUINE

Our story begins with the arrival at dusk of a plainly-dressed young boy at the outer walls of Mistridge. If seen from afar (Per + Scan roll of 6+), perceptive guards (Per + Scan roll of 9+) may notice his furtive haste and frequent glances over his shoulder. He will practically run into the gate before he stops; if any guards are outside, he might run headlong into them instead. If he does so, his eyes will go big and he will stammer an apology, then hang his head and mumble something about needing to talk to his half-brother, **Bix** (the important grog in the story—see **Preparations**). If no one is outside, he will gather his courage for a moment before knocking on the massive gate. When answered, he will perform as above. He is obviously tired, with heaving lungs and quivering legs, and those making a Folk Ken roll of 6+ will note that, while he is trying hard to conceal his uneasiness, he is quite nervous about being near the covenant. If not admitted to the covenant, he will become more and more agitated, until he begins to throw rocks at the grogs in frustration. Hopefully, the grogs on duty have it in their hearts to let him in before it gets that far.

When questioned, the guards will find out that his name is **Jortz** (see insert). He is twelve years old, he lives in Pasaquine, and his half-brother, **Bix**, is a grog at the covenant. If asked why he needs to see Bix he'll mumble, "I just need to, that's all," and if asked about his obvious fear he will mutter something about monsters or devils. Jortz will spend the majority of the time while waiting for his half-brother staring at the ground and pulling loose threads from his crudely woven clothes. He will wolf down any food offered to him. For more on roleplaying Jortz, see his description at the end of the chapter.

As soon as Bix arrives, Jortz will brighten considerably but will wait to embrace him until they are left alone. Be sure to describe how distraught Jortz looks to the person playing Bix — this is a good time for him to start showing some brotherly concern. Once they are alone, Bix may notice (Per + Scan roll of 6+) that Jortz has some green and purple bruises beneath his rough wool tunic, mostly on his upper back and arms. If asked about these, Jortz will change the subject and ask Bix about how he's doing. As Bix questions Jortz, bits and pieces of the following story will come out. Have fun roleplaying this — remember that Jortz is distraught and may not make much sense at first. Fiddle with your hands, look at the floor a lot and mumble. Bix should have to coax the story out a bit at a time. For example:

Bix: "So what's got you so shook up?"

Jortz: "Papa. Mama. The bone-piles. Everything's all crazy. You've got to come home!"

Bix: "What do you mean?"

Jortz: "Papa's all crazy, and Mama cries herself to sleep and this thing keeps eating people."

Bix: "What thing?"

Jortz: "I don't know — except — you can help, Bix! You're my big brother!!"

And so on. After a while, let Bix calm Jortz down enough to make some sense (unless the players are enjoying it). Throughout the dialogue, Jortz will interrupt with variations of, "You can help, Bix! You've just got to. You the only one we got to turn to." Have Jortz say these phrases repeatedly in the story whenever he feels insecure (which is quite often). Here's Jortz's story presented in an orderly fashion.

JORTZ'S STORY

"It all started a few months ago, when Mama and Papa started fighting. At first, it wasn't so bad — I thought it was just one of those things. Was I ever wrong. After a week or so, things got back to normal and Mama seemed pretty happy. Then, Papa started going out after dark and not coming back until almost dawn. Mama was really scared the first time he did it — she stayed up all night and kept candles lit in the windows. She kept crying and cursing some lady. When Papa got home, Mama sent me to fetch some water, and when I got back he was asleep and Mama was crying again. He went out a bunch more times after that and when he got home, Mama had to be quiet or he would beat her. One day, he saw me watching and he beat me too.

"When Papa was at home he was really mean and didn't talk much. I guess he spent most of his time sleeping or at the Green Oak (tavern) drinking. After a month or so he started looking real bad, like he was sick... he was so pale. It got to the point where Mama wouldn't say anything for a few days, then she'd ask him something and he'd hit her, sometimes pretty hard. If I got in his way, he'd hit me too. Mama told me to never come home when it was light after that — I ate at the Sisters' house [the Marien Sisters] mostly. One time I snuck home though and I heard Papa crying. He was asleep.

"Once I watched Papa leave at night. He walked sort of funny, and when I tried to follow him into the woods I got lost and slept in the forest, and Mama was real worried. The next day I heard the Sisters talking about bones at lunch when they thought I wasn't listening, but I didn't understand what they were talking about. I asked the Hoberson twins about it, and they took me to a place where there was a big pile of bones and mud and stuff in the woods. I got really scared and then old Robert [the forester] saw us and chased us off.

"After that, people whispered a lot about piles of bones in the woods, and sometimes in the fields. They was lots of rumors that a big monster came out of the woods at night and ate things, but no one ever saw anything. Last week, a couple goats and sheep got eaten and then, two days ago, two people disappeared, but they didn't find any bones. Everyone says they just ran off together cause they liked each other, but I'm not sure. Last night, little Fabia-Marie was gone, so I ran all the way here to get you. You will come home, won't you? You gotta help Mama cause she's looking really bad."

GETTING STARTED

By now the person playing Bix should realize that something strange is going on in Pasaquine that requires the attention of the magi. If he is slow to pass on the information to Torlen (the grog Sargent at Mistridge) or a mage, you might have to have someone step forward, confess to overhearing the last part of Jortz's story and suggest that Torlen should hear the news. Or, Jortz himself can suggest that the magi come to help the villagers — as long as Bix gets to come too (getting Bix home to help cure their father is the main reason that Jortz made the long journey from Pasaquine in the first place). Of course, this is just one way that the magi can be brought into the story; feel free to handle it in other ways if you like.

However the magi hear the news, they will probably call a council meeting to discuss it. Jortz can be convinced to talk in front of the magi if necessary, but will keep the news of his father's strange behavior to himself. Bix should feel the same way: family problems are not the magi's business. If the magi get wind of it anyway, Jortz will mumble and try to change the subject. Both Bix and Jortz will, however, exaggerate the horrors of the piles of bones and the missing villagers to ensure the magi's interest. Reluctant magi can be prodded into action with other details, perhaps a fantastic description of the monster (passed on by Jortz and completely false). The end result should be an expedition to Pasaquine with Bix and Jortz.

Sometime during the council meeting, you should hand out descriptions of the dreams (see insert) to appropriate magi, companions or grogs who are present—the talk of Pasaquine and the bone-piles jarred their memories and made them remember their bizarre dreams. If you like, determine which dream you will give to which person, then have them make Int + Scan or Int + Concentration rolls of 9+ every five minutes (real time) until they remember. Also feel free to introduce one of the dreams as a vision (perhaps disturbing the council meeting) if someone present has that exceptional talent.

The Dreams

Several covenfolk have been having dreams concerning recent events in Pasaquine, but none have been able to remember them until the arrival of Jortz and the subsequent council meeting.

The First Dream

Note: This dream is most appropriate for a grog or companion who actually has guard duty from time to time. The character having this dream has had it several times, all within the last few weeks.

You are wrapped deep in your fur-lined cloak, nestled out of the wind's cool, whistling way, on the top of the watch-tower early one morning, when you check the stars and see that it is time for another round. Trying not to disturb the pocket of body-warmed air captured in your cloak, you rise and begin your circuit of the battlements. The night seems unnaturally clear, and bright details seem to stand out in the harsh moonlight that are normally hidden in the haze of distance. As your eyes travel with silent wonder across the forests to the northwest, the silvery trees seem to grow in stature as they sway gently in the wind. Your eyebrows rise in quiet surprise as the forest grows dark, and shapes, darting among the shadows, seem to flick from tree to tree. Squinting with concentration, the forest grows darker and darker until all you can see is its ink-black silhouette against the rolling hills. The silhouette shifts, for something is rising from the forest, and it is some time before you can make out the strange shadow-shape of an enormous human towering above the trees. The breeze blows in her hair as she raises her hands to the night sky. You tremble, and catch your breath for fear of drawing attention to yourself. She opens her mouth to shout, and you can see the stars through her throat. Her eyes lower to yours, locking them in an icy embrace. She smiles and begins whispering; the breeze rises. She shouts, and the winds rip your hands from the battlements and hurl your body forcibly into the air. Twisting and squirming frantically, you manage to catch yourself on the outside of the far wall, hanging by one hand over a hundred feet above the ground. You hear her laughter as you fall, screaming and spinning, to the ground.

You wake to find yourself on guard duty with your cloak flapping in a stiff breeze.

The Second Dream

Note: This dream is best suited for magi, preferably the one who is likely to take part in the story. This dream is experienced once only, the night before Jortz's arrival.

You are wandering a strange forest in search of an elusive herb when you stop, startled by a strange sound. Hearing nothing more, you continue, only to hear a twig snap close behind you. Turning swiftly, you see nothing, though for some reason the hair on the back of your neck is standing up. You close your eyes briefly, reaching for the power within as a protective spell weaves itself closely about you. A few seconds more and a glowing, gaseous sword rests comfortably in your hand. So armed, you turn to the woods and shout, "Show yourself! I am not one to be hunted by common beasts of the Forest!" The silence weighs heavy in the air. Moments pass, and you are about to turn away when something catches the corner of your eye. Startled, you turn, and as time slows to a crawl, you see the distorted image of a huge, shadowy creature bearing down upon you, splintering great trees in its haste to reach you. You manage to ready your weapon, but the creature rushes by in a swirl of moldy air, beyond the glowing tip of your slowly moving sword. Time slows further as you turn your head and desperately try to move the magical blade towards the creature, but it seems rooted in the thick air, unresponsive. Suddenly the world seems to lurch, then spin about, and the creature is traveling, circling, just beyond your reach. You feel your defensive spell shred and fly apart as the creature locks eyes with you against the crazily spinning backdrop of the forest. It becomes hard to breathe, and weakening, you lower your sword to the earth. Sweat falls from your brow, and you are distantly surprised to see your feet slowly sinking into the earth, leaving behind an empty numbness. The creature laughs, its great mossy teeth quaking, the sound rippling towards you like slow molasses. The sword dissipates in a whirl of vapors, and you find yourself up to your waist in the soft, warm earth. Confused, you look up and see the creature grown immense, forcefully in his twirling, the stars above just streaks across the sky. You scream as your head sinks within the earth and the loam covers your eyes.*

You awake in a twisted chaos of sweat covered bedclothes and blankets.

WHAT THE MAGI KNOW

All the magi know basic information about Pasaquine: its size, that it owes fealty to the monks of San Blas, and the basic layout of the village. After all, they travel there once a year to gather their magic mushrooms in the nearby forest. Usually the magi spend the

evening in the Green Oak Inn, so they are somewhat familiar with the innkeeper, Lorris. They also know of the Widow; a few have probably talked with her at least once. In addition, the magi probably know something of the villagers' Midsummer's Eve celebrations, as the magic mushrooms also sprout on Midsummer's Eve. At least one of the grogs or companions has eagerly partaken in the village's festivities in the past; pairing up

with someone for the evening. How the villagers reacted is up to the Storyguide and the personality of the character and villager involved. Some villagers may recall their short tryst with fondness, while others may carry a dislike of the character with them even now. In any case, if things get slow, you can always spice up the story by having a companion or grog run into someone they shared Midsummer's Eve with a few years ago.

To represent this past history with the village, have each player roll on the appropriate table below (either Grog and Companions, or Magi) before leaving the covenant. The results may be kept secret if you so desire.

GROGS AND COMPANIONS:

Roll a simple die:

- 1-5 You've never been to Pasaquine, though you may have heard something about it.
- 6-7 You've traveled to Pasaquine for supplies a few times and found the outing pleasant. On a roll of Com + Drinking, Charm or Storytelling of 9+, you have made a favorable impression upon Lorris, the keeper of the Green Oak Tavern, and might receive bonuses when dealing with him.
- 8-9 You have been to Pasaquine several times for various reasons. You know pretty much where everything is, and can recognize important villagers and their occupations on a Int + Scan roll of 9+ or an Int + Area Lore roll of 6+. Lorris (the innkeeper) knows you by sight. At the Storyguide's option, you have someone in the village who you can consider your friend. (A stress die with appropriate modifiers could be used to determine the strength/number of the friendships—a botch could mean an enemy.)
- 10 You have traveled to Pasaquine with the magi one or more times, the last time on their yearly journey to gather mushrooms. On a Dex + Stealth roll of 6+, you managed to slip away from the magi and join the Midsummer's Eve festivities in the woods. Once there, a Com + Charm (or other social talent) roll of 9+ means you ended up spending the night with a villager in the Forest. A botch means you were too forward and offended the young lady (or man). Further stress rolls versus Com + Social Talents will determine the current feelings of that villager towards the player. Keep this in mind as they travel through Pasaquine.

MAGI:

Roll a simple die:

- 1-5 You have had little interaction with the inhabitants of Pasaquine, though you have probably been there at least once.

- 6-7 Though the inhabitants of Pasaquine don't interest you that much, you do know that the Widow Maliér is supposed to be some kind of local healer who dabbles in magic.
- 8-9 You know something of the village and its layout, having been there several times. Lorris is known to you, as is the Widow and a few other important people, like the Reeve.
- 10 You have traveled to Pasaquine frequently over the years, and have become well-acquainted with the Widow Maliér. The Reeve also knows you on sight, and no longer questions your presence.

In addition, knowledgeable magi, companions or even grogs may know a few interesting tidbits of Pasaquine's history or legends. The following tables are provided to help decide just how much the characters know. Each individual Storyguide will have to decide how to incorporate this knowledge into the story; some may wish to let everyone roll before the characters leave Mistridge and hand out the knowledge all at once, while others may wish to parcel it out at appropriate moments as the story progresses. Any method is fine, so long as it adds to the atmosphere and teases the player's imagination.

Characters having **Val du Bosque Lore** may know the following tidbits. If they have **Pasaquine Lore** specifically, add three to the roll.

- 6+ The forest has a history of being strange and magical. People sometimes disappear within its borders, never to return. Also, Pasaquine has excellent ale.
- 9+ Pasaquine is known in the valley for practicing the old traditions and rites. (Magi only: Parts of the forest are known to have a fairly high magical aura, though it varies between magical and faerie power.)
- 12+ The Count of Foix once had a hunting lodge where Pasaquine now stands, but only used it for a season.
- 15+ The reason the Count gave up the lodge was because the hunts were plagued by numerous unexplainable accidents.

Players possessing **Church Lore** may check for information with the following results:

- 6+ Often land that finds its way into the Church's hands is undesirable in some way, i.e., swampy, rocky, exhausted.
- 9+ The land around Pasaquine was given to the church by the Count of Foix some one hundred years ago.

12+ The monks consider the forest to be tainted with evil spirits, though their influence has grown weak in recent years.

15+ The monks originally tried to build the monastery in the woods, but were plagued by “demons” until they moved their efforts beyond the woods to the north.

Those having **Faerie Lore** may check on the following table.

6+ Faeries are known to inhabit the Forest.

9+ No specific faerie court holds power in the Forest; it is a neutral territory.

12+ Many faeries are afraid of (or at least made uncomfortable by) the Forest.

Characters who have **Fantastic Beast Lore** may make a roll with the following results:

6+ A number of creatures could be responsible for the piles of bones. The fact that it leaves bones behind and eats people points strongly towards an Ogre or Giant. Perhaps a band of Ogres?

9+ Many fantastic creatures are known to inhabit Pasaquine Forest.

12+ A pack of highly intelligent wolves is said to live within the forest.

15+ Something is odd here. You can’t place any creature that would leave piles of bones behind like that.

Players with **Legend Lore** may check for the following facts.

6+ The forest near Pasaquine has a history full of strange and magical occurrences.

9+ People have gotten lost in the forest and never returned, or returned after passing many years in strange lands.

15+ It is said that strange tribes of primitive humans inhabit the forest.

18+ Legend has it that the Earth Mother herself blessed the forest near Pasaquine.

Jortz, boy from Pasaquine

Description: Jortz has a small, wiry frame and stands four feet tall, below average for his twelve years. His eyes are large and brown, usually hidden by his badly cut shock of wavy brown hair. His face is lean and tanned, reflecting the hard life of a villager. His voice occasionally cracks when he speaks, betraying his age.

Jortz’s Stats

INT	-2	PER	-1
STR	+0	STM	+1
PRS	-2	COM	-2
DEX	+1	QIK	+2
Confidence:	+0	Age:	12

Personality Traits:

Distrustful of Strangers +2

Curious +2

Brave -1

Important Skills:

Alertness (hearing) 2

Athletics (sprinting) 3

Climb (onto roofs) 2

Stealth (in mud) 3

Dodge (rocks) 2

Pretend (ignorance) 2

Husbandry (weeding) 2

Pasaquine Lore (hiding places) 3

Reputations:

Loner/Pasaquine (2)

Jortz’s father, **Jehan**, is a freeman, though poor even for a peasant. This means that Jortz occupies an awkward social position: he is free, and thus “above” the majority of the villagers who are serfs, yet his family is poorer than many of them. As a result, Jortz is somewhat of a loner. He loves his Mama, **Carlota**, and looks up to his big half-brother, **Bix**. Jortz is getting used to the idea of being the village hunter in his father’s footsteps, and has taken to “stalking” other village children and “killing” them with mudballs or rocks.

At first, Jortz tried to ignore his father’s strange evening walks, but as they continued he became more and more distressed, especially after the numerous beatings both he and his mother received. One day, Jortz resolved to get his older half-brother to come home and help set things straight. He doesn’t know what is making his father act so strangely, but it certainly scares him and he wants it to stop. He considers the piles of bones as a way to help him get Bix to Pasaquine — by telling the fearsome magi about them.

When the players meet Jortz for the first time at the covenant, he will be exhausted, both mentally and physically. His eyes will be sunken, he will have a severe cold, and at the Storyguide’s option could be running a fever (if you want to throw some doubt into his story). He is afraid of the magi and of all the strange people at the covenant. He will try to put up a brave



front, and so will alternate between hanging his head and jutting out his chin defiantly. He is not above embellishing his tales a bit if it will help to get Bix to Pasaquine.

Roleplaying Tips: At first, mumble under your breath a lot (remember you are a loner, and strangers make you uncomfortable) and do what you must to see Bix. When he appears, brighten, raise your head and, as soon as you are alone, hug him hard. Start babbling excitedly about Papa and the bone monster. Become agitated if Bix doesn't believe you. Whenever you lie or exaggerate, bite your lower lip and shift your eyes nervously.

BACKGROUND NOTES FOR THE GROG FROM MISTRIDGE (Bix)

Note: As mentioned previously, a grog (arbitrarily named Bix) from the covenant plays an important part in the story. Think carefully about which person plays this role, for though he is a grog, he is central to exploring the story's theme of relationships between parents and children. The story will be much more meaningful with a grog (Bix) that is roleplayed fully, with careful thought about his feelings and corresponding actions.

Encourage Bix's player to try and resolve the feelings between himself and his father during the course of the story, for better or for worse. This is just as important to a satisfying conclusion as resolving the mystery of the bone piles. In fact, it should trouble Bix much more than the latter.

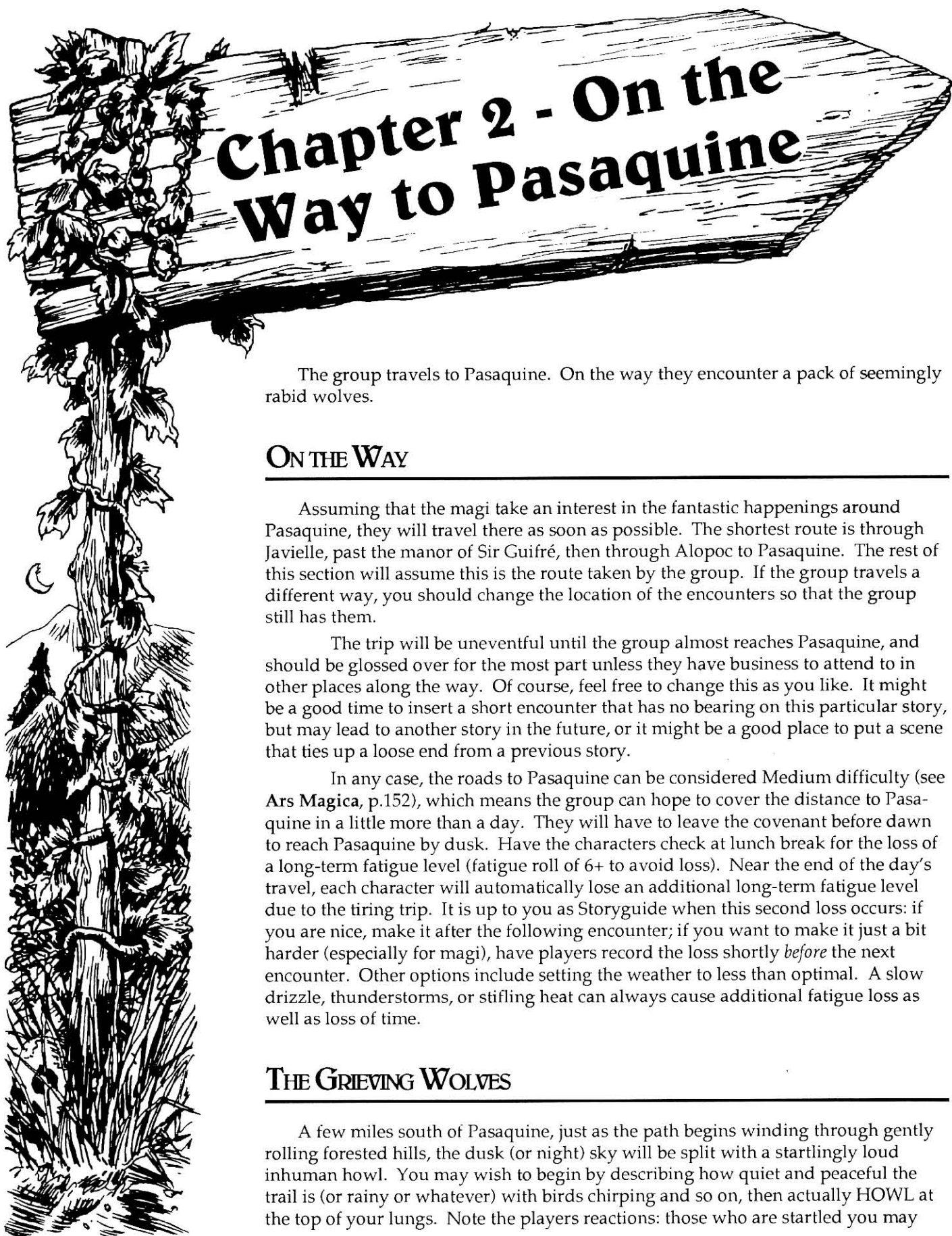
Background Notes: The following background for Bix should be modified as necessary to fit with known facts of the chosen grog's past. It is important that the grog be from Pasaquine and that he love his family, especially his half-brother, Jortz. Be sure and share these background notes with the player sometime before the story's beginning.

Bix was born and raised in Pasaquine. The only surviving son of Jehan and his first wife, Marilis, he discovered at an early age that he didn't care much for his father's profession as village hunter. In fact, one day in his youth, he traveled his father's trap line and released all of the captured animals. His father found out and was furious. Jehan angrily explained and then showed Bix the effects of his actions: the wounded animals either crawled away to die of blood loss, infection or starvation, or were quickly killed by predators. This had a profound effect on Bix and began a rift with his father that widened in the years that followed.

Bix found he had a knack for caring for animals, and became known in Pasaquine as sort of a veterinarian. He was willing to sit up long hours feeding sick livestock and to keep them warm with small fires and blankets. The villagers repaid his efforts with food, drink and bits of clothing. After the death of his mother to a wasting disease, he spent less and less time at home, preferring instead to live in a small hut in back of the Marien Sisters' place, helping with their flocks.

Bix found himself somewhat of a loner, and as time passed, he came in from the fields less and less frequently. When his father remarried and began having children again, he moved back briefly to help with things, and found himself admiring his stepmother, Carlota, for her quiet strength and unpatronizing manner. He also found himself enjoying helping to raise his new half-brother, Jortz; it wasn't so different from caring for an animal.

Once Bix was old enough that his association with the Marien Sisters became talked about in the village as more than platonic, he decided it was time to move on. He didn't want to live at home, because his father constantly pressured him to follow in his footsteps, so he headed off and offered his services to Mistridge. There, his knowledge was put to good use watching their flocks, and the magi didn't tease him about his odd habits. The other grogs were decent, and while a few played tricks on him at first, they soon found out that his temper, when aroused, resulted in many broken noses and bruised bodies. Occasionally he regrets having left Pasaquine, especially when reminded of his young half-brother growing up without an older brother to show him the way of things.



The group travels to Pasaquine. On the way they encounter a pack of seemingly rabid wolves.

ON THE WAY

Assuming that the magi take an interest in the fantastic happenings around Pasaquine, they will travel there as soon as possible. The shortest route is through Javielle, past the manor of Sir Guifré, then through Alopoc to Pasaquine. The rest of this section will assume this is the route taken by the group. If the group travels a different way, you should change the location of the encounters so that the group still has them.

The trip will be uneventful until the group almost reaches Pasaquine, and should be glossed over for the most part unless they have business to attend to in other places along the way. Of course, feel free to change this as you like. It might be a good time to insert a short encounter that has no bearing on this particular story, but may lead to another story in the future, or it might be a good place to put a scene that ties up a loose end from a previous story.

In any case, the roads to Pasaquine can be considered Medium difficulty (see *Ars Magica*, p.152), which means the group can hope to cover the distance to Pasaquine in a little more than a day. They will have to leave the covenant before dawn to reach Pasaquine by dusk. Have the characters check at lunch break for the loss of a long-term fatigue level (fatigue roll of 6+ to avoid loss). Near the end of the day's travel, each character will automatically lose an additional long-term fatigue level due to the tiring trip. It is up to you as Storyguide when this second loss occurs: if you are nice, make it after the following encounter; if you want to make it just a bit harder (especially for magi), have players record the loss shortly *before* the next encounter. Other options include setting the weather to less than optimal. A slow drizzle, thunderstorms, or stifling heat can always cause additional fatigue loss as well as loss of time.

THE GRIEVING WOLVES

A few miles south of Pasaquine, just as the path begins winding through gently rolling forested hills, the dusk (or night) sky will be split with a startlingly loud inhuman howl. You may wish to begin by describing how quiet and peaceful the trail is (or rainy or whatever) with birds chirping and so on, then actually HOWL at the top of your lungs. Note the players reactions: those who are startled you may

wish to have drop things they are carrying (in the mud, perhaps). Perceptive characters (those making a Per + Alertness + any hearing bonuses of 9+) will note that the howl almost sounded like an anguished, drawn-out NOOO-ooo at first. Players with forester skills making Per + Skill rolls of 9+ will know that the howl is wolf-like, but is certainly *not* a normal wolf. Before the original howl dies out, it will be joined by a chorus of other howls (those who made the earlier perception roll will know these really are wolf howls) emanating from the woods to the east. Per + Forester Skill rolls of 6+ place the howls correctly at about one-half mile away.

After ten to twenty seconds of howling, other creatures of the forest will react. Birds will take to the air and all other night sounds will cease. After a half a minute or so, the howling will grow perceptibly louder and small animals will begin to scamper across the road in frantic haste, completely ignoring the characters. Larger animals like foxes and deer will follow shortly thereafter, also ignoring the humans in their wild-eyed haste. Feel free to have a few animals or birds run headlong into a character or two, possibly knocking them down or scratching them. As the last of the animals clears the road the howling will suddenly stop, leaving the night air silent except for the sounds of running animals. Do what you can to heighten the tension at this point, perhaps by pointing out that a mist (completely mundane) is rising from the woods, that the moon has passed behind a cloud, or that the sun has just now completely set.

What is happening: Just east of the road, a powerful faerie wolf, Hrulgar (see **A Brief Rest**), and his pack have discovered the remains of his only son. His howl of anguish at the discovery is what the players hear initially, followed by the other wolves joining in. The forest animals react to his cries with justifiable fear and flee. The wolves howl long enough for the leader to gingerly pick up his son's skull, then they each pick up a bone and join him in his rage and sorrow-filled trek back to their home in the western forests of Pasaquine. Unfortunately, the players are directly in their path.

The wolves and their leader will bound through the woods, moving into the clear about thirty feet from the road. Give the players a chance to react if they make Per rolls and see them coming before that (Per rolls may not be necessary if there is enough light). Note that the sight of the wolves bounding out of the forest holding bones in their mouths might warrant bravery checks on the part of the grogs and companions, and make it difficult for magi to concentrate on spell casting. The wolves, especially the leader, are in a highly volatile state of grief and rage; anything in their path will feel their wrath. Any player standing in their way will be attacked as they run by, potentially several times by different wolves (two to three on average). Players hiding in or behind trees will not be attacked unless they

reveal their presence by attacking a wolf. The goal of the wolves is not to kill the group; the group just happens to be in their way when they are angry and out of control. The driving goal of the wolves currently is simply to run, following their leader until they have exhausted themselves and released their grief. Under no circumstances allow Hrulgar to be killed at this time; he plays an important role later on. For more on the wolves, see below.

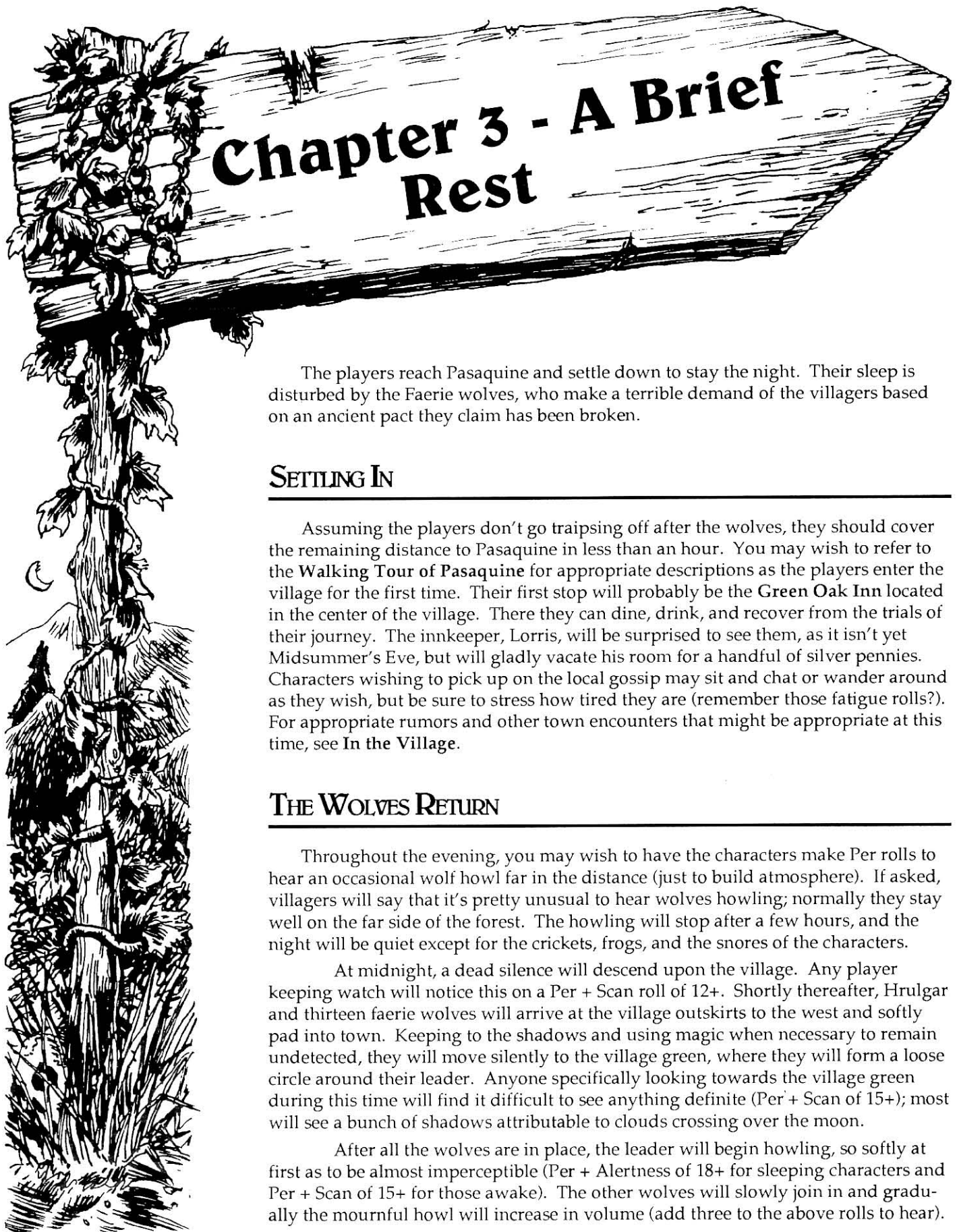
The aftermath of the wolves' passage has probably left a few wounded characters, some scared grogs, and maybe a dead or incapacitated wolf or two. Be sure to remember which characters did what in this encounter, particularly if they killed or severely wounded a wolf — this will be important when the wolves and characters meet again later in the story. As the party regroups, have those looking about make easy search or scan rolls to notice that some of the wolves dropped something — a bone or two from the leader's son. The bones are not magical. An Int + Animal Handling, Fantastic Beast Lore or other appropriate skill roll of 6+ will determine the bones to be those of a normal-sized wolf. A roll of 15+ will further add that the wolf was actually young and still growing, so it would be a very large wolf when full grown.

Curious players wishing to see where the wolves started howling can follow their trail (Per + Track roll of 4+) back to a small clearing about a half mile from the road. The clearing has wolf signs all around, but in the center, there is a small mound of broken earth (about one pace around and a few inches high) that has been recently disturbed. Difficult search rolls will reveal a few very small bones in the mound which might be from a wolf (they are). Even more difficult search rolls (Per + Search of 18+), or magi detecting for *vis* in the area, will find a few stray wolf hairs which, if gathered together somehow (certainly requiring spontaneous magic of some kind) will add up to two pawns of *Vis*. Surrounding the mound (Per roll of 9+ to notice) is a narrow path where the grass has been beaten down and muddled.

Players wishing to follow the wolves on their wild run through the forest will find it an almost impossible task and will soon become hopelessly lost. If you really wish to confuse the players, you could have them stumble into a *regio* in the Forest and encounter something unrelated to the story, or you could have them meet the Broch or Lise prematurely.

THE WOLVES

Roughly two thirds of the wolves are normal and use the stats given in **Ars Magica**, p.117. The leader and the rest are fairly powerful Faerie wolves. For their stats see the end of **A Brief Rest**.



The players reach Pasaquine and settle down to stay the night. Their sleep is disturbed by the Faerie wolves, who make a terrible demand of the villagers based on an ancient pact they claim has been broken.

SETTLING IN

Assuming the players don't go traipsing off after the wolves, they should cover the remaining distance to Pasaquine in less than an hour. You may wish to refer to the **Walking Tour of Pasaquine** for appropriate descriptions as the players enter the village for the first time. Their first stop will probably be the **Green Oak Inn** located in the center of the village. There they can dine, drink, and recover from the trials of their journey. The innkeeper, Lorris, will be surprised to see them, as it isn't yet Midsummer's Eve, but will gladly vacate his room for a handful of silver pennies. Characters wishing to pick up on the local gossip may sit and chat or wander around as they wish, but be sure to stress how tired they are (remember those fatigue rolls?). For appropriate rumors and other town encounters that might be appropriate at this time, see **In the Village**.

THE WOLVES RETURN

Throughout the evening, you may wish to have the characters make Per rolls to hear an occasional wolf howl far in the distance (just to build atmosphere). If asked, villagers will say that it's pretty unusual to hear wolves howling; normally they stay well on the far side of the forest. The howling will stop after a few hours, and the night will be quiet except for the crickets, frogs, and the snores of the characters.

At midnight, a dead silence will descend upon the village. Any player keeping watch will notice this on a Per + Scan roll of 12+. Shortly thereafter, Hrulgar and thirteen faerie wolves will arrive at the village outskirts to the west and softly pad into town. Keeping to the shadows and using magic when necessary to remain undetected, they will move silently to the village green, where they will form a loose circle around their leader. Anyone specifically looking towards the village green during this time will find it difficult to see anything definite (Per + Scan of 15+); most will see a bunch of shadows attributable to clouds crossing over the moon.

After all the wolves are in place, the leader will begin howling, so softly at first as to be almost imperceptible (Per + Alertness of 18+ for sleeping characters and Per + Scan of 15+ for those awake). The other wolves will slowly join in and gradually the mournful howl will increase in volume (add three to the above rolls to hear).

At this point, Hrulgar will raise his howl above the rest while casting a multi-person variant of Adjuration of the Slumbering Spirit (see insert) and begin summoning the sleeping villagers en masse to the village green. Anyone watching will notice villagers stumbling out of their homes in their nightclothes and heading toward the center of town. Players may also respond to the wolves' call and find themselves in a dream where they are walking to the green towards a pack of wolves. Only those who are asleep can be affected, so anyone awakened previously by the wolves howling or on watch need not roll.

Adjuration of the Slumbering Spirit

ReMe Lv 25 — 50 paces, Conc.

Causes a sleeping person (whose position must be at least roughly known to the caster) to rise from their bed and move slowly towards the caster. They will be aware of their activities as in a dream, and may notice that the dream seems incredibly real (Int + Alertness roll of 12+). A person having strong reason to suspect the dreams authenticity may attempt to wake themselves (Int + Concentration or Meditation roll of 9+). Targets with any magic resistance automatically resist the effects of the spell, though they may have a memory of something troubling their sleep when they wake (Per + Alertness roll of 12+). Targets who are awake or who have been in a natural sleep for less than half an hour also resist automatically.

If not resisted, the target will sleepwalk slowly along the best known route towards the caster, opening any doors or gates along the way, as necessary. Any rolls made while sleepwalking are made at -3. The target can be made to stop at any point within 10 paces of the caster, at which time they will stand with eyes partially closed until released. The effects of the spell last for three rounds after the caster stops concentrating, until an hour has passed, or until the target is awakened by a loud sound or physical shock (-3 to normal chances to awaken). The caster may direct the target to move as desired after eye contact is made, including telling the target to return to bed.

If the players interfere with the summons in a nonviolent way (like trying to wake the villagers or counter the spell), the wolves will ignore the players and continue the summons until most of the villagers (and players) stand before them. Players interfering by attacking the wolves directly will be warned to stop by Hrulgar, his deep voice booming in their minds, "This is none of your affair, wizards. Beware, lest you bring harm upon yourselves." Continuing attacks will result in Hrulgar unleashing powerful Mentem or auram spells at the transgressors. If this does not subdue the group, his companion wolves will silently charge to the attack.

Once the villagers are gathered around the wolves, Hrulgar will release them from the spell and begin to speak. He will seem to grow in stature and might, his amulet glowing a vibrant blue against the night. His voice will come directly to the minds of each villager (and players), speaking to each in a manner that is clear and somewhat intimidating: "Villagers of Pasaquine, awake! I am Hrulgar, son of Hrothganna, son of Ethra the Great. Long is the time since we have had to visit the village of Pasaquine to remind you of the Pact [see below for details] made between my kind and the founders of this village over one hundred years ago. I would that this time had not come to pass, but it seems that you humans have short memories — for the Pact *has been BROKEN!* — and broken in such a way that the stone of peace may crumble and this village be laid waste.

"My son, the first, the only of my blood; he wandered as youths do. He came to your lands, knowing of the Pact, trusting the simple mundanes to remember a simple thing. Now he is dead. I found his bones not far from here earlier this evening.

"It is a just thing I ask. *Retribution.* A son for my son. A young, helpless, mundane *live* child for my strong and cunning *dead* son. Only this way can I be swayed from dissolving the Pact completely and *destroying* Pasaquine *utterly*. It is written thus, so do *not* oppose me in this—I warn you. I give you till the moon sets [about fifteen minutes] to decide which one of your infant sons will accompany me back to the forest."

Hrulgar can be swayed by strong arguments to delay taking a human child. He will give the villagers two days at most to prove that they did *not* kill his son. Otherwise he will take an infant, perhaps using a few Mentem spells to make someone comply, and leave. If anyone raises a hand against the wolves at this point, he will allow a wolf to harm, but not kill, the perpetrator. At the merest sign of a strong show of force against the wolves, however, he will summon a whirlwind to raise a blinding dust and depart. When the dust clears, several villagers will be wounded, some severely, and a baby boy will be gone.

When running this encounter, keep in mind how the players treated the wolves in the first encounter. If the players merely defended themselves, Hrulgar will apologize for any wounds suffered, complement their judgment and offer to heal the wounds (he will lick them thoroughly while casting the equivalent of Chirurgeon's Healing Touch). On the other hand, if the players jumped into battle eagerly and killed several wolves, he will be much more predisposed to just collect his human child and leave. He will be willing to forgive the deaths of one or two mundane wolves, but if more were killed he may require a correspondingly higher number of human children to keep the peace. He will also know if the players have the *vis* from his son's pelt, and will demand it back for proper burial. A group that

doesn't comply with this request will face Hrulgar's unrestrained wrath.

CONCLUSIONS

This encounter with Hrulgar and his wolves can go many different ways. The group may be entirely peaceful and negotiate with Hrulgar, they may attack instantly without waiting for an explanation, or they may tread some path between these two extremes. In the event of a peaceful encounter, a negotiation may ensue resulting in some sort of deal to give the villagers time to come up with the true culprits. If this happens, be sure and roleplay the return of the wolves after the allotted time.

In this case, the villagers will be very thankful for the help of the magi and, while some may grumble about accepting "help from the devil," most will be willing to overlook the magi's quirks for a short time. This can go a long way towards opening some previously closed doors, and make the next part of the story much easier.

If the villagers and/or magi fail to come to some agreement with Hrulgar, he will collect his child—forcibly if necessary—and carry him (or her) into the depths of the Forest on his broad, furry back.

On the opposite extreme, the group may fight Hrulgar and his wolves regardless of his words. This course of action will almost certainly result in some dead group members and the dissolution of the Pact of Pasaquine. Hrulgar will flee if it becomes apparent that he is outnumbered, only to harass the players whenever possible in the future. Keep in mind that Hrulgar can travel to many different places using the magical pathways in the Pasaquine Forest—the players may find themselves attacked whenever they set foot in any forest! He also has many powerful allies amongst the Faeries and other creatures of Pasaquine Forest who may aid him if asked. If the Pact is dissolved by Hrulgar due to the players' actions, the villagers will become a raging mob, given time (especially if the peace stone is seen to crack). At the very least the players will be driven out of town and asked never to return. The villagers' threats should not be taken lightly, as they can always take their case to the monks of San Blas and request action against the magi.

Hrulgar, Leader of the Wolves

Description: Hrulgar is an imposing sight. More the size of a large lion than a wolf, his powerful frame towers above his mundane wolf companions, easily clearing ten feet when standing on his hind legs. He has thick silver and black fur that provides excellent protection against the elements as well as camouflage in the deep shadows of the Forest. Besides his size, Hrulgar

Hrulgar's Stats

Faerie Might 35

Size +2

Int +4 Per +6

Str +4 Stm +6

Prs +5

Bite: 1st +9 Atk +11 Dam +20

Tackle: 1st +8 Atk +10 Tackle +10

Fat +6 Def +10 Soak +15

Body Levels: OK, 0/0, -1/-1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Personality Traits:

Commanding +4

Detached +3

Intense +2

can be distinguished by a silver star the size of a small fist located on his forehead. Around his neck hangs a golden amulet set with a large blue sapphire.

Hrulgar is actually a Prince of Faerie in wolf form. Cursed long ago by a family rival, he was forced into the shape of a wolf and ran mindlessly into the Forest. He eventually made his way to the Forest of Pasaquine, where his sanity slowly returned under the healing influences of a Faerie spring. Once himself, he found he actually *preferred* forest life to the intrigues of the Faerie court, and began running with a mundane wolf pack. As he learned the Forest and her ways, he became leader of the wolves and gathered a number of faerie wolves into his pack as well. Long ago he stopped trying to regain his human form, for the wolf is his heartbeast (see **The Order of Hermes**, pp. 64-5). Now he rules all the wolves in Pasaquine Forest — several packs of mundane wolves and a score of magical wolves. Roughly half of the pack is female, including Hrulgar's mate, a large, tawny female who is never far from his side. During the encounter in the village, she gathers several other females to quietly watch Hrulgar's performance and intervene if he does something rash. She and the others will rush to Hrulgar's aid if he is attacked, and will attempt to whisk him away into the Forest if things go badly.

Normally, Hrulgar avoids all contact with mundane humans and keeps his packs wandering far from the known world, only returning every few years to keep abreast of mundane developments. He is happy that the Pact of Pasaquine has lasted so long and, though he himself rarely needs the warning of the hunt given by the peace stone (see **The Pact** below for details), it has saved the lives of his fellow wolves more than once.

Hrulgar is a being of reason, though he is not above using violence to achieve his ends. When enter-

ing most conflict situations he will talk first, then use magic, then physically attack only if there is no alternative. He enjoys intimidating his foes with his size and subtle Mentem spells.

Roleplaying Tips: You are master of the Forest. Be sure to let others know this—especially if they are haughty or overconfident. Be subtle in what you say and how you react to the words of others, respect those who show restraint in all things. When speaking, let howls and yips creep into your speech periodically, but make sure you don't overdo it.

Vis: Hrulgar's ears each contain seven pawns of *Intéllego vis*. Hrulgar hides this fact as well as possible, for if someone were to remove his ears he would lose his magic and become a feral, mundane wolf, a terrible fate for a Faerie prince.

Powers: Hrulgar can cast one spell per round, as long as he has Faerie Might points left. It costs him one Faerie Might point for each ten levels of the spell cast, or fraction thereof. He begins this encounter with 31 might points.

Way of the Mind: He can cast the equivalent of spontaneous Mentem spells up to Level 30. His favorite spells have subtle effects, like Emotion of Reversed Intentions (MuMe 25) to sow confusion, Posing the Silent Question (InMe 25) to gather information, Loss of But a Moment's Memory (PeMe 20) to erase knowledge of his presence, and Confusion of the Numbed Will (ReMe 15) to slow would-be attackers. Hrulgar can also make himself and his pack look like fleeting shadows to any observers. This power costs one might point per five minutes, and can only be used at night, in mist, fog, or other situations where visibility is questionable.

Way of Animals: He can cast the equivalent of spontaneous Animál spells up to Level 25. He uses these spells to speak with his charges, gather information from them about the forest, and occasionally to control them.

Way of the Winds: He can cast the equivalent of spontaneous Auram spells up to Level 20. The spell he uses most is Circling Winds of Protection (ReAu 20) to protect himself, or Whispering Winds (InAu 10) to gather information.

Other Powers: Hrulgar is a powerful being and should prove to be a worthy opponent for any group if confronted. Feel free to give Hrulgar other powers that seem appropriate to his nature, especially while he is within the bounds of Pasaquine Forest. Just remember that he likes to be subtle and avoids most direct attack spells. If being chased, for example, you might have plants twine about the legs of the pursuers (if this is an actual spell or just the Forest helping him is up to you). He would rather make good his escape and then carefully plan revenge than risk the chance of dying or losing a member of his pack. He especially enjoys Rego

spells. Also keep in mind that he is patient and may think in terms of decades when it comes to grudges (or alliances).

Hrulgar's Amulet

This blue sapphire set in gold is Hrulgar's most prized possession. It allows him to cast spells without taking any penalties on the words gestures table (see *Ars Magica*, p.68). It also allows him to speak directly to others' minds without fatiguing himself (the range for this ability is the same as if he were speaking normally). If the amulet is removed from Hrulgar's neck without his consent, a waiting spell, Mind of the Beast (MuMe 30, penetration of 38), will be unleashed upon the foolish thief. Hidden beneath the gemstone is a boar's tooth containing six *pawns* of Animál *vis* which will be used when the spell is cast to make the duration of the spell one year. Naturally, the victim's mind is turned into that of a wolf. If magi study and learn to use the amulet, they will find it negates up to seven points on the words and gestures table, e.g., a magi casts using no voice and bold gestures would only have a -3 penalty, instead of a -10. The necklace is worth one hundred silver pennies if sold as mere jewelry.

A Typical Faerie Wolf

Faerie Might	20		
Size	+1		
Cun	+4 *	Per	+5
Str +3	Stm	+5	
Prs	+4		
Bite:	1st +6	Atk +9	Dam +13
Tackle:	1st +6	Atk +8	Tackle +8
	Fat +5	Def +8	Soak +10
Body Levels:	OK, 0, -1/-1, -3, -5,	Incapacitated	
*The wolves also have an equivalent Int -3 for understanding human speech.			
Personality Traits:			
	Brave +5		
	Callous +3		
	Cunning +2		
	Loyal (to Hrulgar) +2		

Faerie Wolves

Description: The typical Faerie wolf is larger than a mundane wolf, standing over three feet high at the shoulder, and varies in color from pale gray to a tawny buff or black. Most operate in small packs of three to five, though larger bands may form when led by an exceptional leader like Hrulgar. The wolves are ex-

tremely wise to the ways of the Forest, and understand the rudiments of human speech. They communicate with each other using a complicated set of yelps, growls, and whines coupled with body language. In addition, many can speak crudely when necessary.

Faerie wolves are known for their bravery and callousness in battle. Their preferred method of attack is to charge and tackle, then bite while the opponent is stunned (see **Wolf Tactics**). These particular wolves respect Hrulgar immensely and follow him in most things.

The pelt of each Faerie wolf is worth five pawns of *Animál vis*.

Wolf Tactics

The wolves are clever fighters and will almost never simply stand and trade blows with a well-armed opponent. They prefer to charge and leap, bowling over their adversary. Then they bite and tear, usually at the throat, until the victim is subdued or dead. If they are unsuccessful in tackling an armed person, they will dodge until they get out of range, then turn and try tackle again. They also work quite well together, and like to surround and overcome difficult foes.

Remember that for a charging tackle, the base attack roll is $\text{Atk} - 1$ versus the opponents defense. If the attack is successful, roll $\text{Atk} + \text{Size} + 4$ for the wolves and $\text{Qik} + \text{Size} + \text{Brawl} - \text{Enc}$, to see if the victim falls to the ground. People falling might take damage (normal soak vs. +5 damage—you are falling hard) unless a $\text{Qik} + \text{Athletics}$ roll of 8+ is made, in which case no damage is taken. People also might drop objects held, like weapons (they manage to hold on with a successful Str roll of 6+).

While biting a downed foe, the victim's defense is $\text{Qik} + \text{Brawl} - \text{Enc}$ and damage is treated normally. At the Storyguide's option, characters holding daggers or other short weapons may continue to use them for defense and attack while in close combat with the wolves.

THE PACT

The Pact of Pasaquine refers to a pact made between the villagers of Pasaquine and the wolves inhabiting the nearby Forest. It came into being over one hundred years ago after a short, but bloody conflict between the two parties. Previous to the Pact, the wolves frequently killed the villagers' livestock and in return, the villagers killed many wolves with poisons and traps. A young wolf-pack leader named Hrulgar managed to arrange a meeting with the town elders to discuss a truce. Several weeks later, the Pact was finalized at a ceremony on the village green.

The Pact states that no wolf will kill or harass any villager or their livestock. In return, the villagers must let the wolves live in peace, and warn the wolves if someone arrives to hunt in the forest. If either side breaks the agreement, the wronged party may exact payment in lives (human or wolf) unless another form of payment can be agreed upon by both parties. The Pact was symbolically engraved in a magically prepared stone (acquired by Hrulgar through his connections with Faerie) and placed in the center of the village green to constantly remind the short-lived humans of their Pact. If the Pact is broken, the stone will split with a loud *crack!* and begin to crumble.

To this day the Pact has not been broken, but conscious knowledge of the Pact has passed from the villagers' memories to simply become a way of life. The villagers have numerous stories about why their village remains untouched by wolf attacks through the years, each of which contains a grain of truth. The writing on the stone has faded and its true purpose forgotten; it is now called the "peace" stone. In the past, villagers quietly placed a piece of iron on the stone to warn wolves of hunting parties. Now it is tradition; each member of any hunt that begins in Pasaquine touches their spear tips to the stone for "good luck."





Chapter 4 - Interlude

Each of the following chapters contains information and encounters that may be played in almost any order, or not played at all. They are grouped according to location. **In the Village** contains gossip, rumors, information and a few short encounters that can be played while the players are in Pasaquine itself. **A Broken House** has information about playing encounters involving Jehan and Carlota, the parents of Bix and Jortz. **The Forest** details the Broch, Lise and encounters with them. **Conclusions** discusses possible endings and wraps things up. Refer to each section as needed while the story progresses. You also may wish to review **The Three Plots** and the **Plot Summary** in the introduction at this time to help clarify any questions you may have. **What Happens Now?** (below) will also help Storyguides see one way of tying all of these elements together.

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

By this time, the troupe should have made their way to the village and learned of the Pact of Pasaquine from Hrulgar. If this has not happened for some reason, your troupe has strayed quite far from the bounds of the story as written, and the following section won't be of much use to you. All we can say in this case is good luck! Assuming, however, that the troupe has gotten to Pasaquine in one piece, met and dealt with Hrulgar in some way (see **Conclusions** from the last chapter for examples), and are still alive and well, they have a considerable number of options open to them.

Each group is unique, and will advance through the story in different ways. You can certainly influence their actions and hope that they go in a certain direction or do a certain thing, but in the end, the players might (and usually do) surprise you no matter how well prepared you are. In order to keep this surprise to a minimum and to help you run the rest of the story smoothly, an example of how it *could* proceed from this point is given below.

Once the group reaches Pasaquine, the most important thing to keep in mind is that the story is no longer linear, i.e., the encounters do *not* have to take place in any particular order. Each group will go about it in a different way: some will investigate around the village first, others will head straight for the Forest, while others will jump back and forth from place to place. There is no right way and no wrong way for the players to proceed, or for you to handle each encounter. The goal is to have fun and get as much enjoyment from the story as possible. If you feel the need to change encounters slightly—or even drastically—to make the story more exciting or fun, by all means do so. But, also keep in mind that, given all this freedom of action, the group may lose direction and flounder momentarily. If this

happens, be ready to nudge them gently on course with a short scene (like a **Village Vignette**—see the next chapter), an impromptu encounter with a villager (perhaps the Father, the Reeve, or the Marien sisters) or use subtle hints from non-players in the group, like Jortz.

Without further ado, here is one possible storypath. Once again, we stress that this is only presented as an *aid* to the Storyguide and should *not* be viewed as the “proper” way to run the following scenes.

A STORYPATH

The group arrived in Pasaquine after a brief, but confusing, encounter with the grief-maddened Hrulgar. One common wolf was killed by a magi, several wolves were wounded, and two grogs were injured, though not seriously. Upon reaching Pasaquine, they headed directly to the Green Oak, where rooms were procured. Most of the group stayed at the Green Oak, taking time to talk and gather rumors from the patrons. Jortz and Bix went to pay a visit to their parents, which only served to corroborate Jortz’s story and strengthen Bix’s resolve. Bix consoled his stepmother and heard much of her story, but was too late to catch his father slipping off into the woods. Meanwhile, a companion took a walk and had a brief encounter with the Reeve.

That night, Hrulgar entered the village and summoned the villagers to the green. Some of the players were affected by his spell, but others started interfering until Hrulgar stated his intention that no one would be harmed. He gave his speech. Afterwards, the players cleverly pointed out that the villagers did not possess the power to kill so powerful a wolf as Hrulgar’s son. The wolf then blamed the crime on the magi but, after much discussion, an agreement was reached wherein no child would be taken and the magi would have three days to come up with the true culprit. The rest of the night passed uneventfully.

The next morning the players decided to investigate the bone-piles, and encountered **The Arguing Farmers**, which introduced them to the Klaemen. After seeing a bone-pile or two, they met **Father Abelard** who was wandering the fields and, after making a favorable impression, he invited them to join him later that evening at the Widow’s. The rest of the day passed uneventfully, except for a short visit to Bix and Jortz’s house so the magi could hear **Carlota’s story**. Some wandering (and bored) companions met **The Playing Children** while the magi were busy interviewing Carlota. The visit was cut short by a wild-eyed Jehan, who cursed the magi for interfering in family business. The magi left without confronting him, for they hoped to learn something by following Jehan into the woods that night.

Later that day, the group made their way to the **Widow’s Hut**, where they talked for quite some time, exchanged notes on their dreams with Father Abelard, and learned much useful information from the Widow. While running an errand, a grog encountered **The Drunk**.

That evening, scouts were posted at Jehan’s house, and the group prepared to follow Jehan into the woods. Their success was brief, for a short distance into the Forest they encountered **Jehan’s Soul**, who told them something of the *regio*. Unknown to the group, Lise was standing nearby, casting subtle Mentem spells on the grogs and companions to confuse them. As soon as the group started learning useful things, Lise summoned some **Broch** to play with the characters, and successfully ended the night’s adventuring as the players ran screaming from the woods. One grog became lost in a *regio* on the way back and was killed when he was swarmed by Broch. Before he died, Lise appeared to him and gloated.

The next morning, a guard was posted to spy on Jehan’s return, and he was observed placing Broch around the village. The magi then proceeded to Jehan’s house where they forcibly removed the amulet from around his neck. After showing it to the Widow, they decided to hold on to it and wait. A good-looking companion met the beautiful **Généviève** (one of the Marien sisters) who told what she knew of Carlota’s predicament. The magi also spent some time convincing the **Reeve** of two things—that they were close to solving the mystery and that the Klaemen were evil. The Reeve decided not to inform his master at **San Blas** (the Abbot) of the village’s troubles. The Reeve also agreed to keep an eye on the Klaemen, though he remained skeptical of their true nature. The rest of the day was spent with **Róbert** looking at bone-piles on the edges of the Forest (some of them belonged to a late grog).

Unknown to the magi, Lise used Mentem spells to make a companion steal Jehan’s amulet and put it around his own neck. That evening, Lise summoned him to the Forest. He was able to communicate what was happening to the group and they followed him into the woods. With the amulet-wearer as their guide, the group made it to the edges of **Lise’s Regio** before the Broch attacked again. This time, the group was ready and managed to hold them off long enough to get some information about the Broch and Lise. Once again, Lise used her mastery of the *regio* along with semi-destructive Herbam and Terram spells to drive the group from the Forest without revealing herself (except for an occasional maddening glimpse). The amulet-wearer, however, was trapped high in Lise’s *regio* and talked extensively with Lise through the night (as well as helping to make Broch—the details of which he was unable to remember the next day) before stumbling out of the Forest at dawn.

The exhausted amulet-wearer told the magi what he had learned of Lise and conveyed her offer to make a deal. The deal included a large amount of *vis* given to the magi in return for their turning their backs and leaving Pasaquine. She also said that if the amulet was removed from the current wearer, that villagers would die the next night. The magi quickly went to the Widow's hut to discuss their options. They decided that with help from the Widow's charms, they would try to destroy Lise later that day.

After a brief rest, the magi prepared for their foray into the woods. Entering into the woods, they found Lise's *regio*, but were unable to get higher than the third level because of Lise's active interference. Weary and tired of whipping tree branches and other hindrances, the troupe made their way back to Pasaquine.

That night, they prepared again, hoping to follow the amulet-wearer to the *regio* to confront Lise. They made their way to the *regio* unhindered by Lise. She appeared briefly to them, repeating her offer, which was refused. Crying out in frustration, she summoned the **Shaker** and a host of Broch. Beset from all sides, the group was hard-pressed to defend themselves from these physical threats while Lise cast numerous attack spells on them. After several failed attempts, a clever magi managed to close with Lise and knock her unconscious with attack spells. He quickly grabbed Lise's **Amulet** and was grabbed in turn by huge hands made of earth. A grog then killed Lise to try and break the spell.

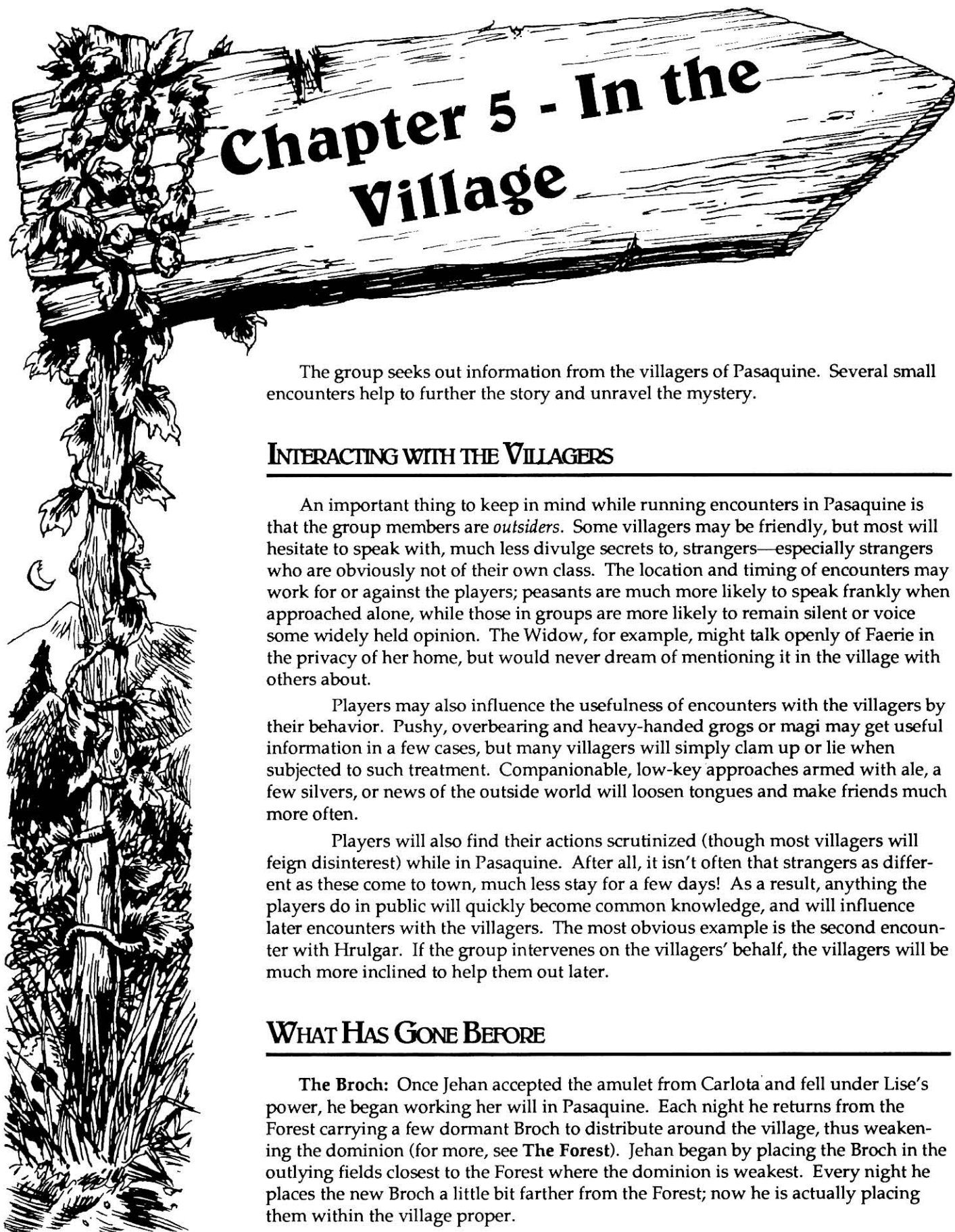
As she died, her body was quickly swallowed by a huge crevasse, which the magi and grog narrowly avoided.

The Broch went crazy and ran off (see **Conclusions**), leaving behind another dead grog (killed by the Shaker) and several wounded people. The magi briefly explored the *regio*, then made their way back to Pasaquine.

Hrulgar was waiting for their return with a host of wolves. After relating the story of Lise and the Broch, Hrulgar thanked the magi and declared the Pact unbroken. He stated his intention to return the following evening to reaffirm the Pact in a short ceremony, then left.

The troupe tended their wounds and generally collapsed until the next morning. That day, Father Abelard found **Father Gabón's Diary**, and the truth about Lise became known. The grogs and companions helped the villagers hunt down and destroy the few remaining dormant Broch, and the Widow and the magi exchanged notes. Preparations were made for a feast for the group, as well as receiving Hrulgar and his retinue. The festivities that night were joyous, but were dampened somewhat when it was learned the **Bernard, the Miller** had traveled to San Blas to tell the monks of recent events.

The magi and group slipped out of town shortly before dawn to avoid meeting them, and made their way back to Mistridge.



The group seeks out information from the villagers of Pasaquine. Several small encounters help to further the story and unravel the mystery.

INTERACTING WITH THE VILLAGERS

An important thing to keep in mind while running encounters in Pasaquine is that the group members are *outsiders*. Some villagers may be friendly, but most will hesitate to speak with, much less divulge secrets to, strangers—especially strangers who are obviously not of their own class. The location and timing of encounters may work for or against the players; peasants are much more likely to speak frankly when approached alone, while those in groups are more likely to remain silent or voice some widely held opinion. The Widow, for example, might talk openly of Faerie in the privacy of her home, but would never dream of mentioning it in the village with others about.

Players may also influence the usefulness of encounters with the villagers by their behavior. Pushy, overbearing and heavy-handed grogs or magi may get useful information in a few cases, but many villagers will simply clam up or lie when subjected to such treatment. Companionable, low-key approaches armed with ale, a few silvers, or news of the outside world will loosen tongues and make friends much more often.

Players will also find their actions scrutinized (though most villagers will feign disinterest) while in Pasaquine. After all, it isn't often that strangers as different as these come to town, much less stay for a few days! As a result, anything the players do in public will quickly become common knowledge, and will influence later encounters with the villagers. The most obvious example is the second encounter with Hrulgar. If the group intervenes on the villagers' behalf, the villagers will be much more inclined to help them out later.

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

The Broch: Once Jehan accepted the amulet from Carlota and fell under Lise's power, he began working her will in Pasaquine. Each night he returns from the Forest carrying a few dormant Broch to distribute around the village, thus weakening the dominion (for more, see **The Forest**). Jehan began by placing the Broch in the outlying fields closest to the Forest where the dominion is weakest. Every night he places the new Broch a little bit farther from the Forest; now he is actually placing them within the village proper.

The villagers didn't know what to make of the inactive Broch at first; some thought they were clay dolls made by village children, others thought they were charms put there by other villagers, and others still came close to the truth in thinking they were gifts from local Faeries. Over time, a few farmers noticed that crops grew better around the strange clay figures. As word quietly spread, the villagers began moving the Broch to their village plots and distant fields. Some even went so far as to tie them to their plows or around the necks of their oxen. It certainly wasn't something to be discussed openly, for even though the villagers gladly took advantage of the Broch's slight powers, each peasant remained a bit scared of the mysterious clay figures. The villagers, when they do refer to the Broch, call them the Klaemen (clay-men: when the players hear this for the first time from a villager run your words together so that it isn't clear that they are actually saying "clay men").

Now, Broch can be found throughout Pasaquine. There still aren't so many as to draw attention to themselves, but enough that a perceptive player might notice a few after a day or so of wandering around the village. They are in the fields, gardens, storage sheds, and even on some hearths in Pasaquine. The Broch are notably absent from regions distant from the Forest, while they are most abundant in fields near the Forest and around the Green Oak Tavern (because of the Mother's Oak). Lise is especially interested in the Church. Twelve larger than normal Klaemen lay in a loose ring around the Church (currently about a fifty-pace radius) that gets a little bit smaller each night. It would probably take a magi to discover this fact, as these particular Broch are well-hidden.

Though the Broch are dormant during the day and in areas where the Dominion still has power, they do move around at night. This causes some concern among the peasants; not that they've actually seen them move, but the figures *do* change position slightly from morning to morning—sometimes they even disappear! For more on the Broch and their affect on Pasaquine, see their description in *The Forest*.

The Bone-Piles: While the villagers view the Klaemen as benign or even good luck, they are openly frightened of the bone-piles. The first was discovered by Róbert, the forester, on one of his trips through the Forest. The bone-pile was located in a small clearing, and consisted of a small mound of disturbed earth mixed with the freshly killed bones of a fox. A ring of grass surrounding the mound was trampled and muddy, but no footprints could be found. Róbert didn't report this to anyone but his family and Father Abelard. Together, they traveled to the site and buried a wooden cross along with the bones.

In the weeks that followed, the entire village became aware of the bone-piles, for a few more appeared in the Forest every night. The piles varied only

Marriages

Most marriages in Pasaquine can be viewed as working relationships. The wife has certain duties which are expected of her, while the husband has other duties which are expected of him. Love may or may not be a part of the relationship, but partners usually have at least a grudging respect for one another. However the relationship works, the female is often seen in a supporting role and, therefore, is supposed to obey her husband. This view is supported by a law of the monks which states, "It is plain that wives should be subject to their husbands and should almost be servants." If a wife doesn't obey her husband, especially in public, it is seen as a great source of shame for the husband and it is well within his rights to either beat her for her insolence or have her "ducked" using the ducking chair at the millpond. According to village law, "All inhabitants of Pasaquine have the right to beat their wives, provided they do not kill them thereby." Be sure to bring this attitude forth during encounters with the villagers—even though Bix and Jortz don't like their father beating Carlota, they don't question his right to do so.

in location and the type of animal's bones jumbled in the earthen mound. The villagers spent much of their free time worrying about and speculating on the causes of the bone-piles, with theories ranging from a coven of invisible black witches to a dragon. They also halfheartedly set a few watches to try and catch the thing(s) responsible, but to no avail.

The week before the group arrives in Pasaquine, the first bone-piles appeared beyond the boundaries of the Forest, much to the horror of the populace. Father Abelard was consulted again and the fields blessed, but this didn't seem to halt the creatures, for soon the first goat, chicken, and sheep bones were found within jumbled heaps of earth surrounded by a muddy ring-path. A few days before the group's arrival, two people disappeared in the night, but no bone-piles were found. Some say that the missing couple simply ran off, while others swear the monster got them.

Note: It is up to you, the Storyguide, to decide which story is true. If you like a more "gruesome" feel to the story, feel free to have the group stumble across the bones of the lovers as they explore the Forest.

Jehan and Carlota: While no one is quite sure why the normally passive but gruff Jehan has begun beating his wife and son, no one thinks too much of it. Wife-beating, though not overly common, is accepted throughout the village as it was in most communities at the time (see insert). Carlota privately receives sympathy from some village wives, while others blame her for failing to please her husband. Jehan's change in behavior has raised few eyebrows among the men. Most have

left him alone after he knocked someone cold for “not minding his own business.” A few villagers have seen Jehan leaving or returning from the Forest in the mornings and evenings, but simply assume that it’s part of his job.

Note: Keep in mind that Jehan has made few friends over the last few months, and villagers will be loathe to help the magi for Jehan’s sake.

GENERAL RUMORS

This section gives information that may be picked up in general conversation with the villagers, probably at the Green Oak or the village green. The rumors are mostly speculation where the Broch, Lise and the wolves are concerned, but perceptive players may learn something of importance nonetheless. It can be fun to assign one non-player to a particular theory and have them expound it above all others. One person, for example, just *knows* that a witch is responsible for everything, while another may swear on his father’s grave that it’s the fault of devils and demons. If you like, have them argue with one another if asked (but only if the villagers are comfortable with the group). Be sure and give out the individual rumors over a period of time rather than all at once.

The information below can be given out in a number of ways. The most straightforward procedure is as follows. First, the player must either listen in or engage someone in conversation successfully. Then, the Storyguide can simply choose a rumor depending on the time spent and the quality of the interaction, or the player can make a Com + appropriate Social Talent or Skill. The number beside the rumor is a gauge of its value — the higher the better. The important thing is that the players roleplay at least part of each encounter — don’t just allow them to roll and gather rumors. Feel free to include any information that the magi missed at the beginning of the story (see **What the Magi Know**).

General (True):

- 3+ Someone recently saw a bit of moss in the shape of a goat — a “sure sign” of the devil’s work (while someone did see this, it has no relevance to the story).
- 3+ The ale at the Green Oak has never tasted better.
- 6+ The Klaemen make crops grow better, or, increase fertility.
- 6+ The bone-piles are found only in or near the Forest.
- 6+ Jehan beats Carlota and Jortz - or - He spends all his time drinking and sleeping.
- 6+ The crops are better than they’ve ever been, as far back as anyone can remember.

- 9+ People fight over Klaemen and plant them in their fields to help their crops.
- 9+ Father Abelard has blessed several bone-piles.
- 9+ Sometimes Jehan “hunts” at night in the Forest, and comes back all scratched and dirty.
- 12+ The Widow knows something about the Klaemen.
- 12+ The bone-piles have muddy tracks around them.
- 12+ Recently someone asked Jehan about a strange amulet he was wearing, and he decked him.
- 15+ The Klaemen started appearing close to the Forest, now they’re being found on doorsteps and fields just a little bit further into town each night.

General (False):

- 3+ The Klaemen are good luck.
- 3+ A huge, flesh-sucking monster is responsible for the bone-piles (be sure to give vivid descriptions).
- 3+ Jehan is a nice guy and enjoys being asked about his personal life.
- 3+ The monks are coming en masse next Sunday to exorcise the demons from the Forest.
- 6+ The Klaemen heal warts if you sleep outside with one tied to your arm.
- 6+ Witches/demon/diabolists are responsible for the bone-piles.
- 6+ Jehan is going to duck Carlota at the ducking pond tomorrow.
- 6+ Sir Guifré is coming with some of his best men to hunt the monster next week.
- 9+ The Klaemen can be used to keep evil spirits from your house.
- 9+ A nearby village was completely destroyed by the creature—all that was left was a big bone-pile with everyone’s bones in it.
- 9+ Jehan is having an affair with Christi — he meets her in the Forest every night.
- 9+ Bernard the Miller has been seen talking with evil-looking strangers lately—he must be in the ring of diabolists responsible for the bone-piles.
- 15+ Jehan has been possessed by a demon, and is responsible for the bone-piles.

PERSONALITIES

This section presents information that each of the major personalities in Pasaquine knows concerning the story. Feel free to make changes as necessary to keep the story moving along.

The Green Oak (Lorris and Christi): The Green Oak is a good place to pick up general rumors (see the

previous section) as well as talk to Lorris and Christi, who know most of what goes on in the village. Observant players (Per + Scan rolls of 9+ for each one) will note that several dormant Broch can be found around the Inn; one behind a few mugs on the mantelpiece by the fire, one nestled in a low branch of the Mother's Oak and one hidden under some straw in the old stable area. If asked about these Klaemen, Lorris will admit that he didn't put them there and he has no idea who did, though he doesn't mind their presence. Lorris has no public opinion on the matter of the Klaemen, though secretly he believes they might be responsible for a recent improvement in the flavor of his ale. Players poking around in his brewing room might see a few Broch hidden among the casks.

Characters getting on Lorris's good side and talking on the right subject might learn that the Mother's Oak has begun growing again—noticeably. The Mother's Oak hasn't grown like this since Lorris has been in Pasaquine. He is a little worried, as it is beginning to strain the roof timbers. Observant characters (Per + Woodworking of 6+ or Per + Scan of 15+) may notice this fact on their own.

Christi will dodge all questions about Pasaquine's problems unless she is alone with the group and has been treated with respect. Then she might relate some of the more obscure rumors floating around town in exchange for stories of strange places. Personally, she is both frightened and excited by recent events. Players might observe her wandering near the Forest at dusk some evening with a dreamy look in her eyes (this is nothing unusual—Christi tries to get away at least once a day to be by herself and dream).

The Mill (Bernard): Players paying a visit to Bernard will find the mill doing slow business and Bernard acting jumpy. If asked, he will say that it's because the peasants aren't bringing in as much grain as usual—many are scared to work the fields close to the Forest because of the bone-piles. Bernard says, "These bone-piles are all just a bunch of hogwash. The peasants just want some way to cheat me out of my grain." Characters making a Per + Folk Ken roll of 9+ will know that this is not the complete truth and may notice (Per + Alertness roll of 9+) that there seem to be an inordinate number of charms and crosses on the walls, doorways and windows of the mill.

In fact, Bernard is quite scared of the bone-piles, and now refuses to travel far from the safety of the stone walls of the mill with all of its dubious charms and protections (many of which he has purchased from traveling trinket-men). The peasants are quite happy with this arrangement, since it means Bernard can't catch them using their *querns* (hand mills). To make sure that he stays scared, the peasants allow him to overhear tall tales concerning the bone-piles whenever they visit the mill.

If the characters make Bernard feel comfortable, he will also hint that he thinks the Widow is a witch and will stop just short of naming Father Abelard a warlock. He has no evidence to back up his claim, except that Father Abelard does see a lot of the Widow and she is *obviously* a witch.

The Church (Father Abelard): Characters approaching Father Abelard will find his normally smiling face gaunt, and his eyes sunken from lack of sleep. He will seem distracted (more than usual) by visitors and will pay little attention to what they say unless it concerns the Forest or the bone-piles. Then, he will give them a guarded look and ask them what they know of these things. He will be most interested in their responses, but will hesitate to share his own knowledge unless the characters have already talked with the Widow and have met with her approval. After the characters leave he will meet with the Widow to talk about the wisdom of bringing the group into their confidence. If the group has behaved well and given reason for Abelard and the Widow to believe that they can be trusted, they will summon the leaders of the group to a secret meeting at the Widow's house. For details of the meeting and Father Abelard's story see **The Widow's House** below.

Father Abelard can also help the group learn Lise's history, though it might take him a while to remember. The priest, Gabón, who chased Lise into the woods that Midsummer's eve over a hundred years ago (see **Lise's Story**), wrote at length of his deed in his diary. He felt extreme remorse and often wandered the Forest praying and thinking of his actions that night. When he died, the diary was left as part of the Church records, which came into Father Abelard's hands. Abelard has read all of the records, and has a chance of remembering this sad tale (from Gabón's point of view) if the players mention the name Lise to him (possibly learned from the Broch or Lise herself). Abelard will have to make an Int + Pasaquine Lore roll of 15+ to remember anything the first time he hears the name, though if he makes a 12+ something will click and he will say, "That name seems familiar," before leaving to check the Church records. It will take him a simple roll +5 hours of looking to find the pertinent passages. If Father Abelard doesn't remember Lise's story the first time she is mentioned to him, he may roll again each day, adding one to his chances. A botch on any day means he has completely forgotten. This may mean that the players won't learn Lise's story until after the story is over and they have already returned to Mistridge. Even so, her history can serve as a poignant postlude to the whole episode, delivered in the form of a lengthy letter from Abelard a few weeks later. The pertinent parts of Father Gabón's diary are reproduced below.

Father Gabón's Diary

If there is justice in the world, God will strike me dead; for I have sinned, and so sinning have driven a hapless soul from His bosom. I only hope that God in His infinite wisdom has the pity to kill me now, for if the villagers discover my heinous crime they will certainly do so with little mercy. But who am I to beg for mercy from anyone? I, who am so filled with shame and self-loathing that my quill shakes even as I write, have no right to expect mercy from anyone, much less compassion or forgiveness. And so I write to you, my long companion and silent, leather-bound keeper of secrets. At least you will not judge me, unless the words I myself write reflect your feelings, too. Enough—I must gather my thoughts and set them down, and in so doing, find some short relief from the pain which rends me.

It began simply enough; a mere straying sheep that needed comforting to be brought to the fold, something I have done often enough in Your service. Her name was Lise, and her family resented the Word and would have nothing to do with it—or rather—the Father would have it so. Upon his death by the pox I approached the girl, Lise, and found her bright, though lonely and shy. I endeavored to undo the damage wrought by her father and show her something of the love and comfort to be found in Your care. My quiet words and careful attention soon made their effects known; for, though at first she would hardly speak in my presence for fear I would grow horns and fangs to devour her, within weeks she was talking—even smiling! In a few months I had my heart's desire, for she agreed to be baptized during the Gangdays in May. If only it could have been so, my heart would be at peace and my soul not damned to hell.

It is the custom of the villagers here to celebrate the bringing in of the May, a pagan tradition from long ago. Being curious, I accepted the invitation of the village elders and entered the Forest on the eve of May with bright eyes

and pounding heart. I followed scores of excitedly whispering villagers to a clearing, and I must say that though they were festive and could hardly contain themselves, a certain edge of fear and wonder filled the air. After short incantations to what I took to be spirits of the earth, the elders produced crude instruments and began playing. Within minutes, everyone was dancing, and soon I saw myself watching another lone figure across the clearing, the friendless Lise. Soon we too were dancing—I don't remember how, for everything was swirling and smoke and music and Lise, smiling and laughing.

I know not how long we danced, only that the music drifted off, and with it, the people went hand in hand deeper into the Forest. Somehow, I thought it right that Lise and I wander the paths together, and neither my head, nor heart, nor soul did stop me from taking those first dangerous steps. I wish now that God would have struck me dead where I stood, but it was not to be. My head giddy and somehow drunk, my body still whirling from the dance, we stopped and talked briefly. Within a few short moment (or was it longer?) I found myself first harshly kissing Lise's lips, then clumsily tearing at her clothes.

An eternity later of sobbing, shouting her name, and running wildly along twisted Forest paths brought me to the realization of what I had done, for Lise was gone. Gone to the Forest. She broke and ran quickly from my embrace and at first, angered, I followed cursing and shouting. Something protected her then, for the branches grabbed at my clothes and the earth pulled at my sandals. I thank God for this, for it certainly saved me from further sin.

I lost her there in the woods. Her crying grew faint, her tracks disappeared, and she was gone. I wept.

And now here I sit, waiting for my life to end, for my soul is assuredly damned to hell.

This is the solemn testament of an unworthy sinner, Father Gabón, in the 1199th year of our Lord.

The Smithy (Bruno): Bruno has little to say to anyone on the matters troubling Pasaquine at the moment, and is confident that the large amount of cold iron in and around the smithy will keep away any evil spirits (in this he is quite right). Observant players (Per + Scan roll of 6+) will notice he is working on a small iron cross, and has a pile of several finished ones on his workbench. If asked, he will say that, "They're all the rage right now among the serfs. I can't make 'em fast enough. I don't mind though, it's certainly easier than making plowshares." The iron crosses are about a hand-span long and meant to be worn on a leather thong around one's neck.

The Forester's (Róbert): Róbert discovered the first bone-pile, and has since warned the villagers about traveling in the Forest. If the players head towards the Forest during the daylight hours, they are likely to run into Róbert, who will caution them against entering the it. He believes that a band of demons is inhabiting the Forest and are gaining strength by eating smaller creatures before attacking the village to steal everyone's soul. Róbert knows the location of all the bone-piles (he has taken Father Abelard to each one) but will be unwilling to show them to the group unless they can convince him that they are fairly religious and will do something to dispel the demons. Any hint of magical (as opposed to divine) power by the players will cause Róbert to cross himself, call the players demons and head for the Church screaming, possibly leaving the players lost in the woods.

Players coming to Róbert with the blessing of Father Abelard, on the other hand, will be received unquestioningly, even if they are known to be magicians by the villagers. Once convinced that Abelard really does support them, he will gladly guide them wherever they wish to go, though he will insist that everyone wear at least one charm of some kind when traveling in the Forest: a cross, a bit of Rowan tied with red thread, or a small bag filled with dried herbs and feathers.

Róbert thinks Jehan is crazy, for he has seen him entering the Forest several times at dusk, presumably to go hunting, and has been unable to convince him to turn back, though he has tried more than once. He has washed his hands of the matter and thinks it is only a matter of time before Jehan's bones will be found in a small mound. He might mention this fact to players with Abelard's support, and can lead the players to the spot where Jehan enters and leaves the Forest each evening. Róbert has not tried to track Jehan into the Forest, and will be fairly unwilling to try, though he might be convinced with enough money or a few rounds of ale.

The Marien Sisters (Jehanne and Génévienne): The Marien sisters are extremely concerned by the bone-piles, for several of their sheep have recently gone missing and are feared to be dead. Jehanne's response

was to put a double watch on the sheep to keep them from straying during the day and to keep them behind closed gates at night. Génévienne went to the Widow for help, and received charms to place on each window, doorway and gate in the Marien household. Perceptive characters will notice (Per + Scan roll of 12+) that there are no Broch to be found near the Marien sisters' house. If approached by the group, the sisters will be hospitable and somewhat curious of the magi, especially if they have used spells in public since coming to Pasaquine. Jehanne doesn't know much about the bone-piles, though she does know quite a bit of gossip about topics of interest to the players (see **Rumors** for examples). Génévienne knows something of importance, but will have to be prodded to remember it.

Génévienne happened to be on her way to the Widow's house one evening a few months ago when she saw Carlota crying and speaking to someone in the woods. Génévienne crept closer and saw that the other figure was the Widow (actually this was Lise in disguise—see **The Forest —What has Gone Before** for more). The "Widow" gave something to Carlota, who then left. Génévienne approached the "Widow," but the "Widow" faded into the woods before she could reach her. Confused, Génévienne continued on her way to the Widow's house, where she found her calmly working on needlepoint. Génévienne has subsequently forgotten the scene, but might remember if asked the right questions. Génévienne might even approach an attractive male group member to tell the news to if the group needs some help later on in the story.

The Reeve's House (Cohat): Cohat is quite concerned about the bone-piles, especially now that some people have disappeared. He is so worried, in fact, that before the players arrived he was seriously considering swallowing his pride and making the ride to San Blas to ask the monks for help. The arrival of the group and their actions with the wolves on the first evening may change that. If the group helped the village, Cohat may hold off until after the group has spent a day in Pasaquine. He will approach the group at the end of the day and try to find out how successful they have been in solving the mystery of the bone-piles. If he is impressed with their progress, he will wait and repeat his visit to the group the next evening. If the group is still stumped after a few days Cohat will ride off to San Blas anyway. It may be helpful to use the threat of Cohat riding off to bring back help from San Blas as a goad to make the group move quickly (it certainly would be embarrassing for some monks to succeed where the magi failed). If the group didn't help the villagers in the first place, he will ride off the next morning to petition the monks for aid. For more concrete details on the monks interventions, see **Conclusions**.

The Widow's House (Maliér): Players approaching the Widow will find her waiting for their arrival (re-

member Hippin?) with tea set out to boil. She will know of the actions of the magi so far, and will ask them a few questions to test their mettle. If the magi have behaved themselves and generally supported the villagers, she will continue to talk and will relate much of what she knows. If, on the other hand, the magi have abused their power or turned a cold shoulder to the villager's plight, she will politely talk for a few moments, then say, "I really must get back to work. It's been quite nice meeting you and I wish you luck. Good day." Unless the magi can convince her to change her mind, she will have nothing further to do with them and will continue, with Father Abelard's help, to fight against the creature(s) making the bone-piles.

It is also possible that the players have met with Father Abelard, in which case he will consult with the Widow before inviting the players to meet with the Widow and himself. Again, if the players have shown little interest in helping the villagers, the group will not be invited to the Widow's.

Assuming that the player's win the confidence of Father Abelard and the Widow, they will relate what they have learned of the bone-piles.

The Widow's Story: "The Forest has always been a strange and wonderful place, as well you may know. Much, much more exists within its borders than simple trees and grass. The Forest has a spirit, a soul that reaches out to some, drawing them near [here she will look wistfully at the woods out her window while rubbing her locket] and it drives others away with its frightening strangeness. Sometimes it watches, or even talks to me when I wander its hidden ways; sharing secrets with a feeble old mind. It can be angry or sad, or even playful in its slowly shifting moods.

"Recently, I have become aware of a change in the Forest. I have felt a new force there, a force almost human in its feelings and desires. Often, I felt this 'thing' watching me as I collected herbs or wandered with my cats along winding paths. Tippin doesn't like it, do you? [Tippin will respond with a low meow that sounds like a 'no']. I can't help but feel like this force in the Forest is somehow responsible for the Klaemen and the bone-piles, though how I don't know.

"I first became aware of the Broch a few months ago, and from my cats' response to them I knew they were more than simple clay dolls. I took one from the edge of the Forest and, using a few simple magics, found they were *very* magical. But I could learn nothing more about them — I am but a simple woman — other than that they were tied closely to the earth [If she discusses the specifics of her experiments with a magi, it will add +3 to the magi's subsequent attempts to understand the Broch using spells]. I've created a few charms to keep earth spirits at bay, but I am unsure of their power [see insert]. At least, no Klaemen have appeared on my property—though if that's the result of my charms or

The Widow's Charms

The Widow is an experienced charm-maker and has experimented with different charms to keep earth spirits at bay. Magi asking to see these charms will be taken outside and shown one of which protects her property. It consists of a small animal bladder filled with a thick, strange-hued liquid which is tied shut with colored thread. Also tied to the thread are several feathers. She says that to work, the charm must be attached to something and driven into the ground; hence, all of her charms are on fenceposts or tall stakes. She will be very reluctant to loan out her charms, especially at night, unless she is convinced of the magi's sincerity and the absolute necessity of it. Note that she has also made some charms for the Marien sisters. If any of these charms are stolen by the magi she will be extremely displeased.

It takes the Widow two days (twenty hours of work) to prepare each charm, but magi might be able to speed things up using spontaneous magic or by simply helping the Widow. Magi wishing to help need make an Int + Magic Theory + Terram + Rego roll of at least 15+. Every five points or fraction thereof that the roll exceeds 15 reduces the time necessary to create a charm by one hour. Unfortunately, the results are highly variable. Each charm confers a different amount of magic resistance to the Broch. To determine the amount, roll a stress die and divide by two. To give this bonus to a person, they must tie the charm to an object, like a staff, then thrust it into the earth and hold the staff tightly. A botch result when making a charm means that it attracts Broch instead.

cats I have no idea. I must admit that Hip, Tip and Pip have all been *extremely* protective of me as of late [they will all raise their heads and stare at the players at this point].

"The bone-piles are disturbing, and nothing like anything I have ever seen before. Have you noticed the ring of mud surrounding each mound? I'm not at all sure what it means, though I wouldn't be surprised if the 'thing' in the woods is responsible."

This might be a good point to have G  n  v     pay a visit for some herbs, with Hippin predicting her arrival and the Widow saying, "Ah, that will be G  n  v    ," a minute or so before G  n  v     appears. If G  n  v     learns of the topic of conversation, helpful Storyguides may have her conveniently remember her seeing the Widow giving Carlota something in the woods. The Widow will deny it was her, and will look quite thoughtful. If the players don't suggest it first, the Widow will suggest paying a visit to Carlota.

In addition to information, she might be convinced to help the players with crossing magical boundaries, though she will only do so as a last resort after the

players have tried and failed several times. She has a charm she has prepared for her own eventual journey into Faerie and will reluctantly give it to a magi for temporary use. It will confer a +12 bonus to entering *regio* upon its wearer.

The Father's Story: "I had my first nightmare the night after I saw the first bone-pile [showed to him by Róbert]. In my dream, I wake from a sound sleep by strange chittering sounds coming through the open window. I move towards the window sluggishly, though I am trying to run, and can see nothing. I grab my shoes and robe and go outside. As I open my door, I notice that there is no sun, moon or stars, but rather a bright, almost blinding light which emanates from the church and seeps from the surrounding ground. Looking towards the village, I see that the light also comes from the ground there, though much diminished. Some of the villagers see me and wave; I wave back. With smiles on their faces they start moving towards the church, I'm not sure why, but I smile as well, knowing that they are safe.

"Then the chittering returns, and I notice a dark shadow moving slowly across the ground from the edge of the Forest. Where it touches, the light goes out and I am sore afraid for my people. I raise my voice in warning, but a chill wind takes it and carries it far away. The shadow is spreading faster now, and I know there is no way to save my people. I try to run, but can't and watch helplessly as the shadow catches up to some villagers. It passes over them without a sound and when it is gone, there are only piles of bones. I think I can see shapes moving in the shadows, but I'm not sure. Some of the villagers see the shadow now and begin to run towards the church; their screams fill my ears. Now I'm yelling as loud as I can, but the wind and chittering makes it impossible for them to hear me. Somehow I think that if I can only get to the church and ring the bell everything will be okay, but when I try to move, I can't; my legs won't respond.

"I watch helplessly as the shadow passes over more screaming villagers, leaving behind the horrible bone-piles. Some of the people make it to the church and the shadow seems to slow as it approaches, as if the church itself were resisting it. As I look around, I see that where village huts stood short moments ago there are now only towering, black trees. I look back and see with horror that the church is slowly sinking into the ground, carrying screaming people with it. Its light fades, and soon the church is gone, completely enveloped by shadow. I raise my head to cry to God and stop when I see a figure striding from the Forest. It is cloaked in darkness, and when it talks to me, it has the voice of a crone. It says to me, *You must die*, then smiles, though I can't see a face. I have time to ask, *Why?*, before I hear her laughter and I feel a cold stab that pierces to my very soul.

"That's when I wake up."

The Father has little more to add, and will defer most questions to the Widow. He will suggest Róbert as a capable guide if they wish to see some bone-piles. Father Abelard is understandably horrified by the bone-piles; even so he visits each one to say a prayer and sprinkle some holy water. His nightmare repeats itself each night after he visits a bone-pile. He is convinced that there is some evil in the Forest, which has some kind of personal vendetta against him. If the group doesn't show significant advances in a few days, Father Abelard may take action, like entering the Forest alone to "battle" the creature. In any case, he will soon organize all night prayer and hymn-singing sessions to combat the "darkness."

VILLAGE VIGNETTES

The following short encounters can be used as "filler" material whenever the group is in Pasaquine, and things are a bit slow or they need some help. These vignettes can be especially useful in giving players or characters in the troupe who are being overlooked a chance to role-play. If a magi or companion is having all the fun, for example, and a grog is sent on an errand, you could have him or her run into **The Playing Children** (see below). Or, the grogs or companions waiting outside for the magi to finish speaking (at length) with the Widow could encounter **The Drunk**. You get the picture — be sure and throw in a few everyday encounters that have nothing to do with the story as well to bring a feeling of life to Pasaquine.

The Playing Children: A character or two encounters two young serf girls named Lindi and Suzanne playing with what at first look like clay dolls. They are making them dance around in circles on the ground while singing a nonsense song. The dolls are actually dormant Broch. If not approached, the girls will eventually run off, chasing each other. If approached, the girls will be wary but will answer simple questions in a playful, roundabout way. Players asking about where they got their dolls from, for example, will be answered, "You don't know? [giggles] Really? We picked them up of the ground, silly [giggles, knowing looks], Adults are so stupid! [whisper, whisper, giggle]", and so on. It may help you to think back to your own experiences with younger children, and model the girls after someone you knew.

The girls got the Broch from a nearby field. ["Which one? Don't you know where the fields are? Sheesh."] and are simply playing dolls with them. They like them because they can get them dirty and it doesn't matter. They know basic information about the dolls that all the villagers know: that the dolls are Klaemen, that you just find them (the Faeries bring them), and that

they're good luck. At the Storyguide's option, you could have the girls know a bit more. Perhaps the girls have seen the Broch move by themselves, or perhaps the girls actually sneak out at night to play with their friends the Klaemen. Of course, if this is true it should only be alluded to in conversation to the characters. Eventually the girls will tire of talking and run off, or be called off by a scolding mother (for talking with foreigners).

The Drunk: The group comes across a drunk sitting with his back to a wall or tree, quaffing ale from a large, partially broken beer mug. His name is Padieu, and he will loudly tell anyone who's willing to listen that, "I'm just celebrating [fill in the name of the last *very* minor holiday—perhaps a day dedicated to wine or deep thought] as it should." Padieu has seen the Broch moving around at night with his own bloodshot eyes while sleeping off a binge in a field near the Forest. He's convinced they were huge rats—the vanguard of a huge army of rats that is going to descend upon the village any moment. Padieu will tell the players what he knows in a foul-smelling conspiratorial whisper after he gathers them in close with a *pssss!* and a wave of his hand (so that they are only inches from his rancid mouth). "The rats was *HUGE!* And they ran all over and chittered like they was talkin'. But I just lay still, not that I couldn't have killed 'em all mind you, but just to conserve me energy, and they ran off after a while." Afterwards he'll confide that, "The real reason I'm drinkin' is to forget about them rats. What I told you earlier was a bit of a lie—about drinkin' cause of a holiday—though, mind you, I'm never one to pass up a good opportunity. And anyway, I like to think of every day as a holiday." He'll follow up the last statement with a broad wink. Padieu really doesn't know much more and will lose interest in the players after telling his story and asking them for a few silvers, "So's I can get my strength up. Next time I see those buggers I'll show *them* who's wearin' the britches." He'll show what he means by smashing his mug into the ground (and chipping off another piece). If the players' investigations take more than a few days, morbid Storyguides may wish to have Padieu's bones found in a nearby field, along with his shattered ale mug.

The Arguing Farmers: While walking down a road in Pasaquine, the players pass by an old, stoop-shouldered peasant who is obviously very pleased with himself. He is holding a bundle of rags close to his chest and alternately chuckling and muttering to himself while grinning a wide, toothless smile. He will pass by the group and if addressed, will start and hold his bundle tighter, look around, then smile widely and enthusiastically mutter something unintelligible like, "Mrwf loks th' do t'dee, don' it? Heh, heh, heh. Mmmm, shor do, mnnn...Yup." A short while later, a loud wail will arise from a hut in the direction the old man just came from, followed by a string of loud and

imaginative expletives. A short, balding, red-faced man will burst onto the road and look around briefly before spotting the old man, who will try to hide behind some ridiculously conspicuous object like a small dog, a bucket, or the players.

The balding man will rush up screaming to the old man and pull him to his feet, while the old man curses and feebly swings his fists. If the players don't interfere, their tussle will turn into a fight for control of the bundle; accentuated by cries of, "Thief! You God damned old fool! Ouch! He bit me! It's mine!" and the like. Sometime during the fight, the bundle will fall to the ground to reveal a Broch wrapped inside. The two men will then leap upon the Broch and continue their fight on the ground, splashing back and forth in mud puddles and becoming completely soaked (possibly splashing the characters). Eventually, the Broch will break in two, leaving each holding a piece.

If the players haven't intervened by now, they will resume their fight, dropping the Broch pieces and slinging mud and refuse at each other, much to the delight of the gathered crowd. Players deciding to break things up won't have too hard a time of it (especially before the mud fight), though this might be an appropriate time for bit of slapstick involving the two men and a soon-to-be mud-covered grog or two. Villagers, dogs and children might be drawn into the mudslinging mayhem if you desire; even magi might get a handful of mud or two in the face if the fracas gets big enough.

Persevering players will eventually be able to calm the two men down and hear their story, though it might take a while with each constantly interrupting the other to tell *their* version of the story. Evidently, Peude (the bald man—pronounced Pooh-day) was lucky enough to find a Klaeman in his backyard plot. He has kept it there to help his garden grow and bragged extensively to his neighbors of his great fortune. Macé (the old man), decided to steal Peude's Klaeman with the intent of tying it around his dried up milk-cow Bessi's neck. It will become apparent that Macé takes great pleasure in pestering Peude, and has stolen this same Broch several times before. Throughout the story Macé will mumble things like, "I took it because you're [Peude] so *stupid*," or, in a sing-song voice, "Peude is a dumbhead, Peude is a dumbhead." Macé is clearly a favorite of the crowd and will play to them, making faces behind Peude's back and dancing about when Peude is trying to be serious. Peude, obviously flustered, will defend himself: "You see what I have to put up with? No one, *no one* should have to put up with this, this *clown* of a father-in-law!"

If the players have taken an active part in the encounter so far, they may be asked by the crowd to pass judgment on the case (perhaps by one of the Marien sisters), declaring some kind of penance as they see fit. The magi should think carefully before passing

judgment, for the crowd will applaud an exceptionally humorous or appropriate sentence, while frowning and showing their disapproval of a harsh or ill-formed one. Word of the encounter will spread through the village and may help or hinder future relations with the villagers. Note that this is an excellent chance to break the ice between the villagers and the group, and can serve as a much-needed humorous interlude.

Note: If anybody thinks to look for the broken Broch after everything settles down ask players their Per and Scan totals and roll a few dice secretly. Whatever the result, shake your head and say, "You don't find anything. It must've dissolved in the mud." You might allow characters making Int + Concentration rolls of 12+ to remember that at least one half of the Broch was on dry land.

At Night: You may wish to have the players catch glimpses of small things moving in the shadows if they wander around Pasaquine at night, just to add atmosphere. Have fun with this by making the players make Per rolls to notice them—that way they'll think they're important. You can frustrate the players by having them see things, then find nothing at the spot after rushing to it. Or, you can have the shadows be of mundane things like cats, dogs, rats (you could make them *big* rats, if you want to put the players on a wild goose chase—see *The Drunk*), or just leaves blowing in the wind. Of course they could be Broch moving about, but all the players should find if they glimpse one

actually moving around is a dormant Broch, or a small disturbed area in the ground where it entered the earth to escape detection.

AURAS IN PASAQUINE

In normal circumstances, Pasaquine belongs nominally to the Dominion, with an aura of strength one throughout most of the village and neighboring fields. It rises to a peak of nine in the altar area of Father Abelard's Church, and drops off to a five in the church. The only non-divine areas in Pasaquine are the Green Oak Tavern, which has a Faerie aura of one because of the Mother's Oak, and the Widow Maliér's house which also has a Faerie aura of one—because of her special cats and her close ties with magic and Faerie in general. The parts of Pasaquine closest to the Forest tend to have no particular aura, for there the Dominion of the village conflicts with the Magical and Faerie power of the Forest.

At the time of this story, the Dominion is under attack by Lise and her minions. The divine power in Pasaquine has been beaten back to an area east of the main road, and the Church's aura has lowered to four due to the twelve Broch stationed around it. Previously a neutral zone, the area west of the stream is now a Faerie area with a strength of one. If the players do not stop Lise's plans, the Dominion will slowly be beaten back until it is completely driven from Pasaquine.





Chapter 6 - A Broken House

The players pay a visit to Bix's mysterious father, Jehan. After an initial confrontation, the players may follow him on one of his nightly journeys. For information concerning the relationships between Jehan (the father), Carlota (the mother), Jortz and Bix, see their character descriptions. Information about Jehan and Carlota are presented in this section, while Jortz and Bix were presented in **The Beginning**.

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

Everything began when a completely false rumor reached the ears of Carlota that Jehan had been seen "carrying on" with Christi, the Innkeeper's young wife. Jehan had been spending more time than usual at the Green Oak, but he never laid a hand in Christi. Carlota began keeping a close eye on Jehan and, one evening as she wandered a path on the outskirts of the Forest, she saw Jehan speaking with a strange woman. Not wishing to be seen spying, she hurried home, desperately trying to think of who it might be. As the sun set Jehan wandered dazedly home, evidently quite shaken—and rightfully so.

While making the rounds of his traps and snares that day, Jehan decided to try a new animal track for a change and found himself in an unfamiliar part of the Forest. Unconcerned, he began retracing his steps, but realized only an hour later that somehow the trail he was following was not in fact his own. As the day wore on, Jehan's became more and more frantic; all of his familiar landmarks seemed to have disappeared. Towards dusk, he paused near the edge of a strange pool and watched a young woman as she picked flowers for her hair. When the woman turned and called to him, Jehan felt a strangeness settle on his limbs and gossamer webs cloud his mind. As he made his way to her, he realized that this woman, beyond all belief, bore the likeness of his beloved first wife, Marilis.

An hour later, he came to with his feet carrying him along the well-worn path to his house near the edge of the forest. An empty game-sack and a thoroughly befuddled mind hinted that something very strange had happened that day, but he wasn't sure what. Unable to explain himself to Carlota, and confused and troubled by her questions about a "lady in the woods," he answered angrily and, before he could stop himself, slapped her across the face. Unable to face the evidence of his hown rage, he stormed off to the Green Oak.

Carlota hurriedly put Jortz to bed and then, stifling back sobs, ran crying in search of the Widow Maliér. She hardly noticed that the dark woods she ran through were different — she just ran on shaky legs until she spied a woman cutting herbs by torchlight. Moving as if in a dream, she approached the woman and saw that it was the Widow. The Widow listened to her problem through and suggested a love

charm. This charm, the Widow explained, would renew Jehan's love for Carlota and make him forget that any other women existed. In fact, the Widow had just the charm with her, and gave it to Carlota on the condition she never reveal its source.

Carlota gave the charm to a skeptical Jehan the next day, and eagerly waited for its power to unfold. Instead, the charm seemed to backfire and Jehan soon began his nocturnal trips into the Forest. A scared and confused Carlota visited the Widow again in the forest and returned strangely comforted, though she couldn't quite remember what was said. As Jehan's trips continued and his temper grew sourer, Carlota became worried and tried to take the charm back. Jehan struck her soundly for the second time, and soon afterwards began to beat Jortz as well.

As for Jehan, he lived in an increasingly dream-like confusion, with lack of sleep and vague, haunting memories of his nighttime activities causing him to seek solace in ever-increasing quantities of the Green Oak's bitter ale. He soon ceased trying to hunt and spent most of each day drinking, sleeping, and dreading the coming night with a sick expectation. This is the situation at the present time: Carlota is beside herself, Jortz takes care of himself and Jehan is slipping farther and farther into Lise's power.

Note: The woman Jehan originally saw, and the person Carlota thinks is the Widow Maliér is actually Lise, the insane priestess of the Earth Mother. For more from her point of view, see p.73.

THE HOUSE OF JEHAN AND CARLOTA

Jehan, Carlota and Jortz live in a small, one-room cottage between the forester and the smith. The small front yard is enclosed with a stout wood and bracken fence to keep animals from getting into the numerous skins and carcasses hanging from wooden racks in the yard and from the roof of the house. Around back there are several small sheds holding traps, snares, and other hunting paraphernalia. Also, another object in back that catches the eye is a large chopping block, used for cleaning and skinning. It is crisscrossed with a web of deep cuts and scratches, and is stained a deep, rusty brown. The skulls of many small animals adorn the walls and eaves of the sheds (Carlota won't allow them in the house).

Jehan is the village hunter. He receives special dispensation from the monks each year to hunt certain types of animals in the Forest of Pasaquine. As a rule, Jehan is not allowed to hunt anything larger than the largest dog in the village, and so must restrict his take to rabbits, bobcats, foxes and other small creatures. During special times of the year, however, he is allowed to

tackle larger game, such as deer and wild pig. Over half of Jehan's furs and skins go to the monks to pay for the privilege of hunting. The rest are traded to the villagers for food or sold at market.

Jehan and Carlota are poor as freemen go, and so during harvest and other busy times for the farmers, Carlota and Jortz hire out to wealthier villagers as labor to help make ends meet. This poverty places them in a strange position, sort of half-way between the other freemen and the serfs. The one time of year that Jehan's family eats better than most is winter, for Jehan can command a high price for any bit of fresh meat he traps.

The cottage is fairly run-down, with visible holes in the walls and the thatched roof wearing thin. Everything is worn and patched almost beyond repair except for Jehan's hunting equipment, which is kept polished and ready at all times. The only item of worth in the cottage is a small, crudely engraved pewter bowl that sits on the mantel above the fireplace. It was given to Jehan by his father, and has come to represent wealth to Jehan. Jehan would sell his hunting equipment and himself into slavery before selling it. Displayed prominently next to the bowl is a small, crude clay figure—a dormant Broch (see p.76).

Jehan the Hunter

Description: Jehan is a large man, with thick black hair, and a beard that all but conceals the deep pox scars on his ruddy face. He has a broad face, a flat nose, and usually wears a worn leather hat with a broad, floppy brim. His clothes are an undyed, knobby wool with irregularly shaped leather patches in the elbows, seat and knees. Jehan carries a large hunting knife strapped to his leg at all times.

Jehan inherited the position of hunter from his father, who was also poor, and vowed that his family would be better off. He married a beautiful young serf named Marilis whom he loved deeply. He swore to her that he would make them wealthy. As the years passed, Jehan struggled to keep his word. He worked furiously to make his dream come true by working long hours and traveling far to find the best prices for his skins. The birth of Bix realized another of his dreams: a son to carry on in his footsteps.

Things went well for a while, with Marilis content, Bix growing sturdily, and Jehan making enough money to keep them from working in others' fields. It became clear, however, as Bix grew, that he had no interest at all in pursuing his father's livelihood. The ensuing friction between them broke the brief spell of happiness. Later that year, Jehan returned from a long market in Javielle to find his beloved wife dead from a sudden fever. This all but destroyed Jehan's spirit.

Jehan's Stats

INT	-1	PER	+1
STR	+2	STM	+1
PRS	-2	COM	-3
DEX	+1	QIK	+0
Confidence: +0		Age: 42	

Personality Traits:

Bitter +3
Proud +2
Gruff +2

Important Skills:

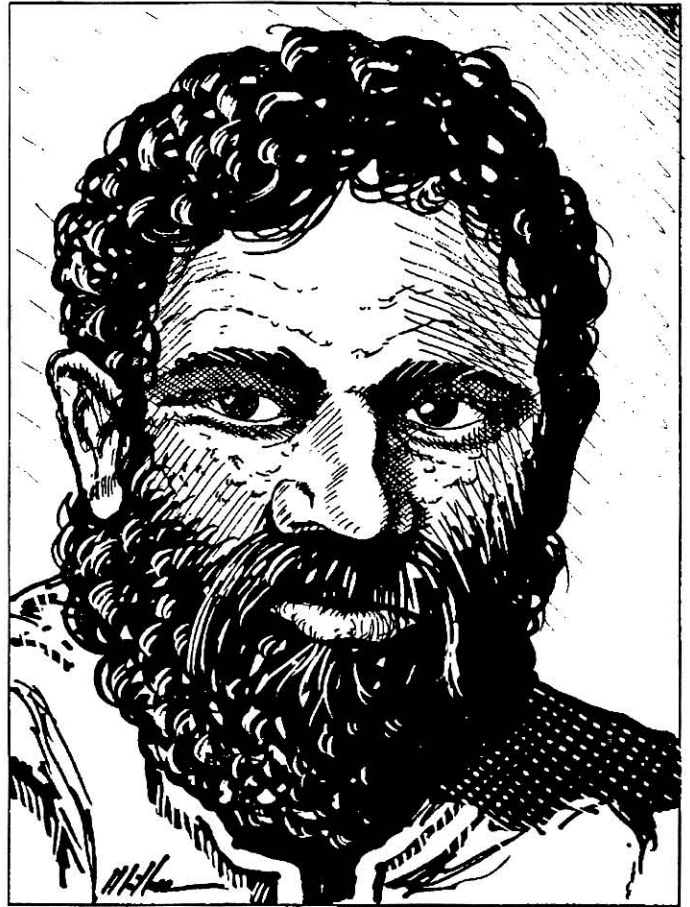
Scan (woods) 3
Dodge (animals) 3
Survival (winter) 3
Track (small animals) 4
Brawl (punch) 4
Stealth (woods) 3
Drinking (ale) 2
Intimidation (serfs) 3
Spear (in woods) 3
Hunting Knife (skinning) 2
Tanning (small skins) 3
Evaluate (hides) 3
Forest Lore (animals) 4

Reputations:

Overbearing/Serfs (3)
Poor/Pasaquine (2)
Distant/Carlota (1)

Crushed, Jehan almost stopped working and spent most of his time at the Green Oak drinking, his son almost forgotten. Eventually he pulled himself out of his slump and, a few years later, married a young freewoman from a neighboring village. Carlota's spirit did much to revive Jehan, and, with the birth of Jortz, he renewed his work with vigor. Bix's reluctance to be a hunter still irks Jehan, though he has high hopes for Jortz.

Currently, Jehan is confused by his "dreams" of meeting Marilis in the woods. He feels guilty and ashamed, for he knows, deep down, that the encounters are real and they are tearing his family apart. Jehan does his best to ignore their reality, however, dismissing the mud on his boots and the increasing number of cuts in his arms every morning as having happened the day before while hunting. His increasing paleness and decreasing energy reinforces his belief that he has a wasting sickness. Anyone intruding on Jehan's delu-



sions by mentioning the reality of his nocturnal visits will drive him into a violent (and previously untypical) fury. Carlota has borne the brunt of these attacks in her attempt to win her husband back.

Note: Because of his nocturnal activities and the rituals he is forced to perform with Lise, Jehan is constantly fatigued (weary, -1 to all actions). This fatigue is long term, and may not be removed until he has had a week of rest.

Roleplaying Tips: You want to be alone to drown your sorrows. Speak gruffly to anyone who disturbs you, and start swinging if they mention anything that could be construed as dealing with your problems. If someone reproaches you for beating Carlota and Jortz, tell them it's none of their business and to get lost. Especially don't let any low-life serfs push you around. You're a *freeman* after all.

Carlota, the Hunter's Wife

Description: Carlota is of medium build with a touch of gauntness around the edges. She has long, brown hair which is usually hidden by a coarse, dull-colored scarf. Her clothes are simple and much in need of repair. She usually carries a small, faded blue scarf in

Carlota's Stats

INT	-2	PER	-1
STR	-3	STM	-2
PRS	+1	COM	+1
DEX	+1	QIK	+1
Confidence:	+0	Age:	29

Personality Traits:

Helpful +3

Worried +2

Carefree -1

Important Skills:

Alertness (safety of family) 3

Charm (children) 2

Pretend (happiness) 3

Storytelling (improvisation) 2

Husbandry (reaping) 2

Reputations:

Hardworking/Serfs (2)

one hand, and worries with it constantly (the scarf was given to her by her mother on her marriage day). Her brow is almost always furrowed with worry, even when she smiles.

Carlota is the youngest daughter of a freeman from Siernami (see the map in *Ars Magica*, p.133) and was married to Jehan to keep her from the clutches of some local unsavories. Carlota doesn't so much love Jehan as support him as a "good wife should," and instead lavishes her love upon Jortz and Bix. Her years of poverty in Pasaquine have tainted her carefree nature with worry, though she accepts her lot stoically. Every once in a while, Carlota's cheerfulness shines through, however, usually when she's working with children somewhere in the village. She has also grown stronger since her marriage, since Jehan's hunting is not a reliable source of support and she must hire herself out to work in others' fields on a regular basis. The serfs have come to respect her hard work and cheerful nature as well as accepting her worrying; if she ever stopped voicing minor concerns, the villagers would know something was really wrong.

Carlota is truly concerned by Jehan's worsening condition and secretly thinks that she is to blame. After all, the problems really began after she tried to fix things with the Widow's love amulet. She can't stand the thought of Jehan seeing someone else and continues to try and stop his nightly visits. Though Carlota doesn't exactly love Jehan, she feels that Jehan owes her something in return for her hard work. As the players arrive in the village, she is nearing the breaking point and may do something rash if not stopped.



Roleplaying Tips: Wrinkle your brow constantly and when you smile, smile tiredly. You have a soft spot in your heart for children, especially Bix and Jortz—don't be afraid to embarrass them with your affection. Say things that voice your concerns as often as possible, however minor they may be.

INTERACTING WITH JEHAN AND CARLOTA

The First Evening: The first time the players see either Jehan or Carlota may be their first evening in town. Jortz at least will want to check in with Carlota and let her know that Bix is in town. Bix will probably want to check in as well; you may wish to remind the person playing Bix of his warm feelings toward his stepmother. If the group gets in much after dark (which is very likely), Jehan will already be gone and Carlota will be sitting at the table, her head lowered on her crossed arms after crying herself to sleep. She will practically fly into Bix's arms when she sees him, and after she stops crying will scold him good-naturedly about tracking mud in the house or some other minor thing.

Carlota will hurry about the house, clearly eager for something to take her mind off Jehan. Eventually, gentle inquiries will bring out her story (with sobs at

appropriate points if Folk Ken rolls of 9+ aren't made). She will try to keep from mentioning the Widow's amulet, especially in front of strangers, but to perceptive players (Per + Folk Ken roll of 6+, Bix receives an automatic +3) it will be obvious that she is hiding something. Carlota will then tearfully explain her role in giving Jehan the amulet.

If asked, she has tried to take it from around Jehan's neck numerous times, but each time he has caught her and beaten her soundly. Carlota has run out of ideas about what to do, though she will gladly help the players with any reasonable plan that doesn't involve injuring Jehan or obvious magic—she has been badly scared by her experience with the amulet and wants nothing more to do with magic. Carlota will be scared to visit the Widow, because last time the Widow threatened her with a curse if she didn't stop bothering her (Characters making a Pasaquine Lore of 9+ will know that this is unusual behavior for the Widow).

Meeting Jehan: Eventually, the players will probably make a point of paying a visit to Jehan. However, unless the players make good time on the first day and arrive in Pasaquine before dark, they will have to wait until the next day to make their acquaintance. The two likeliest scenarios for a meeting between the players and Jehan are: confronting Jehan as he returns from the Forest in the morning, and going to his house during the day. Jehan may be glimpsed briefly at the tavern, but will leave quickly to try and avoid meeting Bix.

Jehan stumbles from the Forest into Pasaquine a few hours before daybreak each morning. If the players post a watch for him, make appropriate Per rolls to spot him. Jehan will be carrying two or three dormant Broch which he will distribute seemingly at random around the village. If interrupted in his task, it will take him several seconds to emerge from his dreamlike trance and respond. Once fully himself, he will drop any remaining Broch and head for home as quickly as possible, becoming violent if the players ask nosy questions or block his path. If forced to talk, he will make up some fairly unconvincing lies to explain his behavior. People who know Jehan may notice (Per + Scan 9+) that even when he's awake he doesn't seem like he's all there—it's almost as if a piece of him were missing.

Jehan's typical day consists of sleeping till after noon, then wandering down to the Green Oak for some ale. He will break this pattern if he knows Bix is in town, however, for he has no desire to see him. Thus, players seeking Jehan out during the day will either find him at home sleeping, or drinking from his stock of sour home-brew. Jehan's initial reaction will be to order the group from his land, and then throw a few insults at his good-for-nothing son Bix (if he's present), blaming Bix for all his troubles. This should be a painful experience for Bix if he is being role-played properly.

Jehan will do everything in his power to keep his delusions of normalcy intact, ignoring or explaining away any questions touching on his dreams, the Broch, or his amulet. If he feels physically threatened, he will fight (using his fists unless weapons are drawn on him) unless outnumbered, then he will try and escape to the Forest where he will take to the magical paths to lose any pursuit. Under no condition will Jehan allow anyone to see, touch, or remove the amulet; he would rather kill or be killed first.

If his amulet is removed or destroyed, Jehan will cry out and fall to the ground unconscious. Immediately the villagers will blame the characters for casting a curse on him (unless they have already earned their trust). Jehan will come to the next day looking haggard and pale (sooner if magical healing or medical expertise is used). He will appear extremely disoriented and have trouble concentrating; sometimes reacting to sights or sounds that only he can see. For more on healing Jehan permanently, see below.

JEHAN'S AMULET

Description: Jehan wears the amulet given him by Carlota around his neck on a thick leather thong. It is made of a ruddy brown baked clay, with a spiral star pattern etched into its front surface. The amulet is roughly circular in shape, about the size of a child's clenched fist and the thickness of an adult's thumb. Even though it is made of clay, it is hard to break (+10 Soak, 3 levels). Perceptive players will notice that the clay is not indigenous to the area (Per + Pasaquine or Val du Bosque Lore of 12+). The amulet contains six pawns of *regio vis*.

Once himself again, Jehan will be exceptionally thankful to the responsible party. He has no wealth to give the group, but he will offer his friendship and services to them in the future as needed. Unknown to Jehan at the end of the story, he can now travel quite well between *regio*, a skill the magi may find useful later.

Powers: The amulet's most apparent ability is to ease travel through *regio* (see *Regio*), specifically those of a faerie- or Earth Mother related nature. A person wearing the amulet receives a +10 on all attempts to enter or leave *regio* within the Forest of Pasaquine.

The amulet also gives Lise power over Jehan's sleeping form as per *Adjuration of the Slumbering Spirit* (see p.50), with no range restrictions, as the amulet holds the spell's power and Lise merely invokes it. Thus, Lise may summon Jehan to the Forest each night as he sleeps, and the amulet makes it possible for him to travel the magical paths needed to reach her. In order to ensure that Jehan sleeps each evening, she allows him little sleep during the day. Each time Jehan falls asleep

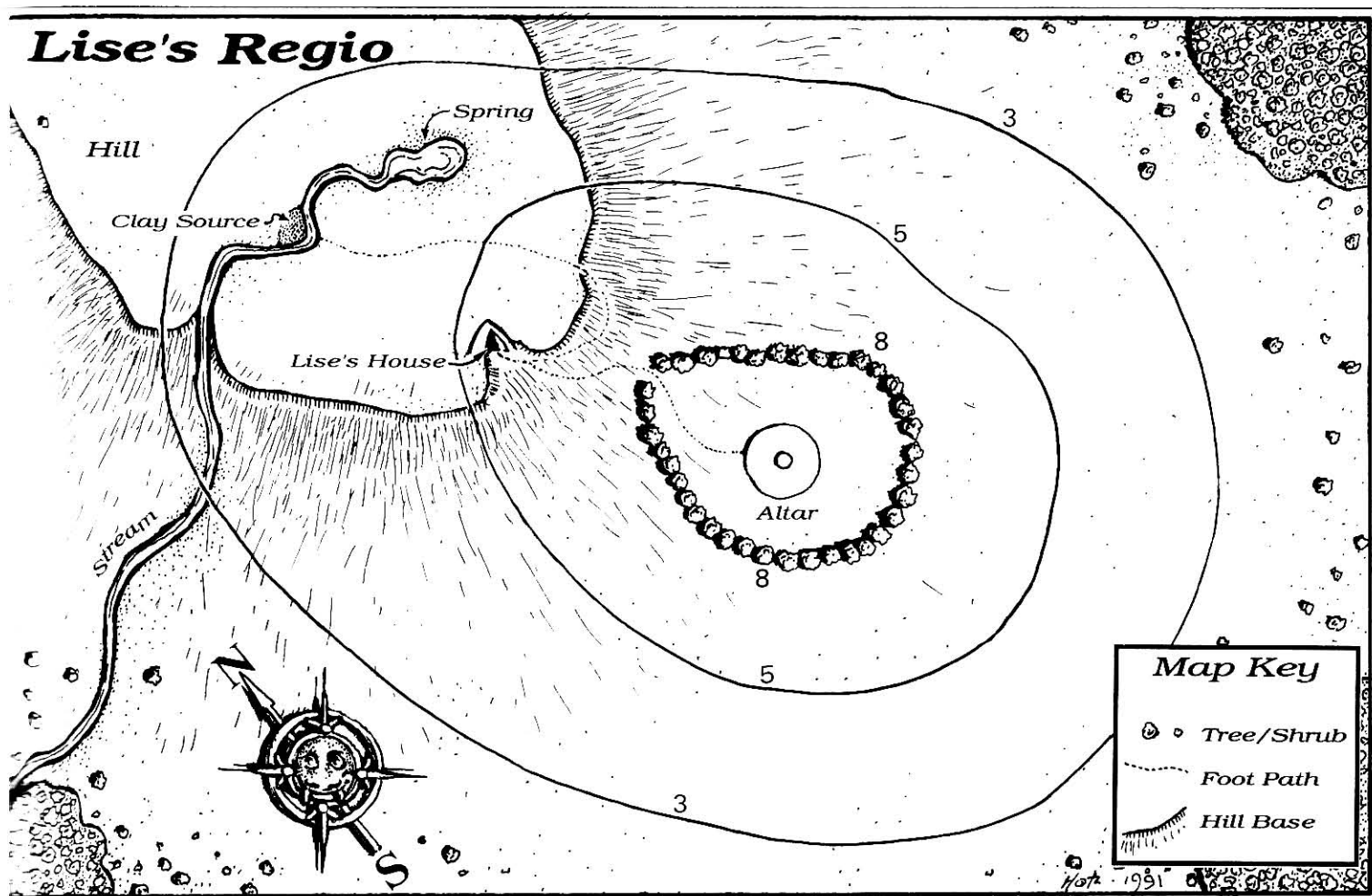
during the day, Lise casts the Adjuration of the Slumbering Spirit, and causes him to walk into a wall or a piece of furniture, thus waking him up. Note that this power applies as well to any players who wear the amulet when sleeping. Lise will gladly summon them to the Forest to replace Jehan.

The last effect of the amulet upon Jehan is most subtle and difficult to discern and is not known, even by Lise, the amulet's creator. Effectively, it removes a small part of Jehan's soul each time he enters the Forest and leaves it to wander where it will. This effect is a product of the mixing of the magic in the amulet and the ritual performed each night by Jehan and Lise to create the Broch (see p.74). Every night, a bit more of Jehan's essence leaves his body to wander the Forest (this spirit can actually be encountered—see **Forest Encounters**). If the amulet is removed, the tie with this part of Jehan will be severed, throwing Jehan into shock. He can live for a time with this loss, but will waste away over the course of the next year if he is not reunited with his wayward

soul. A spontaneous *Intéllego Mentem* spell of Level 10 or higher will tell a curious magi this information.

Several methods can be used to make Jehan whole again. A magi casting a spontaneous spell (probably *Rego Mentem*, to coerce his spirit to return) of high enough level may be successful. Another tact is to seek out his wandering spirit in the Forest itself, then reunite them physically. Spontaneous *Intéllego* spells will be helpful in initially locating Jehan's soul, as will the presence of Jehan himself (he feels a slight pull towards his soul, when close enough). Magi may also cast *Intéllego Vim* spells and see a faint, shimmering cord coming from Jehan's body and disappearing into the woods. His soul is at the other end.

Magi studying the amulet for a season will find it imbued with a form of Adjuration of the Slumbering Spirit (linked to Lise's amulet) as well giving its wearer +10 to enter any *regio*. Anyone who places the amulet around their neck will receive this bonus, but will also be subject to Lise's nightly summons. See the spell description for the details of resisting the spell.





Chapter 7 - The Forest

The players explore the Forest to discover the creature(s) behind the mysterious piles of bones. As they unravel the mystery, they encounter the Broch, their mistress Lise, and travel through strange magical realms.

LISE'S STORY

Lise was brought into the world over a hundred years ago in the young village of Pasaquine. It was not a happy beginning, for Lise was the result of a forced encounter between her mother and the local village priest, a corrupt and despicable man. Furthermore, Lise's stepfather knew of her origin and was reminded of his wife's violation every time he saw the young girl. His deep shame turned into a bitter resentment for the Church which lasted the rest of his life.

Lise's stepfather spoke daily of the evils of the church, and repeatedly refused to allow his children to be baptized. She grew up thinking that clergy were horrible monsters. After her father died of the pox, she was approached several times by Gabón, the new priest, to be baptized. Gabón slowly won her trust with his careful explanations of Christian beliefs, and she began to look forward to his visits. Lise agreed to be baptized on the last of the gangdays in May (see p.8).

Now in her mid-teens, Lise was a shy, but intelligent girl with no true friends. While her father was alive, she was never allowed to play long with other children or take part in any festivities, and so looked forward eagerly to her first real holiday, Mayday. She wasn't sure what to expect, but she eagerly trailed along behind the other villagers as they followed the dance-leader into the Forest. Lise soon was caught up in the dancing and found herself swirling round and round with the young Father Gabón. As midnight approached, the dancing stopped and couples wandered through the Forest together. Gabón walked with the shy Lise for a while, then clumsily kissed her and tried to force himself on her. Lise broke away and ran screaming into the Forest.

When Lise came to her senses she was lost, cold and hungry. She wandered for a long time, but could find no paths leading out of the dense woods. Unknown to her, she had stumbled into a *regio* deep in the heart of the Forest, drawn there in her brief madness by the comfortingly fresh memory of the Earth Mother. Exhausted, she made herself a bed of leaves near a small stream and cried herself to sleep. Upon waking, she tried again to find a way out to no avail.

The creatures of this area knew Lise to be special, that her soul was still free and open to them, and so took care to see that she found enough to eat and that her sleep wasn't disturbed. As the months passed and she explored the boundaries of her magical prison, she finally resigned herself to the fact that she could never leave

and lay down to die. Lise entered a deep sleep and dreamed many strange and primal dreams. She woke several months later with a new sense of purpose, for she had learned of the Earth Mother and of her own place in the world.

Time ceased to have meaning for Lise as she explored this tenuous connection with the Earth Mother. She spent much of her time asleep wandering the dreamlands, and even while awake was often in a deep trance. Slowly, Lise learned the ways of magic and soon wandered the upper levels of the *regio* freely. In a nearby glen, she discovered an ancient shrine to the Earth Mother and appointed herself its keeper after carefully clearing away the brambles and scouring the shrine with sand.

After building herself a small house nearby out of rocks and fallen branches, and spending countless months in contemplation of the Earth Mother, Lise began chafing in her isolation. She explored further and found many strange, frightening and wonderful beings, but only in the fleeting contact with the Earth Mother's spirit did she find true peace and companionship. As the years passed, the enforced isolation from humans and the strong magical aura worked slowly on her mind and body—the powerful magic which the Earth Mother provided began to harm the vessel in which it was placed. Lise found herself filled with strange, unexplained passions, and alternating fits of rage and dark depressions filled many of her waking hours (at the Storyguide's option, these could be linked to the seasons or the weather). She gloried in her newfound power, creating illusory friends to pass the time, and making a hobby of trying to force her will magically upon the creatures she encountered. The dreams of the Earth Mother faded as Lise moved farther and farther from the innocence with which she entered the Forest.

Lise's body changed as well. Her hair streaked with gray, then white. One of her legs twisted and her facial skin wrinkled with age. In short, Lise aged, but not uniformly; parts of her remained young as the day she entered the Forest, while the rest withered, bathed in a magical aura that mortal flesh was not meant to withstand.

Eventually, Lise noticed the absence of the Earth Mother and began looking for an explanation, for she could not conceive that she herself was to blame. She knew the hearts and minds of the local creatures well enough to know that they were not responsible, and so took to wandering the fringes of the *regio* closest to mortal lands in search of an answer. On her journeys, Lise found herself unable to leave the Earth Mother's *regio*, though with magic she could observe what went on in the mortal world.

After many years of observation and numerous failed attempts to leave the *regio*, she decided that the source of her problems was the increasingly strong aura

of the Dominion that filled Pasaquine. Lise convinced herself that if the Dominion were driven from the land, the Earth Mother would return and all would be as before. She retreated deep within the Forest to make her plans.

Lise decided she needed helpers of some kind, beings that could wage war on the Dominion outside the boundaries of the *regio*. Over a decade of experimentation and meditation resulting in the **Broch**, a type of simple earth Faerie that could leave the *regio* as well as follow her simple commands. Creating the Broch, however, exacted a large toll on her already twisted body. She knew she needed outside aid, both physically and magically, to create the numbers of Broch necessary to accomplish her purpose. After several failed attempts at trying to use denizens of the *regio* for her purpose, Lise set her mind on capturing a mortal man from Pasaquine. To this end she fashioned a set of amulets and endowed them with much of her power. One would serve as a focus for her power, and the other she filled with complex spells (see **Jehan's Amulet**) to bind its wearer to her.

Lise settled upon two likely prospects, Róbert the woodsman and Jehan the hunter, for they often wandered the Forest paths and would be easy to lure into the *regio*. Róbert's caution and charms made his abduction difficult, so she turned her attention toward Jehan. Several months of study and observation of Jehan yielded a complex plan to ensure that Jehan accepted the amulet as gift from another mortal—a necessary part of the binding ritual.

Lise managed to draw Jehan into a low level *regio* and, through simple magics, appeared to him as his first wife, Marilis. Her plan reached fruition when she appeared later that evening to Carlota disguised as Maliér, the Widow and convinced her to give the second amulet to Jehan. As soon as Jehan put on the amulet, Lise called him to the heart of the *regio* and over the next few weeks, taught him his part in the Broch-creating ritual (see **Creating the Broch** for more details).

Now, Jehan visits the *regio* almost nightly and dreamily helps Lise create more Broch, which he then takes back with him to Pasaquine and distributes around the village. Lise spends most of her time focusing on the magics necessary to maintain control over Jehan and the ever-growing numbers of Broch. If not stopped, Lise, with Jehan's and the Brochs' help, will almost certainly succeed in driving the Dominion from Pasaquine. While this is not inherently evil, the *method* in which she is achieving her goals *is*.

Lise, Priestess of the Earth Mother

Description: Lise is tall for a woman, standing almost six feet tall when she chooses to straighten her torturously bent back. Her face is wrinkled with age,

Lise's Stats

Magic Might 12

INT +4 PER +3

STR -2 STM -2

PRS +2 COM +0

DEX -1* QIK -2*

Confidence: +3 Age: ??

Knife: 1st +1 Atk +5 Dam +2

Fat -2 Def +2 Soak -2

Body Levels: OK, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

* reduce these characteristics by four when dealing with movement.

Personality Traits:

Driven +4

Confused +3

Lost +2

Important Skills:

Alertness (when sleeping) 3

Scan (in woods) 3

Charm (men) -2

Guile (to the emotional) 5

Pretend (compassion) 4

Survival (in *regio*) 4

Meditation (communing) 5

Stealth (in *regio*) 3

Intimidation (men) 4

Sculpting (figures) 3

Regio Lore (hidden paths) 6

Faerie Lore (weaknesses) 3

Reputations:

Confused/Earth Mother (5)

Touched/Beings in *Regio* (4)

Terrifying/Jehan (3)



slightly different forms by judicious use of magic, clothing and natural makeup. When appearing as the Widow, for example, she conceals her face with a large cloak and accentuates her age. Lise can also appear quite young (especially when not required to stand) by using clay makeup on her face and changing into a simple brown shift. Perceptive players may notice that Lise speaks a slightly archaic form of Provençal (Per + Speak Provençal roll of 9+), though she tries hard to hide this. Knowledgeable folk becoming aware of this fact may be able to deduce the time during which Lise lived in Pasaquine (Int + Provençal roll of 13+).

Currently, Lise is directing all her efforts into driving the Dominion from Pasaquine. Anyone interfering with this goal will face her insane wrath, for she believes the the destruction of the Dominion will bring the Earth Mother back to the *regio* and into contact with her once again. Somewhere deep inside Lise believes that her own disturbed soul might actually be responsible for the loss of contact, but she denies this with every ounce of her being. If Lise is forced to actually confront this, she will go completely insane and try to kill the person who dared to speak such words.

Note: Because of the extreme difficulty of the rituals she casts each evening as well as the effort required to keep control of Jehan and the Broch, Lise is constantly

her hands are young and supple, and her dark green eyes alternate between a piercing coldness and an unfocused glaze. Long tresses of white-streaked jet black hair fall to her waist, usually in a tangled mess. She normally wears a simple patchwork garment of new skins and old cloth that hangs close to the ground, hiding her twisted leg. Numerous pouches hang from two sashes, one around her thin waist and another over one shoulder. Lise wears an amulet similar to Jehan's around her neck (see below for more details), and carries a small knife tucked in her waist-sash at all times.

Though normally looking like a cross between a witch and a crazed hedge-wizard, she can appear in

fatigued (weary, -1 to all actions). The fatigue is long term and may not be removed unless she has a week of rest.

Also, Lise receives a +15 bonus for crossing boundaries within *regio* due to her familiarity and her amulet.

Roleplaying Tips: Remember first and foremost that you are crazy. When interacting with players alternate between several archetypes: the dark and mysterious mistress of the wood, the coy young woman, the old crone, or the crazed hedge-witch. Allow your emotions to show in childlike fits of rage over minor things — always strive to keep the players off balance, and don't be afraid to show and *use* your power against the players, especially in the higher levels of your *regio*.

Powers: Lise can cast one spell every other round as long as she has Magic Might points left. It costs her two Magic Might points to cast any spell above level twenty or higher, and one to cast all others. If Lise's Magic Might falls below 5 she will automatically drop a fatigue level.

Way of the Earth: Lise can cast the equivalent of spontaneous Terram spells up to Level 25. Her favorite spells are showy, like The Earth Split Asunder (ReTe 25) for handling large numbers of attackers, Hands of Grasping Earth (MuTe 15) for defense, or The Earth's Carbuncle (ReTe 15) for single attackers. She can also summon an earth elemental (see insert) if she is within level five or higher of her *regio* at a cost of two magic points. While Lise is in the highest level of her *regio* she may also cast Sense the Feet that Tread the Earth (InTe 35) at a cost of one Magic Point.

Way of Nature: Lise can cast the equivalent of spontaneous Animál or Herbam spells up to Level 15. She uses these spells to get along in the Forest on a day to day basis, though she may use Strike of the Angered Branch (ReHe 15), Repel the Wooden Shafts (MuHe 10) or Trap of the Entwining Vines (CrHe 15) to protect herself.

Way of the Mind: Lise can cast the equivalent of spontaneous Mentem spells up to Level 20. She enjoys spells that give her power over others and has used them extensively on Jehan and Carlota. Her favorites are: Aura of Rightful Authority (ReMe 20), Recollection of Memories Never Quite Lived (MuMe 20), Loss of but a Moments Memory (PeMe 20) and Confusion of the Numbed Will (ReMe 15). She won't hesitate to use these spells against the players to sow confusion in their ranks.

LISE'S AMULET

Description: Lise's amulet hangs from her neck on a thick leather thong (see *Jehan's Amulet* for a descrip-

tion). Usually hidden from view under her clothes, she never takes it off, and brings it out only when making Broch or performing other ritual magic.

Powers: This amulet serves as a focus for much of Lise's power. With it, she is able to walk the levels of the *regio* at will, cast many of her spells more easily, and control Jehan and the Broch for a time without active concentration. If the amulet is destroyed, Lise will go into convulsions and pass out while screaming incoherently. Her control over Jehan will end and the Broch will be free to do as they wish. In addition, she will be unable to cast spells for some time and will be confined to the higher levels of the *regio*. Prolonged separation from the amulet will cause Lise's death.

Lise has warded the amulet extensively to keep it from being taken from her. If anyone but Lise touches the amulet, giant hands of earth will rise from the ground to grab the thief as per Hands of the Grasping Earth (MuTe 15). Once grabbed, however, the hands will begin to pull the victim slowly into the ground at a rate of about one foot every two rounds. Releasing the amulet will cause the hands to let go two rounds later. In addition, upon Lise's death the amulet is warded to cast The Earth Split Asunder (ReTe 25) centered about her body, thus effectively burying her. After this spell is cast, the amulet will crumble to dust.

The Broch

Description: At first glance, Broch appear to be small, crudely formed clay dolls. Most stand about two hands high, and are made from a strange reddish-brown clay that is not indigenous to Pasaquine (Int + Area Lore

The Broch			
Earth Might 5*			
Size	-3		
Qik	+5		
Dance:	1st +10 Atk special	Dam special	
	Fat +10Def +8	Soak +5	
Body Levels: OK, -3, Destroyed**			
* Broch are completely resistant to Mentem and Córpoem spells, and have a resistance of five for all other forms except Terram (see below).			
**Broch are difficult to destroy on a permanent basis—see below.			
The body of a Broch contains two pawns of Terram <i>vis.</i>			
Personality Traits:			
	Playful +5		
	Hungry +3		

Shaker (An Earth Elemental)

Earth Might 30*

Size +3

Cun -3 Str +6

Punch: 1st +1 Atk +5 Dam +19

Hug: 1st +3 Atk +4 Dam +28**

Fat +5 Def +3 Soak +23

Body Levels: OK, 0/0/0, -1/-1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

*Its magic resistance for Terram spells is 30. For all other forms it is only 15.

**See below.

Personality Traits:

Single-minded +5

Description: Standing well over seven feet tall, the hulking shaker is an imposing sight. Looking like a large, hunched-over, crudely-formed man made from clay, the shaker lumbers about on huge feet and shakes the ground wherever he walks—hence the name. Shakers aren't too bright, and can follow only the simplest instructions from their summoner. Their tactics in battle include a devastating punch and, for those lacking the sense to stay at a distance, a bone-crushing hug. The Shaker prefers to hug its victims and will attempt to do so if any are within range. Upon catching someone, the shaker begins squeezing its victim to death, and hits automatically each round unless the victim makes a strength roll of 15+ (this halves the damage) or a 20+ (this breaks the shaker's hold). To simulate squeezing damage, roll damage normally, but apply any lost levels against fatigue until all fatigue levels are lost; then apply damage normally. The shaker will ignore all but the most severe attacks upon its person while hugging a victim.

Its huge (and enormously unwieldy) body contains 10 pawns of Terram *vis*.

roll of 9+ to know this fact). They have two stocky arms that end in stumps, and rectangular legs that are capped with blocky feet. Broch have no necks and their heads are disc shaped (with the disc facing forward) and are impressed with the same spiral pattern as is found on Jehan and Lise's amulets.

Broch are innocent, childlike creatures with only one goal: to "play" with creatures (this usually results in the creature's death, see **Powers** below). They love to dance and leap about while keeping a constant stream of chatter going in slightly archaic Provençal (they learned from Lise—Per + Speak Provençal roll of 6+ to notice). Their voices are high and tittering, though not unpleasant, and seem to emanate from their head, though they have no mouth. Broch can run quite fast, easily keeping up with a running human.

Broch may only be active in areas which have a positive magic or faerie aura; in all other areas they become "dormant" and look (and act) like a simple clay doll. While dormant, however, they exude a bit of faerie aura themselves, which leaks slowly into the surrounding earth. Thus, over a long period of time, a dormant Broch will reduce any Dominion-based aura and replace it with a faerie one. Faerie auras also tend to be stronger at night, so that Broch may find themselves dormant during the day while having free reign of the town at night. Keep in mind that the area surrounding the Mother's Oak in Lorris' Tavern has a Faerie aura of one when determining whether the Broch must be dormant or not.

When encountering humans, they will usually shout with glee and run towards them, whooping and calling out things like, "Hey, large fleshy things! Want to play with us?" They will then try to encircle a person (probably the one talking to them the most) and start their ring "dance." If the players run away, the Broch will follow as well as they can while asking, "Why don't you want to play with us? Come on, it'll be fun!", or, "Okay. We'll play the running game with you now if you'll play our game later." Whatever the players do, the Broch will try and turn it into a game that leads to the Broch dancing in a ring around at least one person; though they may be sidetracked momentarily by other games, they will *always* return to doing their ringdance.

If the players use force or magic against the Broch, they will treat it as just another game as well, playfully leaping over swords and diving into the earth to play hide-and-seek with enraged grogs. When struck solidly from the side, they may fly through the air, whooping all the while, and when struck from above, they will "melt" into the earth only to reemerge a few seconds later laughing. If a magi uses spells effectively against the Broch, they will declare that they don't like *his* game and will try to make him stop by doing their ring dance around him.

If a Broch is captured by the players, it will go through all the standard child-like means of persuasion: bargaining ("Let me go and I'll be your friend"), threatening ("Let go or I'll tell my mom on you" [this should raise some eyebrows among the players]), screaming and yelling and, when all else fails, it will partially break itself up (costing one Earth Might point) and try to escape by dissolving into the earth. Note that a Broch captured while dormant, is likely to remain dormant, at least until it can escape undetected. It can be quite fun to have the players investigating one of the strange clay dolls and have it disappear one evening when they aren't looking.

Broch do know some important facts, and clever players will try to coax some of this knowledge from the Broch during the course of their encounter. The Broch know that their mother is Lise (she lives in the woods by

the hill) and their father is Jehan (he's grumpy). They also know their way around the *regio* quite well and might be convinced to lead players around for a short while. At the Storyguide's option the Broch might know other important clues to help the players along—though they will have to be clever (and careful!) to get them.

Broch are very cautious when in areas with weak Faerie auras—especially areas in which they are dormant part of the time. In these places they have been instructed by Lise to play the “hiding” game and not let anyone see them move or hear them talk. Initially, this was great fun, with the Broch playing a constant game of hide-and-seek with their unwitting human friends. The Broch would run around during the night and try to return to their original positions by daybreak with their human friends none the wiser. The fun of this game is wearing thin, however, and their natural urge to “play” (see below) has caused them to make mistakes and be seen moving by a few humans. Fortunately for them, these humans have either passed them off as a rat or other creature, or as a figment of their imagination.

Roleplaying Tips: Remember above all that the Broch are innocent, childlike and playful. When describing their movements and their mindset, picture a group of excited puppies or children who *really* want to play *now*. Have fun with this, and be sure to contrast the cheerfulness of the Broch with the horror of what they unknowingly do to creatures that become their playmates. Practice the laugh before the game begins, to make sure you have a good one — then laugh all the time, even after you make the players sick of it (The “Snuggles” laugh is a good example of how disgusting you can make the laugh of the Broch's.)

Combat: Broch are intimately related to the earth and are quite difficult to destroy when anywhere near the ground. Initially, their dancing and cavorting makes them difficult to hit (thus their defense of +8). They take damage normally, but can wriggle into the earth to heal themselves for one Earth Might point (reemerging in a few rounds), and will reform completely on their own in a few minutes if destroyed and left in contact with the earth in any area with a positive magic or faerie aura. If this occurs, the reformed Broch will permanently lose one Earth Might point, so each Broch can only be reformed five times before collapsing into an inanimate lump of clay (note that Broch so destroyed lose their *vis*).

Be sure and describe combat against the Broch vividly; their wild dancing, teasing and leaping about, diving into the earth when seriously threatened only to reappear a few moments later, blows which squash or send clay limbs flying, and their incessant chatter. At the Storyguide's option, personality rolls could be required to keep frustrated characters from becoming completely enraged and losing control.

Powers: The Brochs only offensive weapon is their magic. By forming a ring around someone and circling about them three times, they can eventually cause the victim's flesh to melt away into the earth, leaving behind only hair (or fur) and bones. In their childlike innocence, the Broch have no concept of what they are doing, and think it is all a tremendously fun game to be played with any living creature (except Lise, of course, but she's just a big stick-in-the-mud).

To use this power, three or more Broch must form a loose ring around the intended victim a pace or two across. Then, they begin dancing counter-clockwise around the being, gradually increasing their speed. Upon completing the first circuit, the being inside the ring will feel a slight tingling in their extremities (Per roll of 6+ to notice). This tingling will become uncomfortable by the second circuit and the victim must make a successful magic resistance roll (beating three times the number of Broch) or find their feet glued to the earth where they stand. If resisted, the person must make another magic resistance roll during the third circuit of four times the number of Broch or be glued to the spot (sympathetic Storyguides may allow strength rolls of 12+ to break free, leaving huge clumps of dirt attached to their feet). It takes approximately one round for the Broch to make each circuit.

After the third circuit, the Broch will stop dead, and jump a few inches into the air. When their feet hit the ground the Broch will cry “Hah!” in unison, and the person inside the ring must make a magic resistance plus Stm roll equal to greater than five times the number of Broch. If it is successfully resisted, there is no effect and the person's feet are freed (if stuck) and the Broch will have to start over (often the disappointed Broch will invite several more Broch to help them play with this person because “This is a tough one”). If the victim misses his resistance roll, they lose one fatigue level for every five points or fraction thereof that they missed their roll. Each round thereafter, the Broch will jump again (use First strike rolls to determine when in the round if it is important), requiring a new resistance roll each time. When all fatigue levels are lost, the victim begins losing body levels. If no one intervenes, the victim will be reduced to a jumbled pile of bones within minutes as the Broch continue jumping up and down. Moments after this occurs, the Broch will give a cry of glee and leap into the earth near the bones, diving in and around the bone-pile, thoroughly stirring up the bones and hair with the earth. Characters observing this horror for the first time may have strong reactions (personality rolls), especially if it is someone they know.

Note that the Brochs' power only works if the victim is in contact with the ground; it is powerless against someone sitting in a tree or hovering in the air. Though their magic works best on stationary targets, the Broch can dance around a moving victim as long they don't move much faster than a good walking pace.

Destroying one of the dancing Broch or running are effective ways of canceling their magic, as is climbing a tree or wading across a stream (the Broch cannot wade across water without dissolving; they would have to enter the earth and cross *under* the stream).

Note: Magi subjected to the Broch's magic may add their Terram score to all resistance rolls.

Exempli Gratia

Jeremé, a grog from Mistridge, became separated from the rest of his group one evening as they traveled through a regio and comes across four Broch. He is startled and confused by their constant movement and chattering, and reacts by drawing his mace and swinging, trying to keep the clay dolls at bay. When they begin dancing around him (one time) he swings and manages to smash one against a tree, but the remaining three keep on dancing. After First strike rolls determine that the Broch go first, they complete their second circuit and Jeremé must beat a 9+ (3 times three Broch) or have his feet stuck to the earth. He lucks out (helped by a charm giving him +3 magic resistance) and rolls a 7 + 3 (for the charm) = 10, thus remaining free to move. He swings at a Broch and misses.

The next round, the Broch complete their third circuit around Jeremé and he must roll again to see if his feet become stuck. He rolls a 4 + 3 = 7; not high enough (he needed to beat four times the number of Broch = 12+). Cursing, he finds his feet stuck to the ground and almost falls when he tries to move. Jeremé must make another magic resistance roll now (this is regardless of whether or not his feet are stuck), to see if he loses any fatigue levels. He needs to beat a 15+ (five times the number of Broch) and rolls a 5 + 3 (for his charm) + 1 (his stamina) = 9, thus losing two fatigue levels. Jeremé swings wildly and manages to send another Broch flying. Now that only two Broch are left in the circle around Jeremé, the spell holding his feet in place is dispelled (though he doesn't regain his lost fatigue levels). He then notices the first Broch he smashed beginning to move, and wisely decides to run, with the Broch leaping and running after him. It is going to be a long night for Jeremé.

LISE'S REGIO

The regio which Lise and her Broch inhabit is a fairly small, though powerful one. It lies just south and east of the center of the Forest, on the border of a large Faerie regio that extends into the heart of the Forest. It has a Faerie aura strength of eight, with four levels of strength one, three, five and eight. The central feature of the regio is a circular stone altar that once served as a place of worship and devotion to the Earth Mother to countless

primitive humans and Faeries. Now its location is known only by Lise, who takes care of it.

Level Eight: This was once the center of the Earth Mother's power in the Forest, and here visitors are most likely to come into fleeting contact with echoes of her presence. This level of the regio is bordered on all sides by a dense stand of Live Oak trees, each of which towers over eighty feet tall. The trees often evoke strange emotions in those seeing them for the first time: some feel as though the trees are watching them intelligently, listening to their every word; others may cry at their beauty, while others may simply stand in awe, unable to move. To reflect this effect, have players make appropriate personality rolls.

Inside the circle of trees is a clearing filled with calf-length grass and unusual wildflowers (Herbam-lovers could spend months studying their unique shapes and hues). Sunlight filters into the clearing through several ranks of trees, creating strange and ever-shifting shadows on the ground. In the center of the clearing stands a squat, circular altar made of deep chestnut-colored stone. Players stepping into the clearing for the first time and seeing the altar may experience brief flashbacks to strong emotional scenes with their mother (Com + appropriate talent, ability or personality trait roll of 6+ required), leaving them in a heightened emotional state (double all personality traits). Take time to describe a brief scene to each of the affected players, creating a brief vignette that fits with the mood, personality and history of the character.

From the top, the altar appears as a disc some twenty feet across with an almost nine-foot wide hole at its center. It shows no visible signs of age, though it radiates a sense of ancientness. Its coarse, reddish-brown sides rise four feet above the ground and are free of markings except for a simple, hand-sized spiral pattern repeated at one-pace intervals. The stone extends a pace or more into the ground, making it quite a permanent feature of the clearing. For those with a destructive bent, the altar's soak total is +22, with 30 resistance levels. It contains twenty-five pawns of Creo vis. It also has an effective magical resistance of 20 versus all magic, and any destructive Terram magic used against it will automatically fail, with five extra botch rolls for the caster. If the altar is destroyed (this includes removing its vis), the effect upon the regio will be catastrophic. The actual results are up to the Storyguide, but might include the complete severing of the regio from the real world, earthquakes or other natural disasters, waves of insanely vengeful Forest creatures, or the wrath of the Earth Mother herself. Another alternative is to make the immediate effects unnoticeable and work the results of the players' actions into a later story.

Players exploring the hole at the altar's center will find a three-pace circle cut all the way through the

stone. A gnarled, rickety wooden ladder leans against one side, going down to a floor of hard-packed earth some seven feet below. The bottom of the pit is barren except for a small fire-pit at the center, and the walls are smoke-blackened and covered with strange arcane symbols scattered around three evenly spaced spiral patterns, like those found on the amulets. Inquisitive magi will find the writings incomprehensible without extensive study. It would take about four hours to copy all of the symbols accurately.

Perceptive people may notice faint muddy tracks around the outside of the stone and the remains of various offerings at its base (Per + Scan of 12+ and 9+ respectively). They may also notice a trail going from the clearing to Lise's house on level five of the *regio* (Per + Scan of 6+). Those using this trail to leave the *regio* receive a +5 bonus to their attempt to leave this level.

Level Five: On this level, the trees are not quite as impressive and the altar somewhat worn. Little sign of humans or other beings can be found around the clearing, though beyond the trees to the northeast a path materializes and leads a short distance to a ramshackle dwelling built into the side of a small hill. The dwelling is made up of a jumble of uncut deadwood, several large, moss-covered stones, and a few small trees whose intertwined branches form the roof. The path leads to one of the larger openings in the structure and continues inside.

Those entering Lise's abode will find two rooms: one above-ground which contains a crude, homemade shrine to the Earth Mother, and one that is actually a small cave in the side of the hill where she sleeps and stores her few precious belongings. The outer room provides only crude protection from the elements and can be entered from any number of openings between the piles of rock and rotting logs. This room has strange objects strewn about, filling the nooks and crannies as well as hanging from the tree limbs above: skulls of small animals and birds, bits of feather or fur, pieces of multicolored dried moss, strangely carved bones and piles of unusually aromatic herbs. In a hollow formed by two trees, there is a small replica of the altar (from level eight) formed in reddish clay. It has no magical powers.

Characters stooping to enter the inner chamber may notice (Per + Alertness of 11+) three strands of spider's silk crossing the doorway (roll separately for each one, with a +3 bonus after noticing the first). If a strand is broken without saying the phrase, "The Earth Mother gives me peace", the waiting spell Grip of the Choking Hand (PeCo Lv 10, lasts for five rounds) will be cast on the breaker. Breaking a second or third strand will result the casting of Strike of the Angered Branch (ReHe Lv 15) and The Earth's Carbuncle (ReTe Lv 15) respectively. It is possible, but quite difficult, to enter the chamber without breaking any of the spider's

strands (Dex + Athletics - Siz - Enc of 12+). Note that the effects of one spell may cause a character to blunder into and break other strands, thus causing a chain reaction.

Inside, characters will find a small natural stone cave that goes some three to four paces into the hillside. The ceiling is low enough to require crawling to enter the cave. Within, players will find a bed of leaves, moss and rushes against the far wall, while an assortment of clay jars and figures can be seen strewn haphazardly about the floor and the hidden away in crevices. The clay jars contain a variety of things: berries, wax, honey, herbs, dirt, water, or dried blood to name a few. The clay figures are mostly humanoid in appearance; many represent people from Lise's past life in Pasaquine or people currently inhabiting her dreams. Astute players (Per + Pasaquine Lore or Folk Ken of 10+) may notice figures representing current villagers, like Jehan, Carlota, Father Abelard, or the Widow mixed in with the others. The walls are covered with strange writings which seem to be a sort of crude picture writing (this is how Lise helped remember things from her dreams with the Earth Mother). At the Storyguide's option, information about Lise or the Earth Mother may be gleaned by studying these cryptic writings. Hidden in a depression under Lise's bedding (Per + Search roll of 9+ to find) are the tools used in the Broch-making ceremony: a large wooden bowl stained reddish-brown from the clay (or is it blood?), several wooden utensils and a small iron knife.

A path leads from the front of Lise's dwelling up the hill and into level three of the *regio*. Beings following this path to may add +3 to their attempt to cross the boundary to level three.

Level Three: This level of the *regio* contains a small stream and pool which flows nearby. The path from level five leads to the spot on the stream-bank where clay for the Broch is gathered; perceptive players may notice this fact (Per + Scan roll of 12+).

The shadow of Lise's dwelling place on this level is a jumble of rocks and fallen trees. With some difficulty, a player may be able to push their way into the small cave beyond which is deserted.

The altar clearing is ringed with a variety of trees, some of them dead. The altar itself has settled slightly, and is visibly worn with small pieces chipped away in several places.

Level One: This level contains nothing new, though players can explore the shadows of the altar (now cracked) and find Lise's cave only with extreme perseverance.

Mundane Level: In this level, the altar is a circular jumble of rocks in the middle of a grassy clearing ringed by a normal assortment of mundane trees in various states of health. Lise's cave is inhabited by a badger,

who won't take kindly to being disturbed. The paths through the various areas are game paths on this level.

FOREST ENCOUNTERS

Investigating the Bone-Piles: At some point in time the characters will probably enter the Forest to investigate the bone-piles they have heard so much about. They may wander about and try to find them on their own (Per + Scan or other appropriate skill roll of 9+, roll every two hours), or they may have a friendly villager lead them to, or at least tell where several bone-pile sites are. However the group finds some bone-piles, they will all have the following features in common.

All of the bone-piles are within or near areas of positive Faerie auras, i.e., near the Forest. A few, newer bone-piles can be found in the outlying fields west of the stream, but the majority of them are within the actual Forest itself. Each bone-pile has the same general features: a small, disturbed pile of earth about a pace across containing the bones of the unfortunate victim. Per + Search rolls of 18+ will reveal stray hairs or bits of fur from the creature mixed in with the bones, and those making Per + Search rolls of 9+ will notice a faint, muddy ring of trampled grass surrounding the earthen mound (this is from the Broch dancing around the victim).

The bone-piles nearest Pasaquine contain bones from domestic animals, such as sheep, chicken or goats, while those within the Forest contain a variety of small to medium-sized creatures indigenous to the area. Careful examination of the bones will show no teeth, claw or knife marks of any kind. In fact, the bones are incredibly clean of any flesh or cartilage, almost as if they had been boiled and carefully cleaned. At the Storyguide's option, some of the bones near the heart of the Forest may be from strange or magical creatures that the magi know little about. In addition to drawing attention to the magical nature of the Forest, these strange bones may prove of scholarly interest to certain magi or companions.

Entering the Regio: The characters will probably become aware of the existence of *regio* within the Forest of Pasaquine. They may be told of the *regio* by knowledgeable villagers, such as the Widow (who may even be able to help the characters) or they might deduce the *regio*'s existence from legends or stories from less knowledgeable town-folk (like Róbert, the woodcutter). Of course, they could also stumble into a *regio* while searching for bone-piles. Though all of these methods are useful for finding out general information about *regio*, it would be more useful for the characters to find out about Lise's *regio* in particular. An excellent method

of doing so is to follow Jehan on one of his nightly excursions into the Forest.

Characters doing so have several things working for them. First off, Jehan enters a kind of trance when he enters the Forest, and so won't notice followers unless they are exceptionally inept. Next, if the players follow close enough to see Jehan as he crosses the boundaries into the *regio*, they will receive a +3 on their own attempts to follow (remember to add in other modifiers as well, i.e., for phase of the moon, weather, or time of day or year). Otherwise, the players will have to rely on tracking Jehan across each boundary (requiring Per + Track rolls of 6+). If the tracker is successful in following Jehan, they may roll to enter the *regio* with a +3 bonus; otherwise Jehan's fairly clear tracks will disappear into thin air. Lucky characters may make their way all the way to the highest level of the *regio*, though most will probably become lost along the way. Remember that if characters are not careful to stick together, *each* one will have to roll separately for entering each level of the *regio*, thus making it highly likely that the group will become split up as various members make it to different levels. Be sure to roleplay this in an interesting and subtle way so that the characters don't realize what is happening; e.g., "As you push a large, leafy branch out of your way, you realize that you can't see Rollo [the tracker] anymore. That's funny, he was just there a minute ago. In fact, you don't hear anyone behind you either." Characters so lost will probably stumble around for a while (possibly all night!) until they manage to find their way out again. This could be a good opportunity for a roleplaying encounter with Lise (see **Meeting Lise**), or a brief run-in with the Broch. If characters become hopelessly lost, sympathetic Storyguides may let them see Jehan on his way out of the Forest in the morning with a handful of Broch. Sadistic Storyguides, on the other hand, might let the characters wander around for days and have numerous encounters with the strange denizens of the *regio* before finding their way out.

In any case, the characters should get one step closer to solving the mystery of Lise and the Broch each time they enter the *regio*. In order to penetrate to the heart of the *regio* and confront Lise, however, they will probably need magical help of some kind. This could be in the form of a charm or amulet from the Widow Maliér, or the loan of one of her magical cats (see **In the Village**), a spontaneous spell from a competent magi of their own group (see **Regio** for examples), or they may have Jehan's amulet. Characters who make it close to the highest level of the *regio* but are consistently unable to enter may be helped along by a friendly faerie, possibly even by Hrulgar himself if he took a liking to the group. One last thing to keep in mind is that Lise will quickly learn of the group and may hinder or help their attempts at crossing boundaries (see **Meeting Lise**).

Meeting Jehan's Spirit: During the character's wanderings in the Forest, they may encounter the lost fragments of Jehan's spirit (see **Jehan's Amulet** for more). The spirit is confined to Lise's *regio* and spends most of its time wandering the paths that Jehan did (and still does, to some extent). Thus, the spirit could be found as the characters enter or leave Lise's *regio*, or while traveling on footpaths or game trails. Though this spirit could be met at any time of the day or night, the Storyguide should try to pick a moment with the proper atmosphere: at dusk with fog rolling through the trees, in a moonlit glade, or at dawn as a rosy red glow fills the horizon.

Perhaps the optimum time for a meeting with Jehan's soul is when the group is tracking Jehan through the Forest. Imagine their surprise when they lose sight of Jehan briefly, then pick up his trail again only to come upon a translucent spirit mending a trap or sitting quietly in meditation.

Jehan's spirit wavers between a watery, insubstantial form that is truly difficult to see (Per + Alertness of 15+) and a fairly life-like, almost opaque ghost that might be mistaken for the real Jehan at a distance. The spirit is most substantial when Jehan is nearby, and almost fades away during the height of the day. Use the modifiers for entering *regio* as a guideline for when the spirit is substantial and when it is not.

The appearance of the spirit is simply that of Jehan the Hunter, though perhaps a confused and dazed one. When it speaks, it speaks slowly and haltingly, the words coming not from its mouth but rather from a chorus of breezes whispering through nearby branches. Be sure to have characters make bravery rolls when they realize that Jehan is a spirit and not corporeal, with modifiers for the setting and time.

The spirit is lost and confused, with only a vague idea that it has lost something precious in the woods that it must find. When first encountered, the spirit will be oblivious to the presence of mundanes, but it will slowly acknowledge their presence if the characters are patient. Jehan's spirit knows much about the Forest, including information about Lise and her *regio*, though trying to make the spirit focus long enough to answer a question may be difficult. Jehan will interrupt any discussion periodically with, "It was just here! Have you seen it? I have to find it. Help me find it." If asked what it is looking for it will respond, "I'm not sure... but it is very dear to me," or, "Something I lost, forever I fear. Sometimes I feel it close by, like moonbeams in the night." (He is actually looking for his body.) During such interludes he will stare deep into the eyes of a nearby character with a pain-filled, weary, but hope-filled expression (be sure and act this out—say these lines while uncomfortably close to a player's face). From time to time, Jehan will accidentally brush against or

even walk through the characters—tell the player that they feel a tingle in their spine and a brief chill.

Magi will find that most spells concerning ghosts simply do not work on this spirit (like those presented in **The Broken Covenant of Calabais**), for this is not a true ghost. Most spells have no effect, but appropriate *Intéllego* spells reveal a thin, shimmering cord leading towards the corporeal Jehan. The difficulty of actually reuniting Jehan and his wayward spirit is left up to the Storyguide. It might be as easy as bringing them in close proximity with one another, or it might be an entire story of its own, requiring much research and study by the magi.

The usefulness of this scene to the players is largely left up to the Storyguide. The spirit can easily be used to convey important clues to the players, though they should always be cryptic. If the characters ask about Lise, for example, he might respond, "She was once so pure, when did she go wrong?" or "Lise is broken, she was filled too full" (referring to the Earth Mother giving her too much power). Basically, Jehan may be used by the Storyguide to impart whatever knowledge he or she feels is appropriate, but remember to factor in the players' actions towards Jehan when determining this. If the players are gentle, patient and undemanding, they are much more likely to receive useful information than those who are violent and abusive.

The scene should end in some dramatic way after some knowledge has been imparted, but before the players tire of the encounter. Examples are: the spirit grabbing his head, screaming, "She's doing it again! NOOOoooo..." and fading away; the arrival of some playful Broch; the interruption of a well-meaning but bumbling villager; the appearance of Lise; or, the spirit simply fading away with the arrival of the sun. Feel free to have the spirit show up later if need be, especially if the group enjoyed the initial encounter and established a rapport with the tortured spirit. Just be sure that the group doesn't come to rely on Jehan's spirit too heavily.

Meeting the Broch: Though most of the Broch are initially taken to Pasaquine by Jehan, a few small bands have found their way back to the Forest to "play" with the Forest animals or just wander about. Lise tries to control their activities, but has had only limited success. Thus, players may encounter Broch in both the village and the Forest.

Initial encounters with the Broch will probably take place in Pasaquine itself as the players gather information. These Broch will almost certainly be dormant (see **In the Village**), and the "encounter" will probably be nothing more than the players noticing the existence of these strange clay dolls throughout the village. At night, however, some of the Broch closest to

the Forest will become active and might be glimpsed moving about (Per + Alertness roll of 15+) in spite of their cautious nature while out of the Forest. Preferably, these sightings should be at a distance or within deep shadows to keep the nature of the Broch secret until later in the story (see **In the Village —At Night** for examples). Be sure and cast doubt on the player's observations by mixing in some "sightings" of wind-blown leaves, chickens, or large rats throughout the night.

The Broch are much less timid within the Forest, and will eagerly watch the players as they explore the bone-piles. They will keep their distance, however, and stay well hidden—especially during the day. At the Storyguide's option, however, the Broch may take an interest in the group and try to lure them into their *regio* by creating disturbances or briefly appearing in the direction they wish the characters to go. The Broch will aid the characters' entrance to the *regio* by adding half of their combined Earth Might scores to the players' rolls to cross each boundary. Once the group is well within the *regio*, the Broch will emerge to "play" with the unfortunate company.

Another option is to have the Broch attack the players at Lise's command, or to have the Broch present themselves at a critical moment in the story, perhaps as the group tries to make its way back out of the *regio* from an encounter with Lise. Clever players might set bait for the "monster" and observe the Broch killing the bait before the Broch turn their attention toward the characters (remember to make appropriate personality rolls for those watching the Broch kill!). These are just a few ideas for the first encounter with the Broch—just be flexible and keep in mind that the Broch are most comfortable on magical ground or at night—preferably both. Also keep in mind that the first major encounter with the Broch should only occur after the players have spent some time in both Pasaquine and the Forest. This gives the players a chance to gather some clues and piece things together on their own (as well as get scared) before discovering the real monster(s) behind the bone-piles.

After the initial encounter, the Broch will probably feel that some of the group members are fun to play with and will want to play with them lots more. They will follow them around, sneak up on them (Whee!) or try and get more Broch to come play with their special friend. This can make the group quite paranoid—especially if they haven't come up with an effective way of handling the Broch. Essentially, once the group has met the Broch, they can be used to liven things up if things get slow or even to help or give information to foundering players. Just be sure not to overdo it—the Broch should remain somewhat mysterious, unpredictable and scary throughout the story.

Lise's Actions

In order of seriousness, Lise's possible actions include:

- *Casting subtle Mentem spells upon the group from a distance to confuse and disorient them.*
- *Separating the group by luring several and "helping" several characters into different levels of the regio, also to confuse and confound the group (this could be a good time to meet the Broch).*
- *Gathering the Broch together for an attack on the group while remaining hidden herself. If you wish, she could hinder the group's escape with subtle Terram and Herbam spells. (If she hasn't been successful so far, this might be a good time for her to approach the players with an offer to negotiate.)*
- *Casting attack spells on the group, hopefully from a hidden position, and hounding the players as they try to escape the Forest (this works especially well at night).*
- *Summoning a Shaker (see above) to attack the players. She will only do this as a last resort and should represent the climax of the confrontation with Lise. After summoning the Shaker she will call Broch, if not already present, then use all of her magic points to try and kill the group. If she is unsuccessful and still alive, she will wildly attack them with her knife.*

Meeting Lise: Lise is confined to her *regio* and so will only be encountered near or within the borders of the Forest of Pasaquine. Note, however, that the borders of her *regio* are growing daily due to the magic of the Broch. For game purposes, consider the lowest level of her *regio* to extend through much of the Forest and barely touch on the outlying fields of Pasaquine.

In spite of her confinement, Lise knows much of what goes on in Pasaquine through magic and close questioning of Jehan. She will probably hear of the group's arrival in Pasaquine sometime during their first evening there, and will be most interested in their activities. Any trips to the bone-piles or explorations into the Forest will be watched closely, with Lise scrutinizing the group's actions to determine if they are a threat or not. Lise will take care not to reveal herself, hiding (with spells if necessary) at a discreet distance.

When determining Lise's later actions, just keep in mind her ultimate goal: destroying the Dominion in Pasaquine to allow the Earth Mother to return. Anything or anyone interfering with this goal will eventually face her wrath. Also keep in mind that, though Lise is a bit crazy and deluded, she is not stupid—just a bit out of touch with reality. She would just as easily kill all the players to get her way as strike some kind of a bargain with them. *Everything*, including her life, is secondary to

Lise's Negotiations

If Lise attempts to negotiate with the group, she will do so while disguised as an old lady and will never approach the group unless she is in a higher level of her regio. Rather than talk to all of the players, she will try to draw who she perceives to be the leader into one of the highest levels of the regio to talk to alone. This encounter should have lots of mystery about it: moonlight, mist rising from the ground, strange shadows, and Lise's raspy voice coming from the recesses of her hood. You also could have a few Broch dancing around at the edges of the character's vision to help set the mood.

Things that Lise can offer the group in return for the group turning their backs on Pasaquine (or even helping her!) include: vis from hidden stores within the regio, knowledge of how to travel through levels of the regio freely, or a promise of magic items to do the same (like Jehan's amulet). At the Storyguide's option, Lise could lose her temper and try to kill the character if no deal is made.

her higher purpose. Have Lise respond to the players as you see fit, but be sure and have her try several approaches to the problem of getting rid of or making allies with the players. See the chart for some specifics.

Lise has a wide range of methods available to her to try and keep the players from interfering with her work (see **Lise's Actions**). Initial methods will be harmless, designed to confuse or scare the players off,

but if these prove ineffective she will quickly switch to more dangerous techniques and have no qualms about killing characters. At some point, the players will either give up and leave, or Lise will realize that she has underestimated them and try to make some kind of deal (see **Lise's Negotiations**). If no deal is made, then Lise will use all the powers at her command to try and destroy the group, possibly dying herself in the attempt.

Note: Lise is quite powerful within the higher levels of her regio. If the players chose to resolve this storyline with a final confrontation with Lise, it should be difficult, but not impossible for *clever* players to defeat her and her minions. Feel free to give Lise extra powers over the earth to make the fight more interesting; perhaps the earth in her regio "likes" Lise and won't allow Terram spells to be used against her. This is not to say that Lise should be invincible, but rather that defeating her is the climax of the story and the players should have a strong feeling of accomplishment upon its conclusion. On the other hand, if the company fumbles its way through the final encounter, certainly allow them to feel the effects of their actions.

Another Note: If the group has performed well throughout the story but are having exceptional difficulties dealing with Lise, Hrulgar might show up with some wolves and help them out—only if they were reasonable with him in their earlier dealings. Use this only as a last resort, for groups you are plagued by bad luck or just need a little something extra.



Chapter 8 - Conclusions

Each of The Pact of Pasaquine's three storylines can be resolved (or not resolved) in a number of ways. To try and present all of these would be impossible, so a few possibilities are presented instead under the headings of *No Involvement* (the players never go to Pasaquine), *No Interference* (the players chose not to interfere in the storyline) and *Involvement* (the players do *something* concerning the storyline). The last section contains some brief ideas for a final scene in the village.

HRULGAR

No Involvement: If the players never traveled to Pasaquine, Hrulgar would still appear to the villagers the night after his son's death and demand retribution. Without many of the skills necessary to solve the mystery of the Broch, the villagers would have no choice but to give in to Hrulgar's demands and give him a human child. While this would initially cause grief, the family affected would soon get over it. The child would be raised as Hrulgar's own within Faerie. Complaints, however, might be lodged with the Abbot by the villagers and force the magi to undergo an investigation.

No Interference: If the players do travel to Pasaquine but choose not to interfere, events will proceed as above, but the villagers won't be too happy with the characters. They will probably jump to the conclusion that the magi are somehow responsible for their troubles, and will be generally unhelpful and unfriendly. This may even result in complaints being lodged at San Blas against the magi or a mob forming to attack them.

Involvement: The player's involvement can be good or bad. If the players attack Hrulgar and his wolves, the group very well may be destroyed along with a good part of the villagers. The magi will earn the undying enmity of Pasaquine and there will be little chance of the group resolving the other storylines. The villagers will almost certainly lodge a complaint with the monks against the magi, and rumors will spread throughout Val du Bosque of how the magi of Mistridge went wild in Pasaquine and almost destroyed it. In addition, the covenant will have made a strong enemy of Hrulgar and his wolves and find it difficult to collect their *vis* on Midsummer's Eve each year without a stiff fight.

If, on the other hand, the players deal with Hrulgar diplomatically, they stand to gain several things. One, the villagers will respond with gratitude and make other investigations much easier. Also, they stand to make a good friend with Hrulgar, who could be quite a powerful ally.

Loose Ends: As the story progresses, it can be easy to forget this storyline in the wake of the other two. If the group or the villagers made a deal with Hrulgar, be

sure to have him and his wolves appear at the appointed time to collect his tribute or hear their explanation. Hrulgar doesn't particularly care *who* was responsible for his son's death, he just wants to punish the offending party. If the magi are unable to convince him that the Broch and Lise are responsible, he will demand a human son to replace his loss as before. If the Broch and Lise are implicated, however, he will ask a few questions about them, then ride off for Lise's *regio* to see for himself. It is possible that if the group has not dealt with Lise at this point that Hrulgar will offer to join forces with the magi to destroy her. In either case, after confirming the truth of the group's statements he will express his thanks and, depending on the group's actions, offer to aid the magi if they ever need his help in the Forest.

JEHAN AND CARLOTA

No Interference: If the group never involves itself with Jehan and Carlota, the following things will occur: first, Carlota will continue to be beaten and will probably move out to live with someone else within a few weeks. Jehan's nightly visits to the Forest and Lise will go uninterrupted, and Jehan will get weaker and weaker as the Broch-creating rituals and the magic of his amulet take their toll. Eventually Jehan will die, as either his sickly body succumbs to a common disease, or as his body collapses when too much of his soul is removed (for more, see *Jehan's Amulet*).

Involvement: Involvement can take many forms, ranging from killing Jehan, to removing his amulet, to indirectly helping him by getting rid of the source of his problems, Lise. Most of these scenarios are discussed in *Jehan's Amulet*. Remember that simply destroying Jehan's amulet will leave part of Jehan's soul wandering about the Forest; to heal him completely they must be reunited. At the Storyguide's option, this fact might not be learned until much later and might form the core of a future story.

Also remember that Bix and Jortz are part of the story. Depending on the outcome Jortz may wish to join the covenant or, he might have a renewed sense of responsibility towards his father.

LISE AND THE BROCH

No Interference: Not interfering in Lise's plans will have a profound effect upon Pasaquine. As the Broch become more numerous, the Dominion in Pasaquine will retreat, to be replaced by a weak Faerie aura. In order to accomplish this, however, the Broch will have to kill those who have a strong belief in the Dominion (such as Father Abelard and Róbert) and destroy the Church.

Since completely destroying the Church is beyond the power of the Broch, Lise will have to help directly by using powerful Terram spells (such as The Earth Split Asunder). Unfortunately, Lise is already having a hard time controlling the existing Broch, and as time passes her hold over them is sure to slip, resulting in the Broch killing a fair number of Pasaquine's inhabitants. In fact, it wouldn't be surprising if the Broch eventually broke completely free of Lise's control, and began swarming to other regions of Val du Bosque to reduce the Dominion in other towns. An interesting twist which is left up to the Storyguide concerns the status of these Broch-overrun lands. Would they become part of Lise's *regio* or remain tied to the mundane world?

If the Dominion completely disappears from Pasaquine, Lise will find a glimmer of the Earth Mother's return, but after experimentation will discover the monastery at San Blas exerts a strong aura of the Dominion over a good part of the Forest. In time, Lise will thus turn her attentions to San Blas, but will find reducing its aura extremely difficult without additional help.

Of course, the inhabitants of Pasaquine and the monks of San Blas will do what they can to fight the Broch when they become aware of their destructive nature. In Pasaquine itself, the Widow and Father Abelard will work together against the threat, and the monks will probably be called in by a worried Reeve (Cohat) before too long. The effectiveness of the Widow and the Father will probably be marginal, but the monks should be able to strengthen the Dominion with lengthy prayer and elaborate ceremonies.

Involvement: The players will probably interfere in Lise's plans to some degree, either by interactions with her directly or by affecting her minions, Jehan and the Broch. Possibilities include the death of Lise, killing or delaying Jehan, or destroying the Broch.

If Lise is killed, several things will happen. First, a large crevasse will split open underneath her body (see *Lise's Amulet*), burying her and anyone nearby under tons of rock. Second, the wearer of Jehan's amulet will be released completely from her power, though this will not affect the part of Jehan's soul still wandering the Forest. In addition, the Broch will react quite strongly as Lise's controlling influence is removed. Some of the younger ones will die, simply melting into the Earth. Others will yell and scream, running headlong into deeper parts of the Forest. A few might explode or destruct in other harmful ways, showering nearby people with a rain of dirt, while those that are dormant will remain so forever (or will they? this could be an interesting story). The older Broch, on the other hand, will feel the death of their "mother" quite strongly, and either seek vengeance on the people responsible by playing with them, or try and seek out Jehan, their "father," for instructions. If someone

besides Jehan is wearing his amulet, they may become momentarily confused and take orders from that person for a while. If they discover, however, that their “father” doesn’t have the amulet, some will respond by running into the heart of the Forest crying for their parents, while others will throw temper tantrums, screaming, yelling and leaping in and out of the earth until they get tired and melt away.

If Jehan is kept from entering the Forest somehow, either by physical means or by removing the amulet, Lise will be quite upset. Her first action will be to try and call the current wearer of Jehan’s amulet to her. Failing that, she will cast some information gathering spells from the edge of the *regio* near Jehan’s house. If she is able to determine the problem, she will try and solve it at a distance with Mentem spells, otherwise she will retreat and make plans against the people who foiled her.

Destroying a few Broch will not perturb Lise too much, though she won’t like it and will certainly hold it against the people responsible. Wholesale destruction of her “children,” however, will make her furious, especially if Jehan has also been kept from her. She will fly into a rage and use all the means at her disposal to kill the perpetrators.

THE VILLAGE

The villagers of Pasaquine also play a large part in the conclusion to the story—don’t forget to describe their reactions and feelings! While not readily apparent, the friendship or enmity of Pasaquine *can* influence the life of the covenant. If the group both treats the villagers fairly and is instrumental in defeating the “monster of the bone-piles,” they will find them warm and generous with what little they have. A cask of ale from Lorris or the Marien sisters may arrive during the holidays for “tasting,” covenant members may be invited to join village festivities, Father Abelard or the Widow may stop by occasionally to discuss philosophy and magic, and a few articles of clothing or some wheels of cheese will find their way to the covenant walls throughout the year. Most importantly, the covenant will have a new source of information about the goings on in the valley.

Players who abuse the villagers or end up helping Lise may find themselves with a bad reputation in the valley or a serious enemy in the monks of San Blas.

THE MONKS

Remember that the monks are responsible for the health and well-being of Pasaquine and take these responsibilities quite seriously. The monks can be

involved in this story several ways, but most involve someone, like the Reeve or the Miller, riding to San Blas to inform the monks that their help is needed. Cohat (the Reeve) is fairly proud and will not ask for the monks’ assistance unless the magi are clearly unable or unwilling to solve the village’s problems. The only other villager likely to make the trip would be Bernard, the miller. He periodically reports to the Abbot about the goings on in Pasaquine, but dislikes making the long trip more than once a month. He might travel to San Blas if he feels personally threatened by the events in Pasaquine or for reasons of spite, if the magi humiliate him.

If the monks are drawn into the story, their response will depend largely upon the information given them by the person requesting assistance. Requests for help from a calm and collected Cohat, for example, will generate much less interest than a wild-eyed report from Bernard. In most cases, a small group of monks will be assembled to travel to Pasaquine and further assess the situation.

If the monks meet the magi and hear of their involvement, they will be cool and distant — for San Blas wants no one, be they nobles or magi, exerting power over their fief. If any damage has been done and the evidence points to the magi, the monks will not hesitate to bring legal action against the covenant. In fact, even if the evidence does *not* point to the magi, the monks will tend to blame the magi with similar results. The covenant will find such legal action to be slow in coming but powerful once it arrives, for the monks do not like to lose and will take time to prepare their case carefully.

Many of these problems can be avoided by being polite, helpful and respectful in the initial encounter with the monks. If they are treated tactfully, the magi may even be invited to take part in one of San Blas’ famous philosophical debates.

THE END

When all is said and done, the players will hopefully have completed each of the three storylines to their satisfaction. As the story draws to a close, it is important to have some kind of scene which sums up the success or failure of the characters and gives them a chance to reflect on what they have (or have not) accomplished. Because of the wide variety of possible outcomes for each of the three storylines, it is impossible to present a detailed scene for each. Instead, a few choice examples are presented below. Once again, the endings are divided by storyline.

Hrulgarg: If a child has been taken by Hrulgarg, the characters should be reminded of the outcome before

they leave: either a tearful reunion of child and family or a glimpse of the bereaved mother and father as they weep for their lost child.

The state of The Pact of Pasaquine should also be made apparent, and, as this is closely tied to the friendship or enmity of Hrulgar, should be resolved in a final scene with the lordly wolf. If the Pact remains unbroken and Hrulgar is well-disposed towards the villagers, he will gladly take part in its rededication. He will appear in royal splendor, with a complete retinue of wolves, including his mate. If, on the other hand, the Pact has been broken and the characters have earned the enmity of Hrulgar, he will storm into town one moonlit eve, summon the villagers, and officially break the Pact. The stone at the center of the village green will crumble to dust. In addition, Hrulgar and a group of wolves may appear on a hilltop as the players make their way home to remind them of his undying animosity.

Jehan and Carlota: This is the hardest of the three to resolve because of its intensely personal nature. If Jehan is released from Lise's spells, and all is explained between the troubled couple, Bix (at least) should be privy to a happy scene in which they express their gratitude, perhaps with small gifts like a new knife or a particularly nice fur. Keep in mind, however, that Jehan's soul might not be reunited with his body.

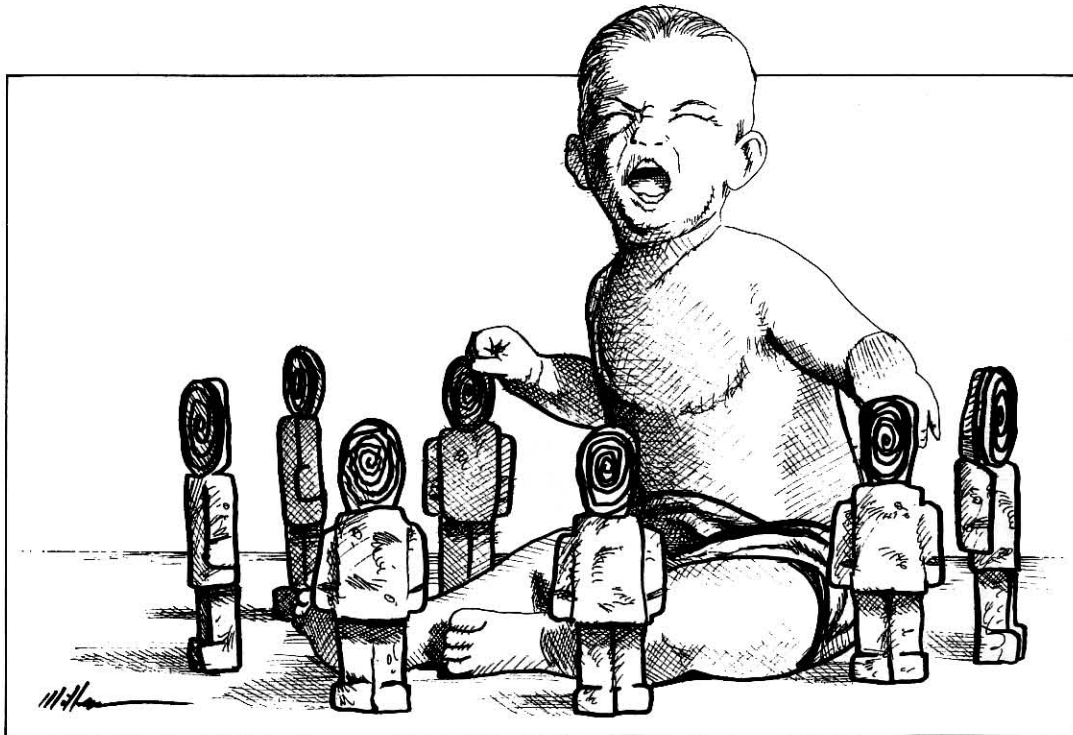
If Jehan is killed, or remains in Lise's power at the story's end, Bix should have to deal with the sad

scene of leaving his devastated mother and little step-brother behind. In this case Bix should feel pressure to leave the covenant and care for his mother, or at least try to save his father on his own (if he's still alive).

Lise and the Broch: The resolution of this storyline is clouded by the fact that a victory for the magi (say, making a deal with Lise for *vis*) may not be good for the villagers—in fact, it could make things worse for them. However the situation is resolved, the characters should see Lise one last time if she is still alive, cursing and swearing revenge if she was marginally defeated and gloating if she was triumphant. If a deal has been struck, you might invent a short scene to remind the characters of their bargain and its consequences. In addition, you may wish to let the players glimpse a Broch lying dormant or running about.

The Villagers: The villagers will respond to the overall success of each storyline from their point of view. A troupe which keeps the Pact intact and vanquishes Lise will probably be treated to an impromptu feast and much merrymaking, while dismal failure will result in being driven from town and the monks being called in. If friends or enemies have been made, prepare a short vignette to reflect that fact.

This can also be a good time to plant the seeds for further stories, so you may wish to look at some of the story ideas in the next chapter.





Chapter 9 - Further Stories

The previous story is but one example of the many stories that can take place in and around Pasaquine. Players may be eager to explore the *regio* they have discovered, and Storyguides may wish to flesh out loose ends or use friends and/or enemies gained as launching-off points for later stories.

Much of the nature of follow-up stories to The Pact of Pasaquine depends upon the group's resolution of the three storylines (see **Conclusions**). While that section presented a few short-term ideas for stories, this section contains ideas that aren't directly related to the initial story.

Each entry begins with a basic statement or question that addresses the core idea, then continues with examples of stories that might arise from it.

Hrulgar

- Hrulgar was once a faerie prince. His past might come back to haunt him.

Example - Hrulgar is the last in the line of succession to a Faerie court. His sisters and brothers have all been killed off by rival factions and now they are after him. He offers the magi *vis* in return for their help.

- Hrulgar's ears have been cut off. If he doesn't get them back soon he will become a mundane wolf.

The Broch

- Perhaps not all the Broch have been killed?

Example - A Broch is found near Mistridge. It is dormant, but where did it come from, and are there more? The magi have to work fast, or the covenant might be overrun with Broch.

Example - Lorris blames a batch of bad ale on the disappearance of the Broch, and secretly finds a few dormant ones in the woods to place near his ale-casks. The Broch are awakened by the aura of the Green Oak and begin wreaking havoc in the village.

- A monster (not the Broch) terrorizes a local village and leaves the bones of its victims behind —a red herring.
- One or more magi may have brought dormant Broch back to the covenant.

Example - A dormant Broch brought back from Pasaquine by a magi for study disappears a few years after the story takes place. It is found in a nearby storeroom, but who or what put it there? Then it disappears again, and a thorough search doesn't turn anything up except faint muddy trails leading around the covenant. Shortly thereafter, a small pile of chicken bones is found in a mound of earth near the covenant. What will the magi do?

Regio

- Lise's *regio* holds many secrets to the interested magi, but they are not easily learned. Many seasons could be spent unraveling them.
 - Now that the magi know of one *regio* within the Forest, perhaps they will look for and find the others. Exploitation and careful control of new stores of *vis* and a gateway to Faerie could vault Mistridge to the top of the Tribunal, or it could spell its downfall. This might become the source of heated debate within a tribunal, should other covenants hear of the *regio*.
 - Many *regio* exist within the Forest to explore, providing an endless source for a variety of stories. Also remember that if magi can cross into *regio*, other things can come out and may find the magi's world *very* interesting.
- Example - A large troll stumbles out of a *regio* one day, and, unable to find his way back, begins tunneling out some caves within the mundane world. It is seen by a villager (perhaps Jehan or Róbert) and the magi are petitioned for aid. Actually the troll is quite friendly, and is merely looking for a way back to his home.
- The *regio* become more and more difficult to enter, and some disappear altogether. What is happening?

Example - The magi travel to Pasaquine yearly to gather their mushrooms. One year they find themselves unable to enter the *regio* containing them. This could be the result of powerful faerie magic, a strengthening of

the power of the church, or that something is deeply wrong with Faerie in general.

- The *regio* get closer and closer to the mundane world. Soon people are going crazy from trying to live their lives in several different layers of existence. What is going on?

- The magi notice their covenant is becoming a *regio*, split into several different magical realities. Why is this happening and what will the players do?

Example - A powerful wizard stretches himself to his limit and makes numerous botches while conducting research using large amounts of *vis*. No effects beyond a short period of disorientation on the part of the magus involved is noticed. Weeks later, that magus begins finding odd inconsistencies in his chambers and lab. Several times, his apprentice fails to find him when he is working in plain sight. Soon, it becomes apparent that his chambers have become a *regio* and that it is spreading to other parts of the covenant.

- New *vis* sources from explored *regio* are plentiful, but it is somehow tainted with Faerie or Earth Mother magic. This fact may only become apparent after a few years has passed. Perhaps Mistridge used this *vis* to pay another covenant for library privileges. What will the other covenant do when they find out?

The Monks

- The monks might not like the magi traipsing about on their land and do something about it.
- Example - The monks hear of the magi's yearly journey to the hill of mushrooms and stage an ambush. The magi will have to be careful, for killing a monk would be disastrous. The monks plan to try the magi for consorting with demons.
- The monks give permission for a new hospice or Convent to be built within the Forest. This might destroy or weaken the magi's source(s) of *vis* as well making the *regio* inaccessible. This story would be one of political maneuvering as the magi seek to block the monk's plans.



Appendix- Regio

This chapter delves into the magical side of Pasaquine's forest. A new concept is introduced: that of *regio*, magical areas that intertwine with, but are separate from the mundane world. Rules for finding, traveling into and exiting from *regio* are presented, as well as guidelines for creating your own.

• Introduction

The areas of power within the Forest of Pasaquine are similar to "normal" magical regions (see *Ars Magica*, pp.71-73) in that they have a strength, rated one through ten, and are associated with a particular power, either Faerie or Magical (there are no Divine or Infernal Regions within the Forest). Unlike most areas of power, however, the magical areas within the Forest, or *regio*, have been hidden away by the Earth Mother, which makes them difficult to find under normal circumstances. Another important difference is that the *regio* are tied to, but separate from, the mundane world. *Regio* of great power, like a Faerie mound, are far removed from the world we know, while *regio* of lesser power are close to, but have slight differences from, the mundane world.

By way of clarifying what a *regio* is, let us look at a magical Faerie spring. Using the standard rules, this spring would have an aura of strength three to five depending on its importance to the area. Players could wander about and find this spring if they searched long and hard enough. The Faeries might hide the spring with illusions or mislead the humans' senses, but the spring's actual physical nature would not change.

The same spring, when placed in the Forest of Pasaquine, is treated as a *regio*. The spring now exists on several interconnected but separate levels of differing aura strengths that *occupy the same space*. Each level is physically real by itself, though somewhat different from the rest. The highest level is most removed from the mundane world and has the highest aura. There, the spring would be as the faeries made it; perhaps with a low, engraved marble wall surrounding the spring and a fountain in the middle. A level lower would find the aura reduced and the spring less noticeably Faerie in origin, with the engraving faded and the marble wall looking more like a jumble of rocks. The lowest level would be the mundane world, with *no* aura, and the spring just a plain spring with a few rocks strewn about its edges.

People and creatures normally exist on one level at a time within a *regio*, completely independent of the other levels. Exceptionally powerful beings might cast shadows across a few adjacent levels, and gross physical happenings on the mundane level can affect higher levels. If, for example, someone destroyed the spring in the mundane world, the highest level's spring might begin to dry up. Likewise, if a faerie tore apart the marble wall in the highest level, the rocks might move or disappear from the mundane level.

One way to picture a *regio* is to imagine a series of thin magical layers stacked upon each other in increasing order of strength. The layers rest on the mundane world with the highest strength aura layer at the top. Each successively higher layer is smaller than the one below it. Thus, a person wishing to travel from the mundane world to the highest level would cross into the lowest level, then the next lowest and so on until they reached the level with the highest aura. Or, they may fail to enter one of the higher levels and remain on a level somewhere in the middle.

• Creating Regio

Regio are associated with a **power** and have a **strength** rating from one to ten. Each individual *regio* is made up of one or more levels, each with a different **aura strength**. One level for every few points of **aura strength** is recommended (see insert), though this is only a guideline. Feel free to create *regio* with greater or fewer levels if you desire.

Levels in Regio

Strength of Aura	Number of Levels	Aura of each level
1	1	1
2	1-2	2 or 1, 2
3	2	1, 3
5	3	1, 3, 5
8	4	1, 3, 5, 8
10	5	1, 3, 5, 8, 10

Thus if a *regio* had a strength of eight, it would have four levels: the first level would have an aura of one, the next an aura of three, the next a five, and the last and highest an eight.

Once you have decided the power, strength, and number of levels for your *regio*, draw an overall map showing the boundaries of each level. When finished, it should look something like a contour map, with each boundary clearly labeled with its strength for easy reference. Don't worry too much about the exact locations of the contours, they're magic after all, and can wander about depending on the time of year, the phase of the moon, or your whim. See the end of this section for some sample maps of *regio*.

The next step is to decide physically what the *regio* looks like at its two extremes, in the level with the highest aura, and in the mundane world. Remember that the levels are related and that important physical objects in the highest level should cast a mundane "shadow" in the normal world and vice versa. Detailing levels other than the highest and lowest is usually unnecessary, as the levels in between are simply steps between the two extremes. If your players decide to explore a level you haven't detailed, simply look at the two extremes of the *regio* (the mundane and the highest level), and create a level that lies somewhere between, having some of the characteristics of both.

• Entering Regio

Most beings, unless they are native to a particular *regio*, cannot travel freely from level to level. Crossing from the mundane world to the lowest level in a *regio* often happens accidentally, especially during special times of the year like Midsummer's Eve, but normally it requires a strong will, a subconscious desire, or knowledge of the boundary or magic to help one across. Higher levels within a *regio* can be quite difficult to enter, as you must work your way from level to level upward to reach them.

The **base chance** to enter any level is two times the level being entered plus six, e.g., you need a 8+ to enter a level one of a *regio*, and a 26+ to enter a level ten of a *regio*. Many things can modify this roll, depending upon the individual situation. Characteristics, virtues and flaws, personality traits and abilities may all help or hinder the attempt. A person

tracking something that goes into a *regio* may add their Per + Tracking to their roll, for example. A short table of sample modifiers is presented below.

Normally, only one person, the guide or leader, rolls to enter the *regio* with that roll applying to everyone within the group. If the group is separated, however, each person rolls individually and enters (or fails to enter) the *regio* separately.

One can enter a *regio* either accidentally or deliberately. Examples of accidental entrance to a *regio* are: following or tracking a being who enters a *regio*, or unknowingly being helped into one by a Faerie or magical creature. When a player comes to a border accidentally, simply have them roll a stress die plus any modifiers that seem pertinent. If they fail, they remain in the mundane world and shouldn't notice anything strange unless they were tracking someone; then the tracks might disappear into thin air. If the player succeeds, they may notice slight differences in their surroundings and the mundane world (see **Noticing Regio**). Once in the lowest level of the *regio*, it is entirely possible for them continue to the next level and so on. Each time the person comes to a boundary to the next highest level, roll to see if they enter it as well. It is possible to work to the highest levels of a *regio* in this manner, though highly unlikely.

Exempli Gratia: Entering Regio

Róbert the forester wanders through the Forest all the time, normally in broad daylight. Every time he crosses a level one boundary, he must check to see if he enters it or remains in the mundane world. On a normal autumn day he makes a stress roll of 8+ (6 + 2x a level of one) to enter, with his die roll modified by -9 (-3 for autumn, -3 for daylight, and the Storyguide determines his charms are good for -3). Thus, as long as Róbert stays away from the Forest on pagan holidays, dusk, dawn and nighttime, he shouldn't have any trouble.

*Here's another example: A prince of Faerie (with Faerie Might 40) leaves his regio on Midsummer's Eve and chances upon a beautiful maiden. He takes a walk with her and without her knowing it wishes to take her back to the heart of Faerie (aura strength 10). The modifiers are: +10 for Midsummer's Eve, +3 for Summer, +20 for his help (half his Faerie Might of 40) and +3 for the phase of the moon, for a total of +36. He needs to beat an 8+ to enter the first level, then a 12+, 16+, 22+ and finally a 26+ to get her all the way to Faerie (across the boundaries of level 1, 3, 5, 8, and 10). Our prince shouldn't have any trouble unless he botches. The girl will probably notice something is amiss before he has taken her too far, however (see **Noticing Regio**), unless he takes care to keep her distracted.*

Let's say that the girl wakes up the next morning and wishes to leave by herself. She needs to roll a 26+ to leave the highest level (what she needed to get in), modified by +9 (+3 for summer, +5 for dawn, and +1 for some familiarity [from a generous Storyguide]). Looks like she'll be wandering for a while unless she gets lucky and doubles.

Players may also try to enter *regio* deliberately. The procedure for entering is the same, except that they will probably use spells or some other means to aid their cause. The Storyguide will have to judge the effectiveness of their preparations on a case-by-case basis. Possible methods

Modifiers for Entering Regio

This table lists the most common things that can modify a person's chance of entering or leaving a *regio*. It is by no means complete and is meant only as a guideline for possible modifiers. Individual Storyguides will often have to make judgment calls on a case-by-case basis. An (F) or (M) following the description indicates the bonus is only good for Faerie or Magical *regio* respectively. Remember that these bonuses add or subtract to the die roll, not the number needed to beat to enter the *regio*.

Season or Particular Day:

- 5 for Winter.
- 3 for Autumn.
- +3 for Spring.
- +5 for Summer.
- +10 for Midsummer's Eve, and proportionately less for other pagan holidays.
- 10 for Christmas Eve, and proportionately less negative for other predominately Christian Holidays.

Time of Day:

- +8 for a full moon, down to no bonus for no moon.
- +5 for dusk or dawn.
- +3 for nighttime.
- 3 for daytime.
- 5 for high noon.

Weather:

- +1-5 for fog or mist.
- +3 for rain.

Previous Knowledge:

+1-10 for familiarity with the *regio* (previous visits, reading about it in books, etc.). A good rule of thumb is +1 for the first visit, and an additional +1 for every two visits thereafter to a maximum of +10.

Help from others:

variable (+ or -) for the aid or hindrance of a being who is native to the *regio* and can travel through it freely. Most beings can add or subtract up to half of their might score to other's attempts to cross over (lower this to one quarter if the being is entering a strange *regio*).

Characteristics:

Per - for finding the boundary or following someone through at a distance.

Virtues and Flaws:

- +3 for Faerie Blood or Faerie Upbringing (F).
- +3 for Magic Susceptibility (M).
- +5 for Susceptibility to Faerie Power (F).
- +5 for simple-minded.
- 6 for Withstand Magic.

Useful Abilities:

Awareness Talents, Magic Sensitivity, Visions, Track, Concentration, Magic Theory, (Area) Lore, Faerie Lore, Legend Lore.

Useful Techniques and Forms:

Intéllego Vim (for finding), Rego or Muto Vim (for entering).

Emotions:

variable (+) - Strong feelings of loss, sadness, fear, or desperation may cause the spirit of the Earth Mother to try and comfort the being by drawing them to her. Also, someone with a love of nature may find it easier to enter a *regio*.

State of Mind:

variable (+ or -) - A person in a contemplative or reflective state of mind may find their feet unconsciously leading them to the peace of some *regio*. Likewise a person lost or paying little attention to where they are going may stray into one. On the other hand, a person paying close attention to their travels or having a mind filled with everyday worries is unlikely to leave the mundane world.

Magic Items:

variable (+ or -) - Magic items may help one to enter *regio*. Charms or amulets against Faeries will hinder passage, while carrying certain flowers or trinkets may help cross boundaries (F).

Maps:

variable (+) - A set of arcane directions, whether memorized or printed on parchment, can help lead one into a *regio*. In certain cases it might make entry automatic, e.g., "Walk round the dying elm thrice, face the setting sun, and walk until you pass between a pair of oaks."

include: willing oneself into the *regio* (requiring concentration or meditation rolls to receive a bonus), saying certain arcane phrases or using charms learned from books or learned people, trying to attract Faeries to help in their endeavor, or using spontaneous Muto or Rego Vim spells. Be sure to take into account the time of day, season, and any previous encounters with the *regio*.

Leaving Regio

The rules for leaving a *regio* are basically the same as for entering them. When a being comes to a boundary leading to a lower level, they must roll a six plus two times the level *they are trying to leave*. Modifiers to the die roll are applied as normal with the exception that each time you try to leave a level and fail, the difficulty goes up by one. Beings who unsuccessfully try to leave a level will find themselves inexplicably doubling back on their tracks, and all paths or trails will lead in circles to keep the players within the *regio*. It

is possible for someone to become trapped in a high level of a *regio* when they linger too long. A person may find it easy to enter a high level of a *regio* on Midsummer's Eve and find it difficult to leave the next morning. A common Faerie trick is to aid an unwitting mortal into a high aura level, then leave them there to find their own way out. Fortunately, Faeries soon tire of mortals blundering about in their realm and often lead them out before too much damage is done.

Some *regio*, however, have a mystical charm that may make it difficult for people to leave of their own volition. Usually, this effect is restricted to the highest level of a powerful *regio* and not all people will feel its effects. When a group enters the highest level of an appealing *regio* that has an aura of eight or more, the Storyguide should carefully consider the demeanor of each character as well as noting the actions and reactions of each character to the *regio*. If any characters seem naturally drawn toward or fascinated by the area, those characters must make a personality roll that equals or beats the

level of the *regio* in order to leave. Examples of personality traits that add to the die roll are: loyal, reliable, distrustful and practical. Examples of personality traits that subtract from the die roll are: easily charmed, gullible, curious and love of nature. The Storyguide will have to determine which personality traits apply (as well as any other modifiers deemed necessary) on a case by case basis.

Noticing Regio

To notice the fact that you have left the mundane world and are traveling in a *regio* requires a base roll of Per + Area Lore (or Faerie Lore, if applicable) of 10+. Add the aura of the level you are in to your roll. For example, if you wander into a level one *regio*, you would add one to your roll, and if you entered level ten, you would add ten to your roll. Be subtle about successful rolls, especially if it was for a low-level *regio*. Describe how the light seems different, the colors brighter, the air sweeter, that the characters feel watched, or any number of small details that will give it away slowly. Players may also feel a slight tingle or shiver go up their spine whenever they cross a boundary.

Magic in Regio

Magic cast in a *regio* receives the bonuses (or penalties) for the aura of the level the caster is on (see *Ars Magica*, p.73). If, for example, a mage casts a spell on a level with a magical aura strength of five, five would be added to his roll.

It can be dangerous to use magic, especially *vis*, in *regio*. Multiple botches while using *vis* might result in warping the *regio*, briefly distorting reality or even trapping the magi inside a *regio* "bubble." At the Storyguide's option, magi may be required to roll twice the normal number of botch rolls while in a *regio*. Another danger of magic-use is the potential of attracting curious or angry creatures to the magi—many beings in *regio* are closely attuned to magic and might sense its use nearby.

Time and the Senses in Regio

Time within *regio* is quite unpredictable. Sometimes, no difference can be detected between time passing in the mundane world and a *regio*, but often, large discrepancies arise. Hours can become weeks, and years can shrink to minutes or seconds. How time flows in a particular *regio* is completely up to the whim of each Storyguide, but it is recommended that the effects become increasingly severe as the players travel into levels with higher aura strengths, e.g., Rip van Winkle-type time effects should probably be reserved for strength ten aura levels. This way, a person could wander in and out of the lowest level of a *regio* without realizing it, but might lose or gain a few hours or days when entering its higher levels.

Also note that, though people who are in adjacent levels of a *regio* can not see each other directly, they might catch fleeting glimpses of one another (Per + Alertness rolls of 15+). This "shadow" effect is magnified for more powerful beings, with Faerie Lords casting wavering images through several adjacent levels within a *regio*. Magi can try spontaneous magic using *Intéllego Vim* of Level 10 to see briefly across levels of a *regio*.

This is in contrast to the faeries and other denizens of the Forest who use long experience and minor magics to see easily across levels of *regio*.

Options

The preceding sections attempt to formalize and make rules for a common concept of folklore and mythology; that certain magical realms coexist with, but are magically separated from, our own. The best known example of this is Faerie—a fantastic place filled with elves, nymphs and dryads which mortals stumble into from time to time. Other examples include: mystical isles which only appear during the full moon; magical towers which can be seen on a certain equinox; or, hidden glades that can be reached only while wearing certain charms.

Any rules developed to deal with these diverse magical realms will, by necessity, be of a general nature. The rules presented above are merely that; guidelines to help the Storyguide deal with *regio* in a consistent and fair manner. If they need to be altered for a *regio* you have created, or to reward a particularly creative player's idea, feel free. In fact, it is perfectly reasonable to change these rules slightly from time to time to keep the players guessing—*regio* are strange places and what works for players one time might not work a second.

Exempli Gratia: Entering Regio without Moving Physically

A group from a covenant makes camp deep in the Forest directly below the center of a powerful regio. A curious elf-lord decides it would be entertaining to bring them to his home on level 8 of the regio. He makes his way to their camp, disguised as a bard and offers to sing in exchange for his dinner. As he sings and strums his lute, he begins to try and make the entire group move upward with him into the regio. It is Summer (+5), at night (+3), there is a slight mist covering the ground (+1), the elf-lord has tried to get his guests in the proper state of mind by singing stories of Faerie (the Storyguide gives this a +3), and the elf-lord is helping them as much as he can through his music (half of the elf-lord's Faerie Might of 20 gives +10), for a total of +22. The Storyguide decides that the elf-lord must bring them into the regio one level at a time, in the normal increments of 1, 3, 5, and 8. He also rules that it takes fifteen minutes of music to allow one roll.

After fifteen minutes of singing, the Storyguide rolls a 3 + 22 = 25; more than enough to bring them into the first level. At this time, extremely perceptive people might notice slight differences in their surroundings as per Noticing Regio, but no one rolls high enough. Similarly, the elf-lord is successful in bringing them through level 3 and into level 5 without a problem. On this level, things look different enough that one companion makes his Per roll and notices something unusual in the surroundings. The Storyguide tells him that the trees look taller and a bit paler than a moment ago, that the grass seems softer, the rocks around the fire seem different somehow. The companion decides that it is merely fatigue mixed with too much good wine, and continues listening to the bard.

The Storyguide rolls a 5 + 22 = 27 for the final step, and successfully brings the group to level eight of his regio (he needed a 22+). At this time, everyone makes their Per rolls; some notice that the stars are different, others that the trees are now enormous and silver, and still others that their fire now burns in a ring of carved rock. They jump up in alarm; the elf-lord lays down his instrument and welcomes the group to his land.

With all this in mind, here are a few examples of alternate rules concerning *regio*. Use them as you see fit.

Entering and Leaving: Many methods of entering and leaving magical realms can be found in fantastic literature and, while all are not appropriate to the world of *Ars Magica*, many can be translated into *Mythic Europe*™ quite easily. Crossing the border physically is perhaps the most common way and has already been presented. Other important ways of reaching *regio* don't involve movement at all, but rather use magic of some kind to transport beings upwards or downwards through a *regio's* layers. An example of this would be a person inadvertently going to sleep on the mundane level of an important *regio* and waking within some higher level. Another example would be magi casting spells from the mundane level of a *regio* to move upwards into the higher levels.

The rules governing these cases can easily be extrapolated from the existing rules by the Storyguide on a case-by-case basis. The Storyguide might rule, for example, that a

person sleeping on mundane soil within the bounds of a *regio* rolls upon waking to see if he or she has been transported to a higher level. The roll is made normally, with appropriate modifiers for time, place and the person's mood. If the roll is lower than an 8 (the minimum needed to enter a level one *regio*), the person remains in the world with which they are familiar. If, however, the roll is 8+, the person enters the *regio* at the highest level allowed by the roll. For example, if the person rolled a 13, they would wake on level 3 (if it exists) because the roll needed to enter level three is 12+. Likewise, using similar rules, the Storyguide may rule that it is possible for a person sleeping in a higher level of a *regio* to move down levels into the mundane world.

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