

Read This First

What the Kit Is

This is probably a different kind of "adventure" from what you are used to. More than simply being a story suited for use with **Ars Magica**, it is a new approach to role-playing. The story is more thematic and plot-oriented than adventure-oriented; and the characters, briefing sheets, and detailed storyguide notes make its presentation unique. With this kit,

you will be able to begin an **Ars Magica** game in under half an hour. The rules briefings and pre-generated characters make starting your first story a simple and painless procedure. Before your second story, you can make up your own characters, but at least then you'll have the benefit of experience with the rules.

To the Players

If you don't want to be the storyguide for this story, do yourself a big favor and do not read anything in this package until your storyguide hands it to you. If you read information meant for the storyguide only,

you'll just be ruining the story for yourself. It's worse than reading the last page of a mystery book before you're supposed to — because you might ruin the story for others and not just yourself.

Advice to the Storyguide

You should try to guide this story at a fast pace, avoiding delays and making sure no one gets bored. Whenever things

start to slow down, step in and maintain the level of energy and excitement that has already been built up. The dramatic

force of the story will be greatly improved if you concentrate on maintaining a steady rhythm to the story and by finding a way to get through the doldrums. When the players seem to be unsure as to what to do, throw a new encounter at them. If they aren't busy, make them busy. Simply go on to the next part of the kit and have something occur. If the players are sitting around, talking among themselves and not focusing on the story, turn to the magi and ask them, "What do you do?" They are the expedition leaders, so if you expect and insist that they make decisions — well, then they will (or at least they'd better...).

At some points in the story you will want to develop a certain mood, or encourage your players to react in a certain way. This is part of the job of the storyguide, to direct and sustain the involvement of the players and the tension of the plot. You cannot simply ask them to do this; it requires a little manipulation and direction. At times you will want the players to become emotional,

perhaps to become angry like their characters rightfully should. This tension and feeling of suspense in the players can be expressed as their characters' strongest passions later on. You can build this tension by demonstrating to the players a feeling of helplessness through playing up the strength and invulnerability of the Stormrider. Role-play out the taunts of the Stormrider as he swings by them. Role-players generally hate being ineffective; they can get really riled up, which paradoxically can be a lot of fun in role-playing. If you were particularly devious and cruel, you could casually point out the ineptitude of the players, and then laugh at them. (That'll get 'em ticked off for sure.)

So enjoy the story, and keep your mind open to the possibilities. We've done half the work for you, but the best part is yet to come. With your imagination and energy this story will come to life, to be shaped into mythic proportions by your capable hands. Remember, storyguides can be heroes too.

Background Briefing

Introduction

You are at the covenant of Mistridge, located in southern France in the land of Languedoc. It is the Year of our Lord 1197, and it is a time of heresy, chivalry, and the love ballads of troubadours. You are all inhabitants or friends of this magical covenant, which is a large stone tower located atop a mist-covered hill, under which deep catacombs extend. A wooden stockade, connected to the tower by an underground passage, lies beneath the tower at the foot of a small cliff. The grogs and many of the companions live in the buildings within these walls, while the wizards have their laboratories in the tower. The covenant overlooks the mystical Val du Bosque (Valley of the Woods) where the villages of the common folk lie, and it is overshadowed by the awesome bulk of Mount Tierné.

Currently it is a time of great turmoil at Mistridge, and all the wizards but Felix Necromius are at a tribunal of wizards in the mountains further to the south. The covenant is involved in a heated dispute with the covenant of Windgraven over a valuable magical pool on the slopes of Mount Tierné. Mistridge possesses it and Windgraven wants it. Tempers are high, and no one knows who will gain possession of the pool. It could mean a war between brothers of arcane lore.

Setting The Scene

A terrific storm came to the valley the past night. Trees were blown up

from their roots, it rained for hours, after sleeting for a time, and the wind ran through the tower continuously. None of you were able to sleep. It has been a frightening night, and you are glad the storm has passed.

The Legend of the Stormrider

You have all heard the legend of the Stormrider. It is said that with every great storm, he can be seen riding around the thunderclouds, guiding the lightning down to the homes of those who have angered him. Occasionally, after extremely severe storms, he actually comes to earth and rides about causing further death and destruction. His rage is that of the storm; he is the storm. He has caused much death and destruction in his repeated maraudings of the valley, though he has not been seen for years. The Stormrider murdered the great Sante Fabía, who was martyred on the point of his evil lance. He attacked the covenant on occasion, and ten years ago he killed a grog — Pol, Lorine's father — and would have killed Lucienne as well, had not Torlen wounded the rider and driven him off. This shows that he can be driven off with mortal weapons, but he is still more than a match for any human warrior. Yet the sight of a cross is said to be more than enough to scare him away.

You have heard many stories about the Stormrider. Some say that he is one of the Four Horsemen of the

Background Briefing, cont'd

Apocalypse, others say he is a man of immense magical might and fury, while yet others say that he is the storm itself and nothing more. Grimgroth has written a treatise on air elementals in which he proposes that the Stormrider is an elemental.

The Characters

Here are the eight characters who can be part of this story.

- Lucienne (loo-see-EN): Wizard of the Evermutating Air and the Ever-changing Mind. The Stormrider nearly killed her when she was younger, and she seeks vengeance.

- Torlen (TORE-len): This aged warrior is the sergeant of the grogs. Strong-willed, with a great deal of common sense (he gets advice from the storyguide on occasion), he is like an uncle to Lucienne.

- Clobi (KLOH-bee): An immense and well-trained ax-man. Sometimes aggressive and brutish, sometimes gentle. He was once an executioner for a local knight; now he is loyal to Lucienne.

- Lorine (loh-REEN): A practical and sensible woman, as well as a capable archer. Her father was savagely murdered by the Stormrider, and she looks for revenge. She and Lucienne have that in common.

- Caeron (CARE-on): Wizard of the Unseen Touch and of the Verdant Forest. An energetic and witty young magus, who still carries a chip on his shoulder.

- Tomas (TOH-mas): A well-educated but gloomy scholar who is a

friend of Caeron's. On occasion he sees into the world of spirits and is struck with visions. He does not engage in armed combat.

- Ramón (rah-MOHN): A very cautious scout and warrior. He's an excellent tracker with an intuitive understanding of the wilds. He owes Caeron a favor.

- Jeremé (jair-ah-MAY): Shield grog for Caeron, this stout fellow loyally stands by him at all times. Ever since Lorine rejected his advances, however, he's been enjoying his wine overmuch.

In this story you should endeavor not only to role-play out your character's flaws, but as the story progresses you should try to find ways to resolve your differences with other characters and learn to control your own anger. Your character is not a painting that is frozen in time, but a changing and maturing individual — character development is the key to good storytelling. Play out your emotions strongly at first, and then try to evolve into a more mature role as the story progresses.

The Grog Pack

Every grog at Mistridge carries a grog pack when they go out on a mission. This pack includes twenty feet of rope, six days of supplies for one, two blankets, two torches, a cooking utensil of some sort, a tinder box, and a knife. The total Load of this pack is only 2. It has already been computed on the character sheets of the warriors going on this mission.

Basic Briefing

Character Types (p. 13)

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While the character types are not balanced in terms of power, they have distinct roles that are important parts of the story, and all three types are fun to play.

Characteristics (p. 15)

Characteristics describe the untrained potential of your character, including such things as strength, presence, and dexterity. The average score for a characteristic is 0. A positive score indicates an above average characteristic while a negative score indicates a below average trait. Thus Clobi, with a -2 Dexterity, is something of a klutz, while Ramón, with a +2 Dexterity, is agile and nimble. Characteristic scores generally range from -5 to +5.

Characteristics are added to relevant rolls. For instance, if Ramón were trying to climb a tree, he would add his +2 Dex to his roll. But if Clobi were trying to climb a tree, he would have to add his -2 Dex to the roll, thus giving him a penalty.

Your eight characteristics are listed near the top of your character sheet.

Intelligence (Int)- thinking power

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Quickness (Qik)- speed of motion & reaction

Virtues & Flaws (p. 16)

Your Virtues & Flaws show how your character is qualitatively different from other characters. They are a big part of your character conception and can have an important effect on play, so familiarize yourself with them thoroughly. The effects of most Virtues & Flaws are already taken into account in your character's stats.

Stress & Simple Rolls (p. 8)

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might have **botched**. You must roll again, and if you roll a second "0" you have botched, and something very bad occurs. In particularly hazardous situations the storyguide might have you roll multiple times to see if you've botched. (Note: If you are re-rolling after rolling a 1, a "0" means 10.)

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When using an ability, you roll a die, then add the appropriate characteristic score and the appropriate ability score. Compare the total to the **ease factor**, a number provided by the storyguide (gamemaster). The harder the task, the higher the ease factor. If your total beats or equals the ease factor, you have succeeded.

You also have a **specialty** listed for each ability (designated "SP:"). If you attempt an action that falls within this specialty, you get an additional +1 bonus.

For Example: Ramón tries to climb a tree. The storyguide rules that the ease factor is 6, that Dex is the appropriate characteristic, and that Climb is the appropriate ability. **Ramón rolls a die (and gets a 5) + Dex (+2) + Climb (2) = a roll of 9.** In addition, Ramón gets a +4 bonus with all rolls related to the forest because of his virtue Way of the Woods, so his final roll is 13. Ramón's roll easily beats the

ease factor, and he successfully climbs the tree.

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Combat Briefing

Combat rules reproduce the dangerous nature of medieval warfare. Be careful, because a botched Soak roll can bring death even to a mighty warrior, and wounds are a serious matter. Be brave when bravery is called for, but don't be foolhardy. Avoid combat when you can.

The Five Combat Rolls (p. 49)

In *Ars Magica* combat, five rolls are important; look for the bonuses you get to these rolls near the bottom of your character sheet. All of these totals have been derived from other scores on your character sheet. They are:

First Strike (1st)- This roll decides how quickly you can strike with a particular weapon. You have a separate 1st for each weapon (because some weapons strike faster than others and you are more skilled with some than with others).

Attack (Atk)- How likely you are to connect with a particular weapon.

Damage (Dam)- How likely you are to hurt an enemy once you connect with the weapon.

Defense (Def)- How well you can avoid being hit, either by parrying with a weapon or by dodging.

Soak- How well you can withstand physical damage without getting seriously hurt. It depends mostly on your armor.

Making Combat Rolls (p. 47)

Each round (about 6 seconds) you can do one thing, such as hurl a spear, cast a spell, or swing a sword.

Who Goes First? 1st vs. 1st

When two combatants meet, each makes a 1st roll (a stress die + the 1st total for the weapon being used). The one who rolls higher strikes the other first and then the one who rolled lower strikes back. This order of attacks continues throughout the battle between these two opponents.

Do You Hit? Attack vs. Defense

When it is your turn to attempt to strike another combatant, you roll a stress die and add your Atk total for the weapon you are using. The target of your attack rolls a stress die and adds Def. If your Atk roll exceeds the Def roll, you have hit and might do damage (see below). Otherwise your opponent has evaded your blow.

Do You Do Damage? Damage vs. Soak

Once you have hit (see above), you roll to see if you have damaged your opponent. Roll a simple die + Dam and compare the total to our opponent's roll of a stress die + Soak. If your total is equal to or below that of your opponent, you have not damaged your opponent. If your Dam roll is higher than your opponent's Soak roll, your opponent loses one body level for each 5 points by which your roll exceeds your opponent's. (See below for the effect of damage.)

Combat Briefing, Cont'd

Missile Weapons (p. 47)

Missile weapons are handled somewhat differently from melee weapons.

1) There is no 1st roll. Missile weapons that were aimed in a previous round are loosed at the beginning of the round. Those aimed in the current round are loosed at the end of the round.

2) There is no Def roll for the target. The storyguide sets an ease factor according to the difficulty of the shot, and you must match this ease factor to score a hit.

Wounds (p. 52)

Each character has a number of body levels, each of which indicates a different level of wounds. As you are injured, you lose body levels. Look at the column of body levels on your character sheet. An X already marks the "Unhurt" level, meaning that at the start of the game you are not injured. As you lose body levels (and put X's in progressively lower boxes), you become more wounded. Each body level between Light and Heavy Wounds has a penalty associated with it (-1, -3, and -5). When you are at one of these levels, you suffer this penalty on all actions (but not on Soak rolls). When Incapacitated, you can take no action at all. If you lose a body level past Incapacitated, you are dead.

It is hard to recover from wounds. If you treat someone's wounds, roll a die + Chirurgy (a skill) + Int. If you roll a 9+, the other character regains a body level. If you roll a 3+, you have at least stabilized the wounds so they

won't get worse. (Torlen and Jeremé have the skill Chirurgy.)

Fatigue (p. 54)

During combat, you will have to make Fatigue rolls. Every time you move immediately from one strenuous activity to another without pausing a round, such as fighting first one opponent and then another, you must make a Fatigue roll. Roll a die + your Fatigue total (listed above your fatigue levels). If you roll 6+, you avoid fatigue. Otherwise you lose a fatigue level, and penalties apply like wound penalties. Wound and fatigue penalties are cumulative. You recover quickly from fatigue, unless it is the result of prolonged exertion.

Brawling (p. 50)

It is possible to fight without weapons, performing such maneuvers as wresting a weapon from an opponent, tackling, immobilizing, or throwing an opponent to the ground. These maneuvers depend on rolls that use your Brawl score and various characteristics as modifiers. Player-characters fighting one another in this adventure, if it comes to that, will use brawling rules.

Complications

Rules that cover a variety of specific situations, such as damage from falling and striking from advantage, are available to the storyguide, but they do not warrant discussion here. Ask the storyguide about your options, but remember this may be their first time running *Ars Magica*, so don't make their job too difficult.

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Defense (Def)- How well you can avoid being hit, either by parrying with a weapon or by dodging.

Soak- How well you can withstand physical damage without getting seriously hurt. It depends mostly on your armor.

Making Combat Rolls (p. 47)

Each round (about 6 seconds) you can do one thing, such as hurl a spear, cast a spell, or swing a sword.

Who Goes First? 1st vs. 1st

When two combatants meet, each makes a 1st roll (a stress die + the 1st total for the weapon being used). The one who rolls higher strikes the other first and then the one who rolled lower strikes back. This order of attacks continues throughout the battle between these two opponents.

Do You Hit? Attack vs. Defense

When it is your turn to attempt to strike another combatant, you roll a stress die and add your Atk total for the weapon you are using. The target of your attack rolls a stress die and adds Def. If your Atk roll exceeds the Def roll, you have hit and might do damage (see below). Otherwise your opponent has evaded your blow.

Do You Do Damage? Damage vs. Soak

Once you have hit (see above), you roll to see if you have damaged your opponent. Roll a simple die + Dam and compare the total to our opponent's roll of a stress die + Soak. If your total is equal to or below that of your opponent, you have not damaged your opponent. If your Dam roll is higher than your opponent's Soak roll, your opponent loses one body level for each 5 points by which your roll exceeds your opponent's. (See below for the effect of damage.)

Combat Briefing, Cont'd

Missile Weapons (p. 47)

Missile weapons are handled somewhat differently from melee weapons.

1) There is no 1st roll. Missile weapons that were aimed in a previous round are loosed at the beginning of the round. Those aimed in the current round are loosed at the end of the round.

2) There is no Def roll for the target. The storyguide sets an ease factor according to the difficulty of the shot, and you must match this ease factor to score a hit.

Wounds (p. 52)

Each character has a number of body levels, each of which indicates a different level of wounds. As you are injured, you lose body levels. Look at the column of body levels on your character sheet. An X already marks the "Unhurt" level, meaning that at the start of the game you are not injured. As you lose body levels (and put X's in progressively lower boxes), you become more wounded. Each body level between Light and Heavy Wounds has a penalty associated with it (-1, -3, and -5). When you are at one of these levels, you suffer this penalty on all actions (but not on Soak rolls). When Incapacitated, you can take no action at all. If you lose a body level past Incapacitated, you are dead.

It is hard to recover from wounds. If you treat someone's wounds, roll a die + Chirurgy (a skill) + Int. If you roll a 9+, the other character regains a body level. If you roll a 3+, you have at least stabilized the wounds so they

won't get worse. (Torlen and Jeremé have the skill Chirurgy.)

Fatigue (p. 54)

During combat, you will have to make Fatigue rolls. Every time you move immediately from one strenuous activity to another without pausing a round, such as fighting first one opponent and then another, you must make a Fatigue roll. Roll a die + your Fatigue total (listed above your 'fatigue levels'). If you roll 6+, you avoid fatigue. Otherwise you lose a fatigue level, and penalties apply like wound penalties. Wound and fatigue penalties are cumulative. You recover quickly from fatigue, unless it is the result of prolonged exertion.

Brawling (p. 50)

It is possible to fight without weapons, performing such maneuvers as wresting a weapon from an opponent, tackling, immobilizing, or throwing an opponent to the ground. These maneuvers depend on rolls that use your Brawl score and various characteristics as modifiers. Player-characters fighting one another in this adventure, if it comes to that, will use brawling rules.

Complications

Rules that cover a variety of specific situations, such as damage from falling and striking from advantage, are available to the storyguide, but they do not warrant discussion here. Ask the storyguide about your options, but remember this may be their first time running *Ars Magica*, so don't make their job too difficult.

Combat Briefing

Combat rules reproduce the dangerous nature of medieval warfare. Be careful, because a botched Soak roll can bring death even to a mighty warrior, and wounds are a serious matter. Be brave when bravery is called for, but don't be foolhardy. Avoid combat when you can.

The Five Combat Rolls (p. 49)

In *Ars Magica* combat, five rolls are important; look for the bonuses you get to these rolls near the bottom of your character sheet. All of these totals have been derived from other scores on your character sheet. They are:

First Strike (1st)- This roll decides how quickly you can strike with a particular weapon. You have a separate 1st for each weapon (because some weapons strike faster than others and you are more skilled with some than with others).

Attack (Atk)- How likely you are to connect with a particular weapon.

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Magic Briefing

Ars Magica has a comprehensive magic system, but for your first session, you need only concern yourself with how to cast spells. There are two kinds of spells you can cast: **formulaic spells**, that are dependable but work only in specific ways; and **spontaneous spells**, that are weak but versatile.

Magic Arts (p. 61)

Fifteen arts represent your mastery of various aspects of magic. They are:

Techniques	Meanings
Creo	(I create)
Intéllego	(I perceive)
Muto	(I transform)
Perdo	(I destroy)
Rego	(I control)
Forms	Meanings
Animál	(animal)
Aquam	(water)
Auram	(air)
Córporem	(body)
Herbam	(plant)
Ignem	(fire)
Imágonem	(image)
Mentem	(mind)
Terram	(earth)
Vim	(magic)

Two arts, one technique and one form, describe a typical spell. The technique describes what the spell does. The form is what the spell affects. For instance, Caeron's formulaic spell *Twist the Living Tree* is *Muto Herbam* because it transforms a tree.

Forms can also protect you from mundane danger. For every full 5 points you have in a form, you get +1 on rolls to

protect you from related dangers. Lucienne's score of 7 in *Auram*, for example, would give her a +1 on a roll to resist being blown over by a gale.

Formulaic Spells (p.63)

The formulaic spells you have studied and learned are listed in your grimoire. You may cast any of these spells whenever you want. The spell's Level shows how hard it is to cast.

To cast a formulaic spell, **roll a die and add your casting bonus**. If your roll **matches or beats the spell's Level**, you have cast the spell with no fatigue. If you roll **within 10 points of the spell's Level**, you have cast the spell but lose a fatigue level. If you roll **more than 10 points below the Level**, the spell fails and you lose a fatigue level.

- If the spell must be aimed, see the section on Targeting.
- If you must overcome the target's magic resistance, see the section on Magic Resistance.

For Example: Caeron casts *Converse with Plants and Trees* (Level 25). He rolls a 4 + 17 (his casting bonus) for a total of 21. The total is 4 points lower than the spell's Level, so he succeeds in casting the spell but loses a fatigue level in the process.

Spontaneous Spells (p. 64)

The more flexible but less powerful method for casting a spell is called **spontaneous magic**. With this kind of magic you can do almost anything, provided you have enough magical skill. You determine what effect you want to have, and based on that effect, you determine the technique and form involved. You can choose any combination of technique and form, even if

Magic Briefing, Cont'd

you have no formulaic spells of that combination.

To cast a spontaneous spell:

1) Decide the effect you seek; based on the effect, decide the technique and form.

2) Decide whether you will exert yourself in casting the spell.

3) Roll a die and add your Technique + Form + Int. If you are exerting yourself, divide the total by 2. If you are not exerting yourself, divide the total by 5. The result is the Level of the spell. The storyguide determines the actual effect based on this Level.

4) If you exerted yourself, lose one fatigue level.

- If the effect must be aimed (storyguide's discretion), see the Targeting section.

- If the target has magic resistance, see the section on Magic Resistance.

Spontaneous spells are rarely effective outside of a magus's specialties in the arts, and even then only minor effects are typical. So don't try to do too much with spontaneous magic; it is weak for beginning magi.

Targeting (p. 65)

Some spells must be aimed to strike a target. For each of these spells you have a **Targeting total**. (Spells without Targeting totals need not be aimed.) To see whether you hit your target, roll a die and add your Targeting total. If the roll matches an ease factor set by the storyguide (based on the difficulty of the aiming), you have struck the target.

For Example: The storyguide rules that Caeron needs an 8 to hit with his Piercing Shaft of Wood. He rolls a 2 + 5 (his Targeting total) for a total of 7, so he just misses his target.

Magic Resistance (p. 66)

Magical creatures can sometimes resist the effects of your spell. To affect a creature with magic resistance, your Penetration roll must exceed the target's magic resistance roll. Your Penetration total equals the **roll you made to cast the spell plus your Penetration talent**.

You have magic resistance as well. Each magus has a skill in creating a magical defense called a *parma magica*. At dawn and dusk you perform a ritual and then you are protected until the sun sets or rises, whichever comes next. As long as you are under a *parma magica*'s protection, you get a bonus on your magic resistance of 5 times your *Parma Magica* score.

The Dominion (p. 72)

Your magic is affected by the nature of the surroundings. When you are in holy areas, or even an area inhabited by the faithful, such as in the village of Javielle, you receive a penalty on your magic rolls. In wilderness areas you receive no penalty, and in Mistridge you even get a +3 bonus on all spells because of the magical aura of the place.

Magical Affinities (p. 24)

Your magus has specialties in magic, represented by affinities that appear on the character sheet as abilities. You can add your score in an affinity to rolls involving the kind of magic specified. Lucienne's score of 4 in Affinity: Muto gives her +4 with Muto spells. Caeron gets a +3 bonus with Herbam magic because of his affinity. (These bonuses are figured into your casting bonuses.)

The Stormrider — Basic Stats

For the Storyguide Only!

The Stormrider

Magic Might 15

Size 0 Int -4

Furious +7

Lance: 1st +16 Atk +14 Dam +19

Sword: 1st +10 Atk +13 Dam +16

Lightning:

Rate 1/round Atk +6 Dam +25

Fat +8 Def +5 Soak +15*

* Soak is +30 against anyone who is enraged

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

If no one opposing him is truly angry, he cannot become the Stormrider. In this story at the last scene, it will require two angry people to make him become the Stormrider.

Power:

Circle of Passion: If the flaming hoofprint ever completely encircle an opponent, that person becomes highly passionate, far more so than normal. Being within the circle simply makes you all emotion, no thought. Whatever emotion you are beginning to feel, you feel twice as much as you normally would. You make a normal personality roll, and then double the result. The effects of this power will usually be noticed only when a character makes a personality roll. The storyguide, however, should have them make personality rolls at the slightest provocation. Use the chart on p. 11 of this supplement to judge the effect of this power on an individual.

Storm Steed

Magic Might 15

Size +2 Cun -1

Frenzied +4

Gore: 1st +5 Atk +7 Dam +17

Fat — Def +2 Soak +20

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

Power:

Winds of Distraction- When in combat, the Storm Steed calls up winds that whip around it at high speeds,

carrying rain, mist and debris, distracting its opponents. All those within 3 paces of it must subtract 3 from all their rolls (except for Soak), roll one extra botch roll, and magi must make Intelligence + Concentration rolls of 6+ to successfully cast any spell.

Description:

This is actually not an animal at all but an air elemental, a magical creature of the air, and in this case of the

storm itself. Being of the storm, this elemental is ferocious, destructive, extremely powerful, and violent. While normally it stays with the storm as its animate, conscious portion, occasionally it will build up so much violent rage (which for it means simply power) that it will form a corporeal body, that of a horse. In this form it flies to the earth to cause more destruction than it can from the air. But it cannot do so without the aid of a human, a human filled with rage, who will ride it upon the earth. In such

Fallemon

Magic Might 13

Size 0 Int +2

Bitter +5

Sword: 1st +3 Atk +6 Dam +10

Fat -5 Def +5 Soak +13

Body Levels: 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated.

Fatigue levels: 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Powers:

If he uses his magical powers in two consecutive rounds, he loses a fatigue level. Otherwise he can cast his magic indefinitely — this is a powerful man. However, since he is exhausted from his nocturnal journey in the valley, he begins the battle at weary (-1).

Way of the Winds- He can cast the equivalent of spontaneous Auram spells up to Level 35. His favored spells are Charge of the Angry Winds (ReAu 30) to slow a group down and Incantation of Lightning (CrAu 35) to

cases the steed can cause immense destruction upon the earth for it gives its human rider many powers (including many of those delineated in the description of the Stormrider, though for different riders, different powers may be used). We describe the steed separately from the Stormrider only because at the conclusion of the story the characters may find themselves battling it alone.

The beast's black spiral horns are worth 10 Auram *vis* each.

kill individual enemies. If threatened too seriously, he can fly away, as Wings of the Soaring Wind (ReAu 25).

Way of Fire- He can cast the equivalent of spontaneous Ignem spells up to Level 20. His favorite effects are Pile of Fire (CrIg 20), Leap of the Fire (ReIg 15), and Hornet Fire (MuIg 15).

Way of Water- He can cast the equivalent of spontaneous Aquam spells up to Level 10. Favored effects are Creeping Oil (CrAq 10) and Parching Wind (PeAq 10).

Description:

The calmer side to the Stormrider, the form he has when he isn't enraged. Though he doesn't have the powers of the Stormrider, he does have great power over the elements, a control which he gained after he first became the Stormrider.

He is tired, so he can't do very many spells anymore, but he is still a very powerful magical savant.

Background to the Stormrider

For the Storyguide Only!

One hundred and twenty years ago there was a young boy named Fallemon, son to Baron d'Uverre. He spent his youth with his twin brother at the castle, but when his burgeoning magical talents were detected, he was sent away to live at the family's hunting lodge in the mountains. His father did not want him to darken the good name of d'Uverre. Out in the wilds with only servants for company, Fallemon developed the power to control the elements, but he always longed to take his place in society, even though he would most likely be shunned. He envied his twin, who had power, fame, and pleasant company, while he had to live poorly and far from the warmth of human laughter. He was horribly lonely, and though he was not supposed to, he began to experiment with his powers over air, water, and fire.

As a young man, he began to spend some time in the villages of Val du Bosque, posing as his twin brother. One day, near the village of Javielle, he met and fell in love with a beautiful young shepherdess. Her name was Fabía.

Love was a force stronger than any of his powers, and he reveled in this newfound experience. All at once his loneliness was gone. For months he courted her, visiting her as often as he could, and he told her his true identity. Though he was a very strange and troubled man, Fabía took pity on him and became his friend. One day he took her to a grove of pines on the slope of Mt. Tierné intending to profess his undying love for her.

Tragically, a divine revelation had convinced her long ago to dedicate her life to the Church, and when Fallemon asked

her to be his wife, she replied that she could not for she had dedicated her life to another — to God. Fallemon, however, assumed she meant another man, namely his brother, and he flew into a terrible rage. He struck her, knocking her into a wild rosebush, scarring her soft cheek. He then strode off, consumed by anger, and invented strange fantasies in his head. He convinced himself that his brother had told Fabía of his magical nature and had warned her that he was dangerous. He began to plan his brother's death as he stalked through the darkening woods, and he didn't notice as raindrops began to strike him.

Swirling in the storm above him was an air elemental, one that feeds on rage. It took the form of a mighty horse and flew out of the clouds to Fallemon. Fallemon took the horse as a magical creature come to aid him, but when he touched the beast's glistening neck, an immense feeling of power surged through him, turning him into the Stormrider. He gained incredible powers from the elemental in horse form, but under its influence his rage was mightily increased — and for a time he lost all sense of himself and all sense of moderation. He became rage.

Soon his rage grew so strong that he could not control himself, and he rampaged through the countryside for hours before going off to fight his brother. He attacked Castle d'Uverre, and there he slew his father. After that, his rage died a little and he retreated to Mt. Tierné and the clouds above it.

Years later he came upon his brother and killed him. However Fabía came along and healed him, performing her first mir-

Background to the Stormrider

acle. Years after that, while in a rage, he saw Fabía, and tried to grab her and carry her away. The villagers she was with tried to prevent him, so he slew many of them. Then lightning from the storm which was called up around him struck Fabía and killed her. Though he did not directly slay her, legend has it that it was he who murdered her, and this he believes to be true.

The Stormrider actually has three forms. When calm, he is Fallemon, by now a very old man, but still in possession of his mind and most of his powers. He spends his time roaming the mountain-side and the clouds, living in a dream world in which he still plots revenge against his brother and makes plans for marrying Fabía. When he becomes angry, he mounts his steed and flies through the air, creating a storm. Inhabitants of the valley have seen him flying in the clouds from time to time. In this form, the horse is immaterial but can bear him up magically. But on those rare occasions when the Stormrider's anger becomes blind fury, the horse takes solid form and drops to the earth. The Stormrider then rides about causing great ruin. If he keeps something of his mind about him, he may remember to attack Castle d'Uverre; but even when he does, he is so wrapped in his malice that he forgets that his brother is long dead.

There are many stories about who and

what the Stormrider really is. Grimgroth has written a well-known treatise that states he's an elemental. Perhaps Grimgroth was right after all. The real essence of the Stormrider is the black steed, and no one really knows how much it controls him.

If they kill the Stormrider's horse but the Stormrider escapes, he will become Fallemon again. At that point most of his rage will pass, though he will still defend himself if attacked.

The Stormrider might again pop up in the saga, even if he dies in this story. This is because any inherently magical person can become the Stormrider if the conditions are right: they become enraged over something during a large storm in Val du Bosque. At that time the storm elemental that can take the form of the black steed can come and make this person a Stormrider. Thus this story never really need end.

However, if you do use the Stormrider again in your saga, give him or her new powers and limitations and try to create an interesting story behind the new rider. You will probably want to use a new emotion; in this story it was jealous rage, but you might want to use fearful rage or some other variation. Remember, at base the Stormrider is a beast of emotion, and the story you weave about the Stormrider must be about that emotion, and should in fact teach something about it.

The Visions Page

The Beautiful Maiden

You are suddenly lifted from your body and feel yourself in another time and another place. It is a warm, beautiful day; you can feel the warm glow of the sun on your skin, but you are sad and lonely. As you wander through an open meadow, you come upon a beautiful maiden sitting beneath a small oak tree holding a lamb in her lap, a group of five sheep graze around her. You are stunned by her beauty and are too frightened to speak. For a time, you watch her in secret. Finally, you summon the courage to draw closer to her and to speak words of love. At first she is startled, but slowly she smiles, and soon you are speaking to her of idle thoughts. She is friendly, kind, and very beautiful.

Rage

You are speaking with a beautiful maiden in a pristine glade in the middle of a grove of pines, offering her words of love. But she says to you, "I am sorry, but I have dedicated my life to another, and I cannot be yours." You cannot believe what you hear. Slowly you rise to your feet. You try to stay calm, but helplessly you feel a rage boil from within. You spring forward, pick up the maiden and brutally throw her to the ground against some thorn bushes. Then you see only darkness. When the darkness passes, the maiden is lying beneath you in a crumpled heap on the ground. She does not stir. In a rage, you rush off up the mountain, under the gloom of an approaching storm.

The Grove of Pines

You see a grove of pines on the lower slopes of a great mountain range. It's a bright, sunny day, though dark clouds do linger near the higher peaks. You are riding a horse, and beside you there is a young woman astride a white destrier. Near a grove of pines, you dismount and then easily lift the lady down from her mount. Together with her, you walk to a glade in the middle of the pine grove and sit amidst the flowers. Soon a servant walks out from a stone cottage hidden beneath a tall fir and brings you food and wine.

Young Boy

You stand at the river bank under the lee of a castle, a servant stands near the boat, holding your coat. Holding onto you tightly is a weeping woman. Though you are sad, you do not cry; it is not the time for tears. A young boy in noble robes, looking much like the man beside him, smirks with glee. The older man speaks to you, "It is for your own good, lad. You have the evil in you, and you must learn to control it. If you learn to control your powers, we will welcome to Castle D'uverre." You hate him, and before you can think better of it you shout, "I'll return, Father, but when I do it'll be with a sword in my hand."

Interpretations

You are obviously very attracted to this woman; you are in love. As you spoke with her, an immense feeling of loneliness was lifted from your shoulders. Meeting her has changed your life... whoever you are.

The woman is still alive and is not seriously harmed.

You understand this to have happened in the past in Val du Bosque. While you are certainly happy, and deeply in love, you notice that the woman appears to be somewhat somber, a little worried perhaps.

You are but a young boy, and are being sent off because your family fears you. They wish you to learn to control your powers, so that they can welcome you back home again.

The Visions Page

The Storm

There is a horrible storm rolling across a valley. Ahead of you, a steep hill rises in the dark night. Wind blows the trees to and fro, rain pelts down from the heavens, and cracks of lightning open the sky. As you struggle to climb the hill, your mind is a confused morass of agony, anger, and indecision. You climb as if you were being chased by a ghost, or fleeing from some ghastly deed. Suddenly, you are illuminated by a nearby flash of lightning, as a glistening black steed rides out of the clouds above. Slowly you reach out to touch its mane, and when you do, you are confused no more. You have immense strength, a lance with great power in your hand, and chain mail, stained black, covering your body. You sense powerful magic. You can feel only your rage—and it feels good.

Oedipus

Through the blur of falling rain, you ride up towards Castle d'Uverre, only it is much smaller than Castle d'Uverre as you know it now. There is only the central keep and some low stone walls. You shout at a knight who stands among his men at the gate of the keep. You yell and you rant and you rave. Then you begin to ride around the castle, shooting lightning at the walls and at the men below. They run like ants from a fire, and you are the fire. You laugh with joy. Then you see an older knight walking alone out of the castle. He says, "Falle, put down your sword; put aside your rage. It is not right. I forgive you for your intentions; you are confused. Come inside and be with us." But you waste little time before you ride up and strike him down. As he lies dying on the ground below you, you feel a cold sense of satisfaction at your work, and you ride away towards your home in the mountains.

The Miracle

The villagers taunt and scream at you, but you don't seem to notice, because before you is your brother. Lying on his back on the ground with the tip of your blade at his throat, he begs you to have mercy on him. But of that feeble emotion, you feel little. Without pity or remorse, you slip your blade into his throat, killing him at once. You expected to feel jubilation, but the darkness in your heart only increased, and you find your rage tainted by your confusion.

Then from behind you hear the soft voice of a woman. "You must go, Falle. Do not return to me until you have forgiven yourself." You turn around to see your only love. She bends toward your brother, and holds his head in her arms. She whispers soothingly and strokes his hair; then the impossible happens: He opens his eyes, and a after a moment sits up. Your brother lives; it is a miracle.

Interpretations

This is when you first became the Stormrider. You realize that this vision has so profoundly affected you that you must add +1 to all your personality rolls for the remainder of the story. This creature must be the Devil himself.

You have just slain your father, and he is not the only family member you have slain. He deserved death, however, for it was he who ruined you as a child.

Your brother had wronged you in a number of ways, taking everything that was important to you: stealing your heritage as well as your true love. He turned your parents against you, and convinced your father to send you into exile. Your hate for him is total and consuming. Your life is ruined because of him; you will never find happiness because of him; all of your sorrow is due to him.

Sante Fabía

Patron Saint of the Distressed, of Healing, and of the Wild Lands.

Sante Fabía was a beautiful young woman who was born one hundred and twenty years ago. She was a naive shepherd's daughter then, who became friends with the poor Fallemon, whom she thought to be a nobleman from Castle d'Uverre. He fell in love with her, not knowing, however, that she had already realized that she would only be happy with a greater devotion, a greater love, and had decided to devote her life to God.

When she told Fallemon that she was dedicating her life to another (meaning to God), he flew into a rage, knocked her into a rose bush, and stormed off. She recovered, though she retained the scars on her cheek, entered the convent, and began a holy life. Soon thereafter however, she performed her first miracle. The Stormrider attacked and killed his brother while he was out traveling, and Sister Fabía found him. Holding three roses from a nearby bush, she revived him from death. A stone cross and a shrine near Javielle mark the spot where this miracle occurred.

She healed several more people before she was martyred by the Stormrider's anger. After her death, the people of Val du Bosque successfully petitioned to have her declared a saint. She was canonized, and a convent was named in her honor.

Sante Fabía is traditionally depicted as a woman with a scarred left cheek and three roses in her right hand. (Since representational art has not developed, no one knows what she really looked like. Artists therefore must use symbols to portray her.)

Sante Fabía is unlikely to appear except under extreme circumstances. If she does, her powers are completely at your discretion. She is most likely to heal, comfort, cure diseases, and so on. If the characters ever pose a serious threat to the well-being of Val du Bosque, she may appear to heal and aid those who are protecting the valley.



The Dogs

Size -2 Cun -1

Per +4 Stm +1

Loyal +4

Bite: 1st +3 Atk +5 Dam +0

Brawl: 1st +3 Atk +4 Tackle +0

Fat +3 Def +3 Soak -1

Description:

These hunting dogs should be fairly easy to dispatch (if the characters are properly armed, that is). If the players are not careful, however, they may suffer wounds in the process — wounds which could hinder them later.

Body Levels:

Old One Eye	-1	-5	Incapacitated
Big Gray	-1	-5	Incapacitated
The Mongrel	-1	-5	Incapacitated
Raggedy Ears	-1	-5	Incapacitated
Young Ferocious	-1	-5	Incapacitated

The River Trolls

Magic Might 12

Size -2 Cun -3

Relentless +1

Claws: 1st +4 Atk +4 Dam +8

Fat — Def +5 Soak *

* These creatures have no Soak. If struck by a sharp weapon, or if struck by a blunt weapon that does at least 10 points of damage, the troll bursts and dies. Otherwise the weapon merely passes through the troll's watery body. When a troll "bursts," the characters may notice, on a Perception + Alertness roll of 8+, that some indescribable essence of the troll flows away with the water towards the river. If somehow this essence can be contained, it is worth 2 Aquam vis. Capturing it and containing it would require a container of some sort and a Dexterity roll of 8+.

Description:

These trolls are actually water elementals, magical spirits that animate a physical element. They have bodies of cohesive water, hair of river weeds, and rocks from the river bed for clubs. The characters will most likely fight them out of the water, where they are weak. Since the animating spirit is immortal, it cares little for the physical form it happens to be using. These elementals, therefore, are perfectly willing to fight to the death.

Elemental spirits rarely assume physical form, usually doing so only when called up by some magical force. In this case, the Stormrider calls them up as he crosses the water, and they serve him by keeping mortals from following him.

Name Clobi
 Player _____
 Covenant MISTRIDGE

Age 21
 Year Born 1175
 Current Year 1196
 Decrepitude 0

Gender M
 Size +1
 Confidence 2
 Current Cnf _____

Intelligence <u>-1</u>	Strength <u>+5</u>	Presence <u>-2</u>	Dexterity <u>-2</u>
Perception <u>-2</u>	Stamina <u>+3</u>	Communication <u>0</u>	Quickness <u>-2</u>

Abilities

Score

SPK PROVENCAL	<u>4</u>	ATHLETICS	<u>2</u>
SP: ANGRY WORDS		SP: ROLLING	
BATTLE AXE AMK	<u>5</u>	DRINKING	<u>2</u>
SP: COLD DE GRACE		SP: LARGE AMOUNTS	
BATTLE AXE PARRY	<u>3</u>		
SP: BLOCKING SWORDS			
BRAWL	<u>3</u>		
SP: RUNNING TACKLE			
ALERTNESS	<u>2</u>		
SP: SOFT SOUNDS			
SCAN	<u>1</u>		
SP: DISTANCE			
INTIMIDATION	<u>2</u>		
SP: VS. WARRIOR			

Virtues & Flaws

LARGE
GOOD ARMAMENTS
TOUGH
 RESERVES OF STRENGTH: ONCE PER DAY, ADD A +4 BONUS TO STR. ROLL.
LONGWINDED
 CLUMSY: EXTRA BOTCH W/ DEX-ROLLS INK. ATTACKS.
DUTY BOUND
 FURY: WHEN INT. OR BEANERY QUESTIONED YOU MUST ROLL 9+(STRESS) TO KEEP CALM. WHILE ENRAGED YOU GAIN +3 DAM, -2 ON ALL OTHER ROLLS. MAKE A FAT. ROLL EACH ROUND. 9+(STRESS) TO CALM YOURSELF, ONE TRY PER ROUND.
SHORT ATTENTION SPAN

Personality Traits

LOYAL/MISTRIDGE	<u>+2</u>
HOTHEADED	<u>+2</u>
GENTLE	<u>+3</u>
BRAVE	<u>+3</u>
BRUTAL	<u>+2</u>

Defense

Parry w/ AXE: +4

Dodge: ☐

Weapon

1st/Rate Atk Dam

BATTLE AXE, 2 HANDED	<u>+4</u>	<u>+5</u>	<u>+22</u>
DAGGER	<u>-2</u>	<u>+4</u>	<u>+9</u>

Equipment

Load 8 (Str +5) Enc 3

Armor

Type CHAIN MAIL HAUBERK

Protection +12 Load 5

Body Levels

Fatigue Levels

Soak Total:	<u>+19</u>	Patigue Total:	<u>+3</u>
Unhurt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Fresh	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hurt	<input type="checkbox"/>	Winded	<input type="checkbox"/>
Light Wounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wearied	<input type="checkbox"/>
Medium Wounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tired	<input type="checkbox"/>
Heavy Wounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dazed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Incapacitated	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unconscious	<input type="checkbox"/>

CHAIN MAIL HAUBERK
 BATTLE AXE
 DAGGER
 GROC PACK

SLOW THINKING, UNOBSERVANT,
 BROAD CHEST, STRONG CONSTITUTION,
 UNASSUMING, CLUMSY, TORPID

Life can be cruel to a man with too much strength but too little control. You scare people enough that they dislike you but not enough that they leave you alone. You've tried to live a simple life. At first you just wanted to be a farmer, but your lord, Sir William (an ex-crusader, originally from England), wanted you as a man-at-arms in his service. He gave you training in the use of an axe and taught you some discipline, but he was brutal, and you hated working for him. For a time you became his executioner — he was an evil man and had much need for you. After executing a frightened young woman at Sir William's command, you tried to run away, but his men caught you. He laughed and called you a cowardly idiot as his men beat you mercilessly. When you were nearly unconscious, he had you thrown in the river. You nearly drowned as you floated downstream, but finally were pulled out of the river by the wizard Grimgroth. His apprentice Lucienne saw you floating by and they rescued you. You went back to the covenant with them, and have been there ever since.

Lucienne has taught you that you have to use your great strength carefully, so you never attack unarmed people, kill your prisoners, disobey orders, or fight unfairly. Still, when someone calls you stupid or cowardly, like Sir William used to, you sometimes fly into a bloody rage. You're trying to learn how to control yourself, but it's hard.

You are a dedicated follower of Sante Fabia, the patron saint of Val du Bosque (the valley you live in). She lived a hundred years ago and was noted for her miracles of healing. You carry a small picture of her, a young woman with a scarred cheek and three roses in her right hand

As the story begins, it is the middle of the night and a storm is raging all about the covenant. You are in a small room sharpening your axe. Up a set of stairs are the ramparts on which two grogs are standing watch.

Your Role

Follow Lucienne, who was your first friend, and follow Torlen's orders, which is your duty. Caeron has been mean to you in the past, but it is still your duty to follow his direct orders. But you don't have to like him or side with him. You are easily the best warrior in the party, so put your abilities to good use. Over the past year you have become Lucienne's protector, a role that you enjoy. If you could kill the Stormrider for her, she would probably be very grateful to you.

Role-Playing Tips

Alternate as appropriate between the "gentle giant" and the "mad marauder" types.



Name TOMAS
 Player _____
 Covenant MISTRIDGE

Age 36
 Year Born 1160
 Current Year 1196
 Deceititude 0

Gender M
 Size 0
 Confidence 2
 Current Cnf _____

Intelligence <u>+3</u>	Strength <u>-1</u>	Presence <u>-1</u>	Dexterity <u>-2</u>
Perception <u>+2</u>	Stamina <u>0</u>	Communication <u>+1</u>	Quickness <u>0</u>

Abilities

Score

SPK PROVENÇAL	<u>6</u>	FANTASTIC BEAST LORE	<u>1</u>
SP: BIG WORDS		SP: SERPENTS	
SPK LATIN	<u>4</u>	CHURCH KNOWLEDGE	<u>2</u>
SP: OCCULT WORDS		SP: DOCTRINE OF HELL	
SCRIBE LATIN	<u>4</u>	HUMANITIES	<u>3</u>
SP: READING BAD HANDWRIT.		SP: TRAGEDIES	
VISIONS	<u>5</u>	MEDICINE	<u>1</u>
SP: DOOM & DESTRUCTION		SP: DISEASES	
OCCULT LORE, DEMONS	<u>4</u>	DIPLOMACY	<u>2</u>
FAIRIE LORE	<u>2</u>	SP: DEALING W/ NOBLES	
SP: UNSEEKED COURT		CONCENTRATION	<u>2</u>
LEGEND LORE	<u>2</u>	SP: STUDYING	
SP: FAMOUS DEEDS		DODGE	<u>1</u>
ATHLETICS	<u>-3</u>	SP: VS. THROWN WEPS	

Personality Traits

LOYAL/MISTRIDGE 0

INTENSE	<u>+3</u>	SOMBER	<u>+2</u>
BRAVE	<u>+1</u>	EASILY AWED	<u>+1</u>

Virtues & Flaws

EDUCATED

EXCEPTIONAL TALENT: VISIONS

STRESS ROLL + VISIONS SCORE OF 12+ TO HAVE A VISION. STRESS ROLL + VISIONS*INT OF 9+ TO INTERPRET.

SUPERIOR CHAR. PAIR: INT/PER

CLEAR THINKER: +3 vs. LIES, ETC.

NON COMBATANT: NO COMBAT SKILLS.

-2 ON ATK AND DAM ROLLS

SENSITIVE TO IGNORANCE

SOCIAL HANDICAP: CONSTANTLY

USES BIG WORDS AND LITERARY ALLUSIONS THAT CONFUSE PEOPLE.

GANGLING

Defense

Parry w/ STAFF: +3

Dodge: +1

Weapon

1st/Rate Atk Dam

WALKING (QUARTER) STAFF	<u>+2</u>	<u>-5</u>	<u>-2</u>
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Equipment

Load 2 (STR 0) ENC 0
 NOTE: STR CAN NEVER ADD TO ENC. STR -1 BECOMES STR 0 HERE.

Armor

Type QUILTED CLOTH CUIRASS

Protection +1 Load 1/2

Body Levels

Fatigue Levels

Soak Total: +1

Fatigue Total: +0

Unhurt	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	Fresh
Hurt	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	Winded
Light Wounds	<u>-1</u>	<u>-1</u>	Wearied
Medium Wounds	<u>-3</u>	<u>-3</u>	Tired
Heavy Wounds	<u>-5</u>	<u>-5</u>	Dazed
Incapacitated			Unconscious

QUILTED CLOTH CUIRASS
 WALKING STAFF

SHARP MINDED, ATTENTIVE,
 WEAK LIMBS, AWKWARD POSTURE,
 SOPHISTICATED SPEAKER, GANGLING

As a child you played with the other boys and reveled in your body's strength and agility. Now you've studied the human body, and when you look at yourself in the mirror all you can think of is the pus of infections, the fetid breath of the dying, and the inexorable decay of age. As a child you delighted in stories of faeries, but now you know faerie stories that children never hear, stories that scholars write in books because none dare speak them aloud. As a child, Hell was a scary tale. Now it is a terrifying reality. And so it has been with you; study has brought you knowledge, and knowledge has brought you anguish. But you know, at least, that yours is a noble suffering that comes from truth, not ignorance.

You first gained your longing for knowledge as you attempted to understand the strange visions that came to you like waking dreams. Then a priest noticed your keen intellect and desire to learn, and he had you sent to school. You learned much, but your attempts to interpret your visions distracted you, and since you could tell no one about these visions, the others did not understand why you were not performing better in your studies.

Then you began a private and engaging correspondence about demons with a secretive scholar named Clavius, and one day he appeared in your study. Simply appeared. At first you thought he was a vision, but his familiar, an extraordinarily large toad, told you he was Clavius, that he was actually a magus from Mistridge, and that you were invited to join the scholars there. To your surprise, you accepted immediately without a backward thought. Now you can tell others of your mystic gift without suffering scorn, and those around you listen to the visions you describe. And you can read books found in no university library — strange, dread books. Yes, indeed, you have found your niche.

As the story begins, you are reading by candlelight in the covenant library. A

storm rages outside, and on nights like this you feel compelled to turn once again to the nearly coherent ramblings of the magus Deritus. You are perusing his treatise called *On the Nature and Perils of the Soul's Dark Passions*. Lucienne is in the library studying as well.

Your Role

Benefit the magi with your knowledge, both from your studies and (perhaps) from visions. Speak mostly with Caeron; you respect his strength of mind. He seems sharper than his master, and maybe he will take you with him in his rise to power. (And perhaps he will brew one of those fantastic potions of longevity for you, so that your mortal collapse can be delayed.)

Role-Playing Tips

Say what you have to say solemnly and dramatically. Look at your companions and remind yourself what awaits them: vicious wounds, disease, decay, violent deaths, perhaps even eternal torment. With that firmly in mind, have fun.

Use words that are inappropriately long.



Name RAMÓN

Player _____

Covenant MISTRIDGEAge 28Year Born 1168Current Year 1196Decrepitude 0Gender MSize 0Confidence 2

Current Cnf _____

Intelligence 0Perception +3Strength 0Stamina +1Presence -1Communication -2Dexterity +2Quickness +1

Abilities Score

SPK PROVENCAL	4	SURVIVAL	3
SP: SLANG		SP: HIDING PLACES	
SELF BOW	3	SCAN	1
SP: AIMING BY EAR		SP: AT NIGHT	
LONG SPEAR ATK	3	ALERTNESS	2
SP: INTERCEPT CHRG.		SP: WHILE SLEEPING	
DAGGER ATK	1	CLIMB	2
SP: AMBUSH		SP: SILENTLY	
DODGE	4	SWIM	1
SP: VS. BOARS		SP: IN ARMOR	
TRACK	4	ATHLETICS	1
SP: DEER		SP: LEAPING	
STEALTH	3	VALDU BOSQUE LORE	2
SP: STALKING		SP: GEOGRAPHY	

Personality Traits

CAUTIOUS	+3	LOYAL/MISTRIDGE	0
BRAVE	+2	LONER	+2
		TRUSTING	-3

Defense

Parry w/ _____ ☐Dodge +3

Weapon

1st/ Rate Ath Dam

SELF BOW	+5	+6	+8
LONG SPEAR	+10	+7	+9
DAGGER	+1	+7	+3

Equipment

Load 2 (Str 0) Enc 2

Virtues & Flaws

WAY OF THE WOODS: +4 on FOREST RELATED ROLLS. ANIMALS LIKE YOU. YOU GET ONE LESS BOTCH DIE. KEEN VISION: +3 on SIGHT ROLLS. SUPERIOR CHARACTERISTIC: PER BAD REPUTATION. OBSESSED W/BOW: NOONE CAN TOUCH IT. SENSITIVE TO ANIMALS IN PAIN. ORPHAN: DIFFICULT TRUSTING OTHERS. FEAR OF LARGE BUILDINGS. CURSED: GROWL LIKE A BEAR WHEN YOU SPEAK MORE THAN A SENTENCE.

Reputation	Location	Score
WILD MAN	THE VALLEY	2

Armor

Type LEATHER HAUBERKProtection +3 Load 1 1/2

Body Levels

Fatigue Levels

Soak Total: +4Fatigue Total: -1

Unhurt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Fresh
Hurt		0	0	Winded
Light Wounds		-1	-1	Wearied
Medium Wounds		-3	-3	Tired
Heavy Wounds		-5	-5	Dazed
Incapacitated				Unconscious

LEATHER HAUBERK

SELF BOW

LONG SPEAR

DAGGER

APPREHENSIVE, ENDURING,
STERN VISAGE, POOR TALKER,
CAT-LIKE GRACE, SUREFOOTED

Your parents died in a tragic fire when you were young, and rather than live with an uncle you despised, you fled to the forest and taught yourself how to survive. Often you would come to a village to beg or steal what you needed, but over the years you have spent more and more time in the woods, less and less in human company.

You are known in the valley as a wild man, and some have called you a werewolf or hinted that you are possessed by a demon. That you growl between your words when you speak adds to this odious reputation. You have growled ever since you ate the meat of a faerie bear that you'd killed. You hardly notice any longer, but everyone else does.

In all your years of wandering, only one friend has proved faithful: your bow. If others touch it, they might ruin it somehow, and then it wouldn't shoot straight any more. You could leave your new friends at Mistridge any time, but you could never part with your bow. You always keep it with you and never let others touch it.

You've learned to respect animals, much as they have learned to respect you. When you hunt, you always try for the cleanest kill possible so that the animal does not suffer. Seeing animals suffer, especially at the hands of careless humans, fills you with pain and anger.

A year ago you were badly wounded by an especially cunning stag. You knew better than to put yourself at the mercy of the common people, so you gathered your courage and came to Mistridge. A young man ordered that your wounds be tended and then let you recuperate in the safety of their walls. In return, you have promised to work for him three times, guiding him through the wilderness. You have served Caeron once already, and now you plan to make working with Mistridge something of a habit.

You come to Mistridge periodically to see if you are needed, but you prefer to stay a safe distance from that horrible, looming tower and the gate that could be the maw of some demonic beast. Tonight, however, a terrible storm has driven you into the walls of the stockade. When the story begins, you are under your cloak huddled against the wall of the compound futilely trying to catch some sleep as raging winds shake the covenant.

Your Role

Guide the other characters through the wilds and keep them from following their foolhardy ideas. Follow Caeron's words over Lucienne's; she's not as practical and clear-headed as he. You need not follow Torlen's orders.

Role-Playing Tips

Be cautious, a little aloof, and be sure to growl. Remember, no one touches your bow.



Name Jeremé
Covenant MISTRIDGE

Age 24
Year Born 1172
Current Year 1196
Decrepitude 0

Gender M
Size 0
Confidence 1
Current Cnt

Intelligence -2 Strength 0 Presence -1 Dexterity +1
Perception -2 Stamina +1 Communication 0 Quickness +2

Abilities

SPK: PROVENCAL 4 BRAWL 2
SP: VULGARITIES SP: TRIPPING
1 H. MACE ATTK 3 ALERTNESS 2
SP: HOLDING GRND SP: GUARDING
KNIGHT SHIELD PRY 4 CHIRURGY 2
SP: VS. THROWN WPNS SP: REMOVE ARROWS
HYV CROSSBOW 2 VAL DU BOSQUE LORE 2
SP: FLYING TARGETS SP: JAVIELLE
DAGGER ATTK 1 DRINKING 2
SP: HOLDING AT BAY SP: ACTING FUNNY

Virtue & Flaw

KNACK WITH SHIELDS:
+2 WITH SHIELDS

COMPULSION TO DRINK:
USUALLY CANNOT RESIST THE
CHANCE TO DRINK

Personality Traits

VOLITILE +2 RELIABLE +3 EASY GOING +2
LOYAL: MISTR. +2 LIKES TO DRINK +3 BRAVE +1

Defense

Parry
w/ SHIELD +10 Dodge

Armor

Type HYV LEA. HAUBERK
Protection +5 Load 2 1/2

Weapon

	1st/ Rate	Atk	Dam
<u>HYV CROSSBOW</u>	<u>-11</u>	<u>+1</u>	<u>+15</u>
<u>1 HANDED MACE</u>	<u>+1</u>	<u>+7</u>	<u>+8</u>
<u>DAGGER</u>	<u>-2</u>	<u>+6</u>	<u>+3</u>

Body Levels

Fatigue Levels

Soak Total: +6

Fatigue Total: -5

Unhurt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Fresh
Hurt		0	0	Winded
Light Wounds		-1	-1	Wary
Medium Wounds		-3	-3	Tired
Heavy Wounds		-5	-5	Dazed
Incapacitated				Unconscious

Equipment

Load 6 1/2 (Str 0) Enc 6

HEAVY LEATHER HAUBERK
HEAVY CROSSBOW
ONE HANDED MACE
KNIGHT SHIELD

DAGGER
BANDAGES
ARROW EXTRACTION TOOL
GROG PACK

UNIMAGINATIVE, MISSES DETAILS,
DURABLE, GREASY HAIR, SMOOTH
MOTIONS, QUICK REFLEXES

You're a shield grog. Your job is to protect the magi from harm, interposing yourself and your shield between them and danger. It's not a bad job; you've escorted magi outside of the covenant three times, and only had minor scuffles with bandits and wolves. You're not sent alone into dangerous areas like scouts are; you get to stay back with the magi. They've also taught you how to treat wounds so you can help the magi if they're hurt. That's useful knowledge in case you ever get hurt yourself.

Ever since your first year of training, Torlen's been harder on you than on the other grogs. At first you resented it, but now you think you know what he's doing. He's testing you; he sees that you could be grog sergeant some day. He trained you with mace and shield himself, and he regularly praises your reliability.

"Praised" would be a better word. After that young wench Lorine spurned your words of love (and after she had been so chummy before), you've been hitting the wine a bit hard, and Torlen is not entirely pleased. But after all, who does that Lorine think she is? Just because she's friends with the apprentice Lucienne, she thinks she's better than the other grogs. Well, Lucienne will be leaving within the year, and then where will Lorine be? When you're grog sergeant, Lorine will be sorry she didn't accept your offers.

The problem is that if you keep drinking, Torlen will no longer consider you suitable to be a grog sergeant. But you've been so miserable you haven't been able to stop. With a little wine in your belly, the world is a bit more gentle.

As the story begins, you are on the Mistridge tower in the middle of the night keeping watch while a tremendous storm rages around you. The storm has made you cold, wet, and miserable. Lorine is also there on watch, and she hasn't made the night any easier on you.

Your Role

Guard Caeron. He respects your loyalty and reliability, and you respect his strong will. He'll make a good leader, you suspect. Try to impress Torlen with your dependability. This could be your chance to show him that you still have what it takes to be a good grog and a good grog sergeant.

If you get the chance, show up Lorine. She's been mean to you lately, and you have to show her that you're a better grog than she'll ever be. If you're really daring (or drunk), tease her about the broadsword she's carrying. It was her father's, and it's too big for her, but she's attached to it because her father was drawing it when the Stormrider killed him.

Role-Playing Tips

If you've been drinking, play out the conflict between drunkenness and a desire to appear strong and dependable. Show that you are proud to be a grog and eager to serve Mistridge, especially if you get the exalted task of guarding the magi.



Name LORINECovenant MISTRIDGEAge 16Year Born 1180Current Year 1196Decrepitude 0Gender FSize 0Confidence 1Current Cnf Intelligence +1Perception +2Strength 0Stamina -1Presence 0Communication -1Dexterity 0Quickness +1

Abilities

Score

SPK: PROVERBAL 4SP: RHYMING SELF BOW 4SP: TOURNAMENTS BROADSWORD ATK 2SP: STRIKE WHEN FURIOUS DODGE 3SP: DISENGAGE FROM FIGHT BRAWL 2SP: CHARGING ALERTNESS 1SP: ON WATCH LEGEND LORE 2SP: THE STORMRIDER SING 1SP: BALLADS

Virtue & Flaw

KNACK WITH BOW:

+2 ON ROLLS WITH BOWS

RECRUIT:

NEVER BEEN IN
BATTLE

Personality Traits

VENGEFUL +3LOYAL/MISTRIDGE +2SARCASTIC +1BRAVE 0RELIABLE +1COMFORTABLE W/ PARENTS +2

Defense

Parry
w/ Dodge: +0

Armor

Type LEATHER HAUBERKProtection +3Load 1 1/2

Weapon

1st/
Rate Ath DamBROADSWORD +2 +6 +8SELF BOW +6 +8 +8

Equipment

Load 4 (Str 0) Enc 4

TINDERBOX

BANDAGES

RING MAIL HAUBERK

KNIGHT SHIELD

JAVELIN

MACE

DAGGER

Body Levels

Fatigue Levels

Soak Total: +2Fatigue Total: -5

Unhurt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Fresh
Hurt		0	0	Winded
Light Wounds		-1	-1	Wearied
Medium Wounds		-3	-3	Tired
Heavy Wounds		-5	-5	Dazed
Incapacitated				Unconscious

FAILING SENSES, TENACIOUS,
SCARRED FACE, SLOW SPEECH,
GRACELESS, SLOW REFLEXES

On your hip you carry an old broadsword, just a bit too large for you, in a worn scabbard. The other grogs teased you about your attachment to this weapon, but not for long. It was the sword your father was drawing when the Stormrider killed him ten years ago. Since then, you have trained in its use with one object in mind. You want to see the blade do what your father meant it to do: send the Stormrider straight back to Hell.

Torlen, the grog sergeant, hasn't allowed you much training with the sword, however, because you are much better with a bow. He has made you train with a bow, and now you are quite an archer. You are a young and inexperienced grog, so you still have to prove yourself.

Pol, your father, was killed defending Lucienne from the Stormrider ten years ago. (Lucienne is the apprentice of Grimgroth, the head of the covenant. She is now almost ready to become a magus herself.) With your father dead, your mother and you came to the covenant to live. She mends clothes, cooks, and performs other small tasks, and she wanted you to follow her example, but Torlen recognized your fighting spirit and let you be a grog. You've trained enough to be trusted in a fight, but you have never fought a real battle.

You are unsure how well you will stand up in combat. You have heard many stories of a warrior's first battle, and the other grogs have told you that no one can predict how an untested warrior will stand up when the blades start to sing. You pray that you will find the courage to kill the Stormrider.

Your Role

Guard Lucienne. You have been friends ever since you came to the covenant. Her study of magic and your training, however, have kept the two of you apart in recent years. Perhaps now that her apprenticeship is almost done and

you are ready to accompany her on journeys, you will become close again as you once were.

Follow Torlen's orders. He is your sergeant, and he has many years of experience at being a grog and at leading them.

Avoid Jeremé. You were friends, but he wanted something more than friendship, and you're not interested in anything but slaying the Stormrider. He took your rejection badly, and now he's often moody, obnoxious, or drunk around you.

Lucienne has told you enough about Caeron that you know you don't want to be around him, either. Be careful that he does not manipulate you.

This is your first dangerous mission, so prove yourself worthy. If the rest of the grogs hear that you were clumsy, scared, or indecisive, you might never hear the end of it.

And, when you get the chance, kill the Stormrider. Strike him dead. Don't let him get away again.

Role-Playing Tips

Speak with energy, and let a tinge of barely-controlled malice enter your voice as you speak of the Stormrider.



Name TORLEN
 Covenant MISTRIDGE

Age 62
 Year Born 1134
 Current Year 1196
 Decrepitude 2

Gender M
 Size 0
 Confidence 5
 Current Cnf

Intelligence <u>0</u>	Strength <u>0</u>	Presence <u>-5</u>	Dexterity <u>-2</u>
Perception <u>-2</u>	Stamina <u>+1</u>	Communication <u>-3</u>	Quickness <u>-4</u>

Abilities

Score

SPK: PROVENCAL, YELL	<u>4</u>	LEADERSHIP	<u>5</u>
1 HAND MACE	<u>4</u>	SP: IN COMBAT	
SP: MULT. OPPONENTS		INTIMIDATION	<u>2</u>
KNIGHT SHIELD	<u>5</u>	SP: UNDERLINGS	
SP: BODY GUARDING		ALERTNESS	<u>2</u>
JAVELIN, RUNNING THROW	<u>3</u>	SP: STANDING WATCH	
DAGGER	<u>1</u>	CHIRURGY	<u>4</u>
SP: CUTTING CORDS & BONDS		SP: QUICK WORK	
BRAWL	<u>3</u>	VAL DU BOSQUE LORE	<u>2</u>
SP: PINNING & HOLDING		SP: ENEMIES / MISTR.	

Virtue & Flaw

COMMON SENSE

DISFIGURED:

FACE HORRIBLY SCARRED

Personality Traits

SEething ANGER	<u>+1</u>	LOYAL / MISTRIDGE	<u>+4</u>	HATE TO BE STARED AT	<u>+3</u>
BRAVE	<u>+4</u>	LOYAL / LUCIENNE	<u>+5</u>	RELIABLE	<u>+2</u>

Defense

 Parry
 w/ SHIELD +9
Dodge: ☐

Armor

Type RING MAIL HAUBERKProtection +7 Load 3

Weapon

1st/
Rate Atk Dam

1 HANDED MACE	-2	+5	+9
JAVELIN	-10	+0	+8
DAGGER	-6	+3	+3

Body Levels

Fatigue Levels

Soak Total: +8Fatigue Total: -3

Unhurt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Fresh
Hurt		0	0		Winded
Light Wounds		-1	-1		Wearied
Medium Wounds		-3	-3		Tired
Heavy Wounds		-5	-5		Dazed
Incapacitated					Unconscious

Equipment

Load 4 (Str 0) Enc 4

LEATHER HAUBERK
 BROADSWORD
 SELF BOW
 GROG PACK

SHREWED THINKING, KEEN-EYED,
 TIRES EASILY, INCONSIDERATE,
 JUMPY,

Forty years ago you first held a mace and shield in defense of Mistridge. Over the years, you've lost your youthful strength and agility, but you've more than made up for it in experience. Your days of guarding the magi are over. Your job is to test and train the grogs, to supervise covenant defenses, and to keep the turb of grogs in order. But you've kept in practice with your mace and shield in case the covenant itself is ever attacked again.

Forty years ago, when you were new at Mistridge, you accompanied the young magus Grimgroth on his first expedition, and you have been close to him ever since. Now he is the head of the covenant.

Ten years ago you saw the Stormrider attack Lucienne (Grimgroth's apprentice) and Pol (a grog friend of hers) as they were returning from a fair. The Stormrider killed Pol, but then you threw your spear and wounded him, driving him away. Without a doubt, you saved Lucienne's life.

A short time after that, you, Grimgroth, and a few others went out in search of the Stormrider. When Grimgroth found him, the two simply talked, and when your party returned, Grimgroth swore you all to secrecy. You've told no one about this event.

As the story begins, a storm is battering the covenant in the middle of the night. You are overseeing several grogs in the courtyard trying to make quick repairs of structures being damaged by the storm.

Your Role

In this story you will, to your surprise and everyone else's, take up your mace and shield once more. Only a remarkable event would bring you to do this; to you, Lucienne's first expedition without Grimgroth is a remarkable event. You've known her since she was a child newly come to Mistridge, and she is like a niece to you. Protect her at all costs.

You will be in charge of the other grogs and of Clobi. Discipline is very important, especially with two inexperienced apprentices in charge of the party. Always, always get these apprentices to think about what they are doing and to think of ways to use their magic. You remember that Grimgroth, when he was young and unfamiliar with his powers, often failed to cast useful spells; these apprentices will no doubt be the same. The greatest danger you have seen in your years of service is simply lack of forethought. Make sure that all the party members know what is expected of them ahead of time so that in a sudden crisis they can act together immediately. If you do not coordinate the group, you could be responsible for needless loss of life.

Keep an eye on Jeremé. He might have what it takes to be grog sergeant some day, if he can give up his wine.

Thanks to your Common Sense virtue, you may ask the storyguide for hints if you think the group might be making a major mistake.

Role-Playing Tips

Speak slowly but firmly. Expect people to listen to you.



Name CADERONAge 29Gender M

Player _____

Year Born 1167Size 0Covenant MISTRIDGECurrent Year 1196Confidence 4Decrepitude 0

Current Cnf _____

Intelligence +3Strength 0Presence +2Dexterity 0Perception 0Stamina 0Communication +3Quickness -1

Abilities

Score

SPK PROVENCAL: DELIVERY ^{SMOOTH} 4SPK LATIN: PERFECT Diction 5Scribe LATIN, SMOOTH WRITING 3Magic THEORY, SPIRIT MAGICS 5HERMES LORE, DOSSIER 2HERMES HIST., DIABOLISM 2PARMA MAGICA, VS. MENTEM 3Finesse, COMPLICATED TASKS 3CERTAMEN, REGO 2CONCENTRATION, ^{IGNORING} 1AFFINITY w/ HERBAM 3Guile, ^{LYING WHEN ALMOST} 2CHARM, FIRST IMPRESSIONS 1SUBTILTY, ^{SEEKING OTHERS} 1Diplomacy 1SP: INTER-HOUSE DISPUTES 1QUARTERSTAFF PARRY 2SP: DESPERATE DEFENSE 1QUARTERSTAFF 1SP: HOLDING AT BAY 1

Magic Arts

Techniques

Forms

Creo 1Animai 6Ignem 0Intellego 3Aquam 0Imaginem 0Muto 4Auram 2Mentem 2Perdo 0Corporem 2Terram 2Rego 7Herbam 11Vim 3

Personality

WRATHFUL +1

Traits

BRAVE +1HAUGHTY +3SELF-PLEASED +2

Virtues & Flaws

SUPERIOR CHARACTERISTIC: INT

Magic Affinity: HERBAM

SELF-CONFIDENT

STRONG-WILLED

LOOSE MAGIC: CANNOT MASTER SPELLS

WARPED MAGIC: SPELL CAST ON PEOPLE MAKE THEM UNEASY.

FABRIC ENMITY

COMPULSION TO ASSIST SELF

MAGIC DEFICIENCY: IGNEM

UNCOMFORTABLE AROUND CORPSES BECAUSE

CURSED: YOU HEAR THE DEAD MOAN IN PAIN.

DELETERIOUS CIRC: -5 ON MAGIC WHEN FLUSTERED.

Defense

w/ STAFF ^{Parry} +8Dodge: 0

Armor

Type _____

Protection 0Load 0

Weapon

QUARTERSTAFF +5 +3 +5

Equipment

Load 0 (Str 0) Enc 0

Body Levels

Soak Total: +0

Fatigue Levels

Fatigue Total: +0

Unhurt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Fresh
Hurt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Winded
Light Wounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wary
Medium Wounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tired
Heavy Wounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dazed
Incapacitated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unconscious

QUICK-WITTED, REGAL MANNER,
SMOOTH TALKER, SLOW REFLEXES,

You don't deserve the indignities you've suffered as an apprentice. First, your demented master, Felix Necromius, deemed you unworthy of his deepest secrets. He taught you magic and made you help him with his investigations, but he never told you what he had discovered. But after all, you never have been eager to learn about the "three stages of death." Nevertheless, he did share some of his less important secrets with you. For instance, he taught you to hear the mortal cries of the dead. Unfortunately he never taught you how *not* to hear their anguished moans. The voices of the dead haunt you, and because of this you have to study in a small room of your own far from Felix's laboratory.

One day when you were particularly miserable, you went to Grimgroth and asked to be his apprentice, along with his current apprentice, Lucienne. You were more advanced than she was, so you thought he'd take you up on the offer, but he just laughed. So did Lucienne when she heard about it later.

Lucienne laughing at you hurt (not that you'll admit it to anyone else). The only light in your dismal apprenticeship was picking on that little street waif. You had the edge in learning and intelligence, so you usually bested her in the little mind games you two always played. She beat you out in the most important contest though: she has the famous Grimgroth for a master.

But you'll have the last laugh. One day Grimgroth will be sorry that he passed up the opportunity to be known for centuries to come as "the magus that mighty Caeron chose to study under." And Lucienne... Maybe you'll let her be an assistant in your laboratory some day.

Your apprenticeship went so slowly that Lucienne has caught up to you in your studies, and now you are roughly equal in learning; but soon you'll be free of that fool Felix, and then you'll really shine.

Despite everything, you think you might miss Lucienne a bit once you've left Mistridge. She is the only one worthy of your pranks and games, the only one who can even come close to appreciating their subtlety. If you had to name someone as your friend, it could be no one but her.

As the story begins, you are staying up late brewing a foul-smelling potion that will grant trees consciousness and speech. A terrible storm is shaking Mistridge's stone tower and constantly breaking your concentration.

Your Role

You've got seniority over Lucienne; take charge. Then show up Lucienne, and, if you can, show up Grimgroth. He's written a well-known treatise in which he says the Stormrider is an elemental. If you can prove that it is not an elemental after all, you can start your glorious career by publicly humiliating the great Grimgroth.

Role-Playing Tips

Maintain the superior demeanor that is natural and fitting for someone of your station and ability. Don't let anything faze you.



Caeron's Grimoire

Twist the Living Tree

Muto Herbam Level 15

Casting Bonus: +18

Near, Sun./Year

You make a living tree bend into unusual positions. Depending on your needs, you can make a cage, a shelter, a wall, a ladder, etc. Even the leaves can be bent to form a solid roof that sheds rain so as to form a tree tent. Takes one to ten minutes to complete (depending on the complexity of the new shape), during which time you must maintain concentration.

Jupiter's

Resounding Blow

Rego Auram Level 10

Casting Bonus: +9

Targeting Total: +3

Near, Instant

Creates a thunderclap; anyone directly underneath must make a Stm roll of 9+ or be deafened. If deafened, the target gets another Stm roll each minute and recovers with a roll of 8+.

The Earth's Carbuncle

Rego Terram Level 15

Casting Bonus: +6

Targeting Total: +4

Near, Instant

Turns the ground just under the surface into jagged rocks, which suddenly burst through the surface and into the air. Anyone standing on the circle, which is one pace across, is knocked into the air and then hit with the falling rocks and partially buried once they have landed. Damage is +10.

Note: This spell has a "Muto requisite" because you transform the earth as

well as control it. That means your Rego score is treated as if it were no higher than your Muto score when you cast this spell.

Piercing Shaft of Wood

Muto Herbam Level 20

Casting Bonus: +18

Targeting Total: +5

Touch, Instant

Turns a piece of wood into a sleek, barbed, strong shaft that then flies through the air at a target. Damage depends on the size of item from which the shaft is formed: Staff (upper size limit) +20, two-foot branch +15, wand +10. If it pierces a body, removing the shaft causes the target to lose another body level unless a Stm roll of 7+ is made (add Chirurgy score of the one who removes the shaft).

Note: This spell has a Rego requisite, but since your Rego score is higher than your Muto score, it doesn't make any difference.

Wall of Thorns

Creo Herbam Level 20

Casting Bonus: +15

Near, Sun./Instant

Creates a straight wall of woody, thorny bushes up to 20 paces across, one pace thick, and 12 feet high. The thorns, which are unnaturally resilient, have +15 Soak and four "body levels" (cut by edged weapons only). Forcing one's way through bodily requires a Str roll of 9+ and does +15 damage regardless of the attempt's success. The wall grows out of existing bushes or fertile soil. A Climb roll of 9+ allows a character to scale the wall, but the character takes +10 damage in the process.

Coil of Entangling Plants

Rego Herbam Level 20

Casting Bonus: +21

Near, Special

Animates all the grass and other plants smaller than adult trees within a field delineated by your outstretched arms and no more than 15 paces away, causing them to grab and wrap themselves around the people nearest to them (Str rolls of 7+ to 10+ to break free). You can free one individual per round as long as you maintain concentration.

Curse of the Rotted Wood

Perdo Herbam Level 10

Casting Bonus: +14

Near, Instant

Causes a non-living, wooden object to rot and fall apart. Objects up to the size of a single door can be affected, but things that size take up to two rounds to decay.

Converse with Plants And Trees

Intéllego Herbam Level 25

Casting Bonus: +17

Reach, Concentration

You can speak with plants for one conversation. The level of the conversation

depends on the type of plants; longer-lived and more "noble" plants have more to say. A single question and response takes ten to thirty minutes, with slower growing plants speaking more slowly. Typically plants can talk about the soil and the other plants around them but have limited awareness of more rapid events, such as the passing of animals or people. Onlookers cannot understand your conversation.

Curse of the Unruly Tongue

Rego Córporum Level 10

Casting Bonus: +9

Near, Concentration

Causes the target to stutter and slur words. Communication rolls are at -4; spoken spells are at -6 with an extra botch roll.

Disguise of the Putrid Aroma

Rego Animál Level 5

Casting Bonus: +13

Near, Concentration

The target animal takes no interest in you as long as you do not threaten it. A carnivore treats you as if you were simply something that it would not want to eat. It retains normal interest, however, in anyone else nearby.

Range

Touch: you must touch the target

Reach: within two paces

Near: within fifteen paces

Duration

If a spell has two durations divided by a slash, the second (longer) duration takes place only when you use raw *vis*, 1 point per 5 Levels of the spell. Raw *vis* is magic

power in physical form.

Concentration- Lasts as long as you concentrate on it.

Sun.- Lasts until dawn or dusk, whichever comes first.

Year- Lasts about one year.

Instant- Works for only an instant, after which nature takes its normal course.

Special- A unique duration detailed in the description.

Name LUCIENNEAge 27Gender M

Player _____

Year Born 1169Size 0Covenant MISTRIDGECurrent Year 1169Confidence 3Decrepitude 0

Current Cnt _____

Intelligence +3Strength -1Presence 0Dexterity 0Perception +2Stamina 0Communication +1Quickness +2

Abilities

Score

SPK PROVOCAL, TALK	4
SPK LATIN, CAREFUL PRONUNCIATION	5
SCRIBE LATIN, SCANTEXT	3
MAGIC THEORY, NON-HERMETIC MAGIC	5
HERMES LORE, W/ SOCIETY	2
HERMES HISTORY, MISTRIDGE	2
PARMA MAGIC, VS. LONGM	3

Finesse, Transformations	1
CERTAMEN, LONGM	1
CONCENTRATION	1
SPK PROLONGED	
AFFINITY WITH MUTO	4
FAERIE LORE	2
SP: FOREST OF THE MORGING OAKS	

GUILE	2
SP: LYING TO AUTHORITIES	
PRETEND	2
SP: FAKING WEAKNESS	
DODGE, VS. TROUPE WPNs.	1
HUMANITIES	1
SP: PHILOSOPHIES	

Magic Arts

Techniques

Forms

Creo	1	Animal	1	Ignem	2
Intelligo	1	Aquam	1	Imaginem	1
Muto	10	Auram	7	Mentem	8
Perdo	1	Corporem	1	Terram	0
Rego	4	Herbam	1	Vim	4

Virtues & Flaws

HERMETIC PRESTIGE: GRIMGROTH'S APPREH.

GOOD CHARACTERISTIC: QUICKNESS

MAGICAL AFFINITY: MUTO

GENTLE GIFT: YOUR MAGIC DOESN'T BOTHER OTHERS

MINOR MAGIC DEF: TERROR

RESTRICTION: MAGIC DOESN'T WORK ON PEOPLE

WHO ARE DEFENSELESS AND FRIGHTENED OF YOU.

DELICIOUS GIRL: MAGIC ZILLS ME WHEN

COLD IRON TOUCHES YOU

SOFT-HEARTED

ORPHAN: TROUBLE WORKING WITH AND

TRUSTING OTHERS.

Personality VENGEFUL +2Traits BRAVE +3MOVED BY SUFFERING +3CYNICAL +3

Defense

Armor

Parry ☐

Type _____

w/ _____

Protection ☐Dodge: +3Load ☐

Weapon

1st/
Rate

Ath

Dam

Equipment

Load 0 (Str 0) Enc 0

Body Levels

Fatigue Levels

Soak Total: +0Fatigue Total: +0

Unhurt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Fresh
Hurt		0	0	Winded
Light Wounds		-1	-1	Wearry
Medium Wounds		-3	-3	Tired
Heavy Wounds		-5	-5	Dazed
Incapacitated				Unconscious

CREATIVE, INSIGHTFUL, SMALL
FRAME, ENGAGING SPEAKER,
FAST LEARNER

Fifteen years ago, Grimgroth rescued you from the streets of Foix and brought you into the vast world of knowledge and magic. Not only did he teach you the arcane arts, but he introduced you to the joys of human learning: Roman epics, local ballads, and Greek philosophy. You are extremely grateful to him for all he's done, and you're determined to repay him some day. It is especially important that you make him proud because his first apprentice, Lupus Mortus, turned into a hateful and destructive magus. Grimgroth has never forgiven himself for teaching magic to such a soul.

Ten years ago you were almost slain by the Stormrider when you were returning to Mistridge from a fair. A good friend of yours, a grog named Pol, died defending you, and you were about to be slain as well when Torlen, the grog sergeant, wounded the Stormrider and drove him off. Over Pol's dead body, you vowed that you would kill the Stormrider some day. Pol's daughter, Lorine, was taken into the covenant and is now a grog.

A major part of your apprenticeship was constantly skirmishing with Caeron, an elder apprentice. In tricks, snide comments, and practical jokes, Caeron usually got the upper hand. One event, however, put you above Caeron. Upset with his own master, Caeron asked to study under Grimgroth, along with you. Grimgroth just laughed. You are still a little bitter about the hard time he used to give you when you were but children.

Soon your apprenticeship will end and you will have to make your way on your own. Grimgroth has offered little advice, preferring to let you make your own decisions.

The reason you hate the Stormrider so much is that he showed you how mortal you were, how even your magic could not fully protect you. When he nearly rode you down, you felt as if you were still a street waif. You want to defeat him your-

self, to prove that you are powerful enough to overcome anything that fate sends you.

As the story begins, you are studying in the library. Before you become a magus, you must pass tests given by Grimgroth's colleagues in House Jerbiton, and you have taken over the library to prepare yourself for this "apprentice's gauntlet." You are currently fighting through an exceptionally long, dry tome called *Veritanis' Brief Historical Biography Concerning the Prima of House Jerbiton*.

Your Role

Take charge. This expedition rightly belongs in your hands, and you are Caeron's equal at least, even though he is older. This is your chance to make good your vow to slay the Stormrider. Follow Torlen's advice. He is like an uncle to you, he is experienced and always has your best interests at heart.

Role-Playing Tips

Be alert and eager, with self-righteous wrath just under the surface ready to burst forth at any time.



Lucienne's Grimoire

Rain of Stones

Muto Auram Level 15

Casting Bonus: +14

Targeting Total: +3

Sight, Concentration

Turns raindrops into stones just before they strike the target, causing +15 damage per round of exposure to rain.

Note: This spell has a "Terram requisite" because it deals with stones as well as rain. That means that your Auram score is considered to be no higher than your Terram score when casting this spell.

Hornet Fire

Muto Ignem Level 15

Casting Bonus: +16

Near, Concentration

Turns a fire into a swarm of fireballs, each the size of a large insect, that fly and harass at your command. Their burning touch gives all those you target within 7 paces of the fire a -2 penalty on all rolls and two extra botch rolls.

Broom of the Winds

Rego Auram Level 15

Casting Bonus: +11

Near, Instant

Whips up violent, swirling winds around the target, who must make a Size roll of 10+ to remain standing. The target can also resist by making a Str roll of 9+ if holding onto a strong support. If both rolls fail, the target is knocked in a random direction; roll a simple die: 1- down; 2 or 3- left; 4 or 5- forward; 6 or 7- right; 8 or 9- backward; 10- up twelve feet and dropped. Damage depends on what obstructions are struck.

Circling

Winds of Protection

Rego Auram Level 20

Casting Bonus: +11

Reach, Special

Surrounds you with winds that circle you at great speed. Since the wind picks up dust, you may be obscured. Anyone standing near enough to you to attack you with a hand weapon must make a Size roll of 9+ at the beginning of each round or be blown away. Melee attacks against you are at -2 Atk, and missile or thrown weapon attacks are at -10. The winds continue for 5 rounds after you end concentration.

Rise of the

Feathery Body

Rego Corporem Level 15

Casting Bonus: +5

Body, Concentration

Allows you to float up and down to any height, but you cannot move horizontally by means of this spell. You can lift up to 50 pounds with you. You move as fast as smoke rises, or slower if you are carrying a load.

Emotion of

Reversed Intentions

Muto Mentem Level 25

Casting Bonus: +22

Eye, Sun./Moon

The main emotion influencing a character at the time of the casting is replaced by its opposite over the next minute. The new emotion is felt as strongly as the original one was, but it lacks justification and can therefore be talked out of someone. Int roll of 8+ to resist.

Confusion of the Numbed Will

Rego Mentem 15

Casting Bonus: +12

Near, Moon

Confuses a person. If the character decides to take any action, the player must make an Int roll. A roll of 13+ ends the spell. A roll of 8+ lets the character take the intended action, but the spell remains in effect. Any lower roll means the character is confused and takes some other type of action. While under this spell, a character always strikes last and gets at least a -1 on all rolls.

Whispers

Through the Black Gate

Intéllego Córpoem Level 15

Casting Bonus: +2

Reach, Concentration

You can, figuratively, talk through the gate that stands between the dead and the living, letting you speak with a corpse that has not yet decayed into a skeleton nor been buried by Church burial. All those

around you can hear the voice of the corpse.

Note: This spell has a Mentem requisite, but since your Mentem score is higher than your Córpoem score anyway, it makes no difference.

Unseen Arm

Rego Terram Level 5

Casting Bonus: +4

Near, Concentration

Moves non-living things slowly; cannot oppose intentional resistance. Magi use this spell to manipulate things at a distance, but it cannot be used to pull something from someone's hand or to move something that is held. It can only move light things, like book pages, instruments, a small pouch of coins, etc.

Supple Iron and Rigid Rope

Muto Terram Level 10

Casting Bonus: +14

Touch, Sun./Instant

Makes a flexible object stiff and a stiff object flexible. Works only on items easily held in two hands.

Range

Body: affects your body or mind; can affect clothing and such indirectly

Touch: you must touch the target

Reach: touching or within two paces

Eye: eye contact

Near: within fifteen paces

Sight: you must see the target

Duration

If a spell has two durations divided by a slash, the second (longer) duration takes place only when you use raw *vis*, 1 point per 5 Levels of the spell. Raw *vis* is magic

power in physical form.

Concentration- The spell lasts as long as you concentrate on it. When distracted or when you attempt to do something else in addition to concentrating, you need to make Concentration rolls to maintain the spell.

Sun.- The spell lasts until dawn or dusk, whichever comes first.

Moon- Lasts until both the new moon and the full moon have come.

Instant- The spell works for only an instant, after which nature takes its normal course.

Special- A unique duration detailed in the descriptions.

The Stormrider



Ars Magica Jump Start Kit



Lion Rampant

by Mark Rein•Hagen
with Jonathan Tweet

The Stormrider

Introduction

This kit was designed to give you a jump start on playing **Ars Magica**. Creating characters and designing an adventure can take a little time, but this kit does the work for you so your first adventure can be run quickly and smoothly. We provide eight pre-made characters and a detailed story specifically designed with those characters in mind. With this kit, even a group of **Ars Magica** novices can role-play a satisfying game with only half an hour of preparation time. We hope you will use it to jump start your saga and quickly begin to experience the magical, medieval world of **Ars Magica**.

In many ways, this kit is also a tutorial in the art of guiding a story. We have often found ourselves at a loss to describe how one "guides" a group of role-players through a story. It's not something you can really teach, for it is a talent rather than a skill, an art rather than a knowledge. In this kit we have provided detailed descriptions of how you should present scenes to the players and have them make rolls. We show you how we guide a story, since it's so hard to explain. Though your style will certainly vary from ours, we hope you will be able to gain a few new ideas and insights into storyguiding.

To properly storyguide (gamemaster) this story, you must have read a few chapters of **Ars Magica** and have skimmed the others. Read the Introduction to **Ars Magica** carefully; it gives an overview of the game system and background. Be sure to also have a firm grasp on the Combat and Magic chapters because those rules will frequently come into play. Finally, read the Saga chapter to understand the setting in which the story takes place.

You need to read this entire kit, from start to finish, before you attempt to storyguide it. Additionally, before you read the main text of the kit, you should skim the eight characters included in the kit, as well as the description of the Stormrider (included on its own separate sheet). Go read that now, and then come back here to finish reading the story itself.

How to Begin

To get your players familiar with the rules, first hand out their characters. Give each character out to whomever you think would best suit that persona or would like that particular character most. You may also let the players choose characters. Try to get the magi into the hands of players who can take charge of the group and

Plot Synopsis

The characters discover that the infamous Stormrider is again rampaging through Val du Bosque, and they set off to find and destroy him. Many of the characters have personal reasons for wanting to slay him and are seeking vengeance. They follow the burning hoofprints the Stormrider leaves behind and witness the destruction that he has caused wherever he's gone. As they journey through the valley, Tomas has recurrent visions of the Stormrider's life and origin that give clues as to the creature's nature. Finally all the characters "meet" Sante Fabía and they learn even more about the Stormrider. In the final confrontation, the characters as a group choose between attacking the Stormrider and killing him out of malice, or trying to reason and talk with him.

The story is made more complex by the interactions among the characters. The two apprentices, Lucienne and Caeron, are enemies, and each has friends in the party, so they form two distinct cliques. Though these rivals will not actually fight each other, their rivalry will provide for some interesting role-playing, and adds to the theme of the story.

Theme

The theme of the story, as you may have already guessed, is centered around the question of what rage is. It deals with the futility of anger, and the destruction a vengeful person can cause themselves, the ones they love, and the world as a whole. Throughout the story, try to play out this theme, which is already a dominant motif, and try to encourage the players to role-play this theme out in their characters. Decide what **you** think anger is and interpret the story in your own way, but then let your players decide for themselves what it is about.

You will find that the story will become larger than life when you make it more than simply a battle, but a moral lesson as well. Faerie tales, myths, and even *Star Trek*™ use this technique to make their stories more vivid and compelling. Stories almost always teach a lesson, however in **good** stories, the storyteller isn't exactly sure what the lesson is.

keep the story moving, as well as pick up game rules quickly. It's probably better that you choose who plays whom, so you can make sure that the characters get in the right hands, and so that you don't have to wait until all the players have arrived before you hand out some characters.

Hand out the briefings as well, and have the players read through them. When all the players are together, read the introduction written on one of the handouts, and then give it to the players to purview at their leisure. When the players feel comfortable with their characters as well as the rules briefings, begin the game. (Understanding the characters and setting is more important than understanding the details of the rules, so encourage the players to start play even if they are not sure about all the rules.) This process should take no more than half an hour. After that amount of time has passed, you should probably begin the story no matter what, so that no one has a chance to get lethargic.

Throughout the kit, any words in italics are meant to be read aloud to the players — these include both scene descriptions, and things a non-player character might say. If reading descriptions verbatim works for you, then fine. Some storyguides, however, find that reading text robs their scenes of spontaneity and excitement, making the plot seem static and deadening the role-playing. If you don't like descriptive paragraphs, simply take the descriptions in italics as examples of what you can say, and then put it in your own words, or ad-lib the characters' words and actions directly. This kit is meant to be a guide to better role-playing, not a guided-tour for gamers.

If you have fewer than eight players, distribute the characters as described below. You might have to alter the first scenes of the story if not all the characters are being used.

7 — All the characters. Have Jeremé played by a player with a companion (probably Tomas).

6 — All the characters. Have Jeremé and Lorine played by players with companions.

5 — All the characters. Have all three grogs played by the three players with companions. Tell the players that they should mostly role-play their companions.

4 — All the characters but Clobi and Jeremé. Torlen and Lorine should be played by the players with the remaining companions. You role-play the grog Jeremé in the watchtower, but he doesn't come along because he's too drunk.

3 — One player role-plays Lucienne, another plays Ramón & Torlen, and a third plays Tomas & Lorine. Ignore all the information about the two rival cliques, but emphasize the aggressive, vengeful aspects of the characters.

1 or 2 — Use the characters suggested for three players, but you'll have to help role-play them.

Note: We have made the visions of Tomas central to this story. If you read the Visions ability as described on p. 41 of *Ars Magica*, however, it may not suggest to you such a primary role. We have taken this virtue beyond its normal role for the purposes of the plot. In the stories which you create, you will find that certain virtues or flaws of your characters lend themselves to the steady progression of the plot. In your saga, do not hesitate to use a virtue or flaw in any sensible way that adds to the story, even in ways not described in the rules. Tomas has a lot of visions in this story, but

in the context it makes sense. In the next story his visions probably won't play as big a role — but someone else's virtue or flaw might.

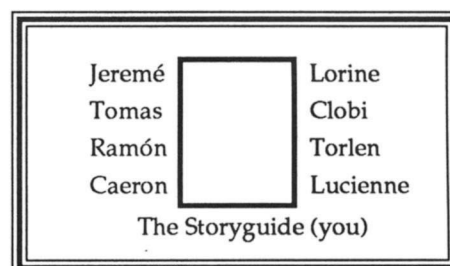
If you are using your own characters for this adventure, rather than the ones we have provided, you will have to find some way to give them the visions that Tomas would normally receive. (The same is true if you are using the provided characters but not Tomas.) The best way to do that is to let one of the characters somehow have a cross that once belonged to Sante Fabia (perhaps by giving it to them in a previous story). Whoever has the cross gets the visions that are intended for Tomas: the player must make a stress roll of 5+ (i.e. 5 or better) to receive a given vision and must make an Int roll of 6+ to interpret the vision. Other than these visions, the story will easily permit any set of characters; you need only ignore certain examples and phrases which talk specifically about the characters for which the story was designed.

Moving Things Right Along

Have the players quickly introduce their characters to the troupe, describing what the others might know about them. (They do know each other; all but Ramón live together at the covenant.) Suggest that they introduce themselves in character, such as "My name is Lucienne, and I don't take crap from anyone, especially not from Caeron." Don't let them go on and on about their characters, but do let them go into some detail. Encourage snide comments and banter among the players, especially if it relates to the characters — "Oh yeah, Tomas — the weakling bookworm who thinks he's something special." This is the time when the players should start getting into character.

The Two Cliques

There are two groups among the characters provided for this story. The groups are divided up by which apprentice they side with the most. Caeron and Lucienne have never really gotten along, but they have studied at the covenant so long that they have formed fast friendships with some of the other inhabitants of the covenant. These friendships have formed into two rival cliques, which tend to give each other whatever grief they can. Tell the players about the two cliques, seat them accordingly — one clique on each side of the room or table — and encourage them to role-play out their rivalry. Below is one possible seating arrangement. The magi are near you (status!), and the squabbling grogs are at the far end of the table where they will feel more free to make trouble.



At the Covenant

In this section, the characters realize that the Stormrider has returned and set out to find him. Since this part of the story takes place entirely at "home base" (the covenant), there is no danger to the characters, and the players can more easily get into role-

playing. In the safe environment of the covenant, the players can learn about who and what their characters are. The covenant plays a central role in any saga, and beginning the session at the covenant is a interesting and elegant way to start each story.

Encourage as much role-playing as you can; let the players be extravagant and test the limits of their characters. These first scenes are meant to get the players comfortable with their characters, begin some simple interaction, introduce them to the covenant itself, and give them a few practical lessons on the *Ars Magica* rules. Remember, however, that these scenes set the stage for the upcoming story, so you can't let things get too wild.

The Lookouts

The story starts with **Jeremé and Lorine**, who have been on watch at the top of the tower all night long.

Read them this description:

• *Jeremé and Lorine, you are on top of the tower standing watch — Torlen sent you up here as punishment for having a fight in the barracks. It is about four in the morning, and all about you in the darkness are the last vestiges of a mighty storm. At times the entire tower shook and the wind blew so hard that you could hardly hear each other speak. You are huddled on top of the trapdoor between the battlements and the strange wooden hut of the wizard Vulcris. Luckily she's gone tonight. It has been a miserable night, and now you are cold, soaked to the skin, and in foul moods.* •

First you should ask Jeremé if he was **drinking or not**. If the player doesn't seem ready to make a quick decision, you could suggest that he or she roll against Jeremé's Likes to Drink personality trait. If the player rolls a 6+ (6 or higher) on a simple roll (i.e., a normal ten-sided die) after adding Jeremé's Likes to Drink score of +3, then he has been drinking through much of the night. If he has been drinking, tell him that he will get -2 on all his rolls until he gets a 10+ on a Fatigue roll sometime during the story. (He'll be making fatigue rolls throughout the story.) The reason Lorine has not reported Jeremé's drinking is that she has been waiting until he gets really drunk so that it will be even worse for him when she does report him. (The player running Lorine can come up with another reason for not having reported him if he or she wishes.)

Once you know whether Jeremé has been drinking, ask both players to make a **Perception + Alertness** roll. Tell them to look on their character sheets for their Perception scores (a characteristic), and then look for their Alertness scores as well (an ability). See if Lorine's player notices that her specialty is "on watch," which means she gets an additional +1 bonus for this roll. (Point it out to her if she doesn't.) Now have them make a simple roll (that is, a die ten read normally), and then add both scores to the roll. Lorine will have +2 for Perception, +1 for Alertness, and another +1 for her specialty; Jeremé will have -2 for Perception and +2 for Alertness. If Jeremé has been drinking, have him subtract 2 from his roll. If either one of them gets a 6+, they notice something in the valley below. Read to them the description of what they see. Read the description aloud so all the players can hear — even though the other characters know nothing of it yet. It's more fun because it lets everyone be involved in the story. If neither of them saw anything, have them get into another little tiff — this time over who gets the blanket when it starts to rain again — and then let them both make another Perception + Alertness roll.

• *The sky suddenly clears, and you can peer down into the valley. You see a small, ferocious cloud hovering over the village of Javielle, with lightning shooting from the ground to the sky. You are taken aback by this sight, for it is one of the things you were told to look for by the grog sergeant Torlen. You realize that lightning shooting from the ground to the sky could only be caused by the infamous Stormrider. But what do you do?*

You can go down one flight of stairs to tell Clobi, the captain of the watch, about this, or perhaps you could sneak past him and go tell someone else this news. •

This is important news indeed, news in which many people might be interested.

If **Jeremé sees the lightning**, tell him that:

• *You know that Caeron would be very pleased if he were the first to learn about this. Torlen should be alerted, of course; that's your duty. But Caeron's study is on the way to the courtyard where Torlen is, and it wouldn't take long to let Caeron know about it. Caeron would probably be even more interested if Lucienne never found out about it at all.* •

If **Lorine sees the lightning**, tell her that:

• *Torlen is the one to whom you should report, but Clobi is a friend as well. Lucienne would probably be the most willing to go after the Stormrider, which would give you the best chance for revenge, but she is busy studying. Torlen would probably tell her anyhow if you brought the news to him.* •

If only one of the grogs saw the lightning, and that one wants to leave guard duty to tell someone else, the player will have to come up with an excuse to tell the other grog. Leaving guard duty is a serious breach of conduct if there's no good reason for it. Have them role-play it out. If both saw it and both want to leave, they might argue about who gets to go, because having both grogs leave the watch is an even more serious offense, especially with the Stormrider about.

• *Torlen considers it a serious offense to abandon your post. By all rights only one of you should go, unless it is something very important.* •

If the grogs leave, ask them what they intend to do about Clobi, who is in the guardroom below. They can tell him what is happening and thus try to get permission to leave and tell others, or they can try to sneak by him.

If they talk to him, let Clobi's player decide how to deal with it, but remind the player that someone should be on watch at all times. Clobi knows that it is his duty to see to it that Torlen is alerted about the Stormrider immediately. Lucienne would also like to know, most likely.

If a grog tries to sneak past Clobi, the player should make a **Dexterity + Sneak** roll, while Clobi makes a **Perception + Alertness** roll. If the grog beats Clobi's roll, he or she sneaks to the spiral staircase at the center of the tower and from there can get anywhere in the covenant (probably two flights down to Caeron's study, four flights down to the library where Lucienne is studying, or to the courtyard where Torlen can be found). If Clobi at least matches the grog's roll, he catches the other character. Let Clobi's player decide what to do with the little sneak. Tell Clobi:

• *You are very angry to see this grog deserting his/her post just because the storm was a little rough. It would be best if you hauled this pile of crap down to see Torlen.* •

Finding the Two Apprentices

If Lorine, or someone else, alerts Lucienne in the library, read this to her:

• *You are holed up in the library studying for the apprentice's gauntlet that you will soon have to undergo. It will be a rigorous series of exams covering Hermetic magic theory, Hermetic history, and magic*

ability; and you are quite worried about it. Not only has the storm hurt your concentration, but you've been repeatedly interrupted. One of the covenant scholars is still rustling around in the back of the library looking for some tome or another, and you're getting annoyed. Suddenly you are interrupted yet again, this time by a knock on the door. •

After Lucienne is told about the Stormrider, tell her:

• *You are stunned by the news. It has been so long since the Stormrider rode the winds that you thought he was gone forever. You, of course, want to pursue him, but first you will have to get permission from a magus — and the only one left at the covenant is the demented Felix down in his caverns.* •

Let the characters continue to role-play for a while. If Lucienne looks out of the library windows to see the valley for herself, she sees the lightning fork from the earth to the sky.

After Lucienne decides to leave the library, tell the character Tomas that he heard the whole thing:

• *While you were looking for your book, you heard someone come into the library and tell the apprentice Lucienne that the Stormrider had been sighted. You've heard of that strange creature; it's a legend of some local notoriety — you've even had dreams about him lately. Hmmm, Caeron would be very intrigued by this information. You could probably find him in his room.* •

This is, of course, how Caeron can learn about the Stormrider, if he doesn't know already. If he does know, then have Tomas bump into him in the hallway as he goes down to see Felix. Tomas might end up accompanying Caeron there.

If someone goes to Caeron's room, read to him::

• *Caeron, you are in your tiny room working on a potion, as you are unable to sleep during this awful storm, when you hear footsteps on the stairway and then a knock on the door.* •

Once Caeron is told the news, tell him that while he thinks chasing after the Stormrider might be an amusing lark before he is made a magus and leaves this covenant forever, he will have to go to his master, Felix, to get permission to go. Felix is the only magus left in the covenant, and only a magus can authorize a dangerous mission. You might also want to mention that he could achieve real fame for himself if he could prove that the Stormrider is not an elemental and disprove Grimgroth's famous treatise. In other words, this is an opportunity of a lifetime, and not something to be passed up.

Petitioning Felix

The only wizard who is left at the covenant is the infamous Felix Necromius, so if the apprentices want permission to seek the Stormrider, they will have to ask him. It will not be a pleasant task speaking with that strange, twisted man, but they have little choice.

In his laboratory buried deep beneath the covenant lives one of the strangest wizards at Mistridge. Felix Necromius is obsessed with death and seems to be unable to think of life in any other terms than in relation to death. He has a strange, quavering voice, and rarely does he speak an entire sentence without at least one reference (however oblique) to death.

If things work out right, Caeron and Lucienne will both rush to Felix seeking permission to go after the Stormrider. You should manipulate things so that somehow both of them find out about the news. One apprentice, however, may reach Felix's lab before

The Art of Narration

As the two grogs go to tell their particular friends of what they have seen, you will have to employ narration and overt manipulation to get everything to work out the way you want it to. In later stories, after you have the hang of intro's, you can let the players tell you where they are in the covenant and what they decide to do. For this story, however, you will have to tell them where they are, what they are doing, and suggest actions for them to take. Try to give the players as much freedom of choice as you can, even if it screws things up a little bit. But to make things work out, you'll have to take charge of things. If someone gets miffed about the lack of freedom in the first few scenes, tell them it only lasts until the moment they step out of the covenant (or that the authors were jerks).

If events turn out that only one of the two cliques has been alerted to the Stormrider so half of the characters are going to be left out, there are several methods to use to ensure that both apprentices find out about it.

- A charwoman can overhear what's happening and spread the news so that everyone in the covenant knows of it. This creates such excitement that even Felix learns of it.
- A character from the clique that is being left out observes the earth-to-sky lightning on their own.
- Felix can refuse to let either apprentice brave a confrontation with the Stormrider alone.

the other one even hears about the Stormrider. If it is at all possible, get as many characters, even companions and grogs, to go to Felix at once, so that the rich detail of the laboratory will not be "wasted" on only one or two characters. Some of them may be driven by a morbid curiosity, a curiosity they will most likely regret. Because of Caeron's bad experiences with Felix, it may be very difficult for him to ask a favor of his master. Remember his curse; he hears the moans of the dead, so he will be very uncomfortable in his master's laboratory. (That's why he no longer lives with his master.)

When a character descends the spiral staircase to the lowest level of the covenant and arrives at Felix' lab, they find the large door to his lab closed and locked.

• *You make your way down the spiral staircase into the rock of the hill, and then walk down a short tunnel towards Felix's lab. Beads of water run down the walls all about you. Eventually you find yourself in front of a huge oak door reinforced with heavy bands of bronze, set deep into the granite walls. Strange inscriptions cover every inch of the metal, and there is a huge bronze knocker in the shape of a person's hand.* •

At first there is no response if they knock. Only after a second knock will they hear a thin, wavering voice say:

- *"Be you living or be you dead?"* •

If the character says, "Living," Felix says, "Go away!" The character will have to ask to be let in and plead a bit before the door will open. If the character says, "Dead," Felix will pause a bit and then say, "Begone, petty liar, or you'll be dead soon enough."

If the character persists in asking to come in, the door will soon open (under control of a spell), and Felix's voice will say:

- *"Come in young one. Welcome to my little tomb."* •

As the characters walk in to his laboratory, they will likely be

taken aback by what they see.

• *Felix's laboratory is a large, rough-hewn cavern scattered with tables piled high with assorted equipment and books. There are glass bowls, brass pipes, small braziers, and hundreds of little pots and vials filled with all manner of herbs and magical ingredients. Much of his research takes place in a large vat of mud at the center of the room. Dried animal bodies line the walls, hanging by chains. Next to a reading stand is Felix, still and pale as a corpse, in loose white robes.* •

If Caeron is here, tell him:

• *There must be at least a dozen corpses in this room, and scores more in the catacombs beyond. First, you hear a whisper almost too soft to detect. Then it grows, and you realize it is the moans of many dead. The different moans mix, swell, and fall like wind in the trees. You know it will only get worse until you leave. The dead have found a sympathetic ear, and they will tear you apart with their cries if you do not leave soon. What's worse, you suspect Felix hears them too, only he enjoys it.* •

If the characters do not ask about the experiment Felix asks them by way of greeting:

• *"Still alive I see, your body looks well. Well, what do you want?"* •

If the characters tell Felix that they want to pursue the Stormrider, he will first try to discourage them, telling them that they are valuable to the covenant and should not be risked on such a dangerous mission. Naturally, the characters will persist. At this point, if appropriate, the apprentice other than the one already in the lab should show up, just to slow down the process of getting permission. To Necromius, the safety of these two is not really important enough for him to waste his time over, so he soon concedes:

• *"Very well, you may give chase to this fellow, but you must promise me something first. You must record the last words of all those who die on your little expedition. I keep a journal of such things."* •

The characters must agree to this stipulation or Felix, who really cares nothing for the Stormrider, will not let them go. And that is that.

• *"So, are we agreed?"* •

Once it is decided that the characters are to go, he will warn them:

• *"You must ensure that the folk of the valley do not think that you are with the Stormrider. They've blamed us for things like that before, and it is decay, pure decay. The good name of Mistridge is in your hands; do not let it lose its fragrance. Do I make myself understood? Good, I will order that preparations be made; you will leave soon no doubt. Now get out of my laboratory... I have work to do."* •

If the two apprentices argue over which one gets to go, Felix will say:

• *"Enough of this bickering; you both shall go. Perhaps you will balance each others' faults."* •

Getting Underway

The characters must now make preparations to get underway. Read to them the following.

• *With the permission of Felix Necromius, preparations to get underway are being made. The grogs are putting on their armor, packing supplies (such as rope), and readying their weapons. But how are the rest of you going to prepare yourselves? Is there anything special any of you want to do before you depart?* •

Felix's Lab

There are many strange things the characters might see in Felix's laboratory, especially when they are not busy speaking with him. Ask the players who are not directly involved in this part of the story to add in whatever details to the laboratory they find appropriate to enhance the mood and feeling of this scene. Below are listed a few ideas of some strange things that characters can notice as they look around.

A dead cat hanging upside down by strings over a table. It's been shaved, its legs are bound in bronze wire, and its eyes are sewn shut. One of Felix's less successful experiments.

On Felix's reading stand is an open book; in it one can see a diagram that seems to describe how to remove the ligaments from a person's leg without tearing them.

A very human-looking hand rises from the vat of mud in the center of the lab. Felix notices what the character is looking at and quickly casts a spell that pushes whatever it was back down in the mud.

Do not encourage them to do anything special or delay departure, but if they think of something they want to do, help them along.

Information About the Stormrider

The characters know certain things about the Stormrider. Before the characters leave Mistridge, call their attention to the description of the Stormrider: on one of their handouts, perhaps even reading it aloud.

Characters who are able to make **Intelligence + Legend Lore** rolls of 7+ will also know the following:

• *The Stormrider is said to be a demon whose presence heralds the beginning of a plague, famine, or war. Some say he is one of the Horsemen of the Apocalypse. Whatever he is, he is a mighty warrior who nevertheless can be felled with the blows of mortal blades. He is able to control the winds, hurl lightning from his lance, and summon trolls from running water. His steed can breathe fire, but cannot fly at will.* •

If the characters think of it, allow them look for information on the Stormrider in the library. They don't have much time before the grogs have gotten their equipment and are ready to leave, half an hour at the most. They will need to make an **Intelligence + Scribe Latin** roll of 8+ to learn anything at all.

The main item they will discover is Grimgroth's treatise on the Stormrider, which has some very interesting information in it. According to Grimgroth, the Stormrider is an air elemental, the essence of the rage of the storm itself. When the storm is at its most ferocious, the most magical part of it takes the form of a black steed and its rider, and it touches the earth in that form to cause yet more destruction and sorrow. This treatise has been the basis of much thought on the nature of elementals, and many wizards have used his ideas in their own theories. The magus Vancasitum states in his own widely known tome on magic theory that Grimgroth's treatise

tise has become the centerpiece of the Order's current understanding of elementals.

If the characters can make a **Perception + Scan** roll of 10+, they will discover an old, yellowed letter tucked between two pages. It is addressed to Mierina at Lariander covenant and signed by Grimgroth, but obviously never sent. Grimgroth mentions that after looking into some old legends about a young knight in Val du Bosque, he became suspicious that he might be wrong about the Stormrider. He suggests the possibility that the rider might actually be a human who was exhibiting some deep inner rage and was gaining magical powers from that rage. Near the end of the letter he states that at the first available opportunity he was going to check into it.

(Grimgroth did in fact investigate the Stormrider further and found him to be human, though his mount did appear to be an elemental. It would have been so embarrassing to have his famous treatise shown even partially incorrect, that Grimgroth quickly "lost" his letter, and buried the whole matter of the Stormrider in his past. He hopes only that no one else will ever investigate the rider and that it will remain his secret. About this whole matter he is not proud, but it is simply something he did.)

Tomas's Visions

At this time, while the characters are still at the covenant, have Tomas roll to see whether he has a **vision**. First describe where in the covenant he is; it should be some time while he is preparing to leave, perhaps while he is looking out the window in his quarters down into the valley. (This helps set up the mood; these visions

should be special things). Have him add his Visions score + 3 (for the covenant's magical aura). His total bonus is +8. If he rolls a 12+ he has the "Beautiful Maiden" vision; give him the slip of paper with the vision on it. (The visions are found on one of the center two pages of the booklet. Remove these pages and cut the visions out so you can hand them one at a time to Tomas during the story.) Tell the player **not to flip the paper over**, at least not yet. (The interpretation of the vision is written on the other side, and the player should not see it yet.)

Encourage the player of Tomas to role-play out what Tomas says as he has his vision. Tomas has gotten into the habit of speaking out loud during his visions so that he won't forget them. "I see a woman, a beautiful young maiden. And she is eating berries...." If the player role-plays it out, it can add a lot of depth to the story; plus it allows all the players to be informed as to the nature of the visions.

Even if he doesn't roll high enough to get a full vision, you should tell him part of the vision. For this, simply read the first three lines of the description to the player. In this case, however, do not give the player the slip of paper.

If Tomas receives the full vision, have the player roll for an interpretation next: **a stress die + Intelligence + Visions**. If the roll is 9+, allow the player to flip the slip of paper over and read the interpretation printed there. If you let the players keep these slips of paper, they will have an easier time remembering them and picking up clues from them, but if you want to make it harder on the players, tell them to give the slips of paper back once the vision is over. At least take back the visions for which Tomas fails to get the interpretation so that they are not accidentally flipped over and read during the game.

On the Fiery Trail

Setting Off

Though the storm has mostly passed, it is still drizzling, and whenever the characters get near the Stormrider, the rain will pour a little faster, the winds will rise, and they will enter the storm again. It is not a nice day, and the characters are likely to be miserable because of it.

When the characters are preparing to leave Mistridge, tell Ramón that he thinks crossing the river directly between Mistridge and Javielle is the only way to reach the village in a reasonable amount of time. If the characters choose to go by way of the ford (an extra three hours of walking), they can cross the river more safely (though still with some effort), but they will be much farther behind the Stormrider than normal.

To guide them to a good place to cross the river, Ramón must make a **Val du Bosque Lore + Perception** stress roll of 8+. Since his specialty is "lay of the land," he gets an extra +1 bonus, so his total bonus is +6. This means he is so good that he will miss only on a roll of 0 (since you cannot roll a 1 on a stress die). If he does in fact miss, he takes the group to a bend in the river where the water runs faster and all the ease factors for anyone in the water (swimming, for example) will be 2 points higher than what is described below.

Crossing the River

After finally leaving the covenant, the characters must cross the river, which is now flooded. They must use either their spells or wits or both to cross. This scene is a thinking exercise for the players. Can they invent an efficient, fast, and safe way to get across the river? The best way is for Caeron to use a spell of his, but other ways work as well. Keep the action moving; don't let the players contemplate forever. If they get bogged down, give them some help. Don't allow them to waste hours trying to get across.

Read to them this description:

• *You climb over the trunk of a fallen tree and come out of the woods onto the bank of the river. Before you rushes a torrent of muddy water ten yards across. It is awash with branches that have been torn from trees, and as you look, a large elm comes racing down the center of the channel. Its ragged branches spread out before it like grasping hands. Quickly it moves past you and goes out of sight downstream, turning around and around all the while.* •

Now the characters have to manage a way across. If they ever are about to try something really stupid, you can give a hint to Torlen; this help represents his long years of experience (and his Common Sense virtue). Listed below are a couple of their options

and what is likely to happen in each case. Don't be surprised if your players think of something else entirely.

Caeron can use his **spell Twist the Living Tree** to bend a tree on this side toward the opposite bank and a tree on the far bank toward this one, so that they meet and intertwine their branches in the middle. Ask Caeron for his **Perception + Finesse** scores and roll this secretly to represent how well he shaped the branches. If he botches, there is a flaw and the first person who tries to cross will fall. If he rolls a 12+, he's done such a good job that everyone gets +2 on their **Climb** rolls when crossing. At least one character might have to climb across unaided (requires a **Dexterity + Climb** roll of 6+ or slip and fall), but if that character brings a rope across, the other characters shouldn't have any problems.

Caeron could attach a length of rope to a branch and use his **spell Piercing Shaft of Wood** to make the branch stick into a tree on the far shore (requires a **Targeting** roll of 8+). Crossing by rope requires a **Strength + Climb** roll of 6+ if the rope is high enough that the character is out of the water, or a roll of 9+ if the character is in the water. Any character who fails the roll falls into the river and must swim (see below). Another danger is that trees are still coming down the river, and if one comes by while a rope is strung across, it will catch the rope and no doubt break it or pull it free. (Good luck to anyone on the rope at that time.)

The characters could construct a raft out of fallen trees, perhaps using spontaneous Muto Herbam spells. (Caeron's spell, **Twist the Living Tree**, doesn't work on an uprooted tree.) Spontaneous Rego Herbam spells could also propel the raft across the torrent.

The water is over twenty feet deep at this portion of the river, so it is not possible to ford it. A **swimming** character must attempt **Strength + Swim** rolls of 9+ (with double the character's Load counting as a penalty). An unsuccessful roll means the character loses one fatigue level for each point of Enc carried and is swept ten paces downstream. Any character who falls unconscious drowns. (A heavily encumbered character, therefore, is likely to drown quickly.) Each character must continue to make rolls until two are successful, at which point the character has reached the opposite shore.

At some time during this scene, possibly at an exciting point, Tomas might have a **vision**. If he is able to roll a 12+ on **Visions**, give him the "Grove of Pines" vision. Otherwise just read him the first few lines from the description. As always, he must make an **Intelligence + Visions** roll of 9+ to read the interpretation on the other side.

Other Side of the River

When they finally get to the opposite bank of the river, tell them that they have to scramble up a small, muddy slope to get to level ground, whereupon they will be in the grove of trees that runs along the river. As the characters get across, have each make a fatigue roll, due to accumulated exhaustion, or once they are all over, tell them:

• *The excitement of departure has left you, and now your weariness finally begins to hit you. All of you were up for much of the night, catching only scattered snatches of sleep because of the ferocity of the storm. Everyone make a fatigue roll.*•

Have them look on their character sheets for their fatigue totals. If they roll a 12+, they do not lose any fatigue and feel fresh and ready to go. If they roll a 3 to 11, they feel a bit tired from a lack

of rest and nervousness and lose one long-term fatigue level. If they get a 2 or under, they lose two long-term fatigue levels. Long-term fatigue cannot be recovered without sleep.

Then skip the Ford section below and go to the Burning Tree.

The Ford

If the characters cross the river at the ford, they can cross safely, though they will get soaked. For the remainder of the story, however, this group will be about two hours behind the schedule they otherwise would have had they crossed the river where Ramón told them to. You will have to adjust the story accordingly: the tree will have mostly burned down, the villagers will have left the church, and though the Stormrider will still be at the castle, it will be in partial ruin and its inhabitants will be half mad from rage caused by the encircling Stormrider. If the characters save the day, the castle inhabitants will not really notice, and the Baron will not emerge to speak with them.

Once they are across the ford, tell them they hike through light forest, and then through farmland. They won't see the burning tree unless someone makes a **Perception + Alertness** roll of 10+, in which case they will see a strange red glow off in the distance towards the river.

The Burning Tree

Once the characters have made it across the river, they see a burning tree in the distance. Under the tree they find the body of a squire who has been mortally wounded by the Stormrider. The squire's dogs are still near his body, and they put up a fight if the characters approach. Here the characters discover where the Stormrider began his rampage, and gain their first clues. It is a test of how the characters will deal with an unusual and possibly dangerous situation. From here they can follow the Stormrider's tracks into Javielle. Since such powerful and elemental magic was at work near the tree, the Dominion no longer holds sway and it temporarily has a +2 magical aura. The wizards get +2 to all their magic rolls.

• *Just as you climb up the river bank, you notice in the distance a tree enveloped in flames. Through the mist, it looks like a giant candle. Everyone make a Perception + Scan roll.*•

After everyone has made a **Perception + Scan** roll, tell them what they see. The higher they roll, the more details they see. Each detail is listed with the minimum number required to see it. The other details will become apparent only as the characters approach.

Automatic: A burning tree in the distance.

5+: A ring of foot-high flames encircles the tree.

8+: Dark, shadowy dog-like creatures are leaping about in the ring.

11+: A human body lies at the foot of the tree, not moving.

14+: The grass and other plants on the ground around the tree for fifty paces have been flattened, blown down to the ground in the direction away from the tree.

Botch: They might perceive the black shadows of demon dogs dancing under the flickering light of the burning tree and tearing the flesh from a still living maiden.

The ring of flames is made up of scores of flaming hoofprints.

The Stormrider must have ridden around the tree again and again, and finally ridden off towards the village of Javielle (where one set of hoofprints leads). There are no hoofprints leading to the flaming tree. They seem to have simply appeared.

Ramón, the tracker, can find out a variety of things if he looks closely. If he makes a Track + Perception roll of 4+ after just looking briefly at the tracks he can tell they are a horse's. If he carefully looks at the entire ring and makes a Track + Perception roll of 8+, he can find where they started, and that they are much deeper than the other tracks, indicating that the horse came down from a jump when it began making the flaming hoofprints.

These **flaming hoofprints** cannot be stamped out, and if dirt is piled on top of them they still flame on top of the earth. They will continue to flame until the Stormrider's horse leaves the earth, goes back to the sky, and loses its corporeal form.

Inside the ring of flames are **five dogs**, each wearing a collar (though the characters won't notice that at first). As the characters approach the tree, you might want to portray the dogs as demonic and horrific. Actually the dogs belong to the dying squire and are frantic with terror. They cannot leave the circle of flame, out of fear, yet the circle intensifies their every emotion. (See the pull-out description of the Stormrider for its effects. Generally speaking, it doubles the passions of a person or animal within it.) If anyone enters the circle, the dogs will attack them in an effort to protect their master.

A fairly simple **combat** should ensue involving the dogs — a good introduction to the combat system. Since the dogs won't cross the circle of flames, the characters can always retreat from the melee to rest or to make better plans. They can also simply kill the dogs with missiles. However, since these dogs are half mad, they will ferociously attack anyone within the circle. See the pull-out from the middle of this booklet for the combat stats of the five dogs. Remember to have the characters roll for fatigue after they change from one strenuous activity to another, and at the end of the battle. If anyone is fatigued, this will be short-term fatigue that can be recovered much quicker than the long-term fatigue they rolled for earlier.

Remind Ramón that he cannot bear to see animals suffering, so if these dogs are to be killed, he will want them killed as quickly and painlessly as possible.

Under this ancient oak, known as the Loving Oak by the locals, the characters will find the **half-dead body** of a young man leaning against the trunk. He suffers from several sword wounds and from a horrible burn on his face and chest; at first the characters might assume he is dead. He wears the blue and gold tunic of Baron d'Uverre and has a broadsword lying at his side, but he is not wearing any armor. In his right hand he clutches a scrap of black cloth. His name is Brien, and he is the son of a minor local lord, Sir Guifré, and is being trained as a knight at the Baron's castle. In the grass, fifty paces from the tree, his horse lies dead, killed by a severe burn.

After some person comes up to him and tries to speak with him, the squire will whisper the name of his beloved:

• *"Marie, my poor Marie."* •

Then he groans and falls into unconsciousness. Unless either Torlen or Jeremé can quickly heal him by making a **Chirurgy + Quickness** roll of 14+, the squire will die. (Torlen gets a +1 on his

roll because of his specialty.)

As soon as the squire dies, Caeron, because of his curse, will hear the corpse groaning in mortal agony and will not be comfortable within a dozen feet of it. If Lucienne uses her spell **Whispers Through the Black Gate**, they can talk with this dead man, but even so he is still in great torment and not very coherent. Mumble and garble what he says so the players have trouble understanding you. If he lives, he will say the same things to the characters, also garbled.

The squire says:

• *"He said to me from his black charger -- 'If I cannot have her, then no one can. She is one thing you cannot have brother.' -- I was confused, I am not his brother! I moved to protect my Marie, to defend her honor. But lightning flew from his lance, and I was thrown to the ground. Then from his horse, the cowardly knave cut me down every time I attempted to stand up. As I lay helpless, he grabbed up my poor, Marie and took her away. I can hear her screams still. Oh please find her for me. And if he has harmed one hair on her head, I beg you please, find that horrible creature and make him suffer!"* •

The scrap of cloth that Brien holds tightly in his right hand was torn from the Stormrider's cape. Be sure to point it out because it is very important to the story. The characters will have to pry it from Brien's clenched fist if he is dead, but if Tomas touches it, he will feel a surge of rage. If Tomas has the cloth, he will receive a +5 bonus on visions related to the Stormrider for the remainder of the story. You may have to manipulate Tomas into touching the cloth, such as suggesting to his player that he is the one most capable of figuring out what it is. Do whatever it takes to get this cloth into Tomas's hands.

If Caeron uses **Speak with Plants and Trees** to talk to the burning tree, it will only "scream" in pain as it slowly dies. With a Perception + Scan roll of 5+, he may hear it mutter:

• *"Why does he torture me so, one who has seen so much love. This is not true to my nature! I am the one who creates love!"* •

This tree is important to the Stormrider for it was here that he originally saw the fair Fabía, the maiden whom he loved above any other. On this night, the Stormrider happened to see a squire wooing his lover under this tree. The sight brought back tormenting memories and he flew into a rage. He began to think that the squire was his brother and the woman was Fabía. So he came down from the clouds, slew the squire, and carried off the woman to Javielle (where the characters will later find her).

Tomas may have a vision at this spot, but only if he moves to investigate matters further. He must either touch the squire, or go inside the circle of flame. If he does something special, like look into the squire's eyes, you might want to give him a bonus to his roll. If he has the scrap of cloth, he receives a +5 bonus as well. If he does roll a 12+ (remember to give him a +2 because of the magic aura), give him the "Rage" vision.

At some point characters will probably decide to follow the flaming tracks to the village. No tracking rolls are necessary because the flaming trail is so easy to follow.

If at this point, or at any time, the characters get far off the suggested course of the adventure, you might want to ad lib some encounters for the rest of the session and then continue the story described here the next time you play.

Javielle

The characters see the damage the Stormrider has done to Javielle and help the squire's lover, who has been wounded by the Stormrider.

Dominion: In this town, since it is a holy day (the feast day of Sante Fabía), the Dominion is 3. Magi must **subtract 3** from all magic rolls, and make three extra botch rolls every time they zero out on such a roll. (See *Ars Magica*, p. 72)

•*The sun has come up, but the storm clouds obscure it, so it is a grim morning. Up ahead of you is the village of Javielle, dark and forsaken in the rain and drizzle. As you walk through its outskirts, you notice that the storm has hit these people hard. Three cottages are collapsed, their timber walls lying crushed on the ground, and two others no longer have their thatch roofs. The tracks of the Stormrider continue straight down the road. Do you continue to follow them?*•

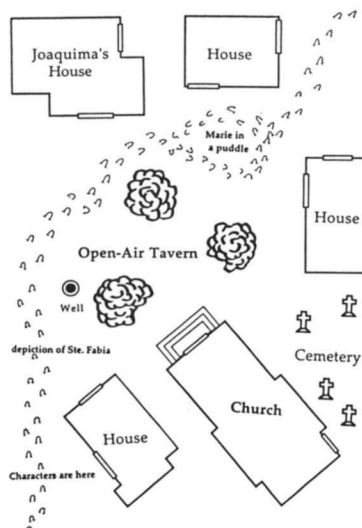
Do not encourage characters to search the houses; there is nothing here of interest. If they do look around, however, tell them that the houses are normal serf's dwellings, made of timber and wattle with only simple belongings inside. (Most cottages have benches or stools; chairs are a luxury.) The characters will find no signs of life, though there are dead bodies inside one of the cottages. There are no people or animals to be seen. The storm and then the Stormrider frightened them off.

•*In the middle of the village there are three oak trees, under which are a number of overturned tressel tables and benches — this is where many of the older people of the village spend their evenings; it's the village tavern. Plates, tablecloths, and mugs scattered about indicate that the tavern had been in full use the previous evening. To the right of the trees is the small stone church, with its double doors shut. You can hear the sound of chanting coming from inside.*•

When the characters get closer tell them:

•*All kinds of decorations and flowers lie about the compound. The villagers were obviously celebrating some sort of festival. Lying in the mud are a number of white banners with red roses sewn on each one, as well as a number of wreaths of flowers. There is also a large wooden board with a crudely carved and painted picture of a woman on it. Hoofprints burn on the surface of the board.*•

If they look closely at the wooden board, they will notice some details:



•*The woman is in white robes, has a halo, and carries three roses in her right hand.*•

Anyone who looks at it can make a **Perception + Val du Bosque Lore** roll. To those who roll 5+, read this:

•*You recognize this woman as Sante Fabía, the patron saint of the valley.*•

There is no one in the center of the village. Most of tables have been flipped over, while there is still a warm mug of ale on one of the two tables that still stands. The oaks shed many branches during the storm, and green boughs lie everywhere.

The church is a small, white-washed building with a small steeple. The doors are firmly barred from within, and the windows have barred shutters. About fifty villagers are crowded inside, chanting; they will not come out. Any player who listens to the chanting can make a **Perception + Scan** roll. Those who get a 6+ can hear a young boy's voice chanting in Latin, and then a man's voice preaching about fire, the four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, and the coming end of the earth. He seems to be preparing the villagers for imminent Armageddon. The tracks of the Stormrider never go near the church. They always remain more than ten feet from it. The Dominion is +4 within this small area. (Remember that Ramón is afraid of large buildings.)

If anyone moves so as to be able to see what is on the far side of the three oaks, read them this description:

•*A maiden lies wounded in a puddle on the far side of the three oaks near the church. A ring of burning hoof marks appear in the dirt all about the puddle. She is weeping, and is covered with mud.*•

The characters will have to decide how to deal with the wounded maiden. She is Marie, the lover of the squire, and she has been through a great ordeal. Her face has been burned and needs to be treated, but the characters will have to calm her before they can treat the burns. If a man tries to comfort her, she will become hysterical and scream, though she doesn't really have the power to fight anyone off. Only if someone can make a **Presence + Folk Ken** roll of 10+ will she calm down. (Lucienne and Lorine get +4 on this roll because they are women and therefore seem less threatening to Marie.) If someone rolls a 3 or less while trying to comfort her, she will scream in terror — remember she has been sitting in a circle of flaming hoofprints for hours. If Ramón tries to come near her, she will recognize him as "the wild man" and become even more terrified (-2 on all future rolls that attempt to calm her down).

Remember that characters who step into the **burning ring** to help the woman will have their passions doubled. They simply double whatever personality trait rolls they get. People tend to get extremely angry/frightened/sad when they are within a circle of flaming hoofprints.

Whoever tries to treat her burns will realize that they take the shape of a palm and fingers, as if someone had slapped her with a burning hand. Her wounds will never fully heal naturally, which is a shame, for one can tell that she was once very beautiful. Any characters who makes a **Perception + Val du Bosque Lore** roll of 8+ will know she is Marie, the young daughter of the carpenter and last year's Mayday Queen.

If questioned, she will slowly and tearfully tell her story to a character she trusts.

•*"He attacked my amour. I fear he is dead. My poor Brien. Have you seen him?"*•

If the characters ask her more questions, she will be persuaded to tell more if the person speaking with her makes a **Communica-**

tion roll of 7+. (Clobi may add his +1 Gentle score and Lucienne may add her +3 Moved by Suffering score if they make this attempt.) If more than one person tries to talk with her at once, you may wish to have them all make a roll, and not have any of them succeed unless everyone succeeds.

• *"I was secretly meeting with good Brien Guifré, a squire at the castle. We were meeting under the Loving Tree, but we had been there only a short time when suddenly a storm arose. Then a black rider flew down from the clouds astride a black steed spouting flame and fear.*

"He struck Brien down, and I fear him dead. He then carried me off.

"I remember no more, until he threw me down in this puddle, shouting, 'You are not her!' He began to ride around me again and again, coming closer and closer meaning to kill me. He seemed to enjoy my fear. He trampled on all the decorations for the feast, and even desecrated the image of Sante Fabía." •

If she is asked how she survived, when it seemed he meant to kill her, have her say:

• *"I feared myself doomed, but then I picked up some flowers from the mud for I meant to pray to Fabía. He looked down at me, gave a growl that was both like a laugh and a cry, and then rode away."* •

In the church are all the inhabitants of the village who have not fled into the countryside. If the characters make Marie scream, three brave young men will unbar the double doors at the front of the church and look out to see what is happening. They will most likely assume that the wizards had something to do with the attack on the village, and one turns to tell the others in the church what they see. While they will certainly yell at the characters and tell them to leave the young woman alone and get out of the village, but under no circumstances will they leave the church.

However, **Father Llorenç** (see *Ars Magica* p. 136) will eventually emerge from the church and say to the characters:

• *"Begone demons, and leave that poor girl alone. The Kingdom of God is at hand, and soon your kind will no longer be welcome amidst my humble flock."* •

He will ignore all that they say, and if they do not leave at once, he will again tell them to leave. If they still do not go, he will bravely walk forward to bring the girl into the church. If the characters make any move to threaten him, he will scurry back into the church like a mouse back into its hole.

The best thing for the characters to do is probably simply to leave without getting angry at the villagers. Unless they are very persuasive speakers (such as making Communication + Charisma rolls of 12+), they will just make things worse by trying to talk to them. The villagers will connect the characters with the storm and the Stormrider, and this will harm the reputation of Mistrudge. Warn the apprentices that the older wizards will be very angry if this severely damages relations with the common folk.

If the characters continue to follow the tracks, they will find that the tracks weave erratically through the village and then head north towards **Castle d'Uverre**. Eventually the characters will follow these hoofprints and leave in search of the Stormrider. When they do so, tell them:

• *"You have been affected in some way by what you have seen and heard in the village. Some of you may have been profoundly moved and angered; others of you may want simply to get on with the job. Make a personality roll by rolling a stress die and adding it to the first personality trait on your list."* •

Look at the insert called Rolling for Personality to see how emotional the characters get. When they tell you what they roll,

read to them the result indicated on the chart. Now you must watch the players carefully to see how they role-play out their emotional state. Later on, you will have to judge how their characters feel, so you will need to watch their role-playing closely.

The Old Hag

The characters follow the Stormrider's hoofprints as they twist and turn down the road until they arrive at a shrine to Sante Fabía. In front of a nearby hut sits an old woman who is wise despite her crazed babbling, and has much of value to say to the characters. She has devoted her life to Sante Fabía. The shrine is a holy place: **Dominion 3** in the immediate environs.

As they approach the shrine, read them this description:

• *As you follow the flaming tracks to the north towards Castle d'Uverre, you see a small stone shrine built beside the road. It is a large stone cross atop a huge stone slab. Hundreds of flowers lie scattered in front of it. Sitting cross-legged in front of the hut is an old hag crooning to herself and rocking back and forth. The flaming hoofprints of the Stormrider encircle the shrine many times, and the eerie light of their flames casts an evil shadow on the face of the hag."* •

The old hag who sits in front of her hut seems unaffected by the power of the flaming hoofprints. She seems neither influenced nor led by her passions; she is as calm as ice. While she is a holy woman, it is in fact the effects of the Dominion around the cross itself that have nullified the emotional effects of the circle of flames. No characters who go inside the flames to see the shrine closer will be affected by their strange magic.

Any character who can make a **Legend Lore + Int** roll of 6+ knows that this is a shrine to the patron saint of the valley, Sante Fabía, who performed her first miracle here. Anyone who gets a 9+ on that roll knows that a knight was killed here by his jealous brother, and then was restored to life by Fabía while she held three red roses.

Anyone who looks closely notices that the woman is very old, dressed in rags, and is missing her right leg from the knee down. Anyone who looks closely at the shrine itself notices that there is a bunch of red roses laid on a small stone altar in front of the cross. (These were brought by the old crone herself.)

The woman will ignore the characters unless they show some sort of **anger or emotion**. When they do she will look towards them and say:

• *"You have the same anger in you that he does. The same anger indeed. You are as tainted with the sin of malice as the fiend himself. The fiend who dared to lay a hand on a woman of God."* •

If they respond, she will say nothing. Only if they go **inside the circle of flames** will she will say:

• *"You undisciplined wretches, I know who you are. You are the dwellers in the mist. So does that make you the same as the rider of the mist? Answer me that."* •

If they treat her with any semblance of civility, she will begin to speak with them. You should ad-lib what she says. This old hag sees Sante Fabía as the ideal model for human behavior, and since the characters are far from this example, she sees no real difference between angry magi and an angry Stormrider. She is unimpressed by youthful bravado and self-satisfaction. If the conversation gets bogged down a bit, you might want her to say:

• *"Anger you have indeed, like the rider for whom you search. But you must dismount from your own steed of rage, before it consumes you. Until you do, you will never find what you search for — do not make the same mistake he did. The fires of damnation will burn in anticipation if you are not able to find peace."* •

If the characters specifically ask **who the Stormrider is**, she will say:

• *"She befriended him, but he was not a holy man, nor a gentle man, nor a virtuous man, and he was filled with much anger. He loved her, he loved her with a fiery passion, but he could not understand her dedication."* •

If she is asked **how to defeat the Stormrider** she will say:

• *"If you cannot control the storm, you cannot harm him. But do not look to the storm above, but to the storm within."* •

And if she is questioned about **the shrine**, she will say:

• *"This is a shrine to brotherly hate; this is where one brother killed another. Are you really all that different? You are of the same home, yet you squabble like enemies."* •

This should hit close to home, assuming, of course, that the characters have indeed been arguing (as they are "supposed to"). She will shake her head and, after letting them speak for a moment, will interrupt with:

• *"This is where Fabía performed her first miracle; she healed the brother of his wounds. She brought him back to life, for it was not yet time for him to die. I have built many shrines to my blessed virgin saint, always in places sacred to her. Always hoping that folk such as you will find peace."* •

This woman is a dedicated devotee of Sante Fabía. She has spent most of her life in service to the memory of this saint. Though she lives in the woods around this shrine and survives on the offerings of food by wayfarers, she has traveled over the valley, building small altars to Sante Fabía. Somehow she always is able to build them in a place important to Sante Fabía. She is so old and weak that she could be killed with a single blow, but she is not afraid of death.

If Tomas thinks to enter the circle of flame, automatically let him have the vision of "The Miracle" If he does not enter the circle, he will not have the vision. He still needs to roll to interpret the vision.

The Stormrider Attacks

As the characters follow the trail, the Stormrider suddenly speeds past them, striking one of the characters. This scene lets the characters confront the Stormrider and get a feel for his power without risking a full-scale battle. It also further develops their anger towards this evil marauder. Find ways to encourage active hostility toward the Stormrider, such as emphasizing his taunt or pointing out how badly the characters handled the attack (if they indeed handle it poorly). This is your chance to get the players angry, if their characters don't seem to be enraged already.

• *You are walking along when suddenly to your left you hear a great rush of wind and the approaching sound of falling rain. Through the mist, you see the dark shape of an armored warrior astride a black steed. He bursts out of the trees and gallops toward you. Quickly, what do you do?*

• Go to each player in turn and ask them what their characters are doing. Don't give them much time to think about it. Let each character take one quick action, for the Stormrider will soon be

Rolling for Personality

This story has much to do with the raging passion within an individual. Not only does the Stormrider exhibit great anger and rage, but some of the player-characters will as well. To help players role-play this out, the characters have personality traits. In certain circumstances, you should ask the players to roll for their reactions to important events, if they are not already role-playing their reactions out. Lucienne, Lorine, and other characters may have savage reactions to hearing some accounts of the Stormrider's deeds. Indeed, if by the climax, some characters are not angry, the story as a whole will not work as well. You will find that the more your players role-play the emotions of their characters, the better their role-playing becomes. Emotions may be in fact the basis of good role-playing, so encourage them to be emotional.

The chart below describes the intensity of feeling a character will have, depending on how high they roll. Use it to explain to a player how their character feels, but tell them it's a guideline, not the law.

Botch	You are filled with strong feeling opposed to the trait you were rolling for and find it hard to control your actions.
up to 4	You don't feel very emotional.
5 to 7	You are feeling emotional, but you are still in control of your actions. If you can find a good excuse, you will gladly follow your feelings.
8 to 14	You feel highly emotional, and you can only control yourself if there is something very strong holding you back, such as personal danger or a vital duty.
15 to 19	You are filled with intense emotion and can hold yourself back only if someone important to you confronts you and stops you from taking an action.
20+	You are completely consumed with passion and are out of control. Only severe measures or threats to your life will stop you.

You should find some way of rewarding players who forcefully role-play their passions out. There are many different ways you can do this, but we suggest that you give them an extra Whimsy Card as a reward for their role-playing. (Whimsy Cards are a role-playing aid available from Lion Rampant.) If you aren't using Whimsy Cards in this story, you can give them an extra Confidence point for the duration of this story. (Rationalization: following your emotions completely and purely gives you moral strength and a sense of purpose.) Otherwise just give them a quick smile and pay them extra attention.

upon them, and any characters who hesitate can do nothing at all.

The Stormrider rides by at great speed and swings his sword at one of the characters on the edge of the group. (If possible, have him strike Clobi, who is most likely to survive the attack.) The Stormrider gets a +2 bonus to Atk and Dam for his superior

position (mounted and racing by), and even if his blow is parried, its force will knock the target to the ground. Only the character attacked and those nearby can strike the Stormrider with melee weapons, and all attacks against him are -2 because he moves by so quickly. The Stormrider laughs maliciously the whole time he rides past the characters, and may even taunt them.

• *Give yourself to me, brother. I am too great for you.* •

Without pause, the Stormrider races into the woods to the right of the party and is gone. He holds no malice for the party, so he does not bother to destroy them. He is merely wandering around causing damage at random while he slowly approaches Castle d'Uverre. The characters have one round to fire arrows at the Stormrider as he flees, but it's a hard shot through trees and wind. Anyone aiming at the Stormrider must roll 15+ to hit. Anyone aiming at the horse must roll 13+ to hit. Anyone aiming at the two of them in general must roll 12+ (then roll a die: 1-6 hits the horse and 7-10 hits the Stormrider). For spells, the ease factor ranges from 6 to 12, depending on the spell. A Piercing Shaft of Wood is affected by wind and trees, so the ease factor would be 12 to hit the Stormrider, while the Earth's Carbuncle is not affected by trees or wind, and has a large target (the horse), so its ease factor is only 6.

Tomas might have a vision at the very moment that the Stormrider attacks. Tell him that he feels a vision coming, but that he knows he will be helplessly in a trance if he has it. He can try to fight it off, or he can accept it. If he fights it, he still must make the roll for having it, but can subtract 5 from his roll. If he wants to have it anyway, he gets a +3 to his roll because of the Stormrider's presence. If he gets a 12+ on his roll, then give him the slip of paper with the "Storm" vision on it. He gets the normal chance to interpret the vision.

If the characters (through some miracle) manage to put an end to the Stormrider here, have Sante Fabia appear and tell the Stormrider's story, followed by the ending described at the end of the story. You should probably fudge the dice to make sure that the Stormrider escapes and allows the rest of the story to continue as laid out here.

You might want to remind Torlen to treat the wounded character, if there is one. He can let the wounded character recover a body level by making a **Chirurgery + Int** roll of 9+ (subtract the wound penalty of the character). If the characters were disorganized, remind Torlen that he feels responsible for coordinating a strategy for facing the Stormrider and that a plan would be useful. (He has the virtue Common Sense, so hints to him are perfectly legitimate.) While characters have little choice but to continue to follow the hoofprints, there is much else they can talk about, if only to share their ideas on who and what the Stormrider is. Encourage them to have a council of war, to plan on what to do when they meet the Stormrider again.

Things happened too quickly during the encounter for the characters to be able to get angry. The Stormrider simply rushed by. But for this next encounter the anger of the characters will make a big difference in the outcome of the battle. One of the Stormrider's powers is having double his normal Soak against anyone who is angry. If a character is enraged by the Stormrider, they will do less damage. The characters will need to learn to control their own anger, if they are to hope to defeat him.

At this point, go from character to character and judge how emotional that character is according to how they have been role-played. The players should have been guided by their personality rolls earlier, and may have been influenced by this last meeting

with the legend. Don't judge the characters on the overt emotional state of the player; instead look at how they role-played and decide whether that suggests they are angry or not.

The Baron's Castle

Again the characters confront the Stormrider, this time as he is attacking Castle d'Uverre. He will flee from the characters across the river, calling up water elementals to attack the party as he does so.

Dominion: 2.

As the group finally reaches the castle, read them the following description:

• *You see the mighty castle of Baron d'Uverre looming over the river on a rocky outcropping. The roof of a building inside the walls is on fire, and you hear the frantic shouts of people in the castle. Riding around the castle is the Stormrider, a dark cloaked figure riding a black horse, dressed in armor of an outdated style, and carrying a lance which has lightning flickering up and down its length. His coal-black horse not only leaves flaming hoofprints but snorts flames as well, its spiral horns glisten in the light. The hoofprints already encircle the castle several times.* •

Anyone who watches the horse and makes a **Perception + Scan** roll of 8+ will notice that:

• *The horse handles beautifully for the Stormrider, moving gracefully with the slightest nudge, but it seems to have an evil, aggressive temperament.* •

As the characters sit at the top of the hill looking down at the castle, give Tomas a chance to roll for a vision. He suffers a -2 penalty on his stress roll + Visions because of the Dominion (but he may get other bonus for special actions, or for holding the scrap of cloth). If he succeeds, give him the "Oedipus" vision.

Fighting the Stormrider

The characters have a round or two to discuss the situation as they watch the castle burn from the top of the hill. If Tomas is having a vision, he stands completely still and stares into space. They have the chance to get down out of sight on the side of the hill opposite the castle. Then the Stormrider rides out from behind the fortress. If they have hidden themselves, the characters will have all the time they need to plan their actions, but if they are still standing atop the hill, the Stormrider sees them and charges at them headlong, his lance crackling with lightning. (If the characters have hidden, he will charge them once they show themselves.)

The characters will have a chance to use missile weapons as the Stormrider approaches, though high winds make accuracy difficult. If they have hidden and are firing at him by surprise, they get a free shot (and can take a round to aim, so they get +3 on the roll).

The Stormrider flees immediately if he is wounded in this battle, turning his steed and charging for the river.

The first round that he charges (or for the surprise shot), they must roll 18+ to hit. Reduce this and all following ease factors by 2 if a character aims at the horse and by 3 for characters aiming at the horse and rider together (in which case you must roll another die: 1-6 hits the horse and 7-10 hits the rider). For spells, the targeting ease factor is anywhere from 9 to 15, depending on the spell and the target (horse, rider, or both).

On the **second round**, they must roll 12+, or 6+ to 9+ for spells. Then the Stormrider looses a **bolt of lightning** at one of the characters, probably an archer. He needs a 9+ to hit at this distance (since wind does not affect the bolt's accuracy.)

On the **third round**, they must roll only 9+, or a 3+ to 6+ for spells.

At that point, he is nearly on top of the characters. If anyone has charged out to meet him, they can fight this one round. Then **Sante Fabía** appears behind the characters in sight of the Stormrider. Unable to face her, the Stormrider rears his horse, turns, and heads southeast for the river at top speed. The characters are unlikely to notice Sante Fabía at first because they are paying attention to the Stormrider, but each character can make an **Alertness + Per** roll of 6+ to notice light coming from behind them. Those who make the roll can turn in time to see Sante Fabía standing there, a woman of indeterminate age in white robes, sporting a halo and holding three roses in her right hand. Just as a few characters catch sight of her, she disappears.

The characters can fire on the Stormrider as he leaves, but he calls up a **swirling wind** (the characters will see a huge whirl of mist) behind him, so characters need to roll 18+ to hit him, or 12+ to 15+ with spells.

Then the Stormrider reaches the river.

The River, Once Again

The Stormrider will ride across the river, his horse galloping on top of the water. The horse's hooves leave a line of large steam clouds, from which a number of water elementals form. After they are defeated, a way must be found over the river.

• *The Stormrider seems to hesitate for a moment, but suddenly he lashes at his horse and moves towards the flooded river. Then he simply rides his horse to the bank and begins to cross over — on top of the water. As the Stormrider gallops across the river, large clouds of steam rise up from wherever his black steed steps, and slowly, from each steaming hoofprint, green misshapen arms rise up out of the water.* •

Give the character one more chance to do something — fire arrows (a 17+ to hit, the swirling winds are gone) or cast spells (11+ to 14+ to hit). They can attempt to shoot at the creatures in the water, difficulty of 19+, and -3 to damage because the water will probably slow down most shots, or 12+ to 16+ and -3 damage with spells.

• *The Stormrider disappears into the woods that cover the foothills of Mt. Tierné, and the arms in the river slowly sink back beneath the surface* •

Baron D'Uverre

As the characters cross the field toward the river where the Stormrider has fled, an enormous man in chain mail and a plumed helmet rides out of the castle gate with three well-armed knights and approaches the characters. He takes off his helmet, and they see the mane of white hair and the embroidered eyepatch that mark him as **Baron d'Uverre**. The Baron thanks them, and then asks them who they are and where they are from:

• *"Thank you for driving away that mad creature. 'Tis a shame, that he did flee. Together I think we could have slain him once and for all. But*

I do not understand why he came here again, and what he wants from me. •

If questioned about what he knows about the Stormrider, the Baron will say:

• *"He is a creature of dark passion. He has come to the castle before, of course. My grandfather used to tell me of the day the Rider came down from the sky and slew his grandfather in front of the castle gates. He has come to the castle three times since, and each time he shouts challenges and screams threats.* •

If asked about what the Stormrider said, or if he is questioned further about what occurred, the Baron will say:

• *"He kept yelling up at the walls, 'Come down you cowardly knave! Come down and face me!' He also shouted other things, but I do not understand what he meant by them."* •

After the characters ask him to continue, he tells them:

• *"He said, 'It is your turn now brother, come and face me. You had no right to steal her from me; she was all I had. You took everything from me, everything.' He is, of course, mad. Such a creature could not be of the d'Uverre family"* •

If the characters ask for help crossing the river, the Baron will tell them that there are boats at a dock near the castle. The characters are welcome to use one. If they ask for help in tracking the Stormrider down, the Baron says that all his men are needed to fight the fires that the Stormrider started. Unless the characters have important things to say or ask, the Baron will soon thank them for their help and return to his castle to fight the fires and assess the damage.

As the characters approach the river to cross it, the river trolls will attack them.

The River Trolls

When more than three people get nearer than ten feet from the river, the river trolls (whose arms they saw earlier) will come out of the water to attack them. (This means that the characters cannot cross the river in the boat until they have dealt with the troll, because the trolls will attack them at the dock.)

• *You see the bulbous heads of many hideous troll-like creatures pop up from the water, scattered clumps of weeds serving as hair. They begin to crawl from the water towards you. You notice that they clutch large rocks in either hand. They aren't here for a party.* •

Though these creatures look loathsome enough, they should not be difficult for the characters to deal with, for when they are struck with edged weapons, they break open and turn back into water.

The characters will have one round to fire missiles or use spells before the first trolls close with them, but then the melee begins in earnest. On the first round, eight trolls will attack the characters, followed by another eight the next round. If the characters are doing exceptionally well in these first rounds, you can throw a third wave of trolls at them, but you don't want to do so much damage that the characters will not be up to a climactic battle against the Stormrider at the end of the story. The trolls pop when hit by edged weapons, but the water that results soon floods the battlefield. At an appropriate time in the fight, announce that the water from the dead trolls has made the bank so slick that everyone must roll an extra botch after rolling a 0. The trolls, at least initially, will have the advantage of numbers, and the characters

will have to fight quickly to reduce the trolls' numbers to a manageable size. If more than one troll attacks a single opponent, use these rules:

The defender must split up the Defense score among the attackers, with a separate roll for each. (E.g. Clobi could split his +5 Def into +2, +2, and +1 to protect himself against three opponents.) To make matters worse, the trolls get +1 to Attack and Damage for each troll attacking a single opponent (if there are at least two), so those three trolls attacking Clobi would each get +3 to Atk and Dam. As you can see, outnumbering an opponent is an excellent strategy.

The Last Push

To cross the river, the characters can use one of the boats docked near the castle (hopefully after the trolls have been dealt with). Also, there are two trees standing on opposite sides of the river 50 paces downstream that Caeron can form into a bridge with his Twist the Living Tree spell. Make crossing the river swift and easy (unless the trolls haven't been dealt with yet). The pace picks up at this point, and to slow things down with pointless details could dampen the excitement.

Once they get to the other side of the river, Tomas, of course, has a chance to have a vision. If he rolls a 12+, give him the "Young Boy" vision.

After the vision, ask the characters if they continue to follow the flaming hoofprints. If so, describe how they make their way up the foothills.

•You slowly and torturously follow the flaming hoofprints, till you reach a point where you can look back over the valley. The storm has abated somewhat, and you can even see Mistridge to the southwest. Above you, however, on the higher slopes of Mount Tierné the storm still rages. If fact, on a hill a little to your right it appears as if the storm is lashing out rather fiercely. •

Sante Fabía

As they walk up the foothills of Mount Tierné, following the flaming tracks of the Stormrider, they meet up with the Stormrider's would-be lover (the one in all of Tomas's visions), who turns out to be none other than Sante Fabía.

Dominion: 5

Describe to the troupe how they hike up the foothills of Mount Tierné, and then describe the small grove of pines they see off to their left:

•To your left, you see a grove of pine trees. This would not be unusual, except for the light that shines down on them through an opening in the storm clouds. The sunlight dances upon the tops of those green boughs in a dramatic contrast to the grayness of the morning around you. •

Have Tomas make a Perception roll; if he gets a 7+, tell him that this is definitely the grove he saw in his visions (assuming he had the Grove of Pines or the Rage vision).

If they walk to the grove, they find it a welcome respite from the fury of the winds and the rain.

•Inside the grove, it still rains, but it is a gentle, warm rain, and the pure evergreen smell of the pines fills the air. In the middle of the grove is a small open glade with a small stone altar in the center surrounded by

rose bushes. Roughly constructed of mountain rocks piled one on top of another, the altar has a simple and unaffected beauty. A wooden cross sticks up from it, and three roses lie at its base. •

Once the characters have had time to look around a little, tell them they see the ruins of a stone cottage at the far end of the glade.

If anyone puts three roses on top of the altar, Sante Fabía will appear before them.

•Before you stands a woman, where only an instant before there was no one. She is dressed in a long white dress, she carries three red roses, and there are scars on her left cheek. Over her head there hangs a halo. You are struck by her gentle but determined stare. She is looking directly at you. •

Tomas will immediately recognize her as the woman in his visions, she who befriended "him," and Clobi recognizes her as Sante Fabía, to whom he is devoted. She addresses all the people in the party equally, focusing no special attention on the magi, Tomas, or Clobi. She says to them:

•"This has gone on too long. The boy I once knew is gone, and in his place is a beast. He has much rage within him, and it has destroyed him. The horror and destruction which he spreads must stop; and though you have the anger as well, it must be you who stop him. Nothing can be done, but to end his struggle. Please go to him now, and send him to me. Send him to me. I will be waiting.

"When you see him, tell him this: it was not he who killed me, it was the storm. Though it was his anger that caused the storm, he did not do the deed." •

After saying this she disappears.

After the blessed saint leaves, everyone in the group gains back a level of fatigue, whether it is short or long term. Tell anyone who prayed at either her shrine in the valley or at this one, or who showed Sante Fabía any sort of special devotion, that they are completely healed of all wounds and that they are no longer weary (all body and fatigue levels restored).

If Tomas missed one or more visions during the story, let him experience one of them now, without having to roll for it. He will have to roll normally for the interpretation.

When the characters decide to continue with their climb say:

•The remainder of your climb is uneventful. After another half an hour of hiking, you reach the foot of the hill where the storm still lingers — the culmination of your journey. As you look up at the hill, you see lightning forking from the ground to the sky. You have found him; soon you will meet face to face. •

Stormrider's Last Stand

This is the climactic scene of the story, and it is here that the characters finally are able to confront the Stormrider. Depending on their mood and actions, they can slay the Stormrider in a vicious battle, dispatch him as a final act of mercy, or convince him to dismount and come with them to see Sante Fabía.

•As you reach the top of the hill, you see the Stormrider screaming up at the clouds above him, still astride his horse. Around him lie scores of trees, all of them either uprooted or snapped in half like twigs. Branches and leaves lie everywhere, creating a scene of such destruction that it is hard to imagine. •

There are three different possible outcomes for this scene, depending on how the characters decide to approach it.

1) If the characters are angry and attack the knight, he will become the Stormrider in 2 rounds and begin to attack them. The characters will have quite a battle on their hands. The Stormrider will use every trick in the book to slay them, and will probably encircle them with the flaming hoofprints in order to make sure they stay angry and not completely rational. If a character is angry, do not give them any time to think or make decisions — force them to act as soon as you ask what they are doing. Allow characters who are not angry, to make plans and speak with other non-emotional characters. Though the Stormrider will not leave the top of the hill, if the characters are dead or have run away, he will fly up to the clouds on his evil steed — to return another day. If they kill him, his horse will leap into the air and fly up to the storm clouds above. An immense storm will ensue a minute later — the characters only have a short time to get off the top of the hill before the lightning really begins to crash.

2) If the characters attack the Stormrider, but do so in cold blood without feelings of revenge and rage in their hearts, they have an easier time of it. They will not actually battle the Stormrider, but will combat his mortal self instead — Fallemon. Though he has special powers over the elements to employ against them, his heart will not be in it, and of course he will not have the strength and stamina of the Stormrider to sustain him. As the characters prepare to give their final blow to the Stormrider, he will take off his helmet and say,

• *"It is time; do the deed."* •

And with that he will die. If they do not strike him, he will attempt to fall on their sword or will grab a dagger and stab himself. As he dies, his steed will immediately leap into the air and fly towards the storm clouds. A huge storm will begin soon afterwards.

3) If they try to speak with him, they can persuade him to get off his horse. He can be persuaded to listen if they say or do a number of different things. First, if they do not behave aggressively towards him he will remain in his human form — this is essential if they wish to convince him to set aside his anger. Second, if they tell him he did not kill Fabia, it will help him resolve some of his feelings about himself, and he will calm down. Third, they must somehow persuade him that it is time to let go, that he has no reason to be angry anymore. Let them try almost anything, and as long as they are forthright and direct, whatever they try will likely succeed. If they are too obvious about trying to get him to do as they want, he will probably become angry.

If the Stormrider does begin to listen to what they have to say, his horse will begin to paw the ground and snort flame. If he actually does get off of the horse, it pushes him aside (after all when he's not the Stormrider, he's an old man) and attacks the characters. A battle will then ensue with the Storm elemental — which is in the form of a horse.

When the characters kill the evil steed, its shadow will dance off, accompanied by the crack of thunder. The characters can see this strange shadow rise to join the storm clouds above. But it will leave behind its spiral horns — worth 10 Auram *vis* each. (This is the reward for figuring out the story, and battling the true enemy, and not simply a pitiful victim of his own anger.)

The characters should take the Stormrider to the mountain shrine to see Sante Fabia. See the Denouement section below. If they do not take him to the shrine he will soon die, if not of his wounds then of his decrepitude, for until now it was his anger that has kept him alive.

In conducting the battle, you are mostly on your own. You have had most of this story laid out for you, but now you must think about how you are going to conduct this battle. Use some of the ideas we used earlier in the kit, and come up with some of your own. It is up to you to make it interesting. Carefully read the description of the Stormrider, especially the powers he has when he is no longer the Stormrider. Then figure out a way to give the battle a little flavor. Some things which we suggest you use are:

- Extra botch rolls because of the terrain (felled trees everywhere) and the weather.
- If the characters make Fallemon angry in any way, he will, over the course of two rounds, again take the form of the Stormrider. Only if they come to him in the most unpassionate of ways will he fight them as his normal self.
- If your players really don't want a battle, but want to resolve this problem entirely peaceably, make it easier for them to persuade Fallemon to dismount and see Sante Fabia. When he does so, the mount attacks, but Fallemon fights it as well. It will be a quick battle with Fallemon and the characters victorious.
- If Lorine uses her father's broadsword to battle the Stormrider, and she is still full of vengeance, she gets +1 to her attack and +2 to her damage. This is due to the mystical significance of poetic justice. (This is an inherently magical world, remember?) When the Stormrider dies however, the sword will crack, and will thereafter be unusable.

Denouement

If the characters take Fallemon down to the mountain shrine, Sante Fabia will appear, even if they only bring his corpse. She will thank the characters and then bend to comfort the man. But as she tends to him, she will explain to them who the Stormrider is, her relationship with him, and will answer any questions that she can.

From her point of view, the Stormrider was a confused boy who had powers that he was neither wise nor strong enough to use without harming himself. His anger got the better of him, he lost control, and from his anger his magic flowed. It was his magical rage that destroyed him, and for her part in it she is sorry. She did not mean to confuse him, or to let him think that she ever looked upon him in but the most chaste of ways. She thinks that the wizards have the same problem as Fallemon did; they are not wise enough to control their magical powers. She pities them as she pities the decrepit Stormrider lying in her arms.

If Fallemon is still alive, he dies of old age or of his wounds here at the shrine — here at the place where he first went into a rage over Fabia. If you want to be very poetic, you can describe what happens as he dies.

• *The old man opens his eyes, smiles up at Fabia, and whispers, "I am not angry anymore." His face goes slack and you hear a low rattle from his throat, he is dead. Slowly from his supine body you see his shade rise up and touch the hand of Fabia. Hand and hand with Fabia, he begins to climb up in the air, never giving a backward glance. They climb higher and higher, buoyed up by a light coming down from the sky. Finally, they disappear through a sunlit crack in the clouds, an brilliant opening in the grayness of the sky that suggests the gateway to Heaven itself. After they are gone, it begins to drizzle again, but you see that where the two of them walked in the air, a rainbow slowly forms.* •

The characters then return to Mistridge and celebrate their victory (or lick their wounds, if they have failed). Speed through

the description of this return and simply describe the grogs on the covenant walls hailing them heartily as they walk the path up to the gate, meeting them in the courtyard, and helping them take off their packs and armor.

But when they get back to the covenant they have to decide what they will do about Grimgroth. Grimgroth's famous treatise calls the Stormrider an elemental, but he was actually a magical human. Do they embarrass him, or do they keep the identity of the Stormrider a secret? If Caeron keeps his mouth shut, he will make himself a friend of Grimgroth for life — and perhaps of Lucienne as well.

If you plan to use the characters in your saga, or if you simply want to demonstrate more rules for the characters, take some time to discuss reputations. Have the players talk about what their characters are likely to remember about the other characters. Will they remember Caeron as "haughty" or Lorine as "fiery?" If they can come to a consensus, give the characters appropriate reputations. Reputation locales could be "among the magi," "among the grogs," or "Mistrbridge," and so on. Then think back to important non-player characters and give the player-characters any other reputations they may have picked up. The apprentice who did the most talking to Baron d'Uverre, for example, might get a reputation at his castle. (See p. 28 in *Ars Magica*.)

Then explain and hand out experience: 3 points for the apprentices, 2 for companions, and 1 for grogs. Tell the players they only put experience on abilities which they used at some point during the story (but not necessarily made a roll using it). Remind the ones playing the apprentices that they cannot use experience points to increase their arts, but they can increase their affinities (See *Ars Magica* p.32)

The Never-Ending Story

The characters used in this Jump Start Kit can actually be used by the players when you begin the saga, if you are going to use Mis-

tridge. Lucienne and Caeron will both become full magi before the next adventure, and, if used by someone in the troupe, they will have joined Mistrbridge covenant. If you want to use Mistrbridge with your own characters, Lucienne and Caeron will go elsewhere and become non-player characters, perhaps taking the others with them.

If the characters remain in the covenant, be careful that the competition created in this story does not endanger or seriously divide the covenant as the saga progresses. Encourage the players to bury their differences and develop their characters towards some semblance of friendship. After all, they did survive the Stormrider together. If a serious schism remains after two more stories, have the older magi at Mistrbridge intervene; it is not in their interests to have the younger magi as well as the covenfolk at each others' throats. If push comes to shove, they will go as far as banishing the two trouble makers.

In this story, a great deal has occurred and the characters have met a number of figures of great importance in the valley — the Baron d'Uverre, Sante Fabía, and the Stormrider himself. One temptation you may have is to make the stories you run after this one just as grandiose. This is the first story in a saga, and so it starts the players out with a bang. All at once they are introduced to some of the leading individuals and myths of Val du Bosque. For your next story, you should tone down the intensity level as much as you dare, and make the whole setting much more mundane. You can slowly build up from there, creating a saga with as much mythical resonance and magical might as suits you and the troupe. But if you let the saga get out of control from the start, you'll never be in control again. Remember, mundanity gives scope to the magnificent.

We hope you enjoyed reading this story, as much as we enjoyed writing it — for us it was a completely different kind of adventure. It is our hope that you find it a source of ideas as well as, perhaps, inspiration. But don't just read this story, tell it. Adventures can be more than we ever imagined. Feel free to write us with any comments or criticism; we'd love to hear from you. PAX!

Credits

Story Design: Mark Rein•Hagen

Development: Jonathan Tweet, Lisa Stevens

Character Design: Jonathan Tweet

Cover Art: Doug Schuler

Title Design: Todd Berreth

Interior Art: Eric Hotz

Cartography: Jonathan Tweet, John Nephew

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Lion Rampant
PO Box 621
Northfield, MN 55057

Editing: Lisa Stevens

Nichole Lindroos

John Nephew

Jonathan Tweet

Art Coordination: John Nephew

Lay-Out: Kirsten Swingle

Jonathan Tweet

Nicole Lindroos

Dedicated to
Jonathan Tweet

The Legend

Loose upon the winds of the tempest, astride his fierce steed, is a rider, a creature of rage, a creature of the storm. It is said you can see him dancing over the gray clouds, urging the winds onward to greater ferocity. When his anger is especially fierce, he descends to the earth to wreak havoc upon the good folk, leaving only his flaming hoofprints behind. Some say he was a man whose passion overcame him, and who now looses his rage upon the winds of the storm. The magus Grimgroth insists he is an elemental, a magical incarnation of the air. Others say he is a foul demon, a Horseman of the Apocalypse, sent to earth to torment the good folk of the valley. However, all of them know him as. . .

The Stormrider

This Kit Includes:

- Eight pre-generated characters, complete with personal backgrounds and detailed personalities.
- Briefing sheets which explain the rules simply and succinctly. Your players do not have to read the game to play in this story; these one-page briefings are all they need.
- An adventure designed to guide you (the Storyguide) through your first *Ars Magica* story.
- Begin play in half an hour or less. All you need to do is to read this kit beforehand, and review selected chapters from *Ars Magica* itself.
- No mere dungeon crawl, this story explores the full mystery and scope of myths and legends. A story in all senses of the word.

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