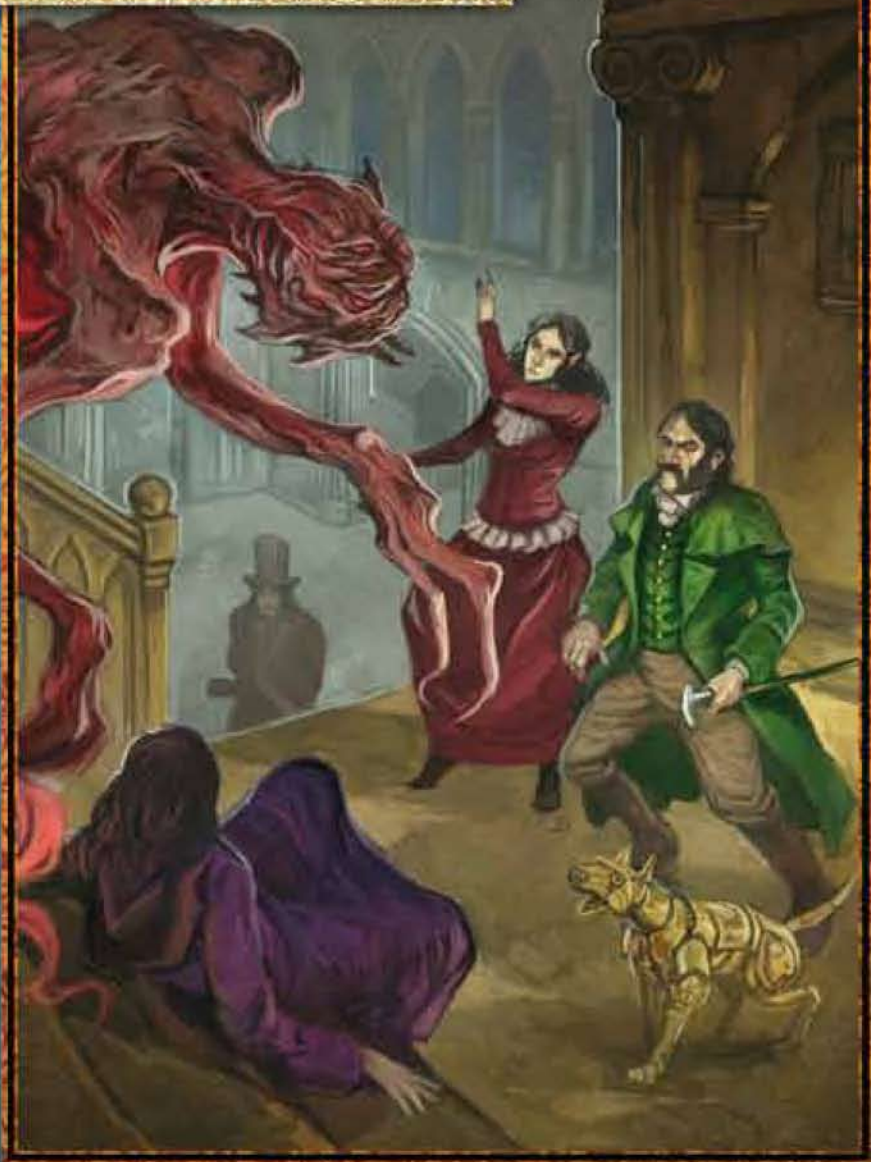


Faces in the Smoke

Volume One - The Secret Masters







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Dedication: To Steve Crook, in memory of his friendship and the many games we played from 'Airwolf til 6:00'. You will be missed.

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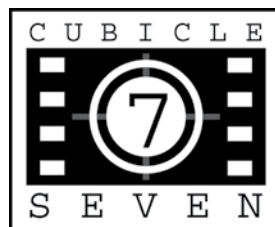
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FACES IN THE SMOKE

VOLUME ONE – THE SECRET MASTERS

CONTENTS

4 INTRODUCTION

11 CHAPTER 1 – THE WATCHERS

- 12 The Chelsea Ladies Circle
- 20 The Thulian Order
- 29 The League of Logical Utopians

37 CHAPTER 2 – DARK HEARTS AND DARK GODS

- 38 Eight
- 44 Planetarians
- 51 The Ancient and Holy Order of Sulis-Minerva

61 CHAPTER 3 – ACADEMIA ASCENDANT

- 62 The Domus Alucinae
- 69 London Orientalists Club
- 76 Aegyptus Society

82 CHAPTER 4 – FEAR AND SILENCE

- 83 Silencius
- 90 West End Terror
- 96 Hexenjaeger

103 CHAPTER 5 – SECRETS AND ADVENTURES

125 APPENDIX – FREEMASONRY AND NPCS



INTRODUCTION

“This city has many eyes, and all of them
report to me.”

- Alexei Borozci

LONDON IS A BIG PLACE...

Four million souls crushed together in the centre of the most powerful empire on the planet. Everybody wants something and, in the Smoke, if you are strong enough, you can take it. Is it really any surprise that people form communities? Usually for mutual protection but often for more nefarious purposes...

This book is about those communities, those organisations of like-minded citizens looking to get what they want. The organisations detailed here come from all walks of life. Some are extremely powerful, controlling the destiny of the Empire, others are more concerned with looking after their own and seeing everyone gets fed. Each organisation has roots in the centre of the British Empire, the metropolis of London. However, they can easily be adapted to suit any urban environment and many have the power to reach far beyond the city.

This is the first volume of *Faces in the Smoke*. You don't need the other to make use of this one - each is a stand-alone supplement with everything you need inside. However, when you see what we have for you in this volume, we believe you'll want to read its partner.

This first volume is entitled 'The Secret Masters', for here we detail the organisations whose involvement is not always obvious. These groups work in total secrecy and most of their plots weave through the higher echelons of society. In our second volume 'Shadows and Steel' we will look at more direct and even violent groups, who often move among the lower orders to work their plots.

WHO IS THIS BOOK FOR?

We have ensured that each organisation detailed in this book comes with an array of secrets and adventure seeds that make them useful for the Gamemaster. As much as these organisations might be the villains of any adventure, they might just as easily be an organisation some of the characters are looking to join. Players may find that looking at these organisations suggest new characters they might want to play, characters already built with an agenda and purpose in the world of Victoriana.

This is not a manual of NPCs to serve as villains of the week. Each organisation might be an ally or an enemy to the player characters depending on how they approach it. Few of the organisations can be

considered 'good' or 'evil'. Even the most ruthless villain might become an ally to a group of nefarious player characters. The most philanthropic gentleman might balk at dealing with the lower orders in person. As with everything in Victoriana, this book presents you with a selection of agenda, secrets and mysteries to bring into your game. You hold all you need to bring their schemes across the player characters' paths but what happens from there is up to you.

THE SECRETS TO BE FOUND IN THIS BOOK

This book's several chapters give the organisations described a theme and style. However, many of the organisations detailed here do not fit neatly into specific groups; there are cultists among the gentlemen and scientists among the soldiers. This is not an oversight, as few agendas fit conveniently into the expectations of others. We have placed groups into the most appropriate category depending on their overall style. In the end, each organisation is really in a category of its own.

CHAPTER 1 – THE WATCHERS

Some are content to wait and watch the world from the shadows, their hand nudging the flow of events from behind the curtain. Such orders rarely reveal their hand, preferring to manipulate from afar and play the long game in their agenda.

The Chelsea Ladies Circle – The wives and daughters of the rich and powerful are not always content to sit and embroider at home. By sharing what they know, the hand that rocks the cradle can indeed rule the world.

The Thulian Order – There will always be those who believe they are better than the rest of humanity. For the Thulians, it is magical ability that marks you for a greater destiny.

The League of Logical Utopians – In a rational age, those with rational minds should be in charge. The Logicians are committed to seeing that intelligence, not politics or birthright comes to rule the Empire.



CHAPTER 2 – DARK HEARTS AND DARK GODS

Ritual and sacrifice are the marks of those who seek power from a darker source. Many from all walks of life have turned from the Aluminat faith and found rapture in a more ancient truth.

Eight – In a time of sensation and wonder, for some there is never enough. Eight is a group of the well-to-do who seek the ultimate limits of sin and decadence.

Planetarians – Not every order comes into being through choice. Some, like the Planetarians discover some powerful secret or artefact that they must control and understand if humanity is to be safe.

The Ancient and Holy Order of Sulis-Minerva – Before the coming of the Aluminat, other gods commanded obedience. This cult developed from a Masonic heritage seeks to return the world to an older path.

CHAPTER 3 – ACADEMIA ASCENDANT

Knowledge is power and these orders have found out how to use that power to further their own goals. In some cases it has led to decadence, but in the new age learning might elevate as much as it might damn the unwary.

The Domus Alucinae – The new age has proved mankind has vast potential. There are those who see the Empire's advances as the tip of the iceberg and they intend to uncover the power that lies beneath.

London Orientalists Club – This group form a decadent club for those interested in the more erotic forms of art available. However, they have also used their skills and abilities to assist the Guild in investigating crimes where knowledge of ancient tantric secrets might be helpful, as long as it is discrete.

Aegyptus Society – Ancient Egypt is a place of wonders and secrets which exerts a powerful pull on the amateur academic. This order of gentlemen seeks to uncover its mysteries.

CHAPTER 4 – FEAR AND SILENCE

Some orders need to operate in secret, even though their methods are more direct. Many people know of such organisations, yet say nothing for fear of what might happen if they do. These are dark orders indeed, ready to commit terrible things to complete their agenda.

Silencius – Those who understand the secrets of magic are expected to behave like gentlemen. When they fail to do so, the Silencius comes calling.

West End Terror – The terrifying and ruthless Alexei Borozci rules a vast criminal underworld that few dare to challenge. This secretive organisation spreads a dark web across the streets of London.

Hexenjaeger – While German in origin, the Hexenjaeger can be found everywhere, looking to root out dark Witches and magical evil across the world.

CHAPTER 5 – SECRETS AND ADVENTURES

For the Gamemaster, alone, the darkest secrets of each of the organisations are revealed and detailed here, including several adventure hooks to help draw the player characters into an encounter with one of these communities.

APPENDIX – FREEMASONRY AND NPCs

One other organisation deserves special attention. To omit Freemasonry from a book like this would have been a mistake but, in Victoriana, there are enough mystical and magical secret societies. Rather than present it as a new order, the Freemasons are detailed as they are in the real world and it is left to you to decide which of the secrets and rumours are true. Finally, we revisit the process of creating an NPC with tips and details to help the Gamemaster create their statistics more easily.



CREATING YOUR OWN ORGANISATIONS

Each organisation in this book follows the same format. When creating your own organisations you may find it useful to follow this same format.

Introduction – A brief introduction, in the form of scene setting fiction.

History – How the order came into existence. Was it always what is it now? How has it developed from its original intentions?

Structure – Details on how the organisation is structured. Are there any ranks? How do members report to each other? Maybe there is no organisation beyond a leader. Maybe the organisation is far larger (or smaller) than it first appears.

Joining the Organisation – No order lasts long without members, so where do they come from and how do they prove themselves? Who decides and what do you need to do to prove yourself?

Resources – Each organisation can lay claim to a certain amount of resources. These need not be guns and machines but might be far more subtle. Contacts in the higher echelons of government can be vital, as can secret lore on magics both light and dark. Does the order claim any special alliances, or powerful members? Where and what is its base of operations, and how well protected is it?

Agenda – What does the organisation want and what are its current activities and priorities? Without a purpose, it would never hold together and that purpose needs an agenda.

Personalities – Who is in charge and who is carrying out their orders? Personalities might not just be the most powerful members; they might also be those with special responsibilities or even those working secretly against the organisation.

While detailing the sections above should provide you with a good foundation for any organisation, there are a few more things you may wish to consider.

The first thing you should ask yourself is do you really need the organisation? It is easy to get caught up in creating something that interests you and lose sight

of what your adventure really needs. Keep in mind the reasons you decided to create the organisation. What purpose will it play in the adventure and how has it been built to fulfil that role? Having said that, you may not have created the organisation to work inside an adventure you already have. Often an organisation comes to mind and you decide to pitch the player characters against it to create new adventures. In this case, you need to consider how well the organisation lends itself to actual adventures. A super-secret order of ancient vampires might sound cool but it is likely to squash the player characters or remain so far in the background they will never discover its existence. Design your idea with the needs of the adventures it will fit into, or generate.

While it is implicit in the organisations in this book, consider the size of your organisation. How many people claim membership and of those, how many understand the real secrets of the society. Size is vital as it implies greater assets and control. More people mean more contacts and muscle. However, a smaller and more select group can prove very well connected as well, although they may outsource a lot more of their dirty work.

Few, if any, groups of people have a membership entirely dedicated to the goals of the organisation. Some people join for power and money or their own agenda rather than due to a belief in the designs of the order. The more people involved in the order, the more chance dissenters may be present. Also, the larger the order the less time it can spend keeping an eye on its members. In larger groups, dissenters (and even agents from other groups attempting to infiltrate) may have an easier time working against the order and remaining unnoticed.

USING YOUR ORGANISATIONS

Consider how much of a challenge is the organisation designed to be. Take the skills and abilities of not only the characters but the players into account; the coolest organisation that proves to be no challenge, or unstoppable, is no fun for your players. Make sure the organisation works in a field the player characters have some skill with. If your character group are all soldiers and lower class thugs, an organisation that manipulates the soirees of the upper classes just is not going to fit. This might not make it completely unsuitable but it will prove a far greater challenge because the characters may not have the right abilities to face it. If the player characters have trouble getting to the upper class NPCs being manipulated,

NEW TRAITS

To allow player characters to be involved with organisations from the start, here are a few additional character traits. Social class restrictions aren't specified as they depend on the organisation involved. Some are very class specific, although there are still ways to cross class boundaries (such as a gentleman being hunted by a lower class gang looking to settle some gambling debts). As always, the Gamemaster should feel free to place social class restrictions where she sees fit.

New Privilege – Membership (2pts or 4pts)

You are a member of an organisation or street gang, either one listed here or another of your own design. For 2 points, you are just a lay member of the organisation. While you have access to the organisation's resources and back up, you also have responsibilities to carry out on its behalf. For 4 points, you are one of the lieutenants, or even leaders, of the organisation. You have the ability to not only use the organisation's resources but also see how they are assigned. You can also order lay members to do jobs for you as long as they are in the organisation's interest.

No matter what level you pick, you must justify your actions to the organisation and actively work to further its goals. If you do not, the organisation might deny you resources, expel you or worse. Organisations designed by the player, must be with Gamemaster approval.

New Asset – Safe House (2pts)

You have somewhere to go, a place of safety run by a group you trust. It may be you are part of a gang, or they owe you a favour. They look after you, feed you and hide you from the authorities when you are in need. However, it is not a hotel; you cannot treat it as lodgings and your being there may endanger the group if you are found. Do not overstay your welcome.

New Complication – Hunted

You have not made an enemy, you have made several. Somehow, you have offended a whole organisation. They want you found and punished for what you did. Their agents range far and wide so nowhere is safe for long. You might have annoyed anything from a street gang to a world spanning order. You should work with the Gamemaster on more details for who this organisation is and why they want you (if you even understand why). The size of the organisation determines how hard they are looking for you. A small gang is spending almost all its waking hours seeking you out but has less resources, agents and influence over a small area. A larger organisation considers you are a minor thorn to be crushed whenever they cross paths with you but they have agents everywhere on the lookout, as well as vast resources and influence.


the adventure becomes a lot tougher, even if the organisation is not very potent.

Be aware of your players' abilities and predilections. Putting a combat-oriented group against a subtle political organisation will not be fun if players are looking to trounce bozos, not investigate the mysterious paper trail and vice versa. If you have been running games for your group for a while you should already have an idea of how they like to solve their problems and should construct opponents they can face in a way they are comfortable with, avoiding the possibility of frustration. However, forcing them to change tack every now and again may help them discover new methods of dealing with a problem but make such 'educational' encounters the sub-plot rather than the main feature.

An organisation should not be automatically good

or bad. Plenty of the groups described here can easily appear to be the opposite of what they actually are. The player characters might be drawn closer to the organisation until they discover a little more about what it is really up to, when it might become their adversary.

By the same token, it also helps the drama within the player group if the characters are likely to disagree about the morality and agenda of an organisation. This is especially true with some of the anarchic and other political groups. One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter, after all. If the player characters are split as to whether they should help or hinder an organisation, the next question is how far are they each prepared to go? Will they just disassociate themselves with the others or actively turn against them?



If the organisation brings a schism to the player character group, make sure you have a way out of it. The discovery of new secrets might band them back together again, with some of them ashamed at having helped or hindered the organisation. If you do not have a plan to bring them all together, you may end up forcing some players to create new characters, which is no fun. However, sometimes, even characters who disagree that facing the bad guys is a good idea might still join the fight just to help their friends.

Having designed the organisation for your player characters, consider how to introduce it to them. You need not start with a direct confrontation. The thugs they fought off might turn out to work for an underworld crime syndicate. To save face they say the characters started the fight, making their bosses think the player characters are somehow onto them.

It need not be the organisation's muscle the player characters come across first, they might run across a high ranking member of an organisation and either offend or impress him. Behind the scenes, this NPC then sets about finding a way to either get revenge or look to recruiting the characters. It may be a very long time before the player characters even realise he is part of the organisation. In this case, the NPC might use the resources of the organisation they are a part of to further a personal agenda. The players might discover the organisation itself does not have a problem with them and may even join forces with them to deal with their member who has overstepped his boundaries.

However, the direct approach is just as viable. The player characters might come across a stronghold of the organisation and end up in a direct confrontation. They might foolishly think that winning that battle has been the end of it. Unfortunately, they did not attack the organisation's main headquarters and soon enough the larger part of the organisation comes looking for payback.

Secrecy is another factor in how the organisation might approach (or be approached by) the player characters. Organisations that prize their anonymity will be careful and subtle. It might be a long time before the player characters discover their opponent is an organisation rather than a series of random adversaries. Some might use their name to frighten potential adversaries, leaving some form of calling card at each encounter. Consider the motives of the organisation in putting it against the player characters. What does it want from the encounter and what is it prepared to risk?

When deciding how powerful an organisation is going to be, it is important to give it a weakness of some form. If it is all-powerful it may be too hard to

defeat and may seem unrealistic. Weaknesses are a vital way of fleshing out both organisations and characters. They need not be crippling but should give the player characters a way to defeat the organisation, or for the player characters enemies to do so. A few suggestions are:

- The organisation has overreached itself, meaning it is spread thin across its fields of interest.
- The leaders of the organisation have supernatural weaknesses that can be exploited. For instance, a group of Vampires run the organisation, so can only actively plan during the night.
- The organisation is in direct conflict with another organisation for control of a vital sphere of influence. Recent battles with other organisations are draining the resources of the organisation (or even both organisations) making it weaker than usual and loosening its grip on the contested resource.
- Subordinates are treated badly in the organisation, making them prone to bribery and even to becoming double agents.
- There is a specific sphere of influence that the organisation has no control over. This might be a particular social class, an area of science or magic, an area of the criminal underworld, or a political affiliation.
- Ritual and dogma is so important to the organisation it easily gets bogged down in trivial details. Maybe it is a group of magicians who only meet to make decisions during a full moon, or a branch of the civil service that is full of red tape (here is my receipt for your receipt), perhaps the leaders of the organisation consider themselves so holy they cannot touch any of their subordinates or anything not ritually purified.

Again, as with everything about the organisation, tailor its weaknesses to both the player character and the style of the organisation itself. You will usually find its weaknesses are apparent as you create it. If you make the weakness something the player character might be able to exploit especially well, then it just remains to leave a few clues and see if they can figure out its Achilles Heel.

It is worth remembering that few organisations command absolute loyalty from every single member. This becomes truer the larger the organisation is, not only because there are more people involved but also because it is less likely to be able to keep an eye on everyone. Totalitarian organisations often command more loyalty by fear but should the player characters find a way to protect their informants, they will find

NPCs AND INITIATIVE

In designing the quick stats for NPCs we sadly made a small omission, an Initiative rating. While you can work it out by generating values for Dexterity, Wits and Perception from the Competences, doing so would really be a pain. Here is a new way to work it out, which we have used for the NPCs you will find in this book (and those books that follow).

For all NPCs the base initiative rating is 2. To represent Dexterity they can add a third of their Physical Competence and to represent Wits a third of their Mental Competence. To simplify this, add Physical and Mental Competences together and divide them by 3 (round down) for the value of their Initiative bonus. Finally, if the NPC has Perception as a Signature skill, add that to the final number.

To make matters easier, we have summarised the bonus from Physical and Mental Competences (and added the base 2 points as well) in the table below. It also seemed fair to give Rank 20 a little extra, so we allowed that one to round up.

The final calculation is: Competence Bonus + Perception skill (if noted)

Savvy players will no doubt assign attribute scores to gain higher Initiative ratings than most NPCs. In general, this system pitches NPC Initiative ratings a little under most player characters as the forces of Fate are usually looking for the heroes to win through. However, if the Gamemaster wants to balance things a little more they should feel free to add 2 or even 3 points to any listed Initiative rating if the players are having an easy time of it, especially in the case of higher Rank NPCs.

plenty of people willing to escape the clutches of the organisation. When an organisation has a central belief finding informants and turncoats is a lot harder. However, there will always be people who have become jaded, or who fake belief to enjoy the power of the organisation.

When encountering an organisation it may be interesting for first contact to be with a rogue agent. Perhaps the organisation is actually good but a rogue agent using its resources crosses swords with the player characters. In this way, they are set against the organisation but may gradually discover they have made a horrible mistake. Within any organisation there are usually people looking to use it to further their own selfish ends. In some cases, they might even subtly control the organisation, steering it in the wrong direction. This might lead the player characters to band together with other elements within the organisation to oust the leader and restore the organisation to its true purpose.

Finally, it is worth reminding both the Gamemaster and players that organisations are not only for the Gamemaster to create. Player characters might look to

COMPETENCE BONUS TABLE

Rank	Bonus	Rank	Bonus	Rank	Bonus	Rank	Bonus
1	+3	6	+5	11	+6	16	+8
2	+3	7	+5	12	+7	17	+8
3	+4	8	+5	13	+7	18	+9
4	+4	9	+6	14	+7	19	+9
5	+4	10	+6	15	+8	20	+10

create their own organisations, bringing in new NPCs and seeking out new adventures. These organisations might be great world changing ideals but might just as easily be a detective agency, street gang or a business. Their new group may generate adventure possibilities and create a solid foundation for further campaigns. Players should not have free rein to grant themselves whatever powers and resources they like. However, as they go about building their organisation, they might come across like-minded NPCs who want to help them out, offering either their services or resources.



CHAPTER 1

THE WATCHERS

“So your husband tells you the Harefield report really was true? How interesting. More tea dear?”

- Elizabeth Bannister

THE CHELSEA LADIES CIRCLE

Marigold Corington and Elizabeth Scotsdale stood in the front window of Marigold's home. They watched as the new family moved in across the street.

"I heard that his wife passed away in childbirth, Lord rest her soul." Marigold sipped her tea.

"Did you? How sad for them," Elizabeth, or Lizzy to her friends, said as she added one lump of sugar to her tea, hesitated and then added a second. Customs be damned, she liked her tea sweet. "I did hear that his mother has come to live with him after a disastrous affair with a nanny."

"Disastrous?" Marigold ignored the fact that Lizzy had broken society's customs about women, tea and sugar. It was her house and her friend.

"Something about the nanny stealing more than just his heart."

"My, my. Men and being blinded by their desires."

"I think a set of my raisin scones will be a nice welcome gift."

Marigold glanced at Lizzy. "It's my turn to introduce myself first."

"Oh, yes. I forgot. My apologies." Lizzy smiled as she sipped her sweet tea. The two of them watched the unpacking for a while longer before Lizzy added, "Of course, you should meet them first. You'll be able to tell if our new neighbour's mother would be any good for our game of Hearts... or for the Ladies Circle. She must have something of interest to tell us."

"Exactly my thought. I think my cinnamon banana bread should do the trick."

Little old ladies—the bigger the city, the more there are and the more they band together in an aging sisterhood of information gatherers. These women spend much of their time listening to everyone's woes, bringing sustenance to the ill, comforting the grieving and generally keeping up on everyone's business in their circle of peers and beyond.

Usually widows or spinsters (but not always), these little old ladies are viewed with a myriad of emotions that range from fond affection to outright hatred for their talent of knowing everything that is going on around them. Sometimes they are meddling busybodies who have little else to do with their time and they watch others for entertainment. Sometimes, they are much more than that.

The Chelsea Ladies Circle is part of the latter set of women. With age comes experience and the members of the Chelsea Ladies Circle spend most of their time caring for them and theirs against the true evils of the world. Some would not believe that little old ladies with chicken soup and blueberry scones could be a force to be reckoned with but they would be wrong.

With a wide informal network they have an almost uncanny ability to ferret out information and put the details together. These little old ladies are the hidden, unsung heroines that the world needs more than it knows. Who better to discover that a new wife is concerned that her husband has changed or that her maid was taken ill with a strange fever than the kind, caring ear of a fondly thought of neighbourhood spinster?

HISTORY

There have always been wise women in the villages of England. Sometimes magical, sometimes lonely and often widows, these older women have assisted in healing, childbirth and even gardening but have often been viewed with disdain, distrust and sometimes even open hatred. Such women were at the mercy of their superstitious neighbours and frequently paid a high price for simply existing when natural disasters occurred. However, while these wise women are a well known part of rural life, they have also developed an urban counterpart.

Like many organisations, this one started out as nothing more than a group of like-minded individuals getting together to do something they enjoyed and to share each other's company while they did it. The Chelsea Ladies Circle, born in the Chelsea area of London along the King's Road in the year 1763, began as three upper class women, one middle class woman and the maid of the hostess of the Circle.

Spinster sisters, Madeline and Laurel Warrington, met with Frederica Barton and Heather Warrington at Mrs. Warrington's Chelsea home every Monday and Thursday afternoons for tea, conversation and a game of cards. Janice Smithson, the maid and the youngest of the women there, was still happily married.

The Chelsea Ladies Circle's foray into protecting the world from harm started innocently enough when



Janice came to her mistress asking for advice about her husband's gambling. He could not stop and he was changing; her once "domestically fat and happy" husband had become a gaunt and snappish man. Worse yet, she found a paper with strange archaic symbols on it amongst his things.

Mrs. Warrington promised to help and took the problem to her friends, which led them to uncover a supernatural force in their own backyard. Someone was using the gambling house as a way to honour Dantallon, the demon of Greed, who was slowly consuming the souls of those who gambled there.

The ladies knew they wanted to do something about it, but what? They had little power alone but they realised that as well-to-do ladies they had the ears of their husbands and other well-placed members of their social circle. Several months of planning, muffins, tarts and gallons of tea later, the plan was hatched and put into motion. They carefully watched the cultists, gathering intelligence and then dropped comments and whispered gossip in the correct ears. Eventually, the details of the demonologists made their way to the right people at the Guild, who quickly dispatched agents to deal with the abomination, saving both Janice's husband and many more.

With their eyes opened to the troubles all around them and that their word, applied carefully, could actually do something about it, the woman made a

pact to fight the evils of the world. Little old ladies of all classes now had an opportunity and a duty to know, to watch, and to protect their towns and cities from dangers both mundane and supernatural. The ladies forged a pact to always be there for each other, to defend and protect one another and spread their ideals (and recipes) across the globe. For the Chelsea Ladies Circle, this was only the beginning.

At Mrs. Warrington's suggestion, all members of the Chelsea Ladies Circle were to travel out of town to visit far off relatives. While on holiday, they were to contact other elderly ladies in the area, to become friends, or at least acquaintances and then casually drop into conversation (in an "of course you already know this" tone of voice) some of the dangers the ladies had already faced and to ask to hear of similar experiences. Once in their confidence, they were to make sure to keep in contact with their new friends. Those they could not visit regularly for a friendly cup of tea and a chat they wrote regular letters to and invited constant correspondence as often as possible. In this way the organisation was born, which has organically spread from Chelsea across the country and even reaches some of the far countries of the Empire.

Since this beginning, the Circle has grown and, though the women who have magical aptitude are only a small percentage of the Circle, their fight against nefarious groups has continued. They have built up an impressive amount of resources – both mundane and supernatural. In the the Great Library all of the accumulated knowledge of the worldwide organisation is stored, cared for and protected by the Librarian of the Matriarch's Circle. These books are in vaults beneath the Harker Finishing School for Girls where no student may go.

Recently, the Chelsea Ladies Circles has made contact with several groups of witches on the Dark Continent and another of the Circle's best agents has been sent on a trip up the Nile. Generally, ladies are not recruited into the movement until they have passed middle-age, although they may unknowingly have been working for them in an unofficial capacity for years or decades. Ladies of the circle are very good at staying in touch with their daughters, nieces and cousins, and subtly enticing their gossip and news.

Open magical displays or rituals are frowned upon and rarely go unnoticed without a curtain twitching somewhere on the street with a Lady of the Circle keeping an eye on things. Crosswords and puzzles are promoted within the Circle to help with deciphering the secret communiqués of other secret societies - and, as always, "no problem cannot be solved or overcome without having a nice cup of tea first."





STRUCTURE

As organisations go, the Chelsea Ladies Circle runs light and loose, despite its size it remains an informal group of friends rather than a seriously hierarchical organisation. Though, as with any social group, there is a definite hierarchy that the Ladies of the Circle adhere to; however, many ladies assume rank and seniority by virtue of age and experience without even being granted any formal title.

The Matriarch

The Grand Dame of the original Chelsea Ladies Circle, she is the one in charge overall. If there is a policy change or a great decision to be made that affects the Circle as a whole, this is the woman who makes that decision. Such a thing is rare, indeed. The most recent decision by the Matriarch was to attempt to gain a foothold on the Dark Continent. So far, the Circle has met with limited success.

The Matriarch's Circle

Located in London, England, this is what the original Chelsea Ladies Circle has evolved into. The Matriarch's Circle is centred in the Harker Finishing School for Girls and the home of the Matriarch. It is this Circle that all other Circles look to for assistance when help or advice is needed. They care for the Great Library, keep abreast of what is going on within the world and look for candidates to join them from within their own ranks. The Matriarch is always chosen from the Matriarch's Circle as they have had the most experience dealing with the overall picture of the Circle's engagements.

The Grand Dame

Every social circle has that one woman whom everyone looks to for approval and advice. She is the natural leader of the Circle. When addressed in formal terms, the leader of any Chelsea Ladies Circle is referred to as the Grand Dame. This started in France and the term was quickly adopted elsewhere.

The Librarian

Each Circle has a responsibility to record and send in their findings; especially when a new cult or arcane piece of knowledge is discovered. This is also true of mundane evils, such as learning who the leader of the slave trade is in an area. Each fact is recorded by the Librarian and sent to the Matriarch's Circle on a regular basis.

'Correspondents'

Women who are not part of the circle but who unknowingly provide information are known simply as Correspondents. The older ladies who make up the movement generally lead fairly sedentary lifestyles, living in one location for long periods of time gathering information and acting when directed, so they need to keep abreast of the latest social gossip in all the grandest parties. By using a vast network of family ties and patronage for young girls entering society, the Circle makes sure that no birth, marriage, death, move or business opening goes unnoticed.

JOINING THE ORGANISATION

There are two strict requirements for joining the Chelsea Ladies Circle: the first is that you are female; the second is that you are of middle age. Everything else is negotiable. Class, race, supernatural, mundane and health are all things that are to be judged by the Ladies of the Circle that you are trying to join. However, a large proportion of the membership is from the middle and upper classes and a certain amount of prejudice against using the lower orders prevails. While the information of working class women is considered very valuable, many of the leisured classes still don't want to invite them into their drawing rooms.

Ladies of the middle and upper class generally have more time to commit to the cause than lower class women. This is simply due to the fact that middle and upper class ladies have servants to take care of much of the housework, but it is generally recognised that the lower class members provide the best intelligence of the seamier side of life. The community of poverty among the lower class can also provide an 'in' with a target with more ease than the cloistered upper classes. The old lady who brings biscuits and some hotpot to the young man renting a room in the attic, who seems to come and go at odd hours, is not simply doing an act of kindness to feed the poor soul, that old lady is a vital link in an information gathering network and her contribution is recognised as such.

Joining the Chelsea Ladies Circle is not a formal thing, it is up to the local Circle, who judge each potential member based on the qualities that they are looking for. It could be something as simple as a willingness to learn to play Hearts or Points, or it could be something as rigorous as having the right background, the right breeding and enough family money to assist the local Circle as needed. In most cases, a prospective member serves as an unwitting

Correspondent for many years before circumstance or necessity requires the Circle to bring her into their confidence.

No matter how formal or informal the judging process is, the one thing that all Circle members keep in mind when judging a potential member, is what the Circle needs, not what the candidate wants. If a potential member has a tendency to be ambitious or flagrant with either information or their supernatural talent, they may not be right for the Chelsea Ladies Circle. If they are the type of little old lady who takes pleasure in the suffering of others, they are most certainly not right for the Circle. On the whole, Ladies of the Circle can be stubborn but they are neither malicious nor inherently evil. All potential new members must be of good character no matter what their breeding, education or background is.

Characters may certainly join a Circle but, depending on type of game being run, the character may opt to simply be associated with the Circle and not be an official member. If the campaign is the type to stay in a single city for a long time, the character may be able to join as a normal member of the Circle. If the campaign is the type to move about the world, the character may be able to join the Circle as a form of messenger if she is approved by at least one Grand Dame of a Circle in the areas she will frequent. However, most often, characters won't know they are working for or with a local Circle.

RESOURCES

The Chelsea Ladies Circle is a loosely run organisation but that does not mean it is not organised or without its particular resources. Each Circle brings its own resources to the tea table but, when needed, they have other trusted resources to depend on.

Arguably the most vital resource for the circle is the Harker Finishing School for Girls. As the real headquarters of the Ladies of the Circle, the school has been in existence for long enough that some of its former students' grandchildren are members of the Chelsea Ladies Circle today. It is a prestigious finishing school for the most successful upper crust families and turns out the most desired young ladies in the world. The Harker Finishing School accepts only the crème de la crème of students who meet all of society's demands for royal and noble young women. They are educated in both the historical facts and societal needs of the day.

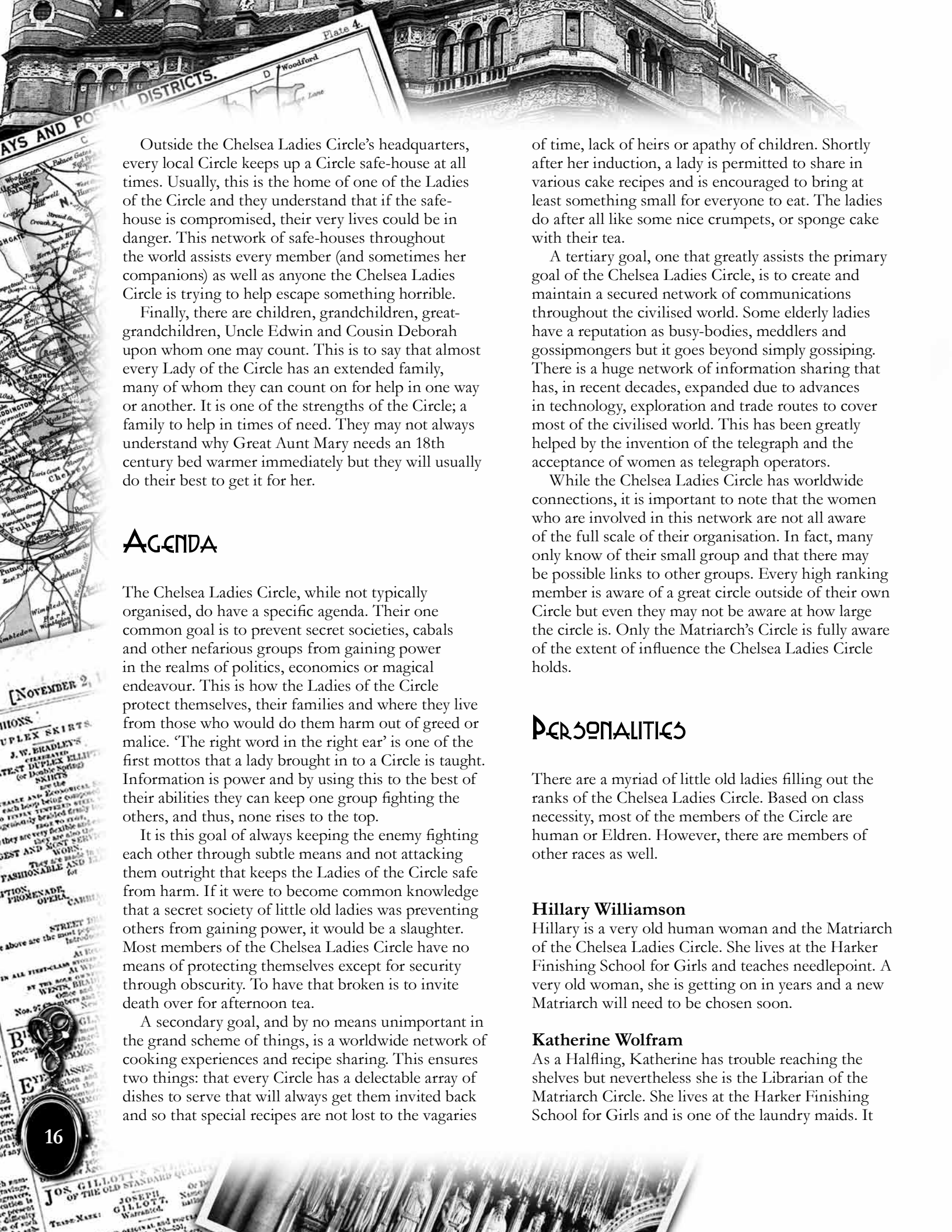
The Matriarch of the Chelsea Ladies Circle is always a faculty member within the school and this



allows her to live within the walled estate of the school. Most of the Matriarch's Circle work with the school in one manner or another as dorm mothers, librarians, teachers of appropriate topics and, yes, even janitorial ladies (those of the lower class, of course!).

Beneath the Harker Finishing School for Girls is the next resource for the Chelsea Ladies Circle. Concealed and protected within the vaults of the Harker Finishing School for Girls, is the Circle's secret library of arcane and mundane lore. Some of the more rare and dangerous occult texts reside within the Matriarch's personal library. All of these books are carefully concealed with fake covers that are often cookery, needlework or genealogy related books. The Matriarch's Circle has their own library system to catalogue these books under the fake topics so that research is not too difficult for those within the Circle.

When it comes to organisational funds, the Harker Finishing School for Girls Estate Trust is the closest thing to an organisational bank. While the Matriarch herself does not have direct control over the Trust, she has control over the Trustee, one Devon Williamson, and can requisition funds for the school that can be funnelled out to Circles in need. Though, admittedly, the need must be dire for this to happen.



Outside the Chelsea Ladies Circle's headquarters, every local Circle keeps up a Circle safe-house at all times. Usually, this is the home of one of the Ladies of the Circle and they understand that if the safe-house is compromised, their very lives could be in danger. This network of safe-houses throughout the world assists every member (and sometimes her companions) as well as anyone the Chelsea Ladies Circle is trying to help escape something horrible.

Finally, there are children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, Uncle Edwin and Cousin Deborah upon whom one may count. This is to say that almost every Lady of the Circle has an extended family, many of whom they can count on for help in one way or another. It is one of the strengths of the Circle; a family to help in times of need. They may not always understand why Great Aunt Mary needs an 18th century bed warmer immediately but they will usually do their best to get it for her.

AGENDA

The Chelsea Ladies Circle, while not typically organised, do have a specific agenda. Their one common goal is to prevent secret societies, cabals and other nefarious groups from gaining power in the realms of politics, economics or magical endeavour. This is how the Ladies of the Circle protect themselves, their families and where they live from those who would do them harm out of greed or malice. 'The right word in the right ear' is one of the first mottos that a lady brought in to a Circle is taught. Information is power and by using this to the best of their abilities they can keep one group fighting the others, and thus, none rises to the top.

It is this goal of always keeping the enemy fighting each other through subtle means and not attacking them outright that keeps the Ladies of the Circle safe from harm. If it were to become common knowledge that a secret society of little old ladies was preventing others from gaining power, it would be a slaughter. Most members of the Chelsea Ladies Circle have no means of protecting themselves except for security through obscurity. To have that broken is to invite death over for afternoon tea.

A secondary goal, and by no means unimportant in the grand scheme of things, is a worldwide network of cooking experiences and recipe sharing. This ensures two things: that every Circle has a delectable array of dishes to serve that will always get them invited back and so that special recipes are not lost to the vagaries

of time, lack of heirs or apathy of children. Shortly after her induction, a lady is permitted to share in various cake recipes and is encouraged to bring at least something small for everyone to eat. The ladies do after all like some nice crumpets, or sponge cake with their tea.

A tertiary goal, one that greatly assists the primary goal of the Chelsea Ladies Circle, is to create and maintain a secured network of communications throughout the civilised world. Some elderly ladies have a reputation as busy-bodies, meddlers and gossipmongers but it goes beyond simply gossiping. There is a huge network of information sharing that has, in recent decades, expanded due to advances in technology, exploration and trade routes to cover most of the civilised world. This has been greatly helped by the invention of the telegraph and the acceptance of women as telegraph operators.

While the Chelsea Ladies Circle has worldwide connections, it is important to note that the women who are involved in this network are not all aware of the full scale of their organisation. In fact, many only know of their small group and that there may be possible links to other groups. Every high ranking member is aware of a great circle outside of their own Circle but even they may not be aware at how large the circle is. Only the Matriarch's Circle is fully aware of the extent of influence the Chelsea Ladies Circle holds.

PERSONALITIES

There are a myriad of little old ladies filling out the ranks of the Chelsea Ladies Circle. Based on class necessity, most of the members of the Circle are human or Eldren. However, there are members of other races as well.

Hillary Williamson

Hillary is a very old human woman and the Matriarch of the Chelsea Ladies Circle. She lives at the Harker Finishing School for Girls and teaches needlepoint. A very old woman, she is getting on in years and a new Matriarch will need to be chosen soon.

Katherine Wolfram

As a Halfling, Katherine has trouble reaching the shelves but nevertheless she is the Librarian of the Matriarch Circle. She lives at the Harker Finishing School for Girls and is one of the laundry maids. It

Hillary Williamson
Rank 16 Human Teacher (Specialist)

Physical Competence: +4
Mental Competence: +10*
Initiative: 6*
Health: 7 Dice (14 pips)
Signature Skills: Empathy +2, Etiquette +3,
Fashion +2, General Knowledge +4,
High Society +3, Needlepoint +2, Teaching +2
Traits: Respected +3
Combat Abilities: None.
*reduced due to old age

Katherine Wolfram
Rank 14 Halfling Librarian (Specialist)

Physical Competence: +4
Mental Competence: +14
Initiative: 7
Health: 6 Dice (12 pips)
Signature Skills: Business +2, Empathy +2,
General Knowledge +4, History +2,
Languages +4
Traits: Well-Read +4, Energetic +2
Combat Abilities: None.

Vera Katsuya
Rank 13 Eldren Adventuress (Generalist)

Physical Competence: +8
Mental Competence: +8
Initiative: 8
Health: 8 Dice (16 pips)
Mana: 4 Dice (24 pips)
Signature Skills: Empathy +2, Fashion +2,
Horse Riding +4, Medicine +3, Perception +1,
Streetwise +3, Swordplay +4
Traits: Well-Traveller +3, Energetic +2
Special Abilities: Glimpse (Sensate Medium)
Combat Abilities: Prefers to negotiate, but
fights with a sword (4 Dice).
Damage: Sword 6 Dice

Elizabeth Bannister
Rank 12 Eldren Sorceress (Focussed)

Physical Competence: +6
Mental Competence: +9
Initiative: 7
Health: 7 Dice (14 pips)
Mana: 5 Dice (30 pips)
Signature Skills: Charm +4, Dance +3,
Empathy +2, Etiquette +4, Fashion +2,
High Society +4, Sensate Medium +2,
Thaumaturgy +3
Traits: Well-Dressed +3
Special Abilities: Magic Sense (Sensate
Medium), Botheration, Etheric Bolt, Etheric
Targeting, Farspeech, Firespark, Gaslight,
Groom, Heal (Thaumaturgy)
Combat Abilities: Prefers to negotiate, but
fights with magic
Damage: Magic.

allows her to move about the entire school without anyone caring where she goes. She is largely invisible to the rest of the school's population and that is how she likes it.

Elizabeth Bannister

This cool Eldren lady is the Grand Dame of the Chelsea Ladies Circle of Birmingham. She comes from old money and good breeding. She is also a rarity in the fact that both of her parents were Human and she was born Eldren. Rumour has it that she is one of the rare magically inclined nobles.

Vera Katsuya

Considered something of an adventuress, Vera is an Eldren lady who loves to constantly travel. She often takes messages between several Circles in England, Belgium and the Netherlands, and is rarely in one place for very long. Despite the Crimean War and being Russian, Vera is well respected within the order. Her specialty is ferreting out spies and traitors on both sides of the line.



Noemi Theobald

A flame-haired Irish gadfly, Noemi is a fascinating but ethereal presence in Dublin society. She is a descendant of old money, which has long run out. Noemi spends a lot of time pretending to not be concerned with finances, as it is not a woman's place but appears to do little to curb her spending or social activities. However, she is well aware that her family, despite its good breeding, is living on letters of credit.

Noemi Theobald

Rank 8 Human Socialite (Generalist)

Physical Competence: +5

Mental Competence: +6

Initiative: 5

Health: 5 Dice (10 pips)

Signature Skills: Act +3, Charm +3, Dance +2, Etiquette +3, Fashion +1, Gambling +4, High Society +2, Horse Riding +1, Instrument (Harp) +2, Perception +2;

Traits: Well-Dressed +3

Combat Abilities: None.

Cecilia Pomeroy

One of the society's greatest socialites, if Cecilia is not hosting a party she certainly has an invitation or knows where to get one. She is also the maintainer and protector of the Birmingham safe-house. As she is always having parties, going to parties or receiving guests, her home is ideal for using as a safe-house for someone on the run. There is no way anyone could possibly keep track of all the comings and goings that occur at her house.

Cecilia Pomeroy

Rank 11 Human Socialite (Focussed)

Physical Competence: +5

Mental Competence: +9

Initiative: 8

Health: 6 Dice (12 pips)

Signature Skills: Art +3, Charm +2, Dance +3, Empathy +2, Etiquette +4, Fashion +2, High Society +2, Perception +2

Traits: Well-Known +4

Combat Abilities: None.

Mary Gillpatrick

Mary is the Grand Dame of the Chelsea Ladies Circle of Dublin and has a wide array of contacts in the business world. She is middle class new money but also very well-to-do. Her husband's mercantile business is the toast of Dublin when it comes to quality fabrics and this is in no small part due to Mary's involvement supporting him. Mary prefers to play the quiet, middle class silent partner, leaving the upper crust hobnobbing to others in her circle.

Mary Gillpatrick

Rank 10 Human Businesswoman (Focussed)

Physical Competence: +5

Mental Competence: +8

Initiative: 6

Health: 6 Dice (12 pips)

Signature Skills: Appraisal +4, Business +4, Etiquette +2, High Society +1, Perception +3

Traits: Cynical +3

Combat Abilities: None.

Elena Robertson

A travelling naturalist, Elena moves between the Circles in Belgium and France. Her specialty is unearthing supernatural beasts, figuring out what makes them tick and sending the information back to the various circles in the area.

Elena Robertson

Rank 8 Human Naturalist (Focussed)

Physical Competence: +4

Mental Competence: +7

Initiative: 5

Health: 5 Dice (10 pips)

Signature Skills: Empathy +2, Fashion +2

Herbalism* +4, Horse Riding +3, Lore +4,

Medicine +3, Streetwise +3, Survival +2,

Swordplay +4

Traits: Well-Travelled +3, Energetic +2,

Spy +4

Combat Abilities: Prefers to negotiate, but will fight with a sword (3 Dice).

*Herbalism is a new speciality that allows Elena to recognise plants and flora and their properties.

Ziva Arun

By day, Ziva is a cleaning woman for the University of Seville's Library and maid to Professor Delgado. By night, she maintains the hidden library within the University for the Chelsea Ladies Circle. She has been instrumental in helping extend the Chelsea Ladies Circle into the Dark Continent of Africa.

Ziva Arun

Rank 12 Dwarven Librarian and Thaumaturgist (Focussed)

Physical Competence: +6

Mental Competence: +9

Initiative: 7

Health: 7 Dice (14 pips)

Mana: 5 Dice (30 pips)

Signature Skills: Business +2, Empathy

+2, General Knowledge +4, History +2,

Languages +4, Thaumaturgy +4

Traits: Well-Read +4, Local Expert +2

Combat Abilities: Magic both violent and non-violent spells

Damage: Magic.

THE THULIAN ORDER

Dr. Edward Wade followed the other newly installed Doctors of Thaumaturgy into the smoking room after he traded a servant his dinner jacket for his velvet smoking one. The room was airy and comfortable, a far cry from the cramped smoking room at college. His unlit pipe rested in his waistcoat pocket; Dr. Wade didn't dare sit and enjoy his pipe and brandy until the senior fellows had settled in. Instead, he looked up and marvelled at the domed ceiling, painted like the stars in the night sky, with the added benefit of constellations drawn in.

"It used to be an open dome," said a voice from behind him, "before the factory smoke blotted out the real sky. Still, I suppose we're better off without the birds and the bats interfering with our conversation. I daresay in the old days they spent more time chasing out animals than enjoying a good brandy."

Dr. Wade froze. He recognised the voice immediately. It was Dr. Zechariah Roth, one of the most senior fellows of the London Guildhall. He turned to meet his gaze, but the older Yebudite was also staring at the dome, his small yarmuke held in place with some strategically placed pins on the hair left on his balding head.

"It's remarkable," Dr. Wade offered.

Dr. Roth shrugged and pulled out his own meerschaum pipe — an old one judging by its golden-brown colour — running his hand over the bowl as he gripped it in his teeth. The pipe lit instantly. He pointed to Dr. Wade's pocket and held out his hand as a friendly gesture. Not wanting to offend although he usually waited until after his first sip of brandy, Dr. Wade pulled out his pipe and allowed the older fellow to light it as well.

"Very good," Dr. Roth said. "Shall we have a seat?"

Dr. Wade excitedly nodded. It was an honour to sit with such a senior fellow on his first night as a true Thaumaturgist. Dr. Roth chose a couple of chairs near one of the fireplaces, which were there more for decoration than warmth. The Guild was more than capable of maintaining comfortable temperatures in the building itself. A portrait of Queen Victoria hung above it. Once they had settled in, a servant offered them a couple of snifters and filled them. Dr. Roth offered a small toast to the new Thaumaturgist's accomplishments and they sipped. He smiled as he saw the look on Dr. Wade's face.

"I presume you're used to that grape brandy they use at college," he chuckled. "This is kirschwasser, imported from Baden. It's my personal favourite."

"It's quite good," Dr. Wade said politely, if not convincingly. "I must say that it is an honour to sit with you, Dr. Roth."

"This room is not for titles, Edward," Dr. Roth chuckled. "Call me Zechariah. I've been wanting to speak with you since cocktails, but I've had many obligations and expectations this evening. As it is, we'll have to be brief. I wanted to tell you how impressed I was with your thesis."

Dr. Wade gulped. He'd been warned that his thesis paper would be very controversial in Aluminat circles, although the Guild Board accepted and published it. He'd asked why, if Thaumaturgists throughout history had the ability to sail a ship across the Atlantic, it took Christopher Columbus to finally accomplish the task. His theory was that the Church had been suppressing exploration of the Atlantic, perhaps to keep something else from being discovered. He'd backed up his argument with several examples of similar Aluminat behaviour on other matters.

"Do you believe in Dr. Schecter's thesis?" Dr. Roth pressed. "Do you think Thulia actually existed?"

Dr. Wade nervously fondled his glass. "It was irrelevant for the purposes of my thesis as to whether the island continent existed. The fact that the Church believed in the possibility is what drove my thesis. Columbus never did find Thulia; nor has anyone else."

Dr. Roth smiled as he puffed his pipe. Even proposing such a theory meant that Dr. Wade had no love for the Aluminat Church. Nor should he; his grandfather had been tried for heresy. He took the pipe from his mouth and leaned closer to the young Thaumaturgist. He now spoke in hushed tones.

"You won't find Thulia on the waves, Edward; it lies below. It is my opinion that Atlantis and Thulia are one and the same, and its ruins lie somewhere in the North Atlantic. I'm currently making preparations to prove my claim. Would you be interested?"

Dr. Wade could barely stammer a reply. "O-of course. I...I'd be honoured, Doc...Zechariah."

The older man smiled and patted Dr. Wade's forearm. "Very good. Let's just leave this conversation between us, shall we? We'll speak more of this later. Now, if you'll excuse me, I promised Bertrand a rousing debate on capitalism."

With that, the older Thaumaturgist stood and walked away. He smiled as he left Dr. Wade alone with his pipe and his thoughts. The Thulian Order was counting on the Submersible Project to rediscover lost Thaumaturgical arts long buried beneath the waves. Such power could strengthen Prussia enough to break free of the Church once and for all. For this plan to succeed, Dr. Roth would need more allies, and Dr. Wade seemed an ideal candidate. Only time would tell.

HISTORY

The Thulian Order is a secret Thaumaturgist organisation that seeks to create a new world order, a Zauberreich, with all Thaumaturgists as the new aristocracy. The Thulian Order believes that the Aluminat Church is responsible for the destruction of an ancient, magical paradise and the continued persecution of its descendants. They also believe that the Aluminat religion is just a way to suppress Thaumaturgy and control the people.

The group's presence is strongest in Prussia, although it has attracted many members from other German states, Austria, France and England. The Thulian Order is not a separate organisation; rather, it works within the Guild. Members identify each other through code words, secret gestures and clothing. The Thulian Order's membership grows by approaching like-minded Thaumaturgists in casual conversation within the comfortable surroundings of a Guildhall. As one of the Thulian Order's major goals is the destruction of the Aluminat faith, it is easy to draw a Thaumaturge into an 'innocent' conversation about their feelings on the Church to determine whether they are worthy candidates for recruitment.

Due to the secrecy surrounding the Society, it is difficult to determine when the Thulian Order was actually created; querying a Thulian, if he is inclined to respond, will most likely produce a prehistoric answer. The Thulian Order traces its origins to the mythical Thulia, an island somewhere in the North Atlantic or Arctic Ocean. This island was a magical paradise, with a Thaumaturgist aristocracy and grateful, non-magical commoners. The glory of Thulia was lost when the Great Flood came, sinking it beneath the ocean. Thulians believe that the Great Flood was an Aluminat plot to destroy their perfect society and to establish themselves as the saviours of man. (While more properly attributed to the Yehudi, the Thulian Order considers all Biblical events to be part of the Aluminat's grand design; this reasoning effectively absolves current Yehudi, as they have 'broken away' from the Aluminats in the eyes of the Thulian Order.)

According to legend, the Aluminats failed. One Thaumaturgist, Arcturus Thule, gathered what he could of Thulia's history and magic and was able to flee the devastation. Thule travelled the globe, fathering many children. He taught his magic to them in order to carry on the Thulian legacy. The Thulian Order believes that Arcturus Thule is immortal and that all modern Thaumaturgists are his descendants. Some believe that the Church considered the people of Thulia to be descended from the Biblical Cain,

THAUMATURGICAL RACISM

The core of the Thulian Order's philosophy is that all Thaumaturgists are part of a bloodline that makes them superior. They believe that Thaumaturgists are born, not made, and have even developed marriage guidelines to foster more Thaumaturgists. Petty Magic is an aberration, as 'mundane' attempts to control the forces that are a natural part of True Thaumaturgy.

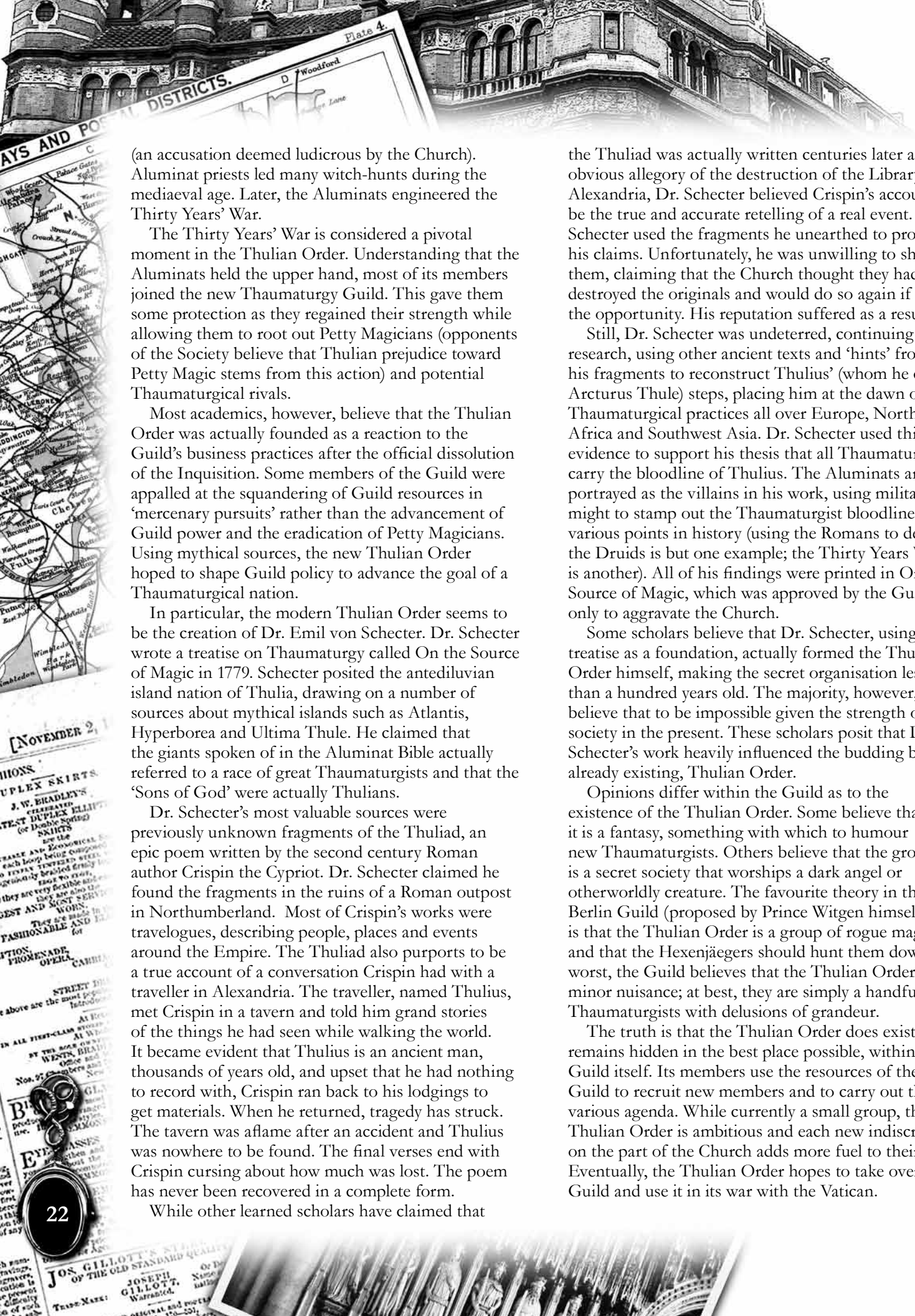
The Thulian Order couldn't be more wrong. Everyone with the willpower has the potential to be a Thaumaturgist; it just takes study, practice and dedication. While it is true that certain families produce more Thaumaturgists than others, it has more to do with the children's exposure to their parent's profession than biological inheritance. A Thaumaturgist generally has the resources to send his children to study magic and 'take up the family profession'. This is lost on the Thulians; they are coloured by their belief in a powerful, anti-Aluminat progenitor and will not be easily swayed otherwise.

It is also important to note that, while the Thulian Order is officially egalitarian when it comes to Thaumaturgists, an individual Thulian may still take race and class into account when selecting a Thaumaturgist mate. Prejudices are hard to shake and a Thulian may not want to make waves in his social circles.

It might seem strange that such an educated group might be so wrong. However, their delusion allows them to consider themselves 'special' in a way ordinary mortals are not. This being the case most Thulians are grossly offended and dismissive of any challenge to their beliefs, as deep down they understand how tenuous these beliefs are.

and that 'the mark of Cain' is the ability to perform Thaumaturgy.

The sons and daughters of Thule became the ancestors of magical bloodlines that spread across Europe. Unlike Petty Magicians, these Thaumaturgists wielded true power. Many of these Thaumaturgists understood their legacy and spoke openly of creating a new magical golden age. The Aluminat leaders saw this and grew afraid. At first, the Aluminats engineered the fall of Rome



(an accusation deemed ludicrous by the Church). Aluminate priests led many witch-hunts during the mediaeval age. Later, the Aluminate engineered the Thirty Years' War.

The Thirty Years' War is considered a pivotal moment in the Thulian Order. Understanding that the Aluminats held the upper hand, most of its members joined the new Thaumaturgy Guild. This gave them some protection as they regained their strength while allowing them to root out Petty Magicians (opponents of the Society believe that Thulian prejudice toward Petty Magic stems from this action) and potential Thaumaturgical rivals.

Most academics, however, believe that the Thulian Order was actually founded as a reaction to the Guild's business practices after the official dissolution of the Inquisition. Some members of the Guild were appalled at the squandering of Guild resources in 'mercenary pursuits' rather than the advancement of Guild power and the eradication of Petty Magicians. Using mythical sources, the new Thulian Order hoped to shape Guild policy to advance the goal of a Thaumaturgical nation.

In particular, the modern Thulian Order seems to be the creation of Dr. Emil von Schecter. Dr. Schecter wrote a treatise on Thaumaturgy called *On the Source of Magic* in 1779. Schecter posited the antediluvian island nation of Thulia, drawing on a number of sources about mythical islands such as Atlantis, Hyperborea and Ultima Thule. He claimed that the giants spoken of in the Aluminat Bible actually referred to a race of great Thaumaturgists and that the ‘Sons of God’ were actually Thulians.

Dr. Schecter's most valuable sources were previously unknown fragments of the Thuliad, an epic poem written by the second century Roman author Crispin the Cypriot. Dr. Schecter claimed he found the fragments in the ruins of a Roman outpost in Northumberland. Most of Crispin's works were travelogues, describing people, places and events around the Empire. The Thuliad also purports to be a true account of a conversation Crispin had with a traveller in Alexandria. The traveller, named Thulius, met Crispin in a tavern and told him grand stories of the things he had seen while walking the world. It became evident that Thulius is an ancient man, thousands of years old, and upset that he had nothing to record with, Crispin ran back to his lodgings to get materials. When he returned, tragedy has struck. The tavern was aflame after an accident and Thulius was nowhere to be found. The final verses end with Crispin cursing about how much was lost. The poem has never been recovered in a complete form.

While other learned scholars have claimed that

the Thuliad was actually written centuries later as an obvious allegory of the destruction of the Library of Alexandria, Dr. Schecter believed Crispin's account to be the true and accurate retelling of a real event. Dr. Schecter used the fragments he unearthed to prove his claims. Unfortunately, he was unwilling to share them, claiming that the Church thought they had destroyed the originals and would do so again if given the opportunity. His reputation suffered as a result.

Still, Dr. Schecter was undeterred, continuing his research, using other ancient texts and ‘hints’ from his fragments to reconstruct Thulius’ (whom he called Arcturus Thule) steps, placing him at the dawn of Thaumaturgical practices all over Europe, North Africa and Southwest Asia. Dr. Schecter used this as evidence to support his thesis that all Thaumaturgists carry the bloodline of Thulius. The Aluminats are portrayed as the villains in his work, using military might to stamp out the Thaumaturgist bloodline at various points in history (using the Romans to destroy the Druids is but one example; the Thirty Years War is another). All of his findings were printed in *On the Source of Magic*, which was approved by the Guild if only to aggravate the Church.

Some scholars believe that Dr. Schecter, using his treatise as a foundation, actually formed the Thulian Order himself, making the secret organisation less than a hundred years old. The majority, however, believe that to be impossible given the strength of the society in the present. These scholars posit that Dr. Schecter's work heavily influenced the budding but already existing, Thulian Order.

Opinions differ within the Guild as to the existence of the Thulian Order. Some believe that it is a fantasy, something with which to humour new Thaumaturgists. Others believe that the group is a secret society that worships a dark angel or otherworldly creature. The favourite theory in the Berlin Guild (proposed by Prince Witgen himself) is that the Thulian Order is a group of rogue mages and that the Hexenjägeres should hunt them down. At worst, the Guild believes that the Thulian Order is a minor nuisance; at best, they are simply a handful of Thaumaturgists with delusions of grandeur.

The truth is that the Thulian Order does exist. It remains hidden in the best place possible, within the Guild itself. Its members use the resources of the Guild to recruit new members and to carry out their various agenda. While currently a small group, the Thulian Order is ambitious and each new indiscretion on the part of the Church adds more fuel to their fire. Eventually, the Thulian Order hopes to take over the Guild and use it in its war with the Vatican.

STRUCTURE

Since members of the Thulian Order are embedded within the Guild, the Thulian Order hierarchy roughly follows the Guild's model. The highest-ranking Thulian within a particular Guildhall is automatically the leader (hauptzauberer translated literally as 'head magus') of all Thulians within that Guildhall. The rest of the Thulians are also ranked according to their status within the Guild. While this makes the Thulian hierarchy dependent upon Guild politics, it also minimises any potential friction amongst members. It is in the hauptzauberer's best interest, as well as the Society's, to maintain his influence within the Guild. In Guildhalls outside of Germany, Austria, London and Paris, this is an academic concern at best, as they may only house one or two Thulians.

While the Thulian Order recruits new members and passes simple messages through the Guild, the majority of actual Thulian business takes place outside the Guildhall. Gentlemen's clubs, country estates and urban parlour rooms are all suitable places for Thulians to gather and plot freely. Thulians that mingle with communists, anarchists and other revolutionary movements might conduct such business in the backs of taverns or warehouses. Only high-ranking Thulians dare to speak freely within the walls of the Guildhall as they hold the authority to do so without arousing suspicion.

All hauptzauberers are joined in a tight confederation known as the Conclave. Status within the Conclave is roughly equal to the power the Guild in their area as well as the number of Thulians within that Guild. Currently, the hauptzauberer of Berlin holds the most status, earning the title of Zaubererführer, or 'magus leader'. The Conclave meets irregularly to discuss Society plans and goals. While each hauptzauberer is free to implement and amend such plans as he sees fit, the Conclave sees little dissention. There simply aren't enough Thulians to survive as a group without sticking together.

The emblem of the Thulian Order is a phoenix clutching a wand in each claw. The phoenix represents the resurrection of Thulia, while the wands represent Thaumaturgist rule. The wands are also positioned as if they were once part of a cross, symbolising the destruction of the Aluminat Church. Currently, the Thulian Order is not so well known that wearing the emblem, or some variant, would arouse suspicion. Male members generally work the design into rings, cufflinks, or pocket watches, while female members favour earrings, hatpins, or lapel pins.

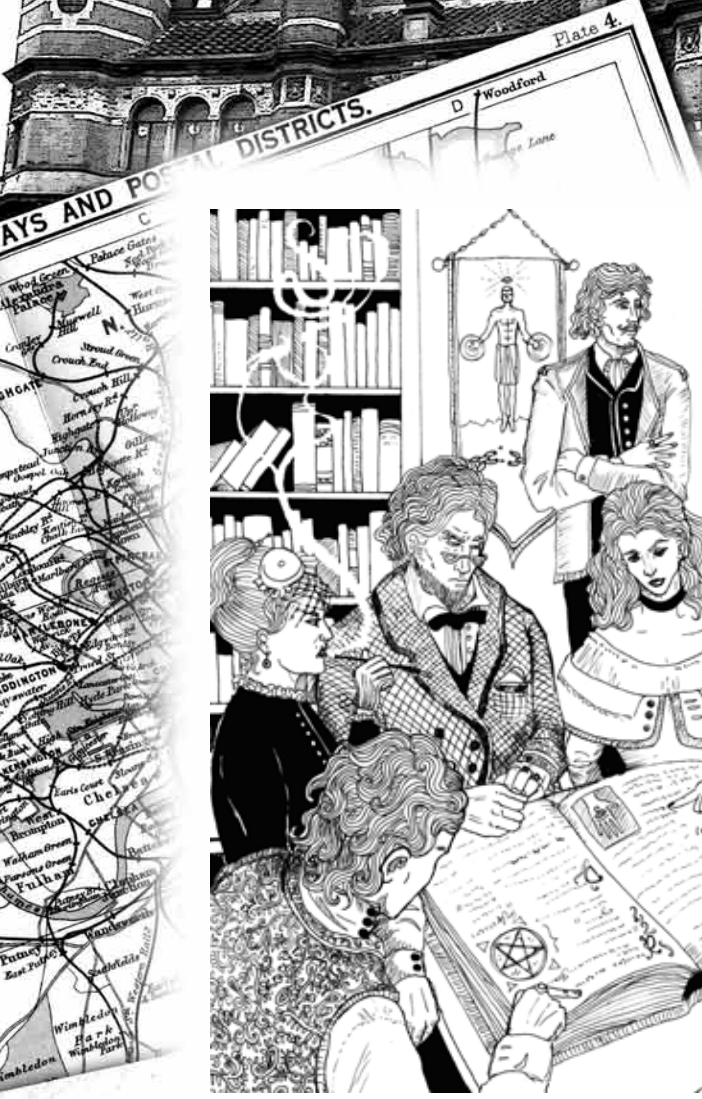


JOINING THE ORGANISATION

Entrance into the Thulian Order is by invitation only. Current members of the Thulian Order observe and assess fellow Guild members, especially new members, for recruitment. Upon discovering a potential recruit, a Thulian engages him in casual conversation over cigars and brandy about his feelings on the Church and politics in general. If the Thulian feels that the recruit is receptive, he reveals more of the Society's philosophy, gauging the recruit's receptiveness. Finally, once the Thulian feels that the recruit's motives and beliefs are in line with the Thulian Order he requests initiation for the recruit. The hauptzauberer makes the final judgement, often conducting his own interview with the recruit before making a determination. Once the hauptzauberer is satisfied, he conducts the Thulian Rite of Initiation with as many Thulians as he can gather. The new initiate then takes his place within the Society in accordance with his Guild rank.

The Thulian Order is less critical of prospective recruits related to a current Thulian. A blood relative





because the Thulian Order's ranking is dependent upon the Guild, hauptzauberers are primarily drawn from the upper class or the gentry. Despite Thulian policy, old prejudices often remain among the hauptzauberers who make the appointments. Middle class hauptzauberers often have little influence within their own Guildhall and lower class hauptzauberers are non-existent.

RESOURCES

The Thulian Order is wealthy, primarily due to the private coffers of its members. Most Thaumaturgists come from noble families or the gentry and tend to have large sums of money at their disposal. While these monetary resources are far from unlimited, the Thulian Order can usually count on enough funds to support a legislative candidate, arm a small band of anarchists, or acquire a piece of military hardware. The primary roadblock to the Thulian Order's success is its small size. Currently, world membership numbers less than a hundred (the Berlin Guildhall, the largest concentration of Thulians, boasts nine members).

Money, however, is not the greatest resource of the Thulian Order. Some Thulians are powerful Thaumaturgists with the ability to call upon powerful magic. Many Thulians dabble in the forbidden arts of Demonology and Necromancy, reasoning that, if the Church forbids it, it must be a powerful weapon. Some secret Thulian Order libraries contain ancient tomes, scrolls and fragments filled with forbidden spells and lore. Experienced Thulian Thaumaturgists do realise the potential dangers of delving too deeply into these subjects but a few inexperienced Thulians have become corrupted. As a result, the Thulian Order carefully guards the use of their forbidden tomes.

The Thulian Order also has a number of politically well-informed Thaumaturgist agents embedded within the power structures of various governments, especially in Prussia and the other German states. These agents work to advance the Thulian agenda by supporting strong leaders and weeding out the weaker ones. Currently, most of these agents (the most prominent of which is Prince Witgen) are attempting to aid Count Bismarck in his quest to unite Germany with varying degrees of success. Similar attempts by Austrian agents to include the Habsburg Empire in this union have failed.

of a Thulian is easily accepted into the Society upon gaining his Guild membership, as long as his blood relation vouches for him. The blood relative, if not a member of the local Guildhall, usually travels there to be present for the Rite of Initiation. A hauptzauberer normally allows the relative to pin the initiate (a task normally performed by the hauptzauberer).

The Thulian Order wishes to preserve its secrecy at all costs. Recruits deemed unworthy of membership will still be monitored in the hopes that they or their progeny can be brought into the fold. A potential recruit that rejects a public offer to join the Thulian Order is dealt with even more harshly; it is not uncommon for them to suffer terrible accidents, fatal crimes inflicted upon them, or deadly encounters with horrible creatures soon after their rejection, especially if they have already met the hauptzauberer.

It bears mentioning that the Thulian Order believes that all Thaumaturgists are brethren and do not discriminate against each other on the ground of race, sex, or social class. A middle class Beastman, for example, can hold his head as high within the Society as an Eldren aristocrat. In the coming Zaubereich, all Thulians will be elevated to the aristocracy, no matter what their previous station. However,

AGENDA

The primary goal of the Thulian Order is to create a *Zauberreich*, a Thaumaturgist-run empire created in the image of ancient Thulia. This new empire would be strong enough to counter the Church's influence in Europe. Pure magical traditions, including those formerly forbidden, will be rediscovered and studied once more. While a few Thulians believe in world domination, most members would be happy with a large, independent state that can hold its own against the other European powers.

In furtherance of that goal, the Thulian Order has been manipulating German politics to create a unified German Empire. The Society sees Bismarck as its best chance; whisperings indicate that the Chancellor of Prussia has no love for the Church and that his ambitions go beyond simply making Prussia the strongest of the German states. Thulians in Austria unsuccessfully tried to create a strong Austro-Prussian alliance (with relations degenerating into war in 1856) so they are currently concentrating on weakening Austrian influence in the region (Thulian agents within the Habsburg Empire are turning the Emperor's attention toward the Balkan Peninsula). Thulians in Paris are starting to lay the groundwork for an increasingly inevitable Franco-Prussian conflict by stoking French fears of a strong neighbour on its border, while the Thulian Order in London works to ensure that Great Britain recognises a unified German Empire.

While not openly declaring their existence, the Thulian Order has let Bismarck know that there is a tightly knit network of Thaumaturgists willing to use their influence to further his ambitions. Bismarck has learned the value of having such agents in the courts, Guildhalls and businesses of other nations and has taken advantage of this network to gather valuable intelligence. The time seems right, as Britain, France and Russia are depleting their resources in the Crimea and the Habsburg Empire is not strong enough to prevent unification.

The Thulian Order is also doing everything it can to increase its numbers. In addition to recruiting new members, the Society also encourages Thaumaturgists to interbreed in order to create more Thaumaturgists. The Thulian Order believes that Thaumaturgy is an inherited gift and that families with strong histories of Thaumaturgy have a better chance to produce new Thaumaturgists. One unfortunate consequence of this belief is that children of such unions that do not pursue Thaumaturgy are considered failures.

Another goal of the Thulian Order is to find

ancient, sunken Thulia and retrieve whatever Thaumaturgical knowledge they can find. Merely finding Thulia would go a long way towards silencing sceptics and verify Dr. Schecter's claims. Currently, the Thulian Order in London is dedicated toward this task. Thulians believe that potent magics equal to or greater than Necromancy and Demonology lie buried beneath the sea.

Finally, the Thulian Order secretly helps anyone that wishes to overthrow Aluminat control. In Great Britain, the Thulian Order supports the Anglican cause to reform its beliefs and practices. In France and Spain, they clandestinely support the Basque and Catalan independence movements. A few agents are active in the emerging Balkan states. The Thulian Order has a recent track record; they supported the wave of revolutions in 1848 that burned across the continent and they would willingly do so again.

PERSONALITIES

Prince Oberon Adler von Witgen

Oberon Adler von Witgen is the current *Zaubererführer* of the Thulian Order. He is the head of the House of Witgen, a small principality near France (the title 'prince' is misleading, as Adler is not part of the Prussian royal family and ranks lower than a Duke) and a member of the Order of the Black Eagle, the highest Prussian chivalric order. He is also one of the top-ranking members of the Berlin Guild, making him a very powerful man.

Physically, Adler is an imposing figure. He is a middle-aged, grey-haired Eldren (his hair turned grey prematurely in his youth, leading to a popular myth that he is actually a *stepegoblin*) of slight build but of towering stature (he is over 6 feet tall). He carries a dragon-headed walking stick that doubles as a magical wand and he is rarely seen without his Black Eagle badge. Those who know him say that he has a keen mind and approaches debates as if they were chess matches. He also has a mean stubborn streak; once he has determined a position it is almost impossible to dissuade him. Combined with his ambition, Adler can be a dangerous adversary.

Due to his Eldren heritage and the proximity of Witgen to France, Adler has been accused of being more French than German. As if to defy his sceptics (as well as further evidence of his stubborn streak) Adler has married a Frenchwoman from the Alsace region. He has also fathered many children, the oldest of which are studying to be Thaumaturgists like their

WHERE IS WITGEN?

Witgen is a small, fictional principality near Alsace. Witgen's actual size and location is deliberately vague to allow the Gamemaster to interpret and use as she sees fit. Officially, it is part of Prussia, as Prince Witgen has sworn fealty to the Prussian monarchy. Due to its proximity to France, many Witgen subjects speak both French and German fluently. Witgen was also one of the first German states to adopt the efficient French bureaucratic model of government. Both of these factors add fuel to the rumour of Prince Witgen's true heritage, much to his chagrin.

Prince Oberon Adler von Witgen Rank 16 Eldren Sorcerer (Generalist)

Physical Competence: +9
Mental Competence: +10
Initiative: 8
Health: 9 Dice (18 pips)
Mana: 5 Dice (30 pips)
Signature Skills: Concentration +2,
Conversation +2, Etiquette +2, Firearms +2,
Politics +4, Sensate Medium +2, Swordplay +3,
Thaumaturgy +4
Traits: Aristocratic Breeding +3, Stubborn +3
Special Abilities: Able to cast any Thaumaturgy
spell in the Core Rulebook, also Magic Sense
(Sensate Medium)
Combat Abilities: Magic. Prince Witgen knows
many spells. He can also be talked into a
sword-fight (12 Dice)
Damage: Small sword (6 Dice)

father. If challenged, Adler is proud to share his family tree, which he has committed to memory. This tree includes the Thaumaturgist that inadvertently started the Thirty Years War (this is questionable, as many records were lost during that terrible conflict but providing that the Thaumaturgist in question had progeny many Germans could legitimately make the same claim). In fact, amongst fellow Thulians, Adler has invoked his ancestor's name as a major reason for challenging the Aluminat Church.

Adler wants nothing less than a unified German Empire with King Wilhelm and Bismarck at its head. Adler is content to remain in their shadows,

manipulating the empire until it is strong enough to defy the Church. While this is happening, the Thulian Order will slowly usurp and control the upper echelons of government as well as the German Guildhalls. Adler optimistically and resolutely foresees the day when the Thulian Order will run a vast German Empire that dominates all of Europe.

Dr. Zechariah Roth

Dr. Zechariah Roth is the hauptzauberer of the Thulian Order of London. Highly placed in the London Guildhall and an engineering professor at University College in Bloomsbury, Dr. Roth has been spending most of his time arranging an expedition into the North Atlantic Ocean to seek the fabled Atlantis. As an engineer, he is throwing most of his resources and inventiveness toward building a submersible that can withstand the journey into the depths of the ocean. Unofficially, he is attempting to find ancient Thulia and unlock some of its secrets for the Society.

A tall man approaching middle age, Dr. Roth suffers from premature baldness, although his full moustache and beard are rather bushy. He is Human and a Yehudite, proudly wearing his yarmulke both under and without his professor cap. His religion enables him to speak out openly against the Aluminats without accusation of heresy. It is not in his nature, however, to go spoiling for a fight. He is an intellectual and prefers reasoned debate to heated rhetoric. This approach has endeared him to many of his opponents as well as his allies.

Dr. Roth is primarily a Thulian due to his dislike of the Aluminat Church and the many atrocities committed by the Church and in its name against his people over the centuries. While he is a loyal member of the Thulian Order, Dr. Roth considers himself a Yehudite first. He simply cannot imagine a new world order run by Thaumaturgists without faith.

Dr. Bernadette Hawkwood

From the German state of Hanover, Bernadette Braun was the young Thaumaturgical protégé of Prince Witgen. Through his obsession with family trees, Prince Witgen determined that the young Braun was a distant cousin. He indoctrinated her into the Society and arranged for her to study in London. Once she settled into a fashionable house in Belgravia, Fraulein Braun immediately set out to find a suitable mate from the London Guildhall.

Although Human, Braun is devastatingly beautiful even by Eldren standards and quickly became popular

Dr. Zechariah Roth
Rank 13 Religious Scientist (Specialist)

Physical Competence: +4
Mental Competence: +12
Initiative: 7
Health: 6 Dice (12 pips)
Mana: 5 Dice (30 pips)
Signature Skills: Charm +2, Conversation +2,
Culture (Yehudi) +4, Research +4,
Teaching +4, Thaumaturgy +4,
Theology (Yehudi) +4
Traits: Calm Debater +3, Pacifist +4, Man of
Faith +4
Special Abilities: All 'non-etheric'
Thaumaturgy spells listed in the Core
Rulebook
Combat Abilities: Magic, but only if all
alternatives have been exhausted
Damage: Very little if he can help it.

Dr. Bernadette Hawkwood
Rank 7 Social Butterfly (Specialist)

Physical Competence: +4
Mental Competence: +6
Initiative: 5
Health: 5 Dice (10 pips)
Mana: 3 Dice (18 pips)
Signature Skills: Charm +4, Conceal +4,
Conversation +4, Fashion +4, High Society
+4, Thaumaturgy +4
Traits: Beautiful +4, Manipulative +4
Special Abilities: Groom, Instant Beauty,
Etheric Bolt (Thaumaturgy)
Combat Abilities: Magic, but she can use
firearms at Physical Competency
Damage: Magic or derringer (4 Dice)

in the social circles of the upper middle class and had no problem getting numerous marriage proposals. Braun chose Sir Martin Hawkwood, a young Thaumaturgist captain and baronet who was about to go to the Crimea. He insisted on marrying her before he left, leaving her in charge of his property. Bernadette agreed and after a wedding and short stay on the Hawkwood country estate, Sir Martin boarded a ship bound for Calais.

Newly married with a husband at war, Dr. Hawkwood is free to respectably pay calls on other women unescorted and can be publicly seen with men without arousing suspicions or society outrage. Dr. Hawkwood uses this to her greatest advantage, using the Thaumaturgical and upper middle class social circles to gather gossip and rumours while influencing their husbands, sons and paramours with her charms to further Thulian goals.

Bernadette Hawkwood has a great deal of influence in both the Thulian Order and the Guild of London. This concerns Dr. Roth, who insists that she keep him abreast of her actions. Dr. Hawkwood complies but only to a point. She is concerned that Dr. Roth's motives aren't the same as Prince Witgen's and she will be ready to pounce on Dr. Roth the moment she has any evidence of his disloyalty to the Thulian Order. Some London Thulians believe her animosity stems from Dr. Roth rebuffing her advances, although Dr. Hawkwood hotly denies this.

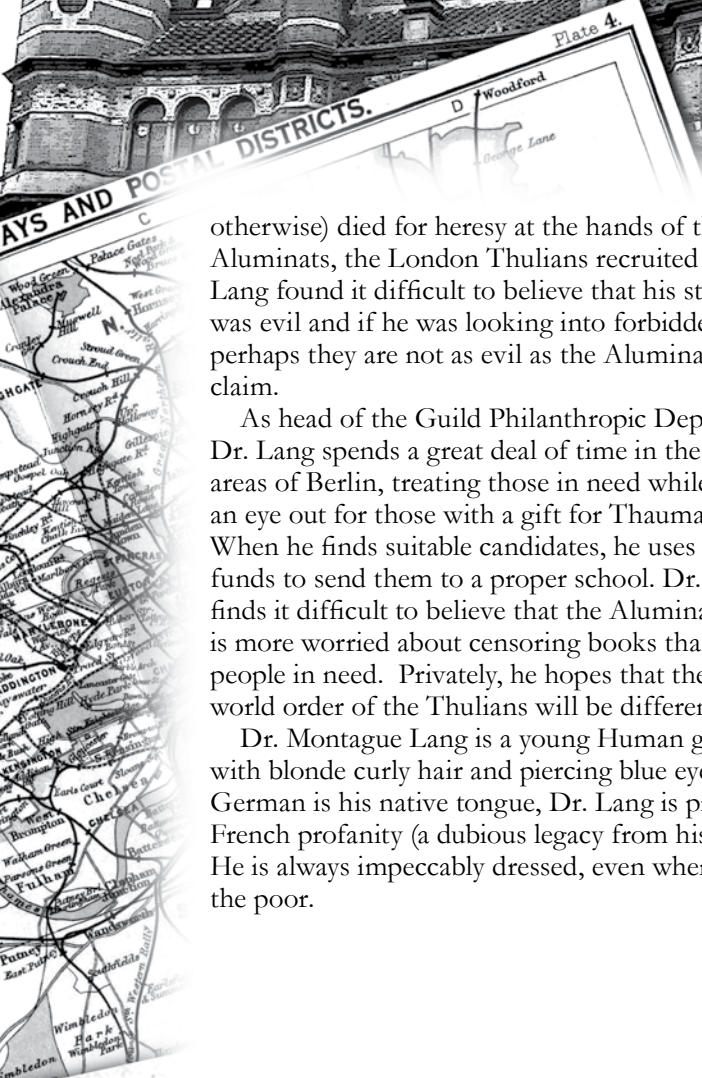
Dr. Montague Lang

Dr. Montague Lang was born to a young widow, Anna-Lise de Romain, in Cologne, Prussia. His father, a participant in the Paris Revolution of 1848, was shot by the French Military. Just prior to his death, Montague de Romain sent his pregnant wife to German relatives in Cologne, planning on collecting her when things settled down. She found work at a Cologne hotel in the interim, only to receive a telegram about his death.

During her stay in Cologne, Anna-Lise made the acquaintance of and fell in love with Dr. Werner Lang, a young Thaumaturgist medical doctor. Their originally innocent flirtation turned into something more and he asked for her hand in marriage. Before accepting, she informed him of her circumstances and Dr. Lang offered to raise the child as his own (he even personally delivered the baby).

By all accounts, young Montague had an excellent relationship with his step-father. Werner told the boy of his true heritage when he was old enough but the Thaumaturgist never stopped loving him as a son. In his last semester at college in 1865, at the request of the local Aluminat bishop, the Hexenjäger (a Prussian group of witch hunters) raided Werner's home on suspicion of Demonology. The elder Dr. Lang died in the conflict. This crushed Montague and the accusations that followed broke his mother's heart. She died a few weeks later.

The new Dr. Montague Lang was now a prime candidate for the Thulian Order. As a young man whose father (the Guild has no reason to believe



otherwise) died for heresy at the hands of the Aluminats, the London Thulians recruited him. Dr. Lang found it difficult to believe that his stepfather was evil and if he was looking into forbidden arts then perhaps they are not as evil as the Aluminat Church claim.

As head of the Guild Philanthropic Department, Dr. Lang spends a great deal of time in the lower class areas of Berlin, treating those in need while keeping an eye out for those with a gift for Thaumaturgy. When he finds suitable candidates, he uses Guild funds to send them to a proper school. Dr. Lang finds it difficult to believe that the Aluminat Church is more worried about censoring books than treating people in need. Privately, he hopes that the new world order of the Thulians will be different.

Dr. Montague Lang is a young Human gentleman with blonde curly hair and piercing blue eyes. While German is his native tongue, Dr. Lang is prone to use French profanity (a dubious legacy from his mother). He is always impeccably dressed, even when amongst the poor.

Dr. Montague Lang Rank 8 Medical Doctor (Generalist)

Physical Competence: +5

Mental Competence: +6

Initiative: 5

Health: 5 Dice (10 pips)

Mana: 4 Dice (24 pips)

Signature Skills: Empathy +2, Fashion +2, Medicine +4, Streetwise +2, Swordplay +4, Thaumaturgy +4

Traits: Communist +2, Well-Dressed +3, Kind-hearted +4

Special Abilities: Ectoplasmic Bonds, Heal, Scholar's Guard

Combat Abilities: Prefers to negotiate, but fights with signature skills (preferably using non-violent spells)

Damage: Magic or Sword-cane (5 Dice)

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THE LEAGUE OF LOGICAL UTOPIANS

Sir Guy Farnsworth had just finished buttoning his morning jacket when he heard the butler enter the room behind him and saw his long legs in the mirror. Most Dwarven gentlemen would hire similarly small servants, as if it were criminal to have to look up to one's employees. Such matters never bothered Sir Guy, as his Human wife would attest. He was most impressed by intelligence and his Foxman butler had that in ample supply.

"I presumed you would be breakfasting indoors today, Sir," Barnaby Miller said, matter-of-factly. He needn't have bothered. The rain pounding against the balcony window had already made the choice obvious. Sir Guy turned and smiled up at his butler.

"Just another typical Bristol morning, I suppose, Barnaby," he smiled. "Hopefully, it shall not delay our guest. His ship is due to arrive at noon. Has the rain detained the courier?"

"No," Barnaby answered, requiring no elaboration. Whenever Sir Guy mentioned 'the courier', he meant the one that carried his correspondence from Bloomsbury. "He arrived while you were dressing. I took the liberty of leaving the envelope on the games table."

"Thank you, Barnaby. I believe I'll make my move before breakfast. Tell Monsieur Flores that I'll be down shortly. I am in the mood for sausages this morning."

"As you wish, sir," Barnaby nodded and left to give his master's order to the Parisian chef. Sir Guy also exited the bedroom but he headed towards the library.

Things were heating up across the pond. Abraham Lincoln, the American president, had avoided a potential civil war by placating the opposition but his term would soon be over. The Republican Party was pushing for an anti-slavery candidate, a Republican Congressman by the name of Ian Donner, an advocate of equal opportunity for all Americans, regardless of their background. There was a great debate in the League whether to support this candidate, as he was proving popular in Communist circles. There was also a rumour that Mr. Donner was receiving Prussian support. An American-Prussian Alliance would threaten Britain's dominance of the Atlantic Ocean.

Sir Guy picked up the envelope and broke the Bloomsbury Club seal. While the issue had been debated and settled in London, it would be up to him to communicate the outcome to his guest. With slight trepidation, Sir Guy took the letter out and read the message from Sir Jareth Bernyn, a University College professor and personal acquaintance, skipping past the body of the message, which while undoubtedly interesting was not an immediate concern. Instead, he found what he was looking for in the postscript: Sir Jareth's chess move.

Sir Guy glanced at the chess table. A black knight threatened a white pawn while the remaining black bishop threatened a white rook. If Sir Jareth chose to move the bishop, he would gain an immediate advantage, but would be struggling within six moves. If he chose to move the knight, he would open himself to attack for the next five moves. In actuality, it wasn't a game at all. Choosing the bishop merely meant that the League has decided to support Ian Donner.

Sir Guy nodded to himself as he reached across the board and made Sir Jareth's move. Almost as if on cue, Barnaby returned to the library.

"Begging your pardon, sir, but your guest has arrived. It would appear that his vessel arrived a bit ahead of schedule."

Sir Guy nodded. "I shall receive him in the drawing room, Barnaby. Thank you."


The butler nodded and removed himself. Sir Guy glanced at the board once more. The decision was plain to see. Nodding to himself, Sir Guy went to receive Congressman Donner.

HISTORY

The League of Logical Utopians, or Logicians, is a group of academics that believe that the most intelligent people should run the government. Naturally, members of this secret society are, by all contemporary measures, highly intelligent. Some Logicians, like communists, attempt to work within the current government to institute change. Others

work with the more violent groups, such as the anarchists and other rabble-rousers, to overthrow the government and replace it with their intellectual ideal.

The Logicians have an ancient pedigree, they trace their origins to the Greek philosophers, particularly Plato. Plato's *The Republic*, treated as an almost sacred text, posits a utopian society ruled by philosopher-kings. A small group of philosophers led by the Gnome, Xanthos the Computer (so named because of the speed in which he could count),



spiralled out of control and Bailoux met his end by the guillotine. Napoleon turned France into a power that almost conquered Europe until he was finally defeated and imprisoned. Fearing another continent-spanning empire, the Logicians helped develop the balance of power in the Treaty of Paris.

Currently, the majority of the League of Logical Utopians is content to spread their theories to their students in the many universities of the occidental world. Some of them quietly work with anarchist and communist groups to reform or replace flawed governments, especially those that would abolish the aristocracy. It is worth noting, however, that the Logicians do not want democracy to thrive. Rule by the masses is just as fearsome to them as rule by bloodline. The Logicians are also turning their attention toward Prussian ambitions, as a strong united Germany would threaten the balance of power.

STRUCTURE

The game of chess has fascinated Logicians, ever since the first two Logicians sat down and played together. Chess encompasses so much of the Logician's philosophy; they manipulate their pieces in an attempt to make the other side capitulate (checkmate). Like the Socratic Method, the game is ended not when the opponent is defeated but when he finally concedes to the superior player. Thus, chess is about creating superior strategies that cannot be effectively countered. The pieces (the world) are unaware of these strategies but play their roles anyway.

Due to their rigorous testing and admission process, there are only a handful of Logicians at any given location. Each local group (known as a 'castle' in Logician parlance) is organised according to the chessboard. At the bottom are the pawns. Pawns represent all non-Logicians. Black pawns usually refer to potential recruits (black is generally used as a "potential step" for the next level).

Next in line are the rooks - entry-level Logicians and the most numerous. Their task is to learn how to think logically. Most rooks never rise above this level and many white pawns became rooks because they accidentally learned about the society. As a whole, rooks are primarily academics and aristocrats that enjoy debating the latest philosophies and technologies while

mastering chess. The higher orders may secretly designate someone who will never advance within society as a white rook, while grooming black rooks to become knights.

While rooks are taught how to think logically, knights are expected to challenge and question logical thought and to lead and test rooks in logical debating. True to their title, knights are also the ones called upon to advance the Logician's agenda. Knights can request aid from rooks if necessary to complete such tasks.

Bishops are the leaders of most Logician castles. While the rooks are taught logical thought and the knights are taught to challenge assumptions, bishops are expected to develop new thoughts and reshape society. Above the bishops are the kings and queens. Kings and queens are regional leaders, often, but not necessarily, corresponding to an existing nation-state. Kings and queens may also lead a castle, typically in a capital city.

It is important to note that 'king' and 'queen' are gender-specific and equal titles. In a local group that has a king and queen, for example, the black queen might be the superior member. If there are multiple kings and queens, rank is often determined through a chess "crown tournament." As in other levels, the lower ranking member through challenge is designated "white."

As Logicians love debate and the Socratic Method, there is generally at least two of each level represented within a castle. Logicians are expected to debate a course of action with another Logician of the same level until both members agree upon one course, the





best course. While the chessboard analogy allows for two kings, two ministers, four bishops, four knights and four rooks, most castles are too small to fill those out beyond rook. As the rooks are primarily a social club, there are often many more than four. Higher levels are filled according to need but the Logicians do not worry if they end up with, for example, five bishops within a castle (they would actually be more inclined to add a sixth than prune to four; advancement must be achieved, not forced). Formally, the lower ranks may not question the orders or actions of those above them, because advancement is a sign of intelligence.

The chessboard is a tool used to determine advancement within the society. Any potential 'black' must defeat a member of the level in which he intends to advance in a chess game (in order to minimise chance, these tests are usually a 'best out of three/five' series) in addition to any other requirements (usually logical tests of intelligence). A member may only attempt advancement three times, designated 'white' after the third failure and no longer allowed to advance. Considered a harsh blow to one's intelligence, many members that fail twice never attempt the third try simply to maintain 'black' status.

The chessboard is also used for communication. Simply by sitting at a table to play, a Logician can indicate his membership and title within the first move. If the other answers as a Logician as well, the subsequent moves promote a dialogue between the two Logicians. These coded conversations can be quite involved and exact, as the Logicians apply a number of mathematical formulae to communicate different words and ideas. To the uninitiated observer, this looks like an involved and legal chess game.

The Logicians have also used postal chess to great effect when sending messages. By predetermining the initial board set-up, Logicians can send moves through the mail that carry coded messages only decipherable to another Logician with the same board set-up. The codes are very difficult to crack and some Logicians even add extra layers of code and complexity to further confound code-cracking efforts.

JOINING THE ORGANISATION

As a small, ancient group, the world at large does not know of the Logicians, its members often perceived as eccentric scholars more familiar with math than social convention. Indeed, while a middle class Logician is always careful in his phraseology, more than a few have unnerved their 'betters' in conversation by

emitting a certain arrogance. As a countermeasure, local Logician leaders often organise a 'philosophical society' with a very low intelligence requirement. This enables the Logicians to allow potentially offended nobles, priests and other notables to join without compromising the society.

If a Logician discovers an intelligent (usually middle class) student or scholar, then he will recruit him into the local society, giving him a series of tests over a short period which, if successful, sees the recruit become a black rook and formally introduced to the rest of the membership. The newly initiated black rook is then able to advance within the society normally.

While it is difficult to completely dismiss social prejudice, the Logicians prize intellect above all else; there are quite a few aristocratic Logicians, often having proved their worth above the initial prejudice and dismissal of the mostly middle class Logicians. These are often 'second sons' and other disaffected members of the upper class. Women are also welcomed into the League of Logical Utopians, as it is not logical to dismiss half of the world's population. Because of this position, the Logicians count many more women amongst their membership and leadership than most other societies.

RESOURCES

The League of Logical Utopians can usually draw on the personal resources of its members (mostly upper middle class) and the resources of their white rook members, usually misled as to the true reasons for the requests. Logicians can also count on the resources of those whom they aid. Whether they realise it or not, many lower class political organisations owe the society favours (usually, the leaders of these groups believe that they are being aided by a wealthy sympathiser, not a full-blown secret society).

Any city large enough to support a university will have a local chapter of the Logicians, usually under their white rook alias. Since the Logicians have strict qualifications for admission, true membership is rather small. Most groups count two to four elite members (those above rook level). Considered one of the larger groups, the Bloomsbury Philosophical Society only counts six elite members.

AGENDA

The Logicians seek a restructuring of the class system into a meritocracy (merit primarily defined as intelligence). This is not the same as democracy, as any Logician is eager to point out. Rule by the uneducated masses can be just as, if not more, dangerous than rule by the elite few.

Logicians prefer to work behind the scenes and plot for the long term. For example, they might support a military coup if they believe it could lead to an ideal meritocracy within twenty years. On the other hand, they might not support an anti-aristocratic rebellion if they determine that the ultimate result will end in failure. Because of this, outsiders have a hard time determining the Logicians' motives and goals.

Currently, the Logicians are encouraging reform movements in Europe. While they may aid anarchists and communists, the Logicians learned a hard lesson in France. In a sense, they are Marxist; they wish to work within existing governments and slowly change them rather than resort to violent action. The Logicians are also doing their best to guide America along, hoping to heal the regional factionalism that divides it. If America does indeed slip into civil war, then the Logicians will do everything in their power to ensure that a more enlightened state is borne from the ashes.

The Logicians also see an opportunity in Germany. King Wilhelm and Chancellor Bismarck are on the verge of uniting central Europe, shifting the balance of power. Prussian ambition may be just what the Logicians need to unite Europe while Austria crumbles.

Within any given city, Logicians can be found working to support government officials and programs. They are also influencing education and promoting equal rights and education for women. They may also be the secret financial backers of more moderate communist groups.

PERSONALITIES

Sir Jareth Berwyn

Sir Jareth Berwyn is a professor of mathematics at University College in Bloomsbury and the black king of the London Castle of the League. He is also a bachelor, which makes him the butt of many jokes, as many of his colleagues feel that he is more in love with his theorems and engines than with the fairer sex (his Welsh heritage only adds to the ribbing). In truth,

Sir Jareth carries a torch for his student and assistant, Amanda Crofton, although he would never act on his desire. He feels that it would be a betrayal of their relationship as well as his friendship with her father.

Sir Jareth is a white-haired, middle-aged Gnome. He often forgets to comb his hair, which protrudes wildly whenever he takes off his hat. He is nicknamed 'the raccoon professor' as the skin tone around his eyes is lighter than the rest of his face, the result of working on hot steam engines while wearing goggles. When in the lecture hall or other social situations, Sir Jareth dresses quite respectably, although any social points he might gain from his attire are usually lost when he unveils his thick Welsh accent.

Like most Logicians, Sir Jareth resents the upper class. In his youth, he fell madly in love with an upper class girl, only to be told that she was 'above him' (in every way). No matter how hard he tried, how much money he made, or how much knowledge he had, Sir Jareth could never break the glass ceiling of his station. Even his baronet title only qualifies him as a middle class gentleman. Sir Jareth firmly believes in allowing every man and woman to prove his or her worth, rising to an appropriate level in society. He maintains a romantic view of America, which he portrays as the intelligent, educated gentlemen wrestling control from the undeserving English aristocracy. He was less enthusiastic about French achievements, which he casts as the uneducated proletariat wrestling control only to hand it back. As a result, Sir Jareth, unlike his assistant Miss Crofton, finds it difficult to mingle with the lower class communists.

Sir Jareth is developing an analytical engine similar to that of Charles Babbage with whom he has regular correspondence. He believes that such a machine could increase efficiency in the new Utopia he envisions. So far, he has resisted any Thaumaturgical assistance, believing that it would affect the purity of his design. Currently, he has been programming his new engine to excel in chess, scoffing at any notion that he is creating an automated master race.

Amanda Crofton

The white queen of the London Castle (or Bloomsbury Club in public), Amanda Crofton is a mathematical and engineering genius. She is also an ardent supporter of women's rights, publicly exclaiming at one rally, "Great Britain is but half the nation it should be! If a woman can lead the country, why should a woman be excluded from other high positions?" Such remarks have labelled Crofton a communist but she does little to correct it as this



makes her quite popular in communist circles.

Crofton is a middle class Eldren woman. She is attractive (though plain by Eldren standards), but as an inventor she often eschews fashion over practicality. She often wears 'Syrian costume' (bloomers) which she finds extremely comfortable when working on machines but makes her the butt of many jokes in Crofton's social circles. Crofton cares little for such criticism, endearing her further with the lower class.

Sir Jareth Berwyn discovered Crofton's exceptional intelligence at an early age during a dinner at her home (her father was a colleague). He was attempting to explain some complex equations and Crofton began solving them at the dinner table. Although scolded for using her father's library, Crofton piqued Sir Jareth's curiosity. He offered to take her on as a servant and apprentice, privately tutoring her in mathematics and engineering. Her father, while worried that this might harm her marital suitability, could not deny his daughter's eager enthusiasm. Secretly, Sir Jareth labelled her a black pawn.

While under Sir Jareth's tutelage, Crofton became angered at the inequities of society. She resented the unconventional method in which she had to gain an education (even if it was ultimately superior). She resented the fact that the university administration did not seem as bright as Sir Jareth. She even resented the artificial class distinctions, especially when it came to education. When she discovered her tutor's connection with the Logicians, she practically demanded admittance, arguing that it was the only logical course of action. To her delight, Sir Jareth agreed.

Crofton quickly mastered her studies and could probably challenge Sir Jareth successfully for leadership if she desired. Instead, she has privately designated herself a white queen so long as Sir Jareth heads the order. While this seems contrary to the Logician's philosophy, most members believe that Sir Jareth has informally beaten Crofton enough that she does not wish to risk public humiliation.

Crofton quickly becomes the centre of attention at any League gathering, often accorded deference in regard for her gender, earning her the nickname "Belle of the Sphere" (an allusion to the other meaning of "ball"). Crofton sees Sir Jareth as a father figure, unaware of his romantic feelings toward her.

Hester Holden

Officially, Hester Holden is Sir Jareth's cook. She has been providing tasty meals for her master and his associates for several years. Officially, she is a black

Sir Jareth Berwyn

Rank 14 Gnomish Engineer (Focussed)

Physical Competence: +6

Mental Competence: +11

Initiative: 9

Health: 7 Dice (14 pips)

Signature Skills: Concentration +4, Cryptography +4, Engineer (all) +4, Perception +2, Teaching +4

Traits: Chess master +4, Computer +3, Underestimated +4

Combat Abilities: Jareth is not a fighter, but in dangerous times he is able to lay his hands on a pistol.

Damage: Colt 1849 Pocket Pistol (6 Dice)

Amanda Crofton

Rank 10 Eldren Engineer (Specialist)

Physical Competence: +3

Mental Competence: +10

Initiative: 6

Health: 5 Dice (10 pips)

Mana: 5 Dice (30 pips)

Signature Skills: Ad Hoc Repair +2, Concentration +4, Engineer (all) +4, Research +2, Science (mathematics) +4, Sensate Medium -3

Traits: Bold +2, Chess player +4, Suffrage Advocate +4

Special Abilities: Magic sense (Sensate Medium)

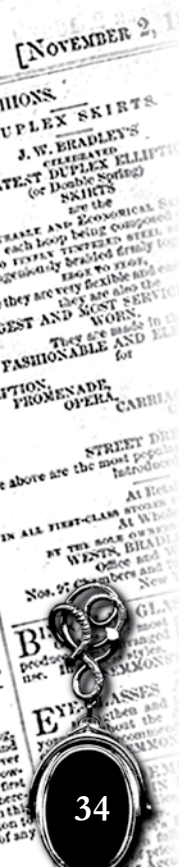
Combat Abilities: Whatever comes to hand

Damage: Wrench (2 Dice),

Adams 1855 revolver (11 Dice)

bishop in the League of Logical Utopians. Although she wishes to advance, Sir Jareth and Miss Crofton have unofficially designated Holden a white bishop for personal reasons. In her current position within the group, however, Holden is amongst the most powerful and influential.

Hester Holden is the daughter of a servant cast out of service for becoming pregnant with her married master's child. Unable to care for Hester, her mother put her under the watchful eye of her aunt that ran an Aluminat school for nuns. Hester decided to



Hester Holden
Rank 8 Halfling Cook (Focussed)

Physical Competence: +4
Mental Competence: +7
Initiative: 7
Health: 5 Dice (10 pips)
Signature Skills: Act +1, Conversation +4,
Craft (Cooking) +4, Empathy +3,
Fisticuffs +2, High Society +2, Perception +2,
Streetwise +2, Theology +5
Traits: Devout +4, Unobtrusive +3,
Combat Abilities: She can usually protect her
kitchen with what comes to hand.
Damage: Rolling pin (4 dice)

become a nun herself and vigorously threw herself into her studies, soon after assigned to a parish near Birmingham.

Unfortunately, Sister Hester studied too well and it was soon obvious that she knew far more theological doctrine than the Parish priests and deacons. At first, they humoured her by including her in theological debates. As time went on, they became distressed that a mere woman should understand the Host better than they did. For her part, Sister Hester could not understand why women could not attain full priesthood. Did not one's understanding of the Aluminat faith outweigh concerns of gender? Due in part to her views and impact, Sister Hester quietly received a dispensation to leave the sisterhood.

Miss Holden was able to secure a position as a cook for a country squire that also happened to be acquainted with Sir Jareth. During a visit, Sir Jareth inadvertently caught Holden playing with her master's chess set. Intrigued, Sir Jareth engaged her in conversation. Once he was satisfied that Holden was intelligent enough (and of the proper mindset) to become a Logician, Sir Jareth arranged for her to become his personal cook at University College.

Hester Holden is an attractive, full-figured Halfling woman that genuinely enjoys cooking. She often uses cooking terms and analogies in her debates. Holden is a devout Aluminat but she believes in admitting women to holy orders in addition to other reforms. While Sir Jareth and other Logicians are sceptical of the Aluminat's place in their vision of a Logical Utopia, Holden simply and effectively notes that spirituality is like a good broth that binds all of the other elements of a good soup together.

Holden also has a great reputation for gathering information, gossip and aid from all aspects of

society. She freely mingles with the lower and middle classes and is cosy with some members of the upper class as well. Other Logicians do not press her on where she gets her information but it is well known that if there are secrets to be uncovered, Cook Holden is the person to ask.

Otis Pratt

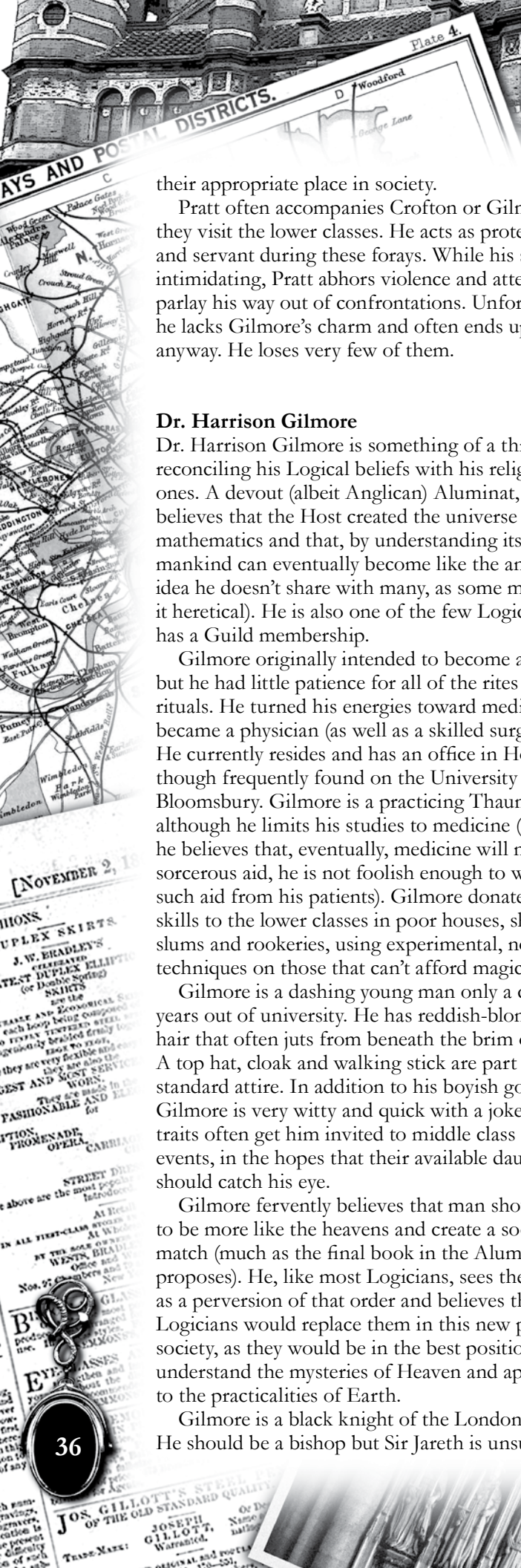
Otis Pratt is one of the most interesting and unusual members of the League of Logical Utopians and of University College in Bloomsbury. Like Crofton, Pratt is not an official student at the school, employed at the University as a groundskeeper. Most students either ignore or poke fun at him when encountered, never realising that he is probably far more intelligent than they would ever hope to be.

Pratt is a typical Ogre of the tusk-less variety, though covered in freckles. He is originally from Cornwall, so his Cornish accent only further degrades the typical Londoner's impression of him. He is usually wearing his work overalls (custom designed by him to take abuse by using copper rivets and strong cloth; he is currently considering marketing them), and keeps a pair of spectacles in one of his pockets for his frequent visits to the University library after hours, soaking up knowledge in the wee hours of the morning.

It was during one of his late night excursions that Sir Jareth stumbled upon him. Initially, Pratt panicked and tried to flee. It was not the first time that a professor caught him 'mistreating' books that he could not possibly understand. Instead of throwing Pratt out, however, Sir Jareth asked him his opinion of Voltaire's *Candide*, the book he had been reading. The two spent the next several hours debating over the question of whether this was the best of all possible worlds (a central theme of the book).

Sir Jareth realised that there was something special about Pratt. While a bright Ogre was rare but not unheard of, an argumentative one was. Not immediately swayed by Sir Jareth's opinions, Pratt was polite and deferential. Curious, Sir Jareth marked him as a black pawn and made it a point to get together with Pratt at least once a week for further lamp-lit discussions. After several months, Pratt became an official member of the League.

Oddly, Pratt does not advocate for the social improvement of his race. He fully believes that, in the New Order proposed by the Logicians, Ogres will still fill the bottom of society. However, he also believes that this New Order will make education available to all and that those few Ogres that are like him should be able to rise through the ranks and take



their appropriate place in society.

Pratt often accompanies Crofton or Gilmore when they visit the lower classes. He acts as protector and servant during these forays. While his size is intimidating, Pratt abhors violence and attempts to parlay his way out of confrontations. Unfortunately, he lacks Gilmore's charm and often ends up fighting anyway. He loses very few of them.

Dr. Harrison Gilmore

Dr. Harrison Gilmore is something of a throwback, reconciling his Logical beliefs with his religious ones. A devout (albeit Anglican) Aluminat, Gilmore believes that the Host created the universe with mathematics and that, by understanding its design, mankind can eventually become like the angels (an idea he doesn't share with many, as some might deem it heretical). He is also one of the few Logicians that has a Guild membership.

Gilmore originally intended to become a priest but he had little patience for all of the rites and rituals. He turned his energies toward medicine and became a physician (as well as a skilled surgeon). He currently resides and has an office in Holborn, though frequently found on the University campus in Bloomsbury. Gilmore is a practicing Thaumaturgist, although he limits his studies to medicine (while he believes that, eventually, medicine will not need sorcerous aid, he is not foolish enough to withhold such aid from his patients). Gilmore donates his skills to the lower classes in poor houses, shelters, slums and rookeries, using experimental, non-sorcery techniques on those that can't afford magical care.

Gilmore is a dashing young man only a couple of years out of university. He has reddish-blond curly hair that often juts from beneath the brim of his hat. A top hat, cloak and walking stick are part of his standard attire. In addition to his boyish good looks, Gilmore is very witty and quick with a joke. Both traits often get him invited to middle class social events, in the hopes that their available daughters should catch his eye.

Gilmore fervently believes that man should aspire to be more like the heavens and create a society to match (much as the final book in the Aluminat Bible proposes). He, like most Logicians, sees the nobility as a perversion of that order and believes that the Logicians would replace them in this new perfect society, as they would be in the best position to understand the mysteries of Heaven and apply them to the practicalities of Earth.

Gilmore is a black knight of the London Castle. He should be a bishop but Sir Jareth is unsure of

Otis Pratt

Rank 8 Ogre Caretaker (Focussed)

Physical Competence: +10*

Mental Competence: +6*

Initiative: 5

Health: 10 Dice (20 pips)

Signature Skills: Conceal +4, Conversation +4, Firearms +1, Fisticuffs +5, Intimidate +2, Might +4, Research +6, Sleight of Hand +2

Traits: Debater +4, Well-Read +4

Combat Abilities: Pratt is an efficient fist fighter, and carries a gun just in case

Damage: Brass Knuckles (7 Dice), Adams 1855 pistol (11 Dice)

*Pratt has the physical bonus for being an Ogre, but not the mental deficiency.

Dr. Harrison Gilmore

Rank 8 Magician and Physician (Focussed)

Physical Competence: +4

Mental Competence: +7

Initiative: 7

Health: 5 Dice (10 pips)

Mana: 4 Dice (24 pips)

Signature Skills: Conversation +3, Etiquette +3, Firearms -2, Fisticuffs +2, Medicine +3, Perception +2, Research +3, Sleight of Hand +2, Thaumaturgy +3, Theology +3

Traits: Caring +3, Educated +4

Special Abilities: Cure, Gaslight, Groom, Heal (Thaumaturgy)

Combat Abilities: Useless with a gun and having only healing spells, Dr Gilmore has to rely on his brief stint as a university boxer to protect himself.

Damage: Fists (2 dice)

the wisdom in giving a religious Logician too much power. For his part, Gilmore does little to encourage a second look, spending much of his time with the lower class that Sir Jareth finds distasteful. Amanda Crofton has been a good friend, encouraging Gilmore to do more within the society but he is completely oblivious to her obvious affection for him. He often debates religious theory with Hester the cook in the kitchen.



CHAPTER 2

DARK HEARTS AND DARK GODS

“The Old Gods are awakening, my friends,
and it is we who shall greet them from their
slumber and remake the world as the Utopia
it once was!”

- Matthew Hauptberg

EIGHT

He came to, slowly, eyes fuzzy, images slowly swimming into focus in the darkened cellar in which he found himself. The place stank with an animal musk, with the stink of blood and other, more unspeakable, fluids. With distress he realised some of the stink was coming from him.

"Where... where am I? Why have I been treated like this?" He slurred, speaking to the figures in the dark his eyes were only just beginning to focus upon. His voice grew stronger as he spoke up, becoming angry as he pulled at his bonds. "To treat a prisoner in such a way, it's unconscionable, inhuman!"

A figure moved out of the dark and in shock he realised it was a woman, as naked as an innocent Eve but with eyes of brimstone and flint. The crop she held in her hand snapped across his face and he tasted blood.

"Conscience? Humanity? To be human is to be animal! Why deny our lusts, our every desire, our emotions, our whims? Why bind ourselves up in whalebone and social convention when we can be gloriously, gloriously free?"

He glowered at this fallen jezebel and the bulkier figures behind her. "You mean to kill me then?" He let the blood pool in his mouth, refusing to spit in front of a lady, even such a parody of a lady as this.

"No," she answered. "We intend to put you to every dark and perverse use we can think of, we mean to break you, we mean to reduce you, we mean to kill you and then to finally eat you and desecrate your remains. Nothing is held from us at all. Nothing."

HISTORY

While '8' is a new group, made up of dilettantes, hangers-on and the idle youth of the rich and titled, they claim a manner of spiritual history from the cults of the pre-Justas Roman Empire, from the pagan faiths they believe to be all but dead and from any number of heresies and infernal cults down the centuries. This is mostly pretence, the members know virtually nothing of history, theology or philosophy, it is only the surface, the aspect of these things that they take on and bring to their debauches without the substance.

The genesis of this group came from three young men attending, but paying little attention to, their studies at Cambridge. Wendelsham, Pritchard and Keene were a gang of hellions, spending all of their allowance on drink, opium and common street-whores. Paying their studies no heed, they took to gambling, indebteding themselves to the kind of people who cared not that they belonged to the upper classes.

McCarthy, a man they had fallen deeply into debt with, was a brute of a man who handled the bets from a number of dogfights, bare-knuckle boxing matches and other low pursuits the trio had been immersed in. When he came to collect his money, he came with the firm intention of carving what he was owed from the boy's skins if they did not pay up. There was a struggle in which Pritchard's face was cut and Keene shot the man down with a pistol. Acting together, the

three of them disposed of the body in the river and swore a covenant to keep this a secret between them but Keene found that he had developed a taste for murder. Having gotten away with it, they all found themselves sinking further into depravity, thinking they were untouchable, invulnerable and immortal.

Much to the dismay of their parents, after university the three of them remained inseparable. Rather than their impropriety being a boyish phase, it became entrenched though, due to the expectations of their families and their reliance on inheritance and allowance, they became more careful, more secretive. In time they gathered others of like-mind and similar tastes into their little, secretive group until there were seven of them. It was then that Keene suggested they model themselves after the seven deadly sins and found a secret society. All of them were wealthy, or stood to become wealthy and all of them stood to have some pull in society and politics in the future. They also all had something over each other, their participation in the group and accounts, and even evidence, of each other's scandalous and despicable habits.

For a time, perhaps a year, this was enough for them but they began to gather hangers-on, disciples, those who wished to be like them or merely wished to leech from their wealth, even those who wished to blackmail them. The society became more organised, more careful. Rules were laid down. Methods of preventing discovery or blackmail were formulated

and many of their acts became ritualistic as they became codified and set down, mockeries of the church or poor imitations of ancient and pagan rites, anything that appealed to their rebellion against convention. This still wasn't enough for Keene - he wanted more, he wanted their little cabal to become more of a cult and he found a hook upon which to hang that desire.

The unnamed cabal became '8' when Keene's crude and opium-inspired philosophising gave him his stroke of genius. The purpose, as far as the hangers-on would know, would be to discover some eighth sin, some new failing, some new weakness, some new animal passion, to which mortal man was vulnerable. It would be a sin beyond the understanding of the church, beyond its capacity to combat, something so outrageous and yet so primal that it had power.

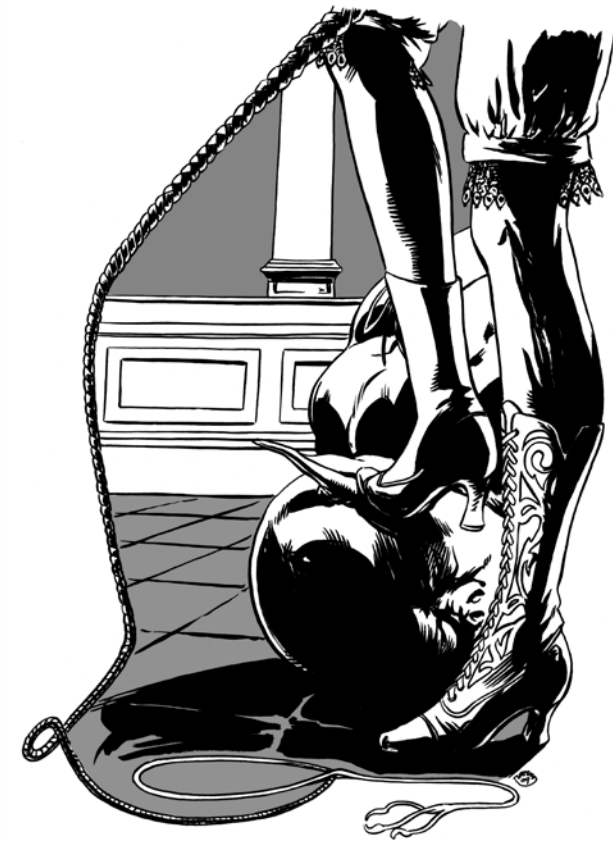
Over time, the inner cabal of '8' has fallen for their own scheme. The idea of the eighth sin drives them deeper into each and every debauchery. Their society drags people in, uses them up and spits them out, broken, dead or insane. They push every limit; allow no decency, no conscience, nothing to stand in their way.

STRUCTURE

'8' is lead by its inner cabal of seven members though, whenever they meet, an eighth seat is set at the table to represent their mythical eighth sin. All important decisions are made by this cabal, with the cabal as a whole outranking any individual inner circle member and any inner circle member having absolute command over any outer circle member.

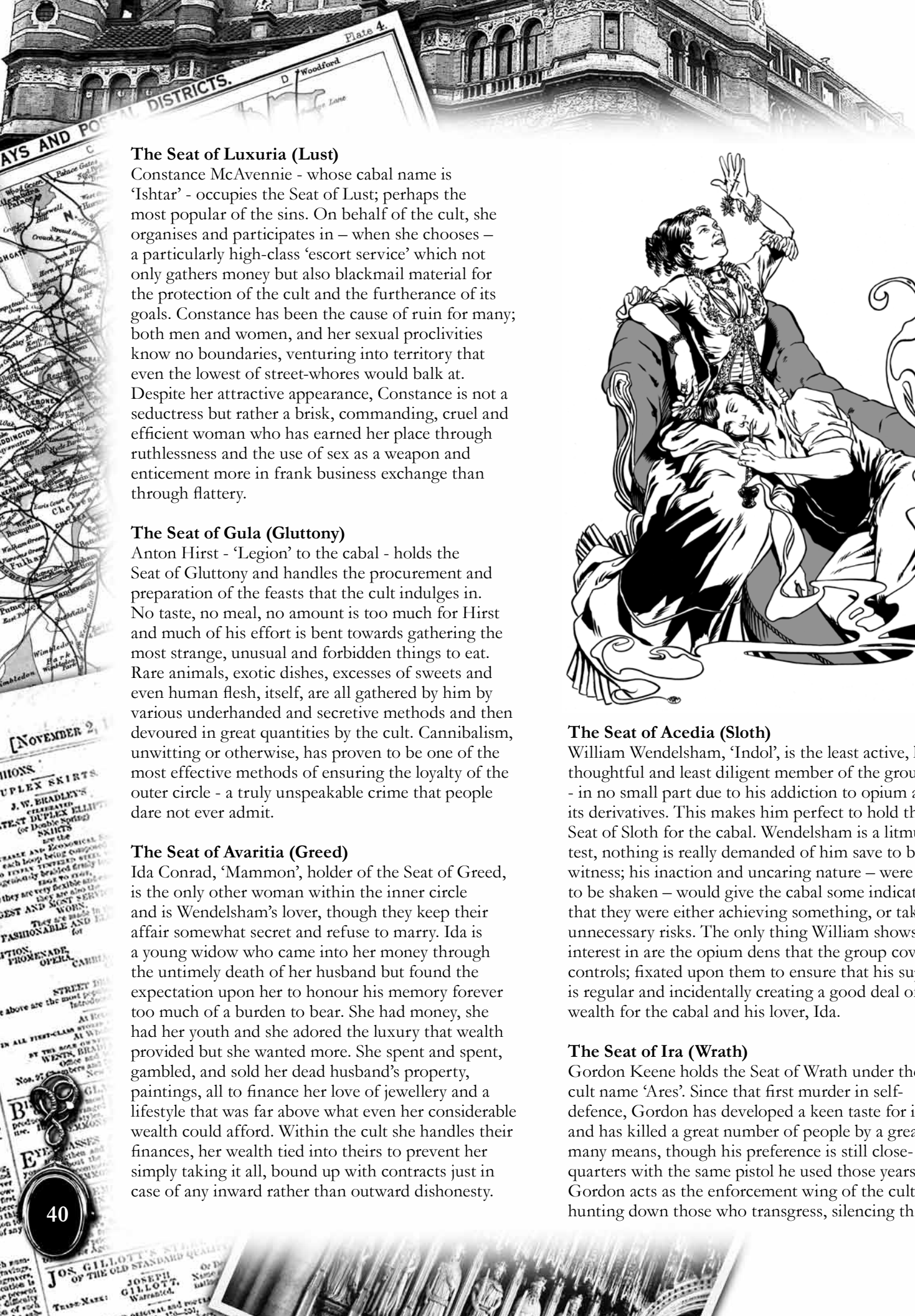
The outer circle is made up of 'everyone else'. It has no ranks or hierarchies, all are considered equal (and equally disposable) by the inner circle, though they may have favourite pets or toys that vary from day-to-day. Mostly the outer circle is left to establish its own pecking order. While outer circle members are told they are so much better than those outside the organisation, they are expected to suffer any and every indignity the inner circle asks of them.

When involved in cult activities, outer circle members are referred to as either 'Toy' or 'Whip'. Most members are called 'Toy', as that is what they are, although outer circle members might call each other 'Brother Toy' or 'Sister Toy'. An inner circle member calls someone a 'Whip' when they are about to be used to do something to one of the others. Sometimes a Whip might be sent out to perform



some task for the order but more usually they do what the name implies to one of the Toys for the enjoyment of the group. When the task of a Whip is done, they become a Toy again, although some members prove themselves more useful as Whips than Toys and are called to serve as such more often.

Each member of the inner cabal, while indulging in every sin and vice imaginable, represents and most especially indulges one particular sin and oversees the aspect of the cult best represented by that sin. While all outer circle members must kneel to the whims of any in the inner circle, each outer circle member owes a more favoured allegiance to one of the seats of the inner circle and the sin it represents. Each of the seats is referred to by its old Roman name, adding further mystique to the order and each of the inner circle members goes by a pseudonym, as much to hide their identity as for the ritual of such a thing. The one line the group hasn't crossed is to specifically name themselves after the demon lords and ladies who claim dominion over the highest sins. Such an act of hubris would almost certainly be seen as a challenge to the Pale - not known for their patience with mortals.



The Seat of Luxuria (Lust)

Constance McAvennie - whose cabal name is 'Ishtar' - occupies the Seat of Lust; perhaps the most popular of the sins. On behalf of the cult, she organises and participates in - when she chooses - a particularly high-class 'escort service' which not only gathers money but also blackmail material for the protection of the cult and the furtherance of its goals. Constance has been the cause of ruin for many; both men and women, and her sexual proclivities know no boundaries, venturing into territory that even the lowest of street-whores would balk at. Despite her attractive appearance, Constance is not a seductress but rather a brisk, commanding, cruel and efficient woman who has earned her place through ruthlessness and the use of sex as a weapon and enticement more in frank business exchange than through flattery.

The Seat of Gula (Gluttony)

Anton Hirst - 'Legion' to the cabal - holds the Seat of Gluttony and handles the procurement and preparation of the feasts that the cult indulges in. No taste, no meal, no amount is too much for Hirst and much of his effort is bent towards gathering the most strange, unusual and forbidden things to eat. Rare animals, exotic dishes, excesses of sweets and even human flesh, itself, are all gathered by him by various underhanded and secretive methods and then devoured in great quantities by the cult. Cannibalism, unwitting or otherwise, has proven to be one of the most effective methods of ensuring the loyalty of the outer circle - a truly unspeakable crime that people dare not ever admit.

The Seat of Avaritia (Greed)

Ida Conrad, 'Mammon', holder of the Seat of Greed, is the only other woman within the inner circle and is Wendelsham's lover, though they keep their affair somewhat secret and refuse to marry. Ida is a young widow who came into her money through the untimely death of her husband but found the expectation upon her to honour his memory forever too much of a burden to bear. She had money, she had her youth and she adored the luxury that wealth provided but she wanted more. She spent and spent, gambled, and sold her dead husband's property, paintings, all to finance her love of jewellery and a lifestyle that was far above what even her considerable wealth could afford. Within the cult she handles their finances, her wealth tied into theirs to prevent her simply taking it all, bound up with contracts just in case of any inward rather than outward dishonesty.




The Seat of Acedia (Sloth)

William Wendelsham, 'Indol', is the least active, least thoughtful and least diligent member of the group - in no small part due to his addiction to opium and its derivatives. This makes him perfect to hold the Seat of Sloth for the cabal. Wendelsham is a litmus test, nothing is really demanded of him save to be a witness; his inaction and uncaring nature - were it to be shaken - would give the cabal some indication that they were either achieving something, or taking unnecessary risks. The only thing William shows any interest in are the opium dens that the group covertly controls; fixated upon them to ensure that his supply is regular and incidentally creating a good deal of wealth for the cabal and his lover, Ida.

The Seat of Ira (Wrath)

Gordon Keene holds the Seat of Wrath under the cult name 'Ares'. Since that first murder in self-defence, Gordon has developed a keen taste for it and has killed a great number of people by a great many means, though his preference is still close-quarters with the same pistol he used those years ago. Gordon acts as the enforcement wing of the cult, hunting down those who transgress, silencing threats,



intimidating those who challenge the cult's power and organising hunts, including those of human prey. He commands a cadre of killers from the outer circle; those who can be more properly trusted. They are skilled but the devotion of these killers to the particular 'special' method of killing that most excites them limits their usefulness.

The Seat of Invidia (Envy)

James Mitchell is the only member of the lower classes to be elevated to high position on the council and it is the Seat of Envy that he holds under the cult name 'Jo'. An effeminate man, James is also a master thief, which has given him wealth even though that wealth cannot garner him the respect he feels he deserves. James acquires things for the cult, things that belong to other people. In return he gets respect within the cult and favours from its other members, though he never gets the general respect and admiration in society that he so desires.

The Seat of Superbia (Pride)

Devlin Pritchard, known as 'Ravanna' within the cult, holds the Seat of Pride. Since it was his scarring in the confrontation that eventually birthed the whole cult, Devlin has become increasingly prideful, vain, narcissistic and paranoid. Dressed in the most expensive and latest of fashions, Devlin often comes across as a pampered dandy but his insecurity, coupled with an overblown opinion of himself, makes him incredibly dangerous to any who slight him. He regularly abuses his authority within the cult to settle personal scores in society. Devlin is the cult's main interface with high society, with the aristocracy and the rich whose boredom often makes them vulnerable targets for the cult's approaches.

JOINING THE ORGANISATION

The inner circle of the cult recruits their outer circle members as much by predation as by any voluntary means. The cult is secretive and paranoid and, so, doesn't advertise for members but instead seeks them out, from all levels of society. They look for those who are either already so debauched or fallen that they have no other place to go, or those who can be manipulated, corrupted or blackmailed into their service. The outer circle is never told a great deal and is used simply as disposable pawns and patsies. For them, the fear of what they have done getting out is literally a fate worse than death so, for the most part, they don't talk or expose the sect, even under torture.

All that is left for them to do is indulge their pleasures some more - better to be hanged for a wolf than a lamb.

A prospective member is first investigated by other outer circle members, who report back to the cabal. If the subject is judged to be a good choice by the cabal, they are then approached, again by outer circle members, to be tempted into their sinful and hidden life. Given a taste of what '8' has to offer most are more than enthusiastic to get involved and indulge themselves behind closed doors, away from prying eyes and in safety – or so they think. This time is used to weave them inextricably into the outer circle through favours, deals, contracts, friendships and affairs as well as to gather blackmail material upon them, just in case. By the time the cult asks a new member to do distasteful or questionable things, they already have more than enough dirt on them to ensure their compliance and loyalty.

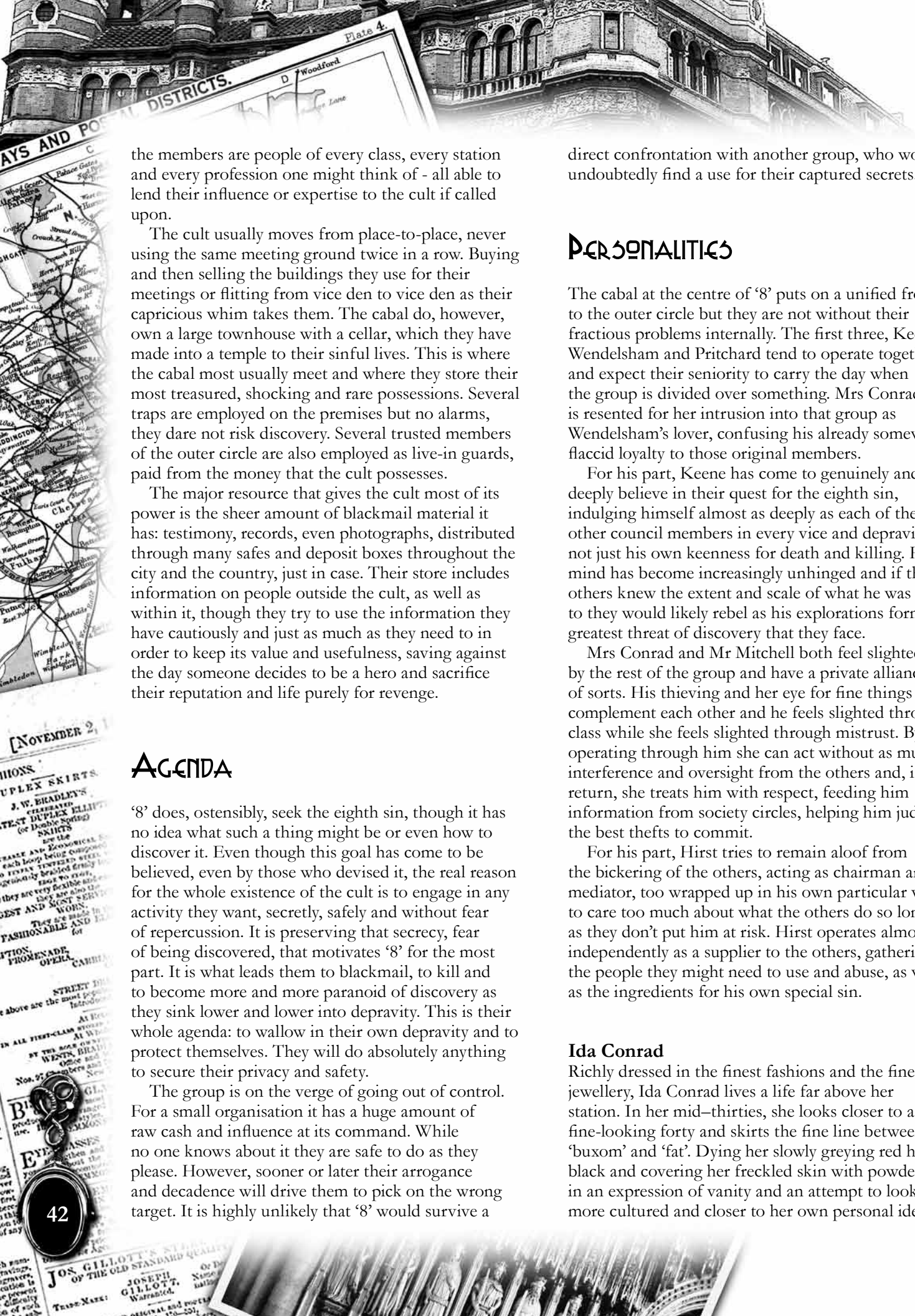
While it might seem egalitarian, class still plays a strong role in the invisible hierarchy of the cult. Recruits are usually taken from the upper, or at least well-moneyed, families. The cult believes that those of breeding are better at seeking and enjoying their debaucheries. Those it recruits from the lower classes are intended as toys and tools for the inner circle.

In order to officially become a member, the candidate must partake of an unpardonable sin, something that would destroy them if it ever got out beyond the cult. This is tailored to the weakness and the situation of the individual person but most usually it is a matter of sexual deviancy or cannibalism, something utterly unforgivable that family, friends and society at large would never, ever, forgive them for. Until this test is passed they are not treated as even outer circle members and are told nothing of consequence in order to protect the cult from infiltrators. However, the cult takes pride in offering the new member something they have always wanted to try but dared not even mention.

RESOURCES

'8' derives most of its power from its core cabal members. All of them are wealthy, or stand to be wealthy through inheritance, and all of them are well connected with people who can give them what they need – at least on the surface. Beneath the surface, within the cult, they have any number of people controlled, addicted or blackmailed willing to do their bidding, even unto death, in many cases. The resources of all these people are at their disposal and





the members are people of every class, every station and every profession one might think of - all able to lend their influence or expertise to the cult if called upon.

The cult usually moves from place-to-place, never using the same meeting ground twice in a row. Buying and then selling the buildings they use for their meetings or flitting from vice den to vice den as their capricious whim takes them. The cabal do, however, own a large townhouse with a cellar, which they have made into a temple to their sinful lives. This is where the cabal most usually meet and where they store their most treasured, shocking and rare possessions. Several traps are employed on the premises but no alarms, they dare not risk discovery. Several trusted members of the outer circle are also employed as live-in guards, paid from the money that the cult possesses.

The major resource that gives the cult most of its power is the sheer amount of blackmail material it has: testimony, records, even photographs, distributed through many safes and deposit boxes throughout the city and the country, just in case. Their store includes information on people outside the cult, as well as within it, though they try to use the information they have cautiously and just as much as they need to in order to keep its value and usefulness, saving against the day someone decides to be a hero and sacrifice their reputation and life purely for revenge.

AGENDA

'8' does, ostensibly, seek the eighth sin, though it has no idea what such a thing might be or even how to discover it. Even though this goal has come to be believed, even by those who devised it, the real reason for the whole existence of the cult is to engage in any activity they want, secretly, safely and without fear of repercussion. It is preserving that secrecy, fear of being discovered, that motivates '8' for the most part. It is what leads them to blackmail, to kill and to become more and more paranoid of discovery as they sink lower and lower into depravity. This is their whole agenda: to wallow in their own depravity and to protect themselves. They will do absolutely anything to secure their privacy and safety.

The group is on the verge of going out of control. For a small organisation it has a huge amount of raw cash and influence at its command. While no one knows about it they are safe to do as they please. However, sooner or later their arrogance and decadence will drive them to pick on the wrong target. It is highly unlikely that '8' would survive a

direct confrontation with another group, who would undoubtedly find a use for their captured secrets.

PERSONALITIES

The cabal at the centre of '8' puts on a unified front to the outer circle but they are not without their fractious problems internally. The first three, Keene, Wendelsham and Pritchard tend to operate together and expect their seniority to carry the day when the group is divided over something. Mrs Conrad is resented for her intrusion into that group as Wendelsham's lover, confusing his already somewhat flaccid loyalty to those original members.

For his part, Keene has come to genuinely and deeply believe in their quest for the eighth sin, indulging himself almost as deeply as each of the other council members in every vice and depravity, not just his own keenness for death and killing. His mind has become increasingly unhinged and if the others knew the extent and scale of what he was up to they would likely rebel as his explorations form the greatest threat of discovery that they face.

Mrs Conrad and Mr Mitchell both feel slighted by the rest of the group and have a private alliance of sorts. His thieving and her eye for fine things complement each other and he feels slighted through class while she feels slighted through mistrust. By operating through him she can act without as much interference and oversight from the others and, in return, she treats him with respect, feeding him information from society circles, helping him judge the best thefts to commit.

For his part, Hirst tries to remain aloof from the bickering of the others, acting as chairman and mediator, too wrapped up in his own particular vice to care too much about what the others do so long as they don't put him at risk. Hirst operates almost independently as a supplier to the others, gathering the people they might need to use and abuse, as well as the ingredients for his own special sin.

Ida Conrad

Richly dressed in the finest fashions and the finest jewellery, Ida Conrad lives a life far above her station. In her mid-thirties, she looks closer to a fine-looking forty and skirts the fine line between 'buxom' and 'fat'. Dying her slowly greying red hair black and covering her freckled skin with powder in an expression of vanity and an attempt to look more cultured and closer to her own personal ideal

Ida Conrad
Rank 10 Glutton (Focussed)

Physical Competence: +5
Mental Competence: +8
Initiative: 6
Health: 6 Dice (12 pips)
Signature Skills: Appraisal +2, Business +2,
Charm +2, Politics -1
Talents: Beautiful +1, Gambler +2,
Combat Abilities: Few, if any

of beauty. Ida believes money solves everything and is never without a ready supply of cash and other expensive items that she can use to sway another's opinion or to bribe somebody to look the other way - a methodology she far prefers to violence of any sort.

Gordon Keene

The appearance of a dandified wastrel covers the extremely dark soul that lurks inside Gordon Keene's heart. He dresses finely and can look almost effeminate save when the killing need is upon him. Shaven and dark haired, he is in his late-twenties but is commonly mistaken for a boy of eighteen, a fact he exploits and which greatly aids his protestations of innocence in the face of any 'wild and groundless' accusations. When he is on the 'hunt' he changes entirely, that angelic face becomes that of an angel of death and his face twists with sheer concentration and the joy of the hunt, transforming him into the very image of a devil.

William Wendelsham

Wendelsham is a useless, drug-addled and desperately unmotivated, opium fiend. Run to fat and softness, he is barely capable of holding a decent conversation when his addictions are fed, let alone when he has gone without for even a short while. Without being taken care of by the other members of the inner circle he should likely turn up dead within so few

William Wendelsham
Rank 10 Drug Addict (Focussed)

Physical Competence: +5
Mental Competence: +8
Initiative: 6
Health: 6 Dice (12 pips)
Signature Skills: Criminology +2, Etiquette -2,
Medicine +3
Talents: Linguist +2, Resilient +2
Combat Abilities: None he considers worth getting up for

Devlin Pritchard
Rank 10 Scarred Narcissist (Focussed)

Physical Competence: +5
Mental Competence: +8
Initiative: 6
Health: 6 Dice (12 pips)
Signature Skills: Charm +3, Fashion +3,
Politics -2
Talents: Animalistic +2, Charismatic +2
Combat Abilities: Sharp blades are a particular favourite
Damage: Sword (6 Dice) or more usually Knife (5 Dice)

as fourteen days and, as things are, the inner circle's wealth and followers are needed to keep him clean and even dressed decently half the time. On rare occasions, Wendelsham does get a bee in his bonnet about something and becomes energetic and focussed, albeit for no more than a few days.

Devlin Pritchard

Pritchard is Keene's counterpart; both of them dress as dandified gentry but Pritchard carries the look with more authority, a young gentleman of charm and sophistication rather than seeming to be a fop and a bugger. Scarred down his face, Pritchard cannot leave it alone, constantly running his fingertips across the scar, reminding himself of it and never forgetting that mark. To compensate, he spends and entertains extravagantly, particularly on the better classes of prostitutes, even though there are members of the cult that would gladly indulge his animal desires if he but asked. In this, as in most things, he seems to prefer an element of privacy, in stark contrast to his tasks for the cult, dealing with outsiders.

Gordon Keene
Rank 12 Hunter (Generalist)

Physical Competence: +9
Mental Competence: +6
Initiative: 7
Health: 8 Dice (16 pips)
Signature Skills: Blunt weapons +2,
Conversation -1, Dodge +3, Empathy -2,
Etiquette -1, Firearms +3, Fisticuffs +1, Hide
& Sneak +2, High Society -1, Improvised
Weapons +2, Swordplay +3, Throwing +1
Talents: Angelface +2, Assassin +2
Combat Abilities: Anything and everything
Damage: Whatever comes to hand, usually
Sword (6 Dice) or Pistol (8 Dice)



THE PLANETARIANS

The room was dark, warm and dark, a velvety darkness, the floor thickly carpeted to deaden the sound, the curved walls painted white and reflecting the barest light that entered through a pinprick gap in the ceiling. We stood in the dark around the central plinth, our faces, our character, all hidden in the darkness, reducing them to the barest of whispering ciphers, our voices swallowed up by the strange acoustics of the dome. The clock in the next room chimed midday, Greenwich Mean Time, the door – only open a sliver – now shut completely with a soft thump, now all was dark save that pinprick of light, creeping imperceptibly across the polished surface of the crystal.

Then it happened, the crystal glowed as the light struck it just right and on the walls of the room and in the suddenly clear faces of the onlookers could be seen a fantastic vista. Red hills rolling over a strange countryside, buildings like eggs, half set into the ground, their oval doors and windows admitting the pale and pinkish light into their interiors. Everywhere grew red, tangled weed and stunted trees with moss instead of leaves, like sponges almost, lifted to a sky in which hung a faint sun and two tiny moons. Up above flitted strange creatures, membranes spread between splayed, rib-like wings, faces like squid, tentacles writhing and snatching at the air. As we watched, another creature, like a bloated head, fringed with tentacles, walking upon them, loomed closer in the light of the crystal, huge dark eyes filling the dome as it peered upon us as we peered upon it.

For four long minutes we gaped at the scene and the creature gaped at us. The light from the ceiling slowly tracked across the crystal until, within a few moments of the fourth minute, the vision faded back into darkness. A gaslamp sprang into life with a suddenness that made us all jump, even those who had been within the dome before, seen that exotic vision before. We were all breathless, shocked, filled with wonder at what we had seen, silent in contemplation of what it meant until the silence was broken.

"Another world, a real, genuine, complete other world. You've seen it. We have seen it and the wondrous marvels that they have there. You understand what it means, don't you? How important this is? Why we must keep it to ourselves, for now?"

HISTORY


The Planetarians are a recent phenomenon, and a secretive one, seeing themselves more as a philosophical movement with effect upon science, art, literature and religion than as a conspiracy of any sort. Their history is relatively mundane, while the history of the crystal egg is far more mysterious and exotic. The genesis of the Planetarians comes from the story of the crystal and so, by necessity, an account of that singular artefact must precede an explanation of the group.

The crystal's genuine origin is entirely unclear. Despite its nature and the other examples of a similar nature found by the group, the Planetarians are not yet prepared to say, for certain, whether the swapping of the visions between the crystals is a matter of coincidence or machination. Most believe the crystal was engineered to its purpose by the creatures seen in the crystal and that they have seeded the Earth, and perhaps other places, to aid their observations of our solar system. The chance remains, however, that the alien creatures are simply more aware of this phenomenon, that it is entirely natural and that they have merely harnessed it.

The crystal came into the group's possession by an unlikely series of events. A naturalist and dealer in antiques, Mr Cave, first discovered its powers when he came by it as part of a job lot bought for his rather down-at-heel store. Quite by chance, he stumbled upon its abilities when a stray shaft of moonlight struck it one night while he was up with insomnia, going over his accounts. The visions he saw became addictive and his insomnia became worse as he replicated the conditions, gazing long and avidly into the crystal night after night.

The crystal's origin before that is unknown but it seems to have passed from hand-to-hand, shop-to-shop, remarked upon as a striking but ultimately worthless piece of ephemera. It was largely considered a window ornament for many years, a matter which makes the tracking of its point of origin all but impossible. Loathed to take a sample of the crystal for analysis (fearing the destruction of its unique properties), a chemical or mineral analysis hasn't been possible but it is believed that the material composition of the crystal is that of simple rock crystal, common enough, no more, no less.

The crystal was pursued, on a whim, by the Reverend James Parker (a missionary) and the Prince of Bosso-Kuni in Java, who, when visiting London



together, came across Cave's shop. The Prince offered a large amount of money for the crystal, enchanted by it in a way neither he nor his Reverend friend fully understood. Mr Cave was not particularly willing to part with it but his wife pressed the issue, forcing him to hide the crystal with a business associate, Mr Wace of St Catherine's Hospital. The nature of the crystal and hence its value, was revealed to Mr Wace, after which he and Mr Cave embarked upon a series of experiments with the crystal, preparing papers on its effect and what was seen within for several scientific journals. While the papers were rejected, considered a hoax, they caught the attention of certain government agencies and, after Mr Cave's untimely death, it was Mr Creighton, an agent of the government, who purchased it from Mrs Cave. Creighton had read all of Wace's papers on the crystal and kept track of those who had shown an interest in it. Using his extensive contacts he gathered those 'chosen by the crystal' together to form the Planetarians.

Since that inception, Mr Creighton, always mysterious, has taken something of a back seat, leaving the other members of the small society to explore the qualities of the crystal, to make their observations and to develop what they will from what they have seen. The influence of these Martian visions has begun to come through, subtly adapting

the thoughts and attitudes of the group. The visions modified Reverend Parker's religious thought, inspired Mr Wace in the field of medicine, making great improvements in the field of transfusions, and others have had their own fruits of inspiration in engineering and art. The source of this inspiration, however, remains secret, for fear of causing a public panic and Mr Creighton (and his trusted contacts in the government) keeps a close eye on members of the group.

STRUCTURE

The Planetarians exist at the sufferance of the government, or more specifically Mr Creighton, who seems to be a law unto himself. The government owns the house containing the crystal and the viewing dome, maintained and watched by trusted men in Mr Creighton's employ. This makes Mr Creighton the nominal head of the group, though he rarely involves himself, leaving the group to their own devices.

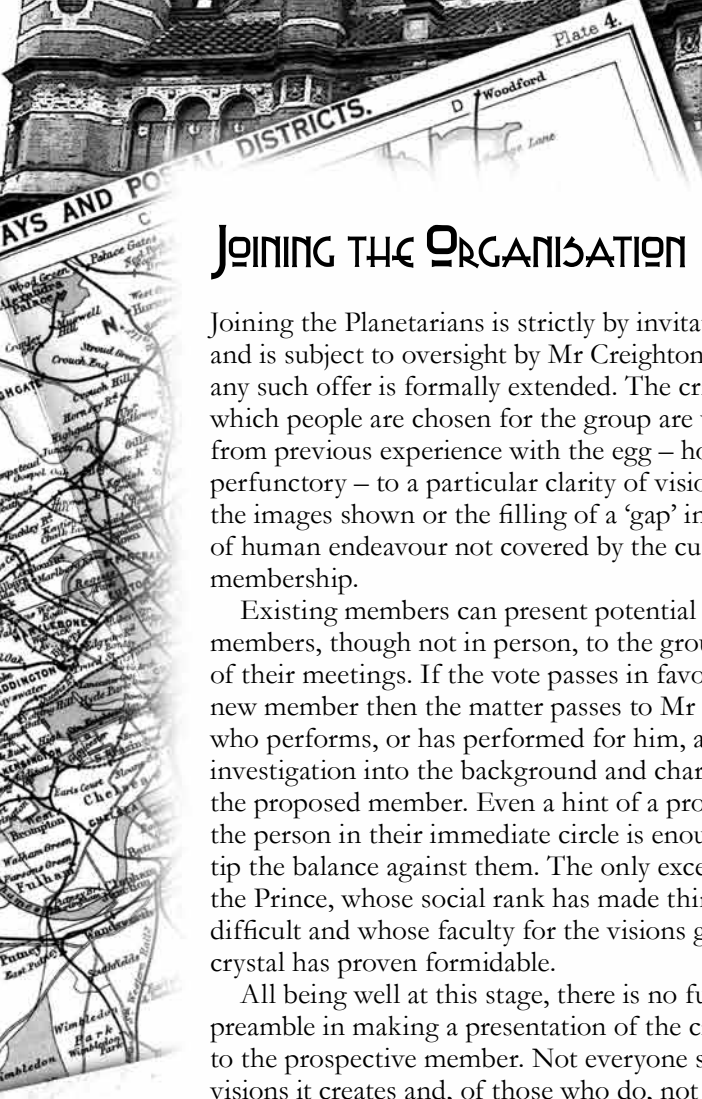
Without Mr Creighton, the group devolves along standard lines of seniority and class. However, membership and access to the crystal is offered to only the upper class and higher echelons of the professional classes, who consider themselves the only ones to be sound enough of mind and morals to be able to comprehend and deal with what they see.

The full listing of the society members includes:

- Mr Marcus Yale Creighton – Government agent.
- Reverend James Parker – Priest.
- The Prince of Bosso-Kuni – Royalty of Java.
- Doctor Jacoby Wace – Physician and examiner.
- Lady Gladys Elwes – Artist.
- Mr John Gray – Gnomish Poet and writer.
- Miss Elizabeth Imrie – Eldren Socialite.
- Mr Victor Keyhoe – Dwarven Engineer and inventor.
- Mr Edward Wodehouse – Scientist of optics.
- Mrs Shirley Robertson – Medium.

Without Mr Creighton's presence, most decisions defer to the Prince, on the rare occasions he is present, or the Reverend as his representative. Occasionally, on contentious issues, a vote is called for and the group goes along with the will of the majority unless Mr Creighton steps in, as he has on occasion, to 'protect the crystal from some unnecessary risks'.





JOINING THE ORGANISATION

Joining the Planetarians is strictly by invitation only and is subject to oversight by Mr Creighton before any such offer is formally extended. The criteria by which people are chosen for the group are varied, from previous experience with the egg – however perfunctory – to a particular clarity of vision for the images shown or the filling of a ‘gap’ in an area of human endeavour not covered by the current membership.

Existing members can present potential new members, though not in person, to the group at one of their meetings. If the vote passes in favour of the new member then the matter passes to Mr Creighton who performs, or has performed for him, a thorough investigation into the background and character of the proposed member. Even a hint of a problem with the person in their immediate circle is enough to tip the balance against them. The only exception is the Prince, whose social rank has made things more difficult and whose faculty for the visions given by the crystal has proven formidable.

All being well at this stage, there is no further preamble in making a presentation of the crystal to the prospective member. Not everyone sees the visions it creates and, of those who do, not everyone sees with the same level of clarity – though everyone sees the crystal glow. There seems to be no rhyme or reason to the visionary capabilities, whether medium, magician, scientist, or man of faith, either the visions come or they do not. If they see nothing, the candidate is warned by Mr Creighton’s men not to talk about what happened, are escorted out, and never again contacted by anyone in the society. If, on the other hand, they can see the visions that the crystal offers, they are offered a place as a member of the society and gain access to its library of notes, sketches, drawings and, of late Mrs Robertson and Mr Wodehouse’s ‘Etheric photography’, which has managed to capture some images of the visions.

RESOURCES

The Planetarians are not a massively powerful or particularly influential group. If anything they are a resource themselves, a resource to the mysterious Martian creatures that watch from the other side of the crystal and a resource for Mr Creighton to try to ascertain the crystal’s purpose, the Martian influence and goals. While the group themselves only have their

personal wealth and particular talents, Mr Creighton can call upon the resources of Her Majesty’s Government should the need arise – pockets that are all but limitlessly deep – but only when the need is dire.

The government owns the Planetarian house and is more like a hotel of sorts with a few rooms for those who occasionally stay over at the house for a few days, working those few minutes each day, or night, when the light is just right. There is a scant kitchen serving simple food to those who elect to stay, the dome and the large light well that serves its pinprick light takes up most of the house. Few members of the society like to stay overnight in the house too often though, as their sleep is often plagued by strange and disturbing dreams they can never fully remember upon waking.

Their greatest resource is their knowledge from the Martian visions - insights into an alien world, an alien culture, an alien technology. All of them are inspired by what they see, their imaginations and creativity fired up and this inspiration is a resource to them, making them feel aloof, special, privileged and more capable. A boundless well of energy and optimism seems to have consumed each of them, a matter that has made Mr Creighton – if anything – even more suspicious and careful, suspecting some sort of alien influence.



[NOVEMBER 2]

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TEST DUPLIX ELLIPTIC

(or Double Spring)

SKIRTS

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each loop being composed

of fifty fine twisted wires

and being made of the finest

material they are very flexible and

they are also the most

comfortable and most

WORK.

They are made in the

FASHIONABLE AND

PROVENANCE

OPERA

CAMBRIDGE

STREET

above are the most popular

Introductions

At

IN ALL FIRST-CLASS

BY THE ROAD

WESTON, BLAD

Office and

No. 97

GLASS

production

the

EYE

with

first

the

of any

JOSEPH GILLOTT'S

OF THE OLD STANDARD QUALITY

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WARRINGTON

ORIGINAL AND

50-501

AGENDA

The Planetarians themselves have no real agenda other than to discover as much as they can about the Martian visions, science and society. They see it as an endless learning opportunity, a chance to better the human race, strengthen the Empire and to become as advanced as the beings they see in the visions each day. They are open when they can be, honest when they can be and, of course, hopelessly naïve. Beneath the enthusiasm and excitability of the group, beneath their good intentions and their intriguing productivity it has not past unnoticed that a lot more seems to be exposed to the Martians in attempts to communicate than is being exposed to the Planetarians. Mr Creighton has had to intervene several times to prevent sensitive information being shown to the Martians on the other end of the crystal while getting any genuinely useful mathematical or engineering information from the Martians has been like getting blood from a stone.

Mr Creighton believes the Martians intend, through this crystal and perhaps others, to gather information on the Earth for some purpose. Since he works in intelligence, his automatic assumption is that there is some nefarious intent behind the gathering of this information and, thus, he attempts to limit the information that the Martians get while maximising what the Empire can learn about them. What he does not admit is that he is scared and outclassed, the creatures being of formidable intellect and deductive ability, which he cannot hope to begin to match.

Things are in the balance with Mr Creighton, his superiors seem to believe that 'men from another world' offer no real threat to the Empire and that the rewards are worth the minimal risks while Creighton himself becomes more and more paranoid, looking for a way to persuade his superiors to terminate the project. To this end the Planetarians are getting a bit more loose rope with which Creighton hopes to manipulate them into 'hanging themselves' by making a mistake or losing the crystal, thereby ending the project while he keeps up appearances with his superiors.

PERSONALITIES

The Planetarians are a small group and the individual personalities involved are each important to understand the working of the whole. Each person draws their own inspiration and has their own

Mr Marcus Yale Creighton Rank 13 Government Agent (Generalist)

Physical Competence: +8
Mental Competence: +8
Initiative: 10
Health: 8 Dice (16 pips)
Signature Skills: Charm +2, Firearms +2,
Gambling +1, Perception +3, Swordplay +2
Talents: Handsome +2, Whitehall man +3
Combat Abilities: First resort, Pistol (10 Dice)
Damage: Pistol (8 Dice)

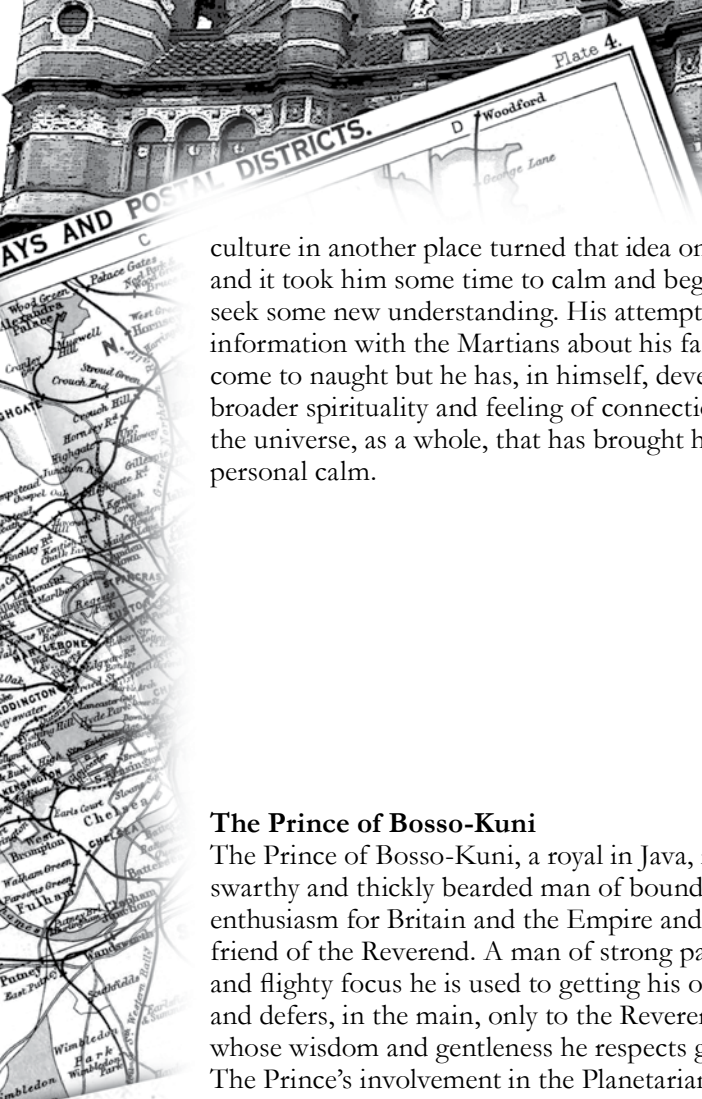
relationship with the crystal and the Martians on the other side of that crystal sphere; surprisingly so, given the short period of active contact the crystal gives them.

Mr Marcus Yale Creighton

A perceptive looking gentleman with a high forehead, Mr Creighton spends most of his time listening to other people, rather than exposing anything of himself, skilfully dodging around such questions while offering the absolute minimum to his questioners and learning as much as he can. If pressed by the particularly persistent, he admits to a minor role in Whitehall, taking care of things for the government but offers that it would be 'indiscrete' to say more than that. Mr Creighton is paranoid to a fault, though he regards it as a blessing and he is sure to be prepared for all conceivable – and many inconceivable – eventualities. The Martians make him extremely uneasy for reasons he cannot entirely explain, though his paranoia both invigorates and energises him.

Reverend James Parker

A priest of the Anglican Aluminat Church, Reverend Parker has done a great deal of missionary work and has travelled far and wide around the world picking up many languages and many converts amongst the tribal and heathen peoples around and beyond the far flung Empire. The Reverend is a tall, thin, almost gaunt man with an easy smile and a disarming manner, which makes him a pleasure to listen to and easy to talk with. As a man of faith, he was at first profoundly disturbed by the existence of intelligent life on another world, finding it to be a displacement of what he had previously regarded as Man's primacy in the works of Order. To find an older, wiser, greater



culture in another place turned that idea on its head and it took him some time to calm and begin to seek some new understanding. His attempts to trade information with the Martians about his faith has come to naught but he has, in himself, developed a broader spirituality and feeling of connection with the universe, as a whole, that has brought him great personal calm.

The Prince of Bosso-Kuni

The Prince of Bosso-Kuni, a royal in Java, is a short, swarthy and thickly bearded man of boundless enthusiasm for Britain and the Empire and a close friend of the Reverend. A man of strong passions and flighty focus he is used to getting his own way and defers, in the main, only to the Reverend, a man whose wisdom and gentleness he respects greatly. The Prince's involvement in the Planetarians is largely an honorary one since he has returned to his own country but secure correspondence with the Reverend through diplomatic bags has allowed him to keep abreast of developments and to offer his own particular insights, which have informed the Reverend's own musings on cosmology and religion no small amount.

Doctor Jacoby Wace

Doctor Wace, who prefers to go by Mister Wace, is a doctor and naturalist working as the assistant demonstrator and a teacher of medical students at St Catherine's Hospital. A keen amateur scientist he has published a few papers though he was unsuccessful at getting any of his early crystal egg studies into the journals. Doctor Wace is one of the most enthusiastic members of the Planetarians, with a scattershot approach to the knowledge gleaned from the crystal, assisting others for short periods and then flitting to his own projects. He is secretive about some of his observations but not the results, which have included a far more efficient method of making blood transfusions, about which he is particularly sensitive.

Reverend James Parker Rank 8 Priest (Focussed)

Physical Competence: +4
Mental Competence: +7
Initiative: 4
Health: 5 Dice (10 pips)
Signature Skills: Charm +2,
Culture (Spinoza) +3, Language (as needed),
Perception -1, Survival +2, Theology
(Aluminat +3, Spinoza +3)
Combat Abilities: None, the Reverend is a man of peace
Damage: Little to none

The Prince of Bosso-Kuni Rank 11 Noble Seer (Generalist)

Physical Competence: +7
Mental Competence: +7
Initiative: 7
Health: 7 dice (14 pips)
Signature Skills: Charm +1, General
Knowledge +2, High Society +2,
Horse Riding +3, Intimidate +3,
Perception +1, Politics +2, Swordplay +4,
Tactics +3
Traits: Mighty +2, Arrogant +1, Warrior +3
Combat Abilities: The Prince is a skilled cavalry warrior as befits his noble blood he prefers to use a large scimitar (11 Dice)
Damage: Scimitar (8 Dice)

Doctor Jacoby Wace Rank 7 Medical Doctor (Focussed)

Physical Competence: +4
Mental Competence: +6
Initiative: 5
Health: 5 Dice (10 pips)
Signature Skills: General Knowledge +2,
Medicine +4, Politics -2, Research +4,
Teaching +3
Combat abilities: None at all, he is a healer not a fighter
Damage: Pathetic fists at best

Lady Gladys Elwes

Lady Gladys is a plump and cheerful woman with a particular talent for watercolour painting and a swift hand that has allowed her to grab extremely accurate representations of the visions through the crystal for a more permanent record. In her own painting and craftwork, she has begun to favour the reds, purples and blues of the Martian palette and the rounded shapes of their buildings and forms. Almost consumed by the paintings, she has gained some appreciation from outside the group for her works, though only the members of the group can truly understand or appreciate what she has done. Some of her paintings hang in most of their homes and even Mr Creighton has a Marscape in his home, discretely hung as much to remind him to be vigilant as to be appreciated as art.

Mr John Gray

Mr Gray is a somewhat noted publisher of penny-dreadfuls of the scientific romance variety. Noted, that is, for the profligacy and fancy of his writing, rather than its quality. Up until his involvement with the Planetarians, Gray had been an unfocussed gadfly, taken with every new idea that came along, credible or not. Often fleeced by confidence tricksters, fakers and pseudo-scientific nonsense, he became something of a laughing stock. His involvement with the Planetarians has given him focus, improving his writing to the point where it has begun to attract some acclaim amongst more respectable circles and giving him the impetus he has needed to make his scientific learning more accurate and complete.

Miss Elizabeth Imrie

Miss Imrie is a somewhat unconventional Eldren socialite, who has mildly shocked society several times, skirting the edge of losing her respectability several times and narrowly avoiding destructive scandal. Her involvement with the Planetarians was controversial but her unconventional nature and cross-cultural experience at diplomatic parties and soirées made her Creighton's choice for the group, her reputation also ensuring she could be 'shut up' and socially destroyed should she get out of hand. As it happens, her experiences with the crystal egg have humbled her, making her more respectful, somewhat more publicly conventional while at the same time undermining her faith in the class system that supports her, turning her into a great philanthropist and a kind figure to the lower classes. A transformation that has startled and alarmed her former associates.

Lady Gladys Elwes

Rank 9 Inspired Artist (Focussed)

Physical Competence: +4
Mental Competence: +8
Initiative: 9
Health: 5 Dice (10 pips)
Signature Skills: Art (Painting) +4, Charm +1, Etiquette +2, Perception +3.
Traits: Artistic +3, Operatic +2
Combat Abilities: Screaming at best
Damage: Only to delicate eardrums

Mr John Gray

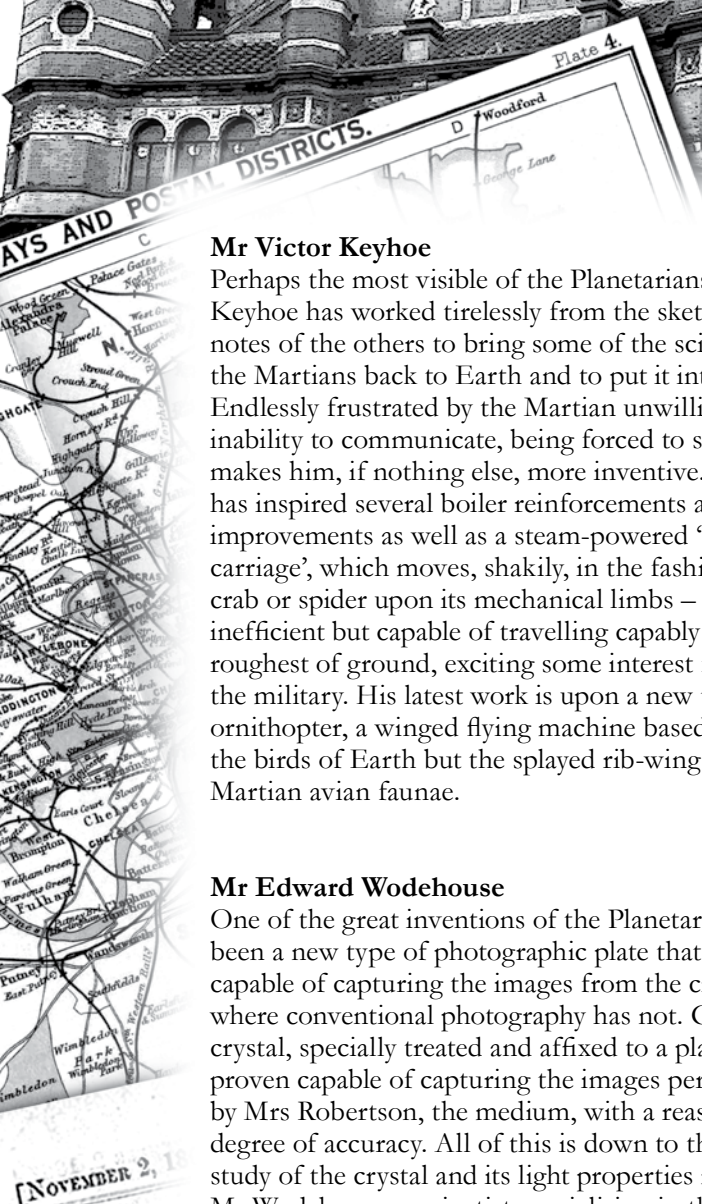
Rank 10 Gnome Poet and Author (Focussed)

Physical Competence: +5
Mental Competence: +8
Initiative: 6
Health: 6 Dice (12 pips)
Signature Skills: Art (Writing) +3, Etiquette -1, History +3, Science (Physics) +2
Traits: Dreamer +2, Gullible +4
Combat Abilities: None, the pen not being quite so mighty as the sword
Damage: None

Miss Elizabeth Imrie

Rank 10 Eldren Scandalous Socialite (Focussed)

Physical Competence: +5
Mental Competence: +8
Initiative: 8
Health: 6 Dice (12 pips)
Mana: 4 Dice (24 pips)
Signature Skills: Charm +2, Empathy +2, Etiquette +3, Fashion +3, Perception +2, Sensate Medium +1
Traits: Decadent +3, Indiscreet +2, Philanthropic +2
Special Abilities: Aura Reading (Sensate Medium)
Combat Abilities: She likes to watch but not participate in combat
Damage: In this dress?



Mr Victor Keyhoe

Perhaps the most visible of the Planetarians, Mr Keyhoe has worked tirelessly from the sketches and notes of the others to bring some of the science of the Martians back to Earth and to put it into action. Endlessly frustrated by the Martian unwillingness or inability to communicate, being forced to speculate makes him, if nothing else, more inventive. This has inspired several boiler reinforcements and improvements as well as a steam-powered 'walking carriage', which moves, shakily, in the fashion of a crab or spider upon its mechanical limbs – hopelessly inefficient but capable of travelling capably over the roughest of ground, exciting some interest from the military. His latest work is upon a new type of ornithopter, a winged flying machine based, not upon the birds of Earth but the splayed rib-wings of the Martian avian faunae.

Mr Edward Wodehouse

One of the great inventions of the Planetarians has been a new type of photographic plate that has proven capable of capturing the images from the crystal egg where conventional photography has not. Ground crystal, specially treated and affixed to a plate has proven capable of capturing the images perceived by Mrs Robertson, the medium, with a reasonable degree of accuracy. All of this is down to the diligent study of the crystal and its light properties made by Mr Wodehouse, a scientist specialising in the field of optics and spectroscopy. He currently focuses on finding methods to replicate the crystal or pairing new crystals in a similar fashion in order to transmit imagery instantly across vast distances.

Mrs Shirley Robertson

Mrs Robertson is an unremarkable medium, who made a little pin money for her talents from her friends, her circle including Miss Imrie. In addition to her talents as a medium, she has also received, since a child, occasional flashes of insight or intense empathy with others. Her friendship with Miss Imrie and her unusual talent, in combination, opened the door to the Planetarians for her. Her visions through the crystal have an unusual level of clarity and, of all the members, only she can cause the images to form on Mr Wodehouse's photographic plates with any clarity. She theorises that her special talent is something entirely different to either magic or psychic and she is, with the help of the more scientific members of the group, attempting to quantify and codify these talents and this extra sense it seems she has.

Victor Keyhoe

Rank 12 Inspired Scientist (Specialist)

Physical Competence: +3

Mental Competence: +12

Initiative: 9

Health: 5 Dice (10 pips)

Signature Skills: Concentration +4,

Engineer (all) +2, General Knowledge +4,

Perception +2, Research +4, Science (All) +2

Traits: Tinkerer +3, Avant-garde +2

Combat Abilities: Keyhoe may make use of one of several strange gadgets that he has constructed that might become a weapon, though wielded with almost no skill.

Damage: GM's discretion

Mr Edward Wodehouse

Rank 8 Experimental Photographer (Generalist)

Physical Competence: +5

Mental Competence: +6

Initiative: 5

Health: 5 Dice (10 pips)

Signature Skills: Photography +4, Research +3

Traits: Scientist +2, Inventive +2

Combat Abilities: He'll do his duty to protect the ladies if need be.

Damage: Fists (4 Dice)

Mrs Shirley Robertson

Rank 11 Talented Medium (Generalist)

Physical Competence: +7

Mental Competence: +7

Initiative: 10

Health: 7 Dice (14 pips)

Mana: 4 Dice (24 pips)

Signature Skills: Bull +4, Business +2,

Channelling Medium +3, Charm +3,

Etiquette +2, High Society +2, Perception +4,

Sensate Medium +3

Traits: Distant +3, Arrogant +1

Special Abilities: Séance, See the Supernatural (Channelling Medium), Glimpse, Psychometry, Sixth Sense (Sensate Medium)

Combat Abilities: She'll not be around for a fight if she can see it coming

Damage: None

THE ANCIENT AND HOLY ORDER OF SULIS-MINERVA

The moon illuminates the circle of stone and fire as smoke from the burning offerings envelops the face and shape of the high-priest and all around him the worshipers join their voices with his guttural chants. It is a song that has been sung on this hill for countless generations, in honour of the Gods that ruled here even before then. The ritual is just as old, every syllable uttered, every move made by the priest and acolytes, a repetition of what has always been. The air is thick with energy and the chant flows slowly, with precision, towards the moon carried by the dark smoke. With ancient words, the priests calls on the Gods to protect and bless all those who have come this night and to grant them good fortune in the trying times to come. The high priest prays that the Gods will arm their followers with strong spirits, wisdom and keen blades. He asks the chosen one to step forward and present his arms. The fire and moonlight reflects brightly in his polished breastplate as the Roman Centurion steps forward, his Gladio held firmly in strong arms covered with scars of war and tattoos of glory. Instructed by the priest, he places the blade in the fire for the consecration. The chanting grows louder, less guttural, more joyous.

The song resonates throughout the chamber, the torches flicker among the stone pillars erected around the sacrificial altar. A joyous celebration to the ancient Gods. The Acolyte steps back, leaving the ceremonial sword in the burning brazier on the altar, the flames reflecting on his cool face - shadow and light dancing across his features. The priest stretches out his arms, letting his own shadow fall across the assembled worshipers. He smiles. The ritual has been performed once again. In accordance with the ways of his ancestors, here below the modern streets of London, far from the light of the moon - the Old Ways have come again.

HISTORY

In 1836, Joseph Hauptberg, an aging German freemason had a life-changing experience in the ruins of the Roman baths in the town named after them. A lifelong disciple of the teachings of the Aluminat Church, as well as an upstanding and respected citizen and member of the Freemason lodge of his hometown, Hauptberg had a long and comfortable life. Falling ill, he feared that the end of his time was drawing near and doubt seeped into his heart. He dreaded death and he dreaded the afterlife, unsure of the heavenly rewards promised him on the other side. Advised by friends and fellow lodge members, he embarked on a pilgrimage throughout European shrines and holy sites of the Aluminat faith in hopes of finding some comfort regarding whatever lay beyond death. Along with him, he brought a couple of his servants, his wife, Sophie, and his youngest son, Uwe Matteus. Though interesting and relaxing, the pilgrimage did little to calm Joseph's doubts; and when his beloved Sophie fell ill, herself, early in the travels and finally succumbed to illness while they were crossing the English Channel, his faith shrivelled. Spurred, however, by his son and a driving instinct to complete his pilgrimage, the mourning Joseph had the remains of his wife dispatched to their

hometown in Germany where she was to be interned upon his return and he continued on to visit the shrines in Britain, as planned.

The shrines of Britain were not able to lift Joseph's grief and he half-heartedly continued, silently cursing Heaven's injustice in taking his wife away. Finally, he came to the town of Bath with its famed Abbey and Roman baths, where his health forced them to stay for a fortnight, recuperating in the supposed hot springs there. He spent several evenings, alone, walking by the baths, or soaking in the water, while trying to see some sense of it all, his faith completely gone. However, on one of these nights, the Goddess, herself, visited him in the form of his wife, Sophie, rising from one of the hot springs, wrapped in airy silks. Despite his initial terror, her melodious voice soothed him as she spoke to him of truth, of his sacrifice and the true nature of his pilgrimage. She identified herself as Minerva and Sulis, the patron of the hot springs of Bath and the Goddess of Wisdom and she gave him instructions for the establishment of a new fraternity dedicated to the old ways. With this, his faith was finally restored.

Along with his son, he travelled to London and presented himself to the Grand Lodge there as a fellow Mason. Settling in the British capital, he contacted three high-ranking Masons, sympathetic to his mission and established a secret order within,



and outside, the Grand Lodge. This secret fraternal order was dedicated to the worship Sulis-Minerva and the old Celtic and Roman Gods. His three first recruits were all, in their own way, secretly practicing pagans, following the traditions of their families from ages past; through them, he was able to reach others. They recruited from the ranks of freemasons, but also from gentlemen clubs, the Guild and other occult gentlemen's associations. They shaped the organisation around Masonic principles and utter secrecy. To any who noticed their activities, they were to be perceived as just another esoteric gentleman's lodge; in other words, a harmless pantomime. Recruited members were instructed to keep up their other memberships and to continue to observe the Aluminat Faith. Those schooled in Thaumaturgical arts were encouraged to be discrete and not draw unwanted attention. Recruitment was slow and selective, to avoid having the ranks of the Order filled by dilettantes and untrustworthy types. By the time Joseph Hauptberg perished in 1854, the Order was a vibrant force with regular rituals held for the benefit of the members and the Pagan Gods, and with a strong set of rules and etiquette governing the social and religious practices within the Order.

Joseph Hauptberg died within the London temple and, in accordance with his own wishes, in solitude within the inner sanctum, afterwards interned and sealed in a newly constructed tomb. Rites are often performed in his honour by the entrance to his tomb and some claim to have heard his voice from within, joining the chants and songs. At his death, power transferred to the Trinity of High Priests, also known as the Tribunal, consisting of the three highest-ranking members of the Order. Among them is Uwe Matteus Hauptberg, who now goes by the name of Matthew Hauptberg in polite society and who has followed his father in the ranks of Freemasonry.

For its entire existence, the Order has managed to stay an open secret; known by close friends or frequenters of Lodges and Gentlemen Clubs as a secretive Lodge with a penchant for Roman togas and artwork. The Order, and other affiliated organisations, scoffs at rumours of Thaumaturgical practices and hermetic rituals; nonetheless, the true nature of the Order and their pagan worship is still a well-kept secret. There are those who suspect that something is going on within the Order and a series of recent events have forced the Order to prepare some drastic defensive measures.

A priest of the Aluminat Church, also a 4° member of the Order, was sloppy in handling some of the tools of his workings and his superiors started asking questions regarding a rather unwholesome interest

in pagan religion. Books of rituals, statues, sacrificial daggers, incense and other items were noticed by his bishop and of some members of his congregation. This forced the Order to use its influence to silence the questions, as well as censor the offending member, hoping that blackmail and good use of disinformation would be enough to keep things quiet.

More serious was a member caught after kidnapping and ritually slaying a young girl. There was public outrage at the discovery of the girl a few months ago and the authorities were anxious to prove their effectiveness by catching the guilty party. Popular prejudices turned most eyes towards the Yehudi population, while others (usually working class people) suspected someone in the upper classes. One of the prime suspects was a zealous member of the Order and as such represented a threat to their secrecy; the manner of the young girl's death correlated with certain rites performed by the Order. The leadership moved quickly and had the suspected member brought in and interrogated, tried and found guilty behind closed doors and he was immediately hung. His body was moved and all was arranged to look like a suicide committed out of guilt. Thus, the Order punished their wayward member and avoided unwanted attention from the authorities.

Unfortunately, a single detective seems unwilling to stop his investigations, he has been looking into the suspect's ties to Freemasonry and the higher echelons of the Order are debating how to put an end to this before he becomes aware of their existence.

STRUCTURE

The Order follows the structure of a traditional Masonic Order and Lodge, where the members gain a greater understanding for the Great Work with each new degree they attain. Each degree involves specific duties and privileges, and a certain course to complete in order to gain a greater understanding in the Mysteries and advancement to the next degree. The Order consists of two main bodies – the inner and the outer workings, and additionally an external degree for aspiring gentlemen that are considered for recruitment, the Gentlemen Acolytes. The latter, referred to as the 0°, are only allowed into the outer areas of the lodge on specific days, when for all intents and purposes the members act as a social club and any reference or deference to rank and position is strictly forbidden, as are mentioning their rites and worship.

DEGREES (RANKS) OF THE SULIS-MINERVA

0° the Gentlemen Acolytes

The outer workings

- 1° Plebeians
 - I Servitude
 - II Worshipful
 - III Free Man
- 2° Initiates
- 3° Devout

The inner workings

- 4° Pilgrims
 - I Mysteries
 - II Seeking
 - III Sanctuary
- 5° Priests & Bishops
- 6° Trinity of High Priests / Tribunal

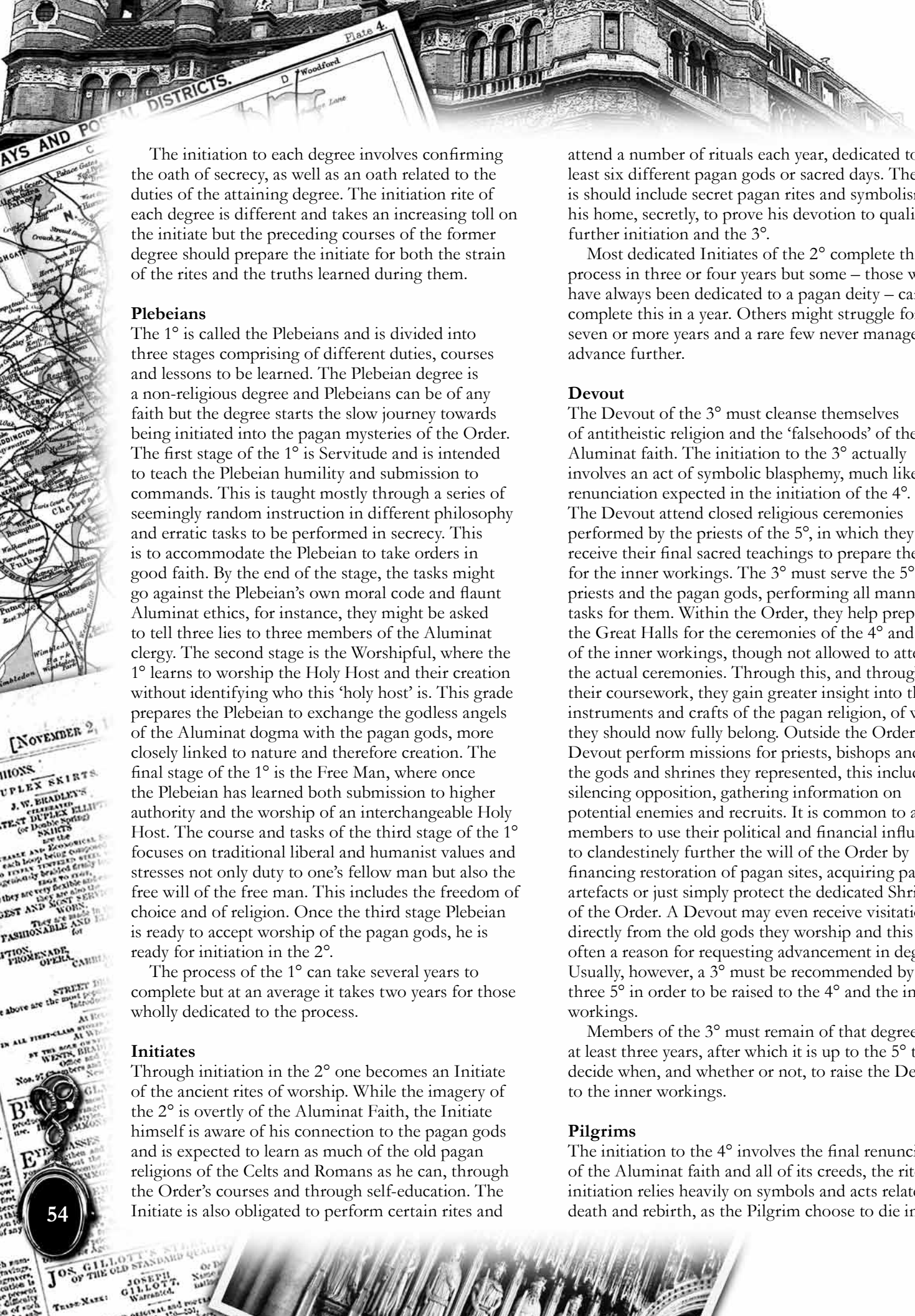
To become a 0° one has to be vouched for by two 3° members, or a single member of the inner workings, in good standing, and declared by them to be fitting for the outer workings of the Order. In practice, this means that they are interested in the Mysteries but still more or less faithful to the Aluminat Church, or in some cases have broken with the Faith. A Gentleman Acolyte is expected to swear an oath of secrecy in regards to the existence of the Lodge and its membership and while they have no official duties within the Order, they are constantly tested and monitored by the Commission of Conversions. If found acceptable, he is offered the test of the 1° and subjects himself to the related initiation ritual; this usually happens after less than a month. Those found lacking often find they no longer receive invitations to any of the social events of the Lodge, though remain routinely monitored and dealt with if thought capable of breaking their vow of silence.

The outer workings of the Order are not openly pagan, though, like the Masonic Lodges it strives towards a Universalist understanding of the Mysteries and religion. For the 1°, the rites and workings still include a good deal of the symbolism and structure found within the Aluminat Church. These elements disappear at an exponential rate and at the 3° they are almost completely gone. To join the inner workings of the Order, the Devout must denounce the Aluminat



Faith completely and pledge themselves to the pagan gods. At this time, they have already been practicing pagans for a long time. The inner workings of the Order are overtly pagan and consist of open worship of the elder Roman and Celtic Gods. Meetings and rites within the Order are restricted according to degree. Members of higher degrees are allowed and expected to attend the ceremonies of the lower degrees but they are not allowed to disclose the secrets gained in the higher degrees while socialising with members of lower rank. The process is considered a journey of personal growth and revelations and any intervention in this journey beyond passive advice or through the mentor-apprentice relationship has dire consequences for both parties.

Each member of the outer working has an assigned mentor to guide them towards paganism; this is one of the tasks given the 4°. The 4° themselves are expected to be self-reliant in their studies and practice but they can be instructed by a priest of the 5°, if that 4° member considers himself a follower of that priest's chosen God or Aspect. Members of the 5° should expect the pagan gods and spirits, themselves, to guide them, the three members of the 6° not giving them any particular favour.



The initiation to each degree involves confirming the oath of secrecy, as well as an oath related to the duties of the attaining degree. The initiation rite of each degree is different and takes an increasing toll on the initiate but the preceding courses of the former degree should prepare the initiate for both the strain of the rites and the truths learned during them.

Plebeians

The 1° is called the Plebeians and is divided into three stages comprising of different duties, courses and lessons to be learned. The Plebeian degree is a non-religious degree and Plebeians can be of any faith but the degree starts the slow journey towards being initiated into the pagan mysteries of the Order. The first stage of the 1° is Servitude and is intended to teach the Plebeian humility and submission to commands. This is taught mostly through a series of seemingly random instruction in different philosophy and erratic tasks to be performed in secrecy. This is to accommodate the Plebeian to take orders in good faith. By the end of the stage, the tasks might go against the Plebeian's own moral code and flaunt Aluminat ethics, for instance, they might be asked to tell three lies to three members of the Aluminat clergy. The second stage is the Worshipful, where the 1° learns to worship the Holy Host and their creation without identifying who this 'holy host' is. This grade prepares the Plebeian to exchange the godless angels of the Aluminat dogma with the pagan gods, more closely linked to nature and therefore creation. The final stage of the 1° is the Free Man, where once the Plebeian has learned both submission to higher authority and the worship of an interchangeable Holy Host. The course and tasks of the third stage of the 1° focuses on traditional liberal and humanist values and stresses not only duty to one's fellow man but also the free will of the free man. This includes the freedom of choice and of religion. Once the third stage Plebeian is ready to accept worship of the pagan gods, he is ready for initiation in the 2°.

The process of the 1° can take several years to complete but at an average it takes two years for those wholly dedicated to the process.

Initiates

Through initiation in the 2° one becomes an Initiate of the ancient rites of worship. While the imagery of the 2° is overtly of the Aluminat Faith, the Initiate himself is aware of his connection to the pagan gods and is expected to learn as much of the old pagan religions of the Celts and Romans as he can, through the Order's courses and through self-education. The Initiate is also obligated to perform certain rites and

attend a number of rituals each year, dedicated to at least six different pagan gods or sacred days. The 2° is should include secret pagan rites and symbolism in his home, secretly, to prove his devotion to qualify for further initiation and the 3°.

Most dedicated Initiates of the 2° complete this process in three or four years but some – those who have always been dedicated to a pagan deity – can complete this in a year. Others might struggle for seven or more years and a rare few never manage to advance further.


Devout

The Devout of the 3° must cleanse themselves of antitheistic religion and the 'falsehoods' of the Aluminat faith. The initiation to the 3° actually involves an act of symbolic blasphemy, much like renunciation expected in the initiation of the 4°. The Devout attend closed religious ceremonies performed by the priests of the 5°, in which they receive their final sacred teachings to prepare them for the inner workings. The 3° must serve the 5° priests and the pagan gods, performing all manner of tasks for them. Within the Order, they help prepare the Great Halls for the ceremonies of the 4° and 5° of the inner workings, though not allowed to attend the actual ceremonies. Through this, and through their coursework, they gain greater insight into the instruments and crafts of the pagan religion, of which they should now fully belong. Outside the Order, the Devout perform missions for priests, bishops and the gods and shrines they represented, this includes silencing opposition, gathering information on potential enemies and recruits. It is common to ask 3° members to use their political and financial influence to clandestinely further the will of the Order by financing restoration of pagan sites, acquiring pagan artefacts or just simply protect the dedicated Shrines of the Order. A Devout may even receive visitations directly from the old gods they worship and this is often a reason for requesting advancement in degree. Usually, however, a 3° must be recommended by three 5° in order to be raised to the 4° and the inner workings.

Members of the 3° must remain of that degree for at least three years, after which it is up to the 5° to decide when, and whether or not, to raise the Devout to the inner workings.

Pilgrims

The initiation to the 4° involves the final renunciation of the Aluminat faith and all of its creeds, the rite of initiation relies heavily on symbols and acts related to death and rebirth, as the Pilgrim choose to die in the



eyes of the faith of society in general and is reborn to a new pagan society. The newly born pagan is now supposed to seek out the truth of natural religion and tradition and learn to find comfort in this. This is a lengthy and demanding process, divided into three distinct stages. The first stage of the holy pilgrimage of the 4° is the Mysteries, where the Pilgrim instructs himself in the occult texts of Hauptberg and other like-minded authors. It is not until now that the initiate gains a full understanding of the symbolism in the Order's rituals and the sacred Pilgrimage made by Hauptberg, himself. They also learn of the sacrifices demanded of the faithful by the Gods, as Hauptberg had to sacrifice his most beloved wife to learn the Divine truths of Minerva. Through a general understanding of the Mysteries of religion and the occult world, the Pilgrim prepares himself for the pilgrimage itself, which is the second stage – the Seeking.

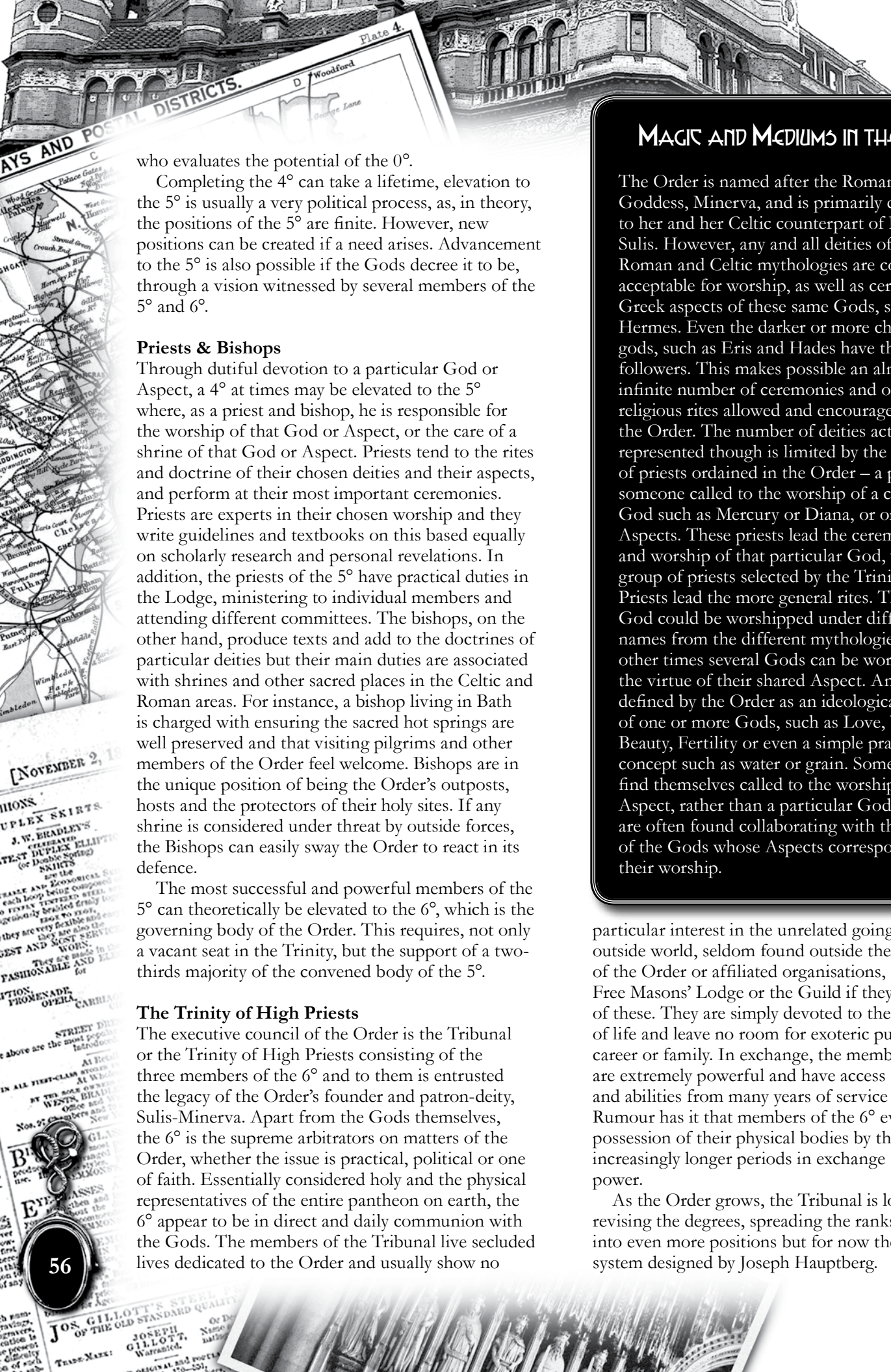
During the Seeking, the Pilgrim conducts a spiritual search for the Gods and their Aspects alone, which should ideally lead to a visitation or a revelation about him or the world and in turn presented in a closed ceremony involving the Pilgrim and available members of the 5° and all three members of the 6°. Those who, through their training, have already found an affinity for a specific Deity or Aspect focus on this, while those who have heard a calling of a particular God at this point tend to be more general in their Seeking. The Seeking takes very different forms for the individual Pilgrims and it can be very consuming; some Pilgrims venture forth on actual pilgrimages to shrines or remote places, emulating the journey performed by Hauptberg. For others, the Seeking stage is an extended period of meditation, worship and studies striving towards a revelation from within. The latter have extended use of the texts, shrines and ritual instruments available to the Order. Not all are destined to complete the Seeking and strive almost relentlessly towards their final revelation, some burn themselves out in the process, while others, the more reckless of Pilgrims, even manage to get themselves killed.

Once the Pilgrim has had his epiphany, and it is approved by the higher degrees, he enters the third and final stage of the pilgrimage, the Sanctuary. In both theory and practice, the Sanctuary is the highest most members of the Order can possibly reach in the current structure. In the Sanctuary, the 4° continues the work and worship begun previously in the Pilgrimage, as well as the degrees of the inner workings. At this point, the initiate member of the Order has pledged himself to the service of one or more Gods or Aspects and is expected to

GODS AND ASPECTS

The Order is named after the Roman Goddess, Minerva, and is primarily dedicated to her and her Celtic counterpart of Bath, Sulis. However, any and all deities of the Roman and Celtic mythologies are considered acceptable for worship, as well as certain Greek aspects of these same Gods, such as Hermes. Even the darker or more chaotic gods, such as Eris and Hades have their followers. This makes possible an almost infinite number of ceremonies and other religious rites allowed and encouraged within the Order. The number of deities actually represented though is limited by the number of priests ordained in the Order – a priest is someone called to the worship of a certain God such as Mercury or Diana, or one of their Aspects. These priests lead the ceremonies and worship of that particular God, while a group of priests selected by the Trinity of High Priests lead the more general rites. The same God could be worshipped under different names from the different mythologies and at other times several Gods can be worshiped by the virtue of their shared Aspect. An Aspect is defined by the Order as an ideological domain of one or more Gods, such as Love, War, Beauty, Fertility or even a simple practical concept such as water or grain. Some priests find themselves called to the worship of an Aspect, rather than a particular God and they are often found collaborating with the priests of the Gods whose Aspects correspond with their worship.

continue advancing in the Mysteries of the ancient religion on his own, sharing any new knowledge and inspiration with his peers and superiors. Many of these consider themselves as autonomous agents in service of their chosen deities and act accordingly, while others take up important duties within the Lodge, supervising practical matters on behalf of the 5° and 6° in particular issues that might be beneath their notice. Some are assigned official offices with duties within the Order, such as enforcing discipline and investigating potential dangers to their secrecy. One of the most important duties rotated among the Pilgrims in the Sanctuary of Worship is to serve on the Commission of Conversions, a board of five 4°



MAGIC AND MEDIUMS IN THE ORDER

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particular interest in the unrelated goings on in the outside world, seldom found outside the social circles of the Order or affiliated organisations, such as the Free Masons' Lodge or the Guild if they are members of these. They are simply devoted to the esoteric way of life and leave no room for exoteric pursuits of career or family. In exchange, the members of the 6° are extremely powerful and have access to knowledge and abilities from many years of service to the Gods. Rumour has it that members of the 6° even allow possession of their physical bodies by the Gods for increasingly longer periods in exchange for even more power.

As the Order grows, the Tribunal is looking into revising the degrees, spreading the ranks below them into even more positions but for now they keep to the system designed by Joseph Hauptberg.

who evaluates the potential of the 0°.

Completing the 4° can take a lifetime, elevation to the 5° is usually a very political process, as, in theory, the positions of the 5° are finite. However, new positions can be created if a need arises. Advancement to the 5° is also possible if the Gods decree it to be, through a vision witnessed by several members of the 5° and 6°.

Priests & Bishops

Through dutiful devotion to a particular God or Aspect, a 4° at times may be elevated to the 5° where, as a priest and bishop, he is responsible for the worship of that God or Aspect, or the care of a shrine of that God or Aspect. Priests tend to the rites and doctrine of their chosen deities and their aspects, and perform at their most important ceremonies. Priests are experts in their chosen worship and they write guidelines and textbooks on this based equally on scholarly research and personal revelations. In addition, the priests of the 5° have practical duties in the Lodge, ministering to individual members and attending different committees. The bishops, on the other hand, produce texts and add to the doctrines of particular deities but their main duties are associated with shrines and other sacred places in the Celtic and Roman areas. For instance, a bishop living in Bath is charged with ensuring the sacred hot springs are well preserved and that visiting pilgrims and other members of the Order feel welcome. Bishops are in the unique position of being the Order's outposts, hosts and the protectors of their holy sites. If any shrine is considered under threat by outside forces, the Bishops can easily sway the Order to react in its defence.

The most successful and powerful members of the 5° can theoretically be elevated to the 6°, which is the governing body of the Order. This requires, not only a vacant seat in the Trinity, but the support of a two-thirds majority of the convened body of the 5°.

The Trinity of High Priests

The executive council of the Order is the Tribunal or the Trinity of High Priests consisting of the three members of the 6° and to them is entrusted the legacy of the Order's founder and patron-deity, Sulis-Minerva. Apart from the Gods themselves, the 6° is the supreme arbitrators on matters of the Order, whether the issue is practical, political or one of faith. Essentially considered holy and the physical representatives of the entire pantheon on earth, the 6° appear to be in direct and daily communion with the Gods. The members of the Tribunal live secluded lives dedicated to the Order and usually show no

JOINING THE ORGANISATION

Since the Order is a secret society, few outsiders know of its existence and even fewer actively seek to join them. The few who know of the Order's existence know it only as a loosely knit group of gentlemen who meet at an irregular basis – much like many other gentlemen's clubs. Those who join the Order do so at the request of the Order itself and go through a series of trials, as described earlier.

Those considered potential recruits for the Order are anyone that has expressed mistrust in the Aluminat faith or shows a keen interest in classical mythology, religion and tradition. Archaeologists, historians and other academics are considered excellent material for recruitment. Influential members of society, as well as members of the Guild, the Freemasons and other Lodges are highly sought after, as are Mediums and talented Petty Magicians. When introduced to the Order, the organisation is first represented as a loose social group where certain religious, historical and philosophical issues are discussed. During this first period, close monitoring and testing of the 0° determines if, and when, they are offered advancement to the 1° and are informed about the existence of the Order.

RESOURCES

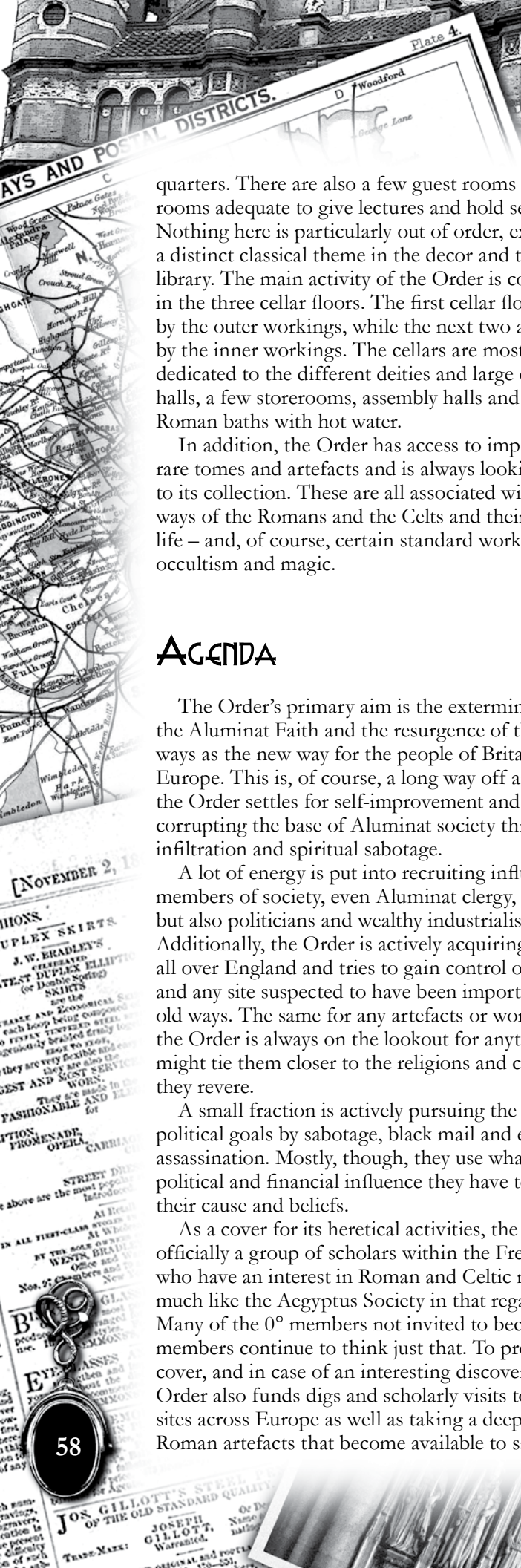
The members of the Order pay a tithe of ten percent of their annual earnings, though most members donate even more and the 5° and 6° donate at least twenty percent of their earnings. In theory, one can pay off one's tithe by performing duties and works for the Order, as expressed throughout their entire document of rules, but, in practice, people donate their time and efforts in addition to the tithe. Some members also add to the Order's resources by having their properties and collections of artefacts and books readily available for use by any member in good standing. The rules state that any member in financial difficulties can expect to find shelter and help at the home of any other member or at the Lodge, itself, though this rarely happens, as the Order tends to target the well-to-do for recruitment. Those not affluent when recruited soon find themselves elevated to a higher position with the aid of their brothers. The tithe and steady stream of donations ensures that the Order has the financial resources and properties to continue its day-to-day operations. Surplus money is invested in more properties, artefacts and books,

and, of course, the money is used to finance various projects that the Order's upper echelons consider useful.

The Order owns a lot of properties through its members and is always looking to acquire more. Mostly used as safe houses and bases of operations, some are converted into ritual sites. The Order is particularly interested in acquiring property near old sites of worship and their shrines, and, if possible, they try to acquire the shrines, themselves. In cases where the shrine cannot be purchased (such as because it's owned by the Aluminat Church), they try to buy as much property as possible surrounding it and use political manoeuvring to place one of their bishops in a position of authority in the area. This way, they may not have the deed for the shrine, but they have a certain amount of control of what is going on there.

The most important property is, of course, their Grand Hall in London, where they hold their meetings. The ground floor and the two floors above it contain everything one might expect from a decent gentleman's club. There are several parlours, a library, a small music room and a larger concert hall and a dining room as well as a kitchen and servants'





quarters. There are also a few guest rooms and small rooms adequate to give lectures and hold seminars. Nothing here is particularly out of order, except for a distinct classical theme in the decor and the large library. The main activity of the Order is contained in the three cellar floors. The first cellar floor is used by the outer workings, while the next two are used by the inner workings. The cellars are mostly chapels dedicated to the different deities and large ceremonial halls, a few storerooms, assembly halls and even a few Roman baths with hot water.

In addition, the Order has access to important and rare tomes and artefacts and is always looking to add to its collection. These are all associated with the old ways of the Romans and the Celts and their religious life – and, of course, certain standard works on occultism and magic.

AGENDA

The Order's primary aim is the extermination of the Aluminat Faith and the resurgence of the old ways as the new way for the people of Britain and Europe. This is, of course, a long way off and for now the Order settles for self-improvement and slowly corrupting the base of Aluminat society through infiltration and spiritual sabotage.

A lot of energy is put into recruiting influential members of society, even Aluminat clergy, if possible, but also politicians and wealthy industrialists. Additionally, the Order is actively acquiring properties all over England and tries to gain control over shrines and any site suspected to have been important to the old ways. The same for any artefacts or works of art, the Order is always on the lookout for anything that might tie them closer to the religions and cultures that they revere.

A small fraction is actively pursuing the Order's political goals by sabotage, black mail and even assassination. Mostly, though, they use whatever political and financial influence they have to further their cause and beliefs.

As a cover for its heretical activities, the Order is officially a group of scholars within the Freemasons who have an interest in Roman and Celtic mythology, much like the Aegyptus Society in that regard. Many of the 0° members not invited to become true members continue to think just that. To protect this cover, and in case of an interesting discovery, the Order also funds digs and scholarly visits to Roman sites across Europe as well as taking a deep interest in Roman artefacts that become available to sale.

HOW REAL ARE THE GODS?

The ancient gods of the Order grant several powers to their members but where do these powers come from? Are the Gods real, or are these abilities something of a hoax?

The truth is something in between. All the deities of the Order are ancient manifestations of the Goddess of the old faith. Each god, of any of the ancient faiths, is little more than a way to call on her aspects. In one sense, they are a way to access power but an indirect one at best.

Most of the powers and abilities those in the Order acquire are the standard abilities of Thaumaturgy and Petty Magic gained from hours of esoteric study. Their system of magic use might not be Guild-approved but it is doing the same job in the same way, even if the practitioner believes he is channelling holy energy rather than eldritch forces. Enchantment does require the 'spark of magic' but often a dedicated member might get close enough to the Goddess for her to breathe that spark into the supplicant. However, in most cases the powers are a mixture of showmanship, magic, community and theatrics, even if the members of the Order believe them to be gifts from their gods.

Having said that, it is your game. Maybe the Gods are real; maybe the power of Aluminat Dogma has outstayed its usurping welcome. The visions of Joseph Hauptberg might have been true messages as easily as fevered dreams. As always, the real decision lies with the Gamemaster.

PERSONALITIES

Uwe Matteus (Matthew) Hauptberg

The High Priest of Sulis-Minerva is the primary member of the Trinity of High Priests and the de facto leader of the Order. As the son of Joseph Hauptberg, Uwe followed his father on his pilgrimage and witnessed firsthand his tribulations and eventual salvation. He has followed in his father's footsteps, first in freemasonry and then in the Order and

eventually he ascended to the position of High Priest of Sulis-Minerva, responsible for the fulfilment of his father's wishes and channelling the will of their patron deity. Uwe is well aware that not everyone believes he is worthy of this position, and considers his ascension through the ranks as nepotism, and he is constantly struggling to prove himself worthy of filling his father's shoes. His doubts he keeps to himself and he plays his part as the confident master in full control of the Order.

Uwe devotes his entire life to the Order and he is an affirmed bachelor – something that would cause some rumours about alternative tastes, if it wasn't for the fact that Uwe demands respect by his very presence. Everyone in the Order, even those not fully aware of the entire hierarchy recognises that Uwe is a man of power and influence, and most members defer to him in even polite and informal conversations.

Uwe has no goals outside of serving his father's legacy and the will of Sulis-Minerva. Unlike his father, he has not had concrete visitations by their patron deity and has had to rely on his religious instincts and the texts of his father to guide him in governing the affairs of the order. His father left behind a large collection of notes, which Uwe is editing and releasing to the Order as they are completed, these notes include specifics on religious rituals, political concepts and even a few vague prophecies and poems.

Physically, Uwe is an impressive figure, tall and blonde, with gleaming blue eyes underneath silver-framed spectacles. He tends towards wearing flowing green robes when at the Lodge; in public, he sports a dark suit and overcoat and a silver walking-cane.

Jonathan Stockard

The Bishop of Bath & Wells is one of the most prominent members of the 5°, as he is the custodian of their most symbolically important shrine. It was at Bath that their patron deity Sulis-Minerva was worshipped by the ancients and it was here that Hauptberg received his visions from her. This positions the Bishop as an important voice for Sulis-Minerva and he aids visiting Pilgrims and other members in seeking their own personal experience with their deity. Of course, his primary task is guarding the shrine from the influence of rival groups, most importantly the Aluminat Church.

Officially, Jonathan Stockard is a well-to do member of the clergy in Bath & Wells and he has made a name for himself as a patron of the preservation and restoration of the old architecture in the area, in particular the old Roman baths. Through his hard work and many influential friends,

Uwe Matteus (Matthew) Hauptberg Rank 15 Occult Academic (Focussed)

Physical Competence: +7

Mental Competence: +11

Initiative: 10

Health: 8 Dice (16 pips)

Mana: 6 Dice (36 pips)

Signature Skills: Concentration +2, Culture (Roman) +5, Enchanting +3, General Knowledge +3, History +3, Lore +3, Perception +2, Research +4, Teaching +2 Traits: Scholarly +3, Dutiful +4, Fatherly +2 Special Abilities: Create Heartstone, Edge Sharp, Rainguard, Sleep Stone Guard (Petty Magic)

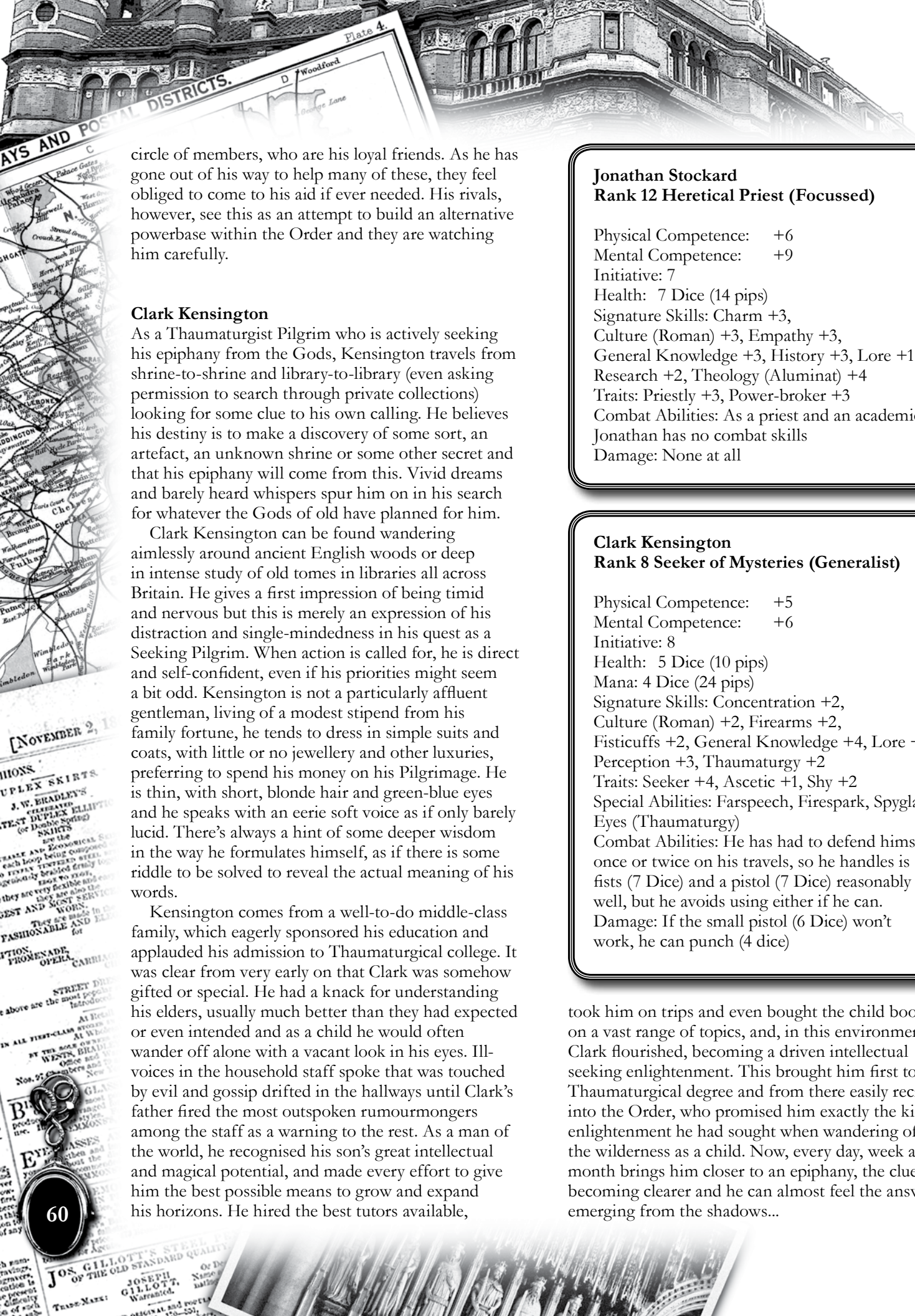
Combat Abilities: He is past fighting, but knows how to use a sword or gun if there is a need at his base competence. Magic is usually his best defence.

Damage: Whichever weapon might be to hand.

he has established a trust fund that finances his operations, and with the blessings of the Church, he runs this fund himself as part of his religious duties. This adds to his image as a devout member of the Church and he is a popular member of the local society, considered by most to be a compassionate humanitarian, as well as a learned priest.

His position in the Aluminat Church hides his real loyalties to The Holy and Ancient Order of Minerva, of which he was an early member. Stockard is the youngest son of an old family of the lower aristocracy and as such he chose to join the priesthood after finishing his education. Though religious in nature, he was never moved spiritually by the Aluminat faith as much as he was intrigued by its more scholarly sides. He later became a Freemason in search of a more spiritual experience, but with no luck, and as he was losing interest in his Lodge, his long interest in archaeology and history met with an introduction to the Order. He blossomed and soared through the ranks of the organisation, earning a favoured position in the eyes of Hauptberg and the Tribunal, who offered him the most important bishopric when it became available. He has used this position to become the most influential member outside of the Trinity of High-Priests and most believe him soon to be a member of that tribunal.

As the Bishop of Bath & Wells, Stockard has aided many Pilgrims and he has become a patron for a large



circle of members, who are his loyal friends. As he has gone out of his way to help many of these, they feel obliged to come to his aid if ever needed. His rivals, however, see this as an attempt to build an alternative powerbase within the Order and they are watching him carefully.

Clark Kensington

As a Thaumaturgist Pilgrim who is actively seeking his epiphany from the Gods, Kensington travels from shrine-to-shrine and library-to-library (even asking permission to search through private collections) looking for some clue to his own calling. He believes his destiny is to make a discovery of some sort, an artefact, an unknown shrine or some other secret and that his epiphany will come from this. Vivid dreams and barely heard whispers spur him on in his search for whatever the Gods of old have planned for him.

Clark Kensington can be found wandering aimlessly around ancient English woods or deep in intense study of old tomes in libraries all across Britain. He gives a first impression of being timid and nervous but this is merely an expression of his distraction and single-mindedness in his quest as a Seeking Pilgrim. When action is called for, he is direct and self-confident, even if his priorities might seem a bit odd. Kensington is not a particularly affluent gentleman, living of a modest stipend from his family fortune, he tends to dress in simple suits and coats, with little or no jewellery and other luxuries, preferring to spend his money on his Pilgrimage. He is thin, with short, blonde hair and green-blue eyes and he speaks with an eerie soft voice as if only barely lucid. There's always a hint of some deeper wisdom in the way he formulates himself, as if there is some riddle to be solved to reveal the actual meaning of his words.

Kensington comes from a well-to-do middle-class family, which eagerly sponsored his education and applauded his admission to Thaumaturgical college. It was clear from very early on that Clark was somehow gifted or special. He had a knack for understanding his elders, usually much better than they had expected or even intended and as a child he would often wander off alone with a vacant look in his eyes. Ill-voices in the household staff spoke that was touched by evil and gossip drifted in the hallways until Clark's father fired the most outspoken rumourmongers among the staff as a warning to the rest. As a man of the world, he recognised his son's great intellectual and magical potential, and made every effort to give him the best possible means to grow and expand his horizons. He hired the best tutors available,

Jonathan Stockard

Rank 12 Heretical Priest (Focussed)

Physical Competence: +6
Mental Competence: +9
Initiative: 7
Health: 7 Dice (14 pips)
Signature Skills: Charm +3,
Culture (Roman) +3, Empathy +3,
General Knowledge +3, History +3, Lore +1,
Research +2, Theology (Aluminat) +4
Traits: Priestly +3, Power-broker +3
Combat Abilities: As a priest and an academic,
Jonathan has no combat skills
Damage: None at all

Clark Kensington

Rank 8 Seeker of Mysteries (Generalist)

Physical Competence: +5
Mental Competence: +6
Initiative: 8
Health: 5 Dice (10 pips)
Mana: 4 Dice (24 pips)
Signature Skills: Concentration +2,
Culture (Roman) +2, Firearms +2,
Fisticuffs +2, General Knowledge +4, Lore +3,
Perception +3, Thaumaturgy +2
Traits: Seeker +4, Ascetic +1, Shy +2
Special Abilities: Farspeech, Firespark, Spyglass
Eyes (Thaumaturgy)
Combat Abilities: He has had to defend himself
once or twice on his travels, so he handles is
fists (7 Dice) and a pistol (7 Dice) reasonably
well, but he avoids using either if he can.
Damage: If the small pistol (6 Dice) won't
work, he can punch (4 dice)

took him on trips and even bought the child books on a vast range of topics, and, in this environment, Clark flourished, becoming a driven intellectual seeking enlightenment. This brought him first to his Thaumaturgical degree and from there easily recruited into the Order, who promised him exactly the kind of enlightenment he had sought when wandering off into the wilderness as a child. Now, every day, week and month brings him closer to an epiphany, the clues are becoming clearer and he can almost feel the answers emerging from the shadows...



CHAPTER 3

ACADEMIA ASCENDANT

“Humanity has yet to reach its true potential.
It is up to us to illuminate the path.”

- Professor Roderick Eggleston

THE DOMUS ALUCINAE

Roderick Eggleston relaxed back into the reassuring comfort of the leather chair and tried to focus. The buttery yellow light of the nearby gas lamp caught his attention. His eyes grew wide as the flame's dance took on meaning and significance beyond his understanding. Another moment of rapt attention and the flame leapt from its confining glass. Freed from its perch, the mote flew across the room, leaving a trail of ephemeral sparks.

Confounding the laws of physics, the flame alighted on the wainscoting and appeared to chuckle. Eggleston could not look away as the subject of his gaze transmogrified into a graceful creature with flame-coloured wings and inscrutable black eyes.

"You have drunk a deep draught of freedom, friend," it spoke to him as it again took to the air. "Your body is but a shackle upon your mind."

The professor could aught but watch the apparition. Even as it flew at remarkable speed in a spiralling pattern before him, his eyes could make out every beautiful detail of it. The air in front of him shivered and boomed. A moment longer and it cracked and wrinkled in upon itself, revealing the radiant cogs and golden flywheels that drove the universe. The incandescent creature rocketed into the rent in reality trilling like a coronet.

His mind raced along avenues of thought. Reality could be bent to the will of the perceiver. Traditional physics was nothing – the work of frightened idiots and naïve beginners. Even as he thought of it, his body rose from the chair at his command and he dove headlong toward the growing light. Surrounded by the ever expanding mechanism of the universe, Eggleston's mind strove to comprehend all it experienced.

"The true secrets of the universe must be in constant calculation by this grand engine," he thought as he continued to move effortlessly through perfectly crafted registers the size of cities and crystal devices tall as mountains.

Elijah Woolsey observed his research partner with great interest. He wrote with efficiency and speed, logging the gross effects of the alkaloid salt upon his research partner. They had agreed to test the alkaloid on themselves before they introduced it to the rest of the Domus Alucinae. Eight minutes after injecting a ten-dram dose of the plant derivative, Eggleston's body coursed with regular muscular contractions. At first Elijah believed these to be pre-emptory seizures, but as he continued to observe, the motions settled into a regular rhythm not dissimilar to those of a swimmer. The pupils Eggleston's eyes were vastly dilated and moved quickly in all directions, as if attempting to keep track of a number of objects.

A few more moments passed as Eggleston continued to swim in his chair. Woolsey's writing scratched along quietly, continuing to log the session. Without warning, Eggleston sprang from his seat, screaming unintelligible phrases. Woolsey dove behind a divan, so as not to present an additional stimulus in the experiment. Eggleston raved a moment longer, spinning in place, before crashing headlong into the solid mahogany door of the sitting room. Blood from a split pate soaked his greying hair and covered his face in a red mask. Woolsey moved to restrain his fellow researcher before he could harm himself further.


"Next time," Eggleston noted in the log after recovering from a long and exacting session of scalp stitches and expensive Guild healing, "the subject should also ingest a light dose of laudanum to avoid profound physical reactions."

HISTORY

The Domus Alucinae was founded in 1858 to explore the limits of the mind. After swearing allegiance to each other in the library of Maynard Wirth, the founding members each undertook world-spanning travels with the intention to return after two years. Their journeys took them to the American Southwest, into African Orc territory, through the Caribbean and through the reaches of India to the fabled city of Kathmandu. Flung to the corners of the Earth, and working alone, most members learned many of the secrets of wise men, yogis, fakirs and shamans. Medicinal plants, smoking herbs, complicated positions of the body, rhythmic dances and more

they learned through careful bribes and well-acted attention. At the end of their journeys, the survivors returned to England and to the Wirth Estate to begin their work.

The group's initial travels had few applicable results. They considered much of the work to be a foundation for further research in the years to come, a common attitude with science only just beginning to rise as 'a truth born of investigation and deduction' from the mire of 'natural philosophy'. Among the nascent fields of physics, chemistry and biology were many investigations of sorcery and mysticism, deemed just as valid as any other form of this 'new science'.



The Domus Alucinae is simply one of many groups, albeit with a deeper dedication to their cause perhaps. As the years progressed, they came to understand that the mind is programmable. The application of drugs and mesmerism can inure subjects from pain, free them from unwanted memories and quell the distresses of many emotions. Emboldened by their success, several members of the Domus Alucinae attempted to make their findings public through medical journals, public demonstrations and numerous articles in the newspapers.

Public backlash, spurred on by zealous members of the Guild lead to a number of arrests and humiliation, the sciences of the mind dismissed as trickery and persecuted as unregulated magic. The Guild decided to quash this upstart investigation before it proved troublesome, or discovered a truth they could not control. The people were not prepared to reckon with the possibilities of what the Domus Alucinae had to offer either, fearing what might happen if men learnt how to control each other's minds. The suggestion that foreign cultures possessed secrets that an Englishman might not understand was also unsettling. The group was dismissed as men 'gone native' by too much contact with 'Johnny Foreigner', forced to go into hiding on lands owned by the Wirths and the Egglestons. They kept their experiments to themselves and moved forward in their attempts to develop a unified theory of mental freedom.

After their public disgrace, the group was hesitant to do anything more than continue their research. It appeared as if the world was not ready for them. However, many families of note have continued to approach them seeking some forms of treatment for various mental ailments. The Domus Alucinae offered discreet experimental (but sometimes successful) treatments for those desperate to avoid the scandal of madness in the family line. In providing these services, the Domus Alucinae has won an important place in the society. The moneys they charge are almost secondary to the influence they now possess with many important families. No one is willing to track down what the researchers do with lower class 'patients' because they are complicit by virtue of association. Worse, the guilt in simply having a loved one need their services muffles many voices.

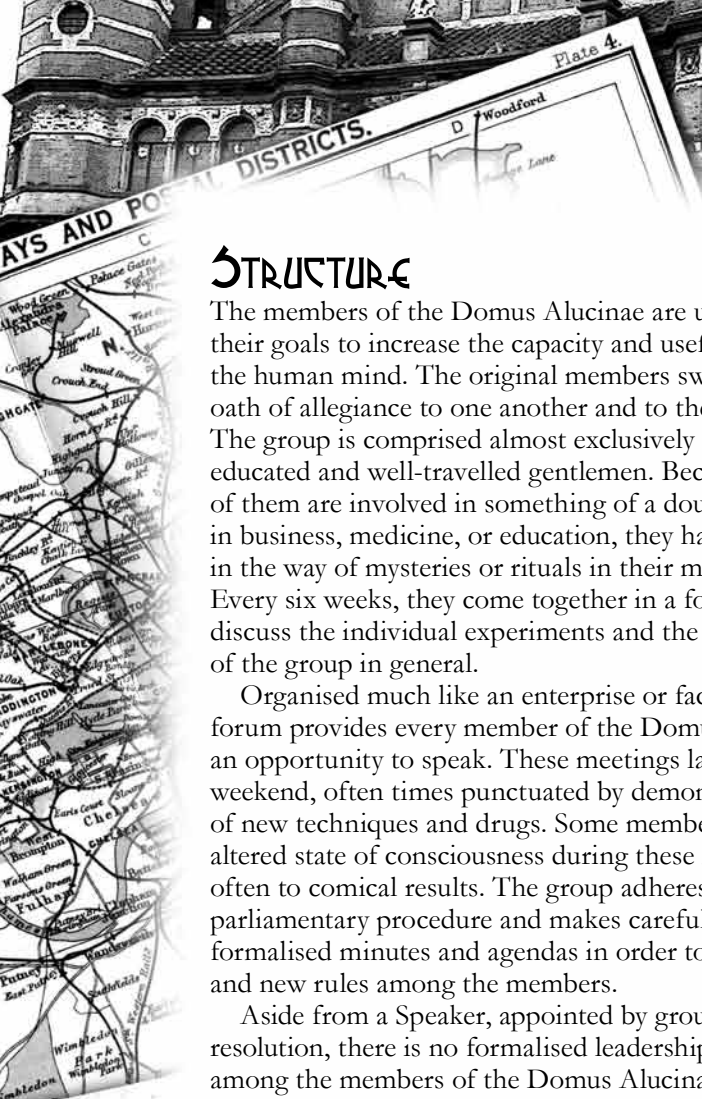
Recently, they have begun to use their techniques with Mediums, trying to unlock the differences between a Medium's mind and a normal mind. To date, there has been little progress and thankfully no major setbacks. It may only be a matter of time before something untoward happens, however.

"The human creature has always been defined by its mind. We alone have the ability to remember, to conceptualise and to imagine. For centuries, explorers and mystics have worked to increase the abilities of their minds. American and African Shamans ingest the fruits of odd plants in order to tap into the Universal. Indian Yogis meditate for hours or even days upon end, seeking ephemeral enlightenment.

"Here, we believe that science is the lever by which we shall shift the world of our minds. We will breach the ramparts of this heaven of dreams. We will unshackle ourselves from doubt, guilt and fear. Man's unfettered mind is undoubtedly an engine as great as any dynamo or mill. We shall find its true application together."

From a speech held in King's College, Strand Campus, by Doctor Maynard Wirth





STRUCTURE

The members of the Domus Alucinae are united in their goals to increase the capacity and usefulness of the human mind. The original members swore an oath of allegiance to one another and to their goals. The group is comprised almost exclusively of well-educated and well-travelled gentlemen. Because many of them are involved in something of a double life in business, medicine, or education, they have little in the way of mysteries or rituals in their meetings. Every six weeks, they come together in a forum to discuss the individual experiments and the direction of the group in general.

Organised much like an enterprise or faculty, the forum provides every member of the Domus Alucinae an opportunity to speak. These meetings last an entire weekend, often times punctuated by demonstrations of new techniques and drugs. Some members enter an altered state of consciousness during these meetings, often to comical results. The group adheres to parliamentary procedure and makes careful use of formalised minutes and agendas in order to set policy and new rules among the members.

Aside from a Speaker, appointed by group resolution, there is no formalised leadership among the members of the Domus Alucinae. The Speaker's role is largely to keep the group adhering to parliamentary rules during the forum meetings. During demonstrations or other presentations, the member doing the demonstration has the duty of being the Speaker as well and can keep questions and interference to a minimum. Every member has the same rights and responsibilities.

When the organisation is not together for a forum, they are free to pursue their agendas as their research demands. Many of the members work in small teams of three or four in order to maintain one member as an anchor, someone not partaking of any mental exercise or perception altering drugs. As they are well off, most of these experiments take place in well-to-do homes or out in country manors, well away from the prying eyes of the uneducated.

The individual members of the Domus Alucinae keep in regular contact through journal exchanges and letters, with the occasional use of the telegraph for

those in outlying areas. Most members maintain connections, even outside of their six-week forums, just to keep the flow of ideas and experiences moving throughout the organisation. One peculiar form of communication the group uses from time-to-time involves mesmerism. A subject is mesmerised and given a powerful suggestion to relate a missive to a specific member. When the subject meets the targeted member and a spoken key-phrase puts them into a trance state and they speak the missive, often mimicking the voice of the sender. This means of relaying intelligence has proven quite useful.

JOINING THE ORGANISATION

The Domus Alucinae has a stringent policy on accepting new members. While it is likely that those of the upper class and well-to-do middle class may have heard about their ether frolics, mesmerism and sweat sessions, the vast majority of the population does not have the intellectual freedom necessary to provide the group with anything more than an additional test subject. However, those with a strong background of medical training and some experience with the sciences of the mind may find an invitation to the Wirth Estate.

The process of joining the Domus Alucinae is not particularly difficult. Prospective members must have some resource or skill the organisation desires, such as connections to pharmaceutical manufacture, training



[NOVEMBER 2, 1890]
DUPLIX SKIRTS.
J. W. BRADLEY'S
CELEBRATED
TEST DUPLIX ELLIPTIC
(or Double Spring)
SKIRTS
FOR THE
TRADE AND ECONOMICAL
each loop being composed
of FIFTY TWISTED STEEL
WIRE, and being fitted with
a constantly heated spring
which is very flexible and
they are also the
BEST AND MOST
WORK.
They are made in
FASHIONABLE AND
FOR
PROXIMATE
OPERA
CANNON
STREET
above are the most popular
Introduction
At 100
IN ALL FIRST-CLASS HOTELS
BY THE ROYAL OWNERS
WESTON, BRADLEY
Office and
Nos. 97 and 98, New
BROADWAY
GLA
produced
the
EYE
ever
first
this
on to
of any



in the medical or philosophical fields, or some influence in local politics. The prospective member must be willing to try the techniques the group has devised over the years, including mesmerism, meditation and exposure to at least one psychoactive pharmaceutical. Often, during one of these 'initiation' exercises, powerful subconscious suggestions to unobtrusively support them are given to those who do not meet the group's standards.

If a prospective member proves worthy of entry, they are invited to take part in a forum and speak on their own behalf. With a positive vote, the new member must swear allegiance to the group and their ideals. Afterward, they are treated as an equal, furnished with access to the group's major works. A player group, who may have characters lacking the mental wherewithal or social standing to become members, may be treated as trusted assistants or research subjects for the successful characters.

RESOURCES

Many of the members of the Domus Alucinae are independently wealthy. Given their allegiance to the group as a whole, they have significant financial power. As providers of unique 'cures' to the wealthy and powerful they move in circles of power most only hope to attain. They do not often stray into local or regional politics, seeing it as an impediment to further research or exploration. It is often enough for the group to be left alone to pursue their research and agenda, repeatedly squelching investigations into their research methods.

The major centre for Domus Alucinae work inside the City, the Bogg Manor is located on the outskirts of South Kensington and enjoys a friendly relationship with the local police precinct. The Wirth and Eggleston Manors, several miles outside London, both have ample space for the entire group to come together and conduct experiments on large numbers of subjects. The members of the households' staff have been mesmerised and partially indoctrinated to ease what might be fierce reactions to some of the experiments that occur.

In the face of outside agitation, angered family members, or similar direct threats, all of the manors have a number of "Nemesis Somnalum" or sleeping fighters. These sleepers, through numerous sessions of psychic moulding, have their innate resistance to harming others stripped away. At a command word, the Nemeses spring to the defence of their masters. They fight to kill, wielding anything near to hand that

NEW TALENTS

Drug Riding (2 point Talent)

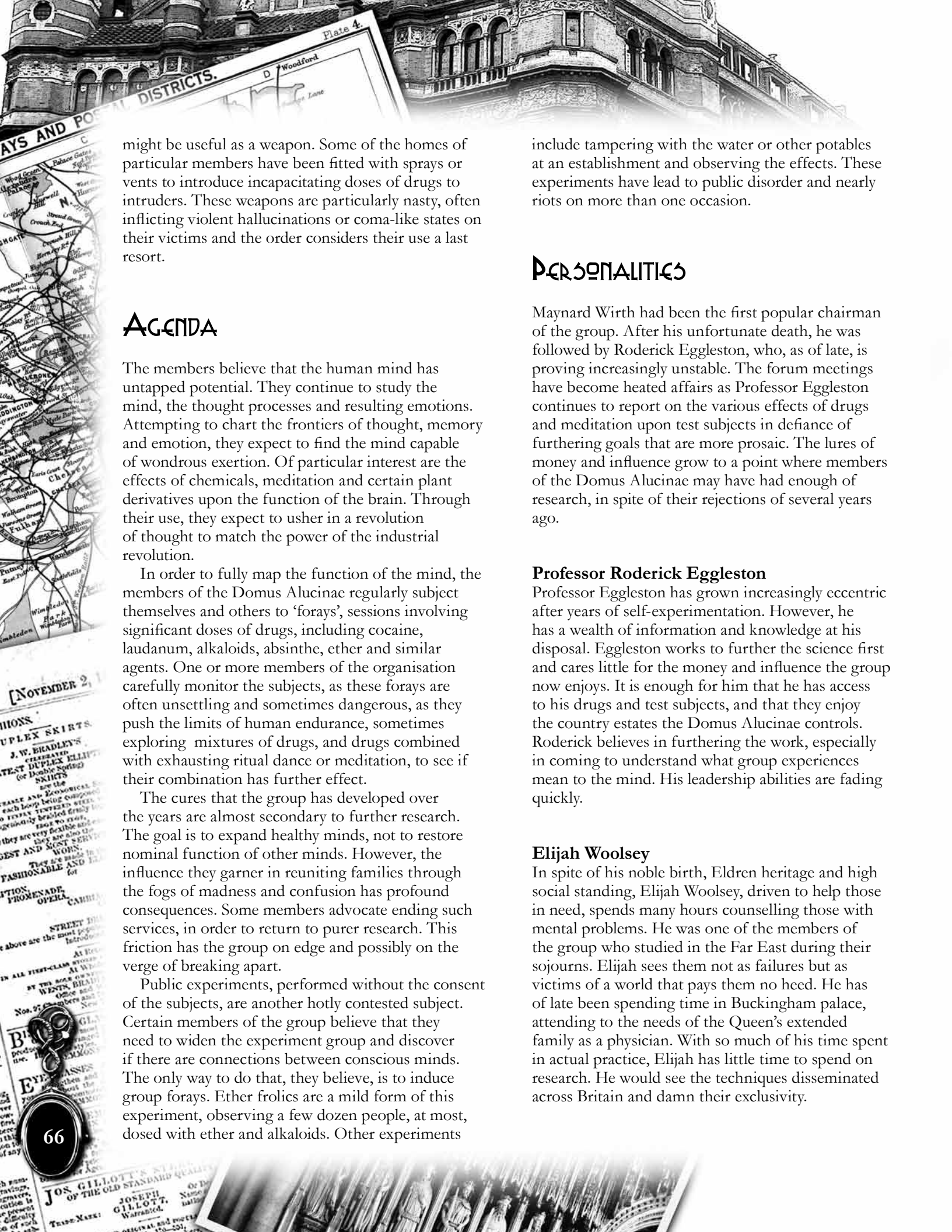
With this Talent, you are adept at managing the effects of pharmaceuticals. You need to use the 'Concentration' skill, which you must purchase separately. To take this Talent, a character must have some experience with mind-altering pharmaceuticals to be able to manage the experience. Drug Riding is the ability to maximise the 'highs' of any drug you take and to ride out the 'lows' more easily. You are also more adept at staying in control of yourself while the drug confuses your senses and emotions. It is very hard to shrug off the effects completely but they can be brought to a manageable level. Gamemasters may allow players to use this Talent to deal with the effects of alcohol.

Meditation (4 point Talent)

Another use for the 'Concentration' skill is to meditate. Your character has taken the time and training to learn how to meditate effectively. While meditating, the character gains one additional pip of Mana every two hours and considered 'resting'. For every two hours of meditation, a character can also recover an additional Health pip of Bruise Damage. True adepts might also achieve higher states of consciousness, the effects of which might be similar to Medium powers, but less controlled. The effects, for good or ill, are up to the Gamemaster.

Mesmerist (5 point Talent)

When you buy this Talent, you gain one point in the 'Mesmerism' speciality skill, which may be improved as normal. This skill allows you to put a willing subject into a trance where you might implant suggestions and latent orders into their subconscious. You cannot force the subject into a trance if they choose to resist, however, using charm or drugs may dupe them into submitting. A mesmerised subject will never carry out an order that is out of character for them, such as murder, but might do something that their social or personal inhibitions otherwise prevents them from doing. Again, the Gamemaster is the final arbiter of what happens to a mesmerised subject, who carries out their orders as best they can until they reach a limit. Deeper mesmerisms are possible, programming people over several sessions, but the success of such attempts is left to the judgement of the Gamemaster.



might be useful as a weapon. Some of the homes of particular members have been fitted with sprays or vents to introduce incapacitating doses of drugs to intruders. These weapons are particularly nasty, often inflicting violent hallucinations or coma-like states on their victims and the order considers their use a last resort.

AGENDA

The members believe that the human mind has untapped potential. They continue to study the mind, the thought processes and resulting emotions. Attempting to chart the frontiers of thought, memory and emotion, they expect to find the mind capable of wondrous exertion. Of particular interest are the effects of chemicals, meditation and certain plant derivatives upon the function of the brain. Through their use, they expect to usher in a revolution of thought to match the power of the industrial revolution.

In order to fully map the function of the mind, the members of the Domus Alucinae regularly subject themselves and others to 'forays', sessions involving significant doses of drugs, including cocaine, laudanum, alkaloids, absinthe, ether and similar agents. One or more members of the organisation carefully monitor the subjects, as these forays are often unsettling and sometimes dangerous, as they push the limits of human endurance, sometimes exploring mixtures of drugs, and drugs combined with exhausting ritual dance or meditation, to see if their combination has further effect.

The cures that the group has developed over the years are almost secondary to further research. The goal is to expand healthy minds, not to restore nominal function of other minds. However, the influence they garner in reuniting families through the fogs of madness and confusion has profound consequences. Some members advocate ending such services, in order to return to purer research. This friction has the group on edge and possibly on the verge of breaking apart.

Public experiments, performed without the consent of the subjects, are another hotly contested subject. Certain members of the group believe that they need to widen the experiment group and discover if there are connections between conscious minds. The only way to do that, they believe, is to induce group forays. Ether frolics are a mild form of this experiment, observing a few dozen people, at most, dosed with ether and alkaloids. Other experiments

include tampering with the water or other potables at an establishment and observing the effects. These experiments have lead to public disorder and nearly riots on more than one occasion.

PERSONALITIES

Maynard Wirth had been the first popular chairman of the group. After his unfortunate death, he was followed by Roderick Eggleston, who, as of late, is proving increasingly unstable. The forum meetings have become heated affairs as Professor Eggleston continues to report on the various effects of drugs and meditation upon test subjects in defiance of furthering goals that are more prosaic. The lures of money and influence grow to a point where members of the Domus Alucinae may have had enough of research, in spite of their rejections of several years ago.

Professor Roderick Eggleston

Professor Eggleston has grown increasingly eccentric after years of self-experimentation. However, he has a wealth of information and knowledge at his disposal. Eggleston works to further the science first and cares little for the money and influence the group now enjoys. It is enough for him that he has access to his drugs and test subjects, and that they enjoy the country estates the Domus Alucinae controls. Roderick believes in furthering the work, especially in coming to understand what group experiences mean to the mind. His leadership abilities are fading quickly.

Elijah Woolsey

In spite of his noble birth, Eldren heritage and high social standing, Elijah Woolsey, driven to help those in need, spends many hours counselling those with mental problems. He was one of the members of the group who studied in the Far East during their sojourns. Elijah sees them not as failures but as victims of a world that pays them no heed. He has of late been spending time in Buckingham palace, attending to the needs of the Queen's extended family as a physician. With so much of his time spent in actual practice, Elijah has little time to spend on research. He would see the techniques disseminated across Britain and damn their exclusivity.

Roderick Eggleston
Rank 9 Researcher (Specialist)

Physical Competence: +3
Mental Competence: +9
Initiative: 9
Health: 4 Dice (8 pips)
Signature Skills: Athletics -2,
Concentration +3, Empathy +2, Firearms +1,
Medicine +2, Mesmerism +4, Perception +3,
Research +3, Survival -2
Traits: Eccentric +1, Unflappable +3,
Well Travelled +2
Special Abilities: Drug Riding, Meditation,
Mesmerist
Combat Abilities: Roderick will try to defuse a
violent situation, or find a way to retreat from
one. If the worst happens, he defends himself
with a derringer secreted in his vest (4 Dice)
Damage: Derringer (4 Dice)

Geoffrey Wirth
Rank 9 Spokesman (Generalist)

Physical Competence: +6
Mental Competence: +6
Initiative: 8
Health: 6 Dice (12 pips)
Signature Skills: Bull +3, Concentration +4,
Conversation +2, Empathy +3, Might -2,
Perception +2, Tactics -2
Traits: Enlightened +2, Savvy +2
Special Abilities: Meditation
Combat Abilities: Fisticuffs (6 dice) or Small
sword (6 dice)
Damage: Fists (2 dice), Sword (8 dice)

Geoffrey Wirth

Geoffrey Wirth has become something of a wild card. For a long period, he was the major proponent for using the influence and money of the Domus Alucinae to take control of a significant portion of British society and culture. Recently, his mood has changed. Geoffrey has spoken at length, espousing how the strength of the group can be used to better society for its own good. His speech has become somewhat convoluted and esoteric, as if he were quoting from Aluminat texts. However, his impassioned speeches are beginning to sway opinion.

Elijah Woolsey
Rank 10 Eldren Doctor (Focused)

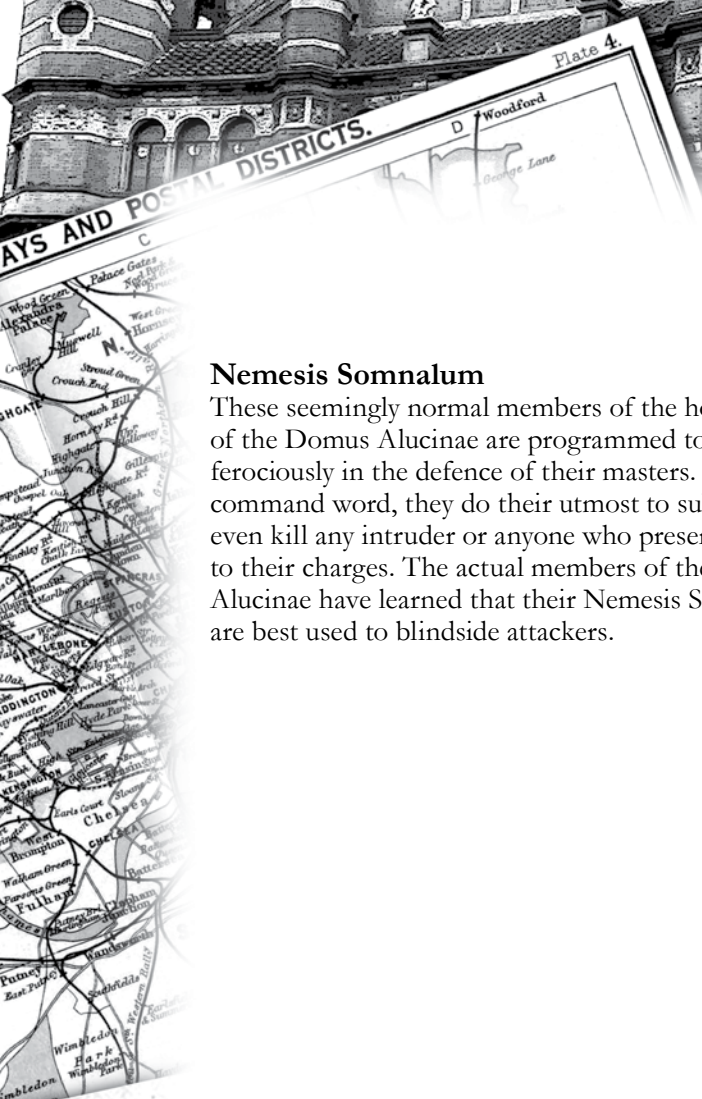
Physical Competence: +5
Mental Competence: +8
Initiative: 8
Health: 6 Dice (12 pips)
Signature Skills: Bull -2, Empathy +2,
Fisticuffs (Judo) +3, Gambling -2,
High Society +3, Medicine +2, Mesmerism +3,
Perception +2
Traits: Mysterious History +1,
Genuinely Cares +2, Precise +1
Special Abilities: Mesmerist
Combat Abilities: Elijah has had to use his
fighting skills to pacify more than one subject.
In a fight, he uses Fisticuffs (8 dice) to grapple
an opponent and pin them down.

Patterson Bogg
Rank 11 Scientist (Focused)

Physical Competence: +5
Mental Competence: +9
Initiative: 8
Health: 6 Dice (12 pips)
Signature Skills: Charm -2, Intimidate +2,
Medicine +3, Mesmerism +2, Perception +2,
Research +3, Science +4, Survival -2
Traits: Cold-Blooded +1, Focused +2,
Menacing +1
Special Abilities: Mesmerist
Combat Abilities: Doctor Bogg does not
fight. His minions fight for him. If left with
no recourse, he doses himself with the Janus
Elixir (see Chapter 5 'Secrets and Adventures'
p116 for the effects)

Patterson Bogg

Patterson Bogg is of a different stripe. He believes that research should continue until the Domus Alucinae has achieved their true goal, the control and expansion of the mind. Money and influence are tools to further that end. Doctor Bogg is one of the most brilliant minds in the group but does not seek to lead. It is enough that there are no fetters to his research, including the laws of the land.



Nemesis Somnalum

These seemingly normal members of the households of the Domus Alucinae are programmed to fight ferociously in the defence of their masters. Given a command word, they do their utmost to subdue, or even kill any intruder or anyone who presents a threat to their charges. The actual members of the Domus Alucinae have learned that their Nemesis Somnalum are best used to blindside attackers.

Nemesis Somnalum Rank 5 Trained Killer (Specialist)

Physical Competence: +6

Mental Competence: +2

Initiative: 6

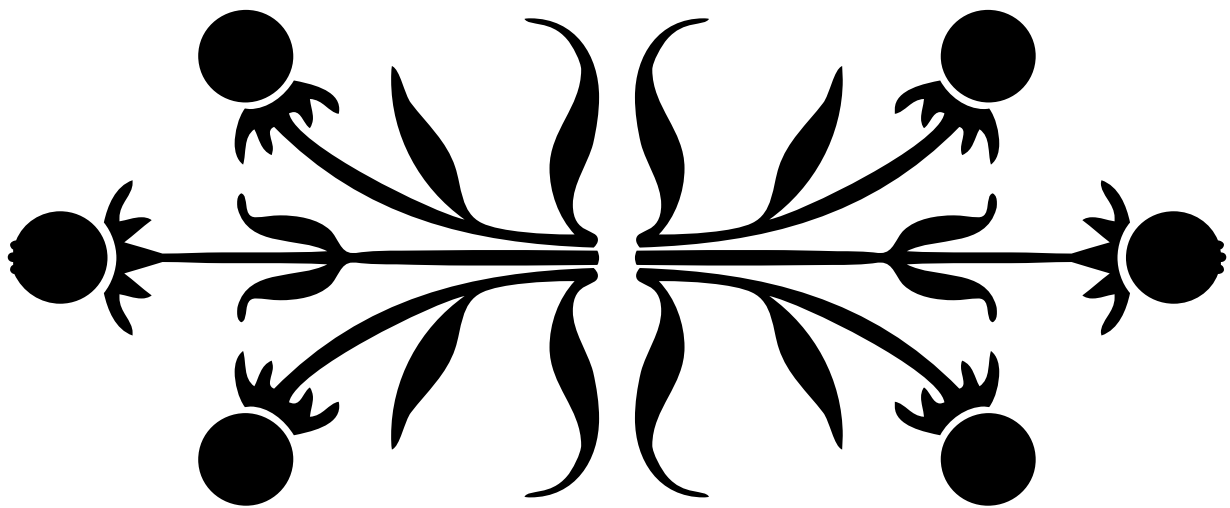
Health: 6 Dice (12 pips)

Signature Skills: Fisticuffs +2, Improvised Weapon +3, Perception +2, Throwing +2

Special Ability: Backstabber (as Talent - Ambushes give them 2 bonus dice)

Combat Abilities: Fisticuffs (8 Dice) or Any Reasonably Dangerous Object (9 Dice)

Damage: Fists (2 Dice), Dangerous Objects (5 or more dice)



[NOVEMBER 2, 18...]
DUPLIX SKIRTS.
J. W. BRADLEY'S
PATENT DUPLIX ELLIPTIC
(or Double Spring)
SKIRTS
...
FASHIONABLE AND ELEGANT
...
STREET DRESS
...
At Retail
...
No. 27 Chambers and
...
GLASS
...
EYE GLASSES
...
68



LONDON ORIENTALISTS' CLUB

The club met for its monthly assembly that Tuesday. The two dozen members of the London Orientalists' Club were packed into the expansive library of Lord George's Marylebone home. The place has a decidedly male cast to it, despite the number of women, dressed elegantly for evening: leather-bound chairs and dark wood furnishings were arranged in the room to best move the energies of the room, creating a relaxing environment for those within. Feng Shui, the Chinese called this art of channelling the natural environment. Dominating the room's walls were rows of leather-bound volumes, with baskets containing scrolls and maps placed neatly around the floor. The fireplace at the end of the room was positioned between two large windows looking out into Portman Square and the wispy falling snow that was covering London. At the other end of the room, a large object was covered with a sheet.

Lord George Mace wished his friend Richard Burton, or at the very least, Isabelle, his wife, could be here for the unveiling. Richard had no doubt been to the temples and was familiar with the kind of art lurking under the linen. Isabelle, a sharp-witted and brave woman, was still a proper lady – a member of the Arundel clan – and would be appropriately 'moved' by the piece. Evoking a reaction was one of Mace's greatest pleasures. Especially if there was the slightest hint that he could parlay that reaction into a passionate evening. He glanced across to Concetta, the Doña Anaya y Ramirez, who was holding court from one of the armchairs; she was surrounded by several of the men of the club, all hoping for the merest of her favours. The other ladies of the club were gathered around Dasher. The handsome soldier was grinning expansively and holding forth on some subject. Knowing Dasher, he was probably opining on some subject he knew nothing about. There were many of those. While stunningly handsome, charismatic and unquestionably heroic, Dasher was...well, stupid.

Mace wished Dr. LaBove was here. His reaction to this sort of thing was always amusing. The 'Lion-man of Hampstead' was nothing if not highly strung and priggish.

"Ladies and gentlemen," Mace intoned, his voice heavy and unnatural. It was a simple spell but an effective one. The talk about the room fell off and all eyes turned toward him. "May I present the latest addition to the collection of the Orientalists' Club!" With a flourish, he snapped the sheet away, unveiling the slab of Tantric amorosness. The collective gasp from the assembled guests told him all he needed to know. Tonight was going to be a bit.

Dinner was excellent, more for the conversation than the food. Mace would have to look to his cook. Brandy and cigars in the library afterward finished off a successful night of entertaining. That women and men sat together for cigars would shock London Society, and was one of the myriad reasons that the respectable looked on members of the club as barely acceptable company. Pornographers and reprobates, they were called – but always 'sotto voce' and behind a fan. Later, with the guests gone, Mace relaxed in the library, gazing at the frieze in the corner. Concetta had seen to the last of their departing friends, and his manservant, Sutherland, tucked his head in to see if there was anything else. Mace dismissed him with thanks.

Concetta arrived a few minutes later. Her evening gown had been shed in favour of her corset, gloves, and stockings, and nought else. She was simply, the most extraordinary woman Mace had ever met – a woman that could fence, ride and shoot as well as a man; a woman with the grace of a ballerina, the courage of a soldier, and the intellect of a man. Other women might pull off parading about their house in their underwear, but Concetta exuded confidence and sex. She stopped in front of him and took the cigar from his fingers, puffing on it while fixing him with a smouldering look. The effect was visceral. "I think that," she nodded her head toward the ancient artefact, "had the... desired effect."

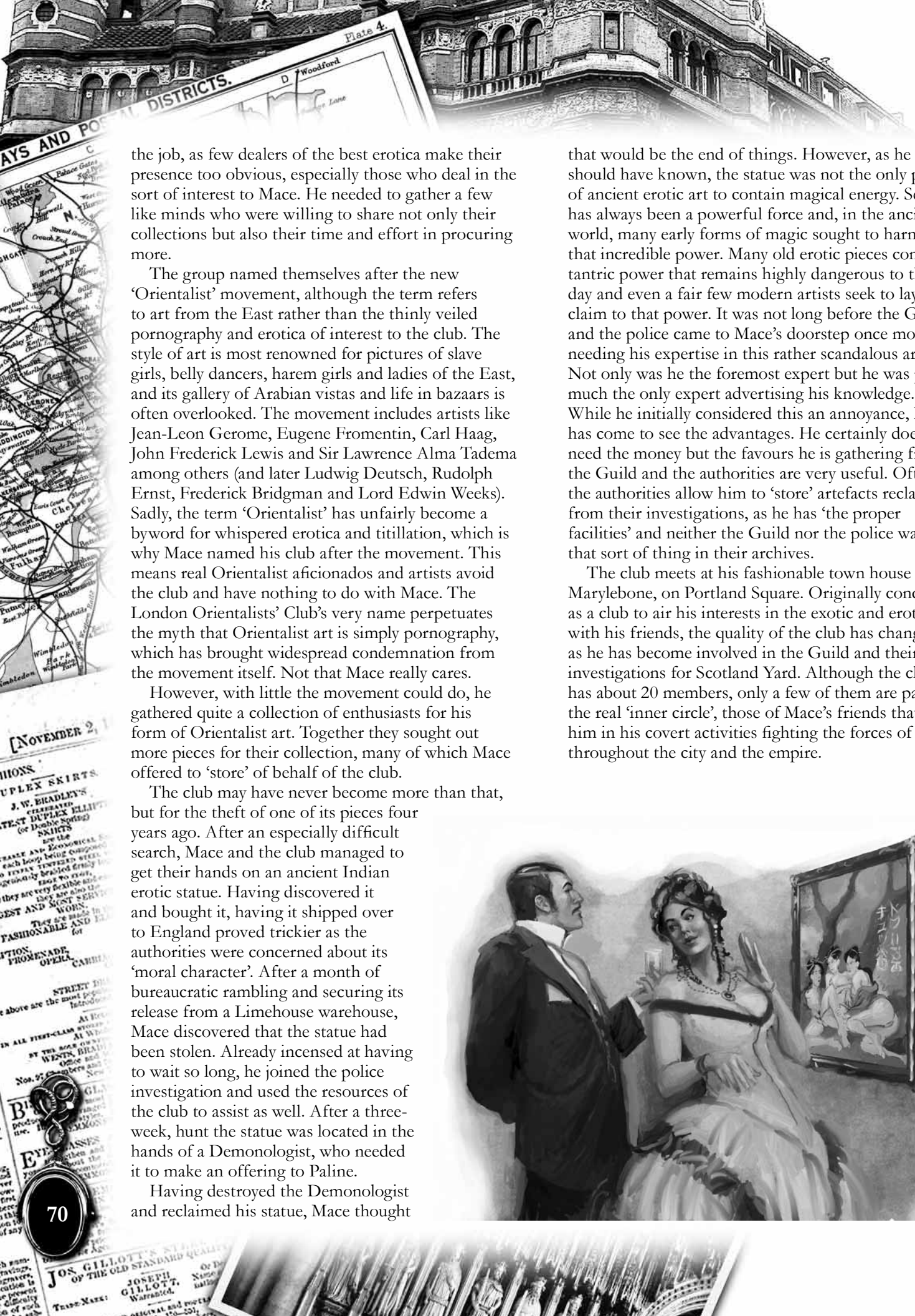
He drew her to him, kissed her, while taking the cigar and dropping it into the remnants of the snifter of his scotch nearby. As their passion increased, it seemed the room itself was glowing with Tantric energy. Something disturbed Mace in the midst of their tryst; the room was filled with light and a strange energy. He glanced away from Concetta, her face flushed, her breath coming quickly. The tablet hummed audibly. The eyes of the figures glowed ethereally. Before his eyes, the figures unwrapped themselves, ominously, stepping from the stone face towards him...

HISTORY

The London Orientalists' Club is a recent creation, having only been around for ten years, although the inner circle has only existed for five years. The invention of Lord George Mace, the London Orientalists' Club formed to create a space where

he could share his love of Oriental mysticism and eroticism. All of the members are, at least, art aficionados, if not intrigued by the sexual and magical draw of the East.

Mace began the club due mainly to laziness on his part. His fascination with erotica from around the world meant he had to spend a lot of time travelling and searching out the best pieces. Travel was only half



the job, as few dealers of the best erotica make their presence too obvious, especially those who deal in the sort of interest to Mace. He needed to gather a few like minds who were willing to share not only their collections but also their time and effort in procuring more.

The group named themselves after the new ‘Orientalist’ movement, although the term refers to art from the East rather than the thinly veiled pornography and erotica of interest to the club. The style of art is most renowned for pictures of slave girls, belly dancers, harem girls and ladies of the East, and its gallery of Arabian vistas and life in bazaars is often overlooked. The movement includes artists like Jean-Leon Gerome, Eugene Fromentin, Carl Haag, John Frederick Lewis and Sir Lawrence Alma Tadema among others (and later Ludwig Deutsch, Rudolph Ernst, Frederick Bridgman and Lord Edwin Weeks). Sadly, the term ‘Orientalist’ has unfairly become a byword for whispered erotica and titillation, which is why Mace named his club after the movement. This means real Orientalist aficionados and artists avoid the club and have nothing to do with Mace. The London Orientalists’ Club’s very name perpetuates the myth that Orientalist art is simply pornography, which has brought widespread condemnation from the movement itself. Not that Mace really cares.

However, with little the movement could do, he gathered quite a collection of enthusiasts for his form of Orientalist art. Together they sought out more pieces for their collection, many of which Mace offered to 'store' of behalf of the club.

The club may have never become more than that, but for the theft of one of its pieces four years ago. After an especially difficult search, Mace and the club managed to get their hands on an ancient Indian erotic statue. Having discovered it and bought it, having it shipped over to England proved trickier as the authorities were concerned about its ‘moral character’. After a month of bureaucratic rambling and securing its release from a Limehouse warehouse, Mace discovered that the statue had been stolen. Already incensed at having to wait so long, he joined the police investigation and used the resources of the club to assist as well. After a three-week hunt the statue was located in the hands of a Demonologist, who needed it to make an offering to Paline.

Having destroyed the Demonologist and reclaimed his statue, Mace thought

that would be the end of things. However, as he should have known, the statue was not the only piece of ancient erotic art to contain magical energy. Sex has always been a powerful force and, in the ancient world, many early forms of magic sought to harness that incredible power. Many old erotic pieces contain tantric power that remains highly dangerous to this day and even a fair few modern artists seek to lay claim to that power. It was not long before the Guild and the police came to Mace's doorstep once more needing his expertise in this rather scandalous area. Not only was he the foremost expert but he was pretty much the only expert advertising his knowledge. While he initially considered this an annoyance, he has come to see the advantages. He certainly does not need the money but the favours he is gathering from the Guild and the authorities are very useful. Often the authorities allow him to 'store' artefacts reclaimed from their investigations, as he has 'the proper facilities' and neither the Guild nor the police want that sort of thing in their archives.

The club meets at his fashionable town house in Marylebone, on Portland Square. Originally conceived as a club to air his interests in the exotic and erotic with his friends, the quality of the club has changed as he has become involved in the Guild and their investigations for Scotland Yard. Although the club has about 20 members, only a few of them are part of the real ‘inner circle’, those of Mace’s friends that aid him in his covert activities fighting the forces of evil throughout the city and the empire.



STRUCTURE

To the extent that there is a structure, it centres on Lord George Mace, not just the president of the club but also the chief agent, frequently travelling around the world in search of enemies of the Empire and good pornography. The secretary is John Guthrie, a crusty older Scot from the Inversnaid estates and the treasurer is Samuel Muir, his lordship's solicitor and financial agent.

The inner circle uses chess pieces to refer to each other in correspondence regarding club business but do not use the terms outside of their covert activities. This group comprises Lord George Mace (the White King), Captain 'Dasher' Powell (White Knight), Dr. Henri LaBove (Black Rook) and the Dona Concetta Anaya y Ramirez (the White Queen and Mace's current lover), Captain and Mrs. Richard Burton (Black and White Bishops, respectively). Unofficially, Disraeli is part of the club's elite but is not on the roster of members – he is their connection to the government. The normal members of the club are only partially aware of the activities of the Circle; to them, these are merely the men and women that procure the collection's literary and artistic treasures.

Adjutant to the club is a small group of street urchins recruited by Mace. Many are orphans schooled at the Royal Masonic School for Boys, in Wood Green. These youngsters (boys, nearly exclusively) are known as the 'Little Princes' and operate as runners for the club – doing small jobs like ferrying messages to important work, like conducting surveillance, gathering information, or otherwise assisting the club in its official works.

JOINING THE ORGANISATION

One does not join the Orientalists' Club; his lordship invites you. This usually happens after a chance meeting where the prospective member impresses Mace with either their wit and intelligence or their attractiveness. Members of the inner circle are recruited for their particular skills.

Membership is open to men and women, and requires the utmost discretion to avoid scandal on the part of the women. Dona Concetta is the exception to this rule; she was an infamous demimondaine in Paris and her background as a duellist makes her barely fit for polite company.

One of the best ways to gain access to the club is to impress Mace with some new and exciting

piece of erotica, earning them an instant invitation; though with precious little that he has not already seen, finding something new proves problematic. Most likely, one would have fallen into the club's orbit through the 'Little Princes'. This is particularly good for lower-class characters to be involved in the club's missions. The characters have been orphans or children of poor Freemasons schooled at the Royal Masonic School for Boys, in Wood Green. These characters should be mostly scoundrels of the street, but could also include kids that have moved into the middle class, having made good as clerks, police, or some other useful profession.

RESOURCES

While the Orientalists' Club is a small group, its members wield considerable power due to their rank and connections in society. This means that they can often call on the Guild, high-ranking members of the government and even the armed forces for assistance when they need it.

The club meets at Lord George Mace's Portman Square house in Marylebone but there are plans to expand the club to its own building in St. James. The library is central to the club's activities: here Mace shows his artistic finds. Esoteric books on mysticism crowd the bookshelves and his collection of occult manuals almost rivals that of the Guild. The most important works, however, are not in the library but stored in a vault (along with his wine and spirits collections) – these include a few Tantric scrolls of incalculable value. Mace is wealthy enough to fund small missions out of his own pocket and he frequently loans out his brougham and horses for investigations throughout London.

The Earl of Inversnaid, his father, also has a house in Edinburgh, just off Princes Street, as well as a castle in the Grampians. The castle is a barely habitable pile of stones but a small town of tenants is close by in a small glen. At one time, this was a cattle area, but the Inversnaids have participated in the Highland Clearances, turning their tenants into sharecroppers, distillery labour, or shepherds. The distillery that takes their name is here, as well, and is the real source of their wealth, along with rents and wool.

Mace has access to Guild money, as well, depending on the assignment. The Guild also provides safe houses, special equipment when needed, and other types of aid. When working for Her Majesty's Government, the club often can draw on

The London Orientalists' Club is, on the face of it, a literary/artistic club dedicated to the study of erotic art and literature. Unkind critics would call them pornographers – with good reason. For many of the ordinary members, this is precisely what it is. Members of this element of the club, which meets once a month on a Monday night, include the explorer, Richard Burton and his wife (when they are in London), Benjamin Disraeli and other literary luminaries. It is acceptably scandalous to be a member, as the good names of the membership have kept the club above reproach.

A black and white illustration of three men in suits. The man on the right is holding a cane and looking towards the man on the left. The man in the center is looking back at them. The background is dark and textured.

PERSONALITIES

Lord George Mace is the heir of the 5th Earl of Inversnaid, a fairly new family who came to attention for their royalist activities during the Jacobite Revolt in 1745-46. Since then, they have made much of their fortune on canny investments, clearing Highlanders and the cattle off their lands to make way for sheep and the attendant wool industry and a massive distillery in the village of Inversnaid. The current earl is in his 60s and is still hopeful for his son to marry soon. There are two other male children in the Mace family, including Edward, an Aluminat clergyman, and Victor, a naval lieutenant, as well as a daughter, Mary, the youngest.

‘Nothing more than a stuffed shirt,’ Gladstone recently remarked of him, to the amusement of those ‘in the know’. However, this is all an act, Mace is a cunning, well-educated man with peculiar tastes. He is bisexual, a voyeur, a sadomasochist and delights in the darker aspects of culture. His current fascination is the Dona Concetta Anaya y Ramirez, a fiery Spaniard with a reputation as a duellist and a demimondaine (all true.) Despite his fascination with pornography and erotically charged religions, he maintains good connections within the Aluminat Church and Masons. Mace is a sorcerer of remarkable talent, born Eldren even though his parents are both Human, due to the Eldren blood in his family line. He is, however, lazy – preferring the ‘left hand path’, as the Hindu sorcerers would call it, to the more studious and scientific traditions of European magic. His sexual antics power much of his abilities and are more than just for pleasure seeking. He is particularly interested in Tantric-based Thaumaturgy at present.

He works for the Guild and Scotland Yard at his discretion, frequently for his own reasons. To this end, he created the 'inner circle' of his London Orientalists' Club – a literary group dedicated to the study of Eastern eroticism. Even in this there is an element of laziness, much of the legwork of the club's quasi-official activities is conducted by street urchins – the 'Little Princes' – or the nocturnal investigations of Dr. LaBove.

Mace is interested in power: financial, political and sexual. His air of lazy indolence covers a sharp wit and a driven heart. He can be a good friend and ally one minute, a dangerous opponent the next; for him, all friends and allies are transitory. He rarely takes it personally when he is at odds with a former mate but does his all to win through. Without his wealth and position, he might have been a criminal mastermind.

Captain Sir Thomas 'Dasher' Powell

Dasher, as he is known to all, is a recently-promoted captain in the Royal House Guard (known as 'The Blues'). The son of a landowner in Sussex with ties to the Duke of Richmond, Dasher has grown up around money and privilege. This coupled with his Adonis-like good looks – thick blonde hair, bright blue eyes and rakish moustache – makes him a welcome guest anywhere. He frequents the Fork & Albany for lunches, since his rank is not sufficient to get him into the United Services Club. When not hobnobbing with the Marlborough House Set (he is an intimate of the Prince of Wales), clubbing with members of Parliament, or escorting fine ladies to the theatre and dinner in Mayfair, the dashing captain can be found slumming it in the East End ratting dens and houses of comfort.

He is the archetypal British hero of the period: brave and loyal, handsome, athletic and charismatic. He attended Rugby but expelled for gambling; his refusal to name his accomplices saved the son of the Duke of Richmond from embarrassment and as a reward, he bought into his regiment. He is brave to the point of foolhardy, rides well, speaks well, fights well but is barely literate and frankly, 'a bit thick'. Despite this, he is generally well thought of. Women love him and he reciprocates...often. More intelligent women recognise he is a chauvinist, a narcissist and unlikely to call on them after he gets what he wants.

While most of his regiment is off fighting, Dasher's company stayed behind to provide the escort and ceremonial duties for the Prince of Wales, who handles much of Her Majesty's duties while she is in mourning. It is rumoured he and his company were held back because the Princess of Wales is in love with

Lord George Mace

Rank 13 Eldren Pornographer (Focussed)

Physical Competence: +6
 Mental Competence: +10
 Initiative: 9
 Health: 7 Dice (14 pips)
 Mana: 5 Dice (30 pips)
 Signature Skills: Art (Classical literature) +2, Art (Erotic Arts) +5, Charm +4, Dance +3, Etiquette +4, Fashion +4, Firearms +2, General Knowledge +4, High Society +5, History +3, Horse Riding +4, Languages (French +4, German +3, Latin +4, Greek +4, Spanish +4), Lore +3, Perception +2, Sensate Medium +2, Swordplay +1, Thaumaturgy +5
 Traits: Hedonist +4, Narcissist +4, Powermonger +2
 Special Abilities: Groom, Etheric Bolt, Hair of the Dog, Instant Beauty, Magic Tobacconist (Thaumaturgy), Psychometry (Sensate Medium)
 Combat Abilities: Magic, or if forced, a sword-cane (7 Dice) or his Adam .36 revolver (8 Dice)
 Damage: Sword-cane (5 dice), Adams .36 (8 Dice)

Captain Sir Thomas 'Dasher' Powell

Rank 10 Heroic Soldier (Specialist)

Physical Competence: +10
 Mental Competence: +3
 Initiative: 9
 Health: 7 Dice (14 pips)
 Signature Skills: Athletics +3, Bull +2, Charm +5, Firearms +4, Fisticuffs +5, Gambling +3, General Knowledge +1, Horse Riding +5, Perception +3, Swordplay +4, Tactics +2
 Traits: Dashing +4, Heroic +4, Arrogant +3, Aristocratic +3, Dim +4
 Combat Abilities: Ready to defend the ladies at any opportunity with sword (14 Dice) or pistol (14 Dice)
 Damage: Sabre (8 Dice), Tranter .44 revolver (10 Dice)



him (false), or that the Prince of Wales couldn't bear to part with his friend (also false). The actual reason for his remaining in England has been the influence of Lord George Mace, who arranged for him to remain to aid with his investigations into London's criminal element. Dasher would desperately like to get out to the Crimea, to test him mettle against the Russians, but his prospects seem somewhat thin right now.

Dasher is an excellent foil or friend for a military character, or for that middle-class girl looking to marry up.

Doña Concetta Anaya y Ramirez

Born in Alicante in Spain according to her passport, Doña Concetta is a figure of mystery. She is obviously Eldren, though she also claims to have gypsy blood. Well educated for a Spanish woman, she has money from a mysterious patron in Italy. She is infamous in France as a high-quality demimondaine, who has captured the hearts of many men, including the French Emperor it is said. Her mysterious backer found her ruined by her husband, who left her penniless and heart-broken, in Italy. He turned her into a project, moulding her into the 'perfect woman' (as least, as he saw it). He never asked for anything in return for raising her, almost like a daughter, but all favours have a price eventually.

Literate, well educated and charming, Doña Concetta would be a successful woman without her other talents: she is a good pistol shot and an expert swordsman trained in the Italian school. A seductress and an adventuress, she attracts men for all the wrong reasons, using them up and spitting them out. She was a popular member of society in Florence and Turin before leaving for her home in Spain. A few months later, she turned up in France, while there, Concetta became tied to the Empress' (originally from Spain) court. In Spain, she is a suspect in the untimely death of her former husband—found stabbed in a brothel by a rapier. Her company is still widely sought by members of French society, romantically linked to several authors and members of the government.

She has recently settled in London, where she is popular company with the fast set and the Spanish expatriate and exiles. She is frequently seen in the company of General Prim y Prats, the former 'republican' general. Though apolitical for a long time, she has fallen in with Prim's exiled Spanish revolutionaries. Her exotic good looks and reputation brought her to the attention of Lord George Mace, captivated by her intelligence and skill in bed; she was just as impressed by his abilities. She is a member of the inner circle.

Doña Concetta Anaya y Ramirez Rank 12 Eldren Courtesan (Generalist)

Physical Competence: +7
Mental Competence: +8
Initiative: 9
Health: 8 Dice (16 pips)
Mana: 4 Dice (24 pips)
Signature Skills: Bull +2, Channelling Medium +2, Charm +4, Dance +4, Etiquette +3, Fashion +4, Firearms +4, General Knowledge +4, Hide & Sneak +2, Horse Riding +2, Language (English +4, French +3, Italian +3), Perception +2, Swordplay +5
Traits: Alluring +5, Mysterious +3, Decadent +3
Special Abilities: Heal (Channelling Medium)
Combat Abilities: Equally adept with sword (12 Dice) or pistol (11 Dice)
Damage: Elegant Rapier (6 Dice) or medium Pistol (8 Dice)

Henri Detraub LaBove

Originally from Guernsey, one of the Channel Islands, LaBove is from a respectable and somewhat French Human family. The only surviving child of Captain Seymour LaBove of H.M. Navy, Henri's massive, powerful frame kept him from too much ridicule from his fellow students at Winchester. Later, he studied medicine at Cambridge and found himself in the position as ship's doctor on H.M.S. Manticore in 1848, travelling to India. While in that strange land, an attack by some form of Beastman left a curious imprinted of itself on him: the bite injuries (he believes) infected him in some way. He has become excessively hairy, with a thick and luxuriant golden coat; his face has become twisted into a half-man, half-cat visage. He can see well in the dark and his hearing and smell are incredibly sensitive. He has also developed a strong desire for fresh, often raw meat—a desire that led people to incorrectly believe he had fallen to preying on men, like the creature that attacked him in the jungles. His incredible discipline and willpower have prevented himself from sinking so far but this curse afflicting him has shattered his Aluminat faith. He is commonly referred to by the people of the city as the "Lion-man of Hampstead".

Though brilliant and witty, LaBove shuns human company when he can, embarrassed by and ashamed of his appearance. Many who know nothing of

[NOVEMBER 2, 1848]

UPLEX SKIRTS
J. W. ERADLEY'S
CELEBRATED
TIGHT DUPLEX ELLIPTIC
(or Double Spring)
SKIRTS
TRADE AND ECONOMICAL
each loop being composed
of finely twisted steel, and
consequently heated firmly together
they are very flexible and easy
they are also the
BEST AND MOST SERVICE
WORK.
They are made in the
FASHIONABLE AND ELEGANT
for
PROXIMATE
OPERA
CARRIAGE

STREET DRUG
above are the most popular
introduced
At Retail
BY THE SOLE OWNERS
WESTON, BLAIR & CO.
Office and
Nos. 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100
BUTTER
produced in France
the most famous
EYE GLASSES
you can get
this is the best
on the market
of any

JOS. GILLOTT'S STEEL
OF THE OLD STANDARD QUALITY
JOSEPH
GILLOTT
Warranted.
TRADE MARK:
ORIGINAL AND PROTECT
No. 551

JOSEPH
GILLOTT
Warranted.
TRADE MARK:
ORIGINAL AND PROTECT
No. 551

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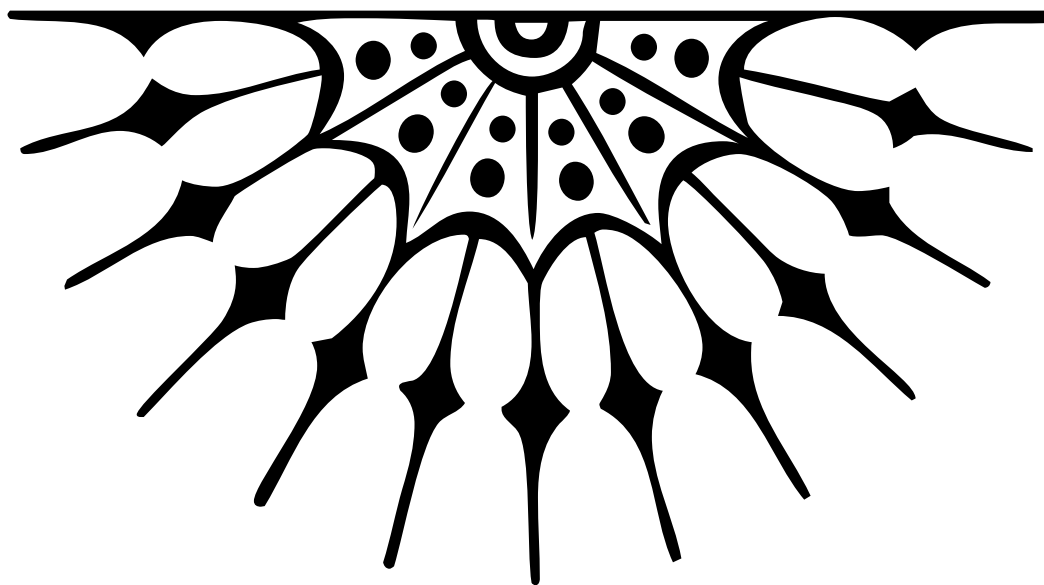
his background wonder how a lowly Beastman manages to maintain a middle class living and conclude it is something scandalous. A brilliant physician and scientist, both Scotland Yard and the London Orientalists' Club often seek him out to aid in criminal analysis, or by others looking for medical treatment. Though a recluse, he is a kind and concerned man; entreaties for aid, either medical or scientific, eventually rouse him. He is best known for his 'rehydration' therapy for cholera, which has saved dozens of lives, utilising the introduction of a salt-water intravenous injection every half hour, coupled with heavy draughts of pure water, which has had excellent results.

LaBove resides at Squire Mont Chapel, a small church in Hampstead Heath from the late 1700s purchased a few years ago before its demolition. He has renovated the church, turning it into a residence and laboratory. Workbenches and long planters, filled with exotic plants, have replaced the pews; the altar area is his dining room. In the balcony over his botanical gardens is the bedroom, while the rectory is now a sitting room and library. An examination room fills an addition to the rectory and is mostly for medical research. The doctor rarely sees patients and often dresses in pyjamas and a dressing gown. His about-town clothing is average quality casual clothing with a frock coat and slouch hat.

Henri Detraub LaBove
Rank 11 Cursed Doctor (Focussed)*

Physical Competence: +5
Mental Competence: +9
Initiative: 8
Health: 6 Dice (12 pips)
Signature Skills: Etiquette +1, Fisticuffs +2,
General Knowledge +4, History +3,
Intimidate +2, Language (French +2,
German +2, Latin +3), Medicine +5,
Perception +2, Research +3,
Science (Biology +3, Pharmacology +3)
Traits: Noble +2, Pessimistic +4, Caregiver +3,
Strong +3
Special Abilities: Animal Traits (Claws)
Combat Abilities: By tooth and claw (7 Dice),
but only if forced or enraged
Damage: Claws (6 Dice)

*LaBove was born Human but has been converted into a Beastman through his encounter in India. Essentially, he is now a Lion Beastman.



AEGYPTUS SOCIETY

The kindly looking gentleman approached Archibald Paget as the handful of people shuffled out of the lecture hall. "Fascinating lecture, sir," he said, pumping Paget's hand with enthusiastic abandon. "You make Ancient Egypt come alive with its rich culture and history." The polite Gnome fidgeted, no doubt unsure quite how to take the compliment in the face of a somewhat poorly attended lecture. "My name is Rupert Bullard," the gentleman continued without reservation. "I was wondering if you might help me discover some information about an artefact I recently inherited...."

He reached into his inner coat pocket and removed a small bundle of cloth; when unwrapped, it revealed a blue faience figurine, a mummiform shape with a face, wig, and hieroglyphics painted on its glazed surface. Paget recognised it as a shabti statuette used in Egyptian burials.

The Gnome lecturer bowed politely and ushered Mr. Bullard through the Aegyptus Society public foyer and into the opulent Palm Room. They passed the dog-headed footman in the somewhat gaudy Arabian costume at the door; Bullard noticed he received a suspicious glance but paid the footman no mind.

Paget prattled on excitedly about the club's library and resources, a quiet place for reading and research, plenty of avenues to explore the statuette's past. No doubt, this was an opportunity to recruit a new member and expand the club's growing body of scholarship, even with such a small artefact as the shabti statuette. He sat Mr. Bullard down in a comfortable chair near a glass case packed with various Egyptian artefacts. Paget sat nearby, producing a printed card and pencil, and began taking down information. Mr. Bullard offered it eagerly, droning on about innocuous personal details while casting glances at the other antiquities displayed throughout the room. A membership with the Society would give him access not only to research materials but also to these small but valuable treasures.

Paget completed the membership card while Bullard removed several five-pound notes from his billfold. The transaction complete, Bullard stood up proudly and shook the Gnome's hand again. "I cannot wait to begin my researches into this statue's origins," he said, carefully wrapping the shabti figure and slipping it back into his coat pocket. After confirming the hours that the Society facilities remained open to members, he allowed Paget to walk him to the door, all while continuing to talk about his interests in Ancient Egypt.

As he walked down the busy Sunday afternoon street past the club facade, Bullard peered inside his inner coat pocket at the face of the statuette peeking out from its wrappings. "Not yet, my friend," he purred. "Let's wait until we gain their confidence, then I'll leave you behind for your little bit of thievery." Bullard winked knowingly at the shabti and the figurine winked back.

HISTORY


Part club and part scientific institution, the Aegyptus Society serves as an amateur association dedicated to the study of ancient Egypt. It possesses far less prestige and patronage than the Royal Geographical Society but its members do not aspire to the pretentiousness of academics and scholars. Instead, they seek to improve their own and others' knowledge of Egypt through frequent lectures, monograph and pamphlet publication, access to the society's specialist library, and sponsorship of a small archaeological expedition each year.

The Aegyptus Society building began as the London home of Henry Salt, the British consul-general in Egypt in the early portion of the century. During his time in Egypt, he commissioned explorers like Belzoni to uncover and retrieve ancient treasures. Salt also acquired antiquities on his own travels along the Nile River and in the Cairo bazaars. These

collections he later sold to various museums and private individuals, including the British Museum and the Louvre. Ultimately, Henry Salt served as a dealer in ancient Egyptian artefacts.

Later in life, Salt regretted his decisions and realised his folly in exploiting Egypt and dividing what might have been the greatest collection of ancient antiquities among numerous institutions and individuals. Upon his death, Salt's will established his London home as the Aegyptus Society, dedicated to preserving and teaching the knowledge of Ancient Egypt. The trustees of the Salt Estate selected a suitable president to run the Society's daily affairs. Most past presidents at one time served or worked in Egypt, have a keen knowledge of its present and past culture, as well as fostering an appreciation of the language, art, religion, architecture and ruins of ancient times.

At first, like the Egyptian Hall initially established to display the treasures Belzoni recovered, the Society served as a focal point for ancient research



and scholarly discourse, with many public programs, lectures and exhibitions to stir interest and financial support. As time passed, the prominence of other institutions – particularly the British Museum – and the publicity surrounding popular archaeological expeditions to Egypt has eclipsed the Society's standing in the public eye.

Today, the Aegyptus Society is little more than a club for the strange individuals who immerse themselves in studying the myriad aspects of Ancient Egypt. Members of more status-conscious clubs, such as the Athenaeum, look down upon the Society as an association of simple-minded enthusiasts. It receives little public recognition from the British Museum, though that institution encourages its lesser curators of Egyptian art to give occasional lectures to test their research theories and expose themselves to public speaking.

Despite its almost forgotten reputation, the Society's resources prove extremely helpful to those undertaking research in London or planning expeditions to Egypt.

STRUCTURE

The Society's direction falls to two bodies: the administrative staff supervised by the president and the Society's board of directors.

The president oversees all daily operations of the Society and the facilities; he manages staff issues, reviews membership applications, delegates responsibilities to handle domestic issues and consults with those running various society programs and departments. He relies on his notable colleagues, Ms. Alderbright and Mr. Hewitt, to handle matters in their respective fields.

The board of directors oversees the Society's general survival, ensuring it receives enough funding from Henry Salt's Trust to remain operating, even at minimal levels. The group entrusts the daily operations to the president, who serves as liaison between the membership, staff and the board; he seeks guidance on personnel concerns, petitions approval on programs and prepares budgets for daily operations, rare capital improvements and the small, annual expedition to Egypt. Board members make broad recommendations regarding society policy, which they entrust to the president's proper administration and good judgment. The president also remains the only person who knows the board members' identities, though the chief solicitor for the Salt Estate sits as the ex officio chairman.

JOINING THE ORGANISATION

Although the Society welcomes the public to lectures and exhibitions, members are granted exclusive access to the institution's smoking room and parlour (for the ladies), dining room, and the extensive library. To acquire membership, one must have a proven accomplishment in the field of either Egyptology or archaeology, or at the very least an intense interest in and ability to understand and excel at these subjects. Assuming one passes the scrutiny of an interview with the three key founders, Archibald Paget, Marion Alderbright, and Evelyn Hewitt, members pay an annual fee of £20 for access to the Society's exclusive facilities. The building remains open for visitors and members' afternoons from noon until 6 p.m., later on lecture nights and for members conducting research with the staff's approval. The Society also welcomes notable Egyptologists visiting London who wish to conduct research in the library.

Members demonstrating particular devotion or valuable expertise receive special invitations to join the Society's expedition in Egypt, working at digs or research venues for several weeks. Most participants



pay half their expenses, with Society Trust monies covering the other half. A handful especially talented members with scholarly or professional field experience receive full support for contributing their expertise to Society's expedition.

RESOURCES

The Society building stands near the corner of Haymarket and Pall Mall East, beyond the more fashionable clubs. Two stone pillars guard the short stairway to the main entrance. Other subtle elements of Egyptian architecture (lotiform columns, obelisks, hieroglyphic carvings) adorn the building's facade. It doesn't stand adjacent to other structures and only those taking an interest in it notice the subtle, yet distinctly decorative motifs. On any given day only a few individuals visit the building, including the Society, which maintains a relatively discreet profile.

The foremost areas of the building allow the Society to pursue its goals of educating the

[November 21]

DUPLICATIONS.

UPLEX SKIRTS.

J. W. BIDDLE'S
REGISTERED
TRADE MARK
TEST DUPLICATION SKIRTS
(or Double Spring)
SKIRTS
are the
TRADE and ECONOMICAL
each long being composed
of 150 yards of finest
quality treated giving
them the
ELEGANCE, STRENGTH,
they are very desirable
and they are also the
BEST and MOST SERVICE-
ABLE WORK.

They are made in
FASHIONABLE and
for

PROXIMATE
OPERA

CAMBRIDGE

STREET
above are the most popular
introduced

IN ALL FIRST-CLASS THEATERS
AT WASHINGTON
BY THE MESSRS. J. W. BIDDLE
WESTON, BIDDLE
AND
Nos. 27 and 29
New

Biddle's
products
use. It is
GLASS
mirrors
stained
glass
mosaic
work

EYE GLASSES
The most
perfect
and
comfortable
and
any


78

The foremost areas of the building allow the Society to pursue its goals of educating the public

The foyer also serves as a lobby to the lecture hall when the Society hosts learned speakers, public exhibitions of recently recovered artefacts and the occasional mummy unwrapping. The hall consists of an open floor upon which the staff can easily arrange chairs or display cases, and a curtained stage for lectures. The 1867 season of public programs offered here includes: the annual excavation report of Evelyn Hewitt, staff archaeologist; the (poorly attended) Pharaoh's Ball; a presentation by noted German Egyptologist, Karl Lepsius; an exhibition of antiquities on loan from a private collector in Sussex; a series of lectures by curators at the British Museum; and the unwrapping of a collection of animal mummies.

Upstairs, offices provide administrative refuge for the staff, though for an additional fee members can rent private, secure space in which to conduct their research. Basement storage vaults — usually off-limits even to members without staff supervision — hold expedition equipment and stores, well-packed antiquities and old Society records.





contains drawers filled with cards cataloguing the library's holdings and their location in the stacks. Books do not leave the library, though tables and carrels offer space where members can read materials and take notes.

The Society library contains perhaps the most extensive collection of Egyptian travel accounts, from those by mediaeval travellers and Arabian merchants to treasure-seekers like Belzoni and Burckhardt. A special endowment allows the institution to purchase expedition reports of most contemporary archaeological digs, as well as the latest monographs and publications on Ancient Egypt. A safe in the library contains the Society's prized papyrus scrolls, which Miss Alderbright retrieves for only the most astute and trustworthy researchers.

Two doors at the rear of the library lead to Miss Alderbright's orderly office and the map room. Cabinets with long, flat drawers hold maps of virtually every part of Egypt, modern and ancient, plus surveys of excavations sites and current dig plans. A wide table and a magnifying glass offer a more comfortable and complete the means to examine any maps.

AGENDA

The Aegyptus Society functions primarily as a resource for those seeking information on Ancient Egypt, either casually through lectures or more seriously with dedicated study facilities and research materials. Its public pursuits focus on promoting knowledge of the period through lectures and small exhibitions, though the annual expedition garners popular interest and ultimately scholarly attention.

Although primarily concerned with providing resources to its membership, the Society seeks to employ the knowledge and talents of its associates for its own academic purposes: collecting and preserving Egyptian artefacts, sharing research among peers to further understanding of ancient Egypt and occasionally publishing significant research for the scholarly community.

Though supported by generous funding from Henry Salt's Trust (and controlled by his estate's trustee and the Society's Board of Directors), the Society still maintains several methods of raising additional monies: solicitation of donations at lectures and exhibitions, membership fees and sponsorship of the annual expedition. These efforts do not interfere with the Society's principle, intellectual missions, which form an important if subtle part of the organisation's operation. While the staff focuses

on daily operations, the Board of Directors and the estate's trustee monitor the budget for maintaining the Society building and activities; they augment more pressing financial needs with additional monies drawn from the trust fund or other, more discreet, activities, which quietly generates revenue off the books.

PERSONALITIES

Archibald Paget

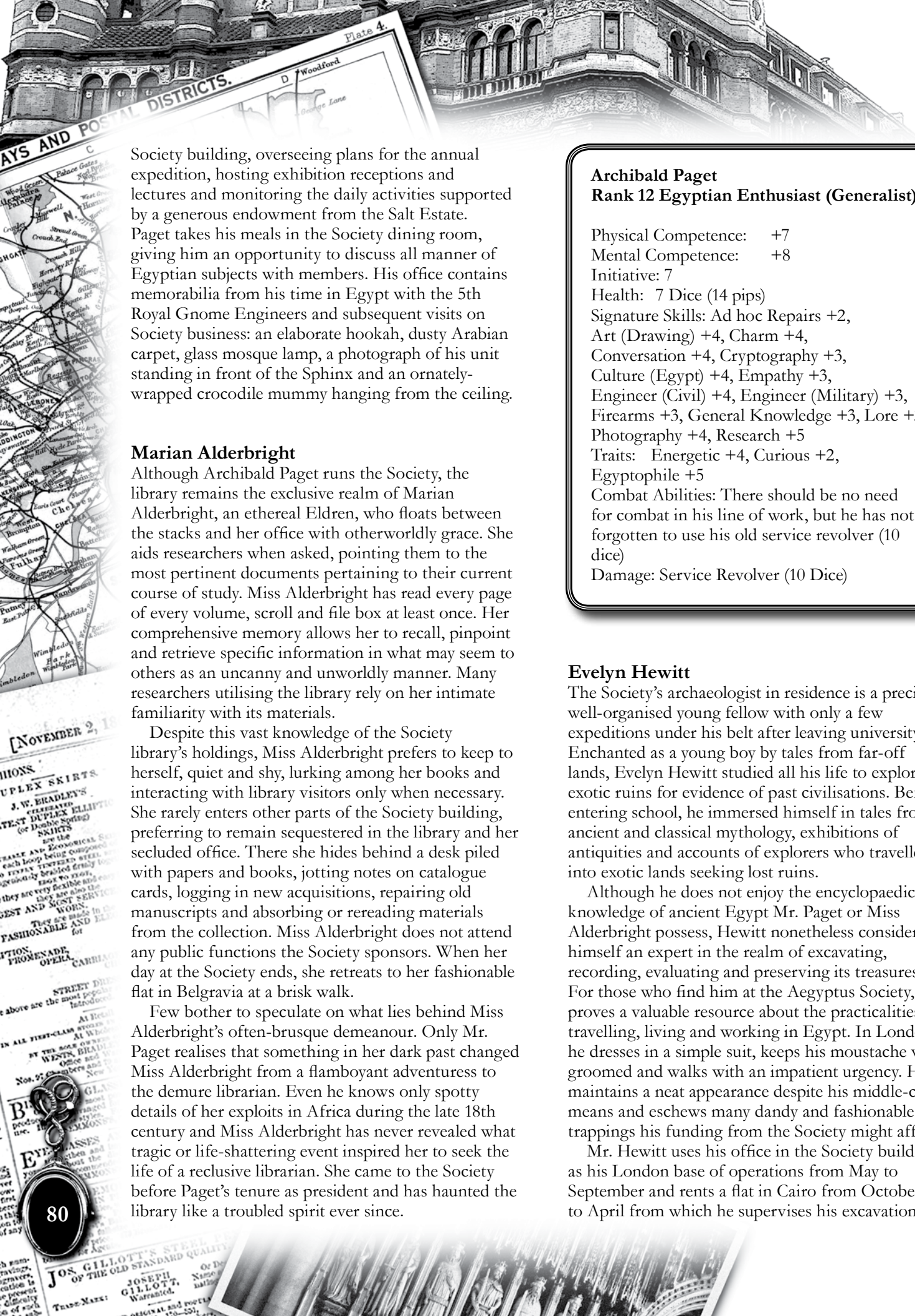
The current president is an enthusiastic and jovial Gnome, who graciously plays the part of guide and host to members and visitors to the Society building. Salt-and-pepper hair frames his gentle face and a well-groomed goatee ending in a little upturned curl gives his appearance an eastern air. Paget frequently wanders about the Society in his smoking jacket and a burgundy fez but dons the appropriate coattails for public or official occasions.

Paget served with the 5th Royal Gnome Engineers, a unit that has supported British forces in Egypt ever since they evicted Napoleon and the French army from Egypt at the turn of the century. The British government has maintained varying levels of military presence in Egypt throughout the century to protect its business interests in cotton, sugarcane and shipping. Paget transferred to the unit in 1844 and mustered out in 1854, when Franco-British efforts to construct a canal linking the Mediterranean Sea with the Arabian Sea resulted in the concession from the Turkish vassal ruling Egypt, Khedive Sayeed (with the blessing of the Ottoman government in Istanbul). Paget did not wish to serve the increasing British military presence protecting and supporting activities surrounding the construction of the Suez Canal.

His time in Egypt inspired in Paget an appreciation for that country's present and ancient art, architecture, culture and people. Upon returning to England, he attempted to put his engineering talents and his love for Egypt to use at the British Museum, designing spaces and exhibits to better share ancient treasures with the public. The eminent scholars at that institution looked down on Paget, dismissing his unconventional ideas. A mysterious note brought Paget to the Aegyptus Society on the exact day its trustees were meeting to select a new president. Seemingly by chance, he arrived for an interview and received the trustees' unanimous approval as the Society's next president.

Paget faithfully discharges his duties, interviewing prospective members, guiding visitors through the





Society building, overseeing plans for the annual expedition, hosting exhibition receptions and lectures and monitoring the daily activities supported by a generous endowment from the Salt Estate. Paget takes his meals in the Society dining room, giving him an opportunity to discuss all manner of Egyptian subjects with members. His office contains memorabilia from his time in Egypt with the 5th Royal Gnome Engineers and subsequent visits on Society business: an elaborate hookah, dusty Arabian carpet, glass mosque lamp, a photograph of his unit standing in front of the Sphinx and an ornately-wrapped crocodile mummy hanging from the ceiling.

Marian Alderbright

Although Archibald Paget runs the Society, the library remains the exclusive realm of Marian Alderbright, an ethereal Eldren, who floats between the stacks and her office with otherworldly grace. She aids researchers when asked, pointing them to the most pertinent documents pertaining to their current course of study. Miss Alderbright has read every page of every volume, scroll and file box at least once. Her comprehensive memory allows her to recall, pinpoint and retrieve specific information in what may seem to others as an uncanny and unworldly manner. Many researchers utilising the library rely on her intimate familiarity with its materials.

Despite this vast knowledge of the Society library's holdings, Miss Alderbright prefers to keep to herself, quiet and shy, lurking among her books and interacting with library visitors only when necessary. She rarely enters other parts of the Society building, preferring to remain sequestered in the library and her secluded office. There she hides behind a desk piled with papers and books, jotting notes on catalogue cards, logging in new acquisitions, repairing old manuscripts and absorbing or rereading materials from the collection. Miss Alderbright does not attend any public functions the Society sponsors. When her day at the Society ends, she retreats to her fashionable flat in Belgravia at a brisk walk.

Few bother to speculate on what lies behind Miss Alderbright's often-brusque demeanour. Only Mr. Paget realises that something in her dark past changed Miss Alderbright from a flamboyant adventuress to the demure librarian. Even he knows only spotty details of her exploits in Africa during the late 18th century and Miss Alderbright has never revealed what tragic or life-shattering event inspired her to seek the life of a reclusive librarian. She came to the Society before Paget's tenure as president and has haunted the library like a troubled spirit ever since.

Archibald Paget

Rank 12 Egyptian Enthusiast (Generalist)

Physical Competence: +7

Mental Competence: +8

Initiative: 7

Health: 7 Dice (14 pips)

Signature Skills: Ad hoc Repairs +2,

Art (Drawing) +4, Charm +4,

Conversation +4, Cryptography +3,

Culture (Egypt) +4, Empathy +3,

Engineer (Civil) +4, Engineer (Military) +3,

Firearms +3, General Knowledge +3, Lore +3,

Photography +4, Research +5

Traits: Energetic +4, Curious +2,

Egyptophile +5

Combat Abilities: There should be no need for combat in his line of work, but he has not forgotten to use his old service revolver (10 dice)

Damage: Service Revolver (10 Dice)

Evelyn Hewitt

The Society's archaeologist in residence is a precise, well-organised young fellow with only a few expeditions under his belt after leaving university. Enchanted as a young boy by tales from far-off lands, Evelyn Hewitt studied all his life to explore exotic ruins for evidence of past civilisations. Before entering school, he immersed himself in tales from ancient and classical mythology, exhibitions of antiquities and accounts of explorers who travelled into exotic lands seeking lost ruins.

Although he does not enjoy the encyclopaedic knowledge of ancient Egypt Mr. Paget or Miss Alderbright possess, Hewitt nonetheless considers himself an expert in the realm of excavating, recording, evaluating and preserving its treasures. For those who find him at the Aegyptus Society, he proves a valuable resource about the practicalities of travelling, living and working in Egypt. In London, he dresses in a simple suit, keeps his moustache well groomed and walks with an impatient urgency. He maintains a neat appearance despite his middle-class means and eschews many dandy and fashionable trappings his funding from the Society might afford.

Mr. Hewitt uses his office in the Society building as his London base of operations from May to September and rents a flat in Cairo from October to April from which he supervises his excavation

Marian Alderbright
Rank 14 Eldren Librarian with a Past
(Focussed)

Physical Competence: +6
 Mental Competence: +11
 Initiative: 11
 Health: 7 Dice (14 pips)
 Mana: 6 Dice (36 pips)
 Signature Skills: Art (Classical Literature) +2,
 Channelling Medium +2, Charm +2,
 Conceal +4, Culture (Egypt) +5, Etiquette +3,
 Firearms +3, General Knowledge +4,
 Hide & History +5, Horse Riding +2, Lore +5,
 Perception +4, Research +5, Sneak +2
 Traits: Cynical +3, Shy +5, Studious +3,
 Mysterious +2
 Special Abilities: Know Historical Events
 (Channelling Medium)
 Combat Abilities: Like any lady who relies
 on herself for protection, Marian carries a
 Derringer (9 Dice) she hopes never to use.
 Damage: Sharps Derringer (4 Dice)

season in Egypt. While in London, he bolts about between his office, the Society library, the British Museum, Oxford, Cambridge, the Foreign Office and other institutions essential in planning a successful expedition. He spends months meticulously planning every aspect of the upcoming season's operations, applying for dig permits, petitioning bureaucrats, purchasing stores, organising notes and scrutinising maps of the proposed excavation site.

Society Footmen

The footmen who greet visitors, offer drinks and serve meals generally lurk around the Society waiting to assist members. They consist of the most genteel and polite Humans and Beastmen (mostly from cat, dog, and goat stock) dressed in exotic Mohammedan robes, sashes and turbans. Footmen open the front door for guests and stand guard at the entrances to the smoking room, parlour, dining room and library to guide visitors.

The footmen always seem to quietly appear from some hidden corner when one requires assistance or has a question. They bow deeply and offer a soft-spoken "Salaam" (a typical Arabian greeting

Evelyn Hewitt
Rank 10 Eminent Archaeologist (Focussed)

Physical Competence: +5
 Mental Competence: +8
 Initiative: 9
 Health: 6 Dice (12 pips)
 Signature Skills: Appraisal +5, Athletics +3,
 Bull +2, Culture (Egypt) +3, Fisticuffs +2,
 General Knowledge +5, History +4, Lore +3,
 Perception +3, Science (Chemistry) +2
 Traits: Neat +3, Careful Planner +3,
 Deductive +4
 Combat Abilities: He boxed at university so
 knows how to sort out a ruffian with his fists
 (9 Dice)
 Damage: Fists (4 Dice)

Society Footmen
Rank 4 Beastman Servant (Generalist)

Physical Competence: +4
 Mental Competence: +3
 Initiative: 6
 Health: 4 Dice (8 pips)
 Signature Skills: Culture (Egypt) +1,
 Empathy +3, Etiquette +3, Fisticuffs +2,
 Hide & Sneak +2, Perception +2
 Traits: Energetic +4, Curious +2,
 Egyptophile +5
 Special Abilities: Animal trait depending on
 type
 Combat Abilities: They are able to eject ne'er
 do wells if need be with Fisticuffs (6 Dice)
 Damage: Fists (4 Dice) or Grapple

meaning "peace") followed by "How may I serve thee, Effendi?" (effendi being a title of respect much like the Hindi saheeb). The corps of footmen know all the occurrences within the Society — who enters and leaves and when, who researches what subjects, who brought guests to dinner — and report anything unusual or noteworthy to Paget.



CHAPTER 4

FEAR AND SILENCE

“To learn the secrets of the arcane is a sacred trust. When that trust is broken, the Silencius will be waiting.”

- Tomas Radiczek

SILENCIUS

Francois DeFleur stepped into the shadowed warehouse, taking a moment to brush snow from his shoulders. He and his partner, Eleanor Trask, covered their noses to block out the horrible stench of musk and raw sewage. "Based on the trail, and the odour, it should be in this warehouse," she said.

The Eldren put his finger to his lips to silence her and motioned her to the other side of the warehouse. Trask complied, sticking to the shadows in an attempt to remain unseen.

Holding up three fingers, DeFleur lowered one at a time. When he lowered the last finger, both of them walked the perimeter of the room. In the few seconds it took to survey the poorly lit room, they heard the scurrying of rats and creaking of crates stacked three and four high but saw no sign of their quarry.

DeFleur stepped almost casually into the centre of the room. "Based on the foul odour, the demon should be here, but I don't see it. I also don't see the usual bloody pools that mark its unfortunate victims."

Eleanor joined him, toeing at a dead rat with her boot. "All I see here are a few dead rats. Based on Guild Member Roberston's story about his apprentice summoning a demon and the trail of residue the beast has left throughout St. Giles, I'd expect more than the two dismembered dockers we found in the first warehouse."

"As would I. We'll have a word with young Thomas about violating Guild Law after we've put this beast down. We'll also explain the value of following the rules to Master Robertson. He's not without blame, either."

When the Eldren cast his eyes around the room one last time, he noticed a rat standing atop a nearby stack of crates, eyeing them intently. As DeFleur watched, the rat's skin started to bubble and undulate as the rodent turned itself inside out. Before he could react, a large tentacle slammed the Eldren in the chest, knocking him into a pile of crates, toppling them. At the same instant, another tentacle wrapped around Trask's legs and pulled, knocking her face down in the dirt. An unearthly gibbering filled the warehouse.

DeFleur pushed the shattered crates aside and watched as Trask struggled to flip onto her back. At the other end of the tentacle, a writhing mass of ichor and mouths, filled with broken, rotten teeth anticipated a meal. DeFleur smiled briefly, he'd found the demon.

Without a second thought, DeFleur intoned a spell, creating a ball of light directly over the beast. It shrieked in surprise, pausing just long enough for Trask to gather her wits and fire a bolt of lightning into the mass. The demon shivered and pulled Trask off the ground beating the sorcerer against a crate. Out of the corner of his eye, DeFleur watched as she pulled a dagger from her jacket and stabbed it repeatedly into the tentacle, eliciting agonising wails from the beast.

As DeFleur readied another spell, a tentacle darted from the shadows and wrapped around his chest. In excruciating pain from the constricting, barbed feeler DeFleur struggled to fire off the spell. A bright light arced from his hands to the beast, knocking it off the crate, forcing it to release its grasp on both of them.

DeFleur stepped forward carefully, sidling toward Trask who was dusting herself off. He looked at her, noting the blood oozing from several wounds and the focused grin on her face. "Are you ready, Trask?"

"I am."

Both stepped around the crate and unleashed their most powerful spells in unison. As they watched, the demon writhed and lashed at them with its tentacles but the sorcerers ignored the weakening slaps. In a matter of minutes, the creature was gone, forced back to the 3rd Circle of the Pale.

DeFleur wiped gore from his coat sleeves. "Now, let's find one of the poor, homeless souls who succumbed to the freezing chill last night. We need to be able to present a human murderer to the police. We don't want them to start thinking the Guild is summoning demons it can't control."

HISTORY

The Guild's reputation for hunting down Necromancers and other nefarious magic users is legendary. Less well known, even among Guild members, is the Silencius. Spanning the world, this secret order is dedicated to keeping Guild members in line, ensuring that licensed magic users do not abuse their power and potentially stumble down the path

to Necromancy or Demonology. More importantly, they serve to protect the Guild's reputation, that sorcery under its leadership is safe, secure and in civilised hands. The Silencius fulfil many roles. Highly trained Guild Thaumaturgists in their own right, they also must function as consulting detectives, skilled trackers and, on rare occasions, ruthless executioners of the law.

As the Aluminat Church exerted control over magic through the Inquisition, the Pope realised he



needed trusted men to watch the watchers. Shortly after the end of the Thirty Years War, a papal bull created La Silenzioza Quelli , the Silent Ones. Eight highly trustworthy and dedicated men were handpicked to become the core of a secret order to keep the world safe. Over the years, the operatives of La Silenzioza Quelli covered up incidents of magical impropriety and magical constructs gone awry. While the Guild policed external, non-licensed magic users, La Silenzioza Quelli policed the Guild, in secret. If a Guild sorcerer stepped out of line and used magic inappropriately, La Silenzioza Quelli was there to encourage the offender to reconsider his actions. The members of La Silenzioza Quelli have traditionally been of Human or Eldren heritage (mainly due to magic being the preserve of the upper classes) but occasionally Gnomes, Dwarves and Halflings have joined the organisation's ranks.

When the Inquisition was disbanded in 1637, the Pope saw the developing mercantile nature of the Guild. In his eyes, they were becoming little better than pandering usurers, who would sell their services to anyone with spare coin. He attempted to rein the Guild in and return them to the path he saw them ordained to follow, practitioners of their God-granted abilities for the betterment of the world and the Aluminat Church. However, the Guild had become powerful enough to stand on its own and refused to bow to Rome.

When the Guild, cognisant of its true power in the world, refused to bend its knee as it had when the Inquisition terrorised the world, the Pope ordered it out of Rome. With far too many wealthy Guild members regularly tithing to the church, not to mention the Guild's magical power, the Pope did not want to go so far as to excommunicate them en masse. However, he would not have the Guild function as an arm of the Church any longer. The schism became formal and the Guild gladly left Rome, moving all official functions to its massive library in Geneva. La Silenzioza Quelli, although created by the Pope, had become a tool of the Guild and, therefore, followed suit. The Guild recognised the need for some form of internal policing but did not want them too close, so they made their headquarters in London instead of Geneva. In truth, the Pope did his best to ensure La Silenzioza Quelli remained with the Guild, so that somewhere inside the organisation there would be some form of oversight.

Over the years, particularly because of the order's new headquarters in English-speaking London, La Silenzioza Quelli was bastardised to the Silencius by many of the newer recruits, a change that became permanent soon enough, severing the order's last tie

to its progenitors in Rome. Since its inception, the Silencius has put down demons in Prague, hunted murderous sorcerers in Southwark, reprimanded wayward apprentices in Boston and been led on a merry, bloody chase by an elemental in Dublin.

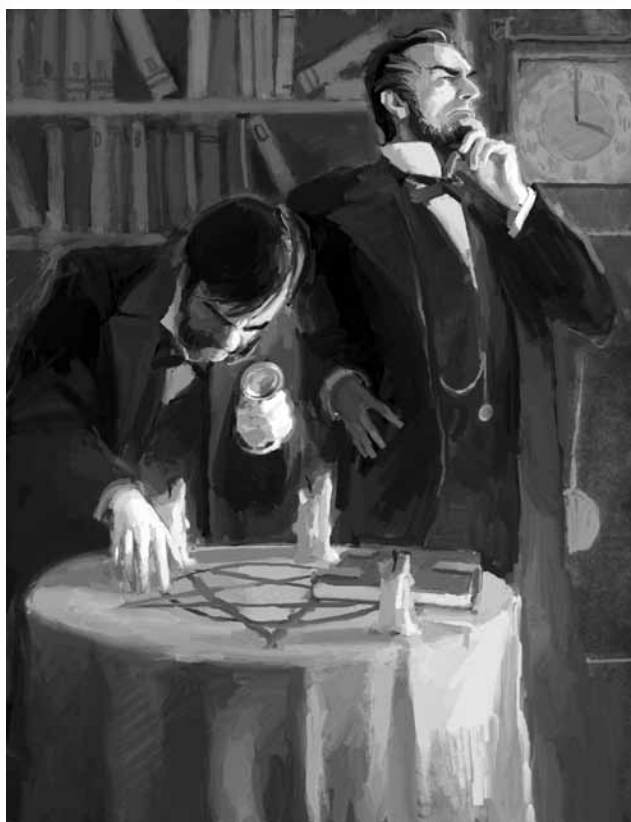
Throughout the years, both when headquartered in Rome and when based in London, the Silencius has prevented many Guild members from straying. Some of their stories are the stuff of legend but most are mundane investigations into the actions of Guild members who have strayed. While it does deal with Necromancers and Demonologists, there are plenty of other organisations to hunt down such evils. The Silencius is more concerned with the actions of more usual sorcerers, those who abuse their power and bring disrepute to the Guild. You need not be a Necromancer or summon demons to work evil with magic. The Silencius is best described as an 'internal affairs' department for the Guild, although many of their methods make them seem more akin to the Mafia.

STRUCTURE

A magister, chosen by the Guild's head from the order's members, leads the Silencius. He serves at the whim of the Guildmaster and can be removed at any time. He in turn appoints twelve sub-magisters that oversee the six districts into which the Silencius has divided the world. Two sub-magisters administer the operations of the Silencius agents on each populated continent. Only members of the upper class are chosen to be a magister or sub-magister. While middle class and, even on some rare occasions, lower class magicians may enter into the Silencius, they can never hope to hold an office. A long-standing member might have more experience than a newly drafted member might but both have an equal chance of becoming a sub-magister or even magister.

Members of Silencius who do not hold an office are a pool of resources the magister and sub-magisters draw from when a mission arises; these are the men and women enforcing the order's mandate. When needed to investigate a sorcerer, capture a magical creature, or vet a Necromancer, the sub-magisters draw on this pool. However, all members are on the lookout for potential magical crime, even among their friends, whether assigned to a mission or not.

It is rare for a member of the Silencius to have no other magical interests. The Guild provides them with no stipend, each must have the means to support himself, so those who are not independently



wealthy continue to operate as magicians-for-hire. No disgrace is associated with having to maintain a separate income to be in the Silencius. The honour of protecting the Guild outweighs pecuniary concerns. However, members of the Silencius are expected to put their businesses on hold should an urgent matter arise that needs their immediate attention. More than one middle-class member has had to either seek patronage from a wealthy member or leave the Silencius because he could no longer afford to be pulled away from supporting his family.

JOINING THE ORGANISATION

Tradition stands that eight new members are inducted into the order every year, regardless of the number of Silencius killed (or, less commonly, those who retire) the previous year. Eight are chosen to represent the original eight members of La Silenzioza Quelli selected by the Pope. Each potential recruit must be a member in good standing with the Guild and have an impeccable record besides; no magical mishap or questionable use of power can exist in a potential recruit's past. Once a suitable recruit is found, he is questioned about his opinions regarding magic and its proper place in society. If the recruiter is pleased with

the answers, he asks the recruit to investigate a Guild member suspected of misusing magic.

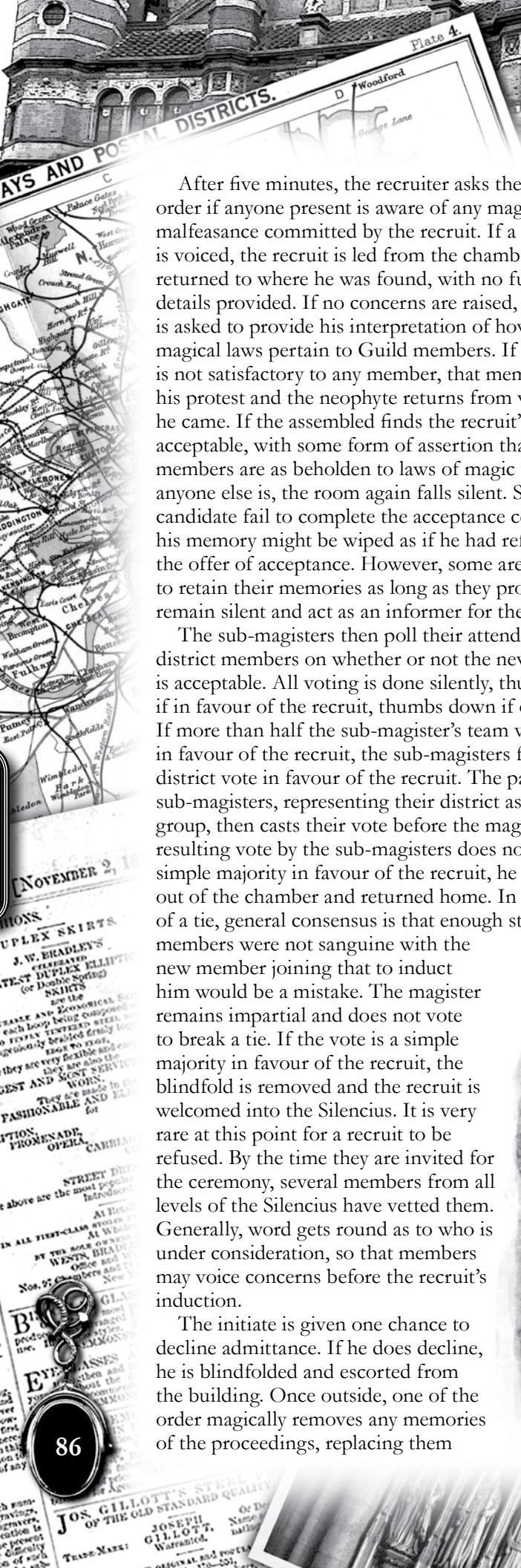
The first task of a new Silencius member is to hunt down a Guild member suspected of magical transgressions. The target, however, is actually a member of the Silencius laying a trail of false clues to test the recruit. The new recruit must hunt down the agent and use any means necessary to end the risk the transgressor poses to law and order. Several other Silencius watch the final confrontation from the wings, ready to step in if things go too far. If the observers believe the matter was handled correctly, and discretely, they invite the new recruit to join the Silencius. It's only at this point that the recruit learns that he was being tested, or the extent to which the Silencius exists.

On several occasions, the new recruit has been killed when he didn't relent in trying to eliminate the 'rogue' magic user. On the even rarer instances when the new initiate killed the 'transgressor' he had been tracking, he was still inducted into the Silencius. However, if a new recruit fails to track down or confront his target, the order does not invite him to join; he has proven he does not have the requisite skills. Should the neophyte succeed at the mission but refuse to join the Silencius, the representative of the order casts a spell, wiping the recent events from the former recruit's mind. This is usually done with the neophyte's permission as they are offered several incentives for their wealth and magical career if they submit. If they resist, the process can take time but it happens all the same. Should the neophyte escape with memories intact he'll be hunted down relentlessly and only offered a second chance if he's lucky. Whatever happens, he forgets his dealings with the Silencius or his mission to track down his assigned target.

The induction ceremony for a recruit who passes the initial test is a solemn affair. New inductions occur only on 8th September, when most of the order is present in London for the annual convocation. Foreign initiates are taken to London 'on official Guild business' at the order's expense. Once in London, they may stay in the Guild's hall at Bishopsgate.

When the time for the ceremony arrives, the recruit is blindfolded and driven around London in a hansom cab for at least half an hour before returning to Bishopsgate, where he is then led down stairs to a secret chamber, placed on a stone dais, and ordered to remain quiet. The entire room is silent. The recruiter then stands next to the initiate and recounts how the potential inductee handled the mission he was assigned. The room again falls silent.





After five minutes, the recruiter asks the assembled order if anyone present is aware of any magical malfeasance committed by the recruit. If a concern is voiced, the recruit is led from the chamber and returned to where he was found, with no further details provided. If no concerns are raised, the recruit is asked to provide his interpretation of how the magical laws pertain to Guild members. If his answer is not satisfactory to any member, that member voices his protest and the neophyte returns from whence he came. If the assembled finds the recruit's answer acceptable, with some form of assertion that Guild members are as beholden to laws of magic use as anyone else is, the room again falls silent. Should the candidate fail to complete the acceptance ceremony, his memory might be wiped as if he had refused the offer of acceptance. However, some are trusted to retain their memories as long as they promise to remain silent and act as an informer for the Silencius.

The sub-magisters then poll their attending district members on whether or not the new initiate is acceptable. All voting is done silently, thumbs up if in favour of the recruit, thumbs down if opposed. If more than half the sub-magister's team votes in favour of the recruit, the sub-magisters for a district vote in favour of the recruit. The pair of sub-magisters, representing their district as a unified group, then casts their vote before the magister. If the resulting vote by the sub-magisters does not indicate a simple majority in favour of the recruit, he is escorted out of the chamber and returned home. In the case of a tie, general consensus is that enough standing members were not sanguine with the new member joining that to induct him would be a mistake. The magister remains impartial and does not vote to break a tie. If the vote is a simple majority in favour of the recruit, the blindfold is removed and the recruit is welcomed into the Silencius. It is very rare at this point for a recruit to be refused. By the time they are invited for the ceremony, several members from all levels of the Silencius have vetted them. Generally, word gets round as to who is under consideration, so that members may voice concerns before the recruit's induction.

The initiate is given one chance to decline admittance. If he does decline, he is blindfolded and escorted from the building. Once outside, one of the order magically removes any memories of the proceedings, replacing them


with visions of a pleasant trip to Piccadilly. If the recruit accepts the offer, he must make the following declaration before the assembled Silencius:

"I swear, on all that is Holy and Just, that I shall serve the Silencius until death. I pledge my life to the Order and its cause above all other concerns. I shall keep its secrets and obey its laws, with no concern to my own safety. I shall never cease to watch over the workings of magic and see that those who manipulate it keep its laws and reject the darkness and temptation that wait to corrupt the weak and uncivilised. This I pledge for evermore, of my own freewill, with the full understanding of the burden I accept on behalf of my fellow sorcerers."

Upon completing this oath, the recruit is told the governing rules, reminded of the need for secrecy and told the secret greeting and pass phrase. After all the trouble of gaining acceptance, it is almost unheard of for a recruit to refuse to join at this point. Having refused to join, such recruits are never offered a position as an informant.

While you must be a magician to join the Silencius, you need not be a magician to work for them. As detailed above, many 'near miss' recruits become informers. However, there are times when magic alone is not enough to deal with the problem. When a member investigates a case, they can employ additional help as they deem necessary. Such entourage might include people from all walks of life, from pickpockets and burglars to socialites and businessmen. The Silencius is only interested in gathering evidence, not the methods used. While





secrecy remains paramount, how much information these 'hirelings' should be made aware of is left to the judgement of each Silencius member. Many Silencius agents build a small team of experts over time; all discreetly aware of whom they are working for and why. However, should one of the members of any agent's entourage prove unreliable, it is up to the agent to silence them or suffer the consequences.

RESOURCES

As members of the Guild, agents of the Silencius have access to all Guild resources. They can use any Guild library, request sanctuary in any Guildhall and request the aid of any Guild member. Although the Silencius can make these requests of ordinary Guild members, they try to avoid doing so to prevent others from learning of the Silencius' existence. When they do it is usually as another Guild member, rather than as a Silencius.

Their primary headquarters is in the Guildhall in Bishopsgate, London. All members of the Silencius, who can do so, meet there annually on 8th September, commemorating the date of the order's founding. Owing to their secretive nature, they do not meet in the General Assembly hall itself. Instead, they meet in a secret chamber underneath the Guildhall. The entrance is hidden behind wine casks in the basement of a wine shop next door, although another entrance (known only to the magisters and sub-magisters) leads into the Guildhall itself. To prevent anyone from accidentally stumbling across this chamber while cleaning or snooping (even though the Silencius secretly owns the wine shop) entrants must whisper the secret pass phrase. Once whispered in front of the correct wine cask, the 8th from the right, the cask slides apart and reveals the entrance to the secret chamber. The secret phrase, 'Docendo discimus', Latin for 'We learn by teaching', is taught to new members upon their induction. Should anyone leave for any reason (except retirement) another member of the order magically strikes the phrase and knowledge of the secret chamber from the person's mind.

The few who know of the order but are not members themselves expect any secret meeting place to resemble an archetypical wizard's library as existed prior to the Thirty Years War. Non-members believe the Silencius confiscates magical tomes and arcane artefacts and hordes the items in secret libraries filled floor to ceiling with symbols of their Thaumaturgical power. That's the furthest thing from the truth. The Silencius, as enforcers of magical law, do not horde

what they seize from transgressors. Instead, the chamber is an austere room with stone benches in concentric circles around a raised stone platform. The circuit of benches is divided into six, one section for each district. The sub-magisters for each district sit closest to the dais, with the Silencius of their district seated behind them. If someone wishes to speak, he stands upon the dais so that his voice carries to all in attendance.

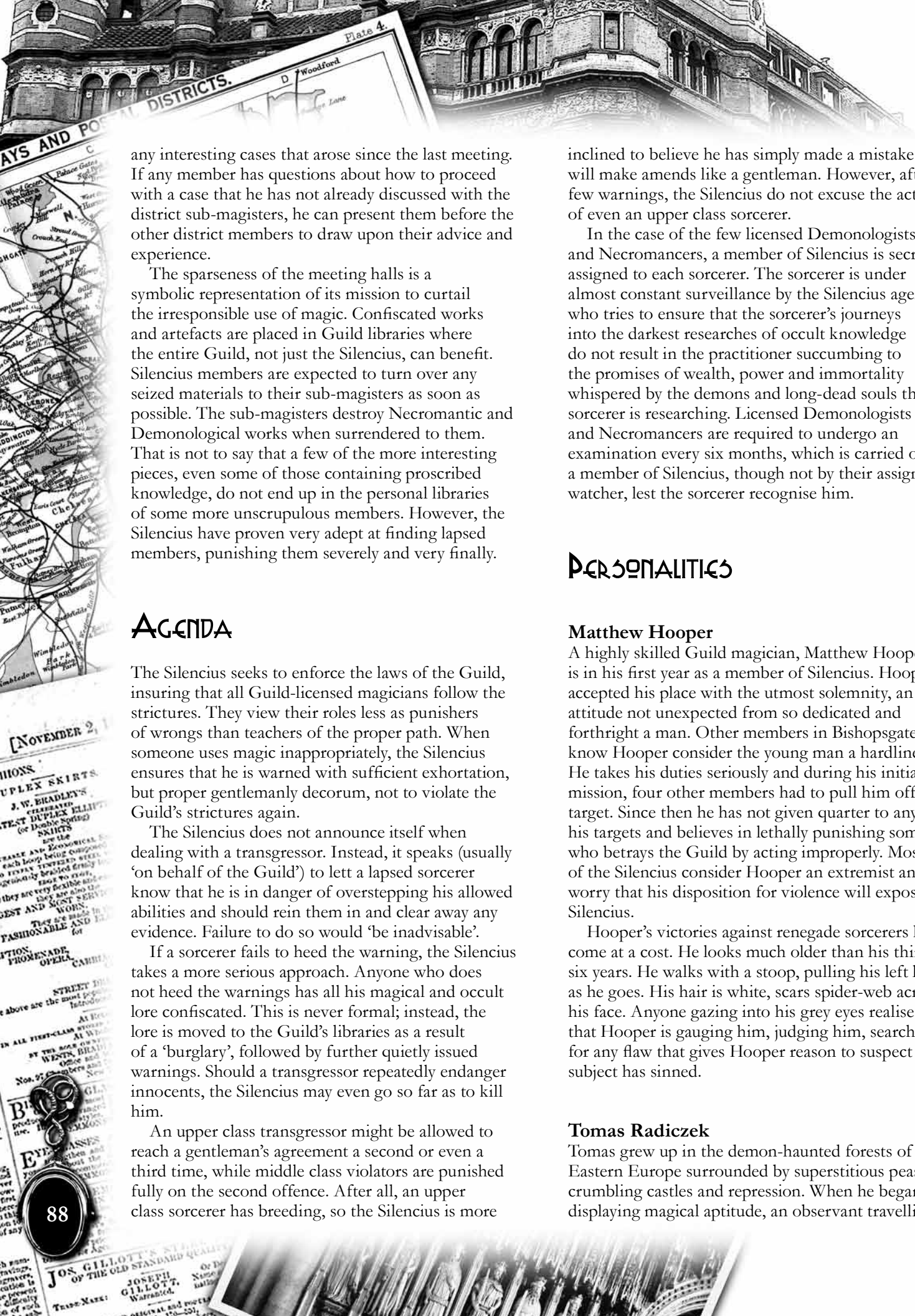
The only concession to their magical nature, other than the magical sealing of the room's entrance, are the wards put in place to ensure that no espionage, magical or mundane, is conducted within the chamber by non-members. Any wizard who attempts to scry finds himself looking at a stone wall backed by earth. As far as the rest of the world is concerned, there is no room hidden beneath the basement of the Guildhall.

The chamber in Bishopsgate is not the only one available for meetings. Each of the districts maintains a secret meeting hall where local members of the Silencius can gather for official meetings. The European District's council chamber is the aforementioned one under Bishopsgate. The African meeting hall is hidden off an alley that runs through the Khan el-Khalili bazaar in Cairo. The North American chamber is under Federal Hall at 26 Wall Street in Manhattan, New York City. The Asian District's headquarters is disguised as a Gentleman's Club on Auckland Road in Calcutta, abutting the Eden Gardens. The Oceanic District has its members meet in a chamber under the Guild's hall in Melbourne, across the street from the Melbourne Terminus. In South America, the order still meets in a secret chamber behind the nave of the Aluminat Candelária Church in Rio de Janeiro. Despite the separation of Church and Guild, and the open hostilities displayed between the groups in other regions of the world, they are able to work together in large parts of South America.

All Silencius meeting halls, regardless of country, use the same secret phrase to gain entrance. The same wards guard all chambers to ensure secrecy. Each meeting hall features the same simple design; circular benches surrounding a raised dais. Not all are made of stone but instead take advantage of local resources. For example, the Calcutta benches and dais are made of wood, while the Cairo room is furnished in sandstone.

Each district sets its own local meeting schedule and the sub-magisters try to arrange meetings to bring all their agents together at least once every two months. At these meetings, the members discuss the state of magical crime in their district in addition to





any interesting cases that arose since the last meeting. If any member has questions about how to proceed with a case that he has not already discussed with the district sub-magisters, he can present them before the other district members to draw upon their advice and experience.

The sparseness of the meeting halls is a symbolic representation of its mission to curtail the irresponsible use of magic. Confiscated works and artefacts are placed in Guild libraries where the entire Guild, not just the Silencius, can benefit. Silencius members are expected to turn over any seized materials to their sub-magisters as soon as possible. The sub-magisters destroy Necromantic and Demonological works when surrendered to them. That is not to say that a few of the more interesting pieces, even some of those containing proscribed knowledge, do not end up in the personal libraries of some more unscrupulous members. However, the Silencius have proven very adept at finding lapsed members, punishing them severely and very finally.

AGENDA

The Silencius seeks to enforce the laws of the Guild, insuring that all Guild-licensed magicians follow the strictures. They view their roles less as punishers of wrongs than teachers of the proper path. When someone uses magic inappropriately, the Silencius ensures that he is warned with sufficient exhortation, but proper gentlemanly decorum, not to violate the Guild's strictures again.

The Silencius does not announce itself when dealing with a transgressor. Instead, it speaks (usually 'on behalf of the Guild') to let a lapsed sorcerer know that he is in danger of overstepping his allowed abilities and should rein them in and clear away any evidence. Failure to do so would 'be inadvisable'.

If a sorcerer fails to heed the warning, the Silencius takes a more serious approach. Anyone who does not heed the warnings has all his magical and occult lore confiscated. This is never formal; instead, the lore is moved to the Guild's libraries as a result of a 'burglary', followed by further quietly issued warnings. Should a transgressor repeatedly endanger innocents, the Silencius may even go so far as to kill him.

An upper class transgressor might be allowed to reach a gentleman's agreement a second or even a third time, while middle class violators are punished fully on the second offence. After all, an upper class sorcerer has breeding, so the Silencius is more

inclined to believe he has simply made a mistake and will make amends like a gentleman. However, after a few warnings, the Silencius do not excuse the actions of even an upper class sorcerer.

In the case of the few licensed Demonologists and Necromancers, a member of Silencius is secretly assigned to each sorcerer. The sorcerer is under almost constant surveillance by the Silencius agent, who tries to ensure that the sorcerer's journeys into the darkest researches of occult knowledge do not result in the practitioner succumbing to the promises of wealth, power and immortality whispered by the demons and long-dead souls the sorcerer is researching. Licensed Demonologists and Necromancers are required to undergo an examination every six months, which is carried out by a member of Silencius, though not by their assigned watcher, lest the sorcerer recognise him.

PERSONALITIES

Matthew Hooper

A highly skilled Guild magician, Matthew Hooper is in his first year as a member of Silencius. Hooper accepted his place with the utmost solemnity, an attitude not unexpected from so dedicated and forthright a man. Other members in Bishopsgate who know Hooper consider the young man a hardliner. He takes his duties seriously and during his initial mission, four other members had to pull him off his target. Since then he has not given quarter to any of his targets and believes in lethally punishing someone who betrays the Guild by acting improperly. Most of the Silencius consider Hooper an extremist and worry that his disposition for violence will expose the Silencius.

Hooper's victories against renegade sorcerers have come at a cost. He looks much older than his thirty-six years. He walks with a stoop, pulling his left leg as he goes. His hair is white, scars spider-web across his face. Anyone gazing into his grey eyes realises that Hooper is gauging him, judging him, searching for any flaw that gives Hooper reason to suspect his subject has sinned.

Tomas Radiczek

Tomas grew up in the demon-haunted forests of Eastern Europe surrounded by superstitious peasants, crumbling castles and repression. When he began displaying magical aptitude, an observant travelling

Matthew Hooper
Rank 12 Silencius Hunter (Focussed)

Physical Competence: +6
Mental Competence: +9
Initiative: 9
Health: 7 Dice (14 pips)
Mana: 6 Dice (36 pips)
Signature Skills: Athletics +2,
Concentration +4, Lore +4, Perception +2,
Swordplay +2, Thaumaturgy +3, Tracking +5
Traits: Rage +5, Limp +3, Scarred +2
Special Abilities: All Etheric spells, Darkness
of Ages, Ectoplasmic Bonds (Thaumaturgy)
Combat Abilities: Attacks anyone he believes
guilty. Fights with magic or signature skills.
Damage: Sword Cane (4 Dice)

Tomas Radiczek
Rank 16 Silencius Sub-Magister
(Specialist)

Physical Competence: +4
Mental Competence: +15
Initiative:
Health: 3 Dice (6 pips)
Mana: 4 Dice.
Signature Skills: Charm +3,
Concentration +4, Demonology +1,
Empathy +3, Lore +5, Necromancy +1,
Teaching +3, Thaumaturgy +5
Traits: Dark +2, Manipulative +4
Special Abilities: All Thaumaturgy spells listed
in the Core rulebook, all licensed Necromantic
and Demonology spells too (for which he has
a licence)
Combat Abilities: Avoids fights whenever
possible. When pressed, uses magic.

Guild-member whisked him away, providing his family with enough money to live comfortably for the rest of their lives. Raised in the confines of the Guild, it is all Tomas has ever known. His indoctrination into the Silencius followed him striking down a demon, accidentally summoned by a Guild sorcerer, and then proceeding to bring the sorcerer to justice. Since then, Radiczek has been appointed a sub-magister in London, overseeing the affairs of the Silencius in Bishopgate. A firm believer in rehabilitation, he prefers to give every transgressor a second chance.

Radiczek is a slight man with a thinning hairline. He dresses well and carries himself like a gentleman, never without a nicely carved cane. Despite his forty years in England, a strong Slavic accent is present when he speaks.

General Silencius Member

The average member of Silencius is a highly skilled sorcerer who has chosen to dedicate his life to ensuring the safety of the Guild. Chosen because of their loyalty to the Guild and belief in the rule of law, Silencius members are formidable sorcerers, especially when their opponent is in the wrong. However, they are also very discrete and patient, knowing that timing and secrecy are as important as magic when dealing with a problem.

Silencius Member
Rank 10 Magical Agent (Focussed)

Physical Competence: +5
Mental Competence: +8
Initiative: 9
Health: 6 Dice (12 pips)
Mana: 4 Dice (24 pips)
Signature Skills: Blunt Weapons +2,
Concentration +2, Etiquette +2, High Society +2, Lore +2, Perception +3, Thaumaturgy +3
Special Abilities: A variety of spells for investigation and capture of a target, usually 3-4 in total.
Combat Abilities: Prefers to talk his way out of fights, but when pressed tries to subdue his opponent with magic or his cane.
Damage: Cane (3 Dice)

THE WEST END TERROR

Martin was a bundle of nerves. This meeting could be the start of a very lucrative venture...or the end of him. If the rumours were true, Borozci was not a man with whom to trifle but a real job would mean a place to sleep where he wasn't tied into a pew, or crowded with a bunch of other Irish on the floor of some dank flophouse.

Even so, the rumours about this fellow were enough to still give him pause. He was at war with other gangs throughout the city, some said. Even the Chinese were afraid of him and they weren't usually afraid of anything. The police steered clear of his activities. He was a fallen prince from some Eastern principality, like Moldavia, or some such. He was a sorcerer. He was a demon. He tortured his enemies and ran his criminal empire through fear. Borozci's people reached out and their enemies died and no one ever saw a thing.

The public house he was to meet at was nearby, cleaner than Martin thought a pub could be, filled with flash gents, and only a few ladies present. Central to the activity was an old, bespectacled man, thin and unimpressive. The men around him, however, were raptly attentive. Moments later, their business was done and the men cleared out. Tentatively, Martin made his move, trying to look as humble as possible as he approached.

Borozci fixed his gaze on Martin and for a moment, he felt a chill. The old man's eyes were shadowed but he could feel them fixed on him. Even without any introduction, it was clear Borozci knew exactly who he was. "You have been making inquiries, yes?"

Martin felt his voice almost crack. "Yes, sir. I hear you are looking for some people to work the city. I know it better'n anyone else you're likely to find."

"You are pickpocket. Petty criminal. There are many of these in London, I think." The old man's voice was merry-sounding, not at all the horror show he had been made out to be. Could this be the West End Terror? Martin doubted it. He felt a bit of indignation at being dismissed.

"Not like me. I'm quick on the heel as they come. I've got a nose for the mark, and I know how to keep my trap shut when the peelers come. Petty or no, I'm a good man."

"You are taking offence to my words. I have insulted you?" There was the subtlest of changes in the old man's posture. It was hard to define, but for a second, the old man's face seemed changed — an image darker, ancient, colder, seemed to superimpose itself on his features. The temperature seemed to drop around Martin. He realised the conversation at the tables around them had stopped. Everyone else was studiously avoiding looking their way. "I should make amends perhaps by giving you job?"

"Uh..."

"I hear talk all the time. 'I am good man...' 'He is good man...' 'Someone you can use...' Many presume, you understand? Few deliver results required. This is gossip. Presumption. You understand?" Martin swallowed and nodded. "You will assist my people this night. Then we discuss if you are good man. If you do well, maybe so. If you do not, then no. If no, you will have lied to me. This I do not accept. Consequences, then, must be grave."


Dismissed, Martin shuffled away as quickly as he could. He'd do as Borozci asked; whatever it turned out to be. The money was too good and he needed the work if he was to eat this week. However, more than all that, the terror he felt after meeting Borozci would never allow him to fail to keep his appointment.

HISTORY

Recently, there has been a new power in the London underworld; something the police are calling the 'West End Terror'. This new gang is proving a tough nut to crack: discipline is maintained, it is rumoured, through torture of those that look to betray the leadership, or do not perform to expectations. The leader of this ring is thought to be called Alexei Borozci, an immigrant from somewhere in the Balkans or Hungary, but there is no record of the man

having entered Britain, nor is there a paper trail that connects any man of this name to any businesses. Those who have met this Borozci have described their encounters as 'chilling', despite the fact that the man is described as being small, dapper and old - like someone's favourite grandfather.

Other members of the leadership are similarly described as unnatural, frightening, or unearthly. Some at Scotland Yard suspect (as do the Silencius) that Borozci and his lieutenants may be sorcerers, or even undead.



The West End Terror is a new group; they surfaced only a few years ago and have risen in influence at an alarmingly fast rate. Their operations began small, muscling in on existing street gangs, but have quickly expanded into more ambitious criminal enterprises. Their rate of expansion is due to taking control of existing operations rather than destroying the opposition. It is almost as if they approach successful criminals and just say 'well done; now you are working for me'. They started with protection rackets for other illicit businesses but now they control most of these rings in Bayswater, Mayfair and Paddington. In addition to the usual protection, this group handles gambling, prostitution, fencing of high-risk objects, as well as some unique criminal enterprises: the illegal trade in cadavers (and the murder of the same), real estate scams and various clever fraud schemes. The success of the group and its secrecy suggests that this organisation is very tight, professional and has real talent in its members. The level of secrecy implies rough discipline and small numbers for the leadership.

STRUCTURE

When operating against the West End Terror, the authorities find themselves constantly dealing with frustration – it is as if Borozci can read their minds! His operations have always cleared out just before the raid, their informants are dead before they can speak – and often left in such a state as to prove a warning to others and to heighten the fear in Borozci's enemies. When they succeed in breaking in on a caper, the authorities often find that in some way, they've aided the villain. He's always a step ahead, so the police have begun to turn to private investigators for desperately needed assistance...

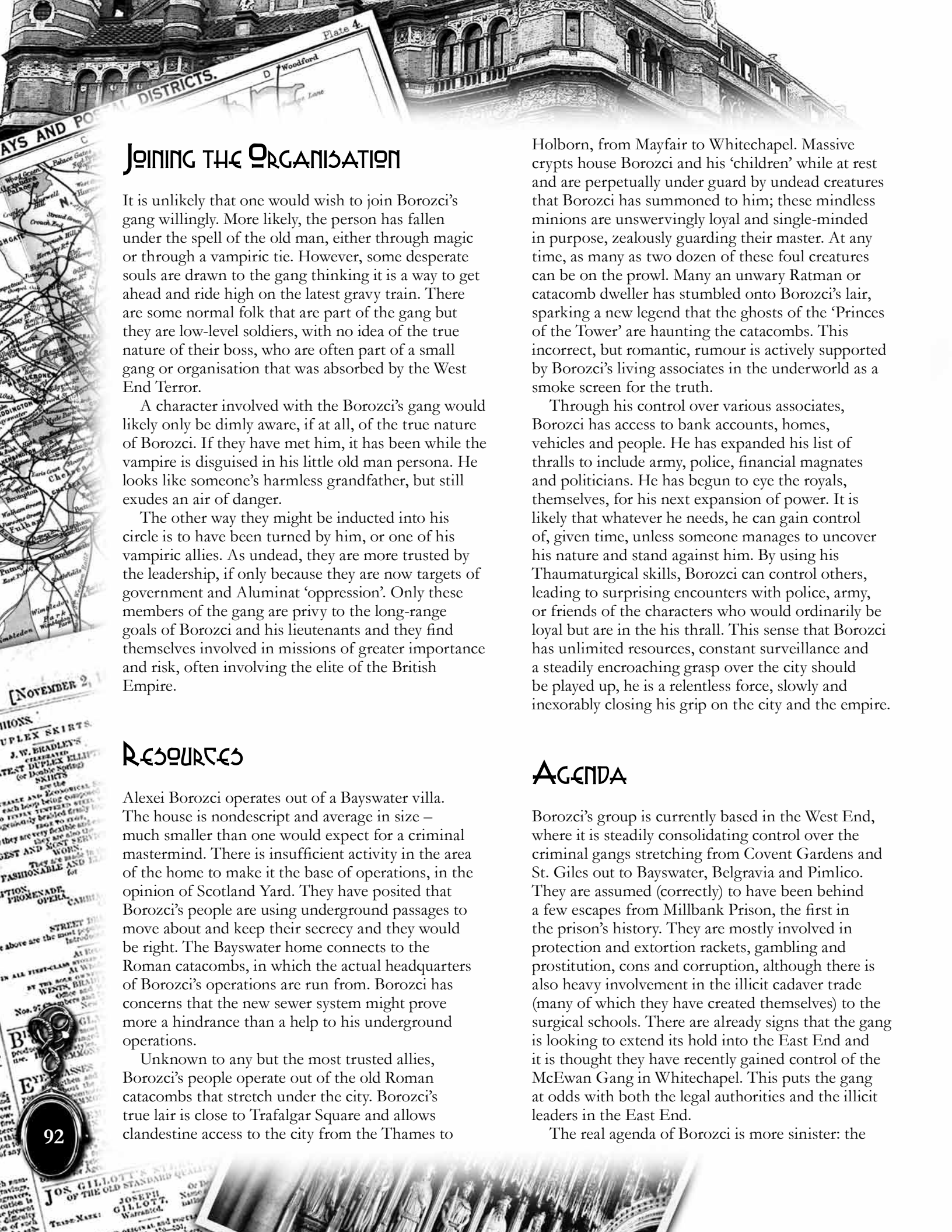
Borozci, himself, is a dichotomy. His public persona is that of an old man, kindly and quiet in aspect. His gang and enemies see another man, a creature of shadow and power, dreadful in mien, and utterly without remorse, empathy, or fear. He is a vampire and an old one. His principal associates are those he's turned and who are dedicated to the preservation of their master and his fortunes. Lead lieutenant Dobro, who is like a son to the old man, is a cool customer, a competent manager for those earthly associates that Borozci needs for his day-to-day operations. He is often found at his master's side.

Other leadership includes Mary, a young vampire and a Londoner. She is a key intelligence asset for Borozci; she understands the people, the gangs and the way the law works (at least in a gutter-level way).

She was a prostitute in Whitechapel, run by one of the more powerful gangs, the McEwan Gang, and her knowledge of the criminal underworld has put her in her master's inner circle. Another lieutenant is Eva, one of Borozci's 'wives', a vampire nearly as old as he is. She was, in her former life, a Balkan princess who had been property of the Turks. The victim of abuse too horrible to recount, she is cynical and without sympathy toward the living.

Central to his success in the living world is that his human associates are often unaware of their involvement in Borozci's business. He controls them, sometimes from a distance, by sorcery or his own formidable vampiric power, directing them to steal, kill, alter records, or spy for him. His investments are secure in Barings Bank, in a secret account maintained by Thomas Baring, the bank's director and a member of parliament, who is an unwitting victim of Borozci's control. Borozci's control is subtle, only allowing him to manipulate Thomas Baring when it comes to financial matters and 'gentlemanly chats'. Thomas Baring won't do anything obviously criminal but he does pass on information and turn a blind eye for 'someone of the right breeding to be trusted'.





JOINING THE ORGANISATION

It is unlikely that one would wish to join Borozci's gang willingly. More likely, the person has fallen under the spell of the old man, either through magic or through a vampiric tie. However, some desperate souls are drawn to the gang thinking it is a way to get ahead and ride high on the latest gravy train. There are some normal folk that are part of the gang but they are low-level soldiers, with no idea of the true nature of their boss, who are often part of a small gang or organisation that was absorbed by the West End Terror.

A character involved with the Borozci's gang would likely only be dimly aware, if at all, of the true nature of Borozci. If they have met him, it has been while the vampire is disguised in his little old man persona. He looks like someone's harmless grandfather, but still exudes an air of danger.

The other way they might be inducted into his circle is to have been turned by him, or one of his vampiric allies. As undead, they are more trusted by the leadership, if only because they are now targets of government and Aluminat 'oppression'. Only these members of the gang are privy to the long-range goals of Borozci and his lieutenants and they find themselves involved in missions of greater importance and risk, often involving the elite of the British Empire.

RESOURCES

Alexei Borozci operates out of a Bayswater villa. The house is nondescript and average in size – much smaller than one would expect for a criminal mastermind. There is insufficient activity in the area of the home to make it the base of operations, in the opinion of Scotland Yard. They have posited that Borozci's people are using underground passages to move about and keep their secrecy and they would be right. The Bayswater home connects to the Roman catacombs, in which the actual headquarters of Borozci's operations are run from. Borozci has concerns that the new sewer system might prove more a hindrance than a help to his underground operations.

Unknown to any but the most trusted allies, Borozci's people operate out of the old Roman catacombs that stretch under the city. Borozci's true lair is close to Trafalgar Square and allows clandestine access to the city from the Thames to

Holborn, from Mayfair to Whitechapel. Massive crypts house Borozci and his 'children' while at rest and are perpetually under guard by undead creatures that Borozci has summoned to him; these mindless minions are unswervingly loyal and single-minded in purpose, zealously guarding their master. At any time, as many as two dozen of these foul creatures can be on the prowl. Many an unwary Ratman or catacomb dweller has stumbled onto Borozci's lair, sparking a new legend that the ghosts of the 'Princes of the Tower' are haunting the catacombs. This incorrect, but romantic, rumour is actively supported by Borozci's living associates in the underworld as a smoke screen for the truth.

Through his control over various associates, Borozci has access to bank accounts, homes, vehicles and people. He has expanded his list of thralls to include army, police, financial magnates and politicians. He has begun to eye the royals, themselves, for his next expansion of power. It is likely that whatever he needs, he can gain control of, given time, unless someone manages to uncover his nature and stand against him. By using his Thaumaturgical skills, Borozci can control others, leading to surprising encounters with police, army, or friends of the characters who would ordinarily be loyal but are in the his thrall. This sense that Borozci has unlimited resources, constant surveillance and a steadily encroaching grasp over the city should be played up, he is a relentless force, slowly and inexorably closing his grip on the city and the empire.

AGENDA

Borozci's group is currently based in the West End, where it is steadily consolidating control over the criminal gangs stretching from Covent Gardens and St. Giles out to Bayswater, Belgravia and Pimlico. They are assumed (correctly) to have been behind a few escapes from Millbank Prison, the first in the prison's history. They are mostly involved in protection and extortion rackets, gambling and prostitution, cons and corruption, although there is also heavy involvement in the illicit cadaver trade (many of which they have created themselves) to the surgical schools. There are already signs that the gang is looking to extend its hold into the East End and it is thought they have recently gained control of the McEwan Gang in Whitechapel. This puts the gang at odds with both the legal authorities and the illicit leaders in the East End.

The real agenda of Borozci is more sinister: the



eventual subjugation of the living in London and control of the British Empire; he envisions a vampiric empire, lording over the world of the living. Moving very slowly, so not to attract attention until it is too late, he hopes to gain control of key members of Parliament and the royalty, but has thus far been thwarted by the Guild (mainly the Silencius), The Observant Society of the Meek and the London Orientalists' Club, among other powerful witch-hunters and rival gangs. However, unless these groups find a way to join forces amicably, Borozci is more than a match for his enemies. While Borozci has a terrifying reputation, he is far from reaching his goals and faces tough opposition. His enemies are becoming aware of his long term plan but these suspicions have been kept from all but the most connected in the Guild and Scotland Yard, even the Queen, herself, has been kept out of the loop.

Secondary to seeking power, Borozci desires to create more vampires for his burgeoning empire. Over time he has discovered that he can only turn some people into true vampires. He has lost many trusted lieutenants in attempts to turn those who are not true Nosferatu, others have become half creatures he has destroyed on general principle. In his homeland, the bloodline is more common but this far away it is harder to find. He awakens and turns any Nosferatu he finds, knowing he can either find a way to control

them or destroy them if they become troublesome. As an addendum to this scheme, Borozci hopes that science can also help him. Perhaps the new discoveries of the west can find a way to allow him to create more vampires, irrespective of whether or not they carry Nosferatu blood. Since leaving his Romanian home, he has also become aware of other forms of vampiric life. He hates these beings with a passion, seeing them as second rate vampires, who are offensive to his dream of a pure vampire empire. His attacks on their nests may gain him a new enemy, with far more power than he anticipates.

PERSONALITIES

Alexei Borozci

Borozci is a fixture of Bayswater's late evening. He is a quiet man who acts more like a banker, than an envoy of evil; he dresses exceedingly well, usually in grey understated business suits and wears wire-rimmed spectacles. His entire appearance suggests a retired businessman: relaxed, friendly and unassuming. He surrounds himself with a collection of pale, grave-looking men and women, all of whom also comport themselves quietly and seriously. In his circle, there is no ostentation; it attracts attention.

He is often found at a Hungarian restaurant, the Carpathian Deli, in Bayswater. Rarely seen at the height of the day (although he can venture out), Borozci conducts his business in the early evening and well into the night. He prefers the earthier atmosphere of the ethnic restaurants and music halls of his adopted district, than the glittering fare of Mayfair and Soho but he can be encountered in the theatre district when business requires it. He rarely goes to his tailors or other merchants, having them come to him at his residence.

Though few would be willing to testify to it, Borozci is the newest, fastest growing force in the London underworld. Despite his mild appearance and behaviour, he is a brutal and sadistic creature. Particularly fond of 'solidifying' his reputation with any who have dealings with him, he often keeps a victim of his rather scientific torture techniques nearby to show those he enters into business with what he does to those that fail or double-cross him. Woe to those that do cross him – they get to meet him in his actual aspect, a shadowy monster that drains his victims of their blood and essence.

His lair is assumed to be in the mansion he has on the edge of Bayswater, near Paddington, but it's underground, in the massive Roman catacombs that



Alexei Borozci
Rank 19 Vampire Sorcerer (Focussed)

Physical Competence: +9
Mental Competence: +13
Initiative: 13
Health: 9 Dice (18 pips)
Mana: 8 Dice (40 pips)
Signature skills: Accounting +3,
Appraisal +2, Bribery +3, Business +2,
Charm -1, Conversation +2, Etiquette +3,
Fashion -2, Interrogation +4, Intimidate +5,
Languages (English +3, German +3, Serbo-Croatian is native), Lore +5, Necromancy +4,
Perception +4, Politics +3, Streetwise +2,
Swordplay +3, Thaumaturgy +4
Traits: Sadistic +4, Genial +3, Grandfatherly +2, Unnatural +3, Keeps his word +5
Special Abilities: Any and all Vampiric powers, Thaumaturgic spells or Necromantic spells the Gamemaster feels he should have.
Combat Abilities: Formidable! Versed with several types of weapon and enhanced by vampiric power and sorcery. Prefers Knives (12 dice)
Damage: Knives (8 Dice, at least, with his strength) and Magic

run underneath the city. This sanctum is massive, with servants' quarters, a huge library and sitting room, kitchen and pantry. The area is guarded by the beasts of this subterranean world, rats which obey his command and spy for him about the city, and a collection of the undead, raised to defend his territory.

Borozci is indeed from somewhere in the Balkans. Born in 1462, he was a victim of the Turkish onslaughts into the area of Montenegro and was nearly killed in an attack on his village. He joined the fighting, even though he was an old man. After the fighting, as he lay dying on the field, a vampire chanced on him and began to feed. However, before it could finish its meal, the Nosferatu was driven off by the approach of mourners. Borozci was thought dead and buried. However, he was 'reborn' days later as an undead. He found his wife, Eva, in the hands of the Turks – she was a petty princess who had been captured by the Turkish forces and was servant to a general; drawn to her plight, Borozci, who still had some vestiges of humanity at this time, rescued her and turned her. For centuries, they have lurked in the Balkans and Austria, building a force of undead. Until recently, Borozci's group was based in Vienna but members of the Emperor's occult secret police nearly succeeded in killing him. Moving his money out of

Austria, Borozci and his gang escaped through Serbia to England, taking advantage of the liberal refugee laws.

When dealing with Borozci, politeness and keeping your word is key to your survival. If you take a job with him, finish it. Keep your word and he keeps his; break it at your peril. His favoured method of getting his point across is torture, always to the point of death but trying to prolong the discomfort for as long as possible.

He is a monstrous creature who long ago came to grips with his new reality as an undead; he no longer mourns his lost life but rather views the livings' horror of the vampiric as oppression. Additionally, his ancient hatreds and beliefs have ossified in him: he is surprisingly religious and views himself as paying penance for being unworthy of heaven. Borozci saves most of his hatred for the 'Turk' – what he calls all followers of Ismal. Followers of the Prophet are in for special treatment if they cross him...or even if they don't. They are the one group he will not treat fairly or well. He has a soft spot in his heart for the Roma, and those who claim gypsy blood.

Currently, much of his energies are going into securing his hold on the West End, but increasingly he is turning his attention toward destroying his arch-rival, Ying Kow, the head of the Black Pearl Beneficence Society (a Tong gang in Limehouse) and consolidating his power and wealth. After that, who knows what he might do...

Dobro

One of Borozci's most trusted lieutenants, Dobro was sired into vampirism by the criminal mastermind. He dresses entirely in black: black frock coat, shirt, waistcoat and trousers. He usually wears a leather corset with steel boning and pockets for thin steel plating to protect him against arrows, wooden stakes and the like. He never wears a hat, even in the sun, preferring his long, silk-like, black hair to a hat. He rarely speaks, leaving that to Borozci out of respect. Though he understands several languages, he speaks only German and Hungarian well.

Born in Buda, Hungary in 1600, he was recruited by Borozci, who took a liking to the man. In many ways, he is like a son to the old vampire. Since his conversion to vampirism, Dobro has rarely been away from Borozci's side. When encountered alone, he is usually on an important mission for Borozci; if you are the target of his visit, run. He is usually sent to collect those who have either crossed or disappointed his master.

Dobro

Rank 10 Henchman (Focussed)

Physical Competence: +8
Mental Competence: +5
Initiative: 10
Health: 8 Dice (16 pips)
Signature Skills: Athletics +4, Dodge +3, Drive Carriage +2, Empathy +1, Fisticuffs +3, Horse Riding +1, Interrogation +3, Languages (English +2, French +2, German +4, Italian +2, Serbo-Croatian +2), Might +3, Perception +4, Swordplay +3, Traits: Loyal +4, Quiet +3, Ruthless +3
Special Abilities: Summon (Wolves), Incapacitating Attack (Enthral), Shapeshifter (Wolf)
Combat Abilities: Silently ready to fight to the death when ordered. Prefers use of a long fighting machete (11 Dice)
Damage: Machete (10 dice with his strength)

Eva

Born sometime in the late 1400s, Eva was a petty princess – most likely the daughter of a gypsy tribal leader in Serbia. She was a young girl when the Turks invaded her village and took her captive. For a year, she served as a slave to a Turkish general and was abused horribly. Her hatred of anything Ismal or Turkish has not abated in 400 years. She was rescued by Borozci from the General and, overcome by love for her, he turned her. This is still a point of contention in their relationship but she has recently come to embrace his idea of a vampire empire.

She is in charge of the 'household' – the vampires that surround the couple, as well as the security of the sanctuary. She is the only person that can stay his hand, once he has made a decision. There is still a streak of humanity in her, and she can be swayed by children and women in difficult straits. This bit of nostalgia for her former life is one of the few means of manipulating Borozci.

Mary Dallian

The most recent convert to the inner circle of the West End Terror is Mary. She has lived in the darkest streets of London since she can remember and had little option but to turn to prostitution. Her long blonde hair coupled with mysteriously decadent grey-brown eyes, as well as a pragmatic nature, ensured she did well enough to eat but that wasn't enough for her.

Borozci noticed something about her the moment they met in a chance encounter. It was more than

Eva

Rank 12 Nosferatu Gypsy Princess (Generalist)

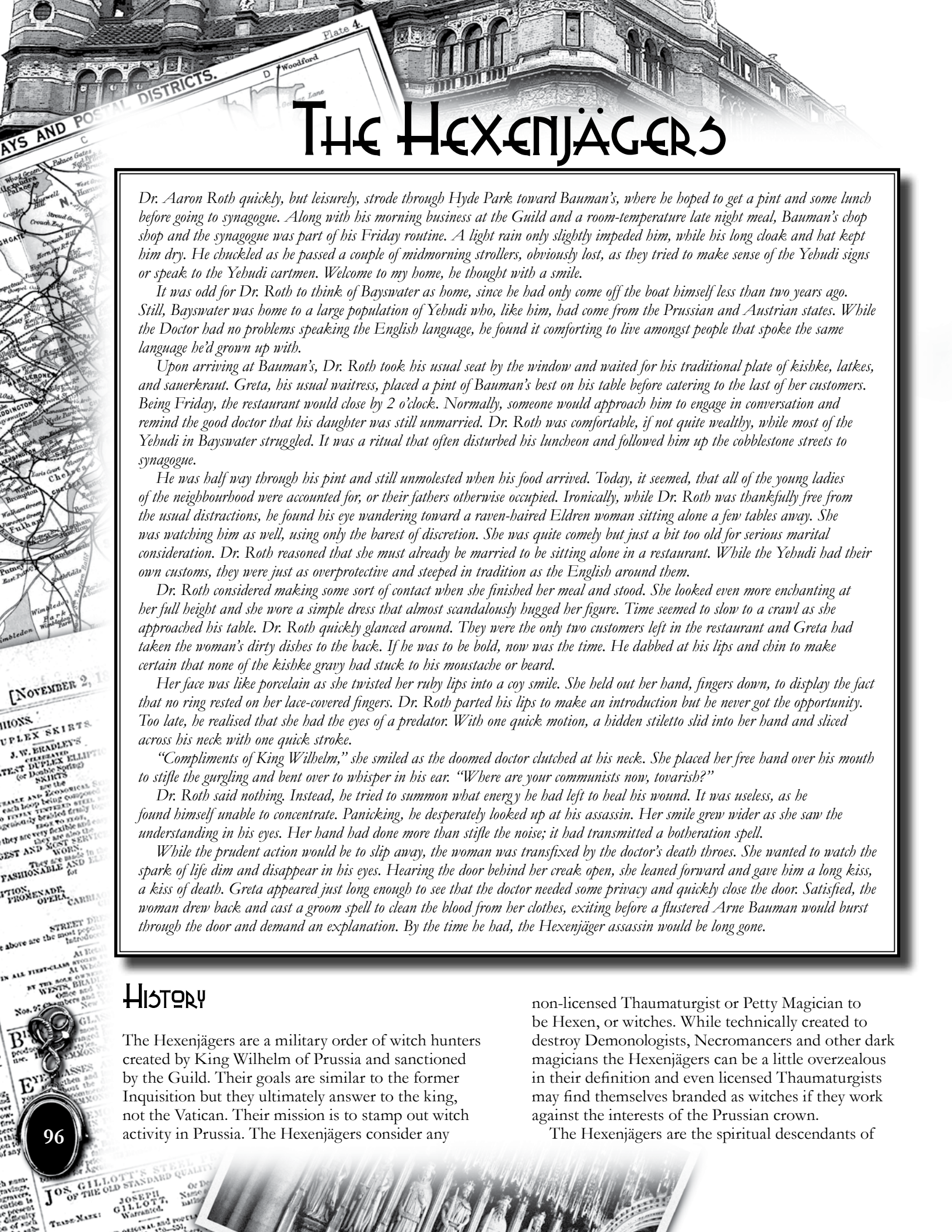
Physical Competence: +7
Mental Competence: +8
Initiative: 9
Health: 7 Dice (14 pips)
Signature Skills: Athletics +3, Charm +3, Dance +4, Etiquette +3, Empathy +4, Fisticuffs +1, Hide & Sneak +2, Horse Riding +2, Languages (English +2, French +2, German +4, Italian +2, Serbo-Croatian +5), Lore +4, Perception +2
Traits: Trustworthy +3, Dedicated +2, Companionship +1
Special Abilities: Summon (Wolves, Rats), Incapacitating Attack (Enthral), Shapeshifter (Wolf, Bat, Mist), Infectious (Sense and Awaken Nosferatu)
Combat Abilities: Avoids combat, but has nasty teeth and claws if cornered (8 Dice)
Damage: Long nails (5 Dice)

just his keen senses telling him she was a potential Nosferatu. He turned her on the spot, unaware that had he not done so, the host of diseases she carried would have killed her in a few months. She considers her vampiric state to be a gift and one that frees her from base human morality. She hopes to leave Borozci one day and carve a trail across Europe. However, for now, her knowledge and experience of the streets of London is invaluable to him.

Mary

Rank 7 Vampire Street-mistress (Focussed)

Physical Competence: +4
Mental Competence: +6
Initiative: 7
Health: 5 Dice (10 pips)
Signature Skills: Athletics +2, Charm +3, Conceal +2, Dance +4, Dodge +2, Empathy +4, Etiquette +3, Fisticuffs +1, Hide & Sneak +4, Improvised Weapon +3, Perception +2, Streetwise +4
Traits: Observant +2, Decadent +3, Social climber +2
Special Abilities: Summon (Rats), Cause Plague (Syphilis), Incapacitating Attack (Enthral), Combat Abilities: Does not like to fight but grabs the nearest blunt object and has a go, if need be (7 Dice)
Damage: Improvised weapon (3-5 Dice or so)



The Hexenjäger

Dr. Aaron Roth quickly, but leisurely, strode through Hyde Park toward Bauman's, where he hoped to get a pint and some lunch before going to synagogue. Along with his morning business at the Guild and a room-temperature late night meal, Bauman's chop shop and the synagogue was part of his Friday routine. A light rain only slightly impeded him, while his long cloak and hat kept him dry. He chuckled as he passed a couple of midmorning strollers, obviously lost, as they tried to make sense of the Yebudi signs or speak to the Yebudi cartmen. Welcome to my home, he thought with a smile.

It was odd for Dr. Roth to think of Bayswater as home, since he had only come off the boat himself less than two years ago. Still, Bayswater was home to a large population of Yebudi who, like him, had come from the Prussian and Austrian states. While the Doctor had no problems speaking the English language, he found it comforting to live amongst people that spoke the same language he'd grown up with.

Upon arriving at Bauman's, Dr. Roth took his usual seat by the window and waited for his traditional plate of kishke, latkes, and sauerkraut. Greta, his usual waitress, placed a pint of Bauman's best on his table before catering to the last of her customers. Being Friday, the restaurant would close by 2 o'clock. Normally, someone would approach him to engage in conversation and remind the good doctor that his daughter was still unmarried. Dr. Roth was comfortable, if not quite wealthy, while most of the Yebudi in Bayswater struggled. It was a ritual that often disturbed his luncheon and followed him up the cobblestone streets to synagogue.

He was half way through his pint and still unmolested when his food arrived. Today, it seemed, that all of the young ladies of the neighbourhood were accounted for, or their fathers otherwise occupied. Ironically, while Dr. Roth was thankfully free from the usual distractions, he found his eye wandering toward a raven-haired Eldren woman sitting alone a few tables away. She was watching him as well, using only the barest of discretion. She was quite comely but just a bit too old for serious marital consideration. Dr. Roth reasoned that she must already be married to be sitting alone in a restaurant. While the Yebudi had their own customs, they were just as overprotective and steeped in tradition as the English around them.

Dr. Roth considered making some sort of contact when she finished her meal and stood. She looked even more enchanting at her full height and she wore a simple dress that almost scandalously bugged her figure. Time seemed to slow to a crawl as she approached his table. Dr. Roth quickly glanced around. They were the only two customers left in the restaurant and Greta had taken the woman's dirty dishes to the back. If he was to be bold, now was the time. He dabbed at his lips and chin to make certain that none of the kishke gravy had stuck to his moustache or beard.

Her face was like porcelain as she twisted her ruby lips into a coy smile. She held out her hand, fingers down, to display the fact that no ring rested on her lace-covered fingers. Dr. Roth parted his lips to make an introduction but he never got the opportunity. Too late, he realised that she had the eyes of a predator. With one quick motion, a hidden stiletto slid into her hand and sliced across his neck with one quick stroke.

"Compliments of King Wilhelm," she smiled as the doomed doctor clutched at his neck. She placed her free hand over his mouth to stifle the gurgling and bent over to whisper in his ear. "Where are your communists now, tovarish?"

Dr. Roth said nothing. Instead, he tried to summon what energy he had left to heal his wound. It was useless, as he found himself unable to concentrate. Panicking, he desperately looked up at his assassin. Her smile grew wider as she saw the understanding in his eyes. Her hand had done more than stifle the noise; it had transmitted a botheration spell.


While the prudent action would be to slip away, the woman was transfixed by the doctor's death throes. She wanted to watch the spark of life dim and disappear in his eyes. Hearing the door behind her creak open, she leaned forward and gave him a long kiss, a kiss of death. Greta appeared just long enough to see that the doctor needed some privacy and quickly close the door. Satisfied, the woman drew back and cast a groom spell to clean the blood from her clothes, exiting before a flustered Arne Bauman would burst through the door and demand an explanation. By the time he had, the Hexenjäger assassin would be long gone.

History

The Hexenjäger is a military order of witch hunters created by King Wilhelm of Prussia and sanctioned by the Guild. Their goals are similar to the former Inquisition but they ultimately answer to the king, not the Vatican. Their mission is to stamp out witch activity in Prussia. The Hexenjäger consider any

non-licensed Thaumaturgist or Petty Magician to be Hexen, or witches. While technically created to destroy Demonologists, Necromancers and other dark magicians the Hexenjäger can be a little overzealous in their definition and even licensed Thaumaturgists may find themselves branded as witches if they work against the interests of the Prussian crown.

The Hexenjäger are the spiritual descendants of



the original Guild, a band of witch hunters dedicated to stamping out rogue magicians. While the Guild, and later the Inquisition, did the job well enough that the Pope declared an end to the Inquisition in 1637, there have always been monarchs and cardinals that felt that the Inquisition was still necessary within their borders. Papal permission has been granted and rescinded for such organisations ever since. The longest of these was the Spanish Inquisition, which continued to operate until 1818 (the Portuguese Inquisition was an offshoot with Portuguese independence in 1714 and itself was dissolved at the same time), although most of these local Inquisitions are temporary grants of authority.

The Königsberg Guild requested and received permission to hunt witches throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. Positioned in a particularly unstable part of Europe, where boundaries were fluid, the Königsberg Guild often had to integrate new Thaumaturgists and rout out the difficult ones. The Prussian Inquisition was involved in many purges, especially in newly acquired territories. The Prussian Inquisition fell afoul of the Pope during the Silesian Wars (1740-1760), when Austrian Guild members rightly accused the Prussian Inquisition of hunting licensed Austrian Thaumaturgists. The Pope ordered a full review of Prussian Inquisition activities and banned them outright in 1761. Former members of the Prussian Inquisition were suspected of conducting similar activities in Poland during the 1777 Partition of Poland but no evidence was discovered. The Königsberg Guild never requested another Inquisition, fearing that their motives would always be suspect.

In the aftermath of the Austro-Prussian War, the Prussian monarchy started to realise that the various small Guild houses throughout the German states could turn from allies to enemies at the drop of a hat. Some Thaumaturgists in recently disputed territories resented the Prussian government and maintained ties with people hostile to Prussian interests. One concerned and highly prominent member of the Prussian Guild (now based in Berlin), Prince Oberon Adler von Witgen, voiced his concerns to then-Regent Wilhelm, convincing him that it was in Prussia's best interest to revive the Inquisition but divorced from the Guild and Papal oversight. He suggested making the new 'Hexenjäger' a military order under the direct control of the Crown. Regent Wilhelm was receptive to this idea but insisted on waiting until he had the throne, lest he be accused of usurping power.

Prince Witgen's plan saw fruition when King Friedrich Wilhelm IV died in 1861 and the regent officially became King Wilhelm I. This was further



reinforced by the new King's appointment of Bismarck to Chancellor of Prussia. Prince Witgen had little trouble convincing both men to approve the creation of the Hexenjäger, announced in 1863.

Predictably, the Guild, the Vatican and neighbouring German states immediately lodged concerns. Prince Witgen, however, had been planning for this moment for six years. He allayed Guild concerns by insisting that before accepting a position within the new order, all Thaumaturgists within the Hexenjäger are licensed and approved by the Guild. Additionally, all licensed Thaumaturgists caught acting against Prussian interests would be turned over to the Guild for deportation. The Vatican, while suspicious, found it difficult to protest an organisation that followed Aluminat teachings. Furthermore, Prince Witgen assured the Pope that the Kommandant served at his pleasure and that a Papal decree could remove him from office at any time. He placated the other German states by noting that the Hexenjäger, like the rest of the Prussian Army, could not move beyond Prussian borders without a neighbouring country's consent. Behind the scenes, Prince Witgen assured King Wilhelm and Chancellor Bismarck that these conditions would only exist until a strong Germany united under the Prussian Crown could sever ties with the Vatican.

In the four years of its existence, the Hexenjäger





have garnered a fearsome reputation. They have been very successful in clearing out witches in Brandenburg and are slowly fanning out through the rest of Prussia. With a title and military rank, any Hexenjäger that rides into a village can be assured of full support from the local authorities and many able-bodied men have been deputised to root out witches. This has not only had a chilling effect on witch immigration but has also created concern amongst neighbouring German states that they are receiving witches driven out of Prussia.

While this has made German unification a little more difficult for Bismarck, the Hexenjäger have flushed out a number of Austrian spies within the Guild. Even a Russian spy was discovered and deported. Overall, King Wilhelm is pleased with their performance and he is considering granting Baron Hügel the title of count (Graf).

STRUCTURE

Most Prussians perceive the Hexenjäger as being a much larger organisation than it actually is. This is due in part to the fact that most Prussians witness the Hexenjäger pursuing prey, when a score or more soldiers bear down on a small coven. In truth, most of these soldiers are conscripts temporarily drawn from the local barracks or deputised from the local populace (as in the past, when a single witch hunter might rouse an entire village to hunt down a rogue witch with torches and pitchforks).

Currently, there are less than fifty Hexenjäger divided into three loose ranks running on a strong military protocol, with orders relayed down the chain of command. The Kommandant, Baron Hügel, is at the top, followed by his hauptmenn, or captains. This is the inner circle of the Hexenjäger (Hügel presently has five hauptmenn; three are listed below and two are left open for the Gamemaster to fill). The hauptmenn advise the Baron and coordinate hunts against powerful rogue Thaumaturgists or covens of Thaumaturgists.

Next are the ritter, or knights, of the order. Currently, there are twenty knights. As the name implies, an appointment to the ritter also comes with a title. Except in extreme circumstances, these knights often work autonomously, reporting to their assigned hauptmann only when necessary (hauptmenn organise bands when a particularly strong threat arises, or when they need to canvas an area to capture a fleeing witch). Each knight is assigned one or two apprentices (squires). A squire does not have a title (unless he or she joins the Order with one) and must prove his or

her worth. When the assigned knight thinks a squire is ready, he brings him to the Baron for an evaluation.

Since the inception of the Order in 1863, Baron Hügel has had to adapt his tactics. In the beginning, the Hexenjäger could ride into town in uniform and investigate suspected magicians. This became less effective as the Order's reputation grew. Within a year, the mere sighting of a black rider was enough to cause Petty Magicians to flee all of the towns and villages in the surrounding areas. In response, Hügel has divided his Hexenjäger into investigators and enforcers. An investigator covertly infiltrates an area, posing as a traveller, a merchant, a monk, a scholar, or any other unassuming disguise. The investigator gathers intelligence and learns the identity and location of Petty Magicians. Once they have been identified, the enforcement arm moves in. The enforcers rarely wear their official black vestments, preferring instead to dress as regular soldiers. To identify themselves to other Hexenjäger, investigators and undercover enforcers carry a silver badge in a black leather wallet that has their military serial number etched into it. The Hexenjäger make a point of hunting down anyone they discover has stolen such a badge or using one to pose as a Hexenjäger.


While all Hexenjäger are expected to be proficient at ferreting out and neutralising witches, Baron Hügel realises that each knight excels at different aspects of witch hunting. He tries to assign his knights to hauptmenn that reflects their specialties. Dame Justine's knights excel at stealth and obtaining information on possible witches, while Sir Everitt's knights excel at hunting down known threats. The Cardinal, when not out hunting, prefers to coordinate large scale missions.

JOINING THE ORGANISATION

Being a Hexenjäger is an honour and a privilege. Generally speaking, there is no open call for witch hunters. Baron Hügel selects most squires based on their military and thaumaturgical experiences. That said, anyone may go to the Baron's manor and request consideration but such audiences are rarely successful without the support of a current knight.

Another good source of candidates comes from the gallows. Condemned soldiers or Thaumaturgists that show promise are sometimes offered a royal pardon if they agree to join the Hexenjäger. A few of the best knights started this way.

Usually, the title of squire is awarded the new recruited who is assigned to a current ritter. His



name is submitted for consideration for promotion after performing his duties for a period of five years, Due to the dangerous nature of the work, most Squires either perish or quit the Order before the end of their term.

Once Baron Hügel determines that a candidate worthy of knighting, he puts the name on a list and submits it to King Wilhelm, who knights the candidates at the annual Octoberfest celebration at Hügel's manor. Most ritter never rise beyond this level within the Order, as the rank of hauptmann is only filled in the event of a vacancy.

As stated previously, Hexenjäger can deputise people to hunt down a specific witch or coven. Since the Order prefers 'seasoned' deputies, local prisoners are sometimes offered royal pardons in exchange for successfully neutralising a witch. Needless to say, this is not very popular. However, as Hügel's manor is near Berlin, prisoners are rarely utilised in and around the capital city. All deputised prisoners must swear allegiance to the King and the Order and must be available whenever called upon. Finally, since most towns and villages have enough soldiers or watchmen at their disposal, prisoner pardons are not as common as propaganda would suggest.

RESOURCES

Baron Hügel houses the Hexenjäger in his own manor. King Wilhelm provided monies toward upgrading the castle to better accommodate the Order and Baron Hügel can rely on royal support when necessary. As a knightly order, the Hexenjäger also have police powers and can outrank local officials when hunting a witch. The Hexenjäger can also rely on a certain amount of support from the Guild, especially the Prussian Guildhalls.

While the current Order is small and concentrated in Brandenburg, King Wilhelm is seriously considering expanding Hexenjäger jurisdiction to all parts of Prussia. Concern voiced at the courts of the various German states prove to be the king's only obstacle and may be impeding Bismark's progress to unite them.

The one place the Hexenjäger have created a base outside Prussia is London. The Baron has invested a large amount of money to furnish a small group of Hexenjäger with a base of operations on the edge of Whitechapel. The house they use is no different to any other run-down tenement in the area, except that it is not very far from Bishopsgate and the London Guild-house. Inside, the house is secure like a fortress

and acts as a safe house for the Hexenjäger to operate in the heart of the Empire, even if they have no official jurisdiction there.

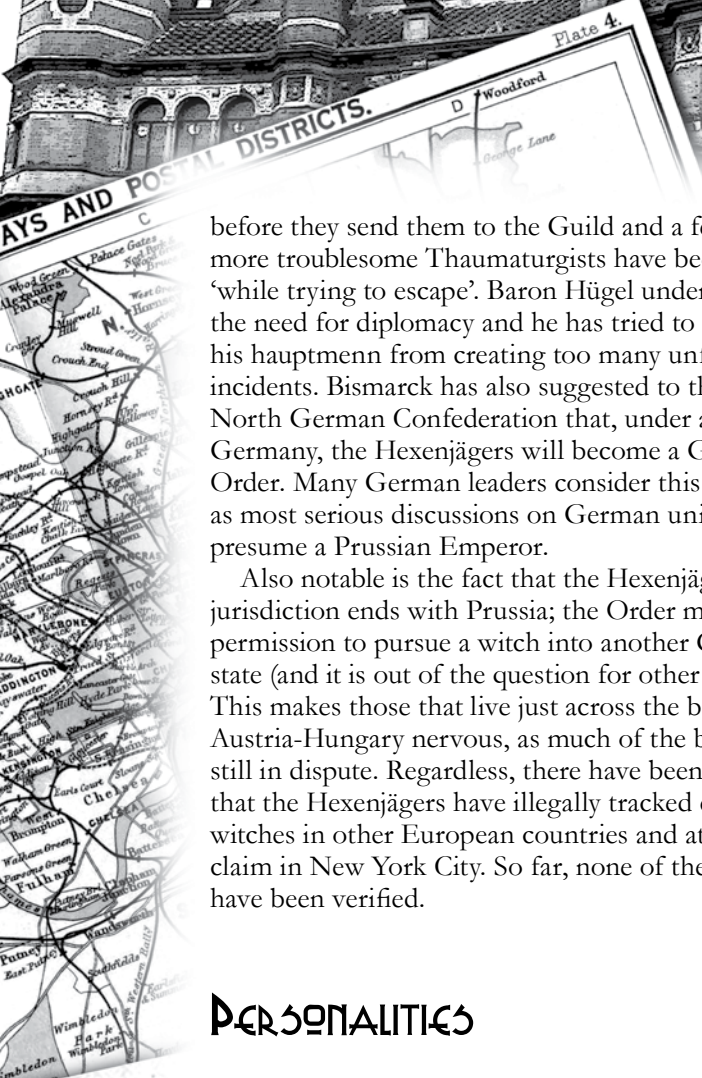
AGENDA

The Hexenjäger have two primary agenda: the neutralisation of 'witches' and the strengthening of Prussian interests. The two often go hand-in-hand, as many spies, saboteurs and insurgents are often trained magicians.

The definition of a witch has expanded with the Hexenjäger's mission. Traditionally, a witch was simply an unlicensed Thaumaturgist or petty conjurer. Under the new Order, a witch is any Thaumaturgist or petty conjurer that is either unlicensed or working against Prussian interests. This extended definition is cause for great concern within the Guild, as previous Inquisitions rarely targeted Guild members unless they dabbled in the black arts.

In his formal announcement of the Order, Chancellor Bismarck mitigated those fears by insisting that any licensed Thaumaturgist caught by a Hexenjäger would be handed over to the Guild for deportation. In practice, however, the Hexenjäger thoroughly interrogate every captured Thaumaturgist





before they send them to the Guild and a few of the more troublesome Thaumaturgists have been killed 'while trying to escape'. Baron Hügel understands the need for diplomacy and he has tried to reign in his hauptmenn from creating too many unfavourable incidents. Bismarck has also suggested to the North German Confederation that, under a unified Germany, the Hexenjäger will become a German Order. Many German leaders consider this irrelevant as most serious discussions on German unification presume a Prussian Emperor.

Also notable is the fact that the Hexenjäger's jurisdiction ends with Prussia; the Order must seek permission to pursue a witch into another German state (and it is out of the question for other countries). This makes those that live just across the border in Austria-Hungary nervous, as much of the border is still in dispute. Regardless, there have been claims that the Hexenjäger have illegally tracked down witches in other European countries and at least one claim in New York City. So far, none of these claims have been verified.

PERSONALITIES

Baron Ernst Hügel von Nordspree

Ernst Hügel von Nordspree is the Kommandant of the Hexenjäger. He is a Brandenburg junker (country squire) and, despite his Dwarven stature, is a powerfully built and menacing leader. Ernst is also a member of the Berlin Chapter of the Guild, although he is more likely to be found in King Wilhelm's Court or his own manor than in the Guildhall. Hügel comes from a long line of junkers dating back to at least the Thirty Year War. While versed in court etiquette, Hügel is a man of few words and means what he says. A terse comment from Hügel means more to the average Prussian than twenty minutes of a flowery speech from a Prussian ambassador.

Hügel is fiercely loyal to fellow Thaumaturgist Prince Witgen, it was Adler's influence that transformed him from a minor country squire to a national figure overnight. As commander of the witch hunters, Hügel is able to do what he does best, bring lawbreakers to justice. He is more of a soldier than a leader; while his position has allowed him to gather a large amount of intelligence within Prussia, he is content to hand it over to Adler or the King rather than use it for personal gain. As on the battlefield, his interrogation methods are often harsh and designed to ferret out information on other suspected witches. This has also caused him to adapt his tactics.

Baron Ernst Hügel von Nordspree Rank 17 Dwarven Sorcerer (Generalist)

Physical Competence: +10
Mental Competence: +10
Initiative: 11
Health: 10 Dice (20 pips)
Mana: 6 Dice (36 pips)
Signature Skills: Firearms +2,
Interrogation +4, Intimidate +2, Perception +3, Swordplay +2, Tactics +4,
Thaumaturgy +2
Traits: Leader +4, Tactical Mind +4
Special Abilities: Can cast any Thaumaturgy spell listed in the Core Rulebook
Combat Abilities: Rarely fights; but does so using signature skills
Damage: Military Sword (Light) (7 Dice),
Tranter Revolver (10 Dice)

The Cardinal

The mysterious man known only as the Cardinal is Baron Hügel's closest advisor. He is also extremely dedicated to the Hexenjäger's cause. The Cardinal claims to be a former member of the Spanish Inquisition and has advised Baron Hügel on their most useful techniques. The Cardinal frequently runs his own missions, preferring the thrill of the chase to strategic planning at the barony.

The Cardinal appears to be an attractive middle-aged Human with thinning hair and a goatee. He is also never without his silver cross, which hangs on a strong chain around his neck. He frequently quotes from the Aluminat Bible, especially the 11th Commandment and other passages relating to witchcraft. His mere presence is enough to unnerve most people. Some point out that it is impossible that the Cardinal was a Spanish Inquisitor, since that order dissolved in 1818. He is, however, a powerful Thaumaturgist, so the assumption is that he has unnaturally extended his life.

'The Cardinal' is a nickname. He has never supplied any proof of his Aluminat title and all previous Cardinals overseeing the Spanish Inquisition have been accounted for. He has never revealed his true name. Legend has it that the Cardinal simply showed up at the Hügel Estate within the first weeks of the Hexenjäger's establishment and offered his services. Baron Hügel gave him a conditional

[NOVEMBER 2, 1890]

UPLEX SKIRTS
J. W. BRADLEY'S
CELEBRATED
TEST DUPLEX ELLIPTIC
(or Double Spring)
SKIRTS
EACH LOOP BEING COMPOSED
OF FIVE STITCHES, WITH A
CONSECUTIVELY STITCHED STRIP
EACH OF FIVE
THEY ARE VERY FLEXIBLE AND
EASY TO WEAR
THEY ARE ALSO THE
BEST AND MOST SERVICE
ABLE
THEY ARE MADE IN
FASHIONABLE AND ELEGANT
FOR
PROXIMATE
OPERA
CARRIAGE

STREET DRUG
above are the most popular
introduced
At Retail
BY THE BOLD OWNERS
WESTON, BLAIR
Office 2nd
Nos. 27, 28, 29, and 30
New
BUT GLASS
product
the
EYE GLASSES
you
first
this
on the
of any
100

JOS. GILLOTT'S STEEL
OF THE OLD STANDARD QUALITY
JOSEPH
GILLOTT.
Warranted.
ORIGINAL AND PROTECTOR
No. 551

The Cardinal

The Cardinal has too many secrets, his statistics are to be found with the answers to his other mysteries in the Gamemaster's chapter 'Secrets and Adventures' on p121.

acceptance but the Cardinal was so successful at hunting down hexen that he promoted him to his personal advisor, permanently.

The Cardinal's methodology is the subject of many rumours and whispers. He considers those that harbour hexen to be just as guilty as the hexen they protect. He insists on penance from such people, consisting of acts of debauchery in the Cardinal's presence. The Baron always dismisses such claims, as the rumours only enhance the Cardinal's effectiveness by instilling great fear and respect amongst those he encounters while on the hunt.

Dame Justina Fischer

Dame Justina Fischer is a hauptmann of the Hexenjäger and one of Baron Hügel's most trusted agents. She is apparently an Eldren woman of plain appearance and slight scars on her right cheek and chin (mementos from the Austro-Prussian War), Dame Justina is able to blend into just about any situation. She tends to disguise herself as a servant, as servants often have the ability to get into places that would otherwise arouse suspicion (she also owns a magical mask that allows her to masquerade as a Human or Beastman, when appropriate). She also has great diplomatic skill and is usually able to trick people into revealing things that they otherwise would not.

Dame Justina comes from a small Silesian farm that was in disputed territory during the Austro-Prussian War. Her father was killed in an early conflict and the young Justina disguised herself as a boy, Justin Fischer, and joined the Prussian Army. She proved to be an excellent scout, able to work her way into Austrian camps and gather valuable intelligence. She also performed a number of assassinations.

While under the command of Col. Ernst Hügel, Justina Fischer used her abilities to assassinate a key Austrian Thaumaturgist and save Baron Hügel's life in the process. Hügel learned of her true gender when shrapnel hit her as they fought their way back to the line but he swore that her secret was safe so long as she wished it.

Dame Justina Fischer Rank 12 Eldren Hunter (Generalist)

Physical Competence: +8
Mental Competence: +7
Initiative: 10
Health: 7 Dice (14 pips)
Mana: 4 Dice (24 pips)
Signature Skills: Disguise +4, Firearms +2, Fisticuffs +2, Hide & Sneak +4, Horse Riding +2, Navigation +4, Perception +3, Swordplay +4, Thaumaturgy +2
Traits: Bloodlust +4, Knife-fighter +2, Secret keeper +3
Special Abilities: Power of Steam, Spyglass Eyes, Steely Skin (Thaumaturgy)
Combat Abilities: Prefers to knife-fight (12 Dice) will use a rifle (10 dice) if need be
Damage: Large Knife (6 Dice), Winchester lever-action rifle (10 Dice)

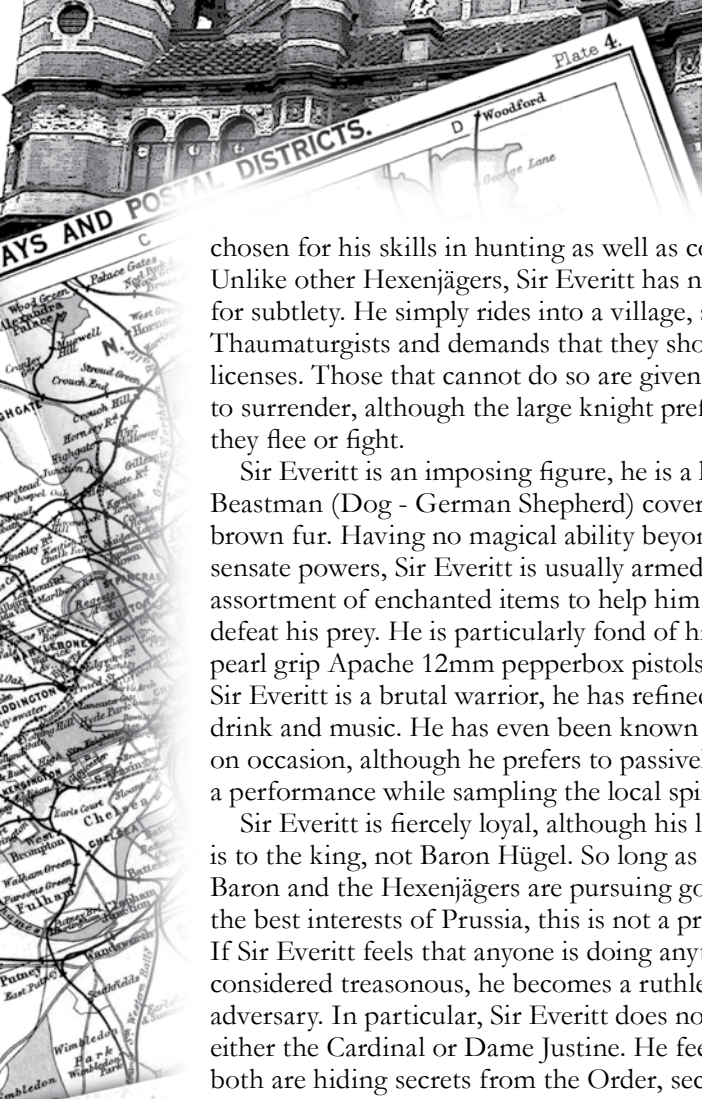
After the war, Baron Hügel vouched for Fischer and she was knighted Dame Justina (having revealed her true gender) for her bravery in the War. The Baron also arranged for her to receive proper thaumaturgical training from the Guild. When Dame Justina graduated, Baron Hügel offered her a post in his personal guard. She was a natural choice when Baron Hügel was looking for Hexenjäger recruits.

In her 'official' form, Dame Justina favours dark clothing, usually a heavy cloak and leather armour. She is a crack shot with a pistol, although she prefers melee combat (while proficient with a sword, Dame Justina really enjoys knife combat). She is also a quite deadly unarmed combatant, using magic to enhance her abilities. Her bloodlust is attributed to her Eldren heritage; in fact, while normally a woman of few words, Dame Justina becomes positively animated while in a knife fight.

When not hunting, Dame Justina often looks for local pit fights to join, either armed or unarmed. Anyone that bests her has her respect and her envy; known to ask for rematches when bested, she fights them with even greater fury.

Sir Everitt Schaeffer

Sir Everitt Schaeffer is notable for being the only member of the Hexenjäger who is not a Thaumaturgist. He is, however, a Sensate Medium, and he uses his talents to discover hidden Thaumaturgists. He is also a potent hunter and was



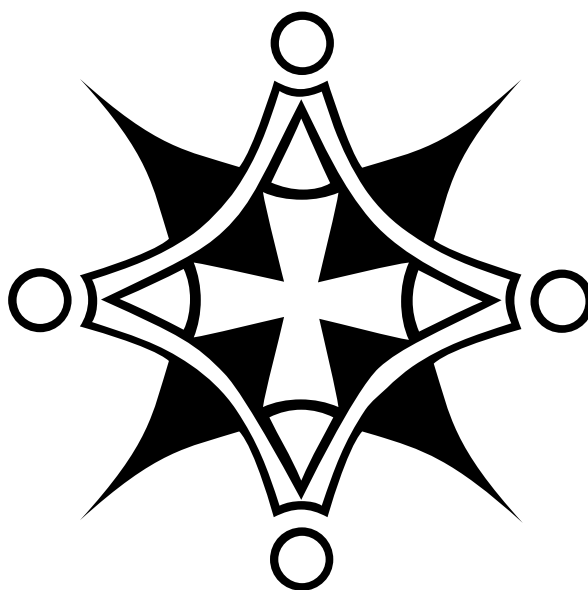
chosen for his skills in hunting as well as combat. Unlike other Hexenjäger, Sir Everitt has no use for subtlety. He simply rides into a village, scans for Thaumaturgists and demands that they show their licenses. Those that cannot do so are given the option to surrender, although the large knight prefers that they flee or fight.

Sir Everitt is an imposing figure, he is a large Beastman (Dog - German Shepherd) covered in dark brown fur. Having no magical ability beyond his sensate powers, Sir Everitt is usually armed with an assortment of enchanted items to help him catch and defeat his prey. He is particularly fond of his twin pearl grip Apache 12mm pepperbox pistols. While Sir Everitt is a brutal warrior, he has refined tastes in drink and music. He has even been known to dance on occasion, although he prefers to passively listen to a performance while sampling the local spirits.

Sir Everitt is fiercely loyal, although his loyalty is to the king, not Baron Hügel. So long as the Baron and the Hexenjäger are pursuing goals in the best interests of Prussia, this is not a problem. If Sir Everitt feels that anyone is doing anything considered treasonous, he becomes a ruthless adversary. In particular, Sir Everitt does not trust either the Cardinal or Dame Justine. He feels that both are hiding secrets from the Order, secrets that, if revealed, could be damaging. He keeps a sharp eye on both.

Sir Everett Schaeffer
Rank 12 Beastman Hunter (Specialist)

Physical Competence: +12
Mental Competence: +3
Initiative: 11
Health: 10 Dice (20 pips)
Mana: 3 dice (18 pips)
Signature Skills: Criminology +3,
Firearms +4, Intimidation +3, Perception +4,
Sensate Medium +4, Swordplay +2,
Tracking +4
Traits: Expert Tracker +4, Imposing +4
Special Abilities: Animal trait – Enhanced
smell
Combat Abilities: Loves to use his Firearms
signature skill (16 Dice)
Damage: Apache 12mm Pistols (10 Dice)



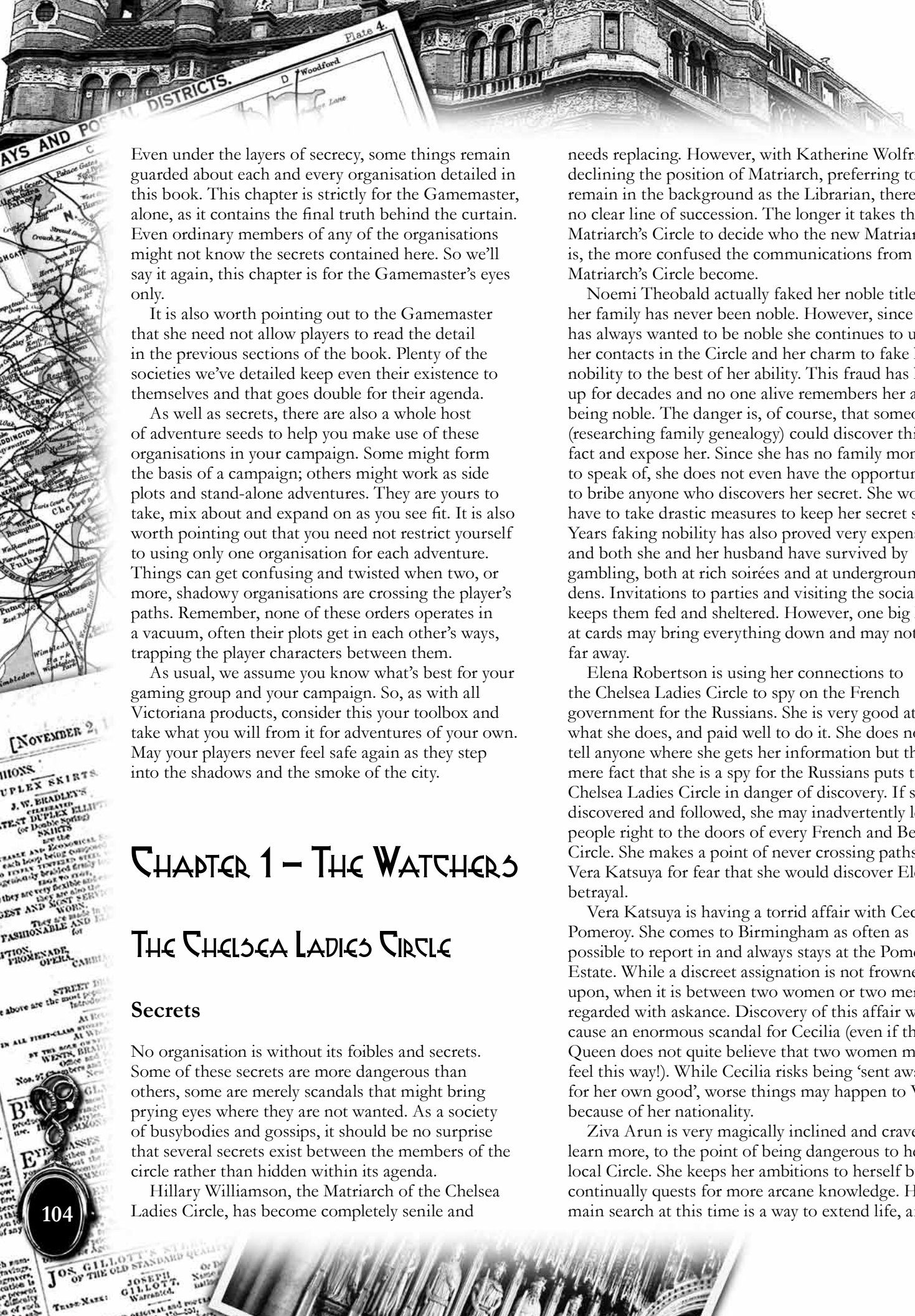


CHAPTER 5

SECRETS AND ADVENTURES

“Secrets? You think we keep secrets? No sir.
What I offer you is the truth.”

- Dr. Zechariah Roth



Even under the layers of secrecy, some things remain guarded about each and every organisation detailed in this book. This chapter is strictly for the Gamemaster, alone, as it contains the final truth behind the curtain. Even ordinary members of any of the organisations might not know the secrets contained here. So we'll say it again, this chapter is for the Gamemaster's eyes only.

It is also worth pointing out to the Gamemaster that she need not allow players to read the detail in the previous sections of the book. Plenty of the societies we've detailed keep even their existence to themselves and that goes double for their agenda.

As well as secrets, there are also a whole host of adventure seeds to help you make use of these organisations in your campaign. Some might form the basis of a campaign; others might work as side plots and stand-alone adventures. They are yours to take, mix about and expand on as you see fit. It is also worth pointing out that you need not restrict yourself to using only one organisation for each adventure. Things can get confusing and twisted when two, or more, shadowy organisations are crossing the player's paths. Remember, none of these orders operates in a vacuum, often their plots get in each other's ways, trapping the player characters between them.

As usual, we assume you know what's best for your gaming group and your campaign. So, as with all Victoriana products, consider this your toolbox and take what you will from it for adventures of your own. May your players never feel safe again as they step into the shadows and the smoke of the city.

CHAPTER 1 – THE WATCHERS

THE CHELSEA LADIES CIRCLE

Secrets

No organisation is without its foibles and secrets. Some of these secrets are more dangerous than others, some are merely scandals that might bring prying eyes where they are not wanted. As a society of busybodies and gossips, it should be no surprise that several secrets exist between the members of the circle rather than hidden within its agenda.

Hillary Williamson, the Matriarch of the Chelsea Ladies Circle, has become completely senile and

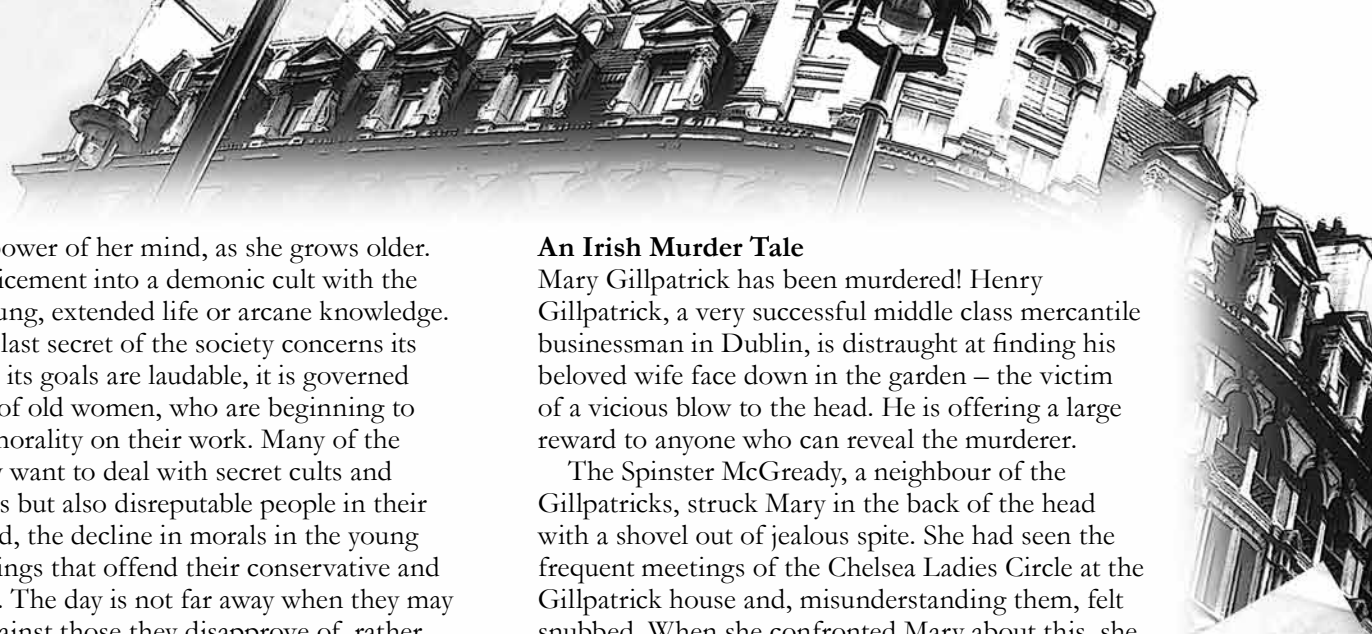
needs replacing. However, with Katherine Wolfram declining the position of Matriarch, preferring to remain in the background as the Librarian, there is no clear line of succession. The longer it takes the Matriarch's Circle to decide who the new Matriarch is, the more confused the communications from the Matriarch's Circle become.

Noemi Theobald actually faked her noble title; her family has never been noble. However, since she has always wanted to be noble she continues to use her contacts in the Circle and her charm to fake her nobility to the best of her ability. This fraud has held up for decades and no one alive remembers her as not being noble. The danger is, of course, that someone (researching family genealogy) could discover this fact and expose her. Since she has no family money to speak of, she does not even have the opportunity to bribe anyone who discovers her secret. She would have to take drastic measures to keep her secret safe. Years faking nobility has also proved very expensive and both she and her husband have survived by gambling, both at rich soirées and at underground dens. Invitations to parties and visiting the social set keeps them fed and sheltered. However, one big loss at cards may bring everything down and may not be far away.

Elena Robertson is using her connections to the Chelsea Ladies Circle to spy on the French government for the Russians. She is very good at what she does, and paid well to do it. She does not tell anyone where she gets her information but the mere fact that she is a spy for the Russians puts the Chelsea Ladies Circle in danger of discovery. If she discovered and followed, she may inadvertently lead people right to the doors of every French and Belgian Circle. She makes a point of never crossing paths with Vera Katsuya for fear that she would discover Elena's betrayal.

Vera Katsuya is having a torrid affair with Cecilia Pomeroy. She comes to Birmingham as often as possible to report in and always stays at the Pomeroy Estate. While a discreet assignation is not frowned upon, when it is between two women or two men it is regarded with askance. Discovery of this affair would cause an enormous scandal for Cecilia (even if the Queen does not quite believe that two women might feel this way!). While Cecilia risks being 'sent away for her own good', worse things may happen to Vera because of her nationality.

Ziva Arun is very magically inclined and craves to learn more, to the point of being dangerous to her local Circle. She keeps her ambitions to herself but continually quests for more arcane knowledge. Her main search at this time is a way to extend life, afraid



of losing the power of her mind, as she grows older. She is ripe enticement into a demonic cult with the promise of young, extended life or arcane knowledge.

Finally, the last secret of the society concerns its agenda. While its goals are laudable, it is governed by a selection of old women, who are beginning to impose their morality on their work. Many of the ladies not only want to deal with secret cults and Demonologists but also disreputable people in their neighbourhood, the decline in morals in the young and several things that offend their conservative and puritan values. The day is not far away when they may start acting against those they disapprove of, rather than the actual evils of the world. With the Matriarch getting more senile and losing her grip on a central leadership, more of the other Circles are acting as they please. If the crisis is not resolved, the society might splinter.

Adventure Hooks

Adventures involving the Chelsea Ladies Circle are all about preventing or causing a scandal. These actions have the goal of pitting secret societies, cabals and other nefarious groups against one another to prevent them from gaining power in some fashion. Therefore, all adventures involving the Chelsea Ladies Circle are all subtle affairs, filled with misdirection.

Schoolgirl Scandal

A scandal has come to the Harker Finishing School for Girls. Despite constantly watching, one of the girls, Margaret Woolsworth, is quick with child. However, Margaret, the dear girl, is tearfully adamant that she is still a virgin. She cannot explain her condition and is terrified of it and the scandal it places on the school and her family. The one thing she admits is having had increasingly erotic dreams. Now, other girls within the school have started having these erotic dreams and they all have the same man in them.

A succubus of Asmodeus has invaded the school; a cult dedicated to him is located in the area just outside the school and the succubus could not resist. The cult needs shutting down, the girl needs purging of demonic taint and the succubus needs banishing. The problem is that the cult is working undercover as a local Aluminat religious group. They have leaked the story about Margaret (but not the other girls), insisting that her immaculate conception is the work of Heaven!

An Irish Murder Tale

Mary Gillpatrick has been murdered! Henry Gillpatrick, a very successful middle class mercantile businessman in Dublin, is distraught at finding his beloved wife face down in the garden – the victim of a vicious blow to the head. He is offering a large reward to anyone who can reveal the murderer.

The Spinster McGready, a neighbour of the Gillpatricks, struck Mary in the back of the head with a shovel out of jealous spite. She had seen the frequent meetings of the Chelsea Ladies Circle at the Gillpatrick house and, misunderstanding them, felt snubbed. When she confronted Mary about this, she denied it. In a fit of anger, the Spinster McGready picked up a nearby shovel and whacked her in the back of the head.

While this simple murder should be an open and shut case, the investigation might lead to the police uncovering some of the Chelsea Ladies Circle's activities and membership.

The Haunted Mansion

The Widower Delgado died recently, leaving his estate to his son, Professor Fredrick Delgado. After one night in the manse, Fredrick and his family left in a hurry, saying that it, especially the library, was haunted. The only person willing to go into the manse is the Dwarven maid, Ziva Arun, though even she seems terrified of the place but her stubborn nature makes it impossible for her to deny her master. Fredrick Delgado needs someone to do something about the haunting before something dastardly happens.

The manse is not haunted. In fact, Ziva herself is the one who is making it appear to be haunted. The Widower Delgado was a student of the arcane and had an extensive library. Ziva has made it seem like a haunting so she can get to the truly arcane books before the two Demonologist cults that are closing in can get to them first.

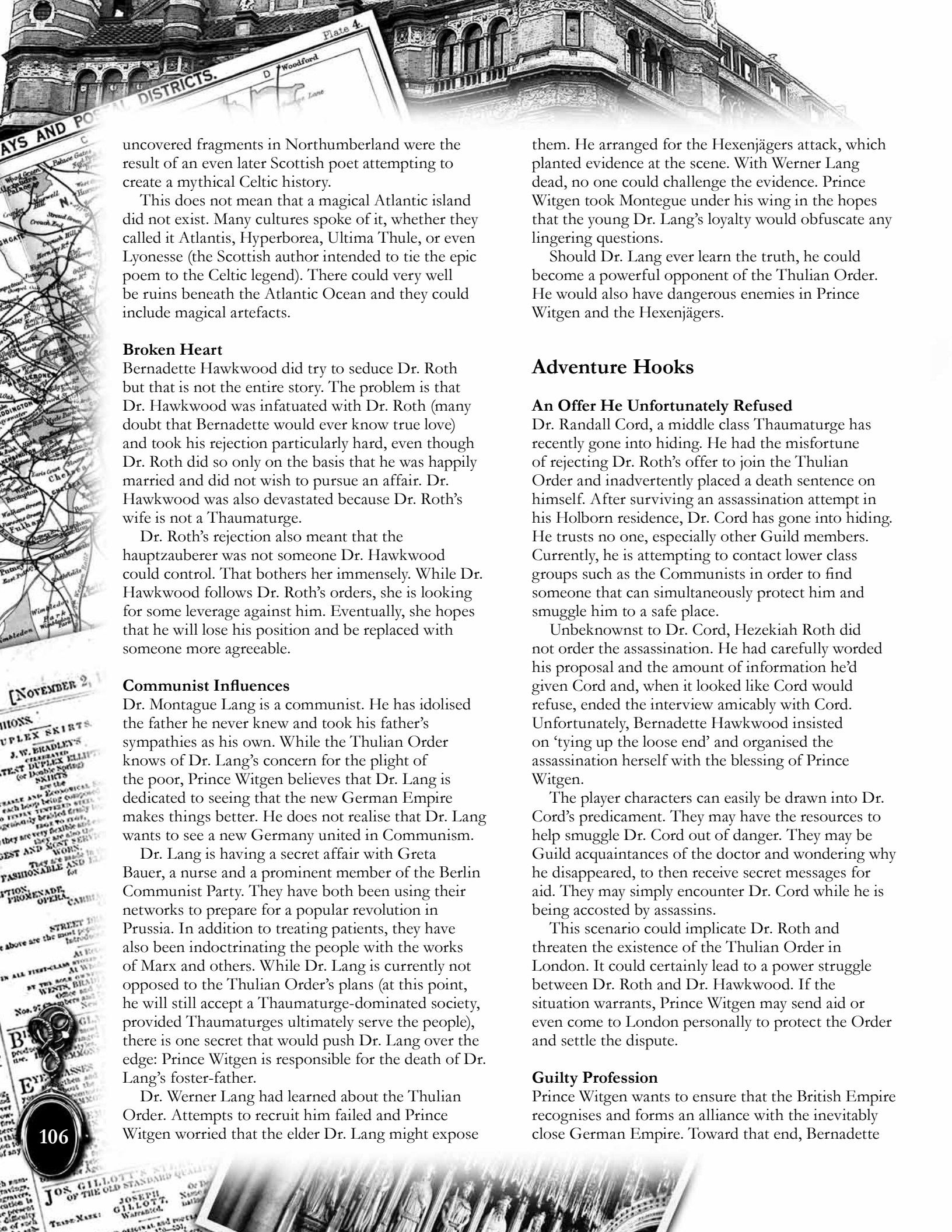
THE THULIAN ORDER

Secrets

The Truth about Thulia

Dr. Schecter was wrong on two fronts. First, the academic community is correct; the Thuliad is an allegory about the destruction of the Library of Alexandria. While the true author is unknown, the epic poem dates to around 800CE. Second, the





uncovered fragments in Northumberland were the result of an even later Scottish poet attempting to create a mythical Celtic history.

This does not mean that a magical Atlantic island did not exist. Many cultures spoke of it, whether they called it Atlantis, Hyperborea, Ultima Thule, or even Lyonesse (the Scottish author intended to tie the epic poem to the Celtic legend). There could very well be ruins beneath the Atlantic Ocean and they could include magical artefacts.

Broken Heart

Bernadette Hawkwood did try to seduce Dr. Roth but that is not the entire story. The problem is that Dr. Hawkwood was infatuated with Dr. Roth (many doubt that Bernadette would ever know true love) and took his rejection particularly hard, even though Dr. Roth did so only on the basis that he was happily married and did not wish to pursue an affair. Dr. Hawkwood was also devastated because Dr. Roth's wife is not a Thaumaturge.

Dr. Roth's rejection also meant that the hauptzauberer was not someone Dr. Hawkwood could control. That bothers her immensely. While Dr. Hawkwood follows Dr. Roth's orders, she is looking for some leverage against him. Eventually, she hopes that he will lose his position and be replaced with someone more agreeable.

Communist Influences

Dr. Montague Lang is a communist. He has idolised the father he never knew and took his father's sympathies as his own. While the Thulian Order knows of Dr. Lang's concern for the plight of the poor, Prince Witgen believes that Dr. Lang is dedicated to seeing that the new German Empire makes things better. He does not realise that Dr. Lang wants to see a new Germany united in Communism.

Dr. Lang is having a secret affair with Greta Bauer, a nurse and a prominent member of the Berlin Communist Party. They have both been using their networks to prepare for a popular revolution in Prussia. In addition to treating patients, they have also been indoctrinating the people with the works of Marx and others. While Dr. Lang is currently not opposed to the Thulian Order's plans (at this point, he will still accept a Thaumaturge-dominated society, provided Thaumaturges ultimately serve the people), there is one secret that would push Dr. Lang over the edge: Prince Witgen is responsible for the death of Dr. Lang's foster-father.

Dr. Werner Lang had learned about the Thulian Order. Attempts to recruit him failed and Prince Witgen worried that the elder Dr. Lang might expose

them. He arranged for the Hexenjäger's attack, which planted evidence at the scene. With Werner Lang dead, no one could challenge the evidence. Prince Witgen took Montegue under his wing in the hopes that the young Dr. Lang's loyalty would obfuscate any lingering questions.

Should Dr. Lang ever learn the truth, he could become a powerful opponent of the Thulian Order. He would also have dangerous enemies in Prince Witgen and the Hexenjäger.

Adventure Hooks

An Offer He Unfortunately Refused

Dr. Randall Cord, a middle class Thaumaturge has recently gone into hiding. He had the misfortune of rejecting Dr. Roth's offer to join the Thulian Order and inadvertently placed a death sentence on himself. After surviving an assassination attempt in his Holborn residence, Dr. Cord has gone into hiding. He trusts no one, especially other Guild members. Currently, he is attempting to contact lower class groups such as the Communists in order to find someone that can simultaneously protect him and smuggle him to a safe place.


Unbeknownst to Dr. Cord, Hezekiah Roth did not order the assassination. He had carefully worded his proposal and the amount of information he'd given Cord and, when it looked like Cord would refuse, ended the interview amicably with Cord. Unfortunately, Bernadette Hawkwood insisted on 'tying up the loose end' and organised the assassination herself with the blessing of Prince Witgen.

The player characters can easily be drawn into Dr. Cord's predicament. They may have the resources to help smuggle Dr. Cord out of danger. They may be Guild acquaintances of the doctor and wondering why he disappeared, to then receive secret messages for aid. They may simply encounter Dr. Cord while he is being accosted by assassins.

This scenario could implicate Dr. Roth and threaten the existence of the Thulian Order in London. It could certainly lead to a power struggle between Dr. Roth and Dr. Hawkwood. If the situation warrants, Prince Witgen may send aid or even come to London personally to protect the Order and settle the dispute.

Guilty Profession

Prince Witgen wants to ensure that the British Empire recognises and forms an alliance with the inevitably close German Empire. Toward that end, Bernadette



Hawkwood has been manipulating members of parliament and military officers into compromising positions (either in the bedroom or sharing state secrets). Dr. Hawkwood has been employing prostitutes and thieves to further her ambitions. Unfortunately, not all victims are willing to stand by and be blackmailed.

This scenario can go in a number of directions. A Member of Parliament may hire agents to 'silence' a prostitute or provide fake intelligence to be stolen. In one particularly nasty scenario, Dr. Hawkwood might have employed a prostitute to distract a military officer while she or a thief steals a top secret document. Blaming the theft on the prostitute, the officer sends agents to beat her and her associates into revealing the location of the document. In another case, a Member of Parliament might try to cover his tracks by slaughtering a number of prostitutes in a single location so that suspicion won't be traced back to him.

Dr. Hawkwood herself may get in a little too deep, requiring that the Thulian Society take steps to ensure their own secrecy and survival.

Voyage to the Bottom of the Ocean

Dr. Roth is currently engaged in the construction of a submersible that can survive a journey into the depths of the Atlantic Ocean and back. This submersible, nicknamed the Leviathan (although Dr. Roth is quick to point out that leviathan is simply a Yehudi word for whale, the Biblical implications are not lost on the Aluminats), is being constructed on scientific and magical principles. Dr. Roth hopes to launch the submersible within the next year.

Dr. Roth would be happy to recruit any player characters with the appropriate skills to make the maiden voyage successful. He currently needs Thaumaturgists and engineers but he has use for pilots, navigators and archaeologists in the near future. While he prefers Thulian Thaumaturgists, he will make do with any magical characters.

The Aluminat Church has an interest in seeing Dr. Roth fail. Saboteurs, either officially sanctioned or unofficially inspired, may attempt to destroy various points of research. The player characters could be caught in the crossfire of a largely secret conflict between the Thulian Order and the Aluminat Church. The player characters could be victims, if helping Dr. Roth, or they could be recruited to stop him.

If the Leviathan is able to launch, you may have to determine whether Thulia really does exist beneath the waves. Even if Thulia exists, it is unlikely that Dr. Roth will discover it on the maiden voyage. Even if it doesn't exist, the Leviathan may discover undersea

cultures and threats only whispered about in the port pubs of the upper world. The player characters may discover the ruins of an ancient culture, only to find that it is not the fabled Thulia. It may still, however, hold treasures and dangers of its own.

THE LEAGUE OF LOGICAL UTOPIANS

Secrets

The Spicy Chef

Due to Hester Holden's love of cooking, most people presume that, as a Halfling, Holden must be fascinated with cooking but they could not be more wrong. While Hester Holden is a good cook and a lover of good food, her true fascination is something of an unsuitable topic of conversation in polite company: sexual attraction and consummation amongst the genteel and upper classes. She is not necessarily interested in intimate relations between marital partners, as the act is more commonly performed out of duty than love (especially amongst the aristocracy) but rather the type of sexual attraction that leads to potentially scandalous situations. The length to which a person goes to indulge in his (or her) baser nature is what truly fascinates Holden.

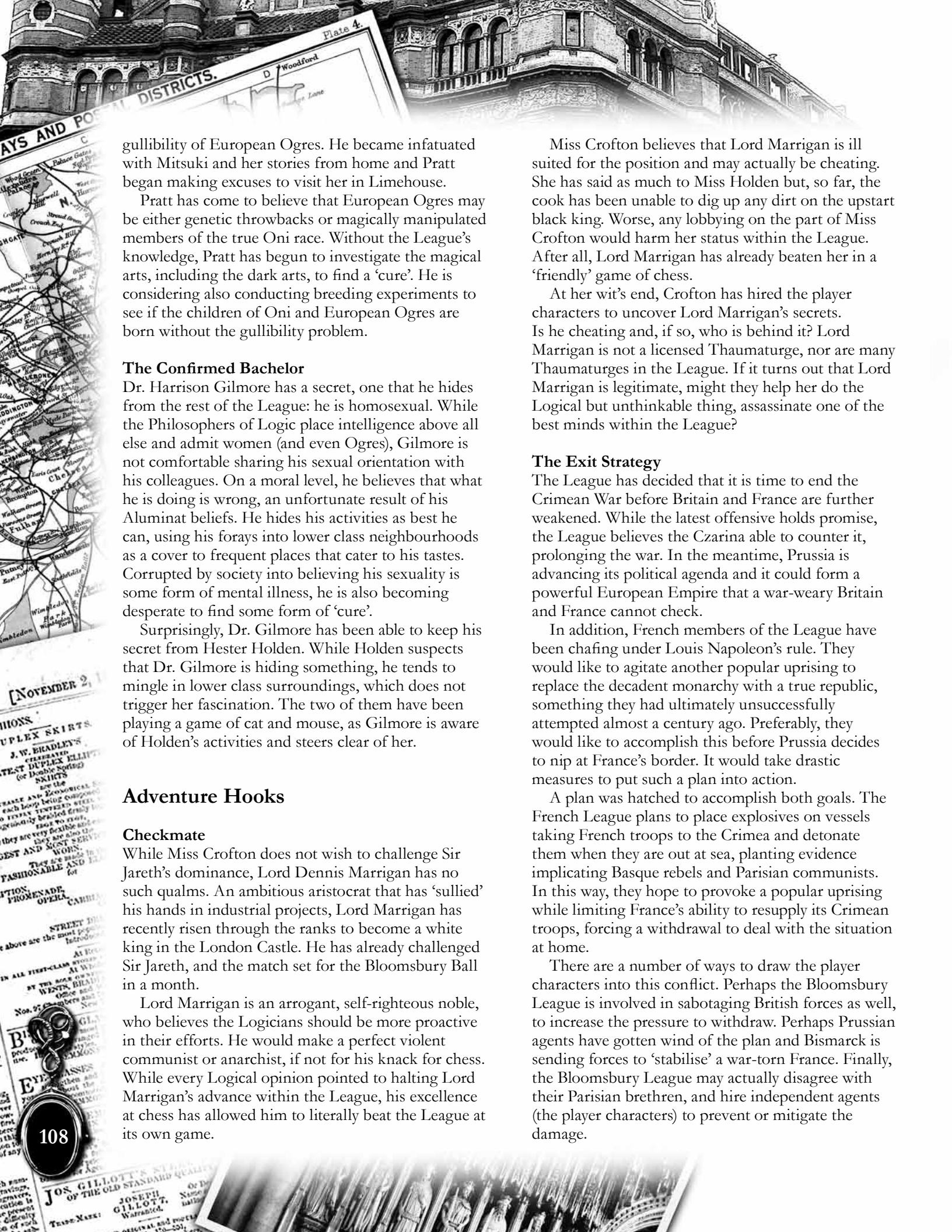
To satisfy this fascination, Holden has learned how to spot the signs of lust and how to surreptitiously follow an individual to observe the consummation. While Holden is not above joining in when the situation calls for it, she is far more interested in watching people satisfy their urges. Holden's fascination extends beyond the typical affair; she is also interested in activities that society (and the Aluminat) would consider deviant behaviour.

Holden has observed enough to have a hold over many aristocrats and gentlemen, who would rather keep their activities secret. As some of those are also members of the League (often white rooks), they give Holden a respect unheard of for a cook at League gatherings. Holden uses her information to extract favours for the League when necessary.

Otis in Love

While the rest of the League believes that Otis Pratt is comfortable with an Ogre's place in society, the truth is not that simple. During one of his excursions into Limehouse to accompany Miss Holden in acquiring exotic ingredients, Pratt met Mitsuki, an Oni (Japanese Ogre). Mitsuki was, like him, very intelligent. What stunned Pratt though was Mitsuki's revelation that the Oni did not suffer from the





gullibility of European Ogres. He became infatuated with Mitsuki and her stories from home and Pratt began making excuses to visit her in Limehouse.

Pratt has come to believe that European Ogres may be either genetic throwbacks or magically manipulated members of the true Oni race. Without the League's knowledge, Pratt has begun to investigate the magical arts, including the dark arts, to find a 'cure'. He is considering also conducting breeding experiments to see if the children of Oni and European Ogres are born without the gullibility problem.

The Confirmed Bachelor

Dr. Harrison Gilmore has a secret, one that he hides from the rest of the League: he is homosexual. While the Philosophers of Logic place intelligence above all else and admit women (and even Ogres), Gilmore is not comfortable sharing his sexual orientation with his colleagues. On a moral level, he believes that what he is doing is wrong, an unfortunate result of his Aluminat beliefs. He hides his activities as best he can, using his forays into lower class neighbourhoods as a cover to frequent places that cater to his tastes. Corrupted by society into believing his sexuality is some form of mental illness, he is also becoming desperate to find some form of 'cure'.

Surprisingly, Dr. Gilmore has been able to keep his secret from Hester Holden. While Holden suspects that Dr. Gilmore is hiding something, he tends to mingle in lower class surroundings, which does not trigger her fascination. The two of them have been playing a game of cat and mouse, as Gilmore is aware of Holden's activities and steers clear of her.

Adventure Hooks

Checkmate

While Miss Crofton does not wish to challenge Sir Jareth's dominance, Lord Dennis Marrigan has no such qualms. An ambitious aristocrat that has 'sullied' his hands in industrial projects, Lord Marrigan has recently risen through the ranks to become a white king in the London Castle. He has already challenged Sir Jareth, and the match set for the Bloomsbury Ball in a month.

Lord Marrigan is an arrogant, self-righteous noble, who believes the Logicians should be more proactive in their efforts. He would make a perfect violent communist or anarchist, if not for his knack for chess. While every Logical opinion pointed to halting Lord Marrigan's advance within the League, his excellence at chess has allowed him to literally beat the League at its own game.

Miss Crofton believes that Lord Marrigan is ill suited for the position and may actually be cheating. She has said as much to Miss Holden but, so far, the cook has been unable to dig up any dirt on the upstart black king. Worse, any lobbying on the part of Miss Crofton would harm her status within the League. After all, Lord Marrigan has already beaten her in a 'friendly' game of chess.

At her wit's end, Crofton has hired the player characters to uncover Lord Marrigan's secrets. Is he cheating and, if so, who is behind it? Lord Marrigan is not a licensed Thaumaturge, nor are many Thaumaturges in the League. If it turns out that Lord Marrigan is legitimate, might they help her do the Logical but unthinkable thing, assassinate one of the best minds within the League?

The Exit Strategy

The League has decided that it is time to end the Crimean War before Britain and France are further weakened. While the latest offensive holds promise, the League believes the Czarina able to counter it, prolonging the war. In the meantime, Prussia is advancing its political agenda and it could form a powerful European Empire that a war-weary Britain and France cannot check.

In addition, French members of the League have been chafing under Louis Napoleon's rule. They would like to agitate another popular uprising to replace the decadent monarchy with a true republic, something they had ultimately unsuccessfully attempted almost a century ago. Preferably, they would like to accomplish this before Prussia decides to nip at France's border. It would take drastic measures to put such a plan into action.

A plan was hatched to accomplish both goals. The French League plans to place explosives on vessels taking French troops to the Crimea and detonate them when they are out at sea, planting evidence implicating Basque rebels and Parisian communists. In this way, they hope to provoke a popular uprising while limiting France's ability to resupply its Crimean troops, forcing a withdrawal to deal with the situation at home.

There are a number of ways to draw the player characters into this conflict. Perhaps the Bloomsbury League is involved in sabotaging British forces as well, to increase the pressure to withdraw. Perhaps Prussian agents have gotten wind of the plan and Bismarck is sending forces to 'stabilise' a war-torn France. Finally, the Bloomsbury League may actually disagree with their Parisian brethren, and hire independent agents (the player characters) to prevent or mitigate the damage.

Shogun Support

For decades League has been encouraging the Tokugawa shogunate to reform its institutions and modernise Japan. The League's greatest successes have come since 1853, when the League was able to encourage the Shogun to abandon his isolationist policies. With Japan open to foreign exchange and investment, the League hopes to strengthen ties with Japan and Europe.

Unfortunately, for the League, there are powerful nobles that wish to restore Imperial rule and once again shut Japan's doors, setting back over a decade of progress for the League. It is in their interest to stop this. In addition, other powers, most notably Prussia and Russia, are concerned with the Shogun's preference for the British.

Currently, a Japanese delegation has come to London to promote a strengthening of ties with Britain. Queen Victoria has planned an elaborate reception for the delegates. Unfortunately, enemy agents have bribed and called on traitors within the British government to aid in an assassination attempt. The player characters get involved in thwarting an assassination attempt on the delegates. Will they be able to prevent a diplomatic disaster and what do they do when it appears that the British government was involved in the attempt?

CHAPTER 2 – DARK HEARTS AND DARK GODS

EIGHT

Secrets

Despite their pretensions to pagan antiquity and Demonology, magic plays only a very small and peripheral role in the cult's proceedings. It is entirely a sham and, while they have come to believe, to an extent, in their pursuit of the eighth sin, it remains an internal mythology entirely made up out of nonsense and barely understood ideas.

'8' has spread beyond the original cabal; without permission, other outer circle members are forming groups affiliated – without the cabal's knowledge – with the cult. These groups are spreading across Europe and believe in the cult's invented purpose far more fully than the originators do. Many of these mock cults are making far more serious explorations into Demonology, Necromancy and other unnatural powers than the original cabal would even contemplate.

The Lady Pale has begun to take an interest in the indulgences and orgies of '8' and she finds them amusing, rich children playing at being demons. Through her genuine agents and demonic daughters, she has decided to 'play' with the cult, baiting them into exposing their depravity, publicly. What use is it to her if it is never discovered? People must be shocked, people must be tempted, and a public scandal accomplishes this far more easily than a slowly spreading cult.

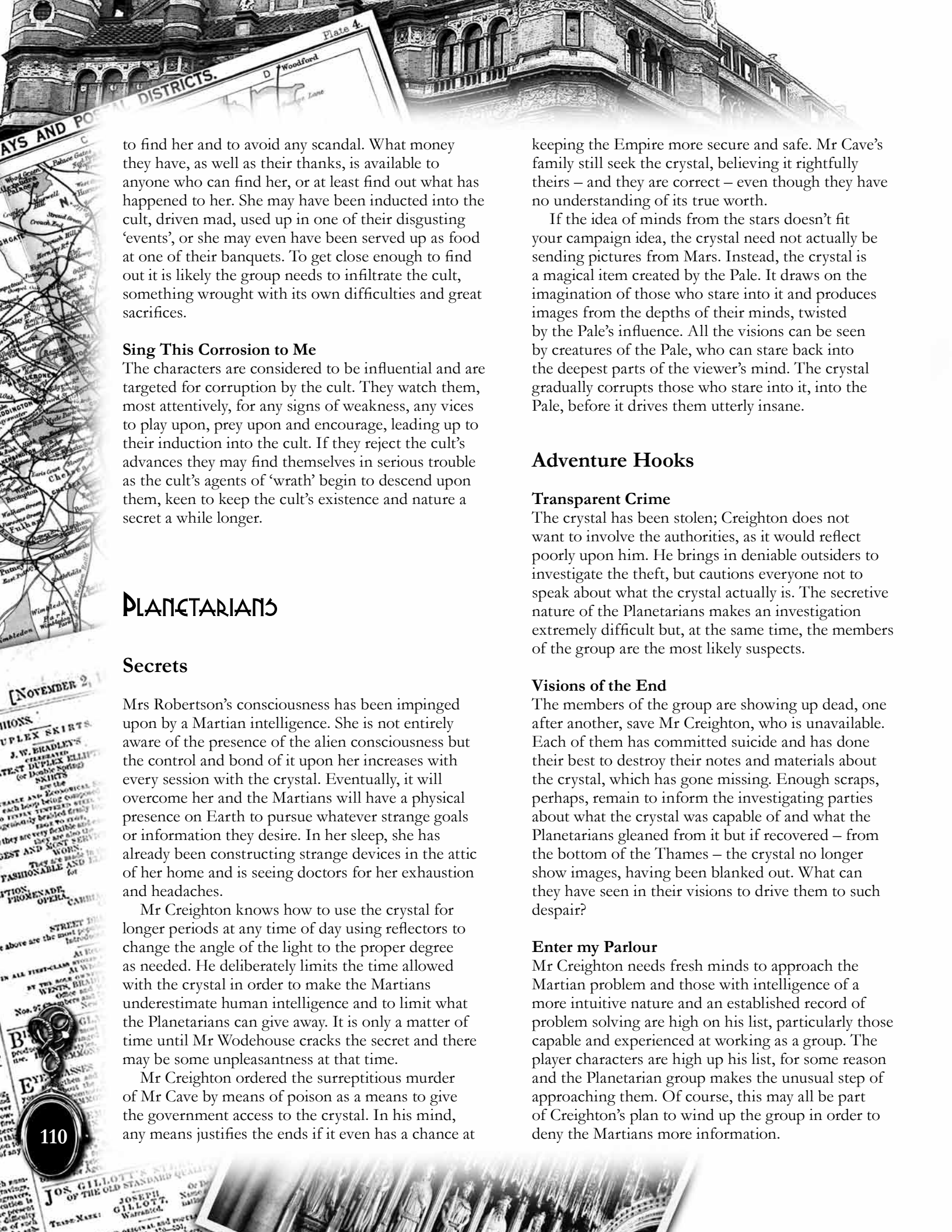
Adventure Hooks

Silence is Golden

A small number of the outer circle has rebelled under the guidance of a priest. They are planning to go to the police with their evidence but first they need to break away from the cult and need protection until they can make and present their case to the court. '8' will do absolutely anything to silence them or to disrupt the case. The priest and the group have gone looking for friends – or anyone – who can help them out of their predicament and guarantee their safety.

The Lady Vanishes

A young girl has gone missing, swallowed up into the machinations of the cult and her family are desperate



to find her and to avoid any scandal. What money they have, as well as their thanks, is available to anyone who can find her, or at least find out what has happened to her. She may have been inducted into the cult, driven mad, used up in one of their disgusting 'events', or she may even have been served up as food at one of their banquets. To get close enough to find out it is likely the group needs to infiltrate the cult, something wrought with its own difficulties and great sacrifices.

Sing This Corrosion to Me

The characters are considered to be influential and are targeted for corruption by the cult. They watch them, most attentively, for any signs of weakness, any vices to play upon, prey upon and encourage, leading up to their induction into the cult. If they reject the cult's advances they may find themselves in serious trouble as the cult's agents of 'wrath' begin to descend upon them, keen to keep the cult's existence and nature a secret a while longer.

PLANETARIANS

Secrets

Mrs Robertson's consciousness has been impinged upon by a Martian intelligence. She is not entirely aware of the presence of the alien consciousness but the control and bond of it upon her increases with every session with the crystal. Eventually, it will overcome her and the Martians will have a physical presence on Earth to pursue whatever strange goals or information they desire. In her sleep, she has already been constructing strange devices in the attic of her home and is seeing doctors for her exhaustion and headaches.

Mr Creighton knows how to use the crystal for longer periods at any time of day using reflectors to change the angle of the light to the proper degree as needed. He deliberately limits the time allowed with the crystal in order to make the Martians underestimate human intelligence and to limit what the Planetarians can give away. It is only a matter of time until Mr Wodehouse cracks the secret and there may be some unpleasantness at that time.

Mr Creighton ordered the surreptitious murder of Mr Cave by means of poison as a means to give the government access to the crystal. In his mind, any means justifies the ends if it even has a chance at

keeping the Empire more secure and safe. Mr Cave's family still seek the crystal, believing it rightfully theirs – and they are correct – even though they have no understanding of its true worth.

If the idea of minds from the stars doesn't fit your campaign idea, the crystal need not actually be sending pictures from Mars. Instead, the crystal is a magical item created by the Pale. It draws on the imagination of those who stare into it and produces images from the depths of their minds, twisted by the Pale's influence. All the visions can be seen by creatures of the Pale, who can stare back into the deepest parts of the viewer's mind. The crystal gradually corrupts those who stare into it, into the Pale, before it drives them utterly insane.

Adventure Hooks

Transparent Crime


The crystal has been stolen; Creighton does not want to involve the authorities, as it would reflect poorly upon him. He brings in deniable outsiders to investigate the theft, but cautions everyone not to speak about what the crystal actually is. The secretive nature of the Planetarians makes an investigation extremely difficult but, at the same time, the members of the group are the most likely suspects.

Visions of the End

The members of the group are showing up dead, one after another, save Mr Creighton, who is unavailable. Each of them has committed suicide and has done their best to destroy their notes and materials about the crystal, which has gone missing. Enough scraps, perhaps, remain to inform the investigating parties about what the crystal was capable of and what the Planetarians gleaned from it but if recovered – from the bottom of the Thames – the crystal no longer show images, having been blanked out. What can they have seen in their visions to drive them to such despair?

Enter my Parlour

Mr Creighton needs fresh minds to approach the Martian problem and those with intelligence of a more intuitive nature and an established record of problem solving are high on his list, particularly those capable and experienced at working as a group. The player characters are high up his list, for some reason and the Planetarian group makes the unusual step of approaching them. Of course, this may all be part of Creighton's plan to wind up the group in order to deny the Martians more information.



THE ANCIENT AND HOLY ORDER OF SULIS-MINERVA

Secrets

The Order is a secret organisation, with a strong hierarchy of insight and thus secrecy is second nature to both the organisation and its members. Though most of the secret concepts of the different degrees have been dealt with, some secrets fall outside the hierarchy. In a climate of total secrecy, this is only to be expected as nothing can be guaranteed to be what it seems, or mean what one would think.

Sacrifice

An open secret of the higher degrees is the need for Sacrifice in order to attain enlightenment but the nature of this Sacrifice is never spoken off aloud and is regarded as a highly personal matter. In some very special cases, there are very good reasons for this. One thing is to sacrifice the safety of the Aluminat faith, family life or other objects and items of personal and financial value and importance, another thing entirely is the sacrifice of the lives of others, particularly people close to oneself. During the 4° members are taught to follow in the footsteps of Hauptberg and his honourable pilgrimage that lead to the Order's foundation, and among the lessons learnt is to understand the sacrifice that Hauptberg endured with the loss of his wife, and that this sacrifice allowed his Epiphany to take place. Sacrifice is both an act of will and of submission to a greater calling and a greater, yet uncertain, gain but it is also the release of spiritual and magical energy that (according to the Order's teaching) allows one to commune with a higher level. In the case of the Pilgrim, the Sacrifice allows one to finally gain ones Epiphany. In the teachings of the Order, the ordeal of Hauptberg and the Sacrifice of his beloved wife is considered an analogy, a symbolic journey that maps the road of the Seeker. For too many Seekers, though, the symbolism of the death of Hauptberg's beloved wife becomes a harsh reality, as they, themselves, are guided towards the sacrifice of a living being, even someone close to the Seeker, himself. Life is much cheaper in the eyes of the old pagan gods, even cheaper than in the eyes of the Aluminat Church.

The act of Sacrifice as part of the Pilgrimage of the 4° encompass only some of the blood on the hands of the Order, for the bloodthirstiness of many older gods is not easily quenched and many

members routinely commit the most heinous murders. The continued practice of living sacrifice is never discussed within the Order's halls, and it is a secret only among the practitioners, and silently condoned by the Trinity of High Priests, who set the wishes of the Gods above that of humanitarian principles and their own conscience. The Sacrificial Rites are restricted to members of the 4°III, 5° and 6°, and for sake of secrecy usually constricted to four or five participants, at its most. These secret blood rituals take place outside the Order's London Lodge, for fear of discovery and are certainly not rare events. Preferably, the rites take place at a far away shrine or a secluded country estate. The victims, unless otherwise ordered by the honoured deity, are chosen from the lowliest members of society, who will not be missed so easily. The Gods cannot expect a virgin sacrifice, unless they ordered so, rather the opposite is more common. The procurement of the sacrifices is difficult and those who perform the rites do not want to risk their or the Order's discovery as murderers or kidnappers. In most cases, the procurement of the sacrificial victim falls to special, secret agents of the Order whom are only known to certain members of the 5°, and of course the 6°, who appoints them. These are the 4°III-H. The H stands for both Harvest and Harbingers.

Harbingers

The Harbingers, recruited from Seekers whom the Order's upper echelons consider particularly ruthless, as well as discrete, are those whom other members might consider quiet psychopaths, with that certain coldness in their eyes. Often the 6° recognise them as having had a particularly telling Seeking or Epiphany. The 4°III-H is a secret degree, held by a handful of 4° members and though they are respected members of the organisation, only a few can ever hope to gain the 5°-H, as their personality usually restricts them from holding a political office. The Harbingers do the dirty work of the Order, where the lower degrees cannot be expected to perform adequately as part of their tests or where discretion and secrecy (not to mention ruthlessness) are of utmost importance. For instance, the aforementioned procurement of sacrificial victims but also the hunting down of fallen members, bringing them back for justice, or if necessary exacting the necessary, and deadly, ritual on the ex-member themselves.

There are few Harbingers but they are possibly the most dangerous members of the Order – which is why the 6° at all times insists on keeping their number low and keeping an ever vigilant eye on their activities. They fear that if left unchecked, the 4°III-H could



evolve into a dangerous secret society that would rival their own and they are particularly alert about attempts at recruitment from lower ranks by the Harbingers. This is something that has been tried a few times already and which might only be resolved through harsh measures. In order to avoid the Harbingers from becoming too influential, they have also instituted a very restrictive policy of who may know of its existence and may access its members, for instance, those who dearly need sacrifices to please their chosen Deity or Aspect. Anyone who reveals their existence to someone not authorised to know can expect to be dealt with harshly. The greatest threat, however, is that the Harbingers could theoretically reveal themselves to such unauthorised members of their own accord, offering their services. For all its power, the Trinity of High Priests fear their own creation and the day their secret weapon could turn on them.

The Secret Notes


Hauptberg left behind a myriad of notes and unfinished manuscripts which are now in the hands of his son and heir, Uwe Matteus Hauptberg. Officially, he is compiling these ideas and gradually adding them to the Order's curriculum and occasionally suggestions found in the notes are discussed and implemented. However, there are some things in the papers that Uwe prefers to keep to himself, not only could they potentially harm the Order, but they serve as a link to Sulis-Minerva, which he feels he is lacking. Consulting the notes made by his father, detailing visions and visitations, Uwe is able to pass these on as his own divine and inspired wisdom. A secret Uwe is very keen on keeping to himself is that in his latter notes, in the months preceding his death, his father expressed certain doubts in the nature of the Order – its duality, as he put it. He felt there were different forces at work, some darker than others. He had received visions of a dark and angry entity emerging from the Order, spreading war and disease, a complete and utter blackness, across Britain and Europe; and he dreaded that he, or the Order, might be the cause of it. When confronting Sulis-Minerva with his anxiety, she dismissed him with a smile, telling him not to worry, that it would all be well. There were other minor prophecies, as well, that Uwe is trying to interpret, hoping to use them as his own.

Reform and Secret Sects

The papers left by Hauptberg, now in his Uwe's possession, include suggestions for reforming the Order, by introducing more diverse, non-linear

degrees, as well as special ranks and positions – one of these being the Harbingers and Harvesters. He suggested assembling an order within the Order, a parallel hierarchy of monitors to keep an eye on the internal affairs, checking on the Harbingers and, in later notes, combating the darkness within that he was beginning to fear. Surprisingly, there are plans for external, quasi-independent orders, as well, which Uwe is now working with the Trinity of High Priests to develop. One of these is a female order to counter-balance the exclusively male hierarchy, with a common leadership for both. The Order is almost exclusively male, according to Hauptberg, not because of the wishes of Sulis-Minerva, but societal restrictions, as the Order is best served by recruiting from exclusively male societies and acting as a gentleman's club. The Old Ways, however, honoured the female Aspect as well as the male. The worship of the old ways is, therefore, not exclusive to one of the sexes, wise folk women have been quite effective in keeping the old ways alive – even if in a less pure version. In secret, Uwe has already started to gather the first few circles of wise women and to instruct them in the ways of the Order and the old gods. Though his father intended the female counter-balance to mirror its hierarchy, Uwe is toying the idea with setting up a structure of witches' covens instead, but he knows that the Order would prefer a Sisterhood to parallel their own Brotherhood, in which case the circles he has formed will be the leaders of that Sisterhood, once they are fully instructed. For now, his covens meet in a couple of country estates spread across Britain, which he visits under the pretexts of seeking spiritual guidance from Sulis-Minerva.

The women's circles are not the only secret organisations springing from the Order, inspired by his father's notes; Uwe has convinced the Trinity of High Priests to form a myriad of informal gatherings interested in the mystic arts and the old ways. These are social gatherings of like-minded and curious people, who meet to discuss religion, philosophy and the supernatural, carefully guided by selected members. They serve as a place of recruitment of potential members and as a way of slowly gathering support for the Order's philosophy. Some of these gatherings centre around Mediums, and after registering the popularity of these, the Trinity of High Priests all expressed an interest in perhaps trying to form a cult, somewhere in Britain (under their control, of course), to test the water and see what reactions their religion would get. Most of these social clubs however, are not much more than book clubs and infrequent tea-parties. The more active ones,



however, do show potential for attaining irregular degrees in the Order, itself, if the Trinity of High Priests ever decides to let them.

Secret Fears

While the Order fears the outside world most of all, the greatest threat to them might come from within, for it is only natural that the dark and chaotic forces of the Pale have taken an interest in them. Starting small, influencing certain susceptible members during their education, a secret brotherhood within the Order recruits willing members to the organised worship of the darker aspects of the old gods. Their numbers are few and so far their existence has been kept hidden from the upper echelons, perhaps because one of the High Priests himself might be a member. Not even the members of this Pale Brotherhood is fully aware of who is a part of their dark conspiracy, they meet in the dark and always wearing ceremonial masks for their secret rituals. During these rituals, they commune with the old gods and the servants of the Pale, and receive instructions on how to best further their cause. Their aim is not to thwart the Order but to bring it completely under the influence of the Pale and to use it against the restraining forces of Dogma. In the process, however, they risk alienating most of the rest of society and bringing the Order to the public's attention. Uwe actually fears that something like this might happen, even though he is unaware of the Pale Brotherhood's existence. On the other hand, he also fears that whatever dark potential lies within the Order, its true purpose. This thought alone keeps him awake many a night.

Adventure Hooks

The Order can be an effective and dangerous antagonist to the player characters, or the characters might be members of the Order, or its unknowing agents. The following suggested adventure hooks allows for all these options and can be expanded and embellished upon as much as the Gamemaster wishes.

There Goes the Neighbourhood

After several failed attempts at acquiring an estate and a particularly important shrine on the outskirts of the estate's property, the faithful decide to go ahead with their God's bidding anyway. They perform a frenzied rite on a secluded mound, with large bonfires and the slaughter of a cow in the ruins of an old Roman building, for three successive nights. It is far enough from the local population that it would not normally be noticed but unfortunately, their festivities coincide

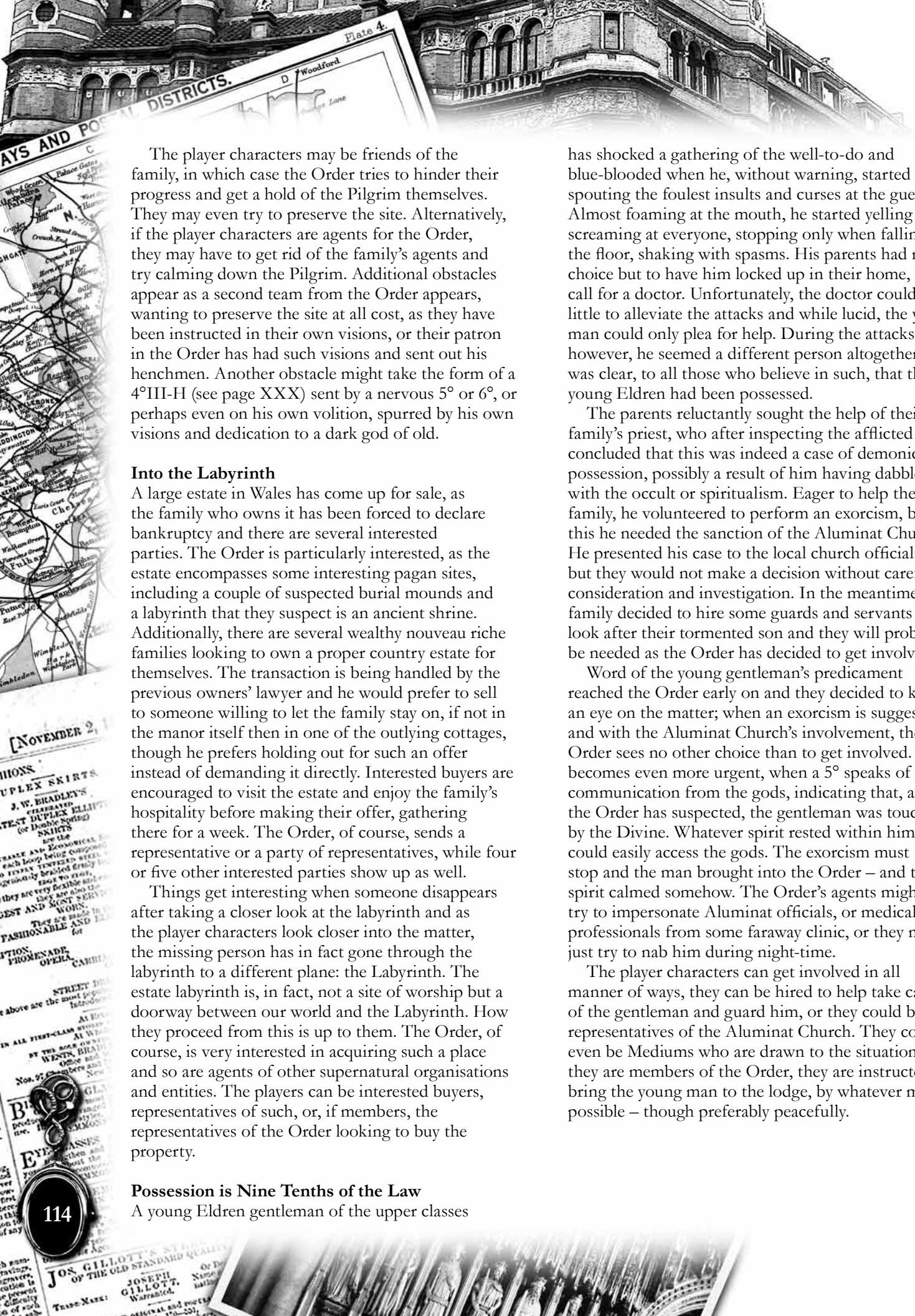
with the annual get-together of the young lord of the estate and several of his closest friends. They plan to do some drinking, and perhaps some hunting in the nearby woods, when by accident they come upon the rite or the leftovers of the rites from the night before. They are, of course, outraged and want to get to the bottom of it all, while the faithful want to get rid of the young lord and his friends and keep their secrets.

The player characters could either be friends of the young lord, who have come to the countryside to enjoy some rest and some fun and games. They might even be faithful worshippers of the Order.

Things might get interesting if, by some chance, the player characters stumble upon a secret room or cache at the estate. Here, they find papers and items indicating that the family itself at times honoured whatever Roman God the Order is worshipping at night, and perhaps even that the tradition of the annual gathering of friends originates from this practice. The fact that the dates coincides may not be an accident, at all.

Maddening Clearsight

A Seeking Pilgrim has vanished, leaving only a hastily scribbled note indicating that he has headed towards a wood in northern England and referring to the dark visions that visit him in his sleep. The young Pilgrim has reached his Epiphany it would seem and whatever sights it brought him has shattered his will, and driven him mad, causing him to flee civilisation. His family is distraught, and the Order keen on getting him back to calm him down, or otherwise make sure that he is not a security risk. As the Order sends out agents to retrieve him, his family seek outside help in tracking him down as well. The hunters can easily follow his trail northwards, as he is not very concerned with staying hidden. Going by carriage and train, and sleeping at hotels and boarding houses along the way, the Pilgrim leaves talk of "that strange, young man, who sweated constantly and mumbled to himself". He is finally tracked to a village where he has rented a seldom-used room, spending most of his time out in a nearby glade in the middle of an overgrown wood, where ornately carved rocks in roughly manlike shapes form a circle around an ancient stone altar. Day in and day out, the Pilgrim is hacking away at the rocks, trying to destroy their carvings and pull them from the ground. His maddening vision showed him dark rites performed at this very site in the worship of some cruel unforgiving god and he saw that god rise again if the rites resume – and they would soon, thanks to the Order, and him. His Epiphany showed him as one of the new Faithful and his conscience could not bear this.



The player characters may be friends of the family, in which case the Order tries to hinder their progress and get a hold of the Pilgrim themselves. They may even try to preserve the site. Alternatively, if the player characters are agents for the Order, they may have to get rid of the family's agents and try calming down the Pilgrim. Additional obstacles appear as a second team from the Order appears, wanting to preserve the site at all cost, as they have been instructed in their own visions, or their patron in the Order has had such visions and sent out his henchmen. Another obstacle might take the form of a 4°III-H (see page XXX) sent by a nervous 5° or 6°, or perhaps even on his own volition, spurred by his own visions and dedication to a dark god of old.

Into the Labyrinth

A large estate in Wales has come up for sale, as the family who owns it has been forced to declare bankruptcy and there are several interested parties. The Order is particularly interested, as the estate encompasses some interesting pagan sites, including a couple of suspected burial mounds and a labyrinth that they suspect is an ancient shrine. Additionally, there are several wealthy nouveau riche families looking to own a proper country estate for themselves. The transaction is being handled by the previous owners' lawyer and he would prefer to sell to someone willing to let the family stay on, if not in the manor itself then in one of the outlying cottages, though he prefers holding out for such an offer instead of demanding it directly. Interested buyers are encouraged to visit the estate and enjoy the family's hospitality before making their offer, gathering there for a week. The Order, of course, sends a representative or a party of representatives, while four or five other interested parties show up as well.

Things get interesting when someone disappears after taking a closer look at the labyrinth and as the player characters look closer into the matter, the missing person has in fact gone through the labyrinth to a different plane: the Labyrinth. The estate labyrinth is, in fact, not a site of worship but a doorway between our world and the Labyrinth. How they proceed from this is up to them. The Order, of course, is very interested in acquiring such a place and so are agents of other supernatural organisations and entities. The players can be interested buyers, representatives of such, or, if members, the representatives of the Order looking to buy the property.

Possession is Nine Tenths of the Law

A young Eldren gentleman of the upper classes

has shocked a gathering of the well-to-do and blue-blooded when he, without warning, started spouting the foulest insults and curses at the guests. Almost foaming at the mouth, he started yelling and screaming at everyone, stopping only when falling to the floor, shaking with spasms. His parents had no choice but to have him locked up in their home, and call for a doctor. Unfortunately, the doctor could do little to alleviate the attacks and while lucid, the young man could only plea for help. During the attacks, however, he seemed a different person altogether – it was clear, to all those who believe in such, that the young Eldren had been possessed.

The parents reluctantly sought the help of their family's priest, who after inspecting the afflicted man concluded that this was indeed a case of demonic possession, possibly a result of him having dabbled with the occult or spiritualism. Eager to help the family, he volunteered to perform an exorcism, but for this he needed the sanction of the Aluminat Church. He presented his case to the local church officials, but they would not make a decision without careful consideration and investigation. In the meantime, the family decided to hire some guards and servants to look after their tormented son and they will probably be needed as the Order has decided to get involved.

Word of the young gentleman's predicament reached the Order early on and they decided to keep an eye on the matter; when an exorcism is suggested and with the Aluminat Church's involvement, the Order sees no other choice than to get involved. This becomes even more urgent, when a 5° speaks of a communication from the gods, indicating that, as the Order has suspected, the gentleman was touched by the Divine. Whatever spirit rested within him could easily access the gods. The exorcism must stop and the man brought into the Order – and the spirit calmed somehow. The Order's agents might try to impersonate Aluminat officials, or medical professionals from some faraway clinic, or they might just try to nab him during night-time.

The player characters can get involved in all manner of ways, they can be hired to help take care of the gentleman and guard him, or they could be representatives of the Aluminat Church. They could even be Mediums who are drawn to the situation. If they are members of the Order, they are instructed to bring the young man to the lodge, by whatever means possible – though preferably peacefully.

CHAPTER 3 – ACADEMIA ASCENDANT

DOMUS ALUCINAE

Secrets

The Myrmidon – Making Men into Monsters.

Work continues in the lab of Doctor Patterson Bogg, paid handsomely by someone close to the Queen to turn soldiers into fighting machines. A recent breakthrough along that course bears the codename 'Myrmidon' after the warriors of legend. The effects of the drug are phenomenal. Immune to pain and inoculated against fear, test subjects experience a terrible mix of joy and rage. Implanted by mesmerism, they charge headlong toward targets and expend their every effort, even their lives in an attempt to destroy them. No one else in the Domus Alucinae knows that Doctor Bogg's formula is complete.

The Myrmidon formula transforms anyone drinking it into a monstrous warrior. It takes five, pain-filled minutes for the formula to take effect after drinking it. It transformed any character or NPC in the following way:

- +5 Physical Competence (or +5 Strength)
- +4 Health Dice
- Immune to the effects of pain or fear
- Unable to cast spells (no ability to focus)
- Unable to use rational thought but remains clever and cunning
- Desire to kill and destroy the first person they are tasked to (resist the urge for 10 minutes on a successful Willpower/Mental Competence check gaining 4 successes)
- The formula lasts for 5 hours, at which point the Myrmidon passes out for an hour

Animus Veritatis – The True Spirit

Geoffrey Wirth, Maynard's nephew, has uncovered a mental technique by which he can reliably access a higher form of consciousness. Without actually being a Medium, he can forge a mental connection to Zenthael, a member of the Angelic Host. Zenthael provides Geoffrey with insights and abilities to right the wrongs it sees through the lens of Geoffrey's mind. It is Geoffrey's belief that the insights come from his meditations and is unaware that an Angel is behind his recent changes in character.

Zenthael is restricted in what it can bring to bear when the Angel is in mental contact with Geoffrey. It can use its Mental Competence, its traits and all of its skills to help Geoffrey. Zenthael does not directly control Geoffrey's body, so it cannot use its Physical Competence to replace his.

Zenthael

Rank 16 Spiritual Advisor (Generalist)

Physical competence: +10

Mental competence: +9

Health: Does not apply

Signature Skills: Etiquette +4, Perception +4, Politics +4, Science (all) +4, Swordplay +4, Theology (Aluminat) +8

Traits: Faithful +4, Peaceful +4, Pure +4

Qualities: Unstoppable

Combat Abilities: Swordplay (10 dice)

Damage: Sword (6 dice)

A Traitor's Stand

Merrill Dinwiddie has had quite enough of this nonsense. He has collected notes from a number of the fellow members and plans to use a smear campaign to destroy the Domus Alucinae. If the work becomes public, all of them stand to lose their reputations at the very least. Too many deplorable experiments, too many excesses of the flesh have happened in the name of progress to ignore. Merrill has connections to the newspapers and is only one or two incidents away from revealing everything he knows.

Love's Great Labour

Elijah Woolsey has kept secret his relationship with a member of the Royal Family (which one is up to the Gamemaster). For years, Elijah has taken her on a whirlwind tour of the mind. Meditation, hypnotism and various drugs the Domus Alucinae discovered have been part of their shared secret along with numerous sessions of illicit lovemaking. This behaviour has given her an amazing depth of character and strength of will. However, should anyone learn of this dalliance, then the Queen's wrath is certain to devastate the group.

Adventure Hooks

The Madness at the King George

The Domus Alucinae has spiked the beer in a



popular local pub with a heavy dose of hallucinogenic compound. They believe that a group experience will provide information of a sort they cannot obtain from any group of test subjects they invite to their meeting areas and homes. The compound is not poisonous, aside from the hallucinations it causes. Mobs run uncontrolled through the narrow confines of the neighbourhood, responding to the visions while members observe the effects from nearby rooftops. This is a great adventure in which to use mobs of hallucinating Londoners to really cause some havoc.

The Janus Experiment

A member has produced an elixir to grant him perfect control over his emotions. Unshackled from base human fears and desires, he is free to apply the whole of his intellect to the problems at hand. The unfortunate side effect is that when exhausted or stressed beyond the calming effects of the drug, he blacks out and transforms into a bestial figure – fuelled by the emotions he has suppressed. The beast stalks the streets, looking to fulfil the worst of his carnal and violent desires. Depending on who has ingested the elixir, the players may be called in to capture him without harm, or kill him.

The Janus Elixir

Physical Competence: +4 Dice (Strength and Fortitude)

Mental Competence: -2 Dice (Wits Only)

Health: +2 Dice (+4 Pips)

Traits: Brutal +3, Unsettling +3

Talents: Gain Iron Grip, Natural Charisma

Combat Abilities: Compounding on any natural fighting ability, the Janus user tries to choke anyone they fight and has 5 extra dice for Grappling and Choking attacks.

Until recently, it has been contained and directed into frivolous erotic activities but as the Club conducts operations for the Guild, and he gains the trust of the Church and the government, Mace finds himself desiring more power. As the effects of his interests and perversions increase, the player characters may be called on to aid him in turning from the path toward evil.

Mace is an interesting choice for those Gamemasters and players who aren't afraid to get more 'adult' with their campaigns. He is a savvy and intelligent man who is good at keeping himself in the good graces of his betters; he should be played with only a hint of the corruption that lurks underneath his sophisticated demeanour.

Dona Concetta's secrets are both more mundane and more dangerous. She is a pawn in great political games, her part in which she barely understands. Her connection to General Prim y Prats places her squarely in the republican conspiracies against the Spanish crown. Her benefactor is a high-ranking board member of the Bank of Italy, Baron Giancarlo Montefialco and her connection to the Baron is unknown to even Mace. The Baron is the chancellor of the Bank of Italy and his goal is to increase the power of Italy in Europe, heighten his bank's financial reach and, even more darkly, he is the host of a Demonic presence seeking world domination.

Doña Concetta is the most popular of the club's members and the one most likely to compromise the group by accident. She is increasingly involved in the machinations of General Prim, who is about to set his plot against the Queen of Spain into motion. She has been travelling extensively of late, moving messages back and forth between Prim and his conspirators in the Spanish navy in Cadiz. Players could become involved in the impending coup d'état unwittingly though her.

Dr. LaBove is a sympathetic and brave character that proves a loyal and useful ally. He has to be wooed into action by the players but once befriended he will immediately aid them in the future.

LONDON ORIENTALISTS' CLUB

Secrets

This is a group of secrets, secret passions, secret connections and secret agendas. Most of these revolve around the machinations and goals of the Aluminat Church and the Guild but each of the members has their own mysteries, as well.

Lord George Mace has his own desire for power.

Adventure Hooks

Stepping into the Dark

The Guild asks the club to investigate the alleged criminal and mystic activities of Alexei Borozci, unaware of the crime lord's true nature. If the character is a member of the Little Princes, they have to try to gather information on the gang through the London criminal networks, which immediately draws the attention of the Terror.

Company Men

Her Majesty's Government comes to members of the club who are tracking down the Tantric magic guide, Agama of Mahavidya, in India. The government might make contact in India, or as the group prepares for the trip in London. They are asked to investigate disappearances of Indian women in Ossira, and the connection of a former East India Company 'boxwallah', who may be at the centre of the mystery.

New Highs

A new type of opium is showing up on the streets of London that makes the user a thrall to an unknown puppet-master in Limehouse. These opium fiends are used to conduct crimes of which they later have no memory. Chinese gangs are the most likely culprit but there are plenty of other people willing to use opium. Can the player characters win the trust of the Chinese so they can investigate, or will a whole community stand against them and their accusations?

Spanish Intrigue

The characters are drawn into the Spanish republicans' plots against the Spanish Crown. Since Her Majesty's Government is opposed to their activities, but legally must allow these political asylum seekers to remain in the country, they must quietly stop any operations being carried out. This brings them into conflict with Doña Concetta.

Dangerous Engines

A criminal mastermind has created a fearsome engine of war – be it an airship, mole drill, tank, or some other weapon – and is using it to destroy government property, rob the Bank of England, or commit another suitably impressive crime. The club is called on to stop the man from continuing his reign of terror on the city or countryside. A secret base of operations, be it the catacombs under London or the fens of the East Country, might make for an excellent climax.

Halls of Power

Magic is being used to manipulate Members of Parliament or the Bank of England. Investigations lead the characters into an international conspiracy involving the head of the Bank of Italy and his Demonic masters. Concetta wants to stop the plot but requires their assistance to set her patron free.

Over-enthusiasm

Doctor LaBove is taking his anger over his affliction out on the criminal element of the city. While this

has been, to date, within bounds acceptable to the police, he is becoming increasingly violent. They must try to stop him from going too far with his war on crime. Perhaps he is not entirely in control of himself, leading them to the West End Terror – who has been using the doctor to unwittingly remove competition in the City.

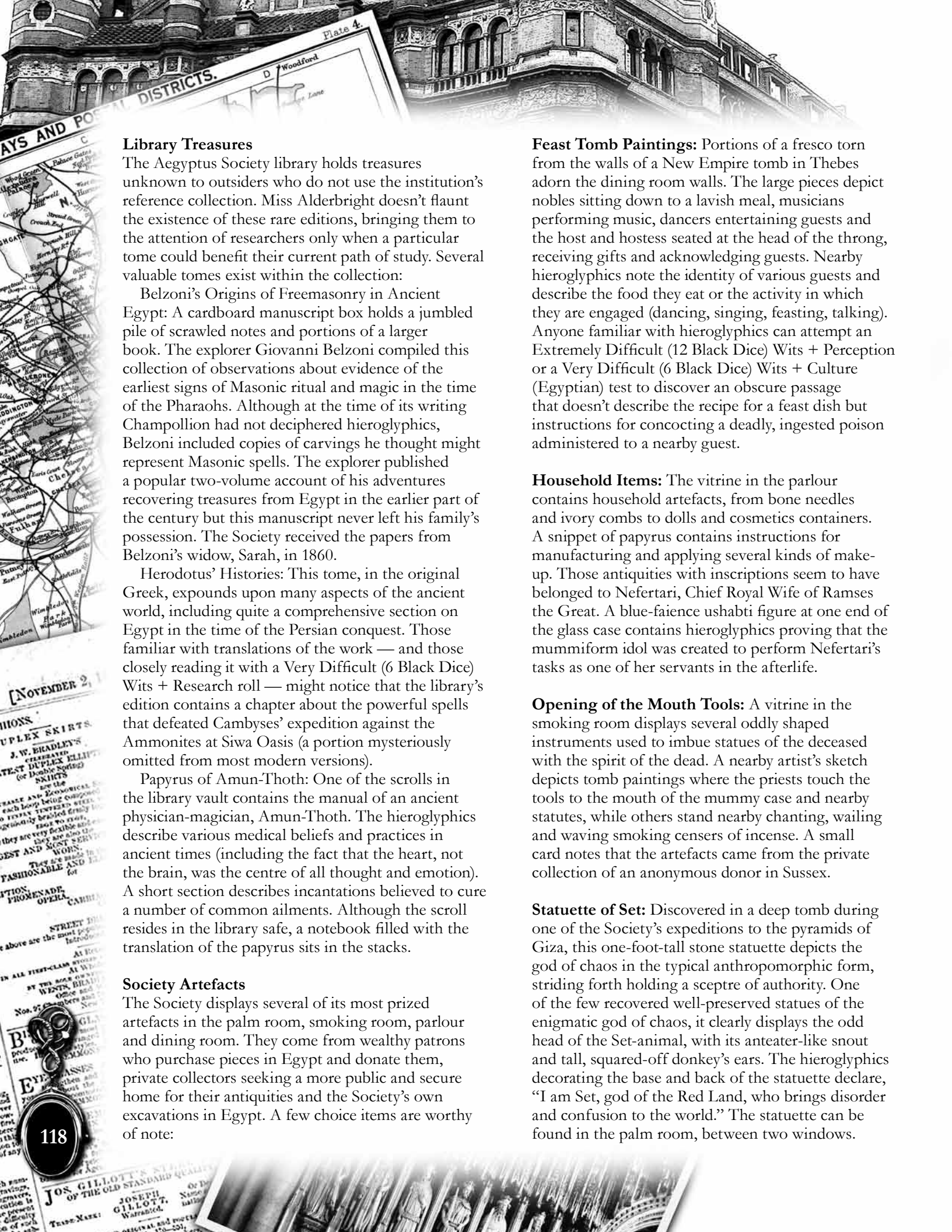
AEgyptus Society

Secrets

The Society's board of directors consists of several wealthy entrepreneurs, who all believe themselves the reincarnations of prominent Ancient Egyptians. Each, in their own way (and to varying degrees), truly channels the spirit of their respective forebear; unfortunately, this leads the board to advocate inconsistent policies that send the Society president and club's resources on conflicting purposes as each personality attempts to pursue its own pro-Egypt agenda.

A uniting, focusing force has recently emerged on the board; Andrew Galbraith, solicitor for the Salt Estate, is in fact wholly possessed by the annoyed ghost of Henry Salt, himself. On a recent journey to Alexandria, Galbraith acquired one of Salt's Egyptian statues into which the benefactor managed to imbue his spirit upon his death in 1827. The spirit intends to spur the board into recruiting more active, scholarly members who can spearhead an effort to gather Egyptian antiquities into one central museum, not one situated in a particular European nation's capital but in Egypt itself.

Two strategies remain paramount to this effort: consolidating the world's collections of Egyptian artefacts — or, at least, the most prominent ones currently displayed abroad — into one Egyptian museum and rescuing antiquities in danger from current development in Egypt, primarily those sites and artefacts impacted by the building, expansion, and opening of the Suez Canal. Establishing a formal museum in Cairo for the preservation and display of those antiquities remains paramount to this mission. Egypt's ancient treasures currently sit on temporary display in a warehouse in Cairo's seedy waterfront district. To further this end Galbraith has begun covertly engaging in petty criminal activities to increase flow of finances to a hidden, discretionary fund within the Society.



Library Treasures

The Aegyptus Society library holds treasures unknown to outsiders who do not use the institution's reference collection. Miss Alderbright doesn't flaunt the existence of these rare editions, bringing them to the attention of researchers only when a particular tome could benefit their current path of study. Several valuable tomes exist within the collection:

Belzoni's Origins of Freemasonry in Ancient Egypt: A cardboard manuscript box holds a jumbled pile of scrawled notes and portions of a larger book. The explorer Giovanni Belzoni compiled this collection of observations about evidence of the earliest signs of Masonic ritual and magic in the time of the Pharaohs. Although at the time of its writing Champollion had not deciphered hieroglyphics, Belzoni included copies of carvings he thought might represent Masonic spells. The explorer published a popular two-volume account of his adventures recovering treasures from Egypt in the earlier part of the century but this manuscript never left his family's possession. The Society received the papers from Belzoni's widow, Sarah, in 1860.

Herodotus' Histories: This tome, in the original Greek, expounds upon many aspects of the ancient world, including quite a comprehensive section on Egypt in the time of the Persian conquest. Those familiar with translations of the work — and those closely reading it with a Very Difficult (6 Black Dice) Wits + Research roll — might notice that the library's edition contains a chapter about the powerful spells that defeated Cambyse's expedition against the Ammonites at Siwa Oasis (a portion mysteriously omitted from most modern versions).

Papyrus of Amun-Thoth: One of the scrolls in the library vault contains the manual of an ancient physician-magician, Amun-Thoth. The hieroglyphics describe various medical beliefs and practices in ancient times (including the fact that the heart, not the brain, was the centre of all thought and emotion). A short section describes incantations believed to cure a number of common ailments. Although the scroll resides in the library safe, a notebook filled with the translation of the papyrus sits in the stacks.

Society Artefacts

The Society displays several of its most prized artefacts in the palm room, smoking room, parlour and dining room. They come from wealthy patrons who purchase pieces in Egypt and donate them, private collectors seeking a more public and secure home for their antiquities and the Society's own excavations in Egypt. A few choice items are worthy of note:

Feast Tomb Paintings: Portions of a fresco torn from the walls of a New Empire tomb in Thebes adorn the dining room walls. The large pieces depict nobles sitting down to a lavish meal, musicians performing music, dancers entertaining guests and the host and hostess seated at the head of the throng, receiving gifts and acknowledging guests. Nearby hieroglyphics note the identity of various guests and describe the food they eat or the activity in which they are engaged (dancing, singing, feasting, talking). Anyone familiar with hieroglyphics can attempt an Extremely Difficult (12 Black Dice) Wits + Perception or a Very Difficult (6 Black Dice) Wits + Culture (Egyptian) test to discover an obscure passage that doesn't describe the recipe for a feast dish but instructions for concocting a deadly, ingested poison administered to a nearby guest.

Household Items: The vitrine in the parlour contains household artefacts, from bone needles and ivory combs to dolls and cosmetics containers. A snippet of papyrus contains instructions for manufacturing and applying several kinds of make-up. Those antiquities with inscriptions seem to have belonged to Nefertari, Chief Royal Wife of Ramses the Great. A blue-faience ushabti figure at one end of the glass case contains hieroglyphics proving that the mummiform idol was created to perform Nefertari's tasks as one of her servants in the afterlife.

Opening of the Mouth Tools: A vitrine in the smoking room displays several oddly shaped instruments used to imbue statues of the deceased with the spirit of the dead. A nearby artist's sketch depicts tomb paintings where the priests touch the tools to the mouth of the mummy case and nearby statues, while others stand nearby chanting, wailing and waving smoking censers of incense. A small card notes that the artefacts came from the private collection of an anonymous donor in Sussex.

Statuette of Set: Discovered in a deep tomb during one of the Society's expeditions to the pyramids of Giza, this one-foot-tall stone statuette depicts the god of chaos in the typical anthropomorphic form, striding forth holding a sceptre of authority. One of the few recovered well-preserved statues of the enigmatic god of chaos, it clearly displays the odd head of the Set-animal, with its anteater-like snout and tall, squared-off donkey's ears. The hieroglyphics decorating the base and back of the statuette declare, "I am Set, god of the Red Land, who brings disorder and confusion to the world." The statuette can be found in the palm room, between two windows.

Adventure Hooks

Cat People

While investigating the disappearance of a wealthy socialite's parlour cat, the characters learn that an alarming number of felines have taken residence near and within the Aegyptus Society. The gathering cluster might indicate some kind of imminent magical phenomenon possibly related to an artefact of Bastet kept in the club or a relic of the more malevolent Sekhmet. Despite opposition from shadowy forces pursuing their own dark objectives, the heroes must either perform a key role in a ceremony to effect a beneficial supernatural event or find some way to prevent a paranormal catastrophe.

Death from the Nile

A man drops dead in front of the characters in the middle of the street, a program from a recent Aegyptus Society lecture clutched in his hand. The police suspect them of foul play, so the heroes must clear their name by discovering the victim's identity and reason for attending the lecture, deciphering arcane notes scribbled on the program and investigating who associated with the club might want the fellow dead for various motives; all before the murderer decides to eliminate them, too.

Express Delivery

Mr. Paget hires the characters to take a carriage and deliver a crate from the London Docks to the Aegyptus Society. He gives them a shipping receipt to find the vessel from Alexandria and take possession of the crate; they also receive express instructions not to open the crate under any circumstances. Other entities actively strive to steal the crate from the characters: shadowy secret societies, agents of unscrupulous antiquities collectors, members of a nationalist Egyptian independence group and a well-placed, powerful sorcerer.

CHAPTER 4 – FEAR AND SILENCE

SILENCIUS

Secrets

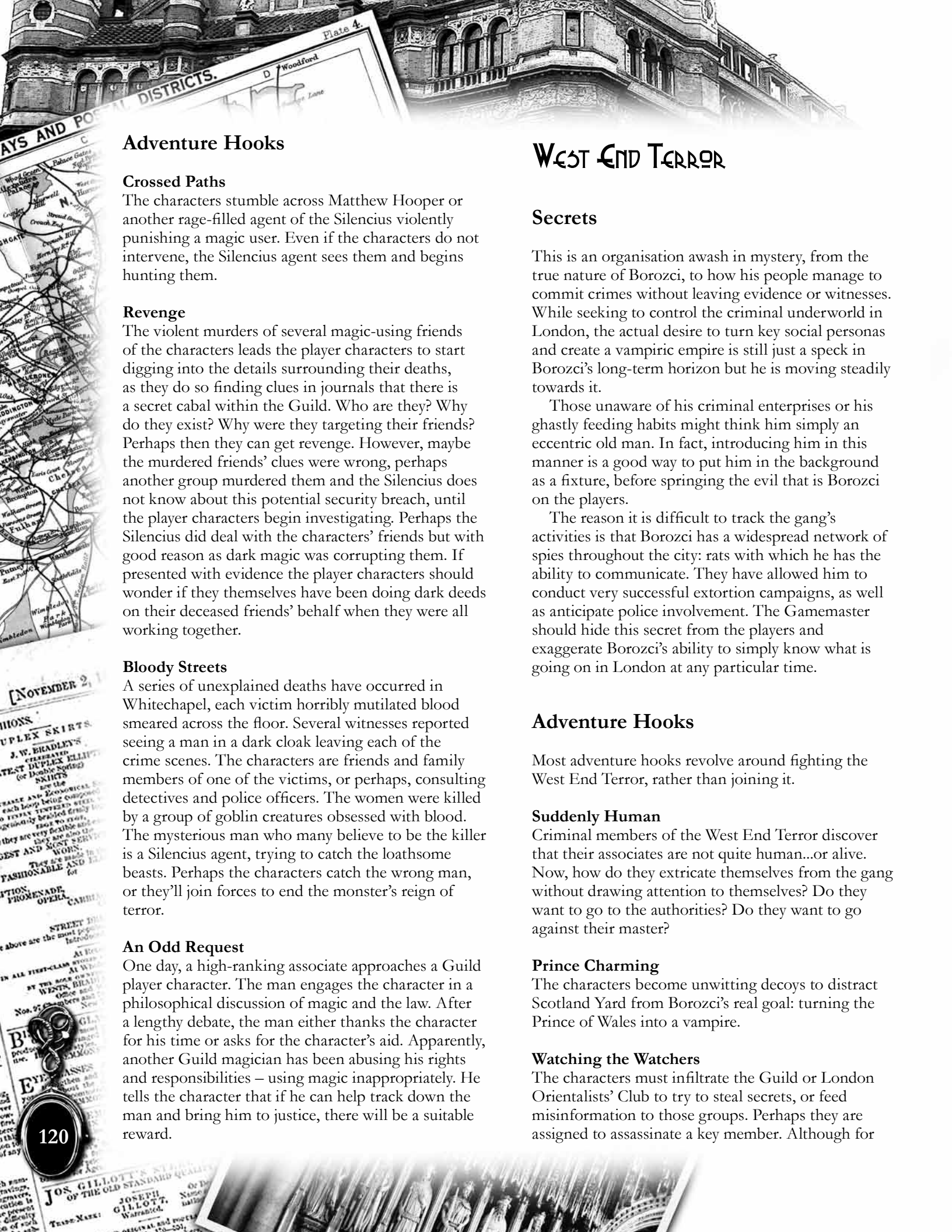
The very existence of the Silencius is a tightly held secret within the Guild. Very few Guild members not already in the Order know it exists. Those who do would never jeopardise their lives by exposing them. However, most Guild members know the name Silencius and know enough not to talk about it. Should some gentlemen 'from the Guild' come knocking, most magicians understand who they are really dealing with. Most are sensible enough not to broach the subject.

In public, Silencius acknowledge each other by pressing the index finger of their left hand to their lips.

The Pope didn't give up all ties to the Silencius. He receives regular secret reports on Guild activities directly from the Magister. This secret arrangement is of advantage to the Silencius as it gives them a powerful ally outside the Guild. After all, one day the Guild itself may have to be held to account.

While the Guild Master of Geneva can remove the Magister at any time, it would be inadvisable, and most Guild Masters are aware of that. The Silencius like to maintain a 'faithful dog' demeanour to those high-ranking Guildsmen who know of it. If it were not for the illusion that they control the Silencius, those Guildsmen might get nervous and do something stupid.

The Silencius likes to offer the appearance that they have agents and spies everywhere. However, they are nowhere near as large as they make out. It is rare for there to actually be eight worthy souls each year to join the Order each year, although few, if any, ever leave it. In truth, each secret meeting hall serves around fifty members at most. Having said that, with each member being a Thaumaturgist, and usually a very wealthy and well-trained one, the resources they can call on are vast.



Adventure Hooks

Crossed Paths

The characters stumble across Matthew Hooper or another rage-filled agent of the Silencius violently punishing a magic user. Even if the characters do not intervene, the Silencius agent sees them and begins hunting them.

Revenge

The violent murders of several magic-using friends of the characters leads the player characters to start digging into the details surrounding their deaths, as they do so finding clues in journals that there is a secret cabal within the Guild. Who are they? Why do they exist? Why were they targeting their friends? Perhaps then they can get revenge. However, maybe the murdered friends' clues were wrong, perhaps another group murdered them and the Silencius does not know about this potential security breach, until the player characters begin investigating. Perhaps the Silencius did deal with the characters' friends but with good reason as dark magic was corrupting them. If presented with evidence the player characters should wonder if they themselves have been doing dark deeds on their deceased friends' behalf when they were all working together.

Bloody Streets

A series of unexplained deaths have occurred in Whitechapel, each victim horribly mutilated blood smeared across the floor. Several witnesses reported seeing a man in a dark cloak leaving each of the crime scenes. The characters are friends and family members of one of the victims, or perhaps, consulting detectives and police officers. The women were killed by a group of goblin creatures obsessed with blood. The mysterious man who many believe to be the killer is a Silencius agent, trying to catch the loathsome beasts. Perhaps the characters catch the wrong man, or they'll join forces to end the monster's reign of terror.

An Odd Request

One day, a high-ranking associate approaches a Guild player character. The man engages the character in a philosophical discussion of magic and the law. After a lengthy debate, the man either thanks the character for his time or asks for the character's aid. Apparently, another Guild magician has been abusing his rights and responsibilities – using magic inappropriately. He tells the character that if he can help track down the man and bring him to justice, there will be a suitable reward.

WEST END TERROR

Secrets

This is an organisation awash in mystery, from the true nature of Borozci, to how his people manage to commit crimes without leaving evidence or witnesses. While seeking to control the criminal underworld in London, the actual desire to turn key social personas and create a vampiric empire is still just a speck in Borozci's long-term horizon but he is moving steadily towards it.

Those unaware of his criminal enterprises or his ghastly feeding habits might think him simply an eccentric old man. In fact, introducing him in this manner is a good way to put him in the background as a fixture, before springing the evil that is Borozci on the players.

The reason it is difficult to track the gang's activities is that Borozci has a widespread network of spies throughout the city: rats with which he has the ability to communicate. They have allowed him to conduct very successful extortion campaigns, as well as anticipate police involvement. The Gamemaster should hide this secret from the players and exaggerate Borozci's ability to simply know what is going on in London at any particular time.

Adventure Hooks

Most adventure hooks revolve around fighting the West End Terror, rather than joining it.

Suddenly Human


Criminal members of the West End Terror discover that their associates are not quite human...or alive. Now, how do they extricate themselves from the gang without drawing attention to themselves? Do they want to go to the authorities? Do they want to go against their master?

Prince Charming

The characters become unwitting decoys to distract Scotland Yard from Borozci's real goal: turning the Prince of Wales into a vampire.

Watching the Watchers

The characters must infiltrate the Guild or London Orientalists' Club to try to steal secrets, or feed misinformation to those groups. Perhaps they are assigned to assassinate a key member. Although for



this, Borozci usually uses either a ghoul or vampire – less chance of capture.

Stalking the Night Creature

Something terrible haunts a young woman, a foul presence seems to be tracking her and she fears for her life. She turns to the characters for help. Unfortunately, she is a Nosferatu, although she is unaware of her vampiric potential. Borozci is watching her, trying to decide if she is what he seeks and would make a good addition to his retinue. He is not happy if the characters interfere with his observations and plans.

HEXENJÄGER

Secrets

Thulian Connection

The Thulian Society was instrumental in the creation of the Prussian Hexenjäger (witch hunters). Initially established by the Königsberg Guild but recently resurrected as a military order under King Wilhelm's control, this group's task is the elimination of Petty Magicians and rogue Thaumaturges. While the work can be distasteful, induction into the Hexenjäger includes a knighthood, which is reward enough for many. Currently, a member of the Thulian Society is in charge of the Hexenjäger, using its resources to make the Society more powerful by stamping out potential rivals. Due to the nature of their business, rooting out rogue magicians, the Hexenjäger have become a powerful intelligence tool for the king and his chancellor.

While not openly declaring their existence, the Thulian Order has let Bismarck know of a tightly knit network of Thaumaturges willing to use their influence to further his ambitions. Bismarck has learned the value of having such agents in the courts, Guildhalls and businesses of other nations and has taken advantage of this network, as well as the Hexenjäger, to gather valuable intelligence. The time seems right, as Britain, France and Russia are depleting their resources in the Crimea and Austria is not strong enough to prevent unification.

The Cardinal's Sin

Much of the legend about the Cardinal is true. He is, or rather was, a cardinal and he did participate in the Spanish Inquisition. What is not common

knowledge is that he is 270 years old and he has been an Inquisitor most of the time. He is also a Liche.

The Cardinal started his life as Donatello Balducci. Raised in a small village in Tuscany, young Donatello was a very pious and dedicated man. He joined the seminary and studied Thaumaturgy to harness such a dangerous power for the good of Mankind. He excelled not only in piety and magic but also in the martial arts. He was quickly ordered into the Inquisition to track down those that would not join the Guild.

Fr. Balducci harboured a great secret. Lust burned within him and he often found it necessary to satiate that urge. Unlike many of his Thaumaturge compatriots, Balducci had taken a vow of chastity. As a result, he had to covertly fulfil his desires. While his compatriots could find companionship in local inns or brothels, Fr. Balducci had to find comfort in darkened alleys or in the beds of married, and therefore discreet, women. Of course these were sins and he tried to make up for them by being a more effective Inquisitor. Those compatriots that caught him wilfully turned a blind eye, as Balducci's results far outweighed his shortcomings.

Fr. Balducci was so effective within the Inquisition that he quickly rose through the ranks. He was just about to obtain leadership in Rome when Pope Urban VIII officially dissolved the Inquisition in 1637. Balducci was amongst the loudest dissenters of that decision, a position that resulted in a secret audience with the Pope. Balducci was certain of censure, excommunication, or worse, for voicing his opinion but to his surprise, the Pope made him a cardinal of the new Spanish Inquisition. While the Spanish Inquisition was to be autonomous, Balducci would be their unofficial Vatican advisor. King Philip IV accepted Balducci after burning the papal decree (as ordered; the Vatican did not want their hands dirtied again).

While serving in Spain, the Cardinal found his carnal desires growing. In a highly religious country, street corners and willing wives were scarce. As a highly trained Inquisitor, the Cardinal often hunted alone. Using his position and his magic, the Cardinal started to elicit 'favours' from his prey and their associates in return for mercy. A secret like this could not be kept forever and soon the Cardinal found himself performing more and more heinous acts to cover his own tracks. Eventually, his companions uncovered his misdeeds and threatened to expose him. In desperation, Balducci slew them.

While the Cardinal had killed for his secret before, it was the first time that he had spilled Inquisitor blood. In shock and horrified at what he had done to

The Cardinal
Rank 16 Liche Necromancer (Focussed)

Physical Competence: +11*
Mental Competence: +12
Health: 7 Dice (14 pips)
Mana: 6 Dice (36 pips)
Signature Skills: Demonology +1, Intimidate +4, Necromancy +3, Perception +2, Swordplay +3, Thaumaturgy +4, Theology (Aluminat) +4
Traits: Investigator +4, Sadistic +4
Special Abilities: Pretty much any Thaumaturgy spell the Gamemaster thinks he should have, as well as a few Demonic and Necromantic ones.
Combat Abilities: Prefers to negotiate surrender terms, but fights with magic or his preferred weapon, an antique great-sword at Physical Competency
Damage: Magic, Antique Great-sword (10 Dice)

*Liche bonus

preserve his own sin, the Cardinal fled the scene and, when his horse could no longer run, found the nearest tree and determined to hang himself. He prayed to the Host for forgiveness.

Danae, a daughter of Paline, answered, presenting herself to him as the Roman goddess, Diana. She told him that she had joined the Host and that it would be a shame for the Inquisition's best hunter to hang himself before its mission was complete. The Cardinal protested, claiming that his sins outweighed the good he had done. In response, Danae gave him a gift. She showed him the sins of other Aluminat priests, many of them Inquisitors and even superiors. It would be hypocrisy for them to condemn him. His faith shaken, the Cardinal argued that his mission was now senseless. Danae countered that the cause of Order is worthwhile but man is imperfect. If he dedicated himself to his mission, she would take him under her wing and ensure his place in Heaven, at the appropriate time. The Cardinal agreed.

With the deaths of Pope Urban VIII in 1644 and King Philip IV in 1665, the Cardinal quietly faded from Vatican and Spanish memory. He burned his own copy of the decree and, with Danae's aid, reinvented himself within the Spanish Inquisition. Under various guises, he continued to serve the Spanish Inquisition until its dissolution in 1818.

The Cardinal's longevity came at a price. Danae

taught him Necromancy to preserve his life, as Heaven was not ready to accept him yet (in truth, Danae simply enjoyed toying with the Cardinal). Eventually, the Cardinal became a Liche. While his body could no longer satiate the Cardinal's desires in his current form, the urges remained. The Cardinal found that he could alleviate those desires vicariously, by forcing victims to perform more and more depraved acts in front of him. Watching from Paline's Court, Danae laughed and enjoyed each performance, often whispering suggestions in his head.

For the next few decades, the Cardinal acted alone, ferreting out witches as he travelled from town to town. In 1863, Danae informed him of a new Inquisition forming in Prussia, one that could benefit from his experiences. The Cardinal travelled to Berlin and Baron Hügel's doorstep.

Using wealth collected over the centuries, the Cardinal purchased a small castle manor near the Bohemian border. He has stocked the dungeon with a variety of mechanical and magical contrivances to aid in his debaucheries. It is whispered that any who are invited into the Cardinal's home are either never seen again or changed forever. His personal guard (all animated corpses) certainly aren't talking.


Russian Dressing

Dame Justina has three secrets. Two are physical: she is neither Prussian nor Eldren. Dame Justina is actually a Russian steppegoblin. Her third secret is criminal: banished from her homeland and she is under threat of death should she ever return.

Dame Justina started life as Natalya Maksimovna Kaslova, the daughter of a steppegoblin boyar. From an early age, Dame Justina showed promise as a Corporeal Medium and was trained as a warrior (which held no prejudice in Russia). Had she completed her training, she might have served in the Czarina's elite Pyetra. Unfortunately, the young Kaslova also had a sadistic streak, finding it difficult to tear herself away from a duel until blood was spilled and sometimes even that was not enough. Her family tried hard to curb her bloodthirstiness but things came to a head in 1855, not long after her fifteenth birthday.

Kaslova had fallen in love with a young man who was betrothed to another boyar's daughter. Undeterred, Kaslova flirted with him and he eventually succumbed to her charms. Since this was technically forbidden, Kaslova learned how to sneak around and infiltrate secluded areas. She also became adept at disguising herself.

Unfortunately, when the young noble finally had to make a decision, he decided to go ahead with his



plans to marry his betrothed. Kaslova was furious and demanded that he marry her, as her honour was at stake. He refused and she challenged him to a duel, in which she easily bested the overconfident young man, but did not stop there. She toyed with and slowly tortured him to death at the end of her blade. Kaslova's rival had the misfortune of arriving as the man was dying. She cried out and in a rage, Kaslova slew her too.

At trial, Kaslova's parents successfully argued that she was mentally ill and was defending her honour, albeit to an extreme. While this normally would not have saved the young woman, the Czarina took an interest in the case and instructed the local bishop to forgive her crime in return for excommunication and exile. Should Kaslova ever set foot in Russia again, she would immediately be put to death.

The young woman was driven to the western border and released with the clothes on her back, a few coins and a parting gift from her family. The parting gift was a magical mask that could disguise her appearance (although she also dyed her hair black, not wishing to rely too heavily on the mask). Kaslova travelled west and eventually found work on a Silesian farm owned by a kindly man, Adolf Fischer. He treated her like the daughter he'd never had but the bond was short-lived. The Austro-Prussian War broke out and Fischer's farm was caught in the cross-fire. Adolf died that day and Justina honoured him by taking his name (conveniently giving herself a new identity in the process).

While Dame Justina enjoys her life and now considers herself a Prussian, she slips into her Russian accent and use Russian phrases when disturbed or excited. Baron Hügel suspects she is Russian but he is unaware of her true race (unbeknownst to Justina, the Cardinal knows her true identity; he simply doesn't care). Additionally, the wronged Russian families have not forgiven her and occasionally hire mercenaries to find and execute her. So far, they have not succeeded and the Czarina has discreetly indicated to the family boyars that she will not tolerate possible Prussian agitation while the Crimean War is raging.

Justina's Steppegoblin heritage does not adjust her statistics from those presented in Chapter 4 (p101). However, she has not manifested the usual Eldren ability as a Sensate or Channelling Medium. She also has talent as a Corporeal Medium but it has not developed into a full ability yet. If the Gamemaster has the forthcoming detail on Corporeal Mediums, she may like to enhance Justina with powers from that listing.

Silencius

One group that isn't pleased about the Hexenjäger's existence are the Silencius, the Guild's own secret police. They abhor the Hexenjäger's indiscreet and military methods. In secret, they often run counter-operations to ensure the Hexenjäger's fail as often, and as publicly as they can, but this has proved very difficult indeed. Sometimes, the Silencius actually rescue suspected Necromancers and Demonologists so they publicly escape the clutches of the Hexenjäger's. Then, of course, they quietly try to execute the rogue sorcerers themselves, all so the Silencius might claim a victory from the failure of the Hexenjäger's.

Adventure Hooks

Hexenjäger Abroad

King Wilhelm, Chancellor Bismarck and Baron Hügel realise that magical forces plotting against them are not exclusively within Prussia. There are rogue witches everywhere and some people, both magical and mundane, have created underground railroads to 'rescue' witches within Prussia. Witches smuggled out of Prussia foster anti-Prussian sentiment, so it is in the best interest of Prussia to shut down these operations and retrieve fleeing witches. Baron Hügel prefers to send his hauptmenn out on these missions, as it requires discretion and experience to pursue these goals without causing an international incident.

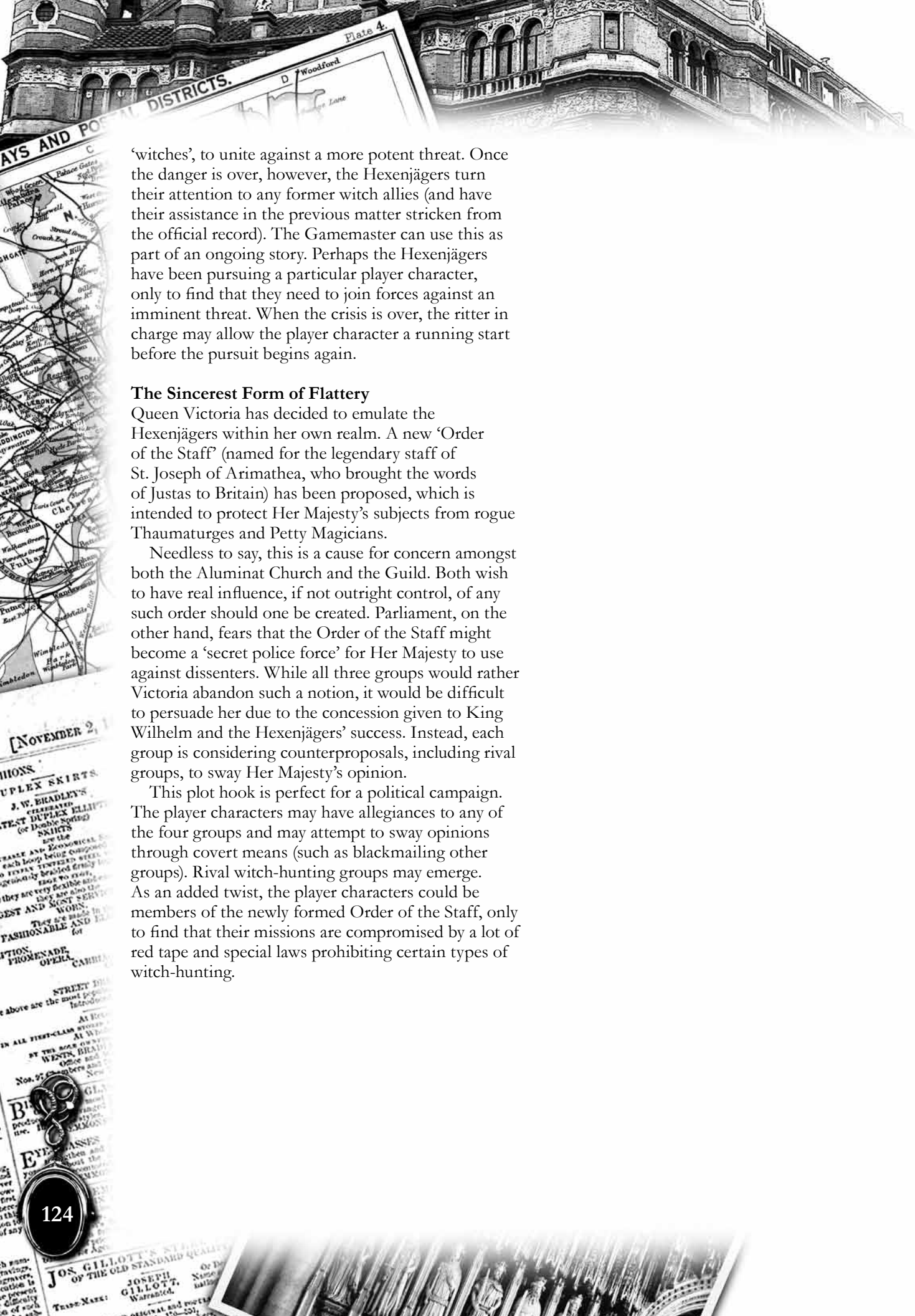
Obviously, this could lead to the Hexenjäger's being encountered anywhere in the world. A London-based campaign could see more hauptmenn joining the London base in pursuit of a rogue Thaumaturge. The hauptmann will be incredibly cunning and ruthless, as he or she cannot expect aid from the local population. Indeed, his or her best plan is to locate the target and wait for an opportunity to silence him quietly. Such prey is rarely taken alive, as the risk of discovery along the way is too great. Of course, if the hauptmenn are trying to take a Thaumaturge alive, then that should be a clue that the target is very important to Prussia.

The Lesser of Two Evils

While frequently seen as a heartless, merciless organisation, there are times when the Hexenjäger's are needed to help destroy a true threat. A group of rogue Thaumaturges might be simply too powerful for the player characters to handle and as such it may be necessary for them to join forces with the Hexenjäger's.

The Hexenjäger's are a practical organisation. They work with player characters, even if considered





‘witches’, to unite against a more potent threat. Once the danger is over, however, the Hexenjäger turn their attention to any former witch allies (and have their assistance in the previous matter stricken from the official record). The Gamemaster can use this as part of an ongoing story. Perhaps the Hexenjäger have been pursuing a particular player character, only to find that they need to join forces against an imminent threat. When the crisis is over, the ritter in charge may allow the player character a running start before the pursuit begins again.

The Sincerest Form of Flattery

Queen Victoria has decided to emulate the Hexenjäger within her own realm. A new ‘Order of the Staff’ (named for the legendary staff of St. Joseph of Arimathea, who brought the words of Justas to Britain) has been proposed, which is intended to protect Her Majesty’s subjects from rogue Thaumaturges and Petty Magicians.

Needless to say, this is a cause for concern amongst both the Aluminat Church and the Guild. Both wish to have real influence, if not outright control, of any such order should one be created. Parliament, on the other hand, fears that the Order of the Staff might become a ‘secret police force’ for Her Majesty to use against dissenters. While all three groups would rather Victoria abandon such a notion, it would be difficult to persuade her due to the concession given to King Wilhelm and the Hexenjäger’s success. Instead, each group is considering counterproposals, including rival groups, to sway Her Majesty’s opinion.

This plot hook is perfect for a political campaign. The player characters may have allegiances to any of the four groups and may attempt to sway opinions through covert means (such as blackmailing other groups). Rival witch-hunting groups may emerge. As an added twist, the player characters could be members of the newly formed Order of the Staff, only to find that their missions are compromised by a lot of red tape and special laws prohibiting certain types of witch-hunting.



APPENDICES

“The best meals are never complete, until
they have been finished with a fine brandy”

-Lord Charles Williams

APPENDIX 1 – THE UNITED GRAND LODGE OF ENGLAND

Freemasonry is often speculated about and is a particular favourite topic for conspiracy theorists. For gamers, the mystery and secrecy surrounding Freemasons is a treasure trove for intrigue and fantastic plots. However, Victoriana is already full of plots and so (perhaps perversely for a gaming product) we decided to leave the Freemasons as they are. The sheer volume of accusations made against Freemasonry, and the number of people believing in stories regarding both Masons and similar orders, has muddled the truth around them. Presented here is not the fanciful description of the grand Conspiracy but a rather mundane description of a large and influential social club. Of course, obvious changes have been made to fit the world of Victoriana but we believe that the order as described here is in accordance to the spirit of real-life Freemasonry. You are, of course, free to make this order the focal point of whatever conspiracy or evil you wish, it is after all your game and we expect you to. For our part though, we prefer to let the Masonic Brothers keep their secrets in peace.

HISTORY


According to the mythical histories of the Masonic Order, Freemasonry dates back to Hiram Abiff and the building of the Temple of King Solomon and many of their symbols and rites are traced back to ancient, often Egyptian, mysteries and geometry. Along with the tools of the Masonic craft, the story of Hiram Abiff serves as an allegory to aid the Mason in his progress and understanding, not as a factual account of the origin of Freemasonry. In fact, it is difficult to ascertain exactly when Freemasonry originated and from where they get their name. This fact, coupled with their use of allegory and myth, gives room for a lot of speculation among non-initiated and among some initiated as well. References to Freemasons first appear in the 1300s and the term is used for craftsmen, as it was for the first few hundred years of Freemason history. The exact reason for why they were called Freemason is unknown,

some believe it comes from working with freestone, others from the French 'frer maçon', meaning brother mason. Others still believe that the term refers to their position in mediaeval society as free craftsmen, in a period when most people outside of the clergy were not free but instead tied to the lands and estates where they lived.

The free stonemasons, therefore, organised in order to preserve their position, lodges where wandering masons could stay were set up and rules of conduct written for these, as well as for Masonic practice, in general. Several such lodges were set up around Europe, spreading mostly from England, all with different charters and rules. In the late 1600s, Freemason lodges opened up to non-masons and from this, we can see a shift in focus from being a guild of professionals to becoming a philosophical society using the tools and craft of the stonemason as allegories for their metaphysical work.

At this time, the Masonic lodges were a diverse group of linked societies, sharing a base set of doctrines and rules. Members of four lodges in London met for dinner and formed the first public Grand Lodge – The Grand Lodge of England, on 24th June, 1717. Several English lodges joined them and lodges all over Europe followed suit and formed their own national Grand Lodges. In some countries more than one Grand Lodge formed. The Grand Lodges sought to unify its children lodges with a common rite and give them a common charter and set of rites. In the 1720s, the changes made to the constitution of the Grand Lodge of England, included the addition of a third degree, that of Master Mason.

There were some that felt that the Grand Lodge made unnecessary changes to the traditions of Freemasonry; in particular visiting masons from Ireland and Scotland voiced concern, but English lodges shared this concern, as well. This difference of opinion culminated on 17th July, 1751, when members of five lodges met in a tavern in London and formed the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of England according to the old constitutions, or what would become known as the Antient Grand Lodge of England. The lodges that joined this rival lodge also became known as Atholl lodges, named after the Duke of Atholl, who was the figurehead of the newly



formed Grand Lodge. The Antients (or ancients, in the modern spelling) objected to what they saw as changes in the constitutions of Freemasonry, not just in its rites, handshakes and organisation but also in a move to a more Universalist religious perspective. The Moderns, as the Antients pejoratively named the Premier Grand Lodge, accepted people of all religious faiths, as long as they confessed to believe in a supreme creator of the universe, the Great Architect, while the Antients were more firmly attached to the Aluminat Church and its teachings. The strife between the two Grand Lodges of England has become known as the Masonic Schism, considered a splitting of the Grand Lodge of England. Later research shows, however, that the majority of masons involved in founding the Antients were Irish, who had come to London seeking work and that the lodges were already independent from the Premier Grand Lodge of England.

During this period, the Premier Grand Lodge of England purchased property in Great Queen Street in 1775; this was to be the site of the Freemason's Hall, the meeting place of the Grand Lodge of England and its associated lodges in London. The property originally consisted of two buildings separated by a garden and the Grand Lodge commissioned the building of the Grand Temple to link the two of them. The building expanded in 1820 but completely rebuilt in the 1860s.

In 1809, the two Grand Lodges of England set down a joint commission to end their dispute and find common ground. The result was that, in 1813, the two Grand Lodges formed the United Grand Lodge of England under a new constitution that refocused on the religious aspect of Freemasonry, while leaving the denomination of faith a private matter for each member – it only demanded belief in the Great Architect. Some Aluminat consider this Great Architect to be a metaphor for the power of Heaven rather than the 'God' forbidden by Aluminat teaching. However, plenty of people outside the order (especially in the Aluminat church) consider this another incarnation of the oldest heresy. This has made the Lodges careful about with whom they share their beliefs. The union of the Grand Lodges also incorporated the uniquely Antient-degree of the Royal Arch Degree as an optional appendage to, and part of, the Master Mason degree. For now, the Grand Lodge stands united and the relationship with other Grand Lodges is amiable but conflict is brewing within masonry again; in particular, on the subject of atheism; and whether or not to get involved in political matters.

ORGANISATION

The Masonic Order is a secret organisation of freeborn men, of respectable standing in society, who believe in a supreme being, in which members explore philosophical questions related to faith, morals and the general meaning of our existence. The secrets of the Order are its rituals, its handshakes and passwords – in other words, most of the highly formalised goings on within the lodges; in particular, those that might be easily misinterpreted or used against Freemasonry.

Freemasonry is organised around the lodge, which, in principle, is not a physical location, as many believe, but a semi-independent organisation devoted to the Masonic constitutions and rules, often with their own additional rules and religions exclusive for their lodge. Most lodges are associated with a region or district and it is not uncommon for a lodge to own a building to serve as their meeting hall and where their rites take place. Usually, several lodges share a hall. Not all lodges are geographically defined institutions, instead founded on shared philosophical statements or professional interests. Within most lodges of regular Craft Masonry, members are bestowed three Masonic degrees:

Entered Apprentice – at this point, the initiate is considered a Mason and starts the first stages of learning the basics of the Craft.

Fellow Craft – at this point, the initiate has started the lessons required to become a Master Mason.

Master Mason – at this point, the initiate is a proper Mason and allowed to participate in most aspects of Freemasonry and take part of its secrets.

Taking a degree involves an initiation rite and, in addition to the three degrees, there are several paths available to the Master that has higher number degrees. These degrees are not considered promotions but optional enhancements of the Master Mason degree bestowed by separate Masonic bodies. In addition to the degrees, each lodge has a variety of ceremonial offices held by its members of the Master degree who uphold certain criteria and they are important for both the rituals of the lodge and its more mundane day-to-day business. The top three officers in most lodges are the Worshipful Master, the Senior Warden (or First Warden) and the Junior Warden (or Second Warden), additionally there can be any number of lesser officers in the lodge.



the lodge. Deacons often help new initiates around the hall and each lodge usually has two deacons – a senior and a junior. The Deacons also help with guests' accommodations and act as messengers for the Worshipful Masters.

A majority of lodges of the United Grand Lodge of England have a Chaplain, who leads the prayers to the Supreme Being before and after the meetings and at times has other spiritual duties. The Chaplain need not necessarily be a member of the Clergy or have any theological schooling. Some lodges have a master of ceremonies, referred to as the Ritualist or Director of Ceremonies who is responsible for the progress of rituals and ceremonies, and at times work as a prompter for distracted members. The Ritualist is also responsible for organising processions and organising and directing the ceremony of a new Worshipful Master.


The Worshipful Master is the elected leader of the lodge, who directs all and any business associated with it and presides over the lodge's ceremonies and rituals. It is an honoured position bestowed upon the most respected members of the lodge and former Worshipful Masters are likewise respected when they have stepped down. In the absence of the Worshipful Master, the Senior Warden acts in his place. The Junior Warden inspects visiting Masons' credentials and he is in charge for the proceeding of social events, such as meals and other breaks from ceremonial business.

The Grand Lodges are the supreme governing bodies of Craft Masonry, there are several of these Grand Lodges in different parts of the world and each one governs several lodges through its constitutions and rules. Each lodge pays an annual due to the Grand Lodges. The Grand Lodge meets from time-to-time but not as frequently as an ordinary lodge. Like with lodges there are several offices associated with the proceedings of ceremonies, meetings and day-to-day operations. These offices correspond with the ordinary lodge equivalent and have the same duties only on a larger scale and have the term Grand somewhere in its title, such as the Grand Worshipful Master.

In addition to the regular Craft Mason Lodges and the Grand Lodge, there are additional Masonic bodies, which Masons of the Master degree can join, if they fulfil a set of criteria. These criteria might be having served in a certain lodge office or hold a certain philosophical belief or faith. These additional Masonic bodies operate outside that of the ordinary lodges and the Grand Lodge and participation is not mandatory or necessary for life as a Freemason, though most Masons often condone

The Treasurer handles the lodge finances, collecting the dues from members and paying any dues to the Grand Lodge. The Secretary, traditionally held by a past Worshipful Master, summons the members of the lodge, advises the Worshipful Master on procedural protocol and, additionally, the secretary organises most social events in the lodge and is an important part of determining who holds what office in the lodge and interviewing petitioning initiates. The Steward is often considered the most junior position of the lodge, traditionally held by newer initiates and is responsible for the serving of wine and food and taking care of the minor practical matters of meetings and rituals. During a lodge meeting, a Tyler holding a drawn sword traditionally guards the room and this respected officer often advises new initiates as they prepare to enter the meeting hall. Some lodges also appoint an Inner Guard to assist the Tyler, a position given to new initiates, giving them a good opportunity to observe and learn the proceedings of

[NOVEMBER 2, 1891]
DUPLIX SKIRTS.
J. W. BRADLEY'S
TEST DUPLIX ELLIPTIC
(or Double Spring)
SKIRTS
EACH LOOP BEING COMPOSED
OF FIFTY FIFTY-SEVEN STITCHES
AND ARE VERY FLEXIBLE AND
EASY TO WEAR.
THEY ARE ALSO THE
BEST AND MOST SERVICEABLE
WORK.
FASHIONABLE AND EASY
TO WEAR.
STREET DRUGGISTS
AND ABOVE ARE THE MOST POPULAR
INTRODUCED.
AT ALL
BY THE ROAD OWNERS
WESTON, BIRMINGHAM
Office and
Nos. 97 and 98, New
BIRMINGHAM
EYE GLASSES
AND
TRADE MARK:
JOSEPH GILLOTT'S
OF THE OLD STANDARD QUALITY
JOSEPH GILLOTT
WARRINGTON.
ORIGINAL AND
TRADE MARK:
JOSEPH GILLOTT'S
OF THE OLD STANDARD QUALITY
JOSEPH GILLOTT
WARRINGTON.
ORIGINAL AND
TRADE MARK:



them. Through these Masonic bodies, the Freemason can gain access to degrees specific to their chosen rite that goes beyond the first three degrees of Craft Masonry. The best known of these, The Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, simply known as the Scottish Rite, goes as far as 33 degrees and append 29 optional degrees to the Mason's list of accomplishment. These degrees represent a further understanding of the Masonic philosophy and the secrets of Freemasonry, as well as a life in the service of the Masonic Order and society in general.

JOINING THE ORGANISATION

A Freemason has access to a large and influential social network and it is in practice reserved for the upper layers of society. To become a Freemason, one has to meet a strict set of criteria and swear an oath to uphold the secrets of the Masonic Order and one's obligation to the same order. The criteria varies for different lodges, in particular those under the jurisdiction of different Grand Lodges. A petitioning candidate to a lodge must be:

- A male of his race and born a free man. A few lodges have racial restrictions and it is common to exclude members of races considered of lower breed (such as Halflings, Ogres, Orcs and certain Beastmen, as well as Yehuddites and people of other ethnic origins).
- The petitioner must be of adult age, the exact ages varies from lodge to lodge.
- He must believe in a supreme being, the architect of the world.
- Be mentally and physically healthy. Disabilities of either kind can be a reason for denial of membership.
- Most importantly, a petitioner must be a moral person, with a good reputation in society. He must be spoken for, sponsored, by at least one Master Mason in good standing, preferably three.

If a petitioner meets the requirements he can ask for acceptance in the lodge and he must ask three times before his petition is considered. The lodge then votes using white and black balls whether to accept the petition, white meaning 'yes' and black

meaning 'no'. After which the petitioner is initiated as an Entered Apprentice and must take the obligations of a Freemason, often referred to as oaths. The exact obligations vary for each lodge but some are common to most lodges. A Freemason shall conduct himself in a manner befitting a Freemason in his everyday life and he shall keep the secrets of the craft; the secrets being the rites, the signs and other specifics of Freemason activity. Additionally, the accepted Mason is obligated to follow the code of his Supreme Being and to obey the laws of his country of residence. The Mason shall attend meetings of his lodge if able, pay his financial due to the same and refrain from cheating, lying to or stealing from his brethren. A Mason is also obligated to be charitable, in particular, to a fellow Mason and his family, if it is necessary

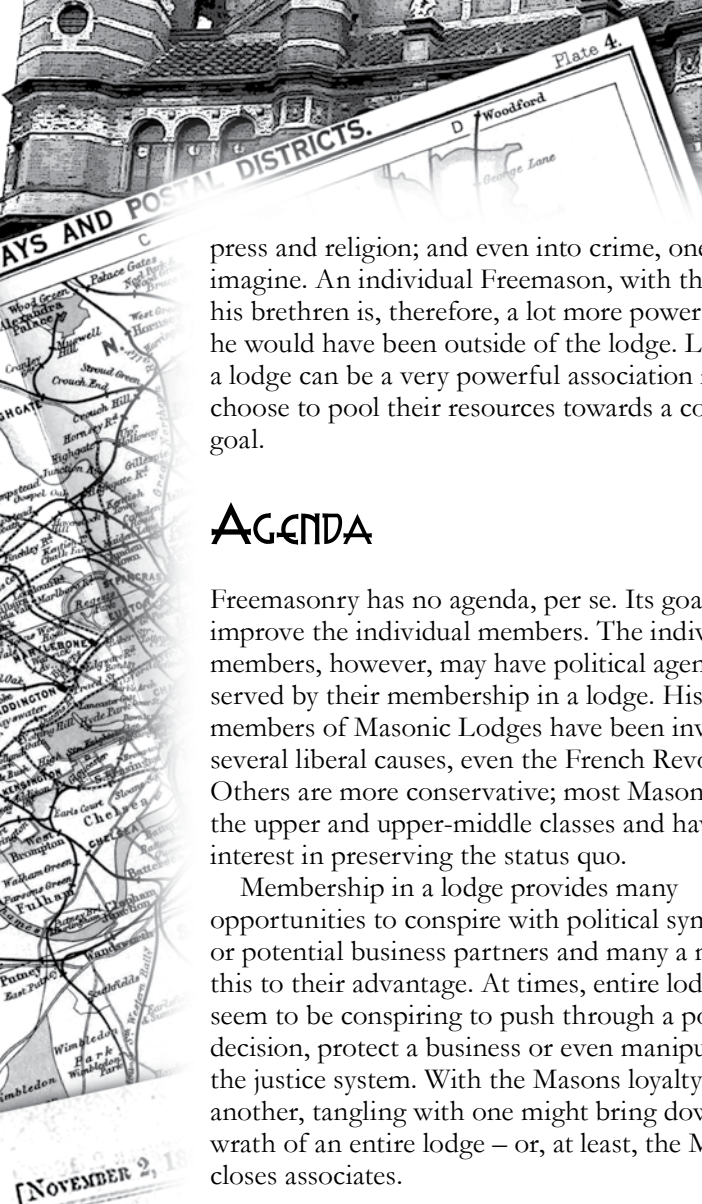
Breaking with the obligations, in particularly that of secrecy, is enforced with sometimes rather graphically described punishments, which are to be considered symbolically and not actual physical threats.

RESOURCES

Theoretically, the resources of the United Grand Lodge of England, its associated lodges and Freemasons, in general, are incredibly vast. That is if one assumes that the Grand Lodge's resources are the pooling together the financial and political resources of its subordinate lodges and their members. In which case, the United Grand Lodge of England would be the de facto rulers of England, and along with associated Grand Lodges, the secret masters of the world. On the other hand, if the Grand Lodge's resources were only the collected dues from its members and the accumulated properties and paid staff of the organisation, the picture is a lot more modest. In particular, since so much of the organisation's wealth is redistributed to different charitable causes.

The truth, as always, lies somewhere in between; the Masonic Order does not have an endless supply of resources, or even vast financial assets for that matter, what it does have, is an influential network spanning most important aspects of society. Through this network, a Mason can expect to find allies in whatever causes he has, even though the entire order will not rally behind him as some anti-Masonic sources seem to think. Equally so, resourceful Freemasons do what they can to aid Freemasonry, even beyond the expected annual dues. The influence of Freemasonry reaches into most aspects of society like politics, law,





press and religion; and even into crime, one would imagine. An individual Freemason, with the aid of his brethren is, therefore, a lot more powerful than he would have been outside of the lodge. Likewise, a lodge can be a very powerful association if they choose to pool their resources towards a common goal.

AGENDA

Freemasonry has no agenda, per se. Its goal is to improve the individual members. The individual members, however, may have political agendas well served by their membership in a lodge. Historically, members of Masonic Lodges have been involved with several liberal causes, even the French Revolution. Others are more conservative; most Masons belong to the upper and upper-middle classes and have a natural interest in preserving the status quo.

Membership in a lodge provides many opportunities to conspire with political sympathisers or potential business partners and many a member use this to their advantage. At times, entire lodges would seem to be conspiring to push through a political decision, protect a business or even manipulate the justice system. With the Masons loyalty to one another, tangling with one might bring down the wrath of an entire lodge – or, at least, the Mason's closes associates.

PERSONALITIES

Lord Williams, an influential Master Mason

Charles Lord Williams is an elderly Eldren, who has served the Lodge and in the House of Lords with distinction for many years. He can sometimes be found at the Unified Grand Lodge of England, seated at a desk reading, or resting in a comfortable chair. He prefers not to walk too much and often needs help getting around. Luckily, a fellow Mason is always willing and able to aid him. A small group of Master Masons, who have had great use of Lord Williams over the years, have organised a rotating group that is available to the elderly Mason at all hours of the day, from the time he leaves his home and until he returns. After many years of service, in positions inside and outside the Masonic Order, Lord Williams still makes himself available to others on principle. He always gives advice to anyone who asks and, if possible, he whispers a word or two in the right ears if that can help.

Lord Williams

Rank 10 Eldren Elder Statesman (Focussed)

Physical Competence: +3*

Mental Competence: +8

Initiative: 4*

Health: 5 Dice (10 pips)

Mana: 4 Dice (24 pips)

Signature Skills: Business +2, Charm +3,

Conversation +4, Empathy +3, Etiquette +3,

High Society +2, Perception +2, Politics +5,

Sensate Medium +1

Traits: Old +3, Incisive +3, Politician +4

Special Abilities: Aura Reading (Sensate Medium)

Combat Abilities: He is in no state to fight, but his assistants all boxed for their schools.

Damage: Unlikely

*reduces due to old age

In many ways, Lord Williams seems himself as a custodian of Britain. His political opponents have labelled him as too conservative, liberal and progressive, while he himself has only acted in a way that he believes best ensures the future of Britain and all British citizens. He is, at heart, an egalitarian but also respectful of social traditions. His goal has thus been to make sure that every one can live comfortably with their social positions, not to overturn the status quo. This has made him a few enemies but also many friends and allies.

Thomas Penbrook, a Fellow Craftsman

A newly educated physician, Thomas Penbrook was initiated towards the end of his medical studies and is now working his way towards becoming a proper Master Mason. The son of a successful baker, Thomas saw his offer to join the Freemasons in the same light as his education – as an opportunity to climb the social ladder in London. Membership in a lodge would probably help him approve his status among other physicians and his patients. Initiation, however, opened his eyes to a more spiritual side of Freemasonry and himself. Now, he struggles to become more selfless as both a Mason and a physician.

Penbrook is currently looking for help to set up a free clinic for the less fortunate in London. For this, he needs financial support to pay for rent, equipment and a salary that would cover his most basic needs. He wants to avoid using his connection to the Masonic Order for this but it is becoming increasingly difficult to find affluent patrons willing to listen.

Thomas Penbrook
Rank 6 Medical Freemason (Focussed)

Physical Competence: +3
Mental Competence: +6
Initiative: 7
Health: 4 Dice (8 pips)
Signature Skills: Empathy +3, High Society +1,
Perception +2, Medicine +2
Traits: Eager +3, Social Climber +3
Combat Abilities: Will fight with fists (3 dice) if
he has to, but not well
Damage: Fist (3 dice)

A handsome man, with blonde hair and a friendly smile, Thomas Penbrook meets anyone with an open mind and a firm handshake, no matter their station. He is a competent physician and an avid fan of the theatre, often found attending the latest plays.

Herbert Cook, a Masonic barrister

Ruthless and ambitious, this middle-aged barrister has gained a reputation among other lawyers as a cunning opponent who wins most of his cases. Much of his success has come from his Masonic ties, which he uses to influence judges, witnesses and even other lawyers. In exchange, he is usually willing to help other fellow Masons with whatever they need, whether it is just putting pressure on people or taking on court cases, pro bono. This also means defending the obviously guilty and even getting his hands a bit dirty himself by covering up evidence, or producing new evidence. It's all in a good cause, right?

Currently, Cook is preparing to defend a murder suspect in a rather gruesome case. The defendant stands accused of having killed a young woman, found stabbed to death in her bed chambers, her window open and witnesses claim to have seen the defendant in the area. Cook has found evidence that the defendant, was actually seeing the young woman behind the back of her parents and her betrothed but as he is the son of a respected Mason, Cook is doing his best to make sure this is either never revealed or is proven irrelevant for the case.

Herbert Cook is a devoted father of three young sons, whom he is raising to be proper gentlemen. His wife, Martha, is the very image of a Victorian wife, loyal and subservient, and thus the exact opposite of Herbert's very independent mistress, a young widow who runs a boarding house outside London. When away on his many business trips, Herbert stays with his mistress, who has many contacts in the more or less criminal underworld. These are one of his greater resources.

Herbert Cook
Rank 8 Devious Lawyer (Focussed)

Physical Competence: +4
Mental Competence: +7
Initiative: 7
Health: 5 Dice (10 pips)
Signature Skills: Charm +3, Conversation +3,
Empathy +3, Etiquette +3, High Society +2,
Legal Matters +4, Perception +2, Streetwise +3
Traits: Devious +4, Cheat +3,
Combat Abilities: Will run, cower and make a
deal rather than fight
Damage: Highly unlikely

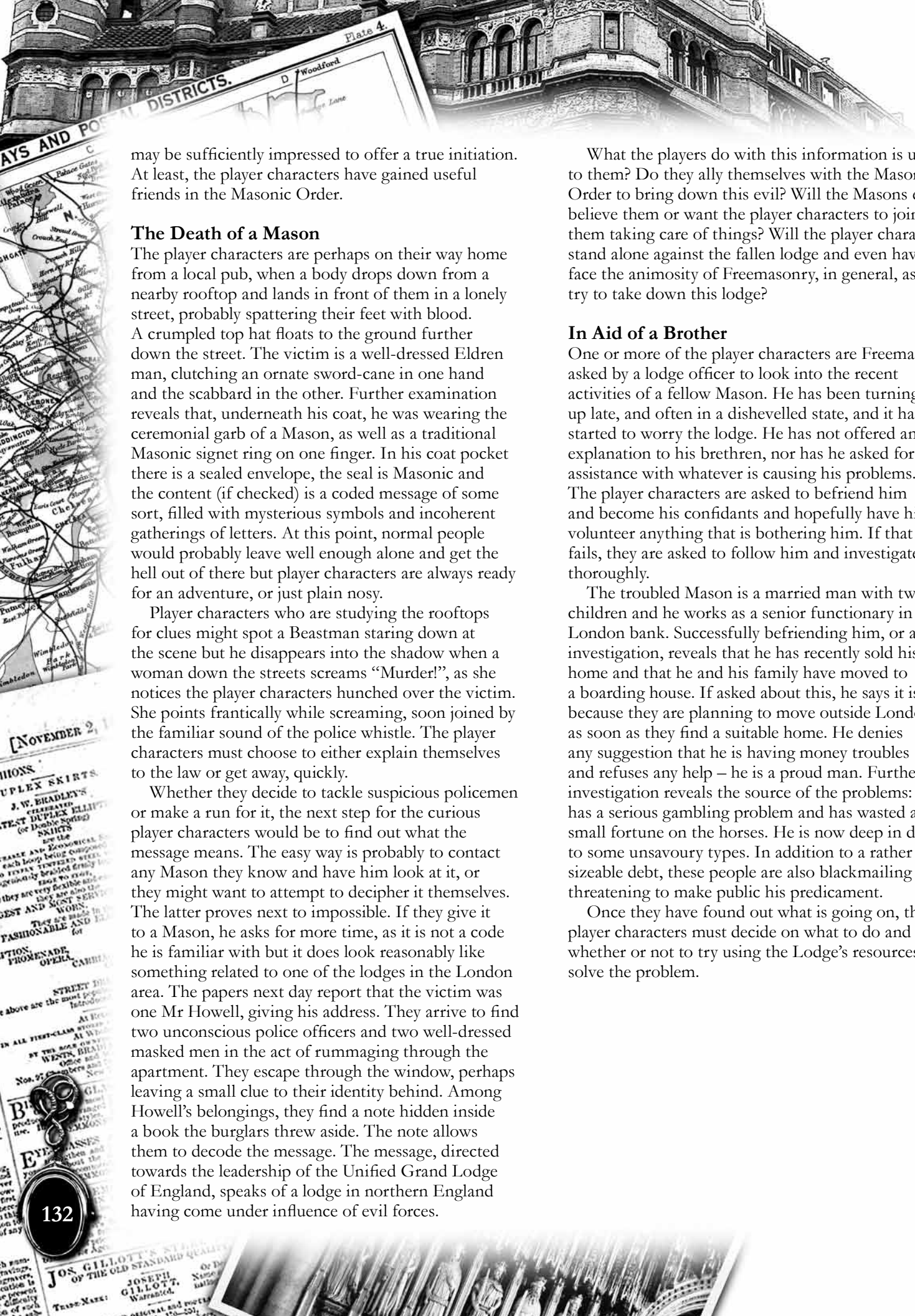
ADVENTURE HOOKS

The Unified Grand Lodge of England can play different roles in your stories, as they represent different things to different people. For someone completely on the outside, the Freemasons appear to be a large and mysterious organisation, even menacing. For the initiated, the Masonic Order is a safe haven, which provides a form of social security that is unavailable to most people. The Masonic Order can be either a friend or a foe to the player characters, or even both at the same time as they get embroiled in the political machinery of London.

The Initiation

Well-dressed Masons approach one or more of the well-to-do player characters of high social standing offering initiation into the Masonic Order. The Masons are charming and eager to complement the player characters for their virtues and explain that these are corner stones in the character of a true Mason. The initiates are, of course, expected to keep their initiation a secret and they are required to perform some token services and make a symbolic offering to the Order to prove their intent, preferably something of a monetary value. Once this is done, the initiates are brought to a warehouse in the outskirts where they are blindfolded and placed within ventilated caskets. The rest is silence. They have been conned.

Luckily, the Masonic Order is aware of the impostors and arrives soon after to release the confused player characters. The real Masons explain the situation and that they were not the first. They offer them a chance to join their mission to bring the impostors to justice. The conmen have probably left town already but with the aid of the Freemason's resources, the player characters are soon be on their trail. If the player characters have succeeded, the real Masons



may be sufficiently impressed to offer a true initiation. At least, the player characters have gained useful friends in the Masonic Order.

The Death of a Mason

The player characters are perhaps on their way home from a local pub, when a body drops down from a nearby rooftop and lands in front of them in a lonely street, probably spattering their feet with blood. A crumpled top hat floats to the ground further down the street. The victim is a well-dressed Eldren man, clutching an ornate sword-cane in one hand and the scabbard in the other. Further examination reveals that, underneath his coat, he was wearing the ceremonial garb of a Mason, as well as a traditional Masonic signet ring on one finger. In his coat pocket there is a sealed envelope, the seal is Masonic and the content (if checked) is a coded message of some sort, filled with mysterious symbols and incoherent gatherings of letters. At this point, normal people would probably leave well enough alone and get the hell out of there but player characters are always ready for an adventure, or just plain nosy.

Player characters who are studying the rooftops for clues might spot a Beastman staring down at the scene but he disappears into the shadow when a woman down the streets screams "Murder!", as she notices the player characters hunched over the victim. She points frantically while screaming, soon joined by the familiar sound of the police whistle. The player characters must choose to either explain themselves to the law or get away, quickly.

Whether they decide to tackle suspicious policemen or make a run for it, the next step for the curious player characters would be to find out what the message means. The easy way is probably to contact any Mason they know and have him look at it, or they might want to attempt to decipher it themselves. The latter proves next to impossible. If they give it to a Mason, he asks for more time, as it is not a code he is familiar with but it does look reasonably like something related to one of the lodges in the London area. The papers next day report that the victim was one Mr Howell, giving his address. They arrive to find two unconscious police officers and two well-dressed masked men in the act of rummaging through the apartment. They escape through the window, perhaps leaving a small clue to their identity behind. Among Howell's belongings, they find a note hidden inside a book the burglars threw aside. The note allows them to decode the message. The message, directed towards the leadership of the Unified Grand Lodge of England, speaks of a lodge in northern England having come under influence of evil forces.

What the players do with this information is up to them? Do they ally themselves with the Masonic Order to bring down this evil? Will the Masons even believe them or want the player characters to join them taking care of things? Will the player characters stand alone against the fallen lodge and even have to face the animosity of Freemasonry, in general, as they try to take down this lodge?

In Aid of a Brother

One or more of the player characters are Freemasons, asked by a lodge officer to look into the recent activities of a fellow Mason. He has been turning up late, and often in a dishevelled state, and it has started to worry the lodge. He has not offered any explanation to his brethren, nor has he asked for any assistance with whatever is causing his problems. The player characters are asked to befriend him and become his confidants and hopefully have him volunteer anything that is bothering him. If that fails, they are asked to follow him and investigate thoroughly.

The troubled Mason is a married man with two children and he works as a senior functionary in a London bank. Successfully befriend him, or an investigation, reveals that he has recently sold his home and that he and his family have moved to a boarding house. If asked about this, he says it is because they are planning to move outside London, as soon as they find a suitable home. He denies any suggestion that he is having money troubles and refuses any help – he is a proud man. Further investigation reveals the source of the problems: he has a serious gambling problem and has wasted a small fortune on the horses. He is now deep in debt to some unsavoury types. In addition to a rather sizeable debt, these people are also blackmailing him, threatening to make public his predicament.

Once they have found out what is going on, the player characters must decide on what to do and whether or not to try using the Lodge's resources to solve the problem.

APPENDIX 2 - NPC CREATION REVISED

As you can see, we had to create quite a few NPCs for this book. To help the Gamemaster create the statistics for her creations more easily, it seemed a good idea to take another look at NPC creation and summarise it here. Don't worry, we haven't changed anything! Instead, here is a slightly more detailed look at the process, with everything in one place so you need not keep track of different pages in the Core Rulebook when making your NPCs.

Let's take one of the characters from Chapter 1 as an example as we go through things. You can create a character following these simple steps quite swiftly, and we've reprinted the tables here to help.

Mallerton Smythe Rank 17 Eldren Medium (Generalist)

Physical Competence: +5*

Mental Competence: +10

Initiative: 6*

Health: 7 Dice (14 pips)

Mana: 6 Dice (36 pips)

Signature Skills: Channelling Medium +4, Etiquette +3, High Society +3, Perception +2, Sensate Medium +4, Thaumaturgy +1

Traits: Cantankerous +3, Privileged +4

Special Abilities: Any Sensate or Channelling Medium ability, and at least five Thaumaturgy spells of the Gamemaster's choice

Combat Abilities: Too old to fight, insists someone else does it for him

*reduced due to old age

Mallerton Smythe Rank 17 Eldren Medium (Generalist)

The title bar details the name, rank, race, type of NPC and gives them a concept 'hook', in this case 'Medium'. There are three types of NPC, Generalist, Focussed and Specialist. You should pick one of these to tailor the competences of the NPC but Generalist is a good default. As the Gamemaster, you already know who this person is but giving them a 'tag' helps you find them among your listings of adversaries.

Physical Competence: +5*

Mental Competence: +10

The competences are noted in the table on p324 of the Core Rulebook and reprinted here for convenience. Just find the two numbers in the table

defined by rank and type of NPC (both of which are up to you as the Gamemaster). The numbers can be either Mental or Physical competence, depending on which you think the NPC favours more. However, you need not be too constrained by the table. If you think the NPC needs more or less of one or the other, they adjust them as you see fit. Common things to modify such competences are the age of the character as well as their race. Optional modifiers for race are detailed below (from Core Rulebook page 322).

NPC COMPETENCES TABLE

Rank	Competences			
	Generalist	Focussed	Specialist	Mob
1	+2/+2	+3/+1	+3/+1	+5/+0
2	+3/+2	+3/+2	+4/+1	+6/+0
3	+3/+3	+4/+2	+5/+1	+6/+1
4	+4/+3	+5/+2	+6/+1	+7/+1
5	+4/+4	+5/+3	+6/+2	+8/+1
6	+5/+4	+6/+3	+7/+2	+9/+1
7	+5/+5	+6/+4	+8/+2	+9/+2
8	+6/+5	+7/+4	+9/+2	+10/+2
9	+6/+6	+8/+4	+9/+3	+11/+2
10	+7/+6	+8/+5	+10/+3	+12/+2
11	+7/+7	+9/+5	+11/+3	+12/+3
12	+8/+7	+9/+6	+12/+3	+13/+3
13	+8/+8	+10/+6	+12/+4	+14/+3
14	+9/+8	+11/+6	+13/+4	+15/+3
15	+9/+9	+11/+7	+14/+4	+15/+4
16	+10/+9	+12/+7	+15/+4	+16/+4
17	+10/+10	+12/+8	+15/+5	+17/+4
18	+11/+10	+13/+8	+16/+5	+18/+4
19	+11/+11	+13/+9	+16/+6	+18/+5
20	+12/+11	+14/+9	+17/+6	+19/+5

RACIAL COMPETENCE MODIFIERS

Race	Physical Competence	Mental Competence
Human	0	0
Eldren	-1	+1
Dwarf	+1	0
Gnome	-2	+2
Halfling	-2	+1
Ogre	+4	-3
Beastman	+1	-1

Initiative: 6*

(should be 10, but reduced for old age)

We've taken a look at initiative in the introduction but we've reprinted it here for convenience.

For all NPCs the base initiative rating is 2. To represent Dexterity they can add a third of their Physical Competence and to represent Wits, a third of their Mental Competence. To simplify this, add Physical and Mental Competences together and divide them by 3 (round down) for the value of their Initiative bonus.

Finally, if the NPC has Perception as a Signature skill, add that to the final number.

To make matters easier, we've summarised the bonus from Physical and Mental competences (and added the base 2 points as well) in the table below. It also seemed fair to give Rank 20 a little extra, so we allowed that one to round up.

The final calculation is: **Competence Bonus + Perception skill** (if noted)

Health: 7 Dice (14 pips)

Mana: 6 Dice (36 pips)

***reduced due to old age**

These two stats are worked out from the competences you assign, so make sure you have those the way you want them first. If the character has no magical ability, there really isn't any need to work out their Mana stat. Remember that Health Dice have 2 pips, Mana Dice have 6 pips.

Health is a base of two dice, plus one for each two levels of Physical Competence (round down). There is also a bonus for Rank. Add +1 for 5th Rank and above, +2 for 10th Rank and above, +3 for 15th Rank and above or +4 at 20th Rank. A Rank 11 character with a Physical Competence of 7 has seven Health Dice, worth 14 pips.

Mana has no base and is calculated purely from Mental Competence. You gain one Mana Dice for every 4 points of Mental competence they have but this time round up. Mana also has a bonus for Rank. So add +1 for 5th Rank and above, +2 for 8th Rank and above, +3 for 14th Rank and above and +4 at 19th Rank and above. A Rank 11 character with a Mental Competence of 7 has five Mana Dice worth 30 pips.

Signature Skills: Channelling Medium +4, Etiquette +3, High Society +3, Perception +2, Sensate Medium +4, Thaumaturgy +1

This part is very simple, just pick a few skills the NPC is especially good or bad at and make a note of them (see list, right). Avoid assigning higher than +4 as these add to the Competences and need not be high. Feel free to assign negative skills to things at which the NPC would be bad.

Traits: Cantankerous +3, Privileged +4

Traits are designed for character building and really take the place of assets and privileges, etc. You can pick Talents and Traits from the book but then you'll have to check up what they do to figure out how to apply them to the NPC. Instead, you can use traits to grant a bonus to something the NPC might do and give them a bit of character background. A character who is 'Wealthy +4' is very rich indeed, more so than a character who is 'Wealthy +1'. Having the trait also means wealth is important to the character, it is something that defines them, so don't start giving each character a Wealth trait just because everyone has some form of resource. Just think up to four traits that can describe the character of the NPC as well as a bonus for any special abilities they might have.

Special Abilities: Any Sensate or Channelling Medium ability, and at least five Thaumaturgy

spells of the Gamemaster's choice

This section helps you keep a note of anything weird and non-standard the NPC might be able to do. Mostly this is a list of any spells or Medium abilities but can also include vampiric powers and anything else that just doesn't fit anywhere else! Racial abilities like Eldren Medium abilities and Beastman Animal traits can also apply.

COMPETENCE BONUS TABLE

Rank	Bonus	Rank	Bonus	Rank	Bonus	Rank	Bonus
1	+3	6	+5	11	+6	16	+8
2	+3	7	+5	12	+7	17	+8
3	+4	8	+5	13	+7	18	+9
4	+4	9	+6	14	+7	19	+9
5	+4	10	+6	15	+8	20	+10

Combat Abilities: Too old to fight, insists someone else does it for him

Damage: Very little

Under Combat Abilities, list the weapons with which they are especially skilled. Combat is the time you want an easy list to help things flow, so add the NPCs Physical Competence to their appropriate weapon skill for a rating for each weapon they might use. Not everyone needs to be a fighter though, so don't feel you need combat notes for NPCs who won't fight. Damage is a simple listing of the weapon damage with any bonuses for strength or the like. Here are two more examples for more fighter types.

Combat Abilities: She keeps a Derringer for emergencies but if she is in a fight, something has gone very wrong.

Damage: Derringer (4 Dice)

Combat Abilities: 'Angela' S&W Model 3 .44-40 revolver (11 dice)

Damage: 'Angela' S&W Model 3 .44-40 revolver (10 Dice)

SKILLS LISTING

Common Skills

Act	Presence
Athletics	Dexterity
Blunt Weapons	Dexterity
Bull	Presence
Charm	Presence
Conceal	Wits
Concentration	Resolve
Dance*	Dexterity
Disguise	Wits
Dodge	Dexterity
Drive Carriage	Wits
Empathy	Presence
Etiquette*	Wits
Firearms	Dexterity
Fisticuffs	Dexterity
General Knowledge	Wits
Hide & Sneak	Dexterity
Horse Riding	Dexterity
Improvised Weapon	Dexterity
Intimidate	Presence
Might	Strength
Perception	Wits
Streetwise*	Presence
Swordplay	Dexterity
Throwing	Dexterity

*social class modifier usually applies

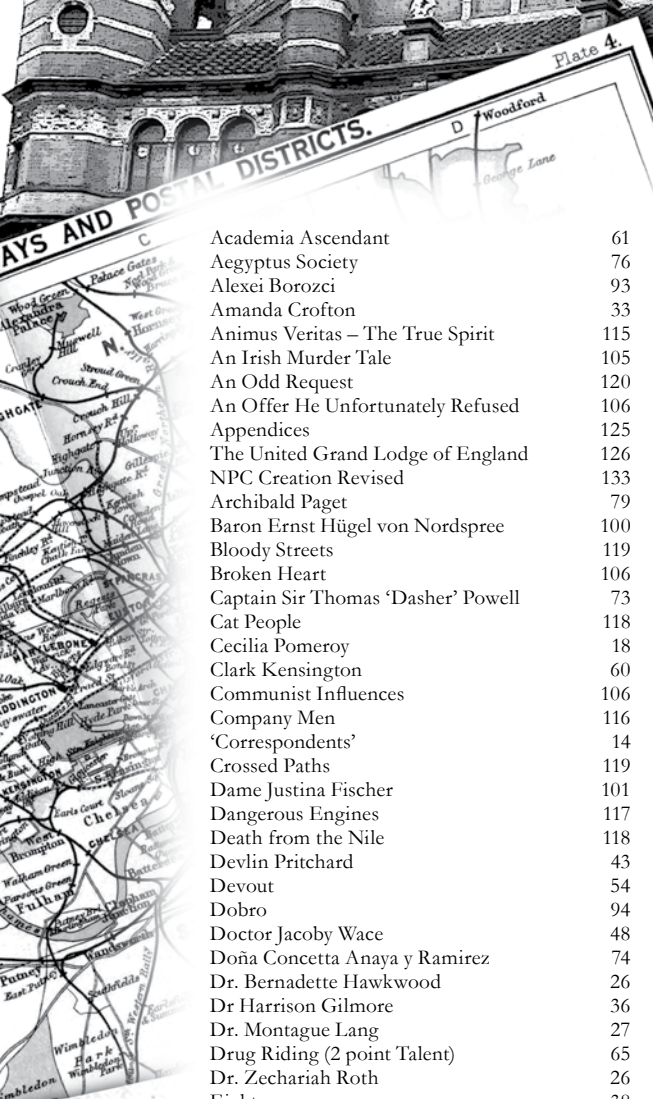
Specialties

Accounting	Wits
Ad hoc repair	Wits
Airborne Rider	Dexterity
Animal Handling	Wits
Archery	Dexterity
Art (specify)	Presence
Appraisal	Wits
Boating	Dexterity
Bribery	Presence
Business	Wits
Conversation	Presence
Craft (specify)	Strength/Wits
Cryptography	Wits
Criminology	Wits
Culture (specify)	Wits
Demolition	Wits
Engineer (specify)	Wits
Gambling	Wits
High Society	Wits
History	Wits
Instrument (specify)	Dexterity/Wits
Fashion	Presence
Forgery	Wits
Interrogation	Presence
Language (specify)	Wits
Legal Matters	Wits
Lip Reading	Wits
Lore	Wits
Medicine	Wits
Navigation	Wits
Photography	Wits
Politics	Wits
Pick Pockets	Dexterity
Pick Locks	Wits
Research	Wits
Science (specify)	Wits
Sewer Lore	Wits
Sleight of Hand	Dexterity
Specialist Weapon (Specify)	Dexterity
Survival	Wits
Tactics	Wits
Teaching	Presence
Theology (specify)	Wits
Tracking	Wits
Ventriloquist	Presence

Magical Skills

Channelling Medium	Presence
Demonology	Presence
Faith Medium	Presence
Enchanting	Resolve
Necromancy	Resolve
Runelore	Resolve
Sensate Medium	Presence
Thaumaturgy	Resolve

INDEX



[NOVEMBER 2, 18...]

DUPLIX SKIRTS.
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TEST DUPLIX ELLIPTIC
(or Double Spring)
SKIRTS
each loop being composed
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for years.
they are very flexible and
easy to wear.
THEY ARE MADE IN THE
BEST AND MOST SERVICE
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Academia Ascendant	61	Miss Elizabeth Imrie	49	Rank 16 Eldren Sorcerer (Generalist)	26
Aegyptus Society	76	Mr Edward Wodehouse	50	Rank 16 Human Teacher (Specialist)	17
Alexei Borozci	93	Mr John Gray	49	Rank 16 Liche Necromancer (Focussed)	122
Amanda Crofton	33	Mr Marcus Yale Creighton	47	Rank 16 Silencius Sub-Magister (Specialist)	89
Animus Veritas – The True Spirit	115	Mrs Shirley Robertson	50	Rank 16 Spiritual Advisor (Generalist)	115
An Irish Murder Tale	105	Mr Victor Keyhoe	50	Rank 17 Dwarven Sorcerer (Generalist)	100
An Odd Request	120	Nemesis Somnalum	68	Rank 19 Vampire Sorcerer (Focussed)	94
An Offer He Unfortunately Refused	106	New Asset – Safe House (2pts)	8	Reform and Secret Sects	112
Appendices	125	New Complication – Hunted	8	Reverend James Parker	47
The United Grand Lodge of England	126	New Highs	116	Roderick Eggleston	67
NPC Creation Revised	133	New Privilege – Membership (2pts or 4pts)	8	Schoolgirl Scandal	105
Archibald Paget	79	Noemi Theobald	18	Shogun Support	109
Baron Ernst Hügel von Nordspree	100	Otis in Love	107	Silence is Golden	109
Bloody Streets	119	Otis Pratt	35	Silencius	83
Broken Heart	106	Patterson Bogg	67	Silencius Member	89
Captain Sir Thomas ‘Dasher’ Powell	73	Pilgrims	54	Sing This Corrosion to Me	109
Cat People	118	Plebeians	54	Sir Everitt Schaeffer	101
Cecilia Pomeroy	18	Prince Oberon Adler von Witgen	25	Sir Jareth Berwyn	33
Clark Kensington	60	Professor Roderick Eggleston	66	Society Artefacts	118
Communist Influences	106	Rank 4 Beastman Servant (Generalist)	81	Society Footmen	81
Company Men	116	Rank 5 Trained Killer (Specialist)	68	Spanish Intrigue	117
‘Correspondents’	14	Rank 7 Medical Doctor (Focussed)	48	Stalking the Night Creature	120
Crossed Paths	119	Rank 7 Social Butterfly (Specialist)	27	Stepping into the Dark	116
Dame Justina Fischer	101	Rank 7 Vampire Street-mistress (Focussed)	95	Suddenly Human	120
Dangerous Engines	117	Rank 8 Experimental Photographer (Gen)	50	The Ancient Holy Order of Sulis-Minerva	51
Death from the Nile	118	Rank 8 Halfling Cook (Focussed)	35	The Cardinal	101
Devlin Pritchard	43	Rank 8 Human Naturalist (Focussed)	19	The Cardinal’s Sin	121
Devout	54	Rank 8 Human Socialite (Generalist)	18	The Chelsea Ladies Circle	12
Dobro	94	Rank 8 Magician and Physician (Focussed)	36	The Confirmed Bachelor	108
Doctor Jacoby Wace	48	Rank 8 Medical Doctor (Generalist)	28	The Domus Alucinae	62
Doña Concetta Anaya y Ramirez	74	Rank 8 Ogre Caretaker (Focussed)	36	The Exit Strategy	108
Dr. Bernadette Hawkwood	26	Rank 8 Priest (Focussed)	48	The Grand Dame	14
Dr Harrison Gilmore	36	Rank 8 Seeker of Mysteries (Generalist)	60	The Haunted Mansion	105
Dr. Montague Lang	27	Rank 9 Inspired Artist (Focussed)	49	The Hexenjagers	96
Drug Riding (2 point Talent)	65	Rank 9 Researcher (Specialist)	67	The Janus Elixir	116
Dr. Zechariah Roth	26	Rank 9 Spokesman (Generalist)	67	The Janus Experiment	115
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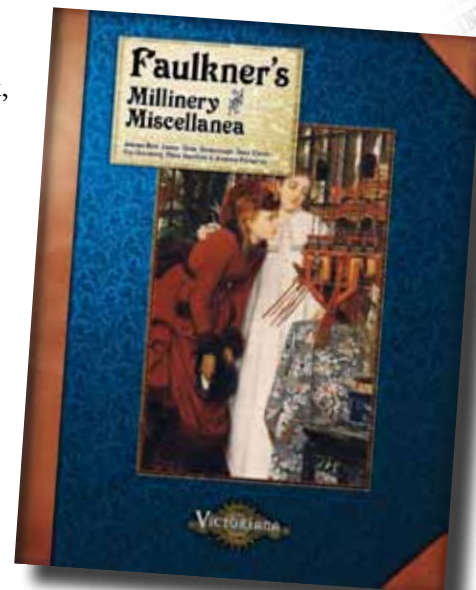
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