



Based on the Dying Earth Book Series by JACK VANCE

# Strangers in Saskervoy

Cugel-Level Adventures for the Dying Earth Roleplaying Game  
Written and Designed by Ian Thomson

“In the Footsteps of Fools” - Episodes 1.2 & 1.3

## Credits

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# GM's Introductory Notes

Whilst maintaining the typically Vancian flavors of Cugel's world, this adventure series offers the chance for your rascally PCs to advance into **loftier realms of 'real' adventuring**. That being said, it's up to the GM if they transition their games into real Turjan-Level, or remain at what may be called 'Advanced Cugel-Level' (ACL). As noted in *Turjan's Tome* (pp21/22) the difference between more adventurous Cugel games and Turjan-Level is largely one of atmosphere. In this adventure series we largely remain at ACL, retaining humor and tag-lines, and facilitating pomposity and annoying reversals of fortune. However, we also provide (especially later in the series) opportunities for advancement and the acquisition of greater skills (including learning spells), and more impressive possessions. The climactic confrontation with Iucounu can be either the PCs' initiation into Turjan-level (you then immediately advance into a more serious tone of gaming - abandoning frivolous tag-lines and turning the humor dark), or merely the crescendo of this first ACL series.

Although the first few episodes in this series will be largely classically Cugelesque (providing much opportunity for amusing and roguish behavior), we at once begin introducing **darker themes**. Emphasis on 'Casual Cruelty' has already been showcased in the previous scenario. There the PCs observed Iucounu's vicious treatment of would-be assassins, and fell foul of either his wrath or his casual displeasure – leading to their cruel banishment to the far north.

'Advanced Cugel-Level' PCs are still profoundly self-motivated, effete and (to a degree) indolent, yet are subtly different from their regular Cugel-Level counterparts. Instead of constantly avoiding danger and seeking betterment only through larceny and duplicity, this next generation of PCs have the opportunity to **gain experience and competency**. In summary, despite themselves they can evolve from blundering effete nincompoops (who once merely stumbled from one amusing or risky escapade to another) into arrogant rascals who've somehow survived a number of life-threatening experiences. As Cugel did, they will become confident (albeit not necessarily realistically) of their abilities to overcome the difficulties of any 'adventuring' situation. They will seek excitement and reward as they wander the land – on the lookout for fascinating magical items to own or sell, and age-old mysteries to pit their wits against. Of course, they may still wish to do so with the minimum effort, and arrange for unsuspecting hirelings to take the most obvious risks, etc...

## New Concepts for 'Advanced Cugel-Level'

We adopt various ideas from *Turjan's Tome* in this campaign. Firstly the levels of danger slowly increase, and the 'Opportunity for Bloodshed' (TT, p24) will become a recurrent theme. Nonetheless this won't necessarily dominate, and more often the PCs will simply still have to tailor their actions to avoid putting themselves in mortal peril. When fighting does occur, use the options for 'Speeding Up Combat' (TT, p25). Pedantic arguments are less prevalent (see 'Heated Protests' – TT, p27), and required Resistances to all save Arrogance and Avarice are less frequent. Resistances will never be called for at any time when a clear and immediate longer-term goal would be notably threatened by such a deviation. Furthermore, the new Turjanic elements of 'Horror' and 'Lost Knowledge' will begin to get much more of a look-in.

**Refreshment of pools** is also now speeded up, as optionally described DERPG p27 & TT, p29 (or even half that time).

Improvement Points (IP) will also be awarded for suitable role-playing in this new style. As for Possession Points (PPs), when a PC finds new items, previously owned items may be sold, swapped, or even given away as long as the owner gains some benefit in doing so (as per TT, p33). This releases old PPs for attaching to new items. Players will need to be fully informed of the **differences as regards IP** at this level. The opportunity to gain IP from Tag-Lines still exists.

Thus, the GM needs to select a new set of IP opportunities. *Turjan's Tome* contains new IP rules (p29). These are designed for a full Turjan-Level campaign and maximize the opportunities for gain - so that PCs can afford spells, manes etc etc. Such considerations are not essential at this stage, so we present here some transitional possibilities:

**1)** Should you wish to keep the awarding of IP at a minimum, we suggest simply awarding 1-3 per session at the rate of one per incident - replacing the 1IP for just showing up. These should be granted according to how well a PC is role-played in the new gaming style. This encourages players to pay attention to the changes in tone. (IE points are not awarded for doing dumb things that threaten the group or individual's goals or safety, though they may very well still be awarded for sensibly applied cunning, well-planned thefts, solving a very difficult problem etc. (1-3 for Taglines, + 1-3 for good role-playing)

**2)** Should you wish to increase the number of IP available, then as well as the options mentioned in ('1') also award 1-5 at the end of the session according to how well each PC furthered of the group's best interests and goals. (This too encourages the new style of play.) (1-3 for Taglines, + 1-3 for role-playing, + 1-5 for goal advancement, + [optional] 1 for turning up)



## A Change of Emphasis

Another significant **style variant** is around ‘anticipating unpredictability’ (DERPG, p138). That basic original ruling in this regard states that PCs can do anything, and that no plot should depend on a single outcome. This concept has been adjusted from this pure form. Of course we still promote flexibility, offer red-herrings and set-ups, and imbue the scenes with much chance for individual action. Nonetheless this campaign contains much in the classic fantasy RPG style. That is to say, a goal is apparent and desirable to aim for. Mind you, not all are essential to the plot. Those that are will be augmented with the crafty ‘all roads lead to Rome’ ploy, and/or presented in a style of cunning inevitability.

As a GM it is possible to gently lead players into new styles of play. One way is by merely operating as the **voice of conscience** at important junctures. If a Player says that their PC is about to begin a typically low-level Cugel act that will clearly jeopardize an important goal or compromise the safety of the group, just gently ask the what their back-up plan is, should the worst happen. “*If you do this and fail, ‘ABC’ may happen, resulting in ‘XYZ’. If so what’s your contingency plan?*”

PCs may still go ahead with such plans, but hopefully in a more considered way. Another way to encourage more well thought-out role-playing is through awarding IP. Make sure that the players know you are awarding an IP to someone who manages a Cugelesque plan with superior cunning, group consultation and planning. And likewise to anyone who acts boldly and significantly in the new ‘brash adventurer’ style. Sympathy Points can be the stick to the IP carrot. Acts of idiocy or dangerous selfishness attract a negative Sympathy Point. Allow sufficient warnings (perhaps alongside the voice of conscience option) when changing your rules, so that Players cannot complain that they didn’t know the consequences to expect. And always remember to apply these encouragements subtly – rather than as a ‘hammer of authority’.

**A Plot Device:** In Cugel’s world ships sailed from Saskervoy to Port Perdusz. In this campaign they do not. Ships have not sailed out of sight of the coast for the last year because of codorfin attacks, and disappearances of entire ships (blamed on the huge appetites and multiple spear-tipped tentacles of the legendary thryfwyd). These attacks built over several years. Under no circumstances now will a vessel sail out of sight of land. Locals hope that these attacks will cease, and the region’s three premier (if rather eccentric and absent-minded) magicians are seeking a solution to the problem.

### Campaign Continuity

For GM’s who have run *All’s Fair At Azenomei* immediately prior to this scenario, suitable mechanics for establishing PC motivation are described within the introductory scene here in *Strangers in Saskervoy*. If you have not run *All’s Fair*, then before you begin running *Strangers...* you will need to create reasons why the PCs are so keen to return to the south. This might be different for each PC – a romantic link, a free one-year scholarship at the Scholasticarium that must commence within the next six months, certain knowledge of a treasure hoard that may be discovered. Enormously varied styles of play exist across the realms of DERPG players and GMs. You know your players and PCs; we do not.

Another scenario, *The Day of the Quelo*, was mentioned in the introduction to *All’s Fair*. This is now also for sale from Pelgrane Press and could be run in this campaign immediately prior to *All’s Fair*. Should you have already played *All’s Fair* and want to run the amusing Quelo adventure anyhow, then you can incorporate it into this adventure by using the information given in the special Quelo appendix attached to the work you are currently reading.

## What You Will Need to Run This Scenario

You will need at least the original DERPG rulebook or (less-ideally) the *Quickstart Rules*. This scenario continues directly from *All’s Fair in Azenomei*. That primary piece not only provides several sessions of amusing gaming around Azenomei’s annual Great Fair but is also the ‘set-up’ scenario for this campaign. Without running it prior to this adventure you will need to invent some other logical way to have your PCs transferred abruptly and against their will to the bitter north from the comfortable regions of Ascolais and Almerly, and create a realistic reason for them to determinedly wish to return. It is not essential to own *Turjan’s Tome* (Pelgrane Press, 2003) in order to run this scenario, though it would be helpful. Later in this campaign ‘TT’ will become even more useful. The Author’s ‘Through Violet Cusps’ page also holds a number of useful free articles ([www.dyingearth.com/violetcusps.htm](http://www.dyingearth.com/violetcusps.htm)).

**Purchaser’s Note:** The continuing evolution of this series is dependent on the initial scenarios achieving sales of at least minimal significance. Therefore, inform your friends and associates of the astounding quality of this resource, and stringently resist any thoughts of gratis distributions. Despite his love of the genre, the author can no longer commit the considerable time required to write long role-playing adventures without any remuneration at all.



## Conventions of Presentation

Within the following text on several occasions we will simply indicate the **suitability of a given ability** in a particular circumstance by inserting it within brackets with this symbol, thus: (Ψ WHEREWITHAL) or thus: (Ψ PERSUASION, SEDUCTION). [An indication ‘-1’ after such a skill means that it is not entirely appropriate and a penalty or levy of 1 need be applied at the GM’s discretion.] Likewise we use abbreviations in place of the full title of results. (HBS - Hair’s-Breadth Success, DF - Dismal Failure, etc). In many cases, success achievements are **listed in ascending order**: a Prosaic Success (PS) expands on the information given in a Hair’s-Breadth Success etc. In such cases read out the appropriate sections as if for the PC/s with the best roll, and tell any who succeeded less well that their PC knows similar but less precise detail. When reading such information out, simply begin at the lowest useful success and stop when the entry for the rolled success level is described. From time to time Contests that are **key plot points** or designed to be a major game incident are detailed in boxed asides instead of the (Ψ ABILITY) entry.

At some places within the text you will see the symbol ‘⊕’. This indicates a section of linkage text that the GM should read out. Some of this information is speech from GMCs, and other parts are the GM’s scene-setting remarks to the players. You will of course read out other parts of the text, or summarize the information, in response to character actions or queries, but the text marked ‘⊕’ requires directly expressing at the appropriate moment - in order to explain or elaborate a situation, or link one scene to another.

At places in this scenario we cover merely **one likely example** of activities the PCs may undertake, sometimes suggesting other possibilities. Some parts are written in precise detail, usually linkage sections, and other parts are more fluid with various options presented that the GM will need to choose from and evolve. Each GM will need to adjust and improvise the action according to the whims and actions of their own PCs.

Another convention adopted first within *All’s Fair At Azenomei* is the GMCs’ **empty ratings**. That is to say some GMC description boxes with abilities left blank and spaces for the GM to write in their ratings. It is impossible for us to cater for every gaming group, and appropriate GMC ability levels will vary enormously. Therefore for some useful skills we leave space for the GM to note whatever ratings she decides as appropriate (after reading the description of the character and the role they play in the scenario). In many cases it may be as simple as asking the PCs what their ratings are and then inventing the GMC’s rating at that very moment. [To be fair it should then be written into the blank space and retained as ‘gospel’ from that moment on.] Such a choice may vary according to their previous successes and failures, or just on the immediate needs of the situation. Alternatively the GM may choose to fill all such blanks in **prior to commencing play**. This varies from the original ‘~+3’ etc idea so as to give the GM total flexibility as to whether they want the encounter to be easy, relatively easy, hard, extremely hard etc. The GM may alter the other ratings at will and even add extra abilities, according to their conception of the character as best matches their gaming group. Incidental GMCs are detailed within the text at the time of their primary encounter. More significant GMCs are in the appendices.

For **reasons of space** we cannot provide convoluted flowery speeches by every GMC that your brave adventurers will encounter, but in most cases we can merely summarize their attitudes. Since this is DERPG and not some game of lesser verve, each GM will need to give proper voice to these **sundry flunkies and townsfolk** rather than passing over their words in hurried summary. Likewise we cannot elaborate all of the opportunities for role-play in this finite document. Sometimes what we mention in brief sentences the GM will need to expand into a minor scene – so be on the alert for these opportunities. For instance, when the PCs arrive at Flutic, if they disastrously fail their Persuasion attempts they will not be allowed entry. The survival option mentioned, should this occur, is the (very brief) note that they can “shelter in the sturdy gardener’s hut overnight”. Rather than simply saying/agreeing that they do this, the GM should require the PCs to find the hut, note that it is stone and therefore defensible, break their way in, barricade the door etc etc. All this should be role-played to the full, possibly whilst more than one PC has to desperately fend off ghouls by shouting and flourishing staves torn from the fence. Further attacks may also occur during the night. In short – elaborate, elaborate! And furthermore, read every section before running it, so that you can expand those parts that are not fully detailed, and yet interest you and/or fit the kind of tone of the DERPG games you usually run.

*GM’s will need to read this series before running it, as some aspects of continuity must be maintained, especially between Chapters 3 and 5.*



# Chapter 1: An Appointment at Shanglestone Strand

[The word ‘appointment’ refers to the inevitability that my campaign PCs would one day rudely arrive at this place in an airborne cage. In the previous scenario one option had Iucounu mentioning ‘Shanglestone Strand’ in passing as a possible destination for his enemies to be exiled.]

## 1.1) The Journey North

During their long flight from Azenomei, the GM can allow the PCs to gradually wriggle free of their bonds, or to co-operate with the others so that knots can be untied. (This should all be fully role-played using the following descriptions as guidelines to their experience of the world as they do this.) It is up to the GM whether Iucounu left the PCs with any particular belongings. However, this is still Cugel-Level role-playing, and needs to be littered with classic examples of ‘unfairness’. If Iucounu even thought that they tried to dupe him he would have stripped them of all weapons, valuables and items easily detected by sight or via a quick search of their persons, even weapons. He would probably act the same way even if he knew that they tried their best to do what he wanted and failed, but be less thorough. (By now some PCs may have imaginative ways of hiding small valuables about their persons; in order to try and outwit such regular inversions of fortune.)

If you are reading this before running the final scenes of *All's Fair At Azenomei* then as their fate becomes clear in that final scene you might allow quick-acting PCs to try to convince Iucounu to let them retain some of their belongings for survival's sake (or whatever other reasons they can come up with). If they tricked him or were utterly inept then such attempts will be at a Penalty or Levy of 1 (GM's choice); if they merely failed him there is no adjustment; and if they succeeded there is a Bonus or Boon of 1. Nonetheless in no case will he simply allow them to ‘keep most of their stuff’. Anything retained will be something to be proud of. Again, if you read this before running *All's Fair* a further idea conceived of since the publication of that first scenario is that of introducing sympathetic fellow prisoners to also be transported north. If Iucounu has one or two other enemies – possibly survivors of the assassin band – awaiting disposal, they can become detailed GMCs and sent along. Their uses can be myriad. The primary option would be the single ‘sacrificial lamb’. PCs assume that this person is a spare PC, only to have the person slain horribly by ghouls

during the group's attempts (see later) to gain shelter inside Flutic<sup>1</sup>. Or they truly might be actual spare PCs. In whatever incarnation you decide they are, they can be handy mouthpieces for the GM to pass on ideas – as long as this is done with sensitivity.

⊕ ‘Your journey is one of great discomfort. The only way to avoid the piercing chill is to cling to one another in an unseemly huddle. On and on and on you go, higher and higher. The world seems vast from this incredible height, even though the details you can make out below are few and far between: a strange blue fire in the middle of Modavna Moor, the shimmering wave crests out across the vast ocean of the Great Chaing Estuary to the west. Were the reptilian avian holding your cage aloft to drop you your demise would be certain, though mercifully swift. Mind you, the wait for its arrival could be several minutes long. Awe and fear are not inappropriate emotions.’

The lengthy passage over the Ocean of Sighs itself is tedious in the extreme. It is marked only by a salty dampness in the air, and the sound of crashing ocean waves from far below as they pass over an island or two. The demon that carries the PCs is not open to conversation. It considers its current temporary enslavement highly embarrassing and refuses to stoop to the level of actually conversing with its charges. Desperate PCs might think to pick the lock of the cage and climb up – perhaps in hopes of wounding or threatening it so that it descends. The GM needs to point out that unless they are an expert in demon anatomy this is most definitely not wise – a wound to a critical juncture might easily result in the cage plummeting from their current height of a mile or more (with demon attached even if they have somehow tied the cage to its leg or something similar). Another option for the GM who wishes to deter over-eager PCs is simply to (as suggested on p13 of *Demons of the Dying Earth*) make this demon invulnerable to normal weapons.

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<sup>1</sup> A handy plot device for showing PCs that this campaign has real dangers compared to classic Cugel-Level play.



## The Saskervoy Reach

What distant geographers refer to so casually as the ‘Saskervoy Reach’ actually incorporates the contiguous realms of Saskervoy and Cil. The actual term is a shipping reference that originally referred to the whole coast from Cil to the north of Tugersbir (centering on the town of Saskervoy). Both Cil and Saskervoy were once far larger realms. More than two thirds of Cil once lay to the east and north, and has been overtaken by the Great Erm Forest. The remaining third has few significant settlements, though several notable ruins. Saskervoy has lost only about a third of its traditional area - to the Great Erm in the north and to the expanding Saskervoy Forest. However, its grandeur too is long gone, and civilization clings only to the coast - with the possible addition of the inland town of Glubersbir.

### Establishing PC Motivations

Presuming your PCs move directly from ‘All’s Fair in Azenomei’, their time during the hellish experience of the flight is an ideal point to introduce “Marvelous and Unique Opportunities for Character Improvement”. (Or this may occur at the time traditional for the awarding of the ‘merely showing up’ Improvement Point, replacing that event.) In truth these are not ‘opportunities’ so much as driving forces behind PCs’ motivations for continuing this campaign. Thus, if necessary, the options below can be transformed from ‘choices’ into things you impose upon the PCs as ‘fait a complis’.

Either way, explain that each PC has an ‘Adversary’ to be added to their Sheet. [Adversaries are explained more fully in *Turjan’s Tome* (p22).] In fact, more than just an ‘adversary’, Iucounu is an *Arch-Adversary*. Because he is a major Dying Earth personality, this is a one-off opportunity for each PC to gain up to a massive 7 character Improvement Points for free – which you can explain as the Law of Equipoise’s counterbalance for the unpleasant fate that has beset them.

**Iucounu the Arch-Adversary** – because we are so generous, each PC automatically gains this relationship, & 1 free IP.

**Goal 1** – “Return to Almery, get even with Iucounu and take his treasure.” Choosing this grants a further 3 free IP.

*The GM should point out that if they do away with, or drive off, the Laughing Magician they can access his wonderful belongings and wealth. Some players may have read the stories and know that Iucounu used magical means to detect Cugel’s return. If anyone brings this up, remind the Players that (a) the PCs do not know the full details of Iucounu, and (b) this is a different version of the Dying Earth from the original stories and so Iucounu may not have such specific powers. Even if Players understand this, they may still sensibly note that the PCs are aware that Iucounu has potent spells. This is an entirely valid consideration, one that Cugel himself pondered occasionally, and yet it did not deter him in the slightest, buoyed as he was on his own sense of self-importance. Thus the only valid consideration alongside taking this goal might be a personal sub-goal for each PC to continue accumulating experience and assistance on their trek south. Thus they will be able to challenge Iucounu with more efficacy. At this stage, so far from their enemy and so full of impotent rage, such fears are in any case far from paramount.*

**Goal 2** – “Support my comrades on our mission.” Choosing this grants 3IP as it’s ongoing. (It cannot be chosen alone.)

Consider incorporating the gaining of these IP into the role-playing. Swearing of dire oaths of vengeance and loyalty may attract further IP if made in an impressively Vancian style. Additionally let the players know that each of these must be written on their Character Sheet as a *Goal*. Oaths/promises can be broken, but Equipoise threatens the dishonorable. (As described in *Turjan’s Tome* once the goals have been adopted, Rebuff rolls against Persuasions that further the goals are at a levy or even penalty – a device that notably assists the transition from regular to advanced Cugel-Level.)

All of this does not mean that ‘Adversaries’ need to feature elsewhere in this campaign. This is all an unashamed plot device to drive the PCs towards a return and to fuel this ongoing campaign. Arrogance and anger now drive the PCs to return, though not to take suicidal risks on the way. This lust for revenge also does not mean they may not stop to enjoy the places they visit or to take advantage of opportunities. After all, the better prepared they are when they return, the easier it will be to exact their revenge. Likewise, the longer they take the less likely Iucounu is to be expecting them.

PCs from an already-existing campaign might already have a strong motivation to return, such as friends, lovers, stored treasure... Incorporate their desires to ‘return home’ as part of this mission of revenge. In fact, whether or not such things exist, you may wish to evoke images of the grand city of Kaiin, the beautiful young women/men, the trappings of civilization, the comparatively easy and civilized life - all the things that Iucounu has cruelly deprived them of.

Down the track it may be possible that PCs will expire. Replacement PCs from local regions could be motivated by the ever-more exaggerated tales the original characters tell of the great rewards that will become available when the little gang defeats the doltish Iucounu and snatches his horde of valuable and fascinating belongings. That is to say that anyone who joins and supports their enterprise will be entitled to a significant share. In this way it is even possible that a group of entirely new PCs might be the ones to finally return to Azenomei and exact the horrible revenges (or at least attempt to).



## An Unwelcome Visitor

When Cugel suffered this style of transportation, a winged imp (TDE, p141) accompanied him for a short while above the Saponid Tundra - snickering at him and refusing to answer his questions. Since it was also tired it attempted to rest upon the cage. Smart PCs might make this luxury dependent on it answering their questions. If so, the GM decides whether it is helpful and knowledgeable or a typical ill-mannered semi-sentient. Possibly a PC might befriend it and gain an odd temporary ally (effectively Unctuous) for as long as its presence enhances the gaming experience. (Such a weird thing already would begin to mark a change in style of game experience for the Players.)



## 1.2) The Arrival

⊕ ‘Dawn comes as your uncomfortable transport nears the coast. Behind you and to the west you can see only the long miles of rolling ocean. Ahead of you in the dim light you can make out a barren coastline with forested hills deep in the interior. As the coast grows near, in the distant east a towering range of mountains becomes faintly visible, and the entity transporting your prison begins to descend. Its objective appears to be the beach itself, a long and thin expanse of sand and rocks behind which stretches acre upon acre of dank yellow spinifex, merging into what appears to be miles of desolate marshland with the low forested hills far beyond. Several miles to east and west dim tree-covered headlands thrust out into the ocean.’

After the PCs have discussed options, complained, prepared for impact and generally carried on, read on:

⊕ ‘Swooping down over the beach, the demon utters what appears to be a crow of relief and frustration, and releases the cage from a around three yards up. The cage crashes upon the sand. You are tossed higgledy-piggledy right and left. The huge hideous winged beast then circles twice before ascending high into the sky. The morning is cold, notably chillier than the climate of Alмеры and Ascolais.’

It is important to note that initially the PCs are unlikely to know where they have arrived. The region consisting of Cil and Saskervoy is so distant from Alмеры that no common knowledge exists about these places. Of course various sages, some magicians who possess transportation magic, and a few highly unusual travelers have experience (or a collection of relatively recent reports) but such information is not in the public domain. Each PC may make a single Pedantry roll, with a penalty of 1 unless their Specialism is ‘Dying Earth Geography’ or something similar, and a further penalty of 1 if their Pedantry rating is 5 or less. For anyone scoring better than a DF begin reading at the QF entry and finish with the entry for their actual rolled result.

### Pedantry – What Is This Place?

DF – We went North, or was it north-west, some many tens of miles, or possibly hundreds. I am befuddled and more than a little apprehensive.

QF – We have traveled hundreds of miles, but where we have arrived I fear to wonder.

EF – We passed first over Modavna Moor, then across the Land of the Falling Wall, and then a vast dark ocean.

HBS – That huge sea was the Ocean of Sighs. I seem to recall that beyond it is a region known as the Saskervoy Reach and an immense ancient forest called the Great Erm.

PS – The Reach covers a wide section of the north, but there are said to be few if any settlements beyond Saskervoy itself.

IS – Civilization has long since deserted much of these lands, which are bordered by swamp or dangerous forest. It is said that ruins, more forests and barren hills fill the interior.

### A Bonus Hazard

Perhaps the cage does not split open, and lands with the door beneath. The PCs might spend a horrible 24 hours (menaced by half-men at night) before a traveler using Live Boots (DERPG, p116) comes along and (after a worryingly long deliberation over the Law of Equipoise) frees them. Possibly this is Master Twango, who only agrees to aid them after they suggest becoming his employees and swear oaths of loyalty. “I would help but since we have no connection Equipoise could be compromised and I might be threatened.” He then merely gives vague directions before striding off eastward on pressing (private) business.





From ground level as the dim sun struggles up above the horizon and begins its arduous clamber across the dome of the sky, the view around them is not inspiring. Read out the following in a suitably despondent manner:

⊕ ‘To the north beyond an expanse of reed-covered dunes are ‘marshy barrens’ scattered with straggling copses of black larch ‘leading to a far huddle of low hills’. To east and west are merely ‘ocean and dreary beach’. ‘Far to the east a dim headland thrusts into the water as does another, somewhat less remote, to the west.’ The only visible man-made object of any kind is a weathered and half-buried remains of an ancient sea wall a few hundred yards to the west<sup>2</sup>. A cold salty breeze stirs the air, and the gritty gray sand of the beach is already starting to find its way into your shoes and hair. In the distant north the tiny speck of a pelgrane or some similar creature of the air can be seen circling as it searches for prey.’

## The Sea Wall

According to the official definition of the spell that brought the PCs here, the caster must have been to the spot to which the ‘delivery’ is made. One may wonder why Iucounu came to this point, vaguely midway (though actually notably closer to Flutic) between the two headlands. Cugel never explored the sea wall, though he tried to in the first story and Firx prevented him. This hefty section of weathered stonework marches roughly parallel to the beach, but is many yards back from the actual water. (The sea-level has dropped significantly since the wall was in use.)

If the PCs move to investigate, they can observe that by some freak chance of weather or erosion a section of ancient hefty sea-wall a hundred yards long has been exposed. If they stand upon it in order to gain a better view of their surroundings (a reasonable course of action), they can see in the dunes behind it that a number of inconceivably ancient buildings have also been exposed to the air. Little remains of them save worn walls projecting from between one and seven feet from the ground. If these traces of structure are explored, the PCs will find that within the last few weeks (but certainly not more recently) someone has performed an excavation here. Several half-filled trenches remain, plus a number of rotting planks presumably once used to shore-up the dig.

<sup>2</sup> For the sake of exactitude, it is worth noting that on the associated map this point is located on the beach above the ‘O’ in ‘Shanglestone’

As well as these traces, the body of a deodand rests nearby. Shortly after its death it was partially devoured by local fauna, and the rest of it has partially mummified in the salty air. It is not a pleasant sight. An astute PC might (Ψ MAGIC [STUDIOUS, FORCEFUL], MAGIC [OTHER] –1, PHYSICIAN, PERCEPTION-1) notice that it was slain by some kind of magical flame blast that has left part of it charred. If the PCs spend notable effort exploring the dig they may come across fragments of ancient pottery or (if very lucky) a small gold ornament. And possibly Fenzark’s Central Node (see note at 2.7).

**GM:** Those who have read Vance’s original DE stories may note similarities to Cugel’s second arrival in this region (TDE: pp295/6). This is a deliberate effort to recapture a recognizable story element, whilst also easing any Players who know the stories into an entertaining sense of familiarity. Fans may recall that in his first escapade upon the Strand, Cugel went east rather than west. This change is but one of many variations you will find in this series. We aim to provide new adventures, yet have them liberally illustrated with characters, locations and incidents from the original stories. Adventuring will thus be an experience that even avid readers of the original tales will find challenging, unpredictable, and amusing. Furthermore it is the author’s fond belief that revisiting the scenes of some of Cugel’s exploits from a variant perspective will be particularly entertaining for those who know the stories well. This adventure and those that follow – such as ‘Lords of Cil’ (FoF 1.4) – will also expand on the places and people that Cugel encountered during his trip across the Dying Earth locales.

## 1.3) Survival

If you didn’t use the optional hazard above, the GM needs to gradually (yet clearly) alert the PCs to the fact that staying exposed on the Strand during the night means certain death. No particular cover exists to barricade oneself behind, and the distant pelgrane and dead deodand attest to the presence of anthropophages. It is important to allow the Players/PCs to experience the full desolation and isolation of this spot, the utter emptiness – and to suspect most strongly that Iucounu sent them here to die far from home, as a dark joke that he is probably still enjoying. No obvious food is to be had, and the water available is either sea-water or brackish marsh-water - if they walk beyond the dunes. *(Now is the ideal time to share amongst the Players your spare copy of Appendix G, as it will enhance and explain the situation that the PCs find themselves in.)*





One possible trigger for their moving on is that one of the PCs will notice ( $\Psi$  PERCEPTION) a ‘red glitter flashing across the distance’ from a point amongst the trees on the western headland. This occurs when the sun reaches a certain point. Any PC with a modicum of sense will realize that this type of red sparkle “could only signify sunlight reflecting from glass”. Common Sense ( $\Psi$  PERCEPTION, TRACKING, LIVING ROUGH, WHEREWITHAL, even SEAMANSHIP) will suggest that the western headland is notably closer, perhaps by as much as 40% of the distance – although only reveal this information in response to a pertinent question. (Or ask for rolls if they just start walking in the other direction.) Even the nearer headland is many miles away (around 20 – with the other headland being over 30 in any sensible estimation) and the journey to the closest one will likely take the whole of the day. Again, do not reveal this information without a PC seeking it.

### Dealing with Intractable Rascals

Some PCs (IE Players) may be willful in the extreme, and strike eastward despite all hints that this is not sensible. (Since east and south is their desired course.) We suggest solutions in the order in which they should be used:

- 1) Far enough out to sea as to be beyond any realistic hailing range (yet close enough that it is certainly hailing from a nearby mooring) a ship is seen travelling from west to east and heading further and further out to sea. (This indicates that a settlement close by in the west may be sufficiently advanced to have a harbor from which they could seek passage east. Do not explain this causal relationship in such clear terms – let them work it out.)
- 2) The Strand is an eerie place, promoting visions of their bleached bones decorating the sands. Once the PCs have walked for a while ask for Perception rolls. Any success confirms that the eastern headland is not within a day’s travelling distance. Anyone then failing a Wherewithal roll will refuse to continue into the face of certain death. (There is no guarantee of any settlements being between here and there, nor even on the eastern headland itself.)
- 3) A strange magician riding a brass horse that travels much faster than any natural beast comes swiftly from the direction of Cil. He cannot believe their stupidity and will pause to arrogantly explain to the PCs that they will not reach shelter by nightfall unless they turn about and head back to Saskervoy. He is in a hurry and not interested in striking up a conversation, merely willing to spend a few moments explaining to the travelers that to go further will be suicide. He will confirm that the red light presumably

comes from a window in the upper floor of Twango’s manse, but will not elaborate on who or what Twango is. (Except to say that the manse is much closer than Saskervoy town, and could be reached before nightfall if they move with speed. And to confirm if they ask that Twango is a reasonable man from whom they could ask for temporary accommodation.) Since all the evidence supports this traveler’s warning, simply tell the Players that their PCs have finally accepted that no matter how urgently they wish to travel east, for the moment the barrier of certain death prevents this. They turn about and head west. **GM Note** – this man is not an ‘amusing or casual encounter’, but an example of a powerful traveler.

Travel will need to be at reasonable speed if the PCs are to have any hope of reaching the headland before nightfall. A ‘striding bent-kneed lope’ might serve them well, and including short breaks will take them roughly nine hours. Along the way they will experience two encounters (although the GM may manufacture more – if so we suggest a pelgrane attack as appropriate<sup>3</sup>):

- 1) **The Old Cage** – Another cage similar to the one they arrived in is lying rusting on the edge of the dunes. It is about a third less in size than theirs and is lying on its side with the door beneath it. Although brown with rust it is largely intact and within its confines, mostly obscured by sand, the PCs can see a few half-buried sand-scoured bones. This encounter is in the nature of a harsh joke for readers of the original stories. If the PCs go to the trouble of righting the cage and smashing open the door (the lock has rusted), they will find other items as well as the bones. Buried in the sand are: several rusted clasps and buttons, a few tattered scraps of desiccated leather, a rapier<sup>4</sup> in surprisingly good repair, and a magical tablet (that converts organic matter to food and alerts the holder to the presence of toxins with a curious soft chime). It is immaterial who this unfortunate is, but the coincidence factor suggests that it is another victim of Iucounu.
- 2) **Mermaids** – On a low and long rocky outcrop observant PCs might ( $\Psi$  PERCEPTION) make out hurried movement as they approach (or peering at them as they pass). The sources of this movement are three mermaids<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> If they have no weapons, suitable survival options must be provided – cover, rocks as missiles, hefty branches, Persuasion opportunities...

<sup>4</sup> This is magically enhanced to remain sharp indefinitely, and the enchantment protects it from corrosion and general decay.

<sup>5</sup> Mermaid ratings and conjectural abilities are available in the Dying Earth Gazetteer. Since this is a minor encounter none are here.



watching shyly from the surf at the edge of the rocks. Initially PCs can only see their upper bodies, as the rest of their forms are hidden beneath the water. Thus, as far as the PCs are concerned three naked or near-naked females of pleasing aspect are sheltering at the end of the rocks. [*In your usual skilled style divert any players whose knowledge of supernatural anatomy is greater than that of their PC.*] Perhaps the women were bathing and taken by surprise? Lusty males (Ψ RESIST RAKISHNESS) [and any female who gets a DF should you run games of heightened social realism] feel compelled to 'offer their assistance'. The mermaids are not evil as such, but delight in playing games on stupid land-dwellers. They will giggle demurely, and attempt to cover themselves with seaweed, but when a PC draws near he (or she) will be hauled into the salt water, wrestled with indecorously beneath the waves, and then let go to splutter half-drowned to the surface. (Should they have any valuables and interesting trinkets these will be removed from their persons, or failing that they may have lost their trousers.) The PCs might turn the tables only by proving their wisdom through identifying the creatures' species (Ψ PEDANTRY) and engaging in conversation without approaching. If so, the creatures know some limited intelligence about the land around these parts, and may pass it on. (GM to invent. For instance they know that Twango the Elder was a magician, and that Twango the Younger is much more arrogant and much less capable. Also of course they know of the existence of Saskervoy.)

As the PCs eventually near the large headland, they will see that a large expanse of forest sweeps down from the north. They will be forgiven for assuming that this is a branch of the Great Erm – that massive forest noted for engulfing much of the far north. In fact it is the eastern edge of the Saskervoy Forest – which stretches towards (but does not reach) the bulk of the Great Erm. As darkness begins to fall, they will at last approach these woods, heading towards where they hope they will find some kind of building. In the distance the odd cries of various half-men will occasionally be heard.

⊕ 'The sun drops behind the headland and gray lavender gloom falls across the beach. The shadows of the forest suggest a number of eerie possibilities.'

The PCs will now need to head into the woods, seeking (Ψ PERCEPTION, LIVING ROUGH -1) the structure with the red glass - or at the very least a path heading in the generally correct direction. No such path exists here, though one is present much closer to the end of the headland. However, various animal trails may cause confusion and/or short-lived optimism. The first

stirrings of half-men should be noted – shadows ducking behind trees in the middle distance, strange calls nearby, etc. At length someone (Ψ PERCEPTION) will realize that they are now standing amidst the trees of an untidy garden. The bushes roundabouts are in orderly rows and perhaps bear fruit at the right time of year. Clearly the gardener here is less than exacting. As they press on within moments they notice in the gloom up ahead a certain solidity somehow palely illuminated:

⊕ 'Here stands a large and elaborate manse of archaic design. The ground slopes towards it, and the illumination from the lower floor was obscured by this imbalance in terrain until you drew this close. Now you can see that the windows of the ground floor glow with an amber light. It is indeed a cheerful sight in this inhospitable land.'



### Anthropophages

The GM needs to introduce one, then two, then three eerie white (humanoid) shapes skulking in the woods. These are 'ghouls' and it was their description in Cugel's encounter at this point in the original story that inspired the entry on ghouls in *Demons of the Dying Earth* (p81 - Pelgrane Press, 2003). The idea is to spur the PCs to attempt to enter Flutic and thus to engage in conversation with old Weamish. The creatures continue to creep closer and closer across the garden, making any alternative but entry to the manse seem more and more impractical. They seem to shun even the last rapidly fading shards of sunshine. If they delay or are delayed, it is possible that PCs may have fashioned cudgels from tree branches and have to fend off one of these creatures with severe blows.



## Chapter 2: The Manse - Flutic

### Flutic

A magical energy barrier protects the entire manse. It activates at the first sign of dusk, and lasts until dawn is well-established. It causes searing damage if pushed against with more than minimal force. (Initially only minor burns are contracted unless someone/something continues to test its effectiveness.) The only exception to its coverage is the main door, which instead is protected by strengthening enchantments. The main door is at the left-hand end of the manse, and can be reached easily. As hinted at above, no other means of entrance to the manse is viable during darkness. A small hinged panel is closed (and secured from inside) in the upper center of the right hand door, and nearby is a bell-rope. If this is pulled with sufficient athleticism, it will soon bring Weamish the butler to the door. He will open the small panel and ask their business.

### Ψ Persuasion

*Wherein the PCs fear for their lives in the face of the encroaching ghouls, and Weamish dull-wittedly attempts to assess their suitability for entry via an interview through the panel in the door.*  
NB: If the PCs already encountered Twango on the beach during the optional hazard incident, he then departed East and is due to return by magic early in the coming morning. But Weamish has heard nothing of the PCs from Twango. Those things that might sway Weamish are if the PCs can convince him that they are hard-workers in need of employment, or that the ghouls now utterly block their exit. Weamish will at first try to convince them to go and stand 10ft into the ocean until dawn, since (he tells them) the ghouls are antipathetic towards salt as well as sunlight. He is a dense old man with unrealistic moral standards, and forgets that Twango actually requires dubious characters for his employment. Should the Persuasion attempt fail, a ghoul will cause the PCs some discomfort (how much depending on their current ability to defend themselves). One fall-back option if they fail against Weamish is that Twango himself will appear (if he hasn't gone east) to see what the noise is all about and grant them a night's accommodation just so that he can get some peace. Or in a space of utter despair after failing all rolls, the PCs may have no choice but to shelter in the sturdy gardener's hut overnight. (In this case Twango, impressed by their resourcefulness will approach them himself before they can leave in the morning.)

### 2.1) Welcome to Flutic

*Individual areas within Flutic are not described as we progress through this section. When you come across a new bolded room or area description refer to the 'Flutic' appendix for incidental overviews and more detailed information. Opportunities for mischief may be available, so skim-read each entry before continuing gameplay. Likewise general knowledge that might be obtained from Twango's employees, or even Twango himself, is contained within that appendix. You will need to adopt the wording according to whom they ask.*

At length, Weamish will allow the PCs into the **Vestibule**. Here he will ask them to wait whilst he consults with Master Twango. On his return he says:

⊕ 'Master Twango has assessed you by remote magic and agreed that you may dine freely at his expense in the refectory and stay overnight in the bunkroom. In return he asks only that you respect his home and in the morning agree to attend an interview as regards potential short-term employment that will be profitable to all parties.'

### The Refectory

Weamish has already dined. If any Players have read the Cugel stories and their PCs ask about costs, Weamish will assure them that the meal is free, and decline to discuss further details. "Such queries must be made to Master Twango tomorrow. I have no concept of your terms of service." "I decline to discuss my own terms of service. Such things are a man's private business."





## A Night in the Bunk Room

Nothing untoward happens in the night, but anyone lying awake hears half-men and/or other woodland creatures calling in peculiar and horrid voices as they wander the grounds. The fact that Twango's magical defenses permit such acts of trespass may in itself be indicative to the PCs that he must be a magician of middling powers, at best.

### Dealing with Unauthorized Explorations

Persons of lesser repute may wish to explore the house by night. Rather than simply bullying Players into not causing their PCs to do this, discourage such things more subtly. For instance, ask the Player of any such PC what their excuse will be if they are caught, and if – as a result of being caught – they (and all their companions) are ejected from the house into the night? (Ψ WHEREWITHAL, RESIST INDOLENCE) Ask too the Players of any other PCs awake if they are keen for their comrade to put them at such risk? Furthermore first encounters with Gark and Gookin might be had in darkened corridors, as these sinister hardly-seen spies whisper warnings and ask questions about the PC's purpose. In any case after such a tiring day all abilities might be at a Penalty of 1 until a good night's sleep is had. Nonetheless, some still might wish at least to have a little wander about, perhaps under the pretence of looking for the washrooms. Such should not be utterly discouraged, but in most cases doors are locked at night. In fact, should you wish it, the corridor between the Cloakroom and Workroom 1 might be blocked with a faintly glowing energy barrier. (An extra security measure evoked whenever unknown rogues are being housed within the staff's quarters).

### A Complimentary Breakfast

Weamish will wake them with fresh towels, and show them to the **Washroom** where heated water awaits in bowls. He invites them to join him in the kitchen for breakfast as soon as they are done. In the kitchen he tells them: *“Master Twango hopes that you slept well and invites you to dine once more. After you have breakfasted he wishes to conduct an interview which he hopes will tempt you to temporary employment. Should you decline his offer, then you are free to leave for Saskervoy with no obligation or adverse feeling.”*

Clearly this breaks the absolute law of ‘No Free Refreshment’. Such is DERPG, full of surprises and contradictions. (If Twango was last seen heading east, he returned via magic a little while before they woke.)

### How Fares the Road South? (Twango's responses)

“I know not of these locales. Almerly, Azenomei? Ah Kaiin, yes a glorious jewel of a city or so I have heard. Does it truly still exist? How wonderful.”

“Really, so far to the south? It must be an enormous distance as I have no knowledge of these places.”

“A mercantile trade operates out of Saskervoy, but its operators charge inordinately heavily to transport passengers along the coast, and although some brave souls still voyage to some of the larger islands close by none fare south over the Ocean of Sighs. That vast sea has offered many attacks from codorfin and thfyrrwyd during the last few years, and deep sea travel no longer takes place.”

“The journey along the Eastern Coast to Cil is one of grave dangers due to the presence of anthropophages in the wilds. However, should someone reach Cil they could fare east and south by foot on the old roads. I hear that habitations are few so the way is dangerous, but not overly so. Those of stout heart and strong arm should face no insurmountable odds in this section of their endeavor. At length they would reach the Mountains of Magnatz and may proceed by any of three routes. The shortest but perhaps most arduous way is to cross the Mountains themselves. Secondly one can surely find a fishing vessel to sail some few days down the coast and avoid the mountain trek utterly. Thirdly it is said that a great old road skirts the northern and eastern arms of the mountains before turning south via the Vale of Dharad. Beyond the Mountains of Magnatz it is rumored that the regions there are contiguous with the lands of the south, though the way is wild, dangerous and of considerable distance<sup>6</sup>.”

“I have never fared far to the south and thus can tell you no more. If you take up employ you are welcome to peruse my library, and I can even put aside two or three days in between each work period for you to spend in self-education, should such a thing appeal<sup>7</sup>. Perhaps the Tugersbir Civic Institute contains more recent material on matters geographical. It is not so far to the north that a visit would be out of the question.”

<sup>6</sup> This answer is designed to: (a) alert the PCs that a way overland exists, and (b) make it sound so awful that they would rather assist Twango and let him help them. It is important to set up all interactions with Twango and anyone else significant, so the PCs will do anything to have him transport them to Noval with him.

<sup>7</sup> Alert players that time in a well-stocked library equals free ability points, not just Pedantry but also in Magic, Appraisal, Engineering, Physician, Stewardship – indeed anything that can be researched.



**GM Note:** Adjust these responses to be less educated and personal for any other employees of whom the question is asked. If Twango is asked, he will also reveal that he plans to travel to Noval<sup>8</sup> in about a month and might be able to come to an agreement to take them along with him – if they will do a few jobs for him in the meantime.

## 2.2) An Interview with Master Twango

Weamish conducts them to the **Study**. Twango arrives shortly. He is a formal in manner and attire, yet in truth has as little conscience as an erb. For more details refer to the separate GMCs' list. Twango has been waiting for suitable 'adventurers' in order to engage them as his employees in a series of ventures. He cannot use locals as none of his neighbors trust him, and he wishes his activities to remain completely secret. His intention in this interview is to use leverage to impel the PCs into his service. He also wants to know what their skills are, and will flatter them (see below). Mechanically this evokes opportunities for Resistance to Avarice and Arrogance if such helps you cement your PCs into working for Twango. Ideally the PCs will mention their wishing to travel to the south, and he will offer to help.

### The Kinds of Questions Twango asks:

"What are your names and professions?"

"What brings you to these parts?"

"How is it that you travel so ill-prepared?"

"Are you intending to stay in this area or to move on?"

"Tell me something of your previous exploits."

"How interested are you in lucrative temporary employ?"

### Examples of Flattery:

"Yes, it is clear that you are persons both of boldness and of physical prowess. How I wish that the local folk were of anything approaching your caliber."

"I am amazed and enthused that persons of your obvious resourcefulness and ingenuity are available for hire. Your inconvenience is my advantage. Certainly I may have to consider offering my maximum rates of remuneration to secure your assistance."

### The Offer of Work

⊕ *"My father spent his life locating the scattered fragments of a relic that was broken during the Cutz Wars. I have recently*

*deciphered his notebooks and now am aware of the locations of the remaining segments. In one month I am to journey to Noval to meet with a conclave of lesser wizards. Should I have access to the whole of this relic for even a few hours before that conclave it will be to my enormous benefit and influence. Thus it is to all our enormous good fortunes that our paths have coincided at this time. Clearly the goddess of fate has brought us together<sup>9</sup>. I wish to hire you to collect these pieces, and although I cannot accompany you I have several magical assistances that I can provide."*

### The Kinds of Answers Twango gives:

"In around one month hence I hope to journey by means of magic to the city of Noval, hard on the northern coast of the southern continent. At some effort I could include yourselves within this magical transportation as reward for good service. From Noval it is surely possible to travel overland to your homes, although the journey would take some weeks. Does this interest you?"

"Duration? Your employment will end automatically at the moment I depart for Noval. Should you have done your utmost to fulfil my requests and yet failed, then I will still take you with me if that is what you wish."

"Four parts remain of the item in question."  
(Five' if incorporating the 'Day of the Quelo'.)

"Most locals are averse to aid me due to ingrained prejudice against my father, who was a most unpleasant individual. Those condescending to my employ unfortunately lack the competencies I require."

"My business? I am a man of independent means since my father bequeathed this manse to me. I pride myself in the collection and sale of antiquities and curios. I am currently engaged in various magical studies, which I am confident, will serve me well."

"My studies are complex. Furthermore I keep them secret for fear that rivals may steal my advances. Thus, such information is not imparted, not even to trusted retainers. I allow myself the conceit that my experiments with vat-creation are coming along most favorably."

"I am prepared to offer a payment rate to staff both loyal and competent in a range between 20 and 45 terces per week, dependent on your competencies, plus full board and any reasonable expenses. On successful completion of any particularly challenging task I shall impart bonuses. Additionally it is highly likely that you will have access to

<sup>8</sup> You can use the official DERPG world map as a visual aid; equating it with PC's general geographical knowledge.

<sup>9</sup> Should any players question the nature of this coincidence, remind that that this is a DERPG session. Coincidence and peculiar circumstance are virtual pre-requisites of the genre.



significant treasures and forgotten items of historical value or magical potency during the course of pursuing these missions. Providing obtaining such does not jeopardize the mission, you are at liberty to keep whatever you find. I will purchase anything you don't want." (NB: *With board this is a good wage for a freeloading scallywag – make sure Players know this. If asked, Twango will elaborate with hints as to the locations they will be asked to visit. This should be sufficient to call for Resist Avarice rolls in order to have the PCs commit themselves at once.*)

(Ψ PERSUASION) Every possibility exists that the PCs will nonetheless wish to bargain Twango upwards, therefore the range suggested above is 5t less in each case than the example scale given later. GM adjusts all as necessary.

### Evaluating Found Items

Twango is able to, and will expect to, use his father's magical laboratories to identify any items that the PCs recover, and to evaluate them using his reference works. He will also expect the standard one-third value as fee for this. If the PCs do not discuss variations of this with him he will not bring the subject up at this stage.

"I hail from Tugersbir to the north. I was educated in the Institute in that town, where I excelled in business. I also learned a little magical lore from my father."

"I know a number of academic spells, and have access to more. Alas I am no master magician like my father, but I am competent enough."

"I require driver, guard, a personal agent, and porters<sup>10</sup>. Though your roles in my employ may not be so formalized much of the time, it is important for me to assess your competencies before awarding the base rates of pay. I insist that these rigorous standards of assessment be adhered to. Without structure and delineation the systemic function is profoundly impaired.<sup>11</sup>"

"Principally the driver will drive the carriage or a cart when you are away from my property."

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<sup>10</sup> Adjust his requirements to suit the skills and number of the PCs. More than one guard is possible if two PCs are clearly martially inclined, or this position can be ignored if none are, etc. If nobody can drive the cart/coach might be magically propelled. Since he is employing a disparate group of vagabonds to go and fetch treasure, one might wonder why he is so formalized in his choice of roles. From his perspective it is a simple way of seeing how good they are, and also to impress upon them that he is an exacting employer who means what he says and does things by the book.

<sup>11</sup> Twango wants not only to assess them, but also to present a coherent appearance of being a proper employer.

"The guards must be alert for the safety of myself and their companions when away from the house. Fortunately, apart from the occasional footpad, during daylight the roads and byways are largely safe in these parts."

"My Personal Agent will lead the team, organize and inspire the rest of you. Not for us the hazards of leadership by committee! They must also be my mouthpiece in dealings with others on my behalf, and so must evidence an even temper and diplomatic skills<sup>12</sup>."

"Porters will perform whatever menial tasks are required, as well as support their companions of higher rank."

"Rest assured I shall neither ask you to work beyond the limits of your endurance, nor throw yourself into certain danger from persons, beasts or upholders of the law. And all tasks will be within the limits of reasonable behavior as I perceive it. However, I am wishing to engage employees, not partners, and am not in the habit of consulting with my servants on the exact details of my business plans."

### Making the Decision

Anyone is likely to know that magicians distrust each other, and the chances of Twango and Iucounu being friends is negligible. Thus the PCs might decide to come clean to some degree. Twango will be realistically sympathetic if they do, and may offer some small magical aid in their righteous quest for vengeance:

*"We are now associates in a venture, and the Law of Equipoise compels me to offer you some small aid as a token of my appreciation. Though of course I shall pass it over at the end of your employment in thanks, rather than inappropriately early, which would make a mockery of the balance of things."*

The GM may also point out that arriving back in the southern continent with riches and magical items can only enhance their goal of revenge. This is something that the PCs will be drawn to in support of their goal. As described in the earlier notes for Advanced Cugel-Level play, acting in this regard may accrue PCs a number of the IPs that are awarded for goal-advancement. (Not many since agreement is not the same as actually doing something.

Nonetheless, make sure the Players know that any PC evidencing real interest or enthusiasm with the idea of amassing riches and treasures through working temporarily for Twango is lining up for IPs – even if you award one on the spot as well.)

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<sup>12</sup> If no PC qualifies as the Personal Agent, Twango will reluctantly promote Weamish, who has been campaigning for the position. He may be the GMC that accompanies the PCs in any case. After the PCs have gained more experience, one of them will be promoted.





### THE SET-UP:

Whether or not Twango is actually going to Noval is irrelevant. **The PCs will not be accompanying him at the end of this scenario.** This interview is a set-up, to cement their desire to serve him as employees. Should the PCs hide their goal to return south from Twango, he will mention his forthcoming journey 'in passing'.

'What a coincidence' you might think. Not really; Iucounu and Twango are associates, and Twango recently sent word to Iucounu saying that he was once again ready to send a bunch of expendable rogues after the pieces of Fenzark. Yes, the PCs are the second such band. (Weamish and Bilberd believe the first group departed happily at the end of their employment. Yelleg and Malser were not yet working at Flutic.)

It should be established soon that Twango's assistance is their only likely way to return safely and quickly across the ocean. IE a working holiday of a month may save a hazardous journey of many months via Cil and the Mountains of Magnatz. Twango himself will happily allow them time to go into Saskervoy to ascertain that what he is saying is true. (See Saskervoy notes further on.)



### Basic Training

If the PCs in your campaign are uniformly poor at Magic this needs to be addressed. Not everyone needs to wish to be a magician, but a certain degree of magical proficiency is essential for ACL play (and for Turjan-Level play). That is to say PCs require a reasonable Magic rating even if just to repel the spells of others later on down the line. More importantly for this series, various magical items require the expenditure of a Magic pool point in order to work. Thus, as part of the reward package, Twango will offer a basic three-day course in 'primary magic' to all who want it. (Adjust timings to allow this to fit in.) This should occur after the 'Quelo' if you run that scenario as part of all this.

Twango, as established, is not powerful with magic, nonetheless, he likes to think he is. In any case, the rudiments of Magic are relatively easy to teach and learn, and he has at least a few points in the Rating. He is motivated by wishing them to succeed, though he will phrase it more as a reward, and as a requirement for his employees to have certain basic competencies. PCs do have a choice, and if they decide to undergo the training will need to expend IPs. (In my games PCs cannot use IPs to improve things like Magic and Craftsmanship without actually undergoing some kind of training.) Describe the arduous training – endless recitations, forcing of small cantraps into one's brain etc. And at the end of each day have everyone make a single roll. Assume PCs are too tired to do anything else, and proceed directly to the end of the three days. According to the success levels of rolls allow PCs to raise their Magic rating up to 3 (or by 1 if it is 3 or more already) - with the objective that they have at least 10 points of rating between them, and someone has at least 3 points. Nobody will learn any spells, but (using the information in *Cugel's Compendium*, the *Demons of the Dying Earth* book, or the free article at the Violet Cusps page) lucky rollers may learn a cantrap or two.

### 2.3) Knowing Your Place

Twango will first interview the PCs to hear why they believe they are suitable for any particular position (or positions). He will interview everyone individually first, and will then wish to see evidence of professional skills. To this end he will ask the PCs to attempt various tasks to prove their claims before he assigns jobs and sets rate of pay. More than one PC can apply for any position, and they may be contesting against each other in the hopes of achieving the higher paid positions. The PCs may add Persuasion attempts into this by performing very well at the original interview. Overcoming his Rebuff gains his agreement to give them a go at a particular test. Adjust his Rebuff with boons or penalties according to how congruently or skillfully the PC presents themselves. *Note that it is also possible to convince Twango to give you a special position, as the would-be magician of the play-test party attempted to do. Had he not been so unlucky with his rolls, he would have been granted the highly-paid position of 'under-magician', which he so badly sought. The optional rules available on the Violet Cusps page for Dabblers made this a hysterical incident that wasn't even written in the original version of this scenario. This was another reminder that it pays to encourage Player improvisation and cater for the unexpected as much as possible within the broadest confines of the adventure plot.*





### Choosing the Driver

Hopeful Drivers may have to guide the carriage quickly up and down the drive, and may never have had to control a pair of high-stepping perchers before. Twango will arrange for various unexpected difficulties (such as Gark and Gookin leaping out and spooking the horses). If anyone attempts this and is not a good driver, then much possibility for amusement and damage to person and property ensues. Note that Twango doesn't care if they are not experts, but will look disappointed and act condescending in the face of obvious failures. In this example and various others we do not include standard statistics for average beasts and their difficulties. Refer to the *DE Compendium* or simply invent as best suits. Likewise elaborate the encounter with utmost vigor.

### Choosing the Guards

Those who claim martial prowess will be asked to describe some of the situations they have faced. Players/PCs should be misled into thinking that this is the test, and perhaps encouraged to stand up making rapier thrusts and acting out ( $\Psi$  PERSUASION, IMPOSTURE) the roles of both combatants. In the face of good performances Twango will appear both impressed and entertained. Only at the end of the various presentations will he reveal which PCs he has selected for the real test, and what the real test is. Over recent weeks various beasts have been roaming the area around Flutic at night, trying to get into the house. The manse's defenses have deterred them, but their trespass is intolerable and Twango wishes an example made of them – by having their flayed carcasses displayed on trees at the edge of his property. He reveals that the real test as to who deserves a guard's position will take place in the coming evening: *"You must illustrate your martial prowess by leading all of my new retainers in an effective action to slaughter at least two, or preferably three, of these creatures and then bring back their corpses for me to hang out as warnings to the rest of them."* If any PCs who are not candidates for these positions think of good reasons why they can't aid this attempt, Twango will listen to them, but only superb excuses will be taken seriously. Twango is used to listening to dumb excuses, and will easily divert any excuse he can, presuming the PC in question to be talking amusing nonsense. (He has a bonus on his Rebuff because of this familiarity, but this is annulled if any Player invents a Cugelesquely complex and – at least vaguely – plausible excuse.)

### Choosing the Personal Agent

The person hoping to become Personal Agent will have the most complex test to complete (which is also the first real duty of their employment). Candidates to become the Personal Agent will be told:

*"I wish you to deal with a local hermit who has taken up residence on a section of the beach within my domain. He vexes me by visiting this house and calling out abuse as I try to work. In truth he is quite mad, and I feel sorry for him and don't wish to injure him. He is so stubborn that I have been unable to convince or bribe him to leave. You will take it in turn to attempt to convince him to permanently relocate. I do not imagine any of you will succeed, so will judge performance for its own merit. However, should one of you by some miracle succeed before another has their turn I will devise another test or award the position ad hoc."*

Twango himself tells them that he will accompany them in disguise, since the old man knows him and may well become enraged by the sight of him. Twango may reveal further information in response to direct questions:

- You may offer up to 2000t. He has so far refused this
- I don't wish to elaborate on the nature of his particular difficulties with me. The man is somewhat deranged, and more than usually malicious. Take with a grain of salt anything that he professes to be true.
- He has magical abilities but they are more in the nature of an annoyance. He does not have the capability to cause anyone serious or lasting harm.
- He has been here for the last four or five months.
- I would prefer it that he did not suffer any physical harm, and yet I am starting to consider that this might be the only way to convince him to remove himself from here.
- I do not know how he protects himself from anthropophages during the hours of darkness.
- He presumably eats native roots and berries, and drinks water from the stream.

### Dealing with the Hermit

This crazy old man is Old Master Twango, though so much changed from his previous self that nobody who knew him recognizes him (not that anyone much sees him anymore). All the old staff except Bilberd are gone, and Bilberd wants to keep his job, so he will never (under any normal circumstances) say to anyone that he can confirm the truth of what the hermit is saying. Old Twango injured himself (mind and body) in a magical experiment, and was thought to be dead for several days, during which time young Twango made himself the new master. When old Twango revived unexpectedly he was half-mad, and much-changed, and wandered off into the woods. On his return three weeks later Twango the younger refused to recognize the crazed derelict as his father, though he retains some



minimal familial empathy for the old man. (And hence is reluctant to merely have him beaten with sticks until he runs away.) Young Twango will, under any regular circumstances, deny that the man is really his father, and perhaps has even convinced himself that this is true.

When the PCs confront him, they will find a drooling old man dressed in tattered rags of what might once have been a magician's robes. Young Twango (disguised as an old man in a hooded cloak) and Weamish will hold back, as if they are both mere retainers. Old Twango claims to be 'King of Saskervoy', and that his throne has been taken by a usurper from the peasantry. He makes stabbing motions with a stick as if fighting them off. When he learns what the PCs want, he'll assume they are "spies, sent by the usurper", and threaten them with 'Evisceration' or 'Forlorn Encystment at a depth of 45 miles beneath the Earth'. He can no longer reliably cast spells, and amusing spell failures (as in the above-mentioned free article on Dabblers) will commence. He will be tearfully disappointed with this, clearly recalling long ago times when his magical efforts conjured impressive results.

During questioning the old man may well reveal the following. That his usurper is his bastard son, that foreign devils threaten him each night and that he spends his whole night knee deep in the surf in order to escape their attention. He also reveals that he has nowhere else to go, and only wishes to spend his last weeks here in his country where he was once king. (And in any case the sun may die at any moment, so what is the point of trying to start anew anywhere else?) On top of all this, he has no use for money, since nature's abundance provides all he needs.

Possible solutions (ideally he will live to become a later plot-device, though the PCs may think that he has died):

- Beat the old man with sticks until he promises to go away and not come back (after congruently convincing young Twango that this is the only viable solution; otherwise a crude beating will not evidence diplomatic prowess)
- Physically secure the old man and take him into Saskervoy and put him to work at some menial task
- Convince the old man that the Law of Equipoise says what goes up must come down. Therefore since he was once king he must now take a menial job for the new master of these lands and behave in a loyal and courteous manner to his betters. (Then convince young Twango to give him a job as under-gardener or something similar.)
- Convince him that they believe him, and that they are here to erect a better home for a man of his stature. Then help him to build a wonderful wooden house out of driftwood and fallen branches, secure in the knowledge that if you convince him that it is magically protected from

half-men that he'll certainly be slain during his first night. (Or so PCs will assume, since no body will ever be found, even if the hut's torn apart & blood spattered everywhere).

**GM Notes:** *Certain of these ideas attract negative sympathy points. These are only examples; leave it to the PCs to actually suggest their own. If Young Twango becomes enraged with the old man's obfuscations at any point he may disrupt everything by flying into a rage and shouting abuse at the old man. Finally, as an aside, how they treat the old man here may very much define how this particular adventure pack ends, so keep a careful note of what they do, and allow this episode to be memorable, without letting the Players suspect that you are giving it any emphasis. Should he not be gotten rid of, the old man will come up to the house the next day and shout abuse through the windows. Whenever they try to drive him off, the PCs realize he does still have some magic, as he is able to avoid detection, and to cast diversionary illusions of himself anywhere.*

### Rewards and Opportunities

All of the tests should be expanded as much as possible into amusing incidents requiring multiple opportunities for role-playing, decisions and rolls. In the table below the success rolls are guidelines rather than being set in stone. Note that Porters will be those PCs who show the least degree of skill. Note also that although a 'poor' result might still result in employment, Twango will show his dissatisfaction at clumsy performance by shaking his head in disappointment and making conciliatory remarks. ("Never mind. Skills improve with time and dedication." etc) Again this is a situation ripe for expansion and role-playing. Quick-thinking PCs can use Persuasions to try and convince Twango that their failure was due to some freak incident and get a second chance. (Twango will not test drivers with his best cart, so even its destruction would not be a disaster.)





## A Contractual Arrangement

As noted in *Turjan's Tome*, adventurous PCs in DERPG are not necessarily the tight-knit parties of other gaming systems. Yet, even so, for an adventure to have any hope of succeeding, the PCs must agree to support each other when the going gets tough. General things include: if one PC is looting treasure and another is attacked by a deodand, then the looting is delayed without question whilst assistance is rendered against the deodand. Such sounds simple, but was not necessarily automatically the case at regular Cugel-Level. At some point, either here at Flutic or perhaps earlier at Shanglestone Strand, the PCs may wish to make other contractual arrangements about rewards for assistance, saving a person's life etc. If they haven't thought of this by now, have Twango suggest it.

## WEEKLY PAYMENT AWARD

Performance	Porter	Driver	Guard	Agent
Excellent (IS)	35t	40t	45t	50t
Good (PS)	30t	35t	40t	20t
Adequate (HBS)	25t	30t	35t	40t
Poor (EF)	20t	25t	30t	35t

## 2.4) The Rest of the Day

In some instances PCs may have demonstrated their professional skills and had their rate of pay set, but much might hinge on whom will become a guard and who will not. First of all Twango will watch the efforts of would be drivers. After that he will take the candidates to become his agent down to the beach. No matter what the result he will find this trying and retire to his rooms afterwards, promising that: *"I will return in time for an early dinner, after which we shall view your cunning plans for dispensing with the half-man menace."*

As a courtesy before he retires Twango will ask Weamish to escort them around the grounds of Flutic (see map). Probably the PCs will see Yelleg and Malser diving in the large pond and ask their own questions. If they don't, Weamish will explain further anyway. In an offhand way Twango has already mentioned to Weamish his permission for the PCs to also dive for scales if they so wish during their spare time. (However, this is a difficult duty, so he has no real expectations or wishes for the PCs in this regard. In game terms it is included merely as an amusing example of 'weird customs' and as an interesting aside for those who have read the books and know what project is going on here.) During the rest of the day the guard candidates have to plan impressive actions (or impressive-seeming actions)

against the intruders for the coming evening, and organize the rest of the PCs into a team, and drill them in their roles. Ideally the others PCs will support them at least to some degree, but they don't have to. (Although devising ambush activities against half-men could be a good role-playing experience.) The PCs have the resources of the house and outbuildings to aid them. Pits might be dug and camouflaged, stakes set into concealed trenches, nooses hidden beneath foliage, suits or armor borrowed. Encourage wild imaginations.

## Diving for Scales

*Adapted from TDE:*

"Already Yelleg and Malser are at work. Hunching and shuddering to the chill, they dive from a platform into the slime. Pulling themselves as deep as possible by means of weights and ropes, they grope for scales; and at last emerge panting and gasping and dripping black ooze."

*The following is written as if explained by Weamish:*

"Only a few weeks ago Master Twango learned from studying the family journals the reason his father transported Flutic to this point. Twango the elder believed that this very mire contained the remains of a certain Sadlark, an Overworld entity that fell to Earth during the Cutz Wars and became separated into many scales. Yelleg and Malser were hired to sift the mire for evidence of such, and indeed have already begun to recover various scales. Twango is presently seeking a buyer for this valuable entity, which he hopes to collect in its entirety." *None of Twango's employees know any more. Twango himself keeps custody of the scales in one of his workshops.*

## Mechanics

It is extremely unlikely that any PCs will recover scales, nor are they supposed to. This is merely a minor part of this scenario, though the PCs may initially suspect otherwise. To recover a scale a PC must reach the center of the lake, make an IS/PS with Athletics (to Swim down), make an IS with Perception and an IS with Athletics to find a scale, then succeed with Athletics to swim safely back up with the scale. On an HBS or EF swimming back up the scale will be dropped, though the PC will surface successfully (though spluttering and beginning to drown if they've rolled EF). Should someone begin to drown Yelleg or Malser will rescue them. Notice that in the stories Cugel never dived for scales. Diving for scales is a genuinely hazardous skill that requires much training and patience.

## Rewards

From 3-20 terces for each scale depending on the quality. At the moment these tasks are very much secondary to Twango's wish to animate Fenzark.



## 2.5) The Evening

The main item on the menu of events tonight is of course the would-be guards proving themselves against the arrival of various man-beasts. As in many cases throughout this adventure series we do not include details on incidental creatures. Most DERPG materials describe examples of Dying Earth creatures, even the basic rulebook has typical examples. Of course we recommend purchasing the fine *Dying Earth Compendium* and using its copiously detailed contents to enhance this and any other adventure series. Nonetheless, in the case of single instances an imaginative DERPG GM can simply invent a creature to suit the proficiencies of the PCs and the desired danger-level of the encounter.

Though presented as a mere aside, it is intended that this little episode constitute an exciting part of this adventure. The guards should have taken weapons (and possibly armor) from the displays in Flutic, and will be expected to be outside the house the whole time with their supporters. In fact Twango will insist upon this, though possibly may be swayed by superb argument if they talk about taking refuge in the house, or regrouping etc. If they are smart the PCs will have created an external defensive position for themselves, and not be relying on Weamish, or Twango to let them into the house swiftly. Basically the GM throws as many anthropophages against the PCs as necessary for rousing good fun. These may be stealthy or overt, or a mixture. Likewise, they may be the savage and crafty ghouls described in *Demons of the Dying Earth*, or they may be lumpish and senile erbs who have wandered onto Twango's grounds by mistake. Or you could be particularly fiendish and have an array of creatures wandering the property, causing all manner of terror and chaos across that Twango will afterwards refer to with amazement and wonder as 'the Night of Horrors'. (If so he will most definitely award brave service with large cash bonuses, and will – if necessary – have access to a range of artifacts that possess magical healing properties, including the vat in his basement.)

## 2.6) The Next Day

### Twango Reveals His Plan

Being favorably impressed by their exploits the previous day (or dealing manfully with his disappointment), Twango reveals the outline of his plans to them, and calls them early into the parlor for an employee address.

Although presented mostly as a continuous stream of dialogue, pause for PC questions as necessary:

*"Is the name 'Fenzark' known to you?"*

*"Then for a moment I must digress. During the Cutz Wars of the Eighteenth Aeon, the demon Underherd interfered with the Overworld, and various champions descended to set matters aright. They were not uniformly successful, and the wars ended in something of a draw for the magicians on the opposing sides. Or more accurately, a mutual failure since almost all of these mighty wizards were slain some by their opponents' champions, and some by the very entities they summoned to assist themselves."*

(Twango shakes his head in regret at the passing of such.)

Twango asks them to follow him, and leads them into his workroom, which he unlocks. After leading them inside [Workroom 1] he pulls aside a cloth over a statue one and a half-feet tall that stands on a workbench. It is a repulsive creature with many ropy filaments.

*"Note this miniature here on this table."*

*"This is a representation of Fenzark, one of the lesser Overworld champions. In his defeat he was disparated into large segments which over the following centuries were scattered about this region. It was my father's life's work tracking them down without allowing it to be obvious that he was doing so. One who owns all pieces of Fenzark may reconstruct him, and will then have access to the energies and gratitude of a potent being. Long ago the lesser magicians of this region fought over ownership of these parts, but no single one of them was able to possess all simultaneously. In these latter days few magicians of note remain and none, other than my father, any longer recall even the name of Fenzark. You have arrived at a fortuitous time, and I shall send you to collect the remaining parts on my behalf, thus further allaying any suspicions that might be engendered should I personally travel about collecting these curios. None of the few powerful magicians remaining in this region will ever suspect that such potent items would be sought and collected by mere hirelings. This is where I shall thwart them, as a magician their junior, I shall outwit them through cunning and strategy, and their very arrogance will defeat them. You may consider my precautions to be exacting, but I have found that circumspection is a potent watchword when dealing with the machinations and ambitions of wizards."*

Twango then moves across to the corner and pulls back a drape. Inside an alcove stands an incomplete statue, the legs and lower torso of the same ugly ropish humanoid. However, this is presumably the real thing, since the ropes seem almost slimy and alive, and occasional dull sparks of magical force can be seen moving along various of the larger filaments.



**Answers that Twango might give at this point:**

(Again in most cases do not feed this information to PCs. Twango will reveal it only in response to questions.)

*"It was not feasible for the expeditions to begin much sooner than this moment. I finally deciphered my father's notebooks only a few months ago, not to mention that my vat-experiments require continual supervision and will not be completed for another twenty days or more. Also, to be completely transparent, I have been too nervous to go and collect them. I am an academic, not a man of adventure."*

*"Sadly I am unable to accompany you for any significant length of time, as my vat experiments require frequent attention, and if they fail in their final days nearly two years' of my work will be lost."*

*"My ambitions? When Fenzark is completed I shall use the binding formula of my father's devising to impel this entity to loan me his magical essence so that I can master a number of spells that have so far eluded me. Also I believe I have the right to insist that he teach me various rudiments of the strange abstract lore 'Mathematics', which is at the base of all magical formulae. Then I shall be truly a magician. At this point I shall happily permit Fenzark to depart to his Overworld home, and hopefully his gratitude for my arrangement of his release will lead to mutually beneficial future interactions. I have no wish to evoke his enmity."*

*"As a magician I shall continue with my researches into the arts of magic. I have a number of specific goals, including the mastery of vat-creation, and the exploration of the dream realms. When I am potent enough I may apply for membership in this region's only conclave of true magicians – the Five-Fold Three. Though no doubt it may have to be renamed to accommodate my addition."*

*"The Five-Fold Three are the only true magicians of this region. They are Klasti the Confusing, Valmouny the Inspid, and Perfluous the Profound. All three have habits both peculiar and offensive, but none are overtly cruel or ruthless and of the three only Valmouny chooses to interact with the common folk with any regularity. He does so in his role as this region's magistrate<sup>13</sup>."*

*"The Overworld? It is a realm contiguous with our own, yet also a realm apart in terms of its resonant structure. Some say that it is also connected to the land of dreams. Nonetheless, it is a dimension that today's sages are no longer competent to define. All I know for certain is that greater and lesser daihak dwell there in some semblance of splendor, beings that come in various forms, including those who wear skeins of crystalline force for bodies."*

*"The Cutz Wars? Once again, little is known, save that mighty mages such as Simbilis the Sixteenth fought others such as the Great Phandaal for control of the various continents, and that in those days Cutz was a land in primacy. Both sides summoned forth daihak both demonic and beatific, but in the end non-prospered and though Simbilis alone is rumored to have survived even his realm was fractured and the majority of his followers destroyed."*

*"Yes I am absolutely certain that no other sages or magicians are searching for Fenzark's missing parts. Even I had no knowledge of Fenzark or that this was my father's work until I inherited his estate. I firmly believe that except for those of us here none these days even know of Fenzark's existence<sup>14</sup>."*

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<sup>13</sup> These three magicians are described in Steve Durrant's article in the first issue of the XPS magazine. Should any of your players claim familiarity with this article, remind them that they can assume without even bothering to ask that any previously published material used in this work will have been adapted. Therefore once again anything they remember – or choose to research between sessions – cannot be assumed to be accurate (except it is reasonable to assume that their essence of character remains to some degree). They are not important to this adventure series; merely local color.

<sup>14</sup> PCs may thus suspect that if they don't take the job that Twango will need to have them silenced. This might be a useful cattle-prod to assist their decision-making. Emphasize Twango's good nature, but dedication to the pursuit of his goals. He clearly wants them to assist him, and is willing to pay well for their help.





### Fenzark's Central Node

This is an optional complication to be built in. As GM you can decide whether or not to engineer that they find it earlier, if they did not look for it themselves. Their ownership of this device is considered in the optional finales to this piece, so you might read those before deciding. Twango is unaware even of the existence of this central node. The fact that the PCs discovered this central node at the diggings on their arrival in the Saskervoy Reach is one of those literary coincidences, and if you use this option it should be played for maximum game amusement as the PCs realize the item's importance.

### Assistance is At Hand

After reading through this Saskervoy adventure series you will no doubt notice that various of the exploits could be jeopardous to the unprepared and foolishly optimistic. If your PCs are hardened to the trail, skilled at arms and routinely hire muscular and brave retainers then perhaps no additional help is required. Otherwise there are two main modes to prepare them for the trials ahead. First of all is the 'magical assistance' option. Twango has in his possession a number of minor magical devices (all charged – none permanent) that he will loan out to assist the missions. *NB: If you are running the Quelo adventure, he will not loan anything until they have proved themselves by exchanging the Quelo for the first part of Fenzark. If the Quelo is not included in this series, he will simply have to trust them.* Only one such device is described here (see below). GMs may wish to devise other things, such as tablets that make anything edible, spears that hit their target at the cost of a Magic pool point, cloaks that grant boons to Concealment, bootlaces that add a bonus to Stealth rolls – whatever you feel appropriate to enhance the PCs without it all feeling to much like a wagonload of 'stuff' that broadcasts dangers to come.

### Voynod's Defensive Circlet

When inactive this device is a circlet of ivory slivers that may be worn upon the head but can just as likely be kept in a deep pocket or pouch. On uttering the command word and expending one point from your Magic pool it forms a circular barrier with a 20ft radius around the holder. This barrier is made of frictionless upright bars of dull metal of an ivory tint, and they are several inches wide, with gaps of only a few inches between each one and form razor sharp spears at their tips. They project into the ground and pass beneath the protected area so cannot be dug beneath. They are 20ft high and bend inwards and outwards alternately at the top 3ft, so even a creature that can jump 20ft can find no purchase other than the savage

spikes. This protection vanishes when the counter-command is uttered or exactly one hour after dawn light strikes it. It can only be used 1x/day, and Twango believes it to be a permanent item. In fact it is charged, and has exactly as many uses as the GM deems useful.

### Other Tasks for the Day

After the PCs finish negotiating with Twango he instructs them to come up with some kind of cover story for who they are and why they are going to Tugersbir. Twango insists that the story involves at least one of them being a travelling historian (or something very similar), as such will be a necessary part of their cover also in Tugersbir. (A consideration he won't elaborate on at this time.) This specific fabrication is also logical that in they are temporarily staying with him - since he is the most knowledgeable person in this area on the curiosities of by-gone ages. He tells them that a good story is essential, so as to be able to answer any incidental questions that will no doubt be put to them when booking and whilst on the voyage, and that each person must be convincing in their role, so they should choose appropriately. (And none of the roles should be too prepossessing – IE purporting to be an important mage from the south would be something bound to attract undue attention and hard to prove to boot.) Otherwise he explains that exact details are not important, only the believability of what they decide.

He tells them that in the morning they must go into town and purchase good quality basic travelling gear and equipment. He expects them to buy such simple things as clothes, packs, rope, woodaxes, traps, etc, out of the week's advance in wages which he will give them. If they want these expenses paid they will have to Persuade him that these costs should not come out of their wages. (He considers that since these are supportive but not intrinsic to the mission, and will directly benefit the PCs, that they should pay for them themselves, since he will be paying for many other purchases.)

Whilst they are in town he will also ask them to visit the offices of Soldinck and Mercantides to book for themselves passage on the next ship to Tugersbir. (For the voyage he hands over to his 'agent' an amount of terces equaling 50 each for the first two PCs and 30 each for those remaining. This amount is not negotiable, except in response to exceptional Persuasions, though how they spend and proportion it is up to them.)



**Quelo:** If the Quelo adventure is to be incorporated into this mini-campaign the next vessel is departing for Tugersbir in five days. This should allow ample time to take the Quelo to Lupshank and be back at Flutic in time to spend at least a day at research.

**NO Quelo:** As above, save for the fact that the next boat for Tugersbir departs in the morning three days hence. (Both options give them two days to spend in research or in and around Saskervoy before departing for Tugersbir.)

### Soldinck and Mercantides

The cost for a first-class cabin (three-share) to Tugersbir is 50t per person; for a large hammock in the crew quarters it is 35t per person; for a tiny hammock squashed in the bilges is 20t per person. All can be made available, and food during the voyage is of suitable quality for the fee paid. Twango gives the PCs 50t per person to pay for the trip, expecting them to go first class. He will explain that he will meet them in Tugersbir on the return leg of their trip, so they don't need to worry about the cost of the return voyage. (He will not explain any further details about their mission at this point.) Consequently it's up to the PCs what they pay (Ψ RESIST ARROGANCE, RESIST AVARICE), and any ruses they try etc (Ψ IMPOSTURE, PERSUASION).

Basically two austere men, one of sprightly middle age (Soldinck) and one a crusty oldster (Mercantides), are wealthy merchants, but not so wealthy that they don't need to work to keep their income at the level they like. They will charge the standard prices for passage unless the PCs can come up with some story as to why they should be transported cheaply (if they convince him they are some kind of religious deputation or sages of repute or perhaps experienced wormingers). NB: This is a good example of when the scenario does not even try to cover all the available options, but only outlines the encounter. The GM will need to expand this fully in order to make negotiations with Mercantides as interesting in terms of role-playing and genuine Saskervoy character as possible.

The shipping agents, if asked, will confirm that no vessels have traveled to the southern continent now for more than a year, and the last three that tried before that are yet to return. No vessels, crew, or captains will brave such a trip until the region's three magicians confirm that the threat is over. Though these magicians are competent and relatively well-meaning (one of them serves as the region's high magistrate) they are also

“strange in their ways”, and any solution or confirmation of safety could be years in arriving. The voyage north usually takes two days, with a stopover in the bay next to Olb to drop-off and collect goods. Departure is always an hour after dawn.

*Should you be incorporating the Day of the Quelo adventure into this mini-campaign, consult the adaptation appendix (App T) before running this encounter with Mercantides, as he needs to be at least vaguely likeable. In such a situation Mercantides will be sympathetic if they push for some exception to the rule that says no vessels travel south. But all he can offer is a voyage to Cil and then further east down the coast, which in itself only gets them closer to their goal, and still leaves many hundreds of miles of dangerous terrain before they would reach Ascolais and Almerly. He asks why they don't stay here: what can be so remarkable about the south that it is worth risking certain death over? (If you are not incorporating the Quelo adventure make Mercantides as irritating and obnoxious as you like.) Also remember if you are running the Quelo, that Lupshank owns the mid-torso and thus Twango's words in the introduction to the next section may need to be adjusted/created to incorporate this.*

## 2.7) A Day Off

This time before they depart on the Galante for Tugersbir is really just an opportunity for them to explore Saskervoy if they want (and if your players enjoy such aspects of role-playing). If you like, you can invent reasons for longer gaps between some of the chapters so that the PCs can spend serious time in Saskervoy and cultivate relationships, friendships and generally get to know the place as a significant DE location.

⊕ *‘The road to Saskervoy passes through a dank forest of thamber oak, yew, mernache and goblin-tree. Wan red sunlight sifts through the foliage; and the shadows, by some trick of perception, seem to be stained dark blue.’*

*(It takes nearly an hour and a half to walk from Flutic to the edge of Saskervoy, and around an hour to drive in a carriage.)*

The PCs will have two evenings to go to the inns, get rolling drunk, attempt to engage in rampant couching, question locals, do some fishing, try and make friends/contacts. Incidental dangers/contests may occur: a tavern brawl where farmers take a dislike to ‘fox-faced foreigners’ propositioning local women, travelling back to Flutic late in the evening could cause various problems (drunken Driving attracts penalties; half-men may be skulking...). Being arrested for public nuisance or petty-theft might result in Twango needing to buy off their sentences, which would come out of their pay.





## Performing Research (Pedantry or ability researched)

**Researcher:** anyone with 0-2 Pedantry either cannot read or cannot read well (levy of 2 for research); persons with 3-6 Pedantry can read reasonably well but are not accustomed to proper research (levy of 1); only someone with 7 or more points is a competent researcher (no levy).

### Other Adjustments:

Average personal library at a manse (levy of -1)

Well-stocked personal library/poor town library (no +/-)

Well-stocked town library/poor city library (boon of +1)

Well-stocked city library (bonus of +1)

*GM assesses this state per the specific subject matter under research*

### Research Period (per ability-use):

If the library is well-ordered the period is 3 hours.

If it is fairly haphazard the period is 6 hours.

If it is a nightmare of disorganization the period is 9 hours.

### Result for Research

DF: Researcher damages library material and may be ejected from the premises if unlucky

QF: Only the most general and obvious information is found, if anything

EF: One small point of relevance.

HBS: One somewhat significant point of relevance.

PS: Two significant facts (or 1 majorly important fact)

IS: Three significant facts (or 1 significant and 1 major)

### Result for Self-Education

DF: Researcher damages library material (as above)

QF/EF: No benefit

HBS: Researcher gains a boon of 1 to next research roll sequence on the same topic in this same establishment

PS: As HBS except gains a bonus of 1 to first three rolls

IS: Gains half an IP, which may only be used to increase the skill being researched. (Or can choose one's specialty)

*GM keeps track and decides max no. of IP available per topic*

**The Five-Fold Three:** In Saskervoy, or in other places the PCs may wish to inquire about the Five-Fold Three, possibly hoping that other magicians than Twango might be able to help them return to the south. They will learn from anyone they ask that “these magicians are not uniformly dependable”, and hear such things as “the last person who appealed to them for aid was mistakenly turned into a hat”, and “some years ago another traveler asked for assistance returning south, and the Five-Fold Three called a special conclave to assist him. He was last seen hurtling across the sky – in three pieces. All of the magicians involved were most apologetic.”

Twango also confirms that they can try diving for scales if they like, and may use the library providing they are very careful with the contents and don't try to open any of the locked cabinets. Twango has research to do and will be inside his study all day. He leaves strict instructions not to be disturbed for anything less than dire emergency, as any interruption breaks his concentration and thus denies him the full impetus of the work. See the Flutic Appendix for full manse details.

## Tomes of Mighty Magic

At the Violet Cusps page is a free article on the problems Dabblers experience when learning spells for the first time. After reading this series prior to running the adventures within, the GM should decide where the PCs will find their first magical tome (containing the various highly unperfected spells listed in that article). Since the Castle Naldriz adventure is the most hazardous, it is not recommended that they find such a tome prior to this. However, otherwise Twango's library is an ideal place, since his own mastery of Magic is rather poor. (He has assumed from his constant failures that he is the one at fault, not knowing that his father left these bogus tomes to annoy his son and any other thieves.) The library in the Barbican at Castle Naldriz is another possibility, as is the opportunity to steal such a tome from the Tugersbir Institute. (Since at the Institute again decoy tomes are left out for thieves.) The point being that if the PCs have not yet begun to learn actual spells it is now time to start them off (here at the beginning of this series). Only later will they find out that they were initially working with bogus tomes and move on to learn actual spells.





## Chapter 3: Collecting Fenzark's Left Arm

### 3.1) Preparing for Departure

Because the *Galante* is to depart one hour after dawn and the drive to *Saskervoy* takes less than an hour, *Weamish* will awaken them an hour before dawn for a fine breakfast. All their gear will have been packed and cleaned (or suitably slightly roughened for believability in their new roles). The gear will not include rations since food will be provided on the *Galante*, though experienced PCs might ask for rations in any case. (Nothing like hard-tack is available here, but sandwiches etc could be made up quite easily.) They will be allowed nearly a full hour to wash, dress and eat, after which there will be a brief meeting with *Twango*, and then *Weamish* will drive them quickly to the *Saskervoy* docks. (All of this has been purposefully designed to give them the least amount of time to pose awkward questions. *Twango* is of the firm opinion that his hirelings need only know that information directly pertinent to the task directly before them. Under no circumstances will he deliver any further information about future collections required.)

#### The Briefing in *Twango's* Study:

⊕ “The mission you are about to undertake involves the collection of the Fenzark's left arm. For reasons of secrecy I will reveal to you the details only at the moment that you need to know them. Shortly you will voyage to *Tugersbir* aboard the *Galante* and in that town you will visit my associate *Oxolan* at the Institute. *Oxolan* believes you to be a party of Historians and has information on a certain ancient location, wherein I know that Fenzark's arm is to be found. This location is one where I confidently expect much treasure to also be located. Thus I advise you to kit yourselves out fully in *Tugersbir* – as historians and archeologists. For these purposes I provide the amount of 300 terces.”

(The reason *Twango* won't pass on any details of the location, and has gone to such great lengths to hide these, is exactly as he has stated. He doesn't want his hirelings to know where they are going until they absolutely have to. He can indeed be bargained up from 300t to 400t if Persuasions are well-worded and rolled.)

⊕ “I have decided that we need to have a senior porter on the mission, someone responsible for the security of the baggage and keeping an inventory whilst you travel.

Which amongst you believes they are suited to this role and the accompanying rise in pay?”

PCs may argue amongst themselves for the pay-rise of 5t per week. It is not the amount necessarily, but the prestige that is most likely to be the impelling factor. Anyone who tried for a better position than porter and failed will need to Resist Arrogance not to try to claim this promotion. If more than one person does so, they will need to contest Persuasions against each other. Remember that one option in Persuasion contests that encourages good role-playing is applying a levy of 1 to any attempts that do not include at least a nod towards Vancian dialogue or to some kind of amusing and/or convoluted claim for precedence. Likewise a boon or straight bonus of 1 for a good attempt at Vancian-speak. If nobody claims the role, *Twango* will appoint the toughest looking PC that is currently a porter.

⊕ “Congratulations on your promotion. There is one small additional duty that you also need to undertake as part of this. My trusted associate *Gookin* here...”

[*Gookin* appears from wherever he has been lurking, and *Twango* takes out a large and sturdy padded backpack from a nearby cupboard or chest.]

⊕ “...will be accompanying you in order to oversee my interests. I believe that my terms have been more than generous, in allowing you to collect whatever spoils that you may recover along the way. However, it is only human nature to face distractions away from the course of one's true path, and *Gookin* here will report directly to me on the nature of individual performance. I understand this might be galling, since no doubt you are all persons of the highest integrity and competence, and therefore I offer a bonus of 150 terces to each and every person who performs their duties with adequate zeal. I also offer a further bonus of between 100 and 300 terces to anyone who acts above and beyond the call of duty to make certain that the segment of Fenzark is obtained and returned to *Tugersbir* without delay. It goes without saying that I expect you to embrace *Gookin* as a brother within your fellowship, and protect his person as if it were your own.”

Pause for *Gookin* to look self-confidently oily and repulsive, and for any discussion before *Twango's* final words:



⊕ “I shall myself arrive in Tugersbir in six days. Under ideal circumstances that is when you too will return, however I shall wait as necessary, and shall take rooms at the Saskervoy Arms, which is where you will look for me. Do not under any circumstances ever allow segments of Fenzark to be visible. Use packing cases, barrels, or even just sacking tied around them.”

Twango will be happy to provide general advice on travelling in the region, but will refer more specific inquiries to his contact in Tugersbir, which of course will need to be made in their new disguised personas. Just before they depart Twango will reverentially present his agent with a small and solid box, which is specially designed to hold three minims of **Explosive**

**Diambroid** (see free article on DE Weaponry – available at the Violet Cusps page). He presents this to them reverentially with a brief explanation as to its uses and dangers. (PCs should gain every impression that this material is exceedingly rare and potent.)

Time is of the essence since the Galante is due to depart, and they must hop into the carriage and be delivered by Weamish to the Saskervoy Docks, where they will arrive just as the last boarding call is being made. If question over his apparent magical ability to transport himself (and them) to Noval in only a few weeks, and his inability to transport them to this more local goal, Twango will say regretfully that various magical impediments exist. Not the least of which is that the magicians of the Noval conclave have set up a resonance point for spells to home-in on, even if the casters have never been there before.

### Gookin

This little homunculoid is included for various reasons: Firstly it is here to keep them on track, being the watchman on behalf of Twango; Secondly it is designed to be a pain the backside and a spur for them to press on, threatening them with deductions to their pay or bonuses if they perform in a lackluster way (the GM must play it as a vocal and irritating GMC, though of course a PC may befriend/pacify it by use of clever Persuasion); Finally, it is a foil to pit the PCs against. They will need to convince it that any delays are necessary, pacify its fears, and pander to its ego. It is also entirely permissible that they can arrange for its ‘accidental’ death, but such a harsh act for no good reason would reduce in a major loss of sympathy points.

## 3.2) The Voyage

### The Galante

⊕ “The vessel is generously proportioned and floats in a buoyant and upright manner. The careful joinery and the lavish use of ornamental detail implies an equal concern for luxury and comfort below-decks. A single mast supports a yard-arm to which is attached a sail of dark blue silk. From a swan's-neck stanchion at the bow swings an iron lantern; another even more massive lantern hangs from a pedestal on the quarter-deck. A pair of ungainly outboard walkways, or sponsons, run the length of the hull, both port and starboard, only inches above the waterline. Alongside each of these is an enormous tubular creature, seven to nine feet in diameter and almost as long as the Galante itself. Other details are hard to make out as they are mostly submerged. Each creature has a tender, scrambling about its body with various brushes and probes.”

### Shipboard Persons:

Captain Baunt  
Slempe (ship's doctor)  
Drofo (chief worminger)  
Sparvin (boatswain)  
Tilitz (underboatswain/deckhand)  
Kinnoide (carpenter/deckhand)  
Angshott (cook)  
Wagmund (underworminger)  
Lankwiler (underworminger)  
Bunderwal (supercargo/deckhand)  
Bork (chief steward)  
Claudio (understeward/deckhand)  
Vilip (understeward/deckhand)  
Doctor Lucre Tefas (portly passenger: a merchant)  
Stamp (Tefas' weasel-like, and hard-pressed assistant)  
Codniks (deckboy)

*Due to worms being the main mode of propulsion the crew manifest is small, raising sails is an emergency measure only*

Ratings for many of these GMCs, plus a description of the game mechanics of ‘worming’ are to be found in the free download article – the ‘Guide to Saskervoy’ at:

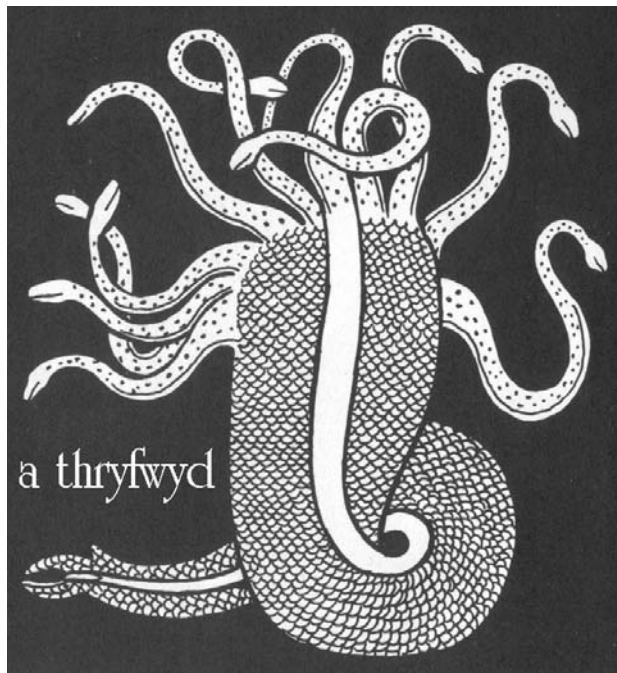
[www.dyingearth.com/violetcusps.htm](http://www.dyingearth.com/violetcusps.htm)

Note that in Chapter 6 the PCs may have need of an experienced and reliable Saskervoy criminal, so the GM might be advised to make one of the junior crewmembers a sympathetic and friendly character. If this person is also very much a likeable rogue (like themselves), they will hopefully remember him later (or can be reminded of him). Such things add to a sense of continuity in a series.



Baunt is keen for the off, and will berate the passengers (PCs) for being late. Nonetheless they are not really late and the berations lack luster. First of all the PCs will need to stow their goods. Vilip and Claudio are assigned to help with this task. Describe berths in a fitting manner: the salubriousness of better accommodations, and the repulsiveness of the lesser bunks.

⊕ The ship at once gets underway, and – drawn by the strongly undulating worms, drives powerfully out of the natural harbor and into the Ocean of Sighs, pulling out to a mile or so offshore as it heads inevitably north.



## Saskervoy to Olb

The weather stays calm all day, and the PCs are free to undertake any actions they wish. However, apart from watching the coastline, chatting to crewmembers (who spend most of the time mending sails and cleaning the deck when not performing their regular duties), and watching seabirds, the day is uneventful. The cargo is one of dried fish, huge wooden containers of cabbages, bundles of manufactured fabric, and a large number of barrels of export Tatterblass – bound for Tugersbir. In the early evening the *Galante* reaches the town of Olb, which is situated on a rise alongside a wide sandy bay. Various of the bales of fabric, and three barrels of Tatterblass are loaded onto a huge raft that is poled out from Olb, and payment is made by the headman of Olb. Baunt invites the PCs to dinner in the small stateroom, along with himself, Tefas, Slempe and Drofo. The Captain explains that they never go ashore at Olb, due

to the uniform nefariousness of its residents (see XPS 7/8). The men will swap tall tales of the sea (one of which will include the tale of a huge and merciless thryfwyd ripping a ship apart) and ask the PCs for tales of adventure. Wine will be freely flowing and a PC will be considered highly churlish if they don't come up with at least one amusing/interesting anecdote. After dinner a hand of cards will be just the thing to allow people to wind down, with perhaps a friendly wager or two. (Tefas will retire early, claiming that he is a poor gambler.)

Any PC that sneaks around during the night might be challenged by the watch (typically Claudio, Vilip, Tilitz or Codniks) – unless the PC is very stealthy. During the night (whilst Codniks dozes inside the longboat) there will be a brief cry of alarm, suddenly silenced. Only an awake PC would hear this, but any check after this reveals no problem with any of the passengers or crew, though a PC member of any search party will find a strip of fresh and damp seaweed hanging down inside one of the gunwales. (Feel free to move this event forward if the card game goes on until the wee small hours, and a PC then steps outside to take the air.)

During the early hours, before anyone is awake, a number of codorfin scramble onboard by using the sponsons and ladders. The worms thrash in alarm and this may alert the watchman; however, the watchman will be the only definite fatality of this incident.

## Typical Codorfin

Codorfins are, in appearance, like a mating of shark and deodand, with long thick bodies and pointed heads with their jaws close to the snout. Their arms and legs are short and muscular, with great webbed toes at the back, and webbed and clawed hands at the front.

*Ferocity 7, Dodge 9, Health 8, Athletics 6.*

The nature of this attack is an uncoordinated attempt to attack and kill the PCs. Although codorfin talk in odd voices this is a strange language of their own, so their purpose will never be consciously revealed. Their tactics are also greatly impeded by the fact that they can only remain active in the air for a few minutes, so although quite a number of them attack in waves, after only a few rounds each individual retires to the sea, jumping over the edge of the ship. Only the PCs will be aware that they are targeted, spotting that the codorfin call to their fellows whenever a PC is spotted, and then disdain all distractions in an attempt to reach them. Should you require ship plans, the free adventure 'High Road to Kaiin' (available at Violet Cusps) has a good example.



The GM needs to bring help if a PC is about to be slain, though should not make it obvious that this is what is occurring. At least one PC should find themselves in a desperate struggle for survival at some point. After some rounds every able-bodied person on board will have grabbed a rapier or club and be attacking codorfin. Except for Tefas who barricades himself into his cabin.

This attack is never explained and the crew has rarely heard of things like this happening so close to land. Nobody will suspect that the attack was focussed on the PCs, believing rather that codorfin are as mindless as deodands. The loss of life (watchman and anyone else who is slain spectacularly just for the sake of atmosphere) will be sadly mourned, with burials at sea. The GM is at liberty to have all the wormingers slain (or terribly injured) thus meaning that there is no choice but for one or two PCs to take over their roles just for the day. (At Tugersbir temporary wormingers can be hired, and the folk of Olb are not to be trusted except in very formally worded pre-arranged mercantile arrangements.) This will of course net them a refund for their voyage (plus a bonus if they manage Persuasion against Baunt).

*Should you want to suggest democracy, Baunt will put the names of all potential temporary wormingers into a hat and then draw out two names. In the game this will include various GMCs as well as the PCs. In reality the GM will choose only from amongst PCs. Whether Baunt cheated (suspecting that further codorfin attacks might slay his crewmen) will never likely be known.*

## Olb to Tugersbir

Since the vessel is midway to Tugersbir and the attack is thought totally random, Baunt insists the vessel presses on. This stage of the journey is uneventful, except that they are running late due to the attack and its aftermath of tending the injured. Dr Tefas stays in his cabin due to terror, and is continually fussed over by Stamp (who presumably fears the loss of his livelihood). If any PC is suspicious they may trick/persuade their way in to see Dr Tefas, who sits at a desk, muttering incoherently, but will manage some brief responses. The Galante does not reach Tugersbir harbor until after dusk has set in. Any nervous or suspicious PC on deck might hear another cry as the lights of Tugersbir are spotted ahead.

*Stamp was looking out across the ocean towards land when the creature that has replaced Tefas clubbed him on the head and he fell overboard. The sound of his hitting the ocean was disguised amidst the regular thrashings of the worms. The new Tefas then retired unseen to his cabin and will be as amazed as anyone if it is discovered that Stamp has vanished.*

## Local Information

**The Civic Librarium:** One piece of information is available to a PC researcher that deserves a reward for persistence and/or truly excellent rolling. Someone with research skill and dedication might find this reference in Inkadene's: 'Relict Religions of the Latter Days':

*'The peculiar beings of Lench in Northern Saskervoy worship a magical carved head, which they say belongs to Vlanzark the Overlord. It has pride of place in their temple, and only the most devout are allowed to approach it. Their legends say that one day Vlanzark's true followers – led by the legendary pilgrim Klandike the Loud – will return to claim the head and carry it away up to the Overworld, at which point the beings of Lench will receive the rewards for the devotion.'*

If they confront Twango at any point with this information before the actual chapter when they head off to Lench, he will deny any connection, except to say that perhaps it is the head of another Overworld being. (Later he will say he obfuscated for reasons of secrecy.) See also information that can be gained in Glubersbir - which the forward-thinking may decide to research here.

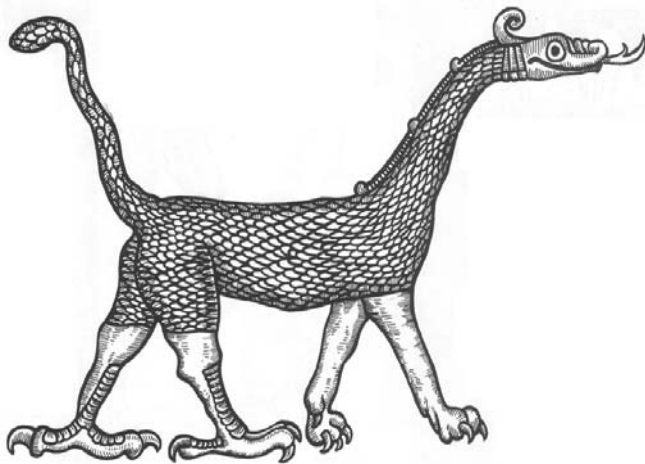
## Twango's Contact – Oxolan Breen:

Oxolan is a junior lecturer in magic at the Civic Institute, and is in fact a woman. Not only that but she is from Kaiin and has been in Tugersbir for only three years. Her association with Twango was through Old Twango originally, who got her this position at the Institute in return for certain considerations about which she does not wish to talk. She is not sure why Young Twango is now dealing with her, but has no interest in disturbing this particular 'cash mermelant'. Young Twango continues to pay her a useful retainer of 40t per week merely to report all the gossip she collects at the Institute. Her information for the PCs is only that as historians she's been told to mention that the ruined Castle Naldriz is by far the most intriguing ruin in these parts, and that they could do no better than visit it. Other than that, she will only say more if she deems them to be about to set off ill-prepared. Or the GM might expand this character if it is so desired. Though note that she also features in the next chapter.

**The Distance Ahead:** Glubersbir is one long day's march, therefore the PCs must spend the rest of the day here first (and the night), setting off very early the next morning. (They may also choose to spend one more day - if they can convince Gookin that they are engaging in preparations - and do further research etc)



**Safety on the Road:** The road to Glubersbir is reasonably well-traveled, but it is not as safe as the coast road. Travelers go in little convoys or armed bands. Some few risk it singly or in pairs, but occasionally such optimistic folk fall prey to half-men. If the PCs want to wait for four days a regular expedition will be going to Glubersbir with supplies. However, knowledgeable locals will say that many farms exist along the way, and tales of danger are greatly exaggerated between here and Glubersbir (though beyond Glubersbir the grasslands turn to tundra and the way indeed becomes hazardous).



### The Lanagil

The lanagil is a creature that appears to have originated from a crossbreeding of tonquil and lank-lizard. Somewhat larger and less trepidatious than the timid tonquil, they are also slower and less agile, all of which makes them far superior riding beasts, if only they weren't so rare.

*Attack (Ferocity) 10, Defense (Dodge) 12, Health 14, Magic (resistance only) 5, Athletics 10, Wherewithal 6*

**Safety off the Road:** The known dangerous creatures of this region are: bazil (rare) cockatrice<sup>15</sup> (mythical), deodands (uncommon), erb (uncommon), griffin (rare), grue (forests), laharq (rare), leucomorph (rare).

**Where is Tefas?** If they go looking for Dr Tefas, they will find that he too has vanished. Though they may trace him via the civic stables (if they are very clever) and find out that a person of his description (except thinner) hired a lanagil and headed out of town on the Glubersbir road. If they think to ask whether anything

unusual was associated with Tefas they will learn that all of the other beasts seemed nervous of him.

**The Fate of Stamp:** If they did not know already, they will at some point learn that Stamp is suspected of having fallen overboard towards the end of the voyage.

**Hiring Help:** Some PCs may be smart enough to think of hiring members of the Civic Yeomanry or hunters to assist them. Such is not possible in Tugersbir. Nobody will agree to go out into the wilds and if tricked with another tale will desert the PCs as soon as they realize the direction being headed. However, apparently in Glubersbir are hunters that are exceptionally brave. Tugersbir folk think that even they would balk at a trip to Naldriz, but then these Glubersbir folk are wild types, so you never know.

## 3.4) The Journey to the Castle

### Tugersbir to Glubersbir

The GM must expand this journey to suit the mood. Describe things like the more desolate scenery and the magnificent decayed roadway, that must once have been a thoroughfare suited to the troop columns of a vibrant Empire. (It is now so vastly decayed that one must often deviate from the road to avoid the large potholes.)

Gookin appreciates none of this and becomes nervous about being so far from civilization; taking it out in constant harping at the PC carrying him, and in a series of false alarms when he sees half-men lurking in nearby groves of trees or behind rocks. (Play the first of these as serious threats, as Gookin is convinced he has really seen a danger.) Space these out along the description of the journey, as around mid-afternoon Gookin will actually see something – a distant figure on top of a rise. A rider and mount, with the rider standing high in the stirrups, staring in their direction with a hand shielding his eyes to make his vision easier. Only the best rolling PC will also see this before the rider wheels his mount and trots swiftly out of sight.

Things of interest along the way include:

- From time to time along the road are fortified farmhouses built of solid stone, often set behind tall fences of sharpened stakes. Some are alongside the road, others on raised ground within a mile or so of the trail. All types are surrounded by smaller and larger fields of cultivated vegetables, and by grazing paddocks – wherein mermelant placidly graze. (*Mention of these farms is included solely as illustration, since no habitations exist across the tundra on the other side of Glubersbir.*)

<sup>15</sup> Local legend says that the only way to defend against this beast is to carry a silver mirror and raise it before the beast's gaze.





- Around the half-way point between the two settlements is the ruin of some large temple complex, which has been partly rebuilt by a community of farmers. They maintain a small inn within the refortified courtyard, and charge exorbitant prices for refreshment. It might be here that the PCs first hear a rumor that hunters spotted a cockatrice only ten miles from Glubersbir, as recently as last springtime.
- Only a mile south of Glubersbir the ancient roadway passes over the river on a tall bridge of obvious antique origin. Most of its sidewalls have fallen away, and several blocks from the floor have also vanished, giving an uncomfortable view of the rushing river below.
- Once across the bridge Glubersbir can be seen clearly behind impressive stone walls. Though crumbling with age these walls are still an impressive protection.

#### Φ SEE APPENDIX 'C': "GLUBERSBIR"

Though old roads go north and north-west these are rarely traveled any distance, and these gates are only opened at all because they give access to nearby fields and orchards in these directions. The north road leads (so tales say) to 'Menk' which was once a large town but is now merely a collection of deodand-infested ruins, with only a single peculiar tower remaining. The north-west road has been used more recently, going as it does to Castle Naldriz which only some centuries ago was the home of a magician (or in some tales a witch) by the name of Rengatha. This person's retainers would come to Glubersbir for supplies, so it is said, and these retainers were always half-men of some description (tales vary) – though by all accounts they behaved with civility when within the town precincts.

However, such things are now distant history, and nobody in living memory has returned from Castle Naldriz, and few have ever returned even in recent history. The only recent expedition to depart was composed of five foreign rascals who claimed to be monks on a pilgrimage and set off less than half a year past. Despite their optimism they did not return. For after all, though a well-mounted and speedy group could certainly cross the distance between Glubersbir and Castle Naldriz in a single span of daylight, it would be a close thing. And once they reach that ghost-haunted ruin what shelter do they expect to find? Fools!

The PCs, on hearing such stories, may themselves seek help in Glubersbir. Zaunt the Celestial is a sage and minor magician who lives in a huge domed building, the interior of which is a single main room inside the dome

of which is a continual vision of a starscape from aeons past. He has an extensive library and is quite an eccentric. He doesn't like to be disturbed, and rarely allows anyone to consult his works. If the PCs convince him to allow them access (using a believably noble tale) they may learn the following from his records (as opposed to the often-contradictory hearsay they might learn from the other townsfolk).

- Castle Naldriz is no more, having succumbed to the ravages of the centuries, leaving only a skeletal ruin; even the basements and crypts have collapsed
- Rengatha was a hermaphrodite, or possibly an archvult; either way he/she always caused a scandal with his/her true appearance, and thus never ventured forth from the Castle.
- Rengatha was a survivor from the Cutz Wars, a junior servant with some magic powers who somehow was missed in the ravages that killed all his/her superiors and colleagues. Over the following aeon he/she mastered sufficient magic from the last surviving records that he/she was able to raise the castle from the ruins of a previous outpost on that site, and began experimenting with such things as vat creatures. Some say that within the ruins is still a vault of treasures from that bygone age, including spoils from the Cutz Wars.
- All the details on Fenzark that are known at the Civic Institute (should they be so bold as to make such inquiries of someone they don't know)

**Getting Some Help** – Glubersbir hunters are indeed bolder than the folk of Tugersbir, but are not suicidal. None will accompany unprotected adventurers across the tundra, but if the Ivory Circlet is demonstrated with confident nonchalance half a dozen swarthy types will offer their services for exorbitant pay. Wise PCs will bank their pay in Glubersbir with the condition that only a surviving PC can release it to them. The wise GMCs will not depart until they see this money banked in full, and hear the inclusion of a clause allowing them payment if the PCs are killed by half-men. The GM may use such folk as expendable plot devices in the trials that follow, even inventing extra dangers to illustrate the hazards of the trail. Invent names and basic personalities too. Well-detailed GMCs evoke a greater feeling of fear at their demise, than virtually faceless retainers, especially if the deaths are graphic and unexpected. The PCs may also think to hire a cart for transportation of spoils. This is quite permissible and possible, though the





survival of cart and draft animal is not guaranteed. (A small file of packbeasts is even less likely to survive.)

**Nocturnal Attack** – During the night the PCs spend in Glubersbir, a half-man will make predations on their accommodation. If nobody awakens it will rifle their belongings before Gookin wakes up and calls the alarm – perhaps just before the creature is about to murder one of the PCs. (Thus making it harder for a PC with any conscience to kill Gookin later.) They will ideally repulse this attack rather than all being killed in their beds. (This half-man will not properly be seen if possible, but is the replacement Tefas. Note that Tefas needs to survive, so if necessary may have recruited a couple of deodands to be sacrificial lambs – if the PCs mount a spirited defense.) Shortly after the attack a townsman will be killed and partially devoured despite Glubersbir's adequate defenses. No half-man has slain anyone inside the walls within living memory. The PCs will be detained by the watch and questioned by the town magistrates - and will need to Persuade their way out of trouble. If they fail, then later in the day hunters will find tracks of the creature that replaced Dr Tefas. Once the PCs have convinced the local magistrate that they have no knowledge of this beast they will be released and asked to leave town forthwith. (Again this event should be expanded and role-played to the full.)

### The Replacement Dr Tefas

A magical White Codorfin. It has been magically bound to investigate what the PCs are up to and, if the opportunity arises, do away with them. Its spells (see below) are optional depending on the abilities of the PCs. Though it will not revert back to being a Codorfin for many days, it does as a human become slowly thinner and more shark-like (pointed head and chin, sharp teeth) as time passes, and less and less resembles Dr Tefas.

*Strength 14 (razor-tipped spear), Dodge 16, Health 15, Magic (Demonic) 10, Athletics 11, Tracking 7, Wherewithal 12.*

### Some of its Spells (\*already activated):

Charm of Brachial Fortitude (DERPG, p105)  
Charm of Untiring Nourishment (DERPG, p106)\*  
The Curse of Unwitting Merriment (IT, p87)  
The First Retrotropic (IT, p90)  
Lugwiler's Resilient Overskin (IT, p113)  
Shabat's Resolute Seeker (IT, p103)\*

## Glubersbir to Castle Naldriz

The journey across the increasingly barren tundra to Castle Naldriz is not an eventful one (unless the GM wishes to add extra material). However, various odd things will occur along the way. (i) The mysterious rider that was following them will be spotted at least three times. (ii) The distant disturbing cry of hungry laharq is heard. (iii) A trio of moss-covered life-like and life-size human statues are seen standing next to the trail and staring in surprise to the west – obviously they have been here for years if not decades [NB: a spell such as the First Retrotropic will end the effect, which was caused by the gaze of a cockatrice. The travelers will then flee back to Glubersbir at best speed]. (iv) The distant sighting of a man stepping across the sky, passing quickly from east to west. (v) The road is disrupted by a rough excavation a half-mile across, which must be passed through. This has clearly been here for centuries, and the trail goes around the inside of it. At its center is a wide irregular pool of black water. If any locals are with the PCs, they will reveal the name of this landmark: "Fenzark's Lake". (vi) Gookin becomes extremely disturbed and continues being spooked by imaginary dangers and muttering nervously and incomprehensibly. Fenzark's Lake in particular terrifies the heck out of him. (vii) In the late afternoon the range of hills becomes more distinct, and on the first of them can be made out the outer shell of some kind of castle complex. (Seen to be somewhat ruined as they approach closer.)

## 3.5) Castle Naldriz

It is most likely that the PCs will stop a mile or three from the ruins and erect their magical protection. If they have used it before, then the GM might decide that this is the very time when it will fail (after a few minutes of woeful and disappointing sputtering), forcing them to spend the night in the ruins of the outer keep. (Nowhere else in the locality is properly defensible, though no doubt they could find a heap of rocks or some other woefully adequate bulwark and spend the night fending off slaving deodands if that's what they'd like.) If they have not used the item before, then it seems unfair to make it fail the first time. In this case they will no doubt watch the ruins from some distance and observe the strange lights, disembodied shrieks, and worryingly large fluttering dark shapes that battle each other without uttering a single cry. After all, perhaps



they'll be stuck here for more than one day, and the barrier fails the next night instead!

### **The Castle from a distance**

⊕ 'Castle Naldriz stands on an isolated crag, a mile or so south of a range of rocky hills. It appears to be an impressive structure, with the walls of the outer keep being something like 40ft high and the walls of the main castle around half as high again. Four turrets and a fortified gatehouse defend the outer keep; six turrets and a larger blockhouse defend the inner keep. A thin plume of smoke rises raggedly from somewhere within.'

### **The Castle from Close-Up**

⊕ 'The thin plume of smoke has now ceased. From this distance you can also see that the castle's stonework is in a pronounced state of disrepair. It does not seem that this would help anyone other than skilled mountaineers however, as the damage to the outer keep's walls seems to be mostly cosmetic. Nonetheless, since the doors of the gatehouse stand open, probably this is not a problem worth the worry. The outer keep faces onto a small rocky plateau on the edge of the crag, which itself is reached by a steep roadway now littered with the debris of numerous small rockfalls. The inner keep is bounded on all sides by perpendicular cliff-faces.'

**GM Note:** The following does not include reminders to evoke an atmosphere of lurking danger, isolation, silence, and unimaginable age. Nonetheless, do so throughout. Again, expand role-playing opportunities, such as by asking what precautions the PCs are taking, calling for rolls even when climbing the unstable roadway to the plateau if PCs do not state that they are moving with caution...

### **Pedantry: Dealing with Ghosts**

DF: "I cannot think, on account of extreme fear."

QF: "Who knows the ways of the undead? Who makes such claims to comprehend the vagaries of the 'other side'. I am no Diabolist, no Necrophage. How dare you even impugn such tendencies upon my good person!"

EF: "As best I recall, ghosts and shades fear sunlight."

HBS: "Possibly sunlight even destroys them instantly?"

PS: "Yes, that's right, and light in general causes them pain and discomfort..."

IS: "...Although it is not a universal deterrent against the most powerful specimens."

### **Pedantry: The Capabilities of Ghosts**

DF: "I cannot think, on account of extreme fear."

QF: "They are merely disembodied entities. If we gather our wherewithal no doubt we shall be invulnerable to their influences..."

EF: "...Although I confess that my absolute knowledge in such areas is a trifle lacking."

HBS: "Perhaps we should take some security measures? Flaming brands, roping ourselves together, and the like?"

PS: "Mayhaps an old marching song with a rousing chorus might drive away our fears..."

IS: "Since ghosts and shades are drawn to human fear and doubt, and repelled by confidence and optimism."

**Timing:** Keep track of time, as it is highly likely that the PCs will fail to properly explore this ruin in a single span of daylight. Thus even if their magical protection works on the first night, it may fail as they try to activate it at dusk on their second night in this area.

## **Φ SEE CASTLE MAPS – APPENDICES D1 & D2**

### **A Night in the Outer Keep**

Should this be an option, the GM should invent a number of strange ghosts to harangue the PCs during the night, none of which will be both intelligible and sane. Some might be merely scary shadows, others vague stalking demonic beings. None should actually seriously harm the PCs, but make this memorable.

### **Identifying Magical Treasures**

Various suggestions are made as to the PCs finding magical items. Since they are adventurers and not magicians they may not be able to identify these items or work out how to use them. Various options exist:

- Anyone with Magical training can use their Magic rating to attempt to 'comprehend' the item. This involves sitting and holding/touching the object in question for several minutes and using a particular cantrap of 'revelation'. An EF tells you what it does in general terms; an HBS is slightly more specific; a PS is more specific still and lets you know whether it is charged or permanent; an IS is precise and clear, and tells you how many charges. Only a number of attempts are possible equal to your Magic rating in the same day, and only one attempt on the same item per day is possible. Those with Magic rating of 3 or less are at a penalty of 2, and those with Magic 7 or less are at a penalty of 1. (Single roll only for each attempt.)
- A session in a magician's workshop is necessary and the item must be coated with (or dunked into) quantities of rare and expensive magical fluids.

### **Exploring the Outer Keep**

**A) The Gatehouse** – "This formerly impressive edifice is now in sad repair. All of its wooden floors have collapsed leaving heaps of stone and wooden debris within. The huge ironbound outer doors stand open to the elements, as to the inner doors; both sets have rotted and begun to collapse. High above the stone ceiling is beset by several



large holes, where the blocks have come loose and plummeted to the floor below.’

*PCs could climb up the walls inside to the high-up doorways that lead onto the walls, but the upper walls of the castle are all in terrible repair, and traversing the tops of them would require numerous rolls for Athletics. Only the walls between F&G and H&I are whole and relatively stable along the whole of their tops.*

Once someone looks inside:

⊕ ‘The interior of the outer keep was once lined with stone and wooden buildings around the walls, with the main area clear, possibly for a parade ground or somesuch. With no exception the interior buildings are stunted shells, some showing signs of having burned down long ago, others merely having collapsed upon themselves over time. All four turrets accessible from here are missing doors.’

**B) Turret** – The stone stair to the roof has largely collapsed, as has the floor of this turret. Long ago a small earth collapse has left a twenty foot deep hole filled with brackish water and rocky debris. (If it amuses the GM, poisonous water snakes live in here.)

**C) Turret** – Approaching this turret reveals that a bad smell emanates from here. Anyone peering inside will find the bloating, rotted, and pestilent corpse of a large and furred humanoid (a ghou-bear). The floor of the upper room has rotted away and the stone ceiling has collapsed (one stone of which fell recently, killing the ghou-bear).

**D) Turret** – The base of this turret is littered with windblown debris. The stone stairs still ascend to a wooden floor above – blocked at the top by a trapdoor. If the trapdoor is pushed open a dozen humanoid mannequins dressed in ragged remains of some kind of uniform and each clutching a rapier climb down and go into the courtyard where each assumes a fencing stance. (These are practice dummies, and how they behave from now on is up to the GM. A sufficiently Persuasive PC might even recruit them as his own private army.)

**E) Turret** – The only decent option for making a place of security. The stone stairs lead up to the rotten floor above. (The room cannot be accessed there, because the floor will collapse when walked upon. A stone trap is still in place, sealing the roof shut.) The one problem with this turret is the fact that three deodands are in here, sleeping off a big meal. (They have blocked the door with a rough hanging made from a sewn-together collection of adventurers’ coats.) They will be most annoyed should someone open the door and disturb their repose.

**F) The Blockhouse** – ‘Unlike the gatehouse, this building appears to be in reasonable repair, including the huge ironbound doors that are firmly closed.’ Anyone

examining the building more closely will find that the doors are fused closed. Some kind of magical explosion imploded the interior into a maelstrom of heaped debris. One would require diambroid to get the doors open, and even then the interior is an impassable mass of treacherous shifting debris. Roof is open to the sky.

**OK-1)** Here in the lee of the blockhouse is where the thin plume of smoke originated. Several persons (Ψ TRACKING = deodands) have collected as much dry wood as they could find and held a macabre barbecue. Still scattered in the area are the shoes and scraps of clothing of two human travelers. The sturdy wooden spit over the fire still evidences the remains of blackened ropes that were used to secure some bulky meat-animal for roasting.

**OK-2)** Obscured amidst the edge of this large pile of debris (that at some point past fell when the upper floor of the blockhouse collapsed) is the (well-preserved, and therefore perhaps recent?) statue of a magician, poised as if lunging back in surprise. If the PCs have some way of re-animating this cockatrice victim he is ‘Palfridge the Encyclopaedist’, who was turned to stone by a cockatrice at this point (three years ago). He will prove a useful ally as he has a few spells, and an annoying companion as he never shuts up, and is full of stories about his bold adventures, though in fact he is somewhat addled after his time of petrification.

**OK-3)** A heavy iron-grating covers this stone-lined shaft. Do not over-emphasize this grating or the shaft beneath, since it is the only easy way into the Inner Keep. (*Note that Gookin is just small enough to be squeezed through the gaps in the grating, but do not mention this unless a PC asks.*) This is also the place from which the ghosts emerge at night, and it will save the PCs a lot of time if one of them is bold or smart enough to check where the ghosts come from. To travel this way, one must clean away the dirt and embedded stones around the edges of the grating (a very tough job – or else someone else would have done this long ago), climb down 60ft to the water level below (where one finds that the remaining water is only 2ft deep), duckwalk the slightly more than 250ft to the north through the five-foot high tunnel, climb the 70ft to the iron grating within the Inner Keep and somehow (explosive diambroid anyone?) force it open.

(NB: Some yards south of the entry shaft the water tunnel is blocked by a rockfall; the tunnel turns north-west a few yards after the shaft beneath the inner keep, and shortly ends at a solid stone plug through which five one-foot diameter channels have been bored.)

☛ SEE APP’DIX ‘E’: “CRITICAL FOUND ITEMS”



## Exploring the Inner Keep

This whole area has seen far better days. All of the interior buildings are in ruins, and a number of pits have fallen open across the ground. In short, the area is like a building site that was grossly overstocked and then struck by a combined earthquake and mini-hurricane. (Those of imaginative mind might suspect that much of this might be attributable to magical attack.) All of the pits descend into the former basements, but all of these have collapsed. All are filled with scraggly bushes, fallen blocks and various piles of masonry from the ceilings above, plus rotten wooden spars, so exploration is hazardous. The persistent can find short sections of corridor, but these go only a little way before being blocked by debris. (The extremely persistent might be able to find a crawlway through to the bottom of one of the spiral stairs inside the Barbican).

**IK-1) Ossip Bushes** – Note also that the bushes between F and G are Ossip bushes. Should a PC be both Perceptive and Knowledgeable see DERPG, p115.

**IK-2)** An enormous statue of a demon standing on a stone pedestal. This being is a full 20ft high and is nearer 30ft from wing-tip to wing-tip. An only partially-functioning guardian entity, it's eyes will glow red and it's head will turn as it watches the PCs move around the Inner Keep.

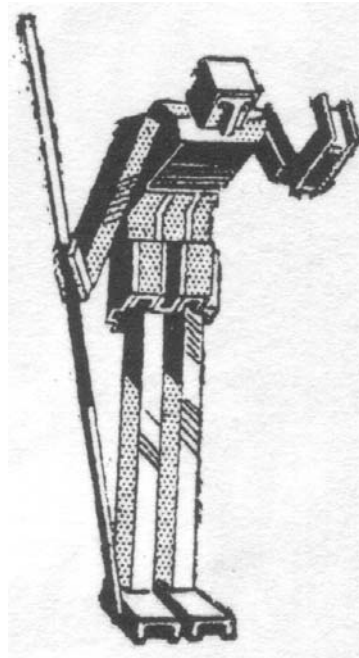
**IK-3)** At this point is a group of running humans, frozen in mid-stride, covered in dust and the muck of ages. Their clothing is ancient and they seem to be a mixture of sorcerers and commoners. Nothing the PCs can do interferes with them in any way; they are held by mighty magic that will wear off in many years to come.

**The Pits** - To examine any pit, a PC must safely ( $\Psi$  ATHLETICS - bonus of 1 with a rope) reach the bottom. A thorough search of any such area requires a single Athletics rolls to avoid injury. (We advise using the 'Enhanced Action' ruling, available free at: [www.dyingearth.com/violetcusps.htm](http://www.dyingearth.com/violetcusps.htm)) EF: PC slips and strains something (no mechanical loss); QF: PC takes the loss of 1 pt from their Health pool due to falling; DF: Loose debris gives way – PC takes an injury.

[Never of course merely say 'you take an injury'; always describe the unfortunate circumstances in detail.]

**G) Turret** - The lower room of this turret contains a trio of eight-foot tall automatons wielding huge iron rods. Fortunately only one of them is still functional, and even it is in severe need of an oiling. It speaks a foreign tongue with a mechanical whine, and if it has the opportunity to listen to the PCs talk for a while it will be able to speak their language. However, in the meantime it views them as

intruders and attacks. It appears formidable, but is slow – its joints grind and scrape with an awful noise as it moves. Upstairs in this turret is a mechanics office, including a trapdoor and hoist for hauling the automatons up for servicing. It is possible to Persuade this creature (once communication is established) that its duty is over and the people it was trying to protect are all dust long ago.



**H) Turret** – The upper floor has all burned away, though the stone stair is climbable. Since that event someone has cleared out the ground-floor room and made it into a mausoleum. In here is a plain dust-covered sarcophagus. The lid is too heavy to get off without a crowbar or a hoist or similar. Should the PCs get it off, inside is the mortal remains of a guard commander, still clutching his enchanted rapier. When the cover comes off this will leap out unaided to defend his body. (See 'Yimbolo's Dancing Blade' - 'TT', p107). After three attacks it falls inert and the next person to pick it up has gained a new toy that is enchanted with a version of the spell. (GM assigns details.)

**I) Turret** – This is filled with bones; well not literally filled with bones. Presumably someone stacked an awful lot of bodies in here at one point, since when the door is opened a small avalanche of human bones comes pouring out.

**J) Collapsed Turret** - PCs might imagine that since this turret is largely collapsed that they could climb into the Inner Keep here. If they are experienced and well-equipped mountaineers they might be able to, otherwise such an effort is tantamount to suicide due to the sheer cliff face and the debris inside the remains of the tower. The same is true of any other wall breaches.



**K) Turret** – Odd noises can be heard through the door to this turret: wheezes, clankings, none of them particularly loud. If the door is opened the PCs will see a machine in the middle of the floor – a peculiar thing of moving brass globes, pistons, and a central glass sphere that contains a flurry of multi-colored lights. It is clearly much more recent than anything else here; but its purpose may never be known. Should a PC step into the room they will receive an electrical discharge from the machine and lose 1 point from their Health pool. Should they manage to get within three feet of the machine another burst will stun them and cause an actual injury.

**L) Turret** – When it is approached this turret will be noticed to be crackling peculiarly, and with occasional flickers of energy trickling across its surface. It is still redolent with sorcery from the attack that breached this place, and if the door is opened the whole place will fall slowly in on itself with a great shower of sparks. Anyone nearby will need to lunge aside to avoid injury.

## The Barbican

**GM Notes:** If burly and avaricious retainers have accompanied the PCs then some of them must perish in the dangers of this place, even if you have to manufacture off-the-cuff traps to make this so. Again for reasons of space, flowery descriptions are lacking and the GM must intersperse their own with the descriptions that follow. Ideally you should also add in some additional items and curiosities within the rooms. Note that any rooms without windows are pitch black, and the PCs must use some light source if they are not to blunder around incompetently. (The sunken entry corridor is faintly illuminated from both ends.)

**a)** The main doors are closed but not locked. (They do however require great strength, or the use of levers to pull them open – in the old days they were opened and closed by means of chains hauled from inside.) Immediately inside is a bare entry chamber opening onto a long corridor moving back into the gloom. This corridor is sunken by three feet, and one must ascend and descend by stairs at each end. Within the walls are murder holes for defense. Slumped only twenty feet from the bottom of the stairs is a dried human corpse (adventurer) without a head (the head is some feet away). This corpse indicates the presence of a scything blade trap, activated by a pressure plate on the floor. Those passing low at this point have no reason to fear. Halfway along the passage the mummified legs of another such unfortunate project from a crack in the floor. This indicates the presence of a tipping-floor trap, the outlines of which are relatively easy to see, since

the wedged presence of this last victim has meant it cannot close as flush as it once did. [It is intended that only the endemically bereft of wit will fall prey to these traps.]

**GM Note:** When the PCs first approach the door with the hole cut through it, they will hear (as if from a considerable distance) the sounds of carousing voices, clanking tankards, and general good cheer. If someone sets foot upon the stairs this noise will abruptly cease forever.

**b)** The door to this room is made of massive oak, bound with iron. It would present a formidable barrier to their continuing save for one thing. At some point in the past someone has used magic to sear a perfectly circular hole (two foot wide) through the middle. The hole is slightly charred around the edges. The room within was once some kind of audience chamber and/or feasting room. A huge table runs across it, and at the center of the far side is a particularly impressive high-backed chair on which is slumped yet another adventurer's corpse. In front of it is a brass plate piled high with fresh fruit, cheeses and hunks of bread. The platter is a magical one that replenishes every dawn and is not cursed in any way. The chair is cursed however, and anyone sitting upon it must resist an ancient warding that exposes them to a burst of Gilgad's Galvanic Thrust (DERPG, p112). The walls are decorated with moldering tapestries showing various heraldic scenes.

**c)** The door is covered in yellow and blue fungus, and disintegrates if subjected to any force. The room within is in a likewise state, an undulating landscape of fungi atop of items which all disintegrate to nothing when touched.

**STURDY DOORS:** As easy as some games make it sound, destroying a fortified door in good repair takes considerable time and effort, and may even break weapons used for this purpose. Rarely could any door of this type ever be broken by a shoulder charge. If PCs try this sort of thing, start subtracting Health pool points on second and third attempts. Even an IS will only rock it on its hinges. Thus doors that are locked will need to have their locks picked, and failing this the PCs will need to use axes to attack the areas around the locks. Even relays take a long time before a door's lock is breached; however, it would take even longer to actually chop the door down.

**d)** This was once a guardroom. Benches, tables, bunks and footlockers (all rotten with age) show that the guard lived here. The small room beyond the corridor that gives access to the murder holes that overlook the sunken entry passage was once a weapons store. This is evidenced by racks and chests in which pole-arms and cutlasses are still stored. None are in particularly good condition, though perhaps two or three battle axes might be salvageable (especially if the PCs neglected to bring an axe along).



e) As 'd'. Except that in here are specialist weapons lockers, still closed and with a handful of items still within. GMs are advised to download the free article on exotic DERPG weaponry from the Violet Cusps page and go to town inventing a few things that the PCs can use. All of them are temporary as nobody these days can repair them or replace the new parts. Let the PCs accumulate a small arsenal as it will only last for an adventure or two and will add greatly to the exotic nature of this particular chapter.

f) Something shuffles and moans behind this door, perhaps even more than one thing. Should anyone be so foolish as to open the door, three guards officers of clearly ancient loyalties (all three are very obviously long-dead) shuffle out and attempt to slay all intruders with their cutlasses. (Two are rusted; one is actually in good condition. This is due to the fact that it is magical: it can strike and damage ghosts and the like.) Should you be so inclined a reference to 'Animated Corpses' (*Demons of the Dying Earth*, pp81/82) would not be inappropriate. This was once their room, and the remains of basic but good quality beds, desks and cupboards linger within.

g) A battle once took place here. Skeletons of humans and deodands, plus broken weapons and battered pieces of armor. These also choke the stairs, although clearly some irreverent soul has climbed the stairs and pushed or kicked the broken bodies aside.

**The Spiral Stairs** – There is no way into the basements, since the rooms and passages below are in a state of collapse or near-collapse. (Presumably they were partially supported through enchantments that have expired.) However, these go all the way to the roof. A stone trap blocks the top of each one, but can be lifted to access the roof. The first time a PC begins to climb either stair, call for Perception rolls. Sobbing may be heard from the upper levels. This should be a recurring theme – occasional calls for Perception to hear this sporadic sobbing.

h) This room was long ago subject to some kind of explosion. The walls are still coated with soot, and charred pieces of bone from mere chips to entire sections of skull and longer limb-bones) litter the room. All are brittle with age. Anyone with sufficient expertise taking the time to examine them might note that the bones are both human and deodand. The bottom of the spiral stair has been reduced to slag, and the stone floor around it also melted. It is still possible to ascend the stairs, providing one has some manner of assistance to gain purchase on the first fifteen feet.

i) These corridors are pitch black. At point [ i ] itself is the body of an adventurer impaled amidst a mass of thin metal spears that have thrust out of concealed holes in the walls.

These can be wriggled around (Ψ ATHLETICS, STEALTH), but there is no way of passing quickly through this area without taking damage. (Fortunately the mechanism has jammed with age.)

j) Locked. This room was some kind of office. The papers and ledgers are written in a foreign hand, and an odd numerical system.

k) Locked. Inside here are a number of cells containing human skeletons. They are also home to a number of oily black shadows that cause fear and drain health – as they whisper and creep. Mere torches do little more than slow them, but daylight (for instance from any door the PCs open in the corridor during pursuit) burns them away into nothing. (Not necessarily as easy as it sounds, since the PCs of course do not know what is behind any doors.)

l) Locked. Some kind of communal area, that once contained divans and potted plants. All sadly neglected and covered in dust and cobwebs. In one chair is a mummified human adventurer. Unlike the others he still has with him his goods. The items worth mentioning are: 40ft of rope, a set of lockpicks, a metal box of mold, a dagger, a rapier, and a purse containing 3 gold centurms and 43 terces.

m) A bedchamber for three. Now very much rotten and decayed. Beneath one bed is a small trunk containing a large brass owl. If properly commanded this owl can animate and fly to a single target, repeat a verbal message, listen to the reply and fly back to pass that on. Distance is no object providing that the magician has been to the location to which the creature is sent. As soon as the box is opened it will sit up and say three sentences in an ancient tongue before lapsing into quietude once more.

n) A Library. Some of the books are still legible, but most are so brittle or rotten as to fall apart when touched. All are historical, geographical or botanical references. A locked black cabinet contains a series of books on demonology, which will be worth a small fortune. However, any person who even looks at them feels somewhat disturbed to say the very least. Destroying any one book nets a PC an instant 5 Sympathy Points. Reading a book brings a loss of 1 Sympathy Point, per chapter.

o) Washrooms/Toilets (open air disposal). Despite the primitive manner of waste-disposal this room was once well-appointed. Troughs complement porcelain washbasins and commodes in discrete compartments. Sadly none of the pumps function any more.

p) Locked. A horrid torture chamber, complete with iron maidens. The chief torturer is still here – a four-foot high demon of repulsive aspect who is bored to insanity and hopes that the PCs have brought a prisoner for torture.





**q)** The wall to this room was breached from the outside by some kind of missile, probably magical or magically impelled since the room itself was not otherwise very much harmed. None of this is visible from the outside, and the door is closed and locked. If it is daylight or if PCs are very perceptive someone might notice that the light around the door's edges (and the flow of fresh air) is somewhat more than around previous doors they've investigated. Due to the effects of the elements over the centuries, this room is now a shambles. Mind you, this suits its new inhabitant very well. If the PCs manage to open the door they will discover that a griffin lives here. All details (whether it's at home, whether it's intelligent, whether it has 'chicks', what treasure might be there...) are up to the GM. (Since it is an animal, the ghosts and shades don't bother it.) NB: These creatures are extremely rare and even some of its feathers could be sold for a small fortune (100t each even in Glubersbir, double that in Saskervoy.) If it is intelligent it will not be friendly. If they do talk to it, it will not under any circumstances help them. Fortunately for the PCs in this case it is not hungry (having recently fed upon deodands), but despises humanity (for aeons of hunting its species to render it into alchemical ingredients).



Once again the PCs might hear sobbing as they begin to ascend one of the spiral stairs. This will not be something that they can track to its source, because as soon as a PC makes any kind of noise the sobbing abruptly halts.

**r)** Not locked. The door of this room is stone, and carved into it is the effigy of a noblewoman, possibly a female magician by her bearing. Inside a heavy cloth covers the window, and the room is bare save for a stone

sarcophagus at its center. This item is carved with patterns and runes. The top is way too heavy to lift off without a crowbar, unless several people strain all together. The coffin is empty, but the floor of it is an enchanted portal to another dimension. This is blocked more or less by a large tentacle that tries to grab new prey and haul them into the other realm. Should a PC be hauled through, you may need to organize a rescue operation into a strange new realm where weird beings are repulsed by fire or the rude abrasion of sound.

**s)** When someone pauses outside this door they may hear low sobbing from within. The door to this room is locked, and if anyone knocks upon it the sobbing instantly ceases and will not start again. Nobody will respond to any knocking or calling out. As the PCs may suspect in here is a monster, sobbing with the voice of a wronged woman. The creature is a hideous and decayed undead, formerly a great beauty of a previous age, remaining in this sumptuous (yet rotten and stinking) bedchamber. It lunges into a frenzied attack as soon as the door is opened – ripping with its fingernail talons and biting with its ghoulish teeth. ( $\Psi$  WHEREWITHAL) No ratings are provided for this creature: it should be slow yet formidable, and only defeatable through imaginative means such as spraying it with oil and setting it on fire, or blasting it with magic – though it has Magic (Resistance only). If they do defeat it and search the room, much inordinately ancient and valuable jewelry is in here.

**t)** The door to this room too (see 'v') is marked with silver sigils, but they are not glowing. That is because they are inert and harmless. The door can be opened safely and easily, and inside is what clearly used to be some kind of display area. Around the walls are the remains of glass display cases, each at least three feet high and much wider and deeper. Without exception all are destroyed and their contents long gone. However, in the middle of the room is a slowly pulsating giant blue slug some eight feet long and very nearly five foot across. Its large head looks somewhat demonic in a bestial way. This being is semi-intelligent and rather pompous, and will awaken as soon as someone enters the room. It fancies itself as the guardian of the inner room, but may if pressed admit that it took this job by default, and used to be one of the exhibits. To get past, the PCs will either need to fight it, or to convince it that they are the new owners or something of the like. It fights by rearing with intent to squash, and defends by roiling its bulky and incredibly thick skin.

**Giant Slug:** Eloquent (pompous) [\_\_\_], Pure-Hearted (dumb) [\_\_\_], Strength [\_\_\_], Parry [\_\_\_], Health [\_\_\_], Magic (Resistance only) [\_\_\_], Athletics [\_\_\_].





When its Health points are reduced to 0 it explodes, showering everyone with a repulsive goo. (The stench from this takes three days to disappear, and until then all communication skills are at a penalty of 1 against anyone who doesn't similarly stink.) If engaged in conversation it will talk about the wonders in the room beyond: the golden statues, the diamonds as big as a man, the living paintings, the enchanted rugs, the singing crystals... (This is all a crock; it has no idea what is in the room and has made all this up during its centuries of isolation.) Behind it the door to the room is made of metal and covered with runes and sigils. As soon as anything touches it, it turns into a geriatric demon with no more intelligence or strength of will than Bilberd has after a night's hard drinking at the Inn of Blue Lamps. Despite this it is charged to defend the inner room and will attempt to do so. It is unable to stop, and cannot be physically injured (except by major blows and even then it regenerates), but it does feel pain and howls in piteous agony. It will endeavor to persuade them to stop attacking it, but is unable to stop attacking them. The PCs will gain respite by crippling it in a regular basis, but even then it will continue to crawl after them. Eventually they will either have to trap it somewhere, or do something drastic like burn it to ash.

**u)** At last the room we've all been waiting for. Here is Fenzark's left arm, mounted on a plate on the wall. Here are also a large number of other historic relics and potent artifacts including: a fine collection of demiurge scales (DERPG, p114), an ever-lengthening rope (DERPG, p116), a Just Amulet of Virtuous Reflection (DERPG, p117), Amulet of Azoic Revelation (IT, p34), Armor of the Neophyte (IT, p35), and the Miniature Conclave of Abbat Loam (IT, p45). The GM should invent other lesser items that include cantraps as part of their effects, plus valuable ornamental items.

**v)** The door to this room is marked with a number of glowing silver arcane sigils. If people wish to open the door without touching it, they'll need to burn it down. Although covered in dust this is a typical magician's workroom. Workbenches, racks of alchemical ingredients, and a pair of vats (long since empty of everything save a strange powdery deposit). A number of magical books are also here, although each one is inordinately heavy. GMs are advised to create a few handy alchemical things here that PCs can salvage (e.g. Glimister of Sharpness – DERPG, p116). Amongst them are a number of pots of magical salves and leather pouches of enchanted dusts, (Thyle Dust – DDE, p67; Dust of Stupefaction. Ossip Wax etc) which no doubt some alchemist somewhere might identify for them, for a percentage. On one bench are a series of five large preservation jars, each connected

by brass pipes to a faintly humming bronze box beneath the counter. Two jars are empty save for some smelly pulpy goo. Of the other three, one contains a miniature gid, one contains a hedge dragon, and one contains a creature that looks remarkably similar to Gark and Gookin. If the tops are taken off the jars and the fluid removed, they will revive (with annoying results).

**The Roof:** As noted, the spiral stairs lead out onto the roof (via heavy trapdoors that require more than human efforts to lift them). Should the GM deem it fun, several air-cars (XPS Vol 1, Iss 2, pp42-46) are parked up here, though all seem to have been caught in some kind of magical blast – the same one that melted to slag whatever machine once stood in the middle of the roof. All bar one will be damaged beyond functionality. Whether the PCs wish to risk life and limb in the remaining one remains to be seen. Three metal ballista are also up here, one partially destroyed, two functional (but only one of these armed). A spectacularly good shot from here (making full use of the aiming assistances and perhaps the Engineering skill) might do away with their threatening pursuer, who is even now perched upon his steed atop a nearby hillock (surrounded by a number of friendly deodands).

### Escape is Blocked

When they leave the inner keep it is time for the confrontation with their codorfin pursuer, who now looks even more animal-like. Their foe waits outside at the top of the shaft in the outer keep and demands the part of Fenzark. (If the PCs found some other means of egress, position this encounter wherever suits best – perhaps in the guard room at 'a' as they emerge from the Barbican.)

*"Humanns; you have met your endss. I am ssent by one to take from you the part of Fenzzarrk. Give it to me now and perhapss you will live."*

He will engage in some bargaining, but will give no information as to the nature of his task, or who put him up to it, and speaks in clipped phrases, clearly not being used to the human tongue. Obviously the PCs will need to make use of some of the strange things they found inside to dispose of this threat, especially if the codorfin has recruited from 3-12 deodands to assist him.

OR the PCs are trapped and unable to use most of the items they have found. In which case the cockatrice returns to its lair, turns all the ambushers to stone. (During this time the PCs will hear the bird's angry shrieks and the roars of fear from the half-men, and perhaps even catch a glimpse of the bird as it flaps past in pursuit of its prey.) This same possibility goes well if



they do surrender the part of Fenzark (which will be the only thing not converted to stone).

[Above is another example of a few words covering what should be an exciting role-playing action/strategy opportunity, filled with glimpses or lurking and lunging deodands. If they have a great many items, some will run out of charges even as they are used in this conflict.] If the codorfin is able to stay alive long enough, as it dies it will curse one of the PCs: *"You have been the end of me, and I curse you. Henceforth the oceans of the world will be your direst enemy."* This is merely an incidental plot device meaning a return trip to the Civic Institute and an expenditure of some of their new wealth or goods to have an expert remove this curse. (Perhaps with a single application of 'Phandaal's Repudiation of Curses' – TT, p99) If it becomes otherwise, the GM must improvise as they see fit.

### 3.6) Back to Tugersbir

#### Naldriz to Glubersbir

Played for maximum effect, the PCs will first hear the distant howls (again) and then notice that they are coming closer. Eventually they will see a pack of these creatures bounding across the tundra. (Any surviving locals will say that such is a rare event indeed.) The only way to survive this attack is through gaining some manner of cover and employing the magical and mechanical spoils sensibly and energetically. Describe their bounding, slaving approach in graphic terms.

#### The Laharq

Mostly quadrupedal, they have thick and hairy pelts, and elongated ape-like faces with tooth-filled jaws. Their front paws are also unusually flexible, and whilst incapable of full manipulations do allow the creatures to hold crude weapons when such becomes necessary. Normally they prefer to use their front paws as rending weapons in their own right, and find it awkward to remain upright when moving any distance. These creatures track by smell and hearing as much as by sight, and can catch scents on the breeze. Thus they avoid GM levies for following trails across narrow bodies of water. (And in other such situations.)

#### Immature Laharq

Ferocity 9, Sure-Footedness 12, Health 12, Athletics 12, Conceal 3, Perception 5, Stealth 6, Track 14, Wherewithal 8

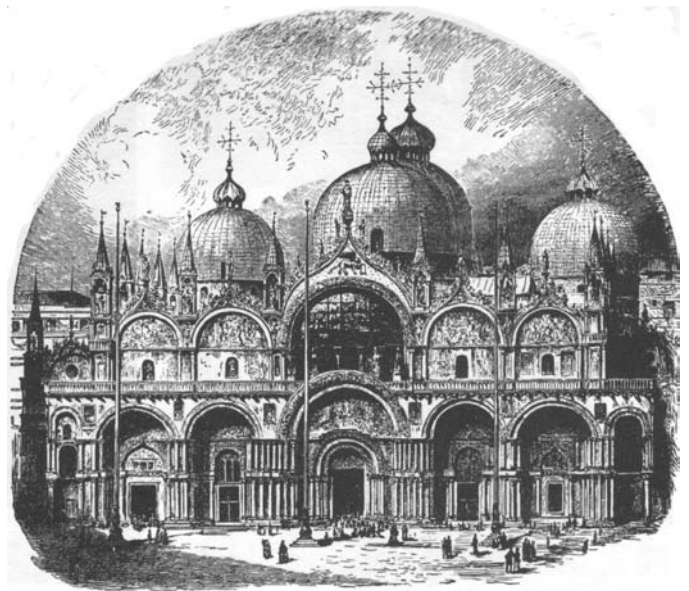
#### Adult Laharq

Ferocity 14, Dodge 13, Health 17, Athletics 16, Conceal 7, Perception 10, Stealth 11, Tracking 19, Wherewithal 14.

### Glubersbir to Tugersbir

Twango is waiting in Tugersbir, at the Saskervoy Arms as he said, disguised through subtle magic. He asks them to address him as Master Ognawt (the name he is registered under.) He pretends to be a merchant interested in their goods and invites them to his room. His glee and appreciation for the recovery of the arm is voluble, and he awards bonuses as per the instructions of (the possibly hysterically relieved) Gookin. If Gookin has somehow mysteriously expired - or been left in the catacombs - Twango is upset, and the heftiness of the bonuses will lack the emphasis they might have had.

PCs may also wish to demand danger-money etc, though Twango will assure them that this was by far the most dangerous part of the mission. He will deny that he sent another party and become worried that someone else might be on the trail of Fenzark's parts<sup>16</sup>. He does not know who it might be and will be realistically worried, though also heartened that whoever it is clearly lacks the resources of high magic. He does have a magic item, a strange mask. When someone wears it and he uses the activation cantrap it charges their appearance, making round faces thin, black hair blonde etc. He will do what it takes to convince them to use it (see details on the next mission overleaf), explaining that the duration is approximately 10 days, though can be annulled sooner. If it amuses you, it runs out of charges before the last PC (who must use mundane disguises).



<sup>16</sup> Note again that little is described here in terms of role-playing opportunities, and the GM needs to expand and extend this into a proper encounter.



## Chapter 4: Collecting Fenzark's Upper Torso

*This chapter is given in summary to allow maximum flexibility in responding to PC actions. When running it, flesh it out with as many extra oddball characters, surprise events, decadent furnishings, bizarre relics, and peculiar incidents as take your fancy.*

Twango explains the mission:

⊕ *"The Upper Torso is held here within the Institute, specifically within the Acolytes' Faculty. You must steal it during the night and leave town before the theft is discovered. The sea route is preferred as it is quicker and there is no chance of being overtaken, but the land route also gives you the advantage of being able to leave town at dawn and perhaps even to leave a false trail. I shall leave all such details to you. However, be warned that the folk of Olb are a nefarious sort."*

### PAUSE FOR PC INTERACTIONS

*"If by some misfortune you are captured, simply admit to being relic thieves and apologize for your uncivilized conduct. Do not under any circumstances mention my name, nor admit to any association with me. As long as you have harmed nobody and done no major civic damage the courts of Tugersbir are lenient. You will be sentenced to a year's hard labor most likely, or perhaps even only six months of civic amenity facilitation. Perhaps when the magical impostures expire you can simply stroll free from your confines? Otherwise I shall have you rescued within a few weeks so that a second attempt can be made to steal the torso, and I expect that you will have a much better plan worked out by then. Obviously during the initial crime you must steal other objects as well, so that if you are apprehended it seems clear you had no individual target in mind. Thus the security measures about the torso will hopefully not be much improved. Your point of contact is Oxolan, who knows the Institute well. Be sure also not to implicate her in any way."*

If they profess a fear that the Institute will be too hard to break into, Twango can reassure them that no real magicians train there: not like Kaiin's Scholasticarium. The head acolyte is one 'Yadcop' who is little more than a gifted dabbler, though he is in advanced middle age and poses as a serious magician. Still, this is an outright robbery that Twango is ordering them to undertake. Should they have any argument, Twango rightly assumes that they have performed swindles and robberies before (they are after all a party of Cugelesque rogues not Paladins). He will up the bonuses and maybe even come up with a cash sum for any expenses they can sensibly delineate. Or he may agree even to an extra boon from the reanimated Fenzark (but only 1 extra at this stage at the most).

After all this is sorted Twango does not stick around. He takes the arm they have recovered, plus anything they want him to take back to Flutic on their behalf. (Note that he insists on nothing; leave no grounds for

the PCs to suspect him of duplicity, especially since – in this case – he has none.) He departs by sea the next morning, still in disguise as Master Ognawt, and insists that they wait until he has departed before they begin the next mission). He promises to reimburse them for any expenses required for the PCs to return to Flutic with the next section of Fenzark, and makes certain they have enough terces to cover such reasonable costs. It is possible that the PCs will have been tested to the limits of their patience/endurance during this last adventure. It may be worth reminding them that Twango is their only hope of an easy trip to the southern continent.

### Oxolan Breene

It is up to the GM whether Oxolan is young and attractive or older and shrewd, or a mixture. She is no fool, and is working for Twango in return for a cash reward and so as to ensure her continued payment of the 40t weekly retainer, which is more or less money for nothing. Young Twango has maintained this connection for different reasons from his father. Old Twango truly wanted to keep track of potential rivals, whereas Young Twango merely wants a loyal person on the spot for this theft. As long as the torso is successfully obtained Twango has not use for her anymore, and will simply terminate the payments. Her weekly letters will remain unanswered and eventually she may travel south to see if anything has happened to him, at which point he aims to have her done away with quietly. Fortright (\_\_\_), Contrary (\_\_\_), Speed (\_\_\_), Intuition (\_\_\_), Health 10, Magic (\_\_\_), Athletics 8, Concealment 11, Etiquette 7, Gambling 9, Imposture 5, Pedantry 8, Perception 10, Scuttlebutt 4, Stealth 7, Wherewith'l (\_\_\_) GM decides on ratings as best suits their vision of this episode.

### Preparation

*Oxolan of course knows much general information. Use the 'Guide to Tugersbir' Appendix ('B') as the primary source.*

The PCs will no doubt wish to scout out the Acolytes' Faculty. They can do so as prospective students, or do something like using Imposture to pose as visiting academics from Kaiin. They will attract no suspicion as long as they put on a reasonable act and dress accordingly. It will quickly become apparent that the inner vaults of the Acolytes Faculty are protected by sturdy and unbribable wardens, that carry not only billy-clubs but actual staffs. Nobody has attempted serious



crime here in many years, but they take their jobs very seriously. Besides which every year another few students decide to steal something for a prank, even though the Institute takes a very dim view of such things.

The GM will need to provide a general map of the faculty, showing that the vault with the relics is impregnable by any normal means. And note that no casual visitors are allowed in the Vault of Relics. To even get a sighting of the torso, PCs will need to use exceptional Persuasion or Imposture. The GM will also need to invent personalities for the staff members.

During their investigation, the PCs will learn that in only 2 or 3 days<sup>17</sup> time the annual Acolytes Symposium will take place. Oxolan suspects that Twango may be more in control of things than he is letting on, since this coincidence seems too good to be true. She advises the PCs (if they don't think of it themselves) to scout out what is required to get to the torso, arrange diversions or discommodations for the guards, and escape with the torso during this event.

**The Symposium:** The PCs will learn that every year the staff of the Acolytes Faculty hold a learned Symposium to which academics from around Saskervoy are invited; a meeting of intellectual advancement in a private dining area. During the sumptuous meal each principle invitee must give a 15 minute lecture on some aspect of Dying Earth lore that is vaguely related to magic. Each year there is a respectable turn-out, but it is never as grand as the organizers would like. (An obvious 'in' for the PCs to present themselves.) The PCs will also learn that the banquet is held in the old (large & colonnaded) assembly hall, which is the only room from which the Vault of Relics can be reached, and that a tour of the relics takes place before the banquet begins.

One example of how this chapter might play is this:

i) Using Imposture the PCs get a guided tour of the Acolytes Faculty and find that they cannot even see the relics. However, they do learn that the Tugersbir folk distrust magic even here in the Acolytes' Faculty, and prefer to depend on stout locks and the watchful wardens. They can presume that each main entry point (main door to Reliquary and the protections around each item) have at least cantraps about them, and may even – through flattering and asking the right people – identify these.

iii) PCs hear of the forthcoming Symposium, and wangle themselves an invitation after making up some suitably enlightening topic of discourse in order to qualify. They might choose to talk to the caterers (with the idea of upping or doctoring the evening's alcohol).

iv) At the Symposium during the talks one or more PCs creates a distraction or camouflage whilst the door to the Vaults is picked and one or more PCs gets inside. PCs must interact with various attendees (annoying, alluring, inquisitive, plus be tempted by the food and wine).

v) The PCs inside must deal with various locks and simple traps, and also with the vat creature that is always released at night. It exudes a sticky web, binding miscreants (since only students are likely to attempt thefts as some kind of prank, it is churlish to slay the town's impetuous young).

vi) PCs steal torso and several other relics (GM invents)

vii) Relics are smuggled back to the old assembly hall (some serious distraction required here), hidden inside the PCs' exhibit and then removed from the premises.

viii) PCs leave town in a hurry, abandoning their disguises. And yes, a ship does leave the following morning, bright and early on a day that is a holiday for all at the Institute.

### Sample Symposium Lectures

**Professor Yadcop:** Famous mages of the Cutz Wars

**Doctor Zortfunger:** A collection of seven lost cantraps

**Professor Pidj:** The Exotic Fauna of the Great Erm

**Master Abraxion:** The forgotten arts of vat creation

**Lady Davina Trodworth:** The peculiarities of the hoon

**Master Idsbodl:** The Spell of the Interminable Interim

Note that none of these are true experts, and various problems can occur with each talk, such as escaping hoons, abominations suddenly springing from the vats (which have been simmering for weeks now) misfiring cantraps that bring deluges of sludge down onto the assembled crowd, spells going disastrously wrong etc (some of which might assist the PCs in their tasks).

### Escaping with the Spoils

**Overland Option** – The forthcoming issue of the Excellent Prismatic Spray magazine (Vol 1, Iss 7&8) contains an article on Olb. Should you own this, we recommend that the ship is delayed, and that the PCs have no option but to flee south and pass through that town. During their stay the torso will of course be stolen and need to be recovered. Write up a scene based on that article to further enhance this chapter.

<sup>17</sup> Making the coincidence factor less in-your-face, plus allowing the PCs time to engage in personal research at the Civic Librarium.



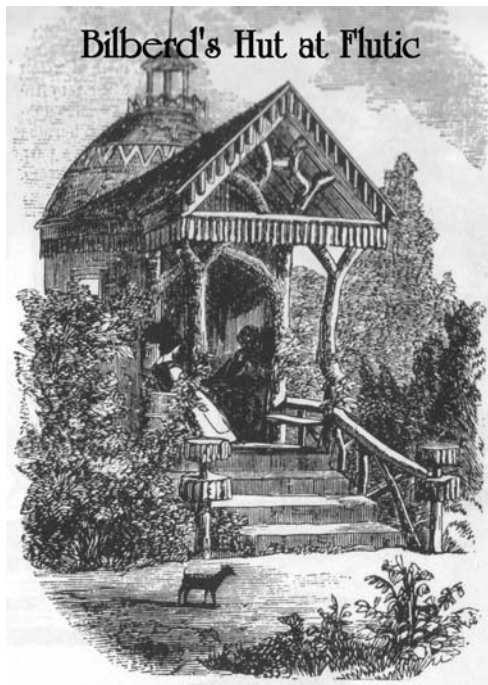
## Chapter 5: Collecting Fenzark's Head

**Fallback Option for Chapter 4:** If things go terribly wrong Oxolan takes the torso in the pandemonium and flees with it, back to Flutic, though the PCs may not know that this has happened. Perhaps she has a lover amongst the wardens and instigates the theft after hours, and even sets up an opportunity for the PCs to flee captivity? Do not make such things too contrived – show that this device depends on her unusual ingenuity.

### 5.1) Back at Flutic

#### Evaluation of Found Items

Most likely when they return to Flutic will be the first time they have goods for Twango to evaluate and identify (if they are magical items). As mentioned earlier, he expects to charge the standard 'one-third' fee (redeemable in a share of the goods if they don't have the money) unless they have made other arrangements.



Twango is delighted to see the PCs if they bring Fenzark's left arm back. If role-playing opportunities are present in allowing the PCs to have some days off to spend their ill-gotten gains in Saskervoy, then Twango requires another day or two to finalize the information he knows on the location of the next part. Or if they botched the last episode and escaped, Oxolan may not arrive for another day or so, leaving the PCs in Twango's extreme bad books (and possibly unemployed and penniless in Saskervoy for a while).

#### Oxolan

This remarkable woman might now or soon be residing at Flutic. For some reason she is loyal to Twango. (Actually it is more than that, she enjoys perfidy for its own sake, and as a former adventurer/treasure-hunter had missed the old days and welcomed the opportunity to recover the torso.) Since she is a characterful GMC, the GM must choose whether or not she becomes attached to the party. I raise this option because if she had to spring the PCs from jail chances are she's burned her bridges in Tugersbir and won't be able to return to her job there. Thus she too will wish to return south<sup>18</sup>. Should such things be within the GM's purview, a romance is not impossible with one of the PCs. Many lazy (or vigorous) afternoons might be spent within Bilberd's hut under the summer sun behind Flutic.

Once again, for reasons of security Twango will not divulge any part of the next mission until just before it is about to begin, although he may say that once again it requires travel (but that the travel will not be anything like so arduous as the last expedition). If they make inquiries (and they may not) the hermit has vanished, a state of affairs which Twango is very happy with. Don't mention this unless they ask, as this is an indication of the deeper plot unfolding. As GM you may now restrict all magical items. Twango will offer to find out how many charges each has, and identify those without known attributes, and work out how to activate them. He will examine all in his laboratory. He will of course keep any that are really good, and give back only a few to the PCs. Make these few usefully appropriate.

**Tugersbir Detectives:** Though the magical disguises (now annulled) protected the PCs, a small posse of suspicious detectives will arrive whenever the GM sees the most amusement, and begin asking questions. Incorporate these as fully as you like. They might be astute, bumbling, magical, a comedic aside, or a bane to the lives of the PCs, maybe even somehow featuring in the grand finale.

<sup>18</sup> It's always useful to have a personality GMC around to perish dramatically. This establishes a real sense of danger without threatening the PCs. PCs should die only rarely, and as a result of terrible bad luck/rolling. Otherwise the GM can use 'movie realism' to save them, with objects breaking their fall, injuries being mere flesh wounds and the like. This is still DERPG after all.



## 5.2) The Mission Briefing

Once again a very chirpy Twango calls them into his office after an early breakfast. The alcove is open and the partially restored Fenzark stands there. The electrical impulses that decorate it are a lot livelier than the PCs recall from their first viewing:

⊕ *“I have wonderful news. I have devised for you a marvelous form of transportation.”*

At this he proudly pulls the curtains fully back from the workshop window - revealing a large and well-apportioned rowboat resting on heavy-duty carpentry supports on the patio. It will easily fit all of the PCs, plus a significant amount of loot and supplies, and even has a sturdy canvas canopy that can be stretched over hoops around all but the extreme for’ard of the boat. This is a superb spot for misunderstanding and disappointment, which should be milked for all it is worth. The PCs will no doubt think they need to row a considerable distance. However, Twango has (after perusing his father’s workbooks at length) enchanted this rowboat to take them through the air in style. Once any confusion has been resolved he continues (his following words are split into sections to allow for PC involvement and Qs):

*“Your destination is the Lench in northern Saskervoy. If it were possible to travel to it safely overland it would take three days. No doubt armed with sufficient magic one could make that trip; however, since your security – and the incidental safe and swift return of Fenzark’s head – are of paramount concern to me I am delighted to present this opportunity for speed and comfort.”*

Note that he does not alert them to the fact that transportation will be by air, thus more confusion may ensue when it is time to depart.

*“You shall depart in an hour and must prepare yourselves well from my supplies and stores. The boat’s speed is such that you will then be transported for the whole of this day and the following night, to arrive a few miles from the hilltop settlement of Lench around dawn. Hide the vessel well and proceed to the settlement. The inhabitants are of low intelligence and friendly disposition. You must find out where they keep Fenzark’s head – it is amongst their relics in a hidden shrine – and obtain it by theft or barter. Then return to the boat tap it upon the prow and utter the words ‘Flutic Ho!’ at which point it will return here at best speed, with all aboard.”*

It is possible that the PCs may lack full and complete confidence in Twango’s plan. Indeed even calling it a ‘plan’ is a trifle optimistic. If pressed he will reveal that his father’s notes on Lench are incomplete or missing,

and that what he knows comes from scattered references and obvious inferences. (Fenzark’s head is held in esteem as one of their relics, the people of Lench are not overly-intelligent IE Old Twango was certain his ordinary agents could easily obtain the head from them for tradegoods or by stealth), and they are an oddly superstitious bunch.)

If necessary Twango will promise the PCs greater cash reward, magical items from his special collection, even special magical boons from the reanimated Fenzark. If they question his ability to guarantee such, he will actually bring out his prize copy of *Calanctus: His Means and Modes* and show them the sections outlining the differing levels of indenture and the magical phrases needed to evoke them. It clearly says that directly preserving or restoring the life of an Overworld entity places it in servitude to you. In the case of Fenzark (listed as a Type 3 Daihak) it must perform twelve substantive labors on your behalf. Twango admits that he had plans for all of these, but is willing to promise one labor to them, to have them transported to wherever they might wish to go. (Though since he can himself transport them to Noval they might wish for some other boon, that will aid them more permanently.)

The Players may suspect that since this all sounds too good to be true, that ‘something is bound to go wrong’. Since this is DERPG, don’t even bother to argue with them, merely raise your eyebrows. Do not under any circumstances otherwise either confirm or deny this in any way, no matter how subtle. Remember that however much the players think they know, the PCs are tossed willy-nilly by the winds of fate, and are trusting souls.

As for the journey itself, allow the PCs to pick reading material, games of chance, and pack sumptuous meals. Twango will say that their transportation will be swift and sedate and advise them to prepare accordingly.

## 5.3) The Journey

Once the PCs are ready (and any confusion about air or water travel sorted out) they can climb aboard. Twango will then pull out a small book and read a convoluted set of magical instructions. (PCs may notice that he doesn’t seem entirely confident with the wording, but is certainly not bumbling through the piece.) At the culmination of this he will say: “Arriving securely with your cargo and passengers in good order at a fine place of natural cover and safety within three miles of Lench.”





Then he will tap with boat smartly upon its prow with his forefinger.

*At this point the GM has a choice. Either the boat can rise smoothly into the air and progress with relative ease (plus whatever incidental encounters you devise) to a place two miles south of Lench, OR (as the author prefers) calling inspiration from Steve Dempsey's 'Laughing Magician' article in the XPS magazine Vol. 1, No. 3 ...*

With a clap of thunder an eighty-foot high translucent demon appears in the garden, one foot atop an outbuilding – which consequently disappears in an explosion of matchwood. With obvious surprise and unseemly haste Twango removes himself through a nearby open window into the manse as the demon bends down<sup>19</sup>. PCs may also wish to flee, but magic keeps them held within the confines of the boat. The demon picks up the boat with relative gentleness and then sets off at a lope across country. Its first step smashes off the end corner of one wing of Flutic, and every third or fourth step kicking down two or three trees. Those in the boat are not tossed about to the extent that they become injured, but the journey is choppy to say the least. One cannot leave the boat, nor communicate with the demon in any way. After its initial appearance, the demon fades from visibility, though its effects remain clearly obvious. More by luck than good management it's course runs through the Flutic woods, and the PCs may observe a trio of ghouls kicked high into the air as the demon smashes a large dead tree (their daytime resting place) to smithereens. (NB: Rolls of some ability such as Health, Wherewithal, or Seamanship might be required to avoid nausea.)

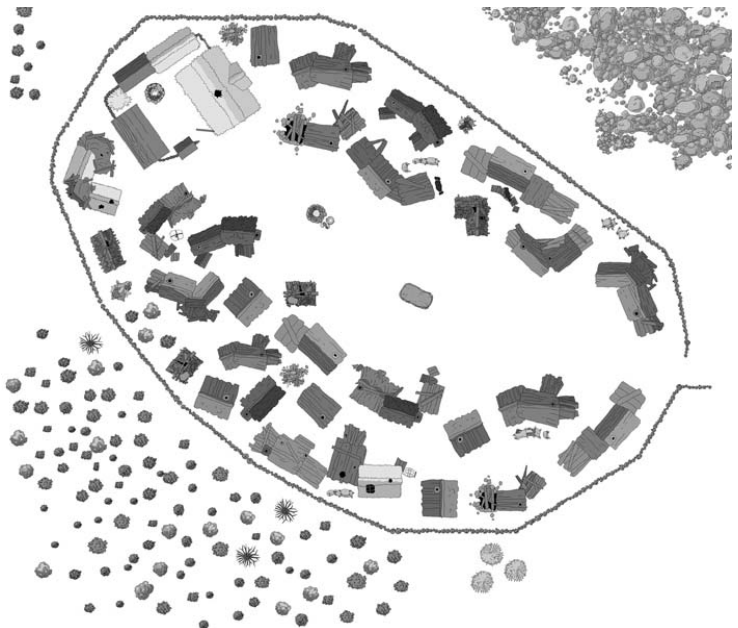
Once beyond the woods (a trip of about five hours) their transporter picks up speed, still moving in a beeline towards the north. Again through sheer luck it only destroys walls and fences and a single barn before (after only another quarter hour) it passes only a mile or two to the east of Idz. Then it strikes out across the plain and makes good time for the next three hours (leaving great footprints in the earth). In the evening it heads into the hills, running up slope and down dale, with very few detours to avoid steep cliffs. It progresses this way for a further two hours until night falls, and it

keeps on going. The PCs will be able to see little, but will hear things being destroyed and half-men shrieking. Sleep is likely to be fitful at best (barring superb rolls of Wherewithal, Seamanship or Living Rough). The first third of the night is across tundra, then an hour or two through woodland, then more hills. As dawn breaks the PCs can see a hilltop settlement only a few miles ahead. At this point a curious pelgrane swings in low to take a look at them, and is swatted out of the air in a broken bundle of bones (by the demon's might invisible fist). Finally the demon begins to slow its stride and suddenly veers left towards a patch of woodland on the southern side of a hill. As it draws close to this the PCs abruptly find themselves in freefall as their boat plunges into the branches of a large and ancient oak, where it lodges securely. Athletics rolls to avoid embarrassment or injury aren't out of the question at this juncture. Any fine lunches and fragile unsecured items will be lost. Hopefully they will remove the boat from the tree (Ψ ATHLETICS, ENGINEERING) and conceal it somewhere nearby, since they may need easy access to it later.

The GM may wish to devise further difficulties and details of their short trek to Lench, although if this is undertaken in daylight it is likely to be uneventful. At night they may encounter a more predatory half-man.

## 5.4) Lench

Φ SEE APPENDIX 'F':  
"SETTLEMENT OF LENCH"



<sup>19</sup> It is up to the GM whether Gark accompanies the PCs. This is always Twango's intention, but the surprise appearance of the demon might occur just as Twango was about to hand him aboard.



## Lench at First Glance

From a rise in the ground at a distance of two miles the PCs see a collection of ruins running across a broad rocky hillock. These are the remains of the once impressive town of Lench. However, the ruins themselves show no signs of habitation. On a flat area beneath them is a much smaller rough and ready pallisaded town and shapes are moving around tending vegetable gardens and fruit-trees. The town is a collection of ramshackle huts with only one building of any note. (Where the chief madlock and his family live, and where the oasts are stabled.)

## GM's Overview

The settlement is inhabited entirely by madlocks, living in a relatively peaceful society. (Physical prowess is the indicator of superiority.) Observation will establish this, although it will not reveal the creatures' attitudes towards foreigners nor exactly how many there are. (There are more than one hundred and twenty adults, and half that many children adolescents, though only long-term observation will clarify this. Otherwise it might be that there are many more that simply don't venture outside.) Once someone recognizes the creatures a Pedantry roll may garner more information. One worrying thing about this settlement is that the few beasts of burden collecting fruit and tending the rough fields are all hulking men eight or nine feet tall, naked, with shocks of dirty yellow hair. (These are oasts, not some species of large human, and they are only of animal intelligence, nonetheless, their presence may give the PCs some cause for concern.) At the center of the town is a large stone with a flat top about 8ft long and 6ft across. From close up it can be seen to be covered around the sides with runic carvings. It could be mistaken for a sacrificial block, but never mention these words: let the PCs jump to their own conclusions.

### Pedantry: The Madlock

DF: A common species of half-man; not necessarily numerous, but certainly widespread.

QF: They are squat, gray humanoids, averaging a size approximately equal to a bulky human male.

EF: Madlocks are powerfully muscled, with bulbous tapered brows on heads that join the torso without the benefit of a neck. Consequently the mouth of a madlock opens directly into its upper chest.

HBS: Despite their fearsome appearance, in temperament madlocks resemble humans more than other half-men.

PS: Some magicians use them as servants for tasks requiring forceful actions of the unsqueamish.

IS: It is rumored that in some regions they gather together in bands, in some form of primitive but recognizable society. Such groups usually inhabit the wilds, keeping as far from human settlements as possible, though some have been known to engage in a little civilized trade.

*Typical Madlock: Obfuscatory (Dim-witted) 3, Obtuse 6, Strength 14, Dodge 15, Health 13, Athletics 10, Concealment 3, Gambling 4, Perception 3, Stealth 2, Wherewithal 5.*

Play these creatures as gruff, menacing, and somewhat dumb, but certainly not total idiots. The chief priest is totally dedicated to the legends and the sanctity of Vlanzark's memory, so play him in that way. They are also smarter than they act, and know the value of curios from the past, which is why they moved here several years ago and founded this colony from which to plunder the ruins. Since then various adventurer groups have come in search of Fenzark's head (the most well-known of the severed parts of this being), and the madlocks have invented a bogus religion to pander to their expectations. The madlocks are also cruel and like nothing better than to watch groups of treasure-hunters stumbling about through the various difficulties in their attempts to obtain the head.

Since there are numerous ways in which the PC party might approach the task ahead (no pun intended) of them, we present the following in summary. The GM must flesh out any relevant details as necessary.

### Frontal Assault

Emboldened with new arcane weapons taken from Castle Naldriz, the PCs might simply decide to storm the settlement and take no prisoners. The GM can of course vary the proffered result to suit their style of game, but it is recommended that this sort of behavior fail utterly. Madlocks do not have human values, and whilst they may feign fear in the initial attack this is only to grant them time to regroup. Once they have done so, they will storm the PCs in commando waves, ignoring all possibilities of death or injury until the PCs are overcome and restrained. The madlocks will attempt to take everyone alive, but if the part contains GMC retainers one will definitely be killed under such circumstances.

### The Stealth Approach

PCs may wish to wait for nightfall and enter the settlement by stealth, perhaps hoping to kidnap someone and force them to say where the temple is. This is entirely possible. The obstacles they face are getting over the 10ft wall that the madlocks have



erected, and avoiding the infrequent madlock patrols (the creatures go in twos). This will require everyone to make at least two sets of Stealth rolls. If anyone fails the GM rolls randomly to see if a patrol is within hearing distance. (Though such things could be rendered less likely if the PCs scout their routines from hiding.) Then the PCs must enter the temple. If they are spotted, a hue and cry breaks forth and madlocks will grab spears and charge around the area. Combined Sneak and Concealment rolls will be required to avoid them. If captured, the PCs might like to make up some reason why they were skulking around and try Imposture, should they have read the appropriate information at the Civic Institute.

### Posing as Pilgrims

If the PCs have read the clue at the Institute, one of them might try posing as Klandike the Loud, a task that requires (i) reverent mention (in a loud voice) of the head of Vlanzark the Overlord, and (ii) a modicum of pilgrim clothing. Either of these will provide a bonus of 1 to Imposture rolls (a possible combined bonus of +2). The other PCs must also in appearance resemble a pilgrim retinue. The obstacles to carrying this off are:

- a) Convincing the Priest Madlock that the PC knows what he is talking about. (Since they don't know the madlocks' Vlanzark lore, this leaves only the option of Persuasion through Obfuscation. Failure has them thrown into the temple to face Vlanzark's justice – see 'Tests of Vlanzark'.)
- b) Passing the 'Tests of Vlanzark' (see below) so as to safely claim the head.
- c) Fulfilling the prophecy by 'rising into the sky from the top of the holy stone'. (This will require some excuse to be made so that some PCs can fetch the boat and out it on top of the runed stone at the town center.)

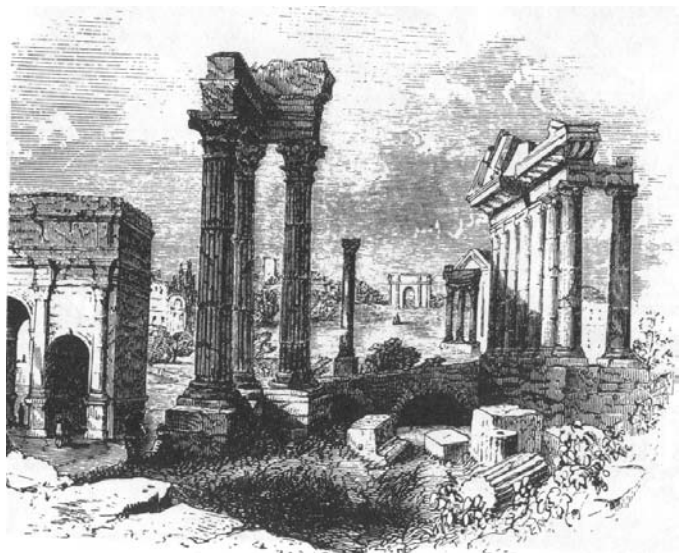
### The Judgment of Vlanzark

If the PCs are captured in the ruins, captured during an attack or whilst trying to kidnap someone in the village, or found out to be fraudulent pilgrims, they have a choice. The madlocks will begin preparation for a feast at which the PCs can tell they are to be the main course. Bound and gagged, things look bad, until the madlock priest comes to proclaim that tradition forces him to ask if they wish to go before the 'Judgment of Vlanzark'. The PCs will learn little of this, save it involves being sent into the temple catacombs. Since the alternate option is to be roasted for dinner and eaten, hopefully they will agree. The madlock priest and any madlocks

nearly will be realistically disappointed, and the priest will try to convince them that a swift butchery prior to dinner will be much easier on them than facing the deadly perils of the catacombs. What equipment the madlocks allow the PCs to take is up to the GM. Probably they will allow all basic weapons, and do not have the wit to identify small magic items that look like jewelry etc, but will confiscate any larger items and specialist weapons.

### Negotiation

It's unlikely that the PCs will think to approach a madlock settlement peaceably, since these creatures look so fearsome. However, they might. If they do all will seem well at first and they will be boarded in temporary accommodation and feast prepared in their honor for that evening. However, they will not be allowed to leave. It will quickly become clear that they are to be the main course. Only when someone mentions to name 'Vlanzark' or 'Fenzark', will a great commotion begin as the madlocks realize that these foreigners must be sacrificed to 'Vlanzark' directly rather than eaten. (The madlocks will not mention the name, so hopefully at least one of the PCs will call out for mercy in this beings name before they are all served up for dinner. Should this not happen, you will have to utilize your skills as a GM to invent some manner of their salvation.)



### Investigating the Ruins

The ruins are a couple of miles across, and the temple is not evident – because it is underground. Numerous entry-points to underground caves and passages exist, and the madlocks spend much time investigating these ruins for relics, which they take and sell at the closest



human settlements once in a while. (All are stored in town.) Thus it is impossible even with tracking (presuming that none of the PCs are expert trackers by profession) to discover the entrance to the temple without help from the madlocks. And at night unusual half-men of hungry disposition are a threat to be reckoned with, or some other odd creatures of the wilds. As suggested immediately below for the temple itself, the GM is advised to draw an intriguing map of the ruins if the PCs attempt to explore it. Should they attempt this exploration at length, throw in the dens of various beasts and/or half-men, or even (if you are feeling generous) some previously undiscovered cache of treasure or magical goods.

## 5.5) The Temple of Vlanzark

**A Tricky Business:** For this section you will be called upon to exercise a GM's trick. Specifically, you will be drawing a map as if a master map actually exists in this scenario, when in fact no such thing does. Fear not, for we shall describe the rooms that the PC's come across, and we shall do so in a game-appropriate order. You can either make the map a simple affair, with single corridors leading from point to point, or you can invent a more complex 'catacombs' map with optional points of egress that the PCs will assume lead to other potentially hazardous rooms and traps. However, these locations need never be detailed since the PCs will never go to them. More specifically, the map that you draw would have various doors and passages that apparently lead elsewhere amidst this dangerous maze. The most likely problem with this is that when PCs find certain traps difficult they may double-back and try different routes. The GM has a number of options for such occurrences: (i) invent even more dangerous hazards (walls of flame, corridors of blades), thus making the original hazard seem worth another try; (ii) have passages double back so that a previously encountered area is once again reached (either through an unexplored door or via a secret entrance); (iii) drop in a few dead ends; (iv) exercise your imaginations to invent other traps and tests or steal such ideas from other role-playing modules.

### Entering the Temple

*GM Note: Once again these rooms are not as precisely detailed as DERPG ideally demands. Some might think that this is because of the dictates of space and time constraints. Absolutely not; it is a deliberately presented opportunity for GMs to exercise their own creative powers in elaborating the appearance and feel of each and every room and corridor. Feel free to use words such as 'dank', 'shadowed', 'cavernous', 'damp', 'melancholy', 'ominous', 'ancient', 'echoing', 'ill-favored', and similar. Definitely describe the first*

*view of each room/corridor much more fully than the brief notes provided below – conjoined with appropriate mapping flourishes.* As noted elsewhere, the **entry corridor** is reached through an otherwise unprepossessing access into some of the ruins. The first part of the passage has been excavated years ago by treasure hunters, and shortly enters a buried passage of impressive size and design. (Ancient carvings, runic inscriptions.) It has collapsed at one end and has huge ornate brass doors at the other. Madlocks may be guarding these doors depending on how and when the PCs arrive here. Behind the brass doors is a wide **temple annex**, where long ago people used to perform rights of worship. No iconic statues are here, only stone benches and a further set of doors leading to an inner sanctum. NB In the other room is also a secret door that allows the madlocks entrance to the upper passages (see below). The **inner sanctum** is more interesting, with a large alcove in its far wall, and a number of statues of forgotten deities around the other walls. Inside the large alcove is an altar, on top of which are three brass heads. The central one is a rendition of Fenzark's head, the other two are unknown entities. In the center of the room itself is a wide circular pit inside a small wall. This is smooth-sided and descends 200ft; coiled next to it is precisely 210ft of rope already knotted every foot for easy purchase. (NB: A further way to have the PCs reach the room below is for the entire large alcove to have a false floor, and as soon as someone lifts one of the heads this pivots onto a polished stone slide. How big an area pivots depends on where the rest of the PCs are standing and on how many the GM wishes to send sliding below. If other PCs remain above, the sliders are trapped in a cage below, so someone must descend to let them out.)

### The Areas Below

**The Lower Entry Room** is circular, tall and domed. It may be partially filled with water so that anyone who falls in has some cushioning to aid survival. (How thoughtful of the original builders.) This pool has overflowed so that even the regular part of the room is now two-foot deep. Only one exit from this room is apparent – an ominous archway leading onto a stone corridor. In a niche only a foot or so above water level is a magical flame, and next to it are two dozen primitive torches made of rags soaked in a slow-burning oil. (Once all the PCs are here, the exit will be blocked. It might be something as simple as the rope being pulled up, or as complex as a heavy stone automatically sliding across the entry shaft.)



**Game Note:** Absolutely abandon all frivolous attitudes. The PCs should be absolutely aware that life and limb are now at stake. Use grim description to its full advantage. The PCs will have to adopt many of the conventions of other fantasy RPGs – planning an order of march, posting scouts and rear-guard, checking for traps, that sort of thing. Do not make this time consuming, but neither allow it to become something automatic. Being as this is DERPG, not everyone will enthusiastically wish to go first (unless you have some bull-headed ex-bodyguard vat-creature amongst the group of course). Nervous arguments (and Persuasion contests) - about who should take what risks and when - are entirely appropriate.

*NB: The solutions to some of the problems that follow should be quirky and imaginative solutions and/or provided by the effects of previously obtained items that seemed to be almost purposeless at the time of identification. Various suggestions will be made in this regard; feel free to invent others.*

### Corridor A

**Problem:** The first difficulty is a blockage of ice.

**Possible Solutions:** This could be cleared by considerable physical effort. However those launching blows at it must resist its chilling effects with their Health or start to freeze. Better to use some kind of magical flame-producing device (although doing so may require all the charges remaining in such a thing).

### Hidden Observers

Every room from now on is 30ft tall. The upper eight feet slopes inwards, sometimes in a dome, sometimes just in a slope (if the room is perpendicular in shape). Across each of these surfaces are a number of horizontal slits some three inches in height and slightly more than a foot wide. Behind these are narrow corridors that priests in ancient times used to use for the observation of victims and supplicants. The madlocks now use these corridors and observation points to watch with amusement as those they have hoodwinked struggle on through the catacombs. Each room also has a secret trapdoor up there, so if necessary the madlocks can lower a rope and retrieve any corpses that are still sufficiently intact to make good eating. The PCs may not at first realize that they are being observed, but after a few rooms someone is bound to hear a scuffling from up in the ceiling. This person may recall that they have heard it before. As the madlocks bustle for the best vantage points they may of course tread on each other's feet and make even further noises. However, they will never respond to criticism or communications of any kind, not even abuse. Even if they are attacked by magic they will simply temporarily retreat and make greater efforts towards silence in future observations.

### Room 1

**Description:** A large hexagonal room with six columns holding up the roof. At the center is a 10ft tall statue of a demon with six clawed arms. On the far side of the room is a metal exit door with a central locking wheel.

**Problem:** The demon begins to wake whenever anyone moves more than 10ft into the room. It takes a few moments to waken, and goes back to sleep when the intruders retreat from the room. The exit door is not a problem, but takes several rounds to open it by rotating the wheel. (Hence there is no chance to run through the room and avoid the demon.)

**Possible Solutions:** If the party are extremely martial or have martial magic then they can expend valuable charges defeating this defender. Otherwise, if someone can throw onto its head the 'Hat of Diminution' all is solved. This may require several attempts, interspersed with retreats and distractions whilst the hat is recovered for another go. (The columns exist as things for PCs to dodge behind.) Ropes and teamwork are another possibility.

### Corridor B

**Problem:** Tongues of flame leap irregularly from apertures at the sides, filling 10ft sections of the corridor. The observant ( $\Psi$  PERCEPTION) might notice at the far end a large lever in the 'up' position, which may control the metal shutters above the apertures.

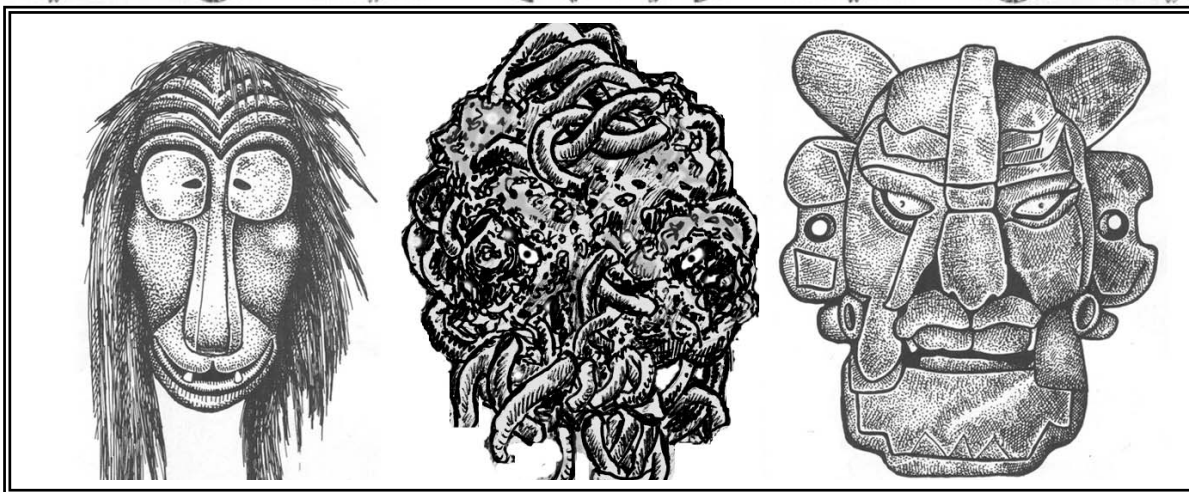
**Possible Solutions:** One might agilely leap ( $\Psi$  ATHLETICS) from safe point to safe point between the apertures, or someone might don the Cloak of Elemental Comfort and run down the corridor to the lever and pull it – closing all of the shutters. (The cloak of course will be a blackened ruin and the PC may take some slight damage.)

### Room 2

**Description:** This large circular room is entirely filled with a pool of silvery liquid. The walls of this room are rough and fissured: an expert climber might be able to make their way around. On the opposite side a doorway opens onto a continuing corridor. At its edge is a large metal lever in the 'up' position, and beneath the door is what looks like the projecting edge of a walkway that points towards you. The alert might ( $\Psi$  PERCEPTION) notice disturbing roiling motions in the liquid, as if some creature or creatures were swimming within.

**Problem:** The climb around the walls would be very difficult, and the carnivorous overworld creature (which is the silvery liquid.) will devour anyone who falls in.

**Possible Solutions:** Climb around the walls and pull the lever, which causes the walkway to extend all the way across (for a little less than a minute). However, if the PCs still possess the Boots of Aquatic Motility all is not lost.



### Corridor C

*Problem:* An iron portcullis blocks the way

*Possible Solutions:* The container of metal-eating bugs won't go amiss at this point. If they don't have this then if everyone works together the gate can be lifted. (If they do have the bugs, consider that the corridor has three such blockages that need to be removed, which will of course exhaust the remaining bugs.)

### Room 3

*Description:* Inside this large square room is a round wooden table with nine seats and several objects scattered upon its surface. Some might notice ( $\Psi$  PERCEPTION) that these objects are dice, playing cards and archaic gaming pieces. No exit is visible.

*Problem:* As soon as they enter the room a 4ft tall green-skinned muscular imp appears. It then insists that all who wish to be shown how to exit this room must prove their superiority by besting it at gambling. The imp is a superb gambler, and the PCs will need to use their best skills to defeat it. Everything they wager will vanish. The imp itself can make jewels appear, which it will use as its own stake.

*Possible Solutions:* If the PCs have no secret boosts to gambling capabilities, that is most unusual for DERPG. If so, on reading this during preparation create some such boosts and introduce them earlier in the series.

### Corridor D

*Description:* This corridor is reached by descending 10ft down a flight of stone stairs, and exited in an opposite fashion 80ft further on. A roiling yellowish fog obscures the whole corridor below.

*Problem:* Through the roiling one can see that the floor of the corridor is intact. However, walking into the fog requires a person to hold their breath, and for probably longer than any PC can manage.

*Possible Solutions:* A lever is on the other side. The Ring of Personal Continuity is the only way I can think that they can pass this. Other options may exist in your game.

### Room 4

*Description:* This large oblong room is 60ft high. Five rows of wooden benches face a dais or lectern on a stone plinth at the far end. 30ft above this plinth is a huge stone demon's face with a massive gaping mouth. Beside the lectern is a large wooden chest.

*Problem:* A mob of small imps pours out of an inter-dimensional space within the chest as soon as it is opened. They then steal from the PCs whatever they can (give PCs chance to defend) and flee back into the space.

*Possible Solutions:* The way on is through the cavity that is the demon's mouth. The way to control the imps is by using 'Zagar's Whip'. An imaginative wielder could also use this to command the imps to form a pyramid up which the PCs could easily climb. Some goods can be recovered during recurrent outpourings of imps, but their magical movements make it hard to see which imp has what. Once they are controlled this is a little easier, but some belongings may be gone for good.

### The Central Chamber

After duck-walking down the passage behind the demon's face, at long last the PCs will reach their objective. This is a huge circular room, about 70ft high. Although very difficult to see in the dim light, all around the top 10ft is a stone balcony, over which peer all of the madlocks from the settlement. None will utter a sound (such is forbidden by their society law during this time) - not in response to abuse or anything. The floor of this room consists of concentric rings. First is a 10ft wide outer circle of stable floor, then comes a 10ft wide pit of spikes, then another 10ft wide stable area which has a multi-legged demonic insect larger than two mermelants wandering around it. (Gnashing its serrated mandibles and looking menacing.)





Beyond that is another 10ft wide pit (the contents cannot be seen from here but are in fact a number of deodands - lowered in specially by the madlocks). This final pit is directly adjacent to a 30ft high smooth-sided dome on top of which is a small shrine building.

If the PCs go around the outside (or when they climb up the dome) they will see on the far side a large stone door with an ornate lintel. Tiny cracks in this ancient door show that it passes directly into daylight (not visible until someone gets fairly close to it). Also directly in front of it is a spread fan of earth and small stones, perhaps indicating that this door has been opened fairly recently. This door can easily be reached by walking around, but cannot be opened except at the whim of the entity within the building on top of the dome.

**Possible Solutions:** If the PCs still have the 'Ring of Carpentry' they can turn the benches from the earlier room into walkways and ladders. Zagar's Whip might even cause the imps to do all the fetching and carrying. If they still have the 'Ring of Superior Restraint' they can use it to create a cube within one of the circles, which the demonic creature will run onto and then get stuck. The PCs can then carve/break the benches into planks allowing them to travel freely on the goop and hack the beast to pieces. If they don't have these then the GM will need to invent some other means of success.

**Inside the Shrine Building:** Within the shrine is a stone altar on top of which are three unusual heads which seem somehow welded in a row to a long metal plate. The central one is clearly that of Fenzark; the one on the right is that of some kind of demonic golem, and the one on the left is smaller than the others, and some kind of ugly little imp. Also, on the wall is a series of seven silver buttons, each with a glyph carved into it. The imp is the only one that is awake, and will invoke energies that trap as many PCs as possible in the room. (Hopefully several will come inside to look at the buttons, which are purely decoys.)

Once the PCs are trapped the imp will be delighted to talk to them, not having had a good conversation in ages. It can alert them to the fact that another party of explorers much like them was here only a few months ago, but refuses to say what happened to them. (Apparently Fenzark's head was active at that time.) It can explain that situated where it is on the altar, Fenzark's head has control of many magical energies that were once connected to the silver buttons. The little imp, which acts as a watchman when its cruel fellows are sleeping also has some limited control. It can further explain that magic makes it impossible to remove one of the heads, and attempts to do

so risk waking them. (At which point various awful fates are to be expected.)

The imp will want to wake its' fellows, since that is its job, but also is very bored and wants to talk to them. There are two obvious ways the PCs can get out of this trap:

(i) Convince the imp that they will take the heads outside for a little while and show them the sights. [The imp knows that its fellows may sleep for quite some time yet; by the way it cannot define why heads need sleep, but knows it is supposed to wake them.] This might be done by flattery, or vivid description, and will certainly involve Persuasion.

(ii) If this all fails, when Fenzark is awake, he actually wants to be reunited with the rest of his body and so will grant them a reprieve (after initial unnerving discussion).

In either case the magic that allows the heads to activate fails when the silver panel is removed from the top of the altar. (The removal can only be accomplished if one of the heads turns off the magical protections. Ideally one of the heads will also extend the walkway & open the exit door.) The imp head will remain conscious long enough to enjoy the view, if this is pertinent to their means of exit.

When the PCs succeed in having the door opened and march out into the daylight the madlocks will wail in surprise and awe. They will swarm down the hillside above and form reverential rows and then an honor guard to escort the PCs back to town. They will take the other two heads, which were never part of the deal. If the PCs attack, the priest will try to calm things, saying that the PCs are now honored guests, and apologizing for any earlier treatment. If the PCs still attack they will be subdued but unharmed.

## Leaving Town

**A)** If the PCs entered after having convinced the madlocks that they were genuine pilgrims, the madlock priest will be in awe, and will state that no doubt they are the chosen ones come to collect Vlanzark, and he will be serious about this. Nonetheless, he informs them that one more test is necessary. They must fulfil the prophecy and rise from the top of the sacred stone, which is now at the center of the madlock village. This is because various groups before them have come here posing as pilgrims in order to try and steal their relic. The legend (which they interpreted from ancient texts found within the ruins) says that only he who rises into the sky from the top of the sacred stone due entirely to the grace of Vlanzark is truly the chosen one.



**B)** If the PCs were forced to take the tests because of attacking the town or being caught out pretending to be pilgrims, the above will happen and the priest will be amazed that they could truly be the chosen ones.

However, his attitude will be much more skeptical and less friendly. The PCs may even be grabbed and hauled along tied in ropes

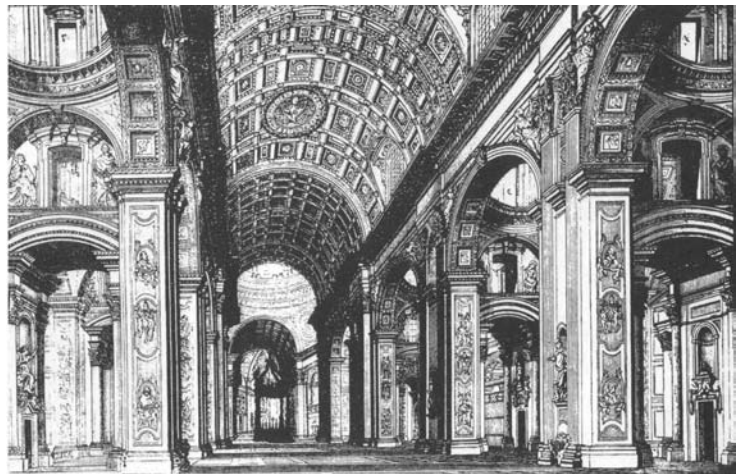
**Getting Away:** The solution is obvious. The PCs must have their boat brought here. (Perhaps madlocks already found it and dragged it into town whilst the PCs were in the catacombs?) The PCs must convince the madlocks that it must be put atop the block and loaded with their goods. If the PCs are in disfavor a cooking fire will be built around the whole thing; even if they are in favor it will be clear (by the appearance of hunting knives) that many madlocks hope the PCs fail this last test.

When all is ready the madlock priest activates a spell, which will (hopefully) be recognized as 'The Liberation of Warp'. This temporarily dispels all magic within its area – which in this case includes the PCs and the boat and all their goods. A number of male madlocks then arrive from between the huts, unlimbering pole-arms. The priest formerly asks the PCs to prove their legitimacy as pilgrims by calling upon Vlanzark to raise them to the Overworld without common spells.

Play the attitude of the madlocks as best fits, gently reverent or total con-artists who do this kind of thing all the time. Perhaps juvenile madlocks can be seen in the background slicing vegetables into cook-pots? The priest may gloat: *"It has been some months since we last attracted such succulent-looking thieves posing as pilgrims!"* In such a case the priest may be falsely polite, even having other madlocks daintily (though somewhat drooling with anticipation) assist the PCs into their boat, along with all their goods.

Fortunately, the magic to activate the boat still works, because it is demonic and not subject to the regular laws. The demon will appear in the midst of the closest huts - which will collapse. The madlock priest will fearfully cast a spell of magic rivulets of flame which outline the demon (making it visible) whilst painning it. It will thus kick out and smash more buildings and throw a few madlocks about, before picking up the boat. If all their goods are not already in the boat (and they probably are) it is possible that in the confusion the PCs will have the chance to grab any confiscated belongings (or at least some of them) and may need to fend off (Ψ ATTACK) an enraged madlock or two.

The journey under demon-power will be the same as on the way out, but in reverse. For the first few minutes they can observe the madlocks running round their now flaming village. Twango will be delighted to see them when they get back, and offer bonuses as always. He will (also as always) make light of any dangers they have been through. (Not in a dismissive way, he seems literally incapable of understanding that they as competent adventurers are not used to such things. Smart PCs will of course make up tales of even worse dangers and try to convince Twango to pay even higher bonuses. IPs might even be awarded for tall tales that are vaguely believable and highly amusing.) After all this is done Twango will reassure them that the final piece of Fenzark is in Saskervoy and that their series of tasks will soon be over. After that it will only be a few days before he departs for Noval, and the PCs can be carried across the ocean on the first stage of their return: rich in terces and armed with the useful artifacts they have recovered.



**The Noval Conservatorium**

### **GM's Introduction to the Next Chapter**

Twango will provide the basic details, and then it is up to the PCs to discover the minutiae and develop a plan. We provide various suggestions; however this is designed to be a very flexible scenario, and the GM will need to respond to and improvise from PC actions. We urge that you add maximum incidental detail in response to their actions, so that this Chapter is a full adventure, not some hastily enacted 'snatch'. Invent 'facts' exactly as you see fit, using the following as an outline. The PCs need to be aware that hanging is still an occasionally used penalty in Saskervoy, and that maximum planning and major skilled execution are called for. PCs may wish to invent diversions, purchase (or even have made) special tools, and might even recruit local crooks (perhaps after inventing a variant cover-story crime).



## Chapter 6: Collecting Fenzark's Right Arm

*With thanks to Edward Pierce and John Simms for inspiration.*

### Twango's Briefing

Twango calls them in to see him in the customary fashion, and proudly shows them Fenzark in his nearly complete state. The buzzing lines and motes of force are clearly more energetic than ever before, and the energy in the room reeks of imminent wakefulness. Twango is excited about this, and yet somehow seems nervous too:

⊕ *"I am immensely grateful for your work so far. It has been a fine boon for me to have had your help. Since we are so close to the conclusion I am now willing to offer an even greater bonus as incentive towards a speedy conclusion to this business<sup>20</sup>. Up to this point I have been entirely honest with you, but I am afraid I have not told you the whole story. The final piece of Fenzark is held in the Saskervoy Civic Warehouse, and will need to be obtained by an audacious act of robbery. I do not have the expertise or knowledge to execute such a thing, and in any case cannot be seen to be involved. You must steal the arm independently and bring it back here before anyone knows that it has been stolen."*

PAUSE for questions/interaction.

*"The exact details are this: in his final weeks my father took leave of his senses, and became fearful of all, including me — his favored son. In this state he hired a locker in the secure area of the civic store, wherein he locked his most recently acquired piece of Fenzark and a number of other valuables, both magical and financial. He also left strict instructions with the Saskervoy Stewards that nobody was to open this locker for twenty years; and foolishly he forgot to specify that his own son was to be an exception to this ruling. Several times I have petitioned for the release of these goods, and each time have been refused<sup>21</sup>. It is essential that you also steal as much other material as possible*

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<sup>20</sup> This might be money, knowledge, practical assistance, services identifying items... whatever the Players/PCs most covet. They can strike up a series of bargains with him, as they have him over a barrel. He might even have a family heirloom or two he could part with, and will certainly be willing to swear oaths that he will uphold his promises. (If necessary he will intend to do so; in the final chapter sufficient problems exist to prevent him.) Some advance payment is OK, but most rewards must wait until the job is done.

<sup>21</sup> The PCs may suspect some ulterior motive for his father's doing this, especially if they suspect that the mad hermit (who has now vanished) was Old Twango. A few of the Townsfolk may confirm that Twango and his father did not get on well.

*from the secure stores in order to obscure the fact that my father's locker was the focus of the robbery. You may keep anything from any of the other lockers, but I must have first refusal of any magical goods recovered and shall pay you one quarter of the market value<sup>22</sup> for such."*

PAUSE for questions/interaction/bargaining. Twango will also hand over a large black metal key, which he says he discovered recently and is the key required to safely open his father's locker. (He is certain this is so, if the PCs are worried a mistake might have been made. He also says that he has seen the locker, and that it is unmistakable in being black and larger than the others, plus lettered with the name "Twango".)

*"Once you have brought the arm back here I shall revivify Fenzark, gain his agreement to repay my efforts in the standard fashion, and then transport all of us to Noval before anybody even knows that the theft has occurred. When I return to Saskervoy some time will have passed and I shall deny all knowledge of criminal acts. Fenzark shall remain hidden and in time will return to the Overworld. No evidence will remain to link me to him or to the theft, you will be long gone, and I shall claim that my increased magical competency is the result of diligent study, which in a way it will be."*

PAUSE again. PCs may have numerous questions about the timing of the trip to Noval and a variety of other things. Invent whatever makes sense in the context of what has unfolded so far. Twango says he can wait a few more days before he needs to go to Noval. Note that he doesn't know any routines of the Saskervoy townsfolk, and will definitely not want to be remotely involved. This is because if he is not actually seen or known to be involved he can later realistically claim ignorance and innocence, saying (if necessary) that he too was fooled and robbed by the mysterious strangers, who then vanished just as abruptly as they had arrived. He is also correct in that he is utterly useless when it comes to burglary. The PCs must do all the following themselves.

If they are nervous of the dangers, or suspect Twango of duplicity, call for Resistances to Avarice (the

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<sup>22</sup> According to his estimation; he may be bargained up to half.



rewards!) and Arrogance (“Perhaps then you are too craven to fulfill this final task?”), and remind them of their goal (PCs Rebuff Twango’s idea at a levy of 1.)

Twango will suggest only one thing; that the PCs take up residence in town, telling folk (if necessary to tell anyone anything) that they have completed their work for Twango (or whatever else it was they have told people they are doing) and are now living on their gains, and/or seeking lucrative employment. This means that they can credibly seek to deposit valuables in the town Civic warehouse and legitimately question its security measures without giving rise to suspicion. (Twango does not suggest this direct link mind you; let the PCs do the role-playing.) The warehouse is where the arm and other relics are stored. Twango instructs the PCs not to even visit him again until the return with the arm. If absolutely necessary (and to inform him of when to expect the arm so that he can begin to prepare the magic to transport them all to Noval) they can contact him through Weamish. Weamish will be at the Inn of the Blue Lamps every afternoon until the first hint of dusk appears. (So that he can travel safely back to Flutic before nightfall. Malser will also bodyguard him.)

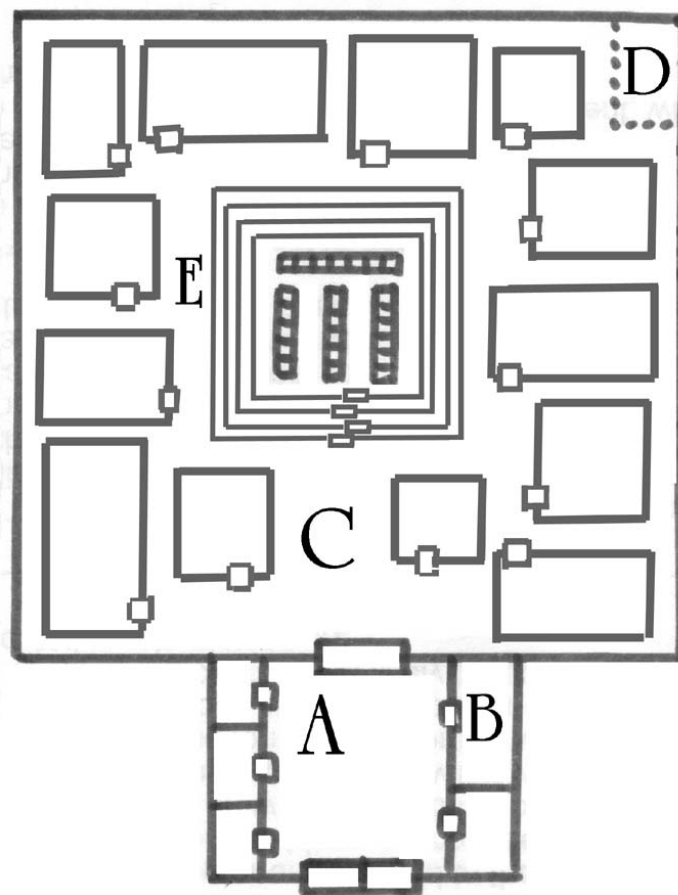
**The Watch:** How boldly the watch feature in this chapter is up to the GM. They might be typically bumbling yokels unused to serious crime, or might be a decent (though inexperienced) crew. Possibly a competent officer might be attached to the case if suspicions are roused, and follow the trail of clues. He might be so skilled that he gains suspicions even though the PCs are skilled at subterfuge. Remember too the Tugersbir detectives!

### Problem 1: Assessing the Job

PCs must gain an overview of the **Civic Warehouse**, find out where the items are stored, and how they are protected. They might do this by presenting real valuables and professing a nervousness that these items will be secure. They may wish to adopt new disguises, and (at least one PC) will certainly need to dress very richly so as to gain boons/bonus to ‘Imposture/ Persuasion’. Even retainers will need to dress and behave appropriately to allay suspicions/ (Feel free to remind players that in Dying Earth societies appearance is often primary, and the reality sadly neglected, thus effrontery and chicanery often work perfectly.)

Another possibility is having one of their fellows become a guard. A PC who claims to be a mercenary of advanced standing (perhaps having worked for Prince Kandive) might approach the town stewards looking for

work suitable to his experience and stature – of which only guarding the Civic Warehouse comes close. At the time of asking there will be no vacancies, but of course one of the current guards could meet a credible ‘accident’ that very night? (One hears that sphigales<sup>23</sup> sometimes take refuge within shoes for instance.) Or might even have an ‘accident’ during the day, and then the PC could step in to offer his services only because of this... (Now you as GM see the need for flexibility as a factor in running this chapter. Who knows what the PCs will decide? Happily because this is DERPG, such odd coincidences rarely come under suspicion.) However they do it, the PCs will need to work out the routines of the guards, and time them (possibly whilst watching from hiding inside a crate) so that a successful break-in can occur. The watchword is improvisation – should attempts to get the keys fail, the PCs may try tunneling in, or invent some other imaginative plan. Judge what may work according to your own best intuitions.



<sup>23</sup> A local crustacean that has a stinger with debilitating poison.



## The Civic Warehouse

All the town's stewards take an interest in the Warehouse, but the person in charge of its administration is Master Chernitz. However, the folk of Saskervoy do not allow a single person to have access. Four people are needed to unlock the primary safe area of the warehouse, and each keeps their own key separate from everyone else. This is then the crux of the matter: first of all the PCs must find out about the four keys, then find out who keeps them, then find out where they are kept, then steal and copy and replace them without anyone knowing this happened.

**A** – Administration Area and Offices. All goods are checked and booked in and booked out.

**B** – Merchants' Room. Bargaining of all kinds may take place here in this comfortable parlor.

**C** – The main area of the warehouse. Each section indicated is a secure store; however, only as secure as a good lock makes it. During their raid the PCs might wish to pick a few in the hopes of finding other valuables.

**D** – The pen of the guard creatures – see below.

**E** – The Secure Store. The bars are solid iron, redolent with ant-enchancements, set in four rows 3ft apart. Each row has its own door set slightly out of plumb in case a directional spell might be used against all of them at once.

**Routine:** Every working day without fail the four key-holders arrive at the Civic Warehouse at the start of the day. At present this is about two hours after dawn. If PCs wish to know how people can tell the time, accurate fob watches take the credit. A small squad of the town watch accompanies each key-holder from their place of residence (stopping to pick up their key if necessary). Having this honor evokes great prestige and a small degree of ceremony. Nobody really believes that anyone would try and steal one of the keys, but a general sense of paranoia means that everyone remains alert 'just in case'. The keyholders for this year are: Master Fegnor (Saskervoy's High Steward), Master Chernitz, Master Koyman, and Lady Kerlianne. After unlocking the keyholders depart and business begins. At the end of the day the self-locking door is merely closed.

**Other Security Measures:** This main section of the building is protected at night by an erb, or possibly a hoon (or maybe even a pair) that have been specially trained. The handler releases it (them?) at closing and drives it/them back into the pen at opening - only minutes before the keyholders arrive. Not only this, but the town watch patrol the plaza regularly (PCs may wish to time them – a minimum of 5 mins will always be available, or as much as the PCs need to break in and swiftly discommode the animals in whatever way they see fit.) Whatever

animals are on guard, they/it are incapable of speech, and the PCs will know this. This means that they do not have to be killed, but could be drugged. Not that a rousing battle with a couple of ferocious beasts leaping and ambushing PCs around the warehouse might not be a bundle of fun too! During the day a dozen burly uniformed attendants patrol the premises, armed with billy clubs and nets. They keep an eye on any and all of the goings on, and four more of them guard the entrance to the secure store in shifts. Dunthold and two of the guards accompany anyone entering the secure store. Since the walls of the store are bars other guards watch those inside.

**Contents:** The main part of the warehouse contains regular goods of all kinds, each locked into their own pen or secure room. Barrels of Tatterblass, crates of dried fish, cured erb-hides, wooden furniture from one of the town's workshops, bundles of paper prepared as manuscripts for books, barrels of salted meat ready for shipment to Cil, racks of spears (also bound for Cil), vegetables from the outlying farms – waiting for the market when they will be sold to local merchants or even wholesale to the townsfolk, finely-crafted metal goods for Olb and Tugersbir.

**The Secure Store** is a very different story. It contains only the town's valuables. These are primarily a series of small lockers containing the valuables of individuals. Each of these is securely padlocked (often two or three). Whilst these could be picked by someone with sufficient time (each attempt taking ten minutes, and even a success taking time: HBS – 10m, PS – 6m, IS – 3m) many [1-4 on D6] are also secured with cantraps. These take effect when anyone unauthorized opens the locker door: blowing dust of stupefaction into the opener's face, filling the entire locker with a clear substance that sets rock hard for three hours then vanishes, an illusion of physical realism that appears to burn the entire contents to ash. Nonetheless, PCs might still manage to access the contents of one or more of these and might find valuable jewels, a few minor magical items, pillow books of the Kang Dynasty, or even erotic appurtenances. Old Master Twango's store is the large black locker that young Twango described to the PCs. The key young Twango gave them works perfectly and dispels (with a flash of sparks) the guardian cantraps. As well as Fenzark's arm it contains: the book "The Decretals of Calanctus", a small box containing 510 gold centrums, a fine example of Talane's Whistle (DDE, p73), an Amorphous Ovoid (IT, p34), a Pen of Chabal (IT,p47), Vrazmund's Lucky Terce (IT, p54), and [if the GM likes] the section of Old Twango's notes that deals with Fenzark's Central Node. NB: Some of these things are useless to the PCs but can be sold at a high price if stolen, or will command high terces from Twango.



## Problem 2: Copying the Keys

Now that the PCs have cased the warehouse and found that the only way in is to access the keys, they need to develop a plan of how to do so. Obviously four simultaneous thefts will alert everyone to the fact that a raid is planned, and individual thefts likewise – plus alerting the other keyholders. Any PC with a hint of criminality and knowledge of city life will have at least have heard of key moulds – small boxes of special clay into which keys are pressed, so that hot metal can be later poured in and a duplicate made. The problem is that they are unlikely to possess such, and don't have access to anywhere that deals with metalwork. So, here are two issues – getting hold of key moulds, and finding somewhere to do the metalwork. Twango has made it clear that they are not to return to Flutic under any circumstances, but the GM might make an exception just for this if they fail in other avenues. Otherwise they may make criminal contacts of their own, and perhaps invent or even begin a decoy operation as the reason for their interest. For instance they might claim to be preparing for a job in another part of the world that they are about to head off to. Lankwiler and Bunderwal are two possible persons who could be bribed or brought into a bogus plan, and Saskervoy is bound to contain at least two metalworking establishments where fine adjustments can be made.

**Master Dunthold:** Dunthold is overseer of the warehouse (Chernitz's man on the spot who does the actual work). He is the person the PCs will need to talk to if they want to find out basic information prior to making a deposit of valuables in the secure area. Merely exhibiting outward signs of wealth can convince him of their integrity. He knows whatever the GM requires him to realistically know in order to make this escapade challenging. He will of course need to be tricked or flattered into revealing any of it.

Persuade (\_\_\_\_\_) [\_\_\_\_], Rebuff (\_\_\_\_\_) [\_\_\_\_]

*Note also that various persons could simply be encountered by 'chance' in one of the town's drinking establishments, and plied with beer and flattery until the time is ripe to discuss matters of civic security. Someone deep in their cups could easily reveal the whereabouts of the key in their charge, and might even have it to hand to show a PC pretending to be a wealthy gentleman<sup>24</sup>, who*

<sup>24</sup> It stretches realism just a little if respectable stewards (even when drunk) tell any old vagabond about town security measures.

*might then (Ψ QUICK-FINGERS) sneakily make the impression right there and then. If the PCs manage to do this easily then ramp up later difficulties to compensate.*

**Master Fegnor:** As mentioned in the Guide to Saskervoy (available at Violet Cusps), Fegnor lives in the manse of the High Steward, since he holds that position this year. He keeps his key in the wine-cellar on top of one of the wine racks. He won't tell anyone this outside of his immediate family, but the servants know that he goes down there every working-day morning immediately before his coachman takes him to the warehouse. Mind you the servants are well-paid and loyal, so they won't do anything that they know inconveniences their master. Searching the whole house would be impossible, since they'd be looking for just one small key that could be anywhere. He does however have an unmarried adult daughter, who is somewhat dense<sup>25</sup> and could be wooed. Obviously she wouldn't tell a PC directly where the key is, but might discuss such things just out of interest if someone wanted to know about her father's business arrangements or flattered her about the cleverness of the security arrangements. Fegnor himself does not associate with outsiders, and the PCs lack sufficient time to make a social connection with him. However, his daughter Callandria has more pressing physical needs that might allow a 'connection' to be made more quickly. She will be amenable to becoming a confidante of someone who is convincingly wealthy, debonair, and additionally lively & imaginative in the arts of the couch. (How much this is also a pleasure for the PC depends on the GM's assessment of what best makes an amusing game.)

Once the location of the key is known, the PCs must break into the house, avoid the servants and depart unnoticed. From midnight until dawn the house is protected by an enchantment, so late in the evening is the best bet. Some kind of diversion might draw everyone from the house, or at least to one window. At the very least the butler would need to be drawn away from the door so that somebody could slip inside. If the

<sup>25</sup> Something that can be used as a plot device to prevent things from going too badly wrong if the PCs fail to woo her well enough. Again, since this is DERPG, there's no problem in having various PCs one after the other try to woo her. Should she fall hopelessly in love with one of them, she could even be let into the plan. (She doesn't have much loyalty to her father, though she wouldn't wish him physically harmed.)





PCs are proficient lockpickers, add in a pair of doors that need to be opened. Other ideas include posing as wealthy visitors, tradesmen, officials from some other part of the world – anything that will get a few of them inside to create a distraction whilst others go and copy the key. The household staff are as few as necessary to make this all work, and might be often out in the laundry or at the market during the day. Possibly the enchantment only covers the ground floor, so the PCs might get onto the roof during the day and then break in after nightfall. If so consider adding a ‘shree’ or ‘fermin’ into the mix to liven things up.

**Master Chernitz:** His key resides in a cupboard in the building that houses the offices of the Saskervoy Stewards. He collects it each morning just before going with the others to unlock the inner store, then returns it at once to its hiding place in a secret drawer in the side of his desk. The Office of the Stewards is locked at night and well-patrolled by the watch, both outside and with two guards that patrol inside. Firstly, the PCs need to find out where the key is. This could be done making an appointment with Chernitz in his office, then observing his reactions when someone outside calls out that the building is on fire. Or as simply as by someone stealthily searching the office whilst the guards walk about in the corridors outside, although this would be hard to do in the dark. The guards could be distracted perhaps? Or it could be done during the day if a PC can sneak in and Chernitz be distracted or away at luncheon.

**Master Koyman:** His key is constantly around the neck of his hulking son Egthold, and Egthold is usually accompanied by two or three of his almost equally looming siblings or cousins. Egthold only relinquishes it each morning when Koyman and his bodyguard call for it, after which the watchmen themselves return Koyman and key to his place of work, where Egthold shortly collects it. Since this place of work is a funeral parlor, we encourage GMs to set some kind of scene there if possible. However, this is probably one of the simplest tasks – perhaps getting Egthold and cronies drunk, or somehow discommoding him in his workplace in such a fashion that he does not suspect duplicity. However, Egthold is thoroughly unpleasant, and despises both foreigners and persons of obvious wealth (and anyone else whom the GM finds it useful for him to despise). He does have one weakness (well, apart from a liking for great quantities of beer), and that is wenching.

**Lady Kerlianne:** Not detailed elsewhere, Kerlianne is an independently wealthy woman who has various business interests, and although in her forties is strikingly handsome. She is also intelligent, ambitious, and possessed of astonishing physical appetites. She keeps the key on her person at all times, and will almost definitely need to be wooed. Only when actually engaged in love-making does she take the key off, and even then she has it close at hand. An accomplice must therefore be nearby to make the impression of the key. Kerlianne might work out that something is going on, but doesn’t really care. The GM might even write her in as an accomplice who enjoys the idea of shaking up stuffy old Saskervoy. Perhaps she blackmails them for a share of the spoils, or even for the vast majority of the spoils. (Presuming that the PCs don’t want to be hung or indefinitely incarcerated.) Invent her servants and household as you see fit.

Persuade (\_\_\_\_\_) [\_\_\_], Rebuff (\_\_\_\_\_) [\_\_\_]

### Magical Assistance

The PCs may well have a few magical items now. If any of these will throw the balance in their favor too much, remember that Valmouny the Insipid (a powerful local mage) has some involvement in the town’s affairs, and may have cast areas of magical nullity, or put other minor protections in place in such areas as the Stewards Office and the Civic Warehouse. Even more easily, the GM (having sensibly read through this entire package before running anything) can just keep track of what the PCs have collected, and make sure anything that might upset the balance runs out of charges prior to this point.

### Problem 3: Breaking Into the Warehouse

Getting inside requires them either to smuggle themselves in disguised as goods<sup>26</sup> or to break in. (Note that if the GM decrees it is so then all boxes big enough to hide a person must be opened and searched before they go into storage.) The only way to break in easily is via the roof, which requires some serious climbing skills, and squeezing through a narrow window far above the warehouse floor. Thus requiring rope, sufficient daring, and (again) serious climbing skill. Once inside they must negotiate the upper rafters (far above the floor) to a point where they can climb down the wall<sup>27</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> A number of options including coffins present themselves.

<sup>27</sup> If you like the copied keys might not quite fit, and thus need further filing at some well-equipped metalworkers workshop.



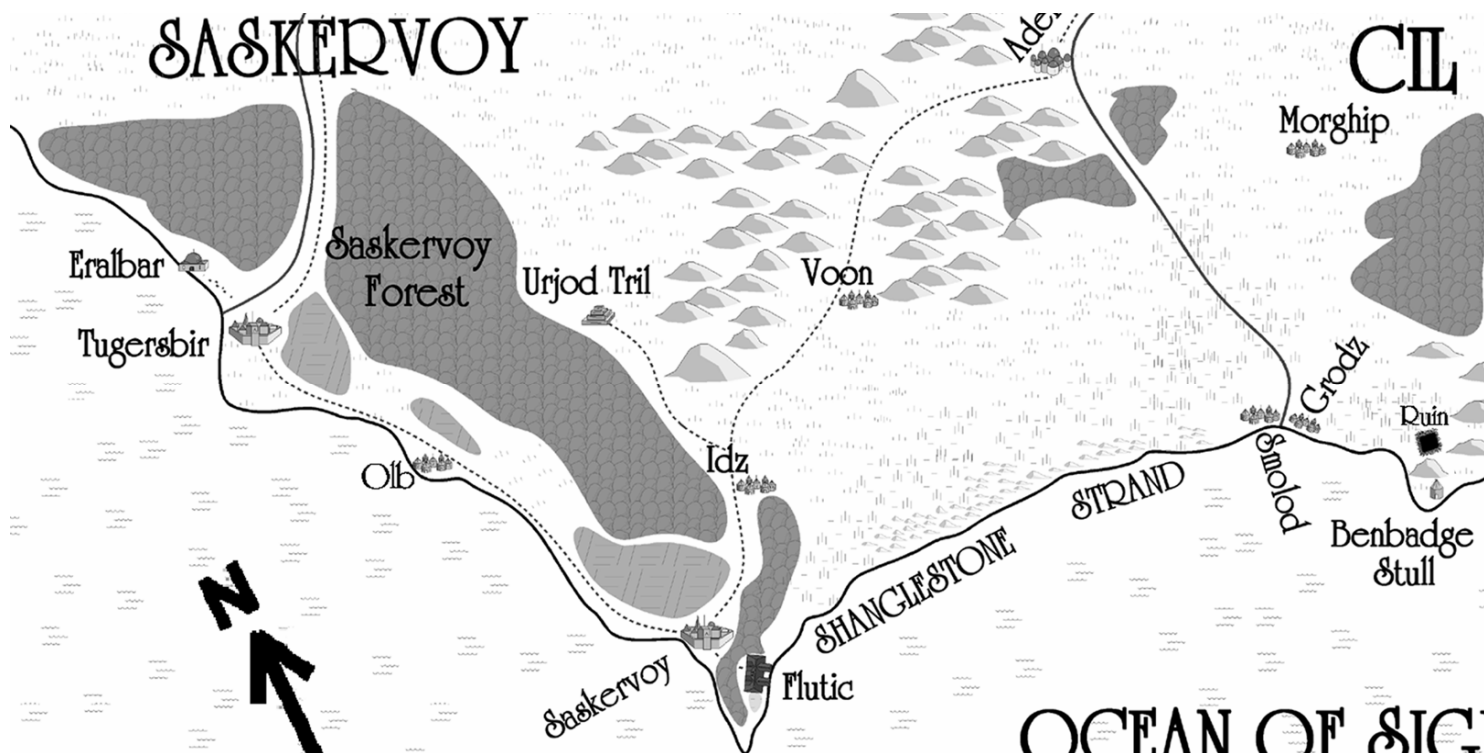
Should the PCs have access to arrow guns, then consider making this even more difficult, with a requirement that they fire a small rope over a rooftop gargoyle outside and then pull a larger rope up with that first rope. Again the GM decides if the Watch has been aware all along and springs from hiding in a last second surprise movement to arrest all the PCs. Or perhaps constables on watch will notice whatever transport the PCs have arranged for their spoils and mark it, requiring an actual rapier fight to ensure a get-away. It is possible that the PCs might ignore Twango's warnings and be chased back to Flutic. It is possible then that the next section can be summarized simply, as he expels them from his presence in a burst of magic – so as to pretend to be on the side of authority when the minions of law burst onto his premises.

**Back to Flutic:** Once they have the arm, the PCs will no doubt return to Flutic. If more action is required manufacture some kind of difficulty, even just some odd creature in the woods. Perhaps it appears from nowhere, some strange multi-legged beast and eats the arm, requiring that then they must hunt it fearlessly and

butcher it. Or maybe a gang of hoons ambushes the wagon of the PCs and must be fought off.

### Emergency Options

Should this prove a useful distraction, enraged madlocks burst into town in a frenzied attack, fresh after their chase of the boat across Saskervoy. (It must be at least 24 hours since the PCs left Lench.) They might attack the PCs or just anyone; a battle across town might even ensue. Should the PCs utterly fail towards the end of this section, simply give them the opportunity to escape Saskervoy. Make this realistic, with a civic pursuit and a general hue and cry that brings out the entire town against them. They can head into the wilds and eventually reach Cil, knowing that if they ever go back to Saskervoy they will be incarcerated or worse. Introduce an officer of the Watch who is tracking their activities if this is amusing and apposite. If the PCs are caught and incarcerated, also run this as fully as you can. Twango (in order to avoid implication, or further implication in an actual judicial hearing) will break them out by using an Agent of Far Dispatch, which will carry them east and dump them back on Shanglestone Strand near Smolod & Grodz (see next section).





## Finale: Departing Saskervoy

*GM Note: Run whatever version you use as a full role-playing opportunity with options and descriptions. None of the below might exactly fit the position of your PCs – in which case improvise. Don't skimp on the options for the PCs to experience role-playing (rather than telling them what is happening).*

### 7.1) Fenzark's Central Node

If the PCs never had Fenzark's Central Node, go to 7.2. If they do have it, or did, then Twango greets them excitedly and invites them to be present whilst he puts what he believes to be the final piece (the right arm) on the statue. (He comments in passing: "Fenzark appears to have a cranial cavity, presumably such is de rigeur amongst his species"). Then (unless stopped) he will carefully read out the long revivification conjuration. (In this option Twango means to honor his agreement with them.) If the PCs have the Node and bargain (Ψ PERSUADE) for further rewards (rather than simply giving it to him), Twango is receptive - because the central node was never part of the deal (he did not know of it). He has no readily available magic to cast at them, though he will at first pretend that he has. "Forlorn Encystment at a depth of forty-five miles?" Once he's agreed to their demands (he'll go to a maximum of one third of the Fenzark's boons plus other money or items), and the Node has been inserted, go to 7.3. If the PCs do not reveal that they have the node (or once had it), and let Twango go ahead, also go to 7.3 – and make sure they're aware that the resultant insanity is their fault. (NB: inserting the node after the fact doesn't help.) If they had it and lost it - and tell him, Twango will become enraged and attempt to drive them out of the manse. In the middle of that argument Old Twango will appear, and subdue Young Twango with magic; use a variation on 7.2.

### 7.2) The Revenge of Old Twango

In the workroom are two Twango's; one standing and one gagged and bound to a chair with a mass of rope. Perceptive PCs might spot that the one standing is slightly older than the one they know. The PCs might recognize Old Twango, though he appears younger and healthier (and saner) than when they saw him last.

#### PCs Treated Old Twango Well?

If they treated Old Twango with consideration when attempting to evict him from the beach he will say this: *"Because of your unusual considerations when I was suffering misfortune I hold you blameless for the acts of my son. If you hand me the final arm without delay I shall allow you a few minutes to collect whatever belongings you can carry and depart this manse."*

He is not open to discussion, does have spells (including protections) and is clearly simmering with anger:

*"I spent decades researching the locations of the parts of Fenzark, only to be thwarted at the last by the machinations of my son and his unscrupulous partner – the Laughing Magician."*

It is possible (through excellent role-playing and rolls) to convince Old Twango at this point that they have a mutual foe, and that to send them across the ocean would give them a chance to attack Iucounu, and 'strike a blow for Old Twango'. If they convince him go to 7.4. If they fail, he says that with the help of Fenzark he is perfectly capable of his own revenges. If they dawdle it becomes painfully obvious that he is borderline insane and will encyst them or subject them to the prismatic spray if they don't remove themselves. Go to 7.5.

#### PCs Treated Old Twango Badly?

*"Ah yes, the lackeys of my treacherous son in the grand deception."* Superb Persuasions (rolls & words) can convince him that they did not know and are sorry. In such a case, as above he will grant some minutes to grab their belongings and leave; go to 7.5. More likely their whinings merely anger him further, and he mutters that once he has reanimated Fenzark he will order fitting punishments. The PCs may flee, in which case go to 7.5. Or they may attack him, in which case he immobilizes them with Felojun's Second Hypnotic (DERPG, p107): go to 7.3 (with the Second Hypnotic ending as soon as Old Twango is gripped by the head). He wears Laccodel's Rune (DERPG, p117), so is immune to most magics, therefore it is unlikely that the PCs can inconvenience him. If they do, the fallback option is that the proximity of his arm enlivens Fenzark, and his will draws it to him, and he reanimates himself. If the PCs flee at this, go to 7.5. If they attempt heroics adapt 7.3.

### 7.3) It's Insane

Whether or not the central node is in place, as soon as he is animate (after a certain period of thrashing around if it is missing its central node) it lunges for Twango and grasps him by the head. Twango flops and shrieks horribly. If the PCs attempt heroics, they will find Fenzark invulnerable to their best efforts. (As an Overworld being it resists all regular magic they can muster.) Ideally the PCs flee the manse; go to 7.5. If they persist, Fenzark will finish with Twango, and let him drop the floor. Then it will turn to the PCs and utter a series of strange buzzing words. An electric whirlwind, rushes them out into the garden and tumbles them through the air at immense speed before dumping them roughly onto a rough shingle beach; 7.6.



## 7.4) The Conjuration Goes Wrong

If Old Twango has agreed to help them, he will first reveal that the treacherous young Twango made up the whole thing about Noval and could have sent them there in the same fashion as he sent them to Lench. He will release young Twango's gag and involve him in the conversation. Young Twango will curse his father and cry out for the PCs to attack the man and set him (Young Twango) free, cursing them if they do not, and offering huge rewards. After this conversation Old Twango will gag his son again, then have Weamish fetch the rowboat and allow the PCs to pack their belongings before beginning a superior conjuration that he says will transport them south. (It is *Thasdrubal's Laganetic Transfer* again.) At the height of this conjuration, moments before its completion, Gark and Gookin will leap out of the shadows and attack Old Twango with knives, causing him to shriek with pain rather than uttering the last pervulsions of the spell. (Or, if they haven't already reappeared, a squad of commando madlocks burst onto the scene, thirsting for revenge.)

The PCs are once again unable to get out of the rowboat, even though they can tell that something has gone horribly wrong. The great winged demon appeared as it did when Iucounu banished them, snatches up the rowboat with a screech and flies out to sea at a height of only 200ft. However, it then begins to veer east rather than south, roughly following the coastline above Shanglestone Strand – although sometimes veering further out to sea, but never rising. Describe the cold and scary journey so close to the surface of the waters and the coastal rocks. The trip terminates at the first light of dawn (no coincidence), when the demonic creature suddenly vanishes with a loud pop and a sulphurous odor. The boat, baggage, and PCs plummet 200ft into the waters a good quarter mile off shore. However, the boat remains buoyant (though upside down) and all manage to cling to it until they are nearly at the shore. At this point a large wave picks them all up and carries them up onto the beach along with (miraculously) some of their belongings washed up from beneath the waves. The boat's hull is smashed upon a rock. Go to 7.6.

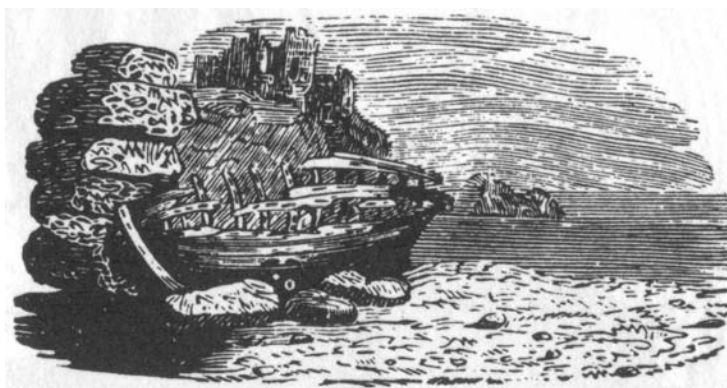
## 7.5) Getting Out of Town

It is possible that the PCs might escape the above options and find themselves hurrying from Flutic with life, limb and even some of their goods. They are now wanted criminals in Saskervoy (and in surrounding towns as soon as word spreads) and so will know for a fact that they must leave the area immediately. The PCs might have sufficient magical items and wherewithal to feel safe to strike eastwards along the Strand (only in this option will they come to Smolod in any other way than via option 7.6).

More likely, they will spin some story for Soldinck and Mercantides (and/or bribe them enormously) and get passage on their next ship (which they will have learned is departing shortly after dawn and heading for Cil). After their confidence game in Saskervoy it can of course only be a short while before the thefts are discovered, but nonetheless the early departure of the boat will precede this by half an hour. Of course manufacture some delays so that the PCs get to watch the key-keepers heading towards the warehouse before the *Sea Hawk* casts off. (And to watch the resultant amusing agitation in the plaza as they sail out to sea.) It is a three-day trip, and the *Sea Hawk* moors offshore near Smolod and Grodz during the second night. (The lights of these towns can be seen, and a crewmember will speak of them as strange places, but hospitable enough.) At first light a thryfwyd attacks the ship. In order to appease this beast the PCs (being the only non-crew) are to be thrown overboard. If this happens as planned the beast ignores them and decides to eat the ship. (Thus they can swim to shore.) If they fervently (and effectively) resist being thrown overboard, the creature starts to eat the ship anyway, causing panic and an attempt to beach the ship in the shallows. The crew defends vigorously, slashing at tentacles and occasionally being savaged by the beak. Sensible PCs will disembark into the shallows. The tide is rising and the ship and creature will soon drift out to sea. Go to 7.6.

## 7.6) On the Beach

⊕ To the north beyond an expanse of reed-covered dunes are 'marshy barrens' scattered with straggling copses of black larch and dank yellow spinifex 'leading to a far huddle of low hills'. Far to the west must lie a dim headland that you know quite well, but it is not visible. Much closer to the east is another forested headland. A cold salty breeze stirs the air, and the gritty gray sand of the beach is already starting to find its way into your shoes and hair. In the distant north the tiny speck of a pelgrane or some similar creature of the air can be seen circling.





## Appendix A - Flutic

### General Overview

When regarding the map, remember that the rooms are all large and gothically impressive, so whilst they may not be many in number, Flutic nonetheless has a feeling of spacious grandeur. Ornamentation is rare in the corridors, save for a few paintings of ancestors and various antiquities (such as crossed sabers, heraldic shields etc). At night (as mentioned in the scenario) all curtains are drawn and a barrier of energy protects all save the fortified main door.

### General Knowledge about Flutic (Scuttlebutt)

**Twango** – He is a magician, but not one of much power. He is not adventuring spell-caster, but a sage, collector and businessman. His father was a much more potent magician, but young Twango never really had the knack. Until a few years ago Twango lived in his family home in Saskervoy. This was sold when he moved to Flutic. His father was already old, and (apparently) died last year. Both men were avid collectors of magical and antique curios, and Twango still has the inherited wealth to pursue this hobby. (Which is his main occupation.)

**The House** - Master Twango has lived here for less than a year. His father had the house magically transported from its previous location near Tugersbir. This was because Old Twango discovered that within the small lake beside the house's current location is a relic of a previous aeon, the scattered fragments of some inter-dimensional being, which he was planning to recover with the idea of reconstruction. Twango's father established the powerful magic within the house.

**Twango's Friends & Connections** – The locals hold suspicions of Twango (as they did his father) simply because he is a recluse and full of his own self-importance. In short he has no friends, and his only regular associates are Masters Soldinck and Mercantides of the firm Soldinck & Mercantides, Shipping Agents.

### The Various Locations in and Around the House

*Rooms not listed can be described at the GM's whim.*

**Carriage House** - Built partially into the side of a large rise in the ground, the lower floor has a large door that can be slid aside, giving access to the main lower room. In here is the space where Twango's carriages (the main one and the old spare carriage) are protected from the elements when not in use. Here too are a pair of stables, though only one is occupied (by Twango's draft percher 'Champion'). Upstairs, reached through a doorway directly up the hill, is split into a carpentry workshop and a large storeroom for lumber and spare furniture.

**Laundry** - Large stone building with troughs and a pump. It serves as the place where scale-divers sluice themselves, and where Weamish launders Tango's clothes.

**Conservatory** – This room has two walls of glass set into a wrought iron framework. Within is Bilberd's pride and joy, trays and rows of unusual plants. Glass doors open onto the verandah. If it amuses the GM odd exotic plants here need to be fed by hand (mice and the like), talk strangely, and/or have vicious teeth and try to bite passers-by.

**Parlor** – A sumptuously festooned relaxation room, of plump divans and large encompassing armchairs. One the walls are various well-painted scenes of beautiful local areas of naturally wonderful aspect. The only discordant element is a full suit of platemail that stands menacingly in the corner, hefting an ornate mace as if waiting to repel intruders. (This is a magical guardian that activates if half-men invade the house – which may cause problems if any PC - or PC retainer - vat-creature with half-man plasm wanders about unescorted.)

**Refectory** – Tables along one side, and a buffet of viands on the other. Spare plates and crockery is stored upon shelves.

**Kitchen** - The source of the abundant food (dishes including tureens of hunter's goulash with morels and dumplings, braised eel with ramp and turnips, a conserve of exotic fruits, coarse bread and pickled or boiled kelp, a fine cut of roast mutton with a piquant sauce, assorted side dishes, and platters of mungberry trifle) are prepared (indeed conjured) by the final extant daihak that was conjured by Old Twango. This human-sized demonette is the vaguely attractive 'Caranak' who cannot attack anyone, nor leave the kitchen (except to load the buffet when no-one else is present in the refectory). Since conjuring food is the only magic she is able to use she practices widely. Since she is largely deprived of other diversions, a strong and energetic mail might find a visit to the kitchen more entertaining than originally planned.



**Library** – If using the research table (at 2.7) this is a well-stocked personal library. It is somewhat disordered (in this case catalogued in such a way as only Old Twango understands the system) so that the research period is five hours. Many books line the walls, three large armchairs, and two writing-desks with more regular chairs, plus another suit of armor (this time toting a broadsword) complete the décor. This suit is not magical, except to the fact that if anyone removes a book without Twango’s permission the suit of armor will chase them and attempt to behead them. It is slow and ungainly and makes an awful racket, so is mostly useful as an alarm rather than as a death-dealer.

**Curio Room** – A chamber of many shelves and cases, containing stuffed animals, items of archeological significance, and a variety of statuettes (including a pair of small quasi-human grotesques rendered in exact detail – Gark & Gookin). Also here is a mirror (behind a curtain) that shows people’s inner natures (and any other weird things the GM invents).

**Common Bunkroom** – Hardly a salubrious place; but sufficient. Yelleg, Malser and Bilberd have alcoves here, for which they pay a trifle extra. If one eschews privacy one may sleep for free on a cot in the central area. Each bed is provided with a small lockable footlocker – at no extra cost.

**Guest Rooms 1 & 2** – Young Twango never has guests, though his father sometimes did. Both are currently unoccupied, but each have three beds, associated dressing tables and cupboards, and even small alcoves containing tin baths. The PCs who are Agent and main Guard will be elevated to these accommodations once they are officially sworn in as employees. (The other PCs will have access to a private cubicle each in the main bunkroom.

**Twango’s Washroom** – Well-appointed with various magical amenities. (PCs are unlikely ever to be in here, but if they are they may be startled by the inviting voices that ask what functions they wish to perform, and the invisible and disembodied hands that assist them.)

**Twango’s Bedroom** – A large four-poster bed with a headboard carved in the shape of two intertwined nymphs (it remains Young Twango’s greatest annoyance that he doesn’t know how to activate them), fancy cupboards, and a selection of clothes (though Young Twango rarely experiments with such things).

**Twango’s Study** – This room is protected by certain elemental energies that can activate crackling electrical bolts. This is much to Young Twango’s dissatisfaction as their buzzing sometimes keeps him awake at night. Within the journals and reference tomes here are mighty academic theories of the type no Cugel-Level PC can even begin to understand.

**Workroom 1** – Twango sorts and stores the few scales of Sadlark here that have already been recovered.

**Workroom 2** – This is where Twango experiments with his vats. Should some PC ever become horribly injured and returned to this place perhaps Twango could fix them in one of the vats?

## Master Twango

*“Greetings. I am Master Twango, owner of Flutic.”*

Short and corpulent, with a bald-head surrounded by shiny black curls & a faddish little goatee. Twango typically wears a black gown, and when outside sports a black-furred bicorn hat. He needs to be played as aloof but not arrogant, and as self-assured but not overbearing. In short he is an employer willing to take the time to help them get set up, but really doesn’t want to be disturbed in his work – and just wants them to perform the tasks he sets. The PCs need to trust that he will do what he says, so that they are motivated to work for him. (See also T’T, pp133/134)

**Ratings:** Fortright [\_\_\_\_], Lawyerly [\_\_\_\_], Caution 4, Intuition 6, Health 6, Magic (Studios)[\_\_\_\_], Appraisal 10, Athletics 3, Etiquette 4, Pedantry 6 (Antiquities), Perception 6, Stewardship 8, Wherewithal [\_\_\_\_]

## Weamish

*“This is Flutic, where Master Twango keeps his residence. What is your business?”*

A ‘pinch-faced old man, thin pale and stoop-shouldered’. Weamish is elderly and more than a little odd. He can be a mouthpiece for some information. Most particularly he worked for a decade Twango the Elder, who was a real magician, and can inform the PCs that as old as it looks Weamish cannot and will not say much about his employers, as he thinks Twango is considering dismissing him, and worries about being overheard or having his words reported to Twango by the PCs. “Both Masters liked their privacy and I shall not break my pledge of solicitude.”

**Ratings:** Fortright [\_\_\_\_], Wary [\_\_\_\_], Caution 2, Sure-Footedness [\_\_\_\_], Health 4, Appraisal 2, Athletics 4, Driving 3, Etiquette 3, Pedantry 3, Scuttlebutt 5, Stealth 7, Stewardship 6, Wherewithal [\_\_\_\_]





## Gark & Gookin

**Ratings:** Persuade (Forthright) 6, Rebuff (Contrary) 8, Attack (Strength) 5, Defense (Dodge) 6, Health 9, Magic (innate) 3, Appraisal 2, Athletics 4, Concealment 3, Gambling 3, Perception 5, Stealth 4, Stewardship 7, Wherewithal 6.

## Bilberd

*"I have gardened at Flutic for twenty-three years and I am starting to lose interest in the job."*

In his early forties and still healthy and spry, Bilberd can seem to be a half-wit on first meeting because he is somewhat introverted and focuses on the task at hand, whatever it is. Surprisingly he is often well-dressed (for one of his outdoor profession), and is something of a minor man about town on his days off. His secret desire is a career in fashion design.

**Ratings:** Eloquent [\_\_\_\_], Pure-Hearted [\_\_\_\_], Finesse 5, Dodge 9, Health 8, Athletics 7, Driving 4, Etiquette 6, Pedantry 5 (Fashion Design), Scuttlebutt 6, Seduction 5, Stealth 4, Stewardship 4, Wherewithal [\_\_\_\_]

## Yelleg

*"That is a remarkably bold attitude."*

A person large and thick-necked with a florid complexion, a tumble of blond curls and a surly expression.

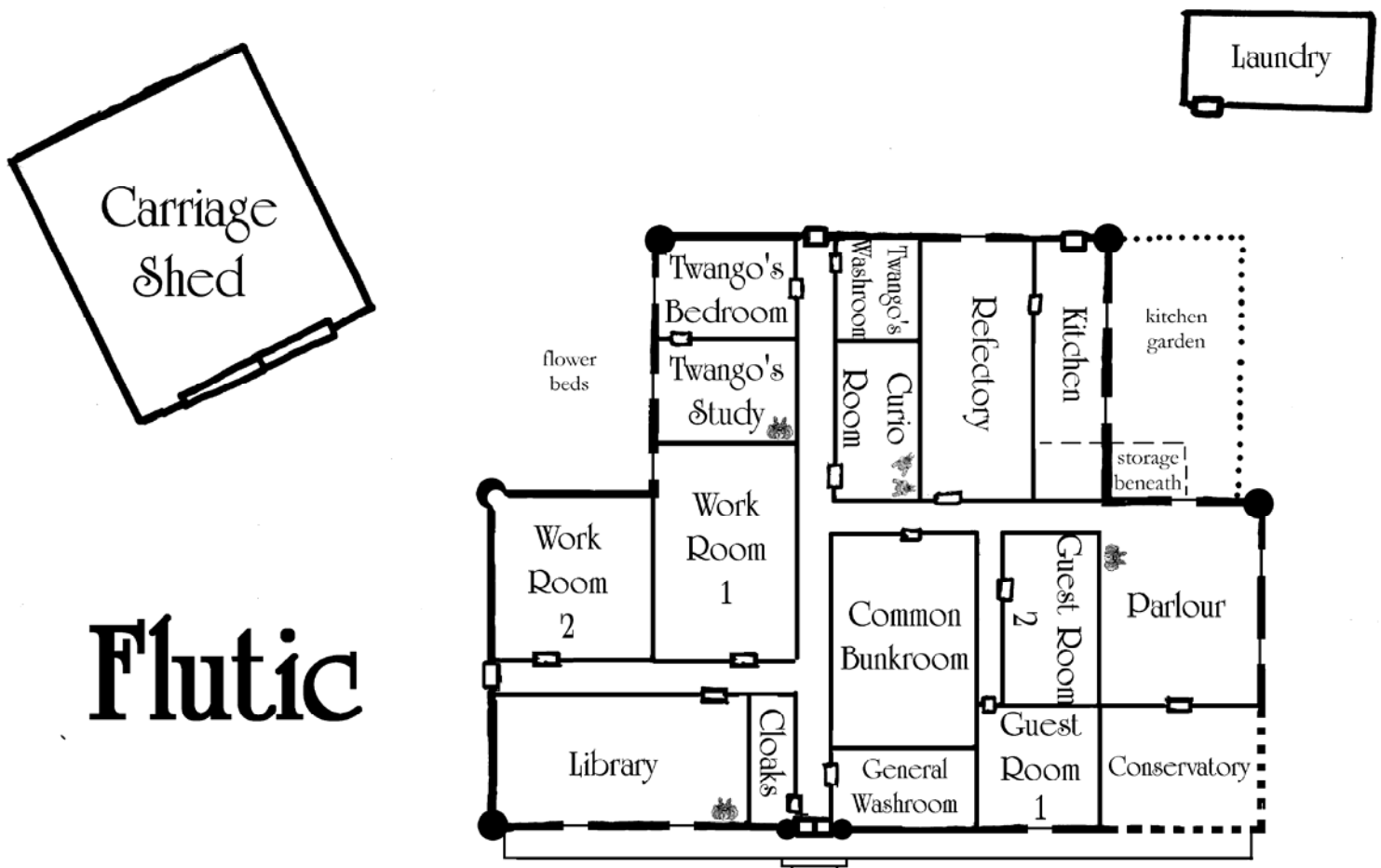
**Ratings:** Intimidating [\_\_\_\_], Penetrating [\_\_\_\_], Strength 8, Parry 9, Health 10, Athletics 8, Wherewithal [\_\_\_\_]

## Malser

*"The fire is cold ashes. Have you no mercy?"*

As lean as a lizard, with a dark leathery skin, a marrow bony face and coarse black hair.

**Ratings:** Forthright [\_\_\_\_], Contrary [\_\_\_\_], Speed 7, Sure-Footed 10, Health 9, Athletics 8, Scuttlebutt 3, Whthl [\_\_\_\_]





## Appendix B - Tugersbir

### Town Overview

Tugersbir is a much larger town than Saskervoy and at the time of the Cutz Wars was an even more major settlement. At that time its citizens were amongst the first to reject the Imperial yoke of Cil, and the memory of Cil's rapacious rulership still rankles. Tugersbir's large, high-gabled, timber-framed houses are set around the bowl of a hill, and the town is very old indeed. Some still say that Tugersbir is the most northerly settlement of note, and they may be right, though that description was more obviously true in historical times. Ruins are visible protruding from the earth right down to the edge of the bay and the Saskervoy River. Certain ancient documents indicate that what remains of Tugersbir now was once only a single prosperous district of the original city, named rather blandly merely as 'North Hill'.

The residents are civilized folk and still hold to the ancient traditions of a representative council voted on a majority mandate by all adult citizens every three years. Policing of the town is conducted by an organization known as the Tugersbir Yeomanry, a paid group whose senior officers are also elected by the citizenry from suitable candidates within the ranks. The most famous civic facility is the Tugersbir Institute, which is the only notable center of learning in the whole of the north. Though a council rules the town, the nominal head is Tugersbir's Regent. However, this hereditary position has more responsibilities for the opening of fetes, organizing of banquets, and playing host to foreign merchants and artists. Such (Tugersbir folk say) is the problem with the cities of the south.

### Places of Note

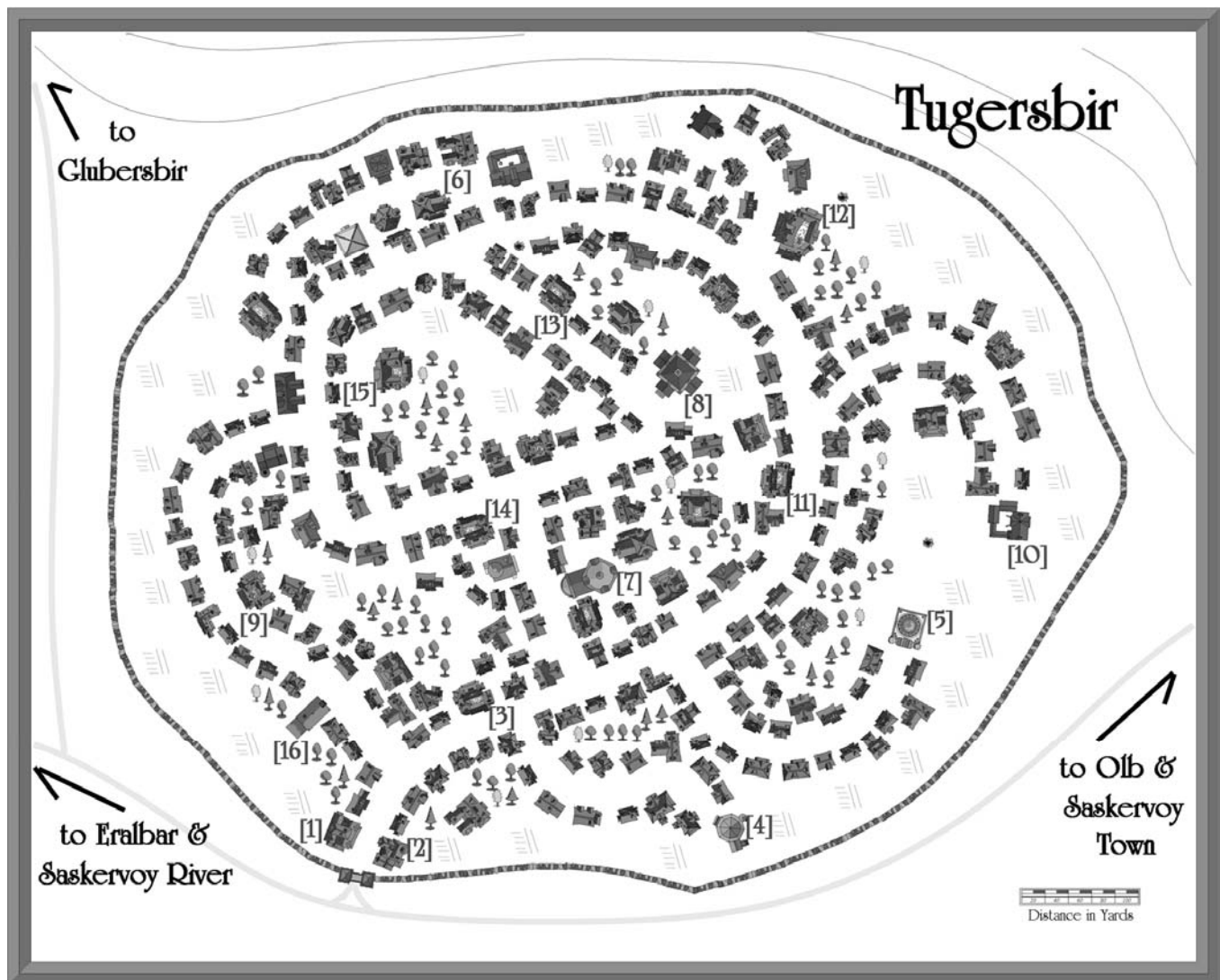
- 1) The Saskervoy Arms (the largest of Tugersbir's inns: popular with both locals and travelers)
- 2) The Shrieking Keak (the second largest town inn, popular with seafarers and fishermen)
- 3) The Emperor's Head (since the sign in front of this large tavern depicts the severed head of some deposed despot whose face remains cruel even in death, one can only assume that the name refers to the Emperor of Cil)
- 4) The Paper Mill. This establishment produces paper and finished books. Its inner workings are a secret, and believed by all locals to be sorcerously-powered machinery.
- 5) The Regent's Manor
- 6) The Tugersbir Institute – A collection of academic and residential buildings all the way along College Street. These include the large Tugersbir Librarium and the Acolytes Building. The Librarium has a general area where all (even travel-worn vagabonds) are welcome, providing they clean their boots before entry, take care of the reading materials, and if electing to sleep do so quietly in a corner. However, the premium stacks are available only to students, academics and those visitors and locals of proven good character. Wardens with billy-clubs patrol the premises in order to make sure such rules are kept to.
- 7) The famous and ancient Basilica of Cutz, which also serves as the Town Hall and Administration Building
- 8) The Tugersbir Baths. Another relic from ancient days, this impressive building houses a series of larger and smaller rooms fed from underground hot springs. Some say that certain private rooms still have attendant nymphs.
- 9) The Green Queycekenjole Inn, the door of which is decorated with a pair of keak jawbones taken from a specimen of extraordinary size washed up on the coast some years ago.
- 10) The City Tannery
- 11) Tugersbir Metalworkers' Guild. The artisans in these workshops manufacture all from rapiers to dinner forks
- 12) Tugersbir Civic Smithy and Stableyard
- 13) The Regency – a fine inn, its back bar popular with students and travelers
- 14) The Headquarters and Stables of the Tugersbir Yeomanry
- 15) The Mercantile Building – offices and boardrooms
- 16) The Fishmarkets



## The Tugersbir Institute

It is split into five principle faculties: Historians (includes Architecture, Local History, Ancient History, History of Almerly & Ascolais); Geographers (includes flora and fauna of the wilds as well as actual geographical locations); Artisans (includes metalworking, woodworking – all types – jewelry-making, lock-smithing, sculpture); Philosophers (as large and as useless as anyone with knowledge of DERP might suspect); and Acolytes (students of magic).

**The Acolytes Faculty** – Knowledge of magic in this region is only a fraction of that known in the south. Historical reasons exist for this – way back in the Cutz Wars all local magicians of note perished and their workbooks went with them. Much time has passed since then of course, but for many generations the people of the Saskervoy Region distrusted all magicians as being pretty much demonists by definition. This remains part of their mistrust of the old Cil Empire, whose rulers were indeed demonists rather than true magicians. As knowledge of magic did return from other parts of the world, magicians and pedants hoarded it jealously. So, whilst cantraps have comparatively flourished, and probably half of all adults in Tugersbir know at least one cantrap, spells have not. The mental skills required to master magic have been lost, as has the cultural motivation to recapture this loss. Certainly exceptions exist, and these include typical students who enroll in the Acolytes Faculty. However, education at the Institute is cross-disciplinary and very few people enroll solely as an ‘Acolyte’. Thus very few have the time or dedication for the months of study required to learn true magic, and none have the motivation to study such risky things within the field by trial and error.

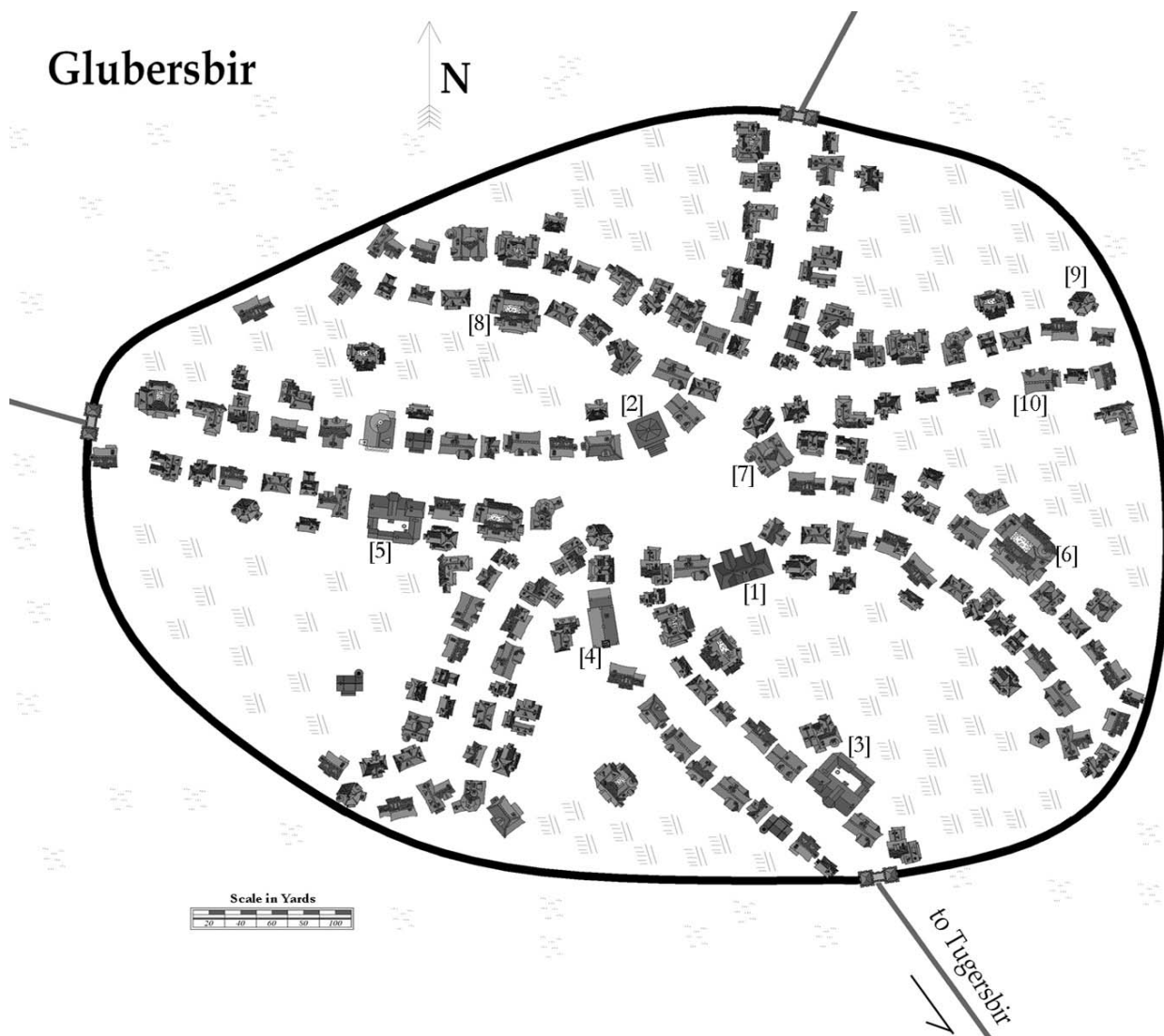




## Appendix C: Glubersbir

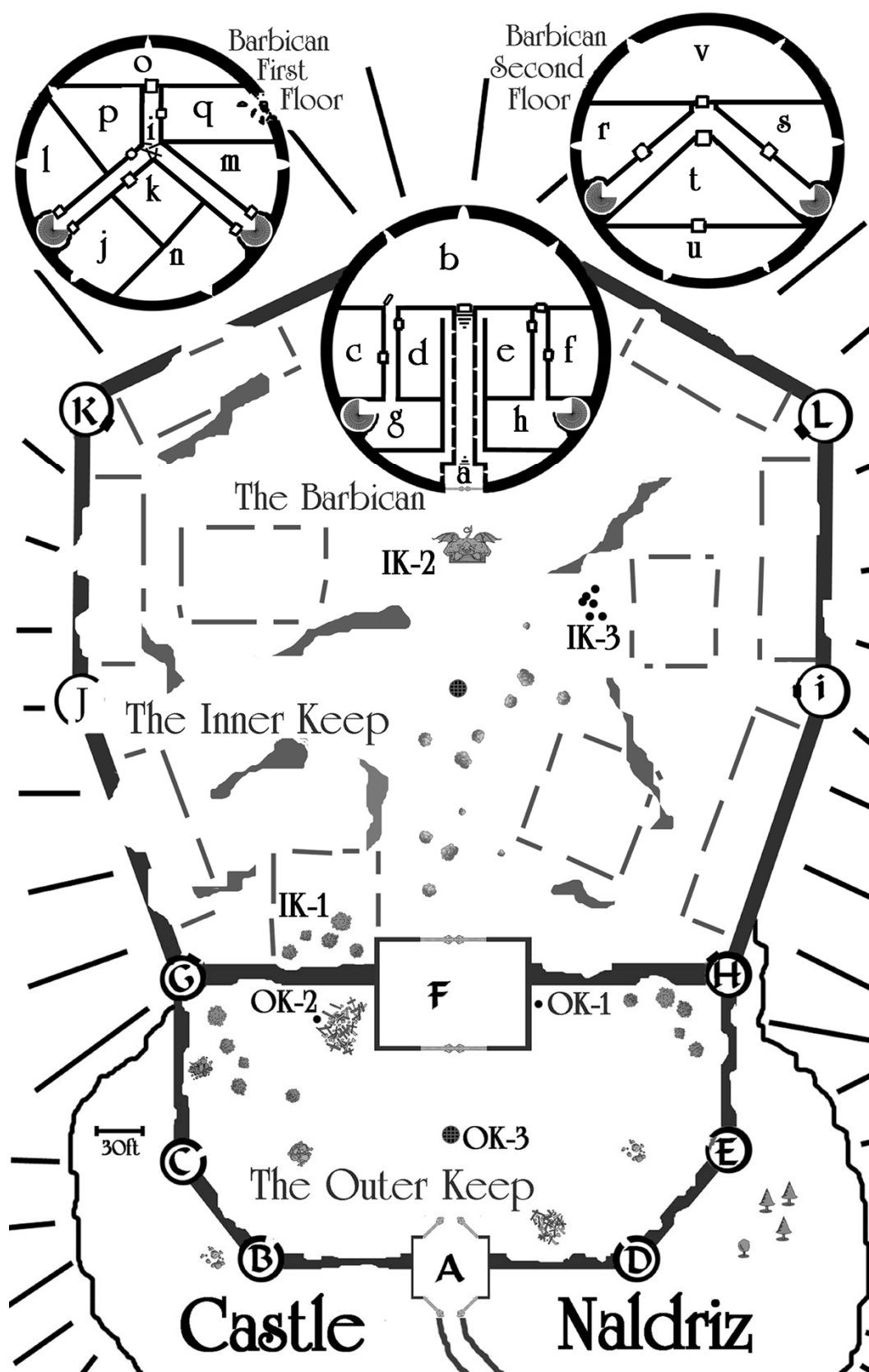
Glubersbir is a frontier town of rough sensibility. Though like Tugersbir the houses are old and of good aspect, they are not so well cared for. Nonetheless civic pride is in evidence in other ways. The streets are clean, the market gardens well-tended, and the sturdy town wall is patrolled day and night. At night the large wooden gates are closed and locked and are never opened for anyone except in the most exceptional circumstances. Regularly deodands stand in the shadows beyond the gate lamps imploring to be let inside and claiming to be deceased victims returned from the wilds. Occasionally watchmen (with nightvision cantraps) take potshots at them with longbows. Once again this town shows signs of once having been much larger, though in this case the ruins are all inside the old walls, and have largely been cleared to make way for the many market gardens and orchard patches. In town the PCs may learn that all locals consider that the lands to the north and west are hazardous indeed. The grasslands give way to tundra only a few miles beyond the town and no more habitations are in evidence.

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1) The Town Hall          | 6) Town Stables and Blacksmiths                 |
| 2) Glubersbir's Law Court | 7) Glubersbir Mayor's House                     |
| 3) The Southway Inn       | 8) Offices of the Glubersbir Watch              |
| 4) Civic Warehouse        | 9) The East Tower (home of Zaunt the Celestial) |
| 5) The Witch's Inn        | 10) Drunken Griffin Tavern                      |



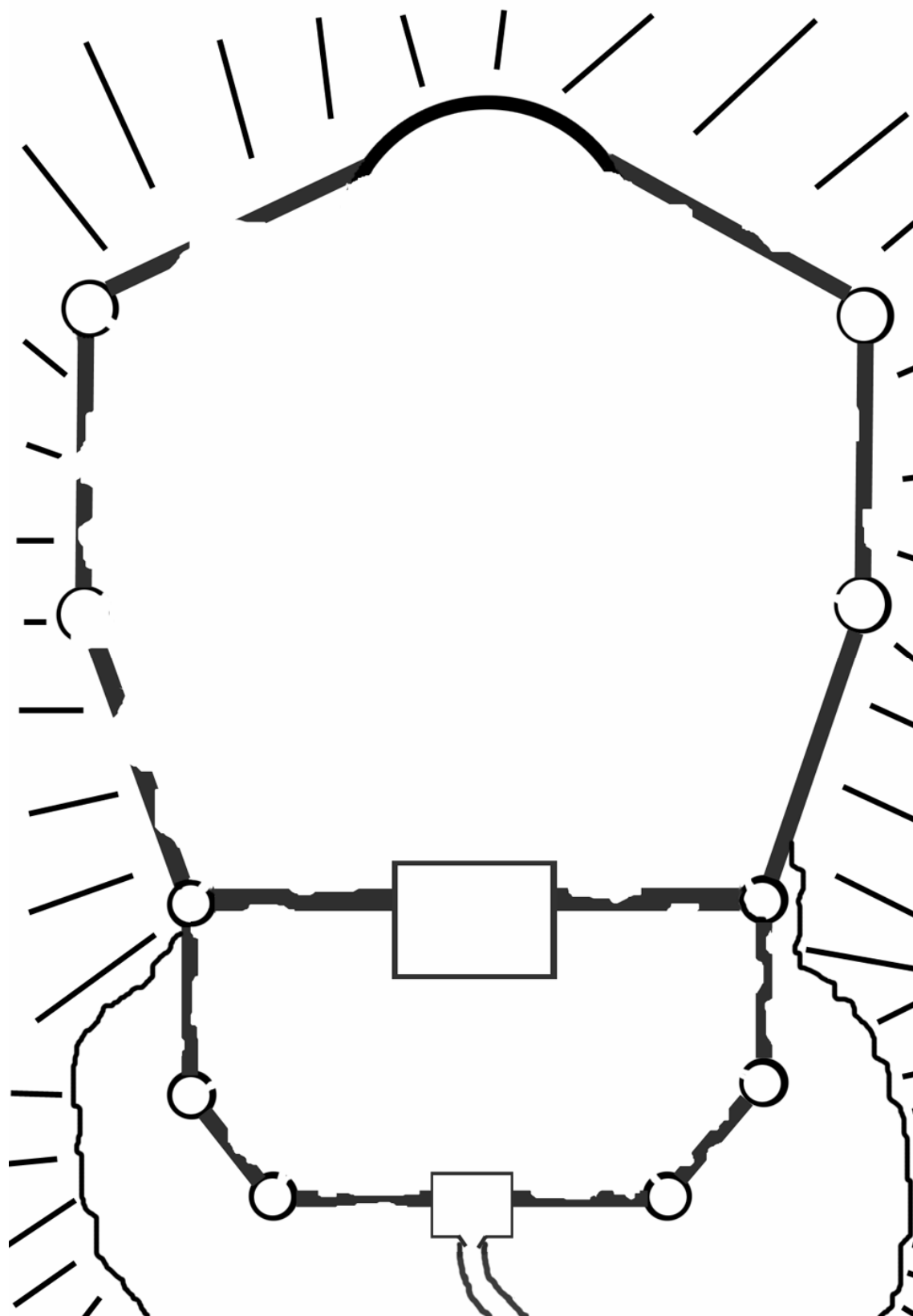


## Appendix D1: Castle Naldriz (GM's Map)





## Appendix D2: Castle Naldriz (Players' Outline Map)







## Appendix E: Critical Found Items at Castle Naldriz

Several magical items must be found in this location because they are necessary for either (aiding in the Tugersbir Institute theft (Chapter 4) or for surviving the Tests of Vladzark (Chapter 5). Locate these randomly, preferably in typical *and* unusual places. If necessary point them out if the PCs forget to search: *“Now that the rotting undead have been hacked to pieces does one of you want to take the gold runic ring that one was wearing?”* Keep such questions casual as if you are doing the PCs a minor favor, rather than introducing a major plot assistance. Likewise if necessary later on, suggest (possibly using Twango as a mouthpiece) that any and all magical items of potential usefulness should be carried on each mission (just in case). *“You never know when something might be important.”* Again keep any such suggestions casual. If the worst comes to the worst and PCs stubbornly refuse to take potentially useful stuff along then they’ll just have to survive the hard way.

Obviously distribute these things amongst various other items of greater or lesser usefulness that you invent to be discovered here. Not all the things that they find will be plot devices – some might even be carried on to future adventures beyond this publication. In the case of all items it is important to create flourishing descriptions. Make each sound very impressive indeed; especially items that can be worn – silks, bejeweled, finely-tailored, lined with finest erbfur... This will then make the PCs more likely to retain them, as well as assisting the atmosphere of DERPGR grandeur.

*The following items are all charged, and the charges will expire whenever the GM says they do. In my games PCs do not know how many charges an item has, as the GM rather than the Players keep track of such things. The main reason for this is so that some of the devices can expire exactly when the PCs have come to rely on them too much, or when at the most amusing or game-useful moment. I reserve this for unusual items and generally invent a number and stick to it. In the case of the items listed here the number of charges is not defined.*

### For Chapter 4:

**Green Cusps:** These items allow you to see magical auras (such as cantraps). Concentrate + expend 1 Magic pool point.

**Wand of Magical Nullity:** Sufficiently potent to deactivate small magics for several minutes. Cantrap plus 1 pool point.

*These first two will need to be used before Twango can see them in his workroom, and leaving identification to chance rolls is not the best policy at this point. We suggest that they are found together, labeled, amidst a small personal collection of other lesser or expired items – perhaps in a display cabinet in the library (n).*

### For Chapter 5:

**Ring of Carpentry:** Anyone who says the cantrap of activation and expends 1 Magic pool point becomes an expert carpenter for a number of minutes equal to ten times their Magic rating. Not only that, but they physically manifest a saw, hammer and nails as required. And the nails remain in existence after the effect ends.

**Ring of Superior Restraint:** Activation cantrap, 1 Magic pool point – Creates a great sticky semi-solid mass (similar to Lorio’s Superior Restraint – TT, p93) The user can specify its boundaries, within about 20x20x20ft and it will stay there, somehow supported as long as it has at least a floor to rest upon. Duration of several minutes.

**Cloak of Elemental Comfort:** A sturdy woolen cloak with symbols on the inside. Keeps the person nicely warm regardless of the outside temperature.

**Ring of Personal Continuity:** Allows the wearer to keep on doing whatever they were doing even after having been injured to the point of inactivity or rendered unconscious. Must be activated by the cantrap as above in order to be ready to go, but actually begins its effect automatically.

**Hat of Diminution:** Place it on someone’s head (including your own) and the wearer shrinks to one tenth their size, making them much easier to deal with. Effect takes place automatically and lasts for five minutes.

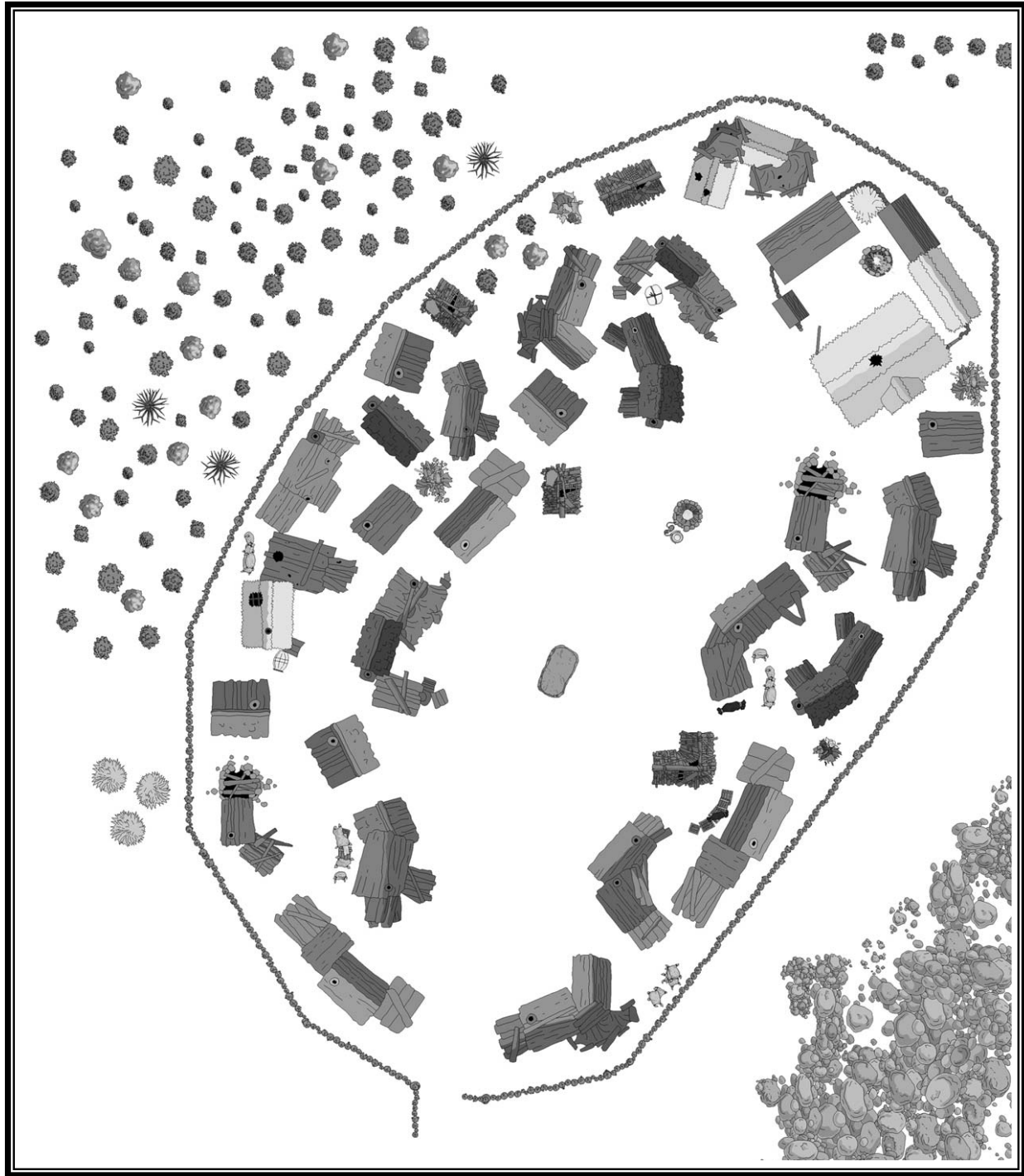
**Boots of Aquatic Motility:** Wearer can walk upon liquids. Duration: three minutes. Cantrap and 1 Magic pool point.

**Rokan’s Metalophages:** A small wooden box that rustles and buzzes disturbingly. When opened a small swarm of bugs tumble out and devour as much metal as they can, typically in an area around 2ftx2ft. If tipped onto a metal object of sufficient size they will do this with no unfortunate difficulties. If they are not next to a metal object they will swarm over the opener and devour any metal objects on them. In any event they will then expire. Effect occurs automatically.

**Zagar’s Whip:** Cantrap and 1 point from the wielder’s Magic pool. The whip can then be used to herd any group of unintelligent creatures – each no larger than a sheep, to perform whatever activities are within their competencies.



## Appendix F: The Settlement of Lench





## Appendix G: New Player Priorities

### *A Player's Guide on Transitioning from Regular Cugel-Level Scenarios to Advanced Cugel-Level Play*

Formerly your PCs cared for nothing beyond the sensory pleasures and their own bloated vanities, but now - due to unusually hazardous circumstances - new priorities will begin to emerge. (mostly these are adopted from recommended ideas for Turjan-Level play in *Turjan's Tome*.) This is not to say that personalities have changed; the pursuit of decadence is still a driving factor, and petty jealousies and spontaneous loutishness will surely continue to occur. Nonetheless from now on such compulsions may need to be held back on occasion, so as not to jeopardize a long-term goal or put the lives of the PC or their companions at risk. Mechanically the greatest illustration of this is in the use of Resistances. These will not now be called for where a greater goal could clearly be severely compromised by ill-considered actions (unless of course the temptation is of a highly superior nature).

The most basic change in your style of play can be encapsulated very simply - your PCs will be much more likely to engage in that formerly unusual behavior of 'thinking twice'. Certainly they will still want to seek out the pleasures of the couch, fill their purses with minimum effort, maintain the highest standards of fashion and dining pleasure, and delight in one-upping their fellows. However, in response to the predicament that they find themselves in, the well-being of their fellow travelers and the advancement of group and individual goals will naturally become general priorities alongside any others. Typically Cugelesque acts are far more likely to be more professionally planned (rather than executed immediately and impulsively), and the opinions of one's companions much more likely to be sought/listened to prior to taking obvious risks. This is a variant on Cugel's behavior only in that he was a loner and for RPG purposes we deal with small groups. Otherwise we believe we are staying true to the essence of the stories. Mechanically, PCs are at a levy (or even penalty) of 1 when attempting to Rebuff ideas that the GM deems sensibly and directly further the PC's goals.

In essence if they wish to prosper from now on, your PCs will find it prudent to adopt some of the sensibilities of the true adventurer alongside their standard impudent behaviors. Survival has become an immediate issue in these unknown lands. Who knows the cruel fates meted out by local authorities; who can predict when someone with potent magic might turn you into a thin red mist with a swift agonizing burst of the 'Excellent Prismatic Spray'? Who amongst you knows which of the local wild berries will provide a nutritious snack and which will cause you to perish within minutes from virulent poisoning? The days of casual assumptions regarding personal safety are over and the risk of premature extinction is now all too real. These are the core differences between classic and more advanced Cugel-Level gaming.

Further note that the granting of Improvement Points now no longer depends entirely upon witty and apposite use of Tag-Lines. Furthering individual and group goals, and role-playing in an adventurous style, now also attract such rewards.

### **The Campaign World**

This boxed information is principally for those Players who have read Vance's *Dying Earth* stories and fancy that they understand the world well. In the Rhialto, Turjanic and Cugel stories each version of the *Dying Earth* was subtly different. Be warned that certain things that are so in some of the stories are **not so** from hereon in as far as the PCs are concerned. After all, this is only right and just - Cugel did not have any sure knowledge of his world much beyond Almery and Ascolais, and neither do the PCs. Those Players who have read the stories will come across things that seem familiar, but will be wise to make no assumptions and to take nothing at face value. To do so could be a deadly mistake as far as your plucky PC is concerned.

In *Turjan's Tome* the option of 'pure Turjanic play' (IT p24) suggests that in some campaigns arch-magicians, IOUN stones, sandestins, madlings, and chugs do not exist. In my conception of the *Dying Earth* I prefer to adapt rather than eliminate. Thus sandestins, madlings and chugs are redefined as specifically powerful and rare elementals, which only very potent magic-users dare to address. (Far beyond the understanding or even awareness of PCs.) The most powerful magicians are individuals such as Pandelume (TDE: pp12/13 & TT: p131) and Pharesm (TDE: pp206-227). These folk (like the classic arch-magicians of the stories of Rhialto) hold themselves apart from society, and rarely if ever interact with common adventurers. They are still immensely powerful, but cannot change reality willy-nilly, nor even travel through time without immense preparation and effort. Any IOUN Stones they own are more likely to be unusual spell-storage devices than the magical immensities described in the books.



## Appendix H: The Tag-Lines

### Session 1 (The Cruel Fates and Becoming Employees)

"Thrust to the ends of the Earth at the behest of a vengeful madman; the Goddess of Fates tests our mettle."  
"I vitally embrace the opportunity to serve such a prestigious personage as yourself."  
"Now would be the time for a plan both cunning and efficacious."  
"I advocate a course of revenge. Let us return unlooked for from the north and deal death unto our jovial nemesis."  
"I am a person of many skills, and will be pleased to consider any post which offers appropriate compensation."  
"Let us equip ourselves to best advantage and sally forth as persons of unquestionable competency."  
"A flash of light has revealed the way. Therein lies our salvation, of this I am certain. Follow me to life."  
"I have seldom seen objects so studiously repulsive as this pair of grotesque bibelots."  
"I proclaim that this is a position to which my qualifications are uniquely suited."  
"Ah Kaiin, jewel of the south; will your fine salons ever again be graced with my beneficent presence?"  
"Come now, which amongst you japing buffoons just then uttered a low and hungry growl?"  
"The contents of my purse are currently insufficient. I would welcome the opportunity to reverse this tendency."  
"He is grossly impudent and should be removed from the property post-haste."  
"No doubt you have various magical adjuncts for our assistance? Of course I ask solely for the sake of the mission."  
"It will serve us well to return to Almerly richer in both experience and actual solid terces."

### Session 2 (Saskervoy and the Voyage to Tugersbir)

"This is a fine town of great age and aspect; were it three hundred miles further south I would declare it exquisite."  
"You, sir, have the impudent manners of a hoon, and no doubt the wit to match."  
"The rewards are tempting indeed, but is it unseemly to suggest they could be made even more so?"  
"This is a most curious manner of propulsion; I must capture it for posterity with a detailed sketch."  
"I have my sword, a sturdy pair of boots and a solid nerve. For me the northern tundra and ancient riches beckon."  
"I encourage silence; your petulance grates cruelly upon my nerves."  
"What of victual considerations? Should we not continue our discussion over a nourishing repast."  
"Do you call this beer? I have drunk rainwater with considerably more zest."  
"Your tales of rapacious creatures are clearly gross exaggerations. I for one shall sleep deeply and well."  
"Cease your sniveling and take hold of your rapier; the time has come for zealous participation."  
"I shall try my hand at a game of Skax. These yokels shall shortly learn a new meaning of the word fleece."  
"Nevermore shall I regard a fried fish in the casual manner that once I did."  
"The call to adventure is lodged within my blood. I shall be the first to set foot boldly upon the trail."  
"Such a repository of knowledge is far from commonplace; I have many erudite questions I wish to ask."  
"If you continue this course I will be left with no recourse other than to belabor you with this truncheon."

### Session 3 (Glubersbir, the Tundra & finding Castle Naldriz)

"I am a person of noble bearing; how is it that barren tundra has become a habitual part of my existence?"  
"I doubt that your plan is as redolent with prudence as you so vehemently claim."  
"I am confident they cannot harm us, for they are beings without substance."  
"Perhaps a sturdy cart will be necessary for the adequate transportation of our new valuables?"  
"No doubt it feels the bite of a thrusting blade much like any other creature."  
"I admit that my steely resolve perhaps lacks the vivacity that once it had."



“Tonight I shall drink fine wines and savor excellent company, for tomorrow we march into the unknown.”

“No doubt we are once again involved in some sinister plot, and once again without the courtesy of consultation.”

“What foul energies are these? I am forced to concede that we are unlikely to survive the night.”

“This vista is not one that fills me with optimistic fervor; in fact rather the opposite has occurred.”

“It is not inconceivable we can find aid here; I shall inquire of the gentleman with the least disheveled straw hat.”

“I am merely pausing to reflect on the wisdom of plundering the domicile of a mythical hermaphrodite.”

“It is clear that some manner of freakish metamorphosis has taken place; perhaps one of demonic origins.”

“Yonder stands a relic of ancient days. Doubtless within lies plunder unimaginable, simply waiting to be claimed.”

“After you I insist. Your status within our bold troop has earned you this privilege by undeniable right and custom.”

#### **Session 4 (Exploring Castle Naldriz)**

“Wait! My refined senses tell me that potent and pernicious sorcery has been at work here.”

“Oft times the answer lies in taking the route that appears to be the least wholesome.”

“Harken; I fancy to hear the clamor of the great bell of fate that marks our doom.”

“Heroes of old dealt with such hazards as a routine, yet it is sobering to consider that not one of them survives.”

“This may or may not be an occasion where a bold and commanding voice turns events to our advantage.”

“Some things are best left undisturbed; perhaps that is a lesson I will one day learn.”

“I profoundly hope that I am suffering from inexplicable auditory hallucinations.”

“One concept remains clear; the originator of the plan must be the one to carry it out.”

“Please remind me again of the great wealth and curios we will inevitably accumulate; my sanguinity is wavering.”

“Our luck is surely greater than this poor fellow’s. Nonetheless I require a few moments to compose my nerves.”

“This at least is the kind of duty I enjoy; hand me a treasure sack and hold my jacket.”

“Hah! I challenge you to make good your preposterous assurances.”

“I require some moments to regain my composure and adopt a change of undergarments.”

“My suspicion is that the inhabitants were beset by a deadly magical assault. Let us avoid their fate if at all possible.”

“Look there; hideous tracks in the dust. What manner of repulsive and deadly horror can have sourced them?”

#### **Session 5 (Exploring and Leaving Castle Naldriz)**

“Before I enter I need a moment to pray. It seems suddenly apposite to embrace a belief in the metaphysical.”

“Here indeed is something one does not observe every day, at least not without recourse to hallucinogenic resins.”

“There is a time for boldness and a time for craven flight; is our current situation truly so unclear to you?”

“It was nothing, a mere flourish I learned long ago from a retired Jhardine pirate.”

“Why is it that the creativity of folk from elder days so often turned to machines of annihilation?”

“Please excuse me whilst I caper with delight; I had lost all realistic expectation of living to see this day.”

“At times like these I am struck with a desire to retire to Saskervoy and begin a career in haberdashery.”

“Go with caution; I feel certain that savage and inglorious fates await you beyond this portal.”

“I question your leadership in this regard. Call it not mutiny, merely the cold assessment of self-preservation.”

“In tales such as ours may one day become, the truly wise never under any circumstances open the sarcophagus.”

“My action lacked both forethought and utility. Pray wipe it from your memories as a freak aberrance on my part.”

“Even this humble settlement is a welcome sight; excuse me whilst I blubber with relief that I still live to see it.”

“On some occasions dawdling in contemplation promotes health and longevity. Now is surely not such a time!”

“I am not convinced your impulsive conduct was either well-considered nor of any practical benefit whatsoever.”

“I may have avoided physical injury, but my delicate sensitivities have been sorely compromised.”



## Session 6 (Tugersbir and the Symposium Job)

"I can safely say that compared to our recent exploits, this task will be something akin to a stroll on the esplanade."  
"Bearing in mind that we are well disguised perhaps there are other tasks worthy of consideration in this locale?"  
"The beverages and viands appear to be of superior accomplishment. Pray excuse me whilst I sample their quality."  
"Amazing; your new features, both rat-like and somewhat cross-eyed seem far more suited to your true character."  
"It seems almost a shame to expose these benign citizens to the true nature of our cunning, yet almost is the word."  
"I compliment you on the nature of your exhibits; I have not seen such surpassing distinction in many long years."  
"I have terces in my purse and a spring in my stride. Without doubt a visit to a house of ill-repute is in order."  
"Surely between us we can devise a presentation both avuncular and imaginative?"  
"This is a difficulty both unlooked for and potentially of notable hazard. I confess I am paralyzed with indecision."  
"During the process of their wind and blather we can execute a plan both bold and excellently designed."  
"Dare I suggest that we retire with this flagon to yonder secluded alcove and become better acquainted?"  
"Now is clearly the time to depart from this settlement with all dispatch."  
"Our stratagem will ideally dovetail with oiled precision into passage onto a fast ship to Saskervoy."  
"Whilst the topics themselves may lack compulsion, the incidental entertainments are of surpassing quality."  
"Farewell, Tugersbir; I fear we did not treat you with the full reverence owed to your ancient heritage."

## Session 7 (Time in Saskervoy and off to Lench)

"If anyone requires my presence I shall be in my chamber undergoing a period of nervous paroxysms."  
"Think nothing of it; I have many more such tricks, for in my youth I performed in an acrobatic troupe."  
"My personal assessment is that Master Twango's mastery of the magical arts has yet to reach its full potential."  
"Your skin is fine alabaster, your eyes the deepest pools of desire, come let us explore the pleasures of the couch."  
"Absurdity; I have never even been to Tugersbir; anyone saying otherwise must be suspected of mendaciousness."  
"Once again we are to be thrust into the wilderness. I begin to suspect that I should have been born an erb!"  
"A flagon of your finest Tatterblass, landlord, and a plate of succulent sweetmeats for myself and my companions."  
"Once I would have ignored such effrontery, but my recent exertions make laughable the paltry threat you pose."  
"I tremble to think of the numerous incidental tragedies and harsh destructions our progress must be inflicting."  
"Our tasks have been arduous. I think I speak for all in saying that the terms of our contract are ripe for revision."  
"I require apparel and appurtenances suitable for the country grandee, and I mean to have them."  
"At least travelling in this fashion we need fear no predators. Perhaps the demon arts have merit after all?"  
"Tonight I intend to wallow in licentiousness, for who knows what crazed errand we shall depart upon next."  
"Our recent exploits have molded me into a person of character, and I am not sure I can be seen in your company."  
"No, wait! I have forgotten my toothbrush and other small sundries. The safety of the whole mission is at stake!"

## Session 8 (Fenzark's Temple)

"How shall we know what greeting is appropriate? They may wish to apply their noses in an impertinent fashion."  
"The sun flickers and may soon expire; why not spend our last days as heroes rather than amongst the rabble?"  
"I sense within this mysterious liquid a presence both baneful and gluttonous."  
"This seems a suitable place for well-earned repose; pray remove your foot from my ear so I may take my ease."  
"They make sport of our deadly trials, the inhuman beasts. I shall succeed merely in order to spite them."  
"Call me overly suspicious, but I am not entirely enamoured of the insidious leer on this demon's visage."  
"There is nobility in their bearing, surely they are beings of ancient probity? Or are my senses playing me false?"  
"Dank and brooding catacombs are most decidedly not my favored haunts, yet here once again I stand."  
"The designers of these hazards cannot have accounted for all eventualities; let us examine our options carefully."





“Various choices present themselves: stealth, violence, duplicity or diplomacy. Frankly I lack confidence in all.”  
“The definition of your duties clearly indicates that if you are a person with even the slightest honor you must be the one to lead the way.”  
“Perchance we can have the privilege of introducing you to a few of the diverse fascinations of the outside world?”  
“Definitely not; I have developed a fear of confined spaces, and besides which my knees pain me mercilessly.”  
“I do not wish to be roasted like a clucking barnyard fowl. Where is the glory in that?”  
“My father always observed that two heads are better than one, but in our current situation I confess perplexity.”

### **Session 9 (The Saskervoy Operation)**

“I will reflect impartially upon any plan you care to put forward, stopping short only at murder and mutilation.”  
“I am a person of obvious native refinement and the sensible choice to pose as a hereditary grandee or somesuch.”  
“Though more refined conduct is my preference, in the end I was left with no choice but to club him senseless.”  
“Such concerns matter not to me. Soon I shall be back in civilized lands, and my trials here a thing of the past.”  
“Were I of a suspicious mind I would postulate that your predecessor did not have your best interests at heart.”  
“Once we know its location the actual act of retrieval will no doubt be a matter of utmost simplicity.”  
“Your plan seems to be flawless; either my cognitive faculties are impaired or you have been replaced by a superior simulacrum.”  
“Rather than courting catastrophe, might I suggest that we seek a local accomplice of appropriate resourcefulness?”  
“Despite the obvious rewards, I must confess I am not entirely comfortable with my new role as a serial burglar.”  
“See how the creature bristles with potentiality; one might almost swear that it knows its time is close at hand.”  
“The townsfolk undoubtedly are persons of routine; a period of close observation seems a judicious initial exercise.”  
“It is not fitting that someone of my ancestry be reduced to skulking in alleyways and scurrying across rooftops.”  
“A quarter is entirely insufficient; I insist that a bare minimum of half the marketplace value be agreed upon.”  
“Numberless ways exist to create new employment vacancies, and not all of them invariably fatal.”  
“Kidnapping is certainly one option, but other more agreeable means of inducement also suggest themselves.”

### **Session 10 (Winding the Saskervoy Operation Up and the Journey Onwards)**

“I refuse outright to dangle precariously on high from a rope, no matter how sturdy or well-knotted.”  
“Our exertions have assuredly made us worthy of our just rewards. I feel that now is the moment to claim them!”  
“Iucounu; I hold you entirely accountable for our renewed misfortune, and you shall pay the price in full!”  
“The role of watchman is crucial. I shall observe all from that distant shadow, and bark like a dog if awt goes awry.”  
“Do I perchance note a small miscalculation in the formulation of our strategy?”  
“Linger not on past mischance. Let us ply our fortunes to the east, then south to the beauties of Almerly and Ascolais.”  
“Now that was an action both foolhardy and ill-considered. What pray tell is to be your next amusing antic?”  
“This is not the time to dawdle in indecision. I wish to avoid an appointment with the local guardians of law.”  
“There is a certain overly-amused magician of Almerly; and I now appoint myself his personal nemesis!”  
“If you wish to relinquish any substantial claim on our rewards merely continue behaving in this fashion.”  
“Slice it, stab it by all means, even skewer it like a pincushion; simply act more swiftly in doing so.”  
“By the beard of Kraal, such unjust treatment is more than intolerable.”  
“Your priorities may differ, but I myself wish to avoid the prolonged hospitality of the local constabulary.”  
“Some manner of finely timed diversion might serve us well at this immediate juncture.”  
“Is this to ever be the nature of our fate? I seethe with anger at the injustice that has been visited upon us.”



# Appendix I: Incorporating the Quelo Adventure

## Introduction

Due to poor publication timing (due to circumstances beyond our control) the scenario *The Day of the Quelo* was put up for sale after *All's Fair At Azenomei*. Since the adventure series that begins with *All's Fair...* and continues with the document to which this appendix is attached takes place out of Ascolais, and the Quelo adventure takes place within that region, this could present a problem for some keen GMs. In recognition of the efforts of such (and also for those who have the choice and choose to move the Quelo adventure to Saskervoy) we provide this single page of adaptation notes.

## Collecting the Quelo

The Quelo is an ultra-rare beast that Twango has recently purchased at great expense. It is stabled at Flutic, where it has enjoyed a relaxing and indolent life since arriving here three weeks earlier. Twango has been too busy to deliver it himself (so he says), experimenting with his vat creatures.

## Changing Geography

The Almetry town of Garvel becomes the Saskervoy town of Voon, with Pilt remaining just beyond it. The 'Derna River' becomes 'Urjod River'. High Bridge is now Idz (there is no longer a turn-off; the river crosses the road just north of Idz) Petrij is replaced by wealthy shipping magnate Master Mercantides, thus changing the PC motivations to assist him. Lupshank owns the 'mid-torso' of Fenzark (it has been in his collection for decades), and has agreed to swap it for the Quelo. (Swap ideally to be made before any rescue attempt on the Quelo's behalf.)

## Putting things in Order

The Quelo will be the first adventure in the series of collections, so as to get it out of the way before the regular storyline can be resumed. Here are the words by which Twango will explain the Quelo mission:

*"A minor magician dwells in his manse just outside the hamlet of Pilt, which in turn is not far from the old town of Voon. This man, Lupshank, is also a collector, but delights more in organic plants and creatures than in curios. He has agreed to a direct swap of Fenzark's mid-torso, which is in his possession, in return for my procuring a semi-magical beast that was long-believed to be extinct. They were once common beasts of burden in these parts but now only 3 or 4 remain in service. It is well known that Lupshank desires one of these creatures, and so he has been unable to simply obtain such a beast by theft or coercion. It would have been known instantly that he had taken it, and the magistrates of Saskervoy are collectively powerful enough to enforce the rule of law in the inner districts. I was fortunate enough to finally obtain one at great expense some few weeks ago, and now it must be delivered. Lupshank believes that I merely wish to possess the mid-torso in order to sell it on to fellow collectors. Under no circumstances disabuse him of this notion, as he has consented to remain utterly silent about this exchange until I have managed to gain the best price possible – from which I have promised him one tenth of the proceeds."*

## Twango's Sympathies

Twango does not care what happens to the Quelo so long as he obtains his section of Fenzark. If the PCs let the Quelo escape after they have obtained the segment, Twango will be more than happy to mollify Lupshank, though this may cause him some consternation. (Lupshank demands a huge fee for his silence about the whole debacle.)

## Setting up PC Sympathy for Mercantides (Petrij in original Quelo adventure)

The PCs need to meet Master Mercantides and have a reasonable interaction with him (see 'Soldinck and Mercantides' box in Chapter 1). Mercantides (the one partner who will be available for interview on the day the PCs show up to inquire about voyages to Tugersbir) will be crusty but affable enough (if rather formal). He will tell them all about his business and that he runs ships to the far east and sometimes takes paying passengers or experienced crew. Impress upon the Players that the PCs might like to cultivate his good feeling. Suggest in an aside that it is always good to have a back-up plan, just in case (heaven forbid) something were to go wrong with their attempts to fulfil Twango's duties. In short, subtly lead your players to believe that Mercantides may be a back-up plot device to move them from this scenario to the next in the series – should their work for Twango somehow go terribly wrong. Any regular players of DERPG will no doubt be familiar with such concepts as the collapse of well-laid plans. Likewise, anyone who has read the DE books will know that Cugel proceeded from Saskervoy across the ocean, and will likely suspect that this purported plot device is genuine. In fact it merely exists in order to later motivate them to seek to save him during the Quelo adventure.