

THE RED ORDER

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THE RED ORDER

THE RED ORDER

The Red Order is a complete adventure for the d20 System, designed for a party of four characters of levels 6-8. Characters of average suggested level would likely earn enough experience points to put them mid-way through the next level if successful.

The adventure takes place in a secluded mountain monastery in a time of plague and great darkness in any campaign world; because *The Red Order* does not specify which world or region in particular, short of describing it as “mountainous” and “cold”, it can be ported into any ongoing campaign no matter its setting.

In this adventure the player characters become privy to a horrible secret, and are pressed into service of the a powerful holy order to investigate a vile cult suspected of having infested this monastery for centuries. To find out the truth, the PC's must masquerade as monks and join the order, penetrate the dark and subterranean depths of its mountain sanctuary, and discover the true motivations of the Red Order.

THE STORY

*By the glow of the torch I carry,
Among these pillars of night;
My soul and heart dare not tarry,
If I am ever to see the Light.*

The adventure begins as the characters, spurred naively by the words of religious warmongers and charlatans, find themselves blindly following the great mountain roads across high peaks towards a far off land, to fight in a war against infidels. On their journey they encounter a mysterious group known as the *Ordo Vermis*, who inform them of a greater and more important evil thriving closer to home - in the Monastery of Caporetto. With instructions to investigate as “spies”, the PC's must masquerade as monks to penetrate the veil of secrecy that surrounds this strange “Red Order”.

Lately the monks of the small monastery of Caporetto have

been experiencing something...*supernatural*. A few of the monks have begun having dreams, terrible dreams, which foretell a coming of great evil. These awful nightmares have plagued the monastery's brethren for weeks, and just recently, monks have begun to die mysteriously within the great walls of the mountain bastion itself...

A MYSTERY STORY

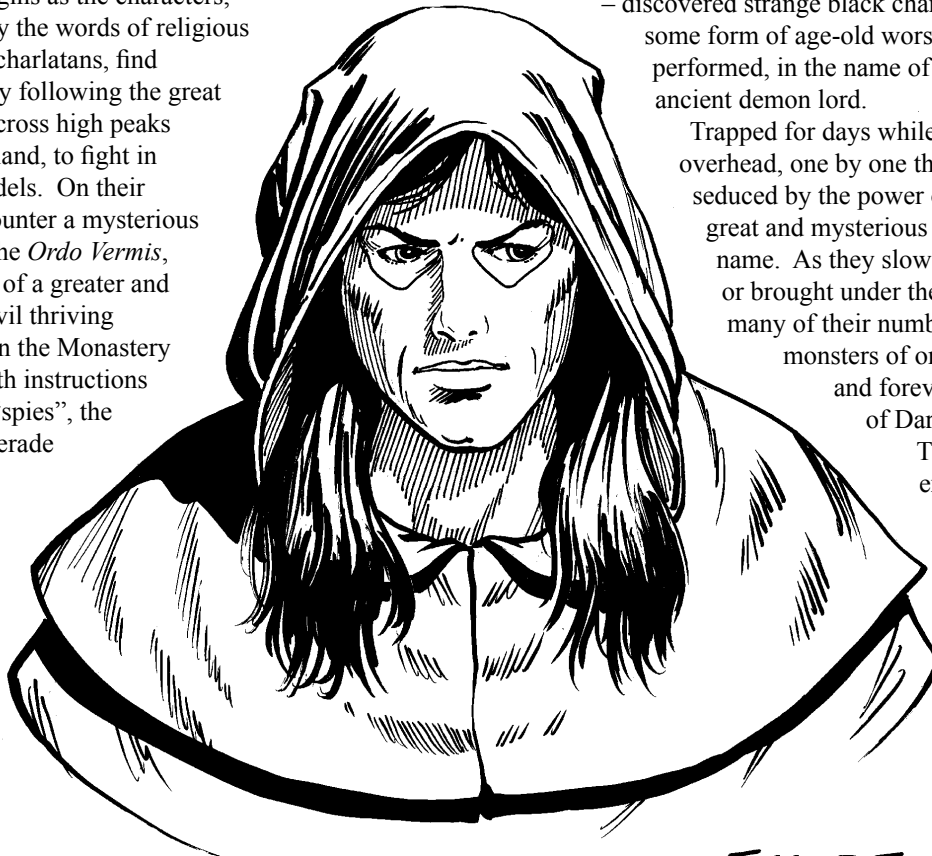
The Red Order is, by and large, a mystery story, without the kind of hack-and-slash typical of many role-playing adventures. Most of the story of *The Red Order* requires PCs be at certain places at certain times – else risk missing subtle clues. The very fabric of the story is, like a good novel, subdued and almost “invisible”, and only the most clever, vigilant players will likely pick up on the hints and suggestions encountered throughout the adventure. Certain important clues as to the nature of the Order, the true identities of its masters, and other facts are easily missed...so remind your players to pay close attention!

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE RED ORDER

Several centuries ago, in a realm far removed from the current locale, a group of missionary monks traveling east through the desert uncovered a lost tomb beneath the dry mountains. In the midst of a great sandstorm the monks were forced to take shelter in the ancient sepulchral caverns, wherein one of their numbers – by sheer accident – discovered strange black chambers in which some form of age-old worship had once been performed, in the name of some equally ancient demon lord.

Trapped for days while the storm raged overhead, one by one the monks were seduced by the power of this entity – a great and mysterious demon lord with no name. As they slowly were driven mad or brought under the dark lord's spell, many of their number were turned into monsters of one kind or another, and forever became servants of Darkness.

This cursed expedition began what was to become the “Red Order”. Although these blasphemous monks were eventually hunted down by the desert people



005

ELMORE

THE RED ORDER

of that distant region, and most of their members were brutally killed, those that survived the great purge fled to the west, through various kingdoms, their fortunes leading them both to shelter and eventual hostility wherever they went. For almost two generations they remained in hiding in the land beyond the mountains (the same kingdom to which the PCs are heading to sell themselves as mercenaries), but they were eventually found out there as well, and were fiercely routed, and again they fled west - into the mountains.

Some three hundred years ago the last remnants of the original monastic mission came to the area of Caporetto one extremely cold winter. Their leader, Anastasius, devised a plan that would protect their past from ever being found out. Using powerful magic, he seduced the Abbot of the monastery into taking his own life; then Anastasius took over his role, using his position to give a new home to his followers. For several years Anastasius lived, until he passed from this life into the next. His successor, Theodore, a vile vampiric creature, was equally evil and patient, and pledged to continue the struggle to bring their nameless demon master into the world.

The Red Order continues with its single-minded obsession - bringing their nameless god into this reality from the shadowy reaches of the Abyss. Strangely, his release can only be done during a *full solar eclipse*, when the moon is positioned between the earth and the sun, casting a dark shadow across the face of the planet. Fortunately, the timing and positioning of the Order had to be perfect, and the opportunity to bring their infernal master into the world only comes once every hundred years.

But that time has finally come.

Recently, one of the monks found out about the true nature of the Abbot and his minions, and in turn was brutally murdered. His body was dismembered and was found in the cellars near the abode of the “moron”, Brziac. Many of the monks believe Brziac did it, due to the fact that he is insane, though the Brewer, Camillus, has prevented them from taking action against him (out of pity for the poor creature).

Another monk, only days ago, was found drained of all blood, though his body was quickly disposed of due to fear that it might be infected by the Black Plague. In truth, however, he was simply victim to the ghoulish thirst of the vampire Abbot, Theodore.

It is at this point that the player characters arrive, after these initial killings. They are about to discover a very horrible truth within the ranks of the Red Order...

THE ORDO VERMIS – ORDER OF THE DRAGON

Although its name is foreboding and often misleading, the *Ordo Vermis* is in actually a clandestine organization dedicated to spying-on and exterminating evil groups and cults, in the name of law and order (alternatively you can change the Ordo Vermis’ allegiance to fit any good or lawful deity in your campaign world).

Formed over one hundred years ago by a group of pious men, the *Ordo*’s purpose was to find and eradicate the most insidious cults and demonic covens that, for one reason or another, were nearly impossible to destroy or bring to justice by conventional means.

Although the *Ordo* is not a legal organization, and is not officially recognized by any earthly kingdom to even *exist*, it has the secret blessings and tacit support of many kingdoms in this part of the world. And although throughout this scenario the PC’s are subtly contacted and directed by the *Ordo*, and it may seem at times that the society is omnipotent and omnipresent, remember that the *Ordo* is a small group that is always in need of heroes - heroes like the player characters.

A NOTE ON DIVINATION SPELLS

A great event is close at hand, and the stars are right. Characters with access to the *divination* spell (or willing to pay an NPC spellcaster to cast one sometime before the adventure actually begins) will find hints of the coming eclipse – and the dangers ahead.

The casting of a *divination* spell will reveal a very terrible tale indeed. The spellcaster in question will receive a most telling prediction – that in the coming weeks, the world will come under a most terrible threat, and a specific region – identified as somewhere “south across the great mountains” – will be the focal point of this potentially-catastrophic energy. The relevance of the moon in the horoscope seems to suggest a great journey will be planned, but the “dark planet” (use whatever name is appropriate to the game world in question), high in the night sky, hints at sinister demonic forces that will distract from this venture, requiring a great struggle against a heretofore unprecedented, unearthly power.

Though unlikely to have ready access to it at their level (though they might pay for a casting), a *vision* spell will reveal even more specific information about the events to come. Through the casting of such a spell (with the intended target being the monastery), visions from the days to come visit the PC in question; images reveal a great journey over snow-frosted mountains. A sanctuary is found within this foreboding high country, but from this sanctuary’s summit a cluster of beady-eyed ravens watch like patient predators, the efforts of those coming to their door. Fractured visions pollute the *vision* spell; images of dark subterranean tunnels, towering pinnacles of stone high above the clouds, and masses of plagued peasants begging for help as their bodies fall to pieces run like a nightmare through the spellcaster’s mind.

Any information (hints) mentioned here should only be given to those characters who specifically undertake their investigation through the use of such spells prior to the adventure’s outset (or during, if they have these spells available to them).

THE RED ORDER

THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

The descriptive text below assumes the player characters are leaving their homeland, crossing over a great mountain range into the boundaries of an ancient empire to the south. The default reason is *war*; the PC's, called upon by a sense of loyalty (or merely for the prospects of new adventures), are heading over the mountains to join in the defense of a kingdom that has traditionally been allied with their people. However, this explanation is only for convenience, and if this beginning does not suit your campaign or style it can and should be modified.

As with all new ventures, the individual reason the PC's come can vary; refugees from war, seeking employment as mercenaries, or merely as pilgrims to the holy sites of another fabled land. Regardless, with only a little modification the DM can certainly replace the suggested introduction to fit more precisely into the course of an ongoing campaign.

Your fellowship of mismatched companions has been traveling on the road for several weeks now, in the constant search of glory and adventure. Your homeland is now but a distant memory, but you take your experiences with you to where you now stand.

It seems only a week past when you passed through the low country to the north, and towards the steps of the great mountain range that has long been a bitter barrier, to the south. It seems only yesterday that you all stood in the market square of your home town, now little more than a beautiful memory, listening to the fervent speech of the city's crier, as he spoke of the Great War that waged across the mountains against the an army of infidels, who were on a crusade against people who shared your ideology. Such emotion had filled your hearts at the stories of the terrible suffering of those who had escaped the hordes of the invaders, that some among you were brought to tears. Many men - of all nationalities - that day swore to avenge the lost armies of your southern brothers, and many - including yourselves - set out on a holy crusade to defend your religion against the terror of war.

But that was then. The cold and miserable air of winter has plagued you ever since you began to cross the mountains; your pack animals perished in the bitter cold and unrelenting storms that savaged you throughout your tiring journey through the mountains. For weeks all you felt was numbness in your bones, the suffering of frostbite, and the pain of starvation.

The small, poorly-organized "army" you had set out with has fallen apart and dispersed over the weeks; many have died from the merciless cold, others have disappeared in the spontaneous mountain blizzards that swept down from the perilous peaks above in a matter of seconds. Being composed of soldiers of various northern kingdoms some brought with them their

regional hatreds and distrust of one another, finding in every misfortune cause to blame the other and set upon their brother with sword and arrow. Many more simply became disheartened, deserting the march, only to be set-upon by bandits that follow the movements of your war party, preying upon stragglers.

The once brave and glorious crusade you all courageously joined has become little more than an ill-fated expedition.

Yet your group, now separated from the rest of your fellow soldiers, has pressed on. The words of the town crier, speaking to the assembly, still echo in your mind as you brave the worst of winter conditions, in hopes of reaching your final destination in time to relieve the armies of the southern kingdom. Perhaps others have had the heart to stick it through, and the quest will not be futile, and you - the glorious few - will snatch sudden victory from imminent defeat.

Up ahead you see the snow-covered roof of a wayfarer's inn, perched on the edge of the mountain road, a thin wisp of smoke rising from its dilapidated chimney. The smell of hot food fills your nostrils, and you gaze at each other in ecstasy! With renewed strength and hope, you all rush down the path to the inn, and enter with a rowdy cry of elation.

THE WAYFARER INN

The roadside inn is located on one side of the long and narrow mountain road, and is little more than a small stone-and-wood structure of rustic design. Consisting of two floors, the inn is situated far from any town or village, and is supplied by what few merchants that can afford to traverse the mountains during the harsh winter.

As you enter the tavern, the warmth of the building's interior makes you shudder with comfort. Pounding the snow from your boots, you glance around to see the place is a rather rustic hostel, with a wooden staircase leading to the second floor. Several wooden tables sit around the room, while a bar occupies the eastern wall. The smell of food comes from a back room.

The bartender, previously cleaning a pair of glass cups while chatting with another traveler sitting by the bar, smiles with excitement as you enter - apparently business has petered out in the colder weather. Quickly he wipes the visible grime from his apron and hands, and leaning on the bar, asks you how he can help you this fine day.

The first floor holds a central tavern-room, filled with round wooden tables, and a high bar against the eastern wall. A sturdy wooden staircase ascends to the second floor, hanging over the bar where the innkeeper works. A small stable, connected to the bar room by a simple door, lies at the southern end of the structure; it is a flimsy building with a set of posts that hold up a hay-filled loft. At present, only a pair of horses (one of which belongs to a mysterious visitor

THE RED ORDER

- see below) are being kept in this damp yet surprisingly warm place. The northern end of the building is composed of a connecting house, where the innkeeper and his twin sons reside; in addition, a large kitchen stocked with food (as well as utensils) connects to the bar room.

The second floor of the inn is accessed via the stairs on the first level (in the tavern-room). A creaky wooden hallway goes all around the building, pierced with fogged glass windows (perhaps the fanciest decorations in the entire building), and four humble yet inviting guest-rooms sit unoccupied. Each such room contains a comfortable feather bed, a washbasin, and other furnishings common to a country inn.

The master of the inn, Luigi, is a quiet and reserved man of some forty years, with thinning gray hair and flabby cheeks. He is a simple man of southern ancestry, though he is pleased to see hungry travelers – haling from anywhere – at his humble establishment. His first son is Franco, a tall and lanky young man who is used to tending to the horses, mules, and wagons of the merchants who often travel the pass during spring and summer. His twin brother, Frederico, is equally tall and thin, though he is far more jovial and outspoken than his brother and possesses a creative and friendly streak. Frederico is the family's cook, having taken over the job since his mother died twelve years past. Franco and Frederico are identical twins, with sandy brown hair and piercing gray eyes.

Inn rooms, if requested, command a modest price of one silver piece per person, per night. It's cold outside, and his inn is the only one for many leagues, so Luigi can afford to get away with such steep prices. Meals, consisting of roast goat meat, dark beer, and piping-hot vegetable soup, cost another two coppers per person.

Treasure: Luigi keeps a collection of coins (82 sp and 100 cp) in an unlocked iron strongbox hidden under his bed.

THE OTHER VISITOR

When the PC's enter the establishment, they will notice the presence of another man at the bar, eating quietly. He will avoid the group, evading questions with simple answers; after a while, allow each character present to make a Spot check (DC 12); success informs them that their fellow innmate is discreetly watching them very closely.

If asked about the man at the bar, the innkeeper will whisper that he doesn't know who the man is, and that he does not reside here at the inn - he has a small camp up in the mountains (the location of which is also unknown to Luigi), only coming here for food. He only appeared in the area about a week ago, and is not very talkative.

As the man turns to leave, he stops for a moment in hesitation. His eyes sweep over the party, and he steps over to their table, placing a small velvet bag between the PC's. With a smile and a nod, he simply states, "Enjoy the meal - it's on me", and walks out.

Treasure: If any of the characters opens the bag, they will find 50 gold pieces, and a small slip of paper, almost overlooked as a piece of scrap. The



message on this piece of paper is revealed in *Handout #1*.

If pursued, the man appears to have already left. His horse has been taken out of the stable, and he has ridden off swiftly into the mountains to his secret camp. If followed, his tracks and those of his horse will be found to disappear almost magically into the darkness

THE WELL AT MIDNIGHT

As indicated in the note slipped to the PC's, the mysterious man at the inn that afternoon wishes to speak with them secretly at a supposed well located in the woods across the mountain road.

Slipping out of the inn at midnight, the characters will not waken any of the innkeeper's family, as they are all fast asleep. The night sky will appear remarkably dark and eerie, and the woods to the east appear to be heavily overgrown with menacing brambles and snow covered foliage.

The old well is easily found in the dark woods east of the inn, and after only ten minutes or so of hushed travel, you arrive in a small copse. Overgrown with dark moss that seems resilient to the cold, its wooden parts long rotten away, the well appears decrepit and abandoned. Shattered bits of stone lie scattered throughout the small clearing where it stands like a collection of bones jutting from the ground.

THE RED ORDER

A low, frosty gale blows through the forest of naked trees, powerful enough to tug at and eventually smother your meager lights. You struggle with your tinder to relight a torch; lifting it high, you are shocked to see the man from the inn standing right in front of you, draped in a grayish cape that seems to match the color of the shadows beneath the trees.

“Ah, I am so glad you have come. You are probably wondering why I have contacted you, and in such a strange matter. In a moment I shall explain everything, but I must first ask your word of honor that you never tell of this conversation to anyone.”

Though he has no means of enforcing their oaths, the mysterious man will nonetheless wait for each person, in turn, to make a pledge of honor to never repeat anything heard or said in the following conversation. He will refuse to speak in the presence of those who are openly cynical or sarcastic, or those who refuse to give their solemn word. Apparently this is a man of honor, with something quite serious on his mind.

As they speak with the man, allow each character present to make a Spot check (DC 14) to notice the small silver brooch he is wearing; this item appears to depict some form of coiled dragon, with gaping maw and menacing ruby eyes. Something about this icon is unnerving and somewhat mystic.

A Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 30 due to the order’s almost total anonymity) will reveal this as the symbol of the *Ordo Vermis* - read to any character making the check (and that character only) what is written under *The Ordo Vermis* (see beginning of this adventure).

If he is given their word, the man will seem visibly relieved. He steps over to the well, and rests against it, disturbing some snow, which falls noiselessly into the depths below. He proceeds to take a roll of vellum from his leather pack, but keeps this in hand, before continuing.

“I wish to employ your services, as soldiers or as mercenaries, on a holy mission of vital necessity. I belong to a secret society - the name of which I cannot even speak - but a society that is good, I assure you.”

If they refuse, or mention that they are already involved in a mission (such as the journey to the southern kingdom to join the war, as mentioned in the introduction), his eyes will glimmer momentarily, and he will then speak again:

“There is a greater and more important evil thriving here, in this seemingly innocent region, more menacing to the kingdoms of man than you could imagine - more menacing than any earthly evil. An evil so despicable and alien that you cannot refuse to fight them. You MUST aid our cause!”

Sense Motive checks or other means of discerning deception will reveal the man isn’t, in fact, lying. The man, whoever he truly is, gladly allows the PC’s to check for lies or alignment, but will only speak more of the matter if and when they agree.

“Half a dozen miles to the east, over a few peaks, lies the monastery of Caporetto. This monastery is like no other monastery under the moon and stars; it is a veritable fortress, aided by its location here in these bleak mountains. It is one that allows very few members to join, and is the home of a group of isolated monks known only as the ‘Red Order’. We know very little of this Order, as it has been most discreet for many years.

“A week ago, a monk was murdered there, although word of it was hushed-up. Only days ago another monk was found dead, and we believe there to be something sinister and corrupt going on there. It is vital that we find out what is happening, and to thwart whatever evil is affecting that place before it kills again.

“I am the only agent of my Order in this region. I cannot go there, for I am but one man – and I have reason to believe that the evil of Caporetto may expect me.

“This then, is your mission. You must masquerade as monks, and thereafter you must join the ranks of the Order to penetrate the veil of secrecy that shrouds it. I wish there were other means, but there are not. None but monks of the Order are allowed in the monastery for any amount of time, and so it must be this way.”

If they ask for a monetary reward, the man will seem rather disappointed, but will agree to allow the characters to commandeer any items they find in the monastery on the condition they return them when their task is done. He reminds them that money or other goods from the monastery’s treasury must not be ransacked, since these are the property of the community. Items that are owned or looked-after by legitimate and innocent monks cannot be taken as booty either. However, he will agree to allow the PC’s to take any items owned by the evil forces there as their own (i.e. any personal possessions of their enemy), so long as they promise to take those accursed objects far from that place.

Since this offer is rather slim, if further pressed he will promise the delivery of a purse containing 500 gp to any temple of the group’s choice within two weeks of completing their mission, to be used by them for any purpose or caprice they desire.

Once they agree to the mission (assuming they do), he will hand the parchment clenched in his hand to the leader of the group. This scroll is a sketchy map, which will lead them through the mountains where they currently stand to the peaks where the monastery of Caporetto is located. He will then nod once more, and dash off into the woods - never to be seen again.

THE RED ORDER

THE BEGINNING OF THE INVESTIGATION

The following day, the characters will head out on foot to the monastery of Caporetto, aided by the map, which was given to the PC's by the strange man who appeared to them the night before and mysteriously vanished.

By mid-day you have made your way across miles and miles of mountains, along the old, deserted trail indicated on the map given you by the mysterious man the night before. It appears the road you are on twists and winds crazily throughout the mountains, as it takes several hours to travel only a handful of miles. The bitter cold you so resent causes your faces to chafe, but you are too filled with anticipation and wonder at what you have heard to care. Met with renewed vigor and spirit, the hours pass quickly and without event.

That night, as the party camps on a ridge by the warmth of a crackling fire, they will begin to feel the malevolent influence of the nameless master of the Red Order, whose presence, even miles from the monastery, has generated a psychic impression capable of influencing the dreams of men.

After all characters have gone to sleep (or at exactly midnight), a randomly determined PC will experience *Dream #1* (see *The Horror Of Dreams*, detailed below).

NONES, DAY 1

The following day, the PCs will arrive at the Monastery about mid-day. No encounters will occur along their journey, though the DM should stress the peril involved in making the venture, due to crumbling paths that hang over cliffs, snow-covered embankments which conceal holes in the trail, and sudden avalanches.

Your group has made their way through the perilous mountain peaks via a narrow trail that at times seemed too dangerous for even mountain goats to traverse. Still, with the map, you are able to get to your final destination - Caporetto.

You are surprised as you come out of the dark thickets and from under the overhanging branches of barren trees, to see a small village lying just on the lip of a steep cliff which falls away abruptly, its sides bare and shrouded in fog some hundred yards down. The village itself is decrepit and sickly; its inhabitants crowded into small huts, cooking rats and dogs on open fires, the sound of weeping echoing throughout the entire hamlet.

As your party walks along the narrow road, you notice something strange about the place; the trees all seem to be dying, their withered and gnarled limbs forming claws that hang over the muddy path in an attempt to snatch your cloaks. Shadows prevail in every dark corner, and leprous beings gaze out with

pitiful yet frightening stares at your party. Despite the cold, a foul stench assaults your noses - the smell of the dead. A weathered woman, her face stained with tears, clenches a dirty bundle under one arm - her lifeless baby has just recently died and she begs with a weak voice for alms to pay for its burial.

As you round the bend, putting the ghastly sights of the tiny village behind you, you halt in your tracks as you see the scene ahead.

Standing across a narrow stone causeway lies another mountain peak, separated from the village by a great cloud-filled gorge; on this peak sits a small collection of buildings, wisps of smoke and the distant sound of monastic chanting riding upon the eerie wind. In the center of this is another smaller promontory, rising like a dagger from the grounds of the place, and far above the glint of a brass dome atop a great-buttressed building dazzles your eyes.

This, in all its glory, is the Monastery of Caporetto - the dwelling place of the Red Order.

The people of the village will at first think the group as more peasants and refugees come for aid from the monks of the Monastery, but after they see the confidence and looks of pity coming from the PC's, they will come forward with hands outstretched, begging for alms. There is no way to avoid the flood of beggars and lepers unless at least 1d4 gp (in money or equivalent goods) is given out - and they will be followed at a distance by pleading children and shadowy victims of the plague.

DM's Note: The characters may hear rumors or whispered tales among the peasants if they intend to spend a little time in the village before entering the monastery itself.

THE MONASTERY

Caporetto was designed to be a fortress to stand up against all manner of hostile forces, both natural and man-made. According to local legend, the pinnacle was forged from the solid stone of a single mountain by a group of master artisans. Former "infidels" from the very lands that now threaten the southern kingdom to which the PC's were headed, they converted to the worship of the local deity of learning and knowledge (choose any deity appropriate to your campaign world) during the crusades that once swept this region. To prove their conversion to all who would still judge them for their ancestry, they banded together and made this masterpiece of architecture: the Monastery of Caporetto.

The Monastery lies on a huge pinnacle of bare gray rock that juts from the nearly continuous mists and fog that shroud the entire mountain region. Ravens and buzzards fly high above, some nesting in the rafters of the monastery buildings, hunting vermin and small game in the thick and dangerous vegetation of the area - or feeding off the bodies of the village's dead.

The Monastery is connected to the rest of the landscape by a long stone *causeway*, a bridge that leads to a small

THE RED ORDER

village which has been erected by the local population of serfs, lepers, and previously homeless. The whole mountainside is covered in blackened bushes, thorny thickets, and willow trees that sag pitifully on the muddy slopes. The entire area is cold and foreboding.

THE VILLAGE

It would seem that the Monastery's main duties are to tend to the poor and sick, but this is not the case. Ever since its original founding centuries ago, the Monastery has been a center of learning, a storehouse of both religious and otherwise priceless knowledge. Students from all over the world once came to distant Caporetto to learn, giving up their worldly ways and entering the life of monastic poverty and solitude in exchange for its boundless secrets.

But things have changed. Few learned men come any more, as the mountains themselves seem to have become more remote, more hostile to travel. Summers are short, but the winter seems to drag on longer and longer each year. The Monastery has become far more selective of those acolytes it will take in, and more miserly with sharing the knowledge it once proudly boasted.

Outside the Monastery, on the bordering cliffs, lies a small and decrepit village of some thirty hovels, made of thatched mud, the odd stone scavenged from the mountainside, and straw. Most of these houses are depressed and marred by years of elemental abuse, and in fact several possess neither doors nor roofs. Still the local peasants, some of which are cramped with up to twenty persons at a time, inhabit them. In addition, a large marshy graveyard lies just off the path, among copses of trees and brambles, where many of the diseased and ill peasants have been put to rest over the years.

The population of Caporetto's hamlet consists of some hundred or so peasants and paupers, who have gathered in the Monastery's shadow to benefit from the *charity* the monks are known to bestow. A local custom instituted long ago (long before the evil elements behind the Red Order infiltrated the local Monastery population; they were forced to continue the charade of charity to avoid undue scrutiny), free food and wine is passed out among any and all who gather at the gates during the *Prime* hour.

The inhabitants of the village, of whom nearly 80% are diseased (leprosy and bubonic plague being the most common), are pitiful beings, too weak to prey upon travelers as bandits and too progressed in their diseases to live much longer.

JOINING THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

Since the characters must masquerade as aspiring oblates entering the monastery's service, the following rules and customs should be made known at some point to all concerned; both DM and players alike should be familiar with these various points.

VESTMENTS OF THE ORDER

As indicated by the Order's name, the garments worn by the monks of the Monastery are a deep shade of *red*. These robes are long, woven from thick wool to provide warmth in the frigid winter of the mountains. Each monk (of every Circle) is given such a robe, as well as a pair of plain leather sandals and linen undergarments. In addition, all new members of the Order receive a copy of *Handout #2* (the prayers of the Red Order, in the form of a small chapbook), which is to be memorized.

MEALS

The meals in Caporetto are spartan though nutritious. The monks in Caporetto eat twice a day (Midday and Supper). The midday meal generally consists of hard biscuits, porridge, boiled eggs, cheese, and water. The supper consists of meat pie or sausage, hard bread (one loaf each), stuffed cabbage (often replaced or supplemented by broth, especially during the winter when no vegetables grow), boiled meat (usually boar donated by the rare hunter in the hills) on rare occasions, and watered wine. Meals generally do not vary from this menu.

TIME

Time in the Monastery of Caporetto is regulated using the centuries-old traditional "monastic time" – and is also used throughout this adventure to note when certain events occur during the course of the story.

Monastic time is detailed in brief below. The hours are:

- **Matins:** Also known as "Vigilae", usually between 2:30 and 3:00 in the morning, the time when the monks say their midnight Shouldn't it be after-midnight ? prayers. During this time, all monks proceed to the *Cathedral* for prayer.
- **Lauds:** Sometimes known as "Matutini", usually between 5:00 and 6:00 in the morning, ending at dawn. All monks proceed to the *School* for the teachings of the day. Afterwards, half an hour is spent in private contemplation, with each monk in his own room.
- **Prime:** Usually just before daybreak, around 7:30, time for daily *charity*. At this time, the monks of the Monastery take bread, wine, and porridge from the stores, and hand them out to the poor and diseased who gather at this time outside the Monastery walls.
- **Terce:** Usually around 9:00. During this period the Monks are allowed into the *Scriptorium*, where they may study, copy, or illustrate in privacy.
- **Sext:** Usually around noon, or during the midday meal in winter. The monks gather in their respective *Refectories* to partake in the meal.
- **Nones:** Usually between 2:00 and 3:00 in the afternoon. Around this time many of the monks take to the garden in the *Lower Palisade* to work, while others share in household duties.
- **Vespers:** At sunset, usually around 4:30, or

THE RED ORDER

suppertime. At this time, all monks proceed to the *Cathedral* for song, after which they head to the *Refectories* for their second and final meal of the day.

- **Compline:** Usually around the monks' time of retirement, at 6:00. This time varies from 6:00 to 7:00 (no later). Monks of the Order are expected to retire at this time, and though few doors will be locked, any activity after this time will be considered a violation of curfew.
- **Hesperum (not observed by the "uninitiated"):** The twisted "witching hour", known only to the inner circle of the Red Order, this time comes at exactly 12:00 midnight when all evil Bursars and Elders gather in the *Dark Chapel*, high up on the pinnacle, to worship their nameless god.

Note that monks are not allowed out of the dormitories after retirement (*Compline*), and those that are must have a very good excuse (a verbal permit from the Abbot or Prior may allow one of the craftsman to work after these hours, though this is rare); those who break this curfew are flogged.

RULES OF CAPORETTO

Those entering the cloister (PC's included) are required to adhere to the following rules; those who do not will receive punishment immediately, and any repeat offense will most likely result in prompt expulsion from the Monastery.

- No one may commit an act of violence against any other inside the walls of the Monastery. Arguments must remain civil, and must be arbitrated by a superior.
- Alcohol and similar beverages are expressly forbidden, except for the wine brewed and served in the Monastery. Those attempting to brew their own wine or ale in secret shall be punished.
- Women are not allowed on the grounds of the Monastery, except if they are temporarily being taken up in the *Common House* (in the case of wintering travelers).
- Monks may never leave the Monastery grounds under any condition. Those that are caught entering or leaving shall be immediately expelled from the Order.
- No one except Bursars and higher brethren are allowed in the *Inner Sanctum* (Upper Palisade) without express permission of either the Abbot or the Prior. This includes visitors, lay monks, and Lesser Bursars. Note however, that daily visits to the *Scriptorium* are allowed by Bursars and Lesser Bursars, but only under supervision.

THE CIRCLES

In Caporetto there is a type of hierarchy that distinguishes between new devotees, accomplished students, and the elderly scholars. These are called "Circles", each of which can only be attained after a lengthy period of proving. They are as follows:

LESSER BURSARS

New arrivals at the Monastery are titled "lesser bursars", and dwell in the *Dormitory* of the Lower Palisade. The Monastery has some twenty-odd Lesser Bursars at any given time, serving as students and lay workers, many of whom give up the religious life due to the extreme hardships involved. Still others stay on, intrigued by the mystery and promise of knowledge. The PC's, when they join, will be given the rank of *Lesser Bursars*.

BURSARS

Those few of this rank are men who have been accepted and initiated into the secretive, demon-worshipping inner circle of the Red Order, and partake of a special feast of celebration in their honor (note that this feast is magical, and is used to sway the minds of monks to the side of evil). Bursars gain the right to enter the *Library* and to live with other students in the Upper Palisade, in separate cells from their lesser brethren. Those of this station are, inevitably, made into mindless servitors of the Order's masters.

ELDERS

The Elders of the Red Order consist of very few brothers, most of who have been in the Monastery for most of their lives and have become trusted members of the monastic community. Most Elders have private quarters (either on the lower level or above), but not all know about the evil behind the Red Order - most have been deceived through magic or trickery. The Prior and the Abbot, both of who are ardent worshippers of their faceless demon god are powerful priests of evil and are adept in spell use.

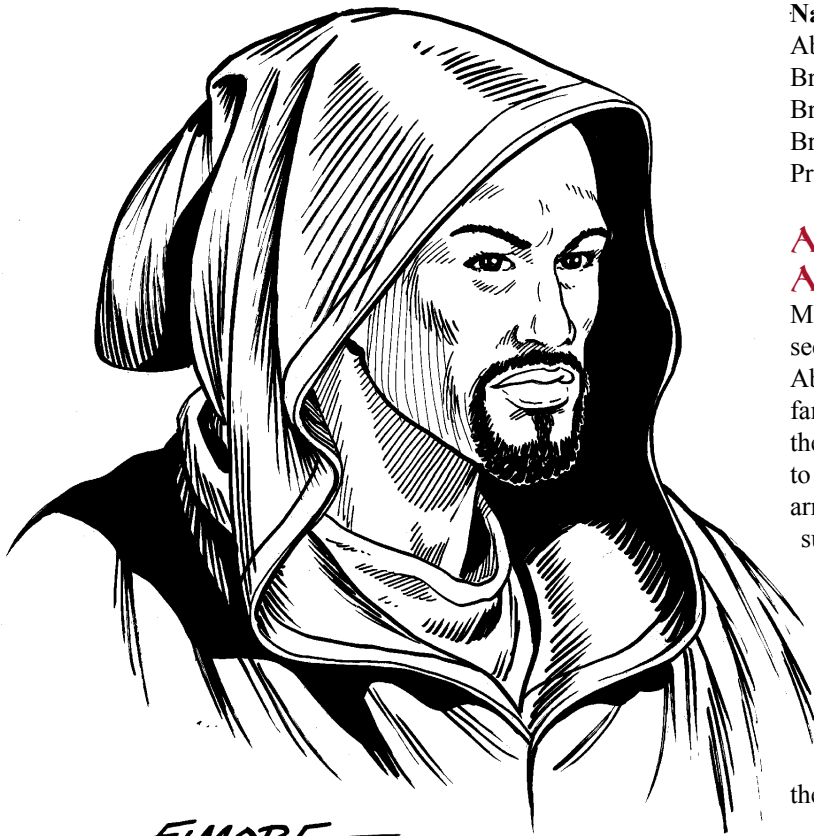
MONKS OF THE RED ORDER

The following lists the major personalities to be encountered in *The Red Order*, with a listing of their general position in the Monastery as well as a descriptive entry detailing the physical appearance, motivations, and other aspects of each. Game statistics are not generally presented for these NPC's since most will not be involved in any combat for the adventure's course. Those that will have such an impact are detailed elsewhere.

LESSER BURSARS

As stated, the *Lesser Bursars* consist of a large number of novices and established acolytes who, for one reason or another, have not been trusted by the masters of the Red Order to join their privileged ranks (most are generally good folk who would rebel or abandon the Monastery if they knew of the Order's true secret). In addition to some 20-40 lesser personalities (of little real consequence to the adventure), there are the following others of interest to the investigators:

THE RED ORDER



139

Name	Position
Brother Alexi	Cook
Brother Augustus	Librarian
Brother Benedict	Instructor
Brother Brziac	Assistant Brewer
Brother Camillus	Brewer
Brother Constantine	Sacrist
Brother Dmitri	Cellarer
Brother Malachi	Physician
Brother Matthias The Greater	Instructor
Brother Matthias The Lesser	Miller
Brother Moski	Scullery Boy
Brother Phocas	Checker
Brother Sven	Chamberlain
Brother Yolo	Assistant Sacrist

BURSARS (THE INNER CIRCLE)

The Bursars consist of those monks chosen by the masters of the Order to rise in rank and join their "Inner Circle". Oddly, many of these are young, disillusioned men – not the elder, more experienced monks who despite their years of loyal service remain overlooked by the Abbot (some figures, such as Dmitri, might comment begrudgingly on this fact). There are roughly 20 or so Bursars at any given time; in addition, the following figures also comprise the Red Order's secretive few:

Name	Position
Abbot Theodore	Abbot
Brother Bors	Cellarer
Brother Trovech	Husbander
Brother Xavier	Friar
Prior Alexander	Prior

ABBOT THEODORE, THE RED ABBOT

Master and spiritual leader of the Monastery, as well as the secretive coterie that has corrupted its core for generations, Abbot Theodore is a true master of intrigue. Born to the family of a rich noble many centuries ago, his position as the youngest of several brothers denied him hereditary rights to rule, and yet his elite blood gave him all the desires and arrogance of royalty. Lacking exposure to his kingdom's subjects on any real level, he never developed sympathy or concern for his people; in fact, from a very early age he demonstrated a callous sadism towards their suffering. An avid hunter (having no official duties he spent his days almost exclusively in the company of his beloved hounds and hunting falcons), he was finally expelled from the court after rumors surfaced that he was hunting peasants among the forests of his homeland as if they were just another form of "game".

Theodore was exiled to a Monastery in a futile attempt to set him on the right path, but the evil in him had already taken shape. He joined his master, Anastasius, as right-hand of the missionary expedition to the East, and was there when the original members of their expedition uncovered the secrets of the "nameless one".

Upon the Red Order's metamorphosis into a cult bent on the worship of that faceless and unmentionable god he, like so many other loyal followers destined for greatness, was physically changed to better suit the Red Order's needs. Theodore was given the gift of *immortality*, the sole price of which was a fear of the sun and an eternal thirst for blood.

The regal Theodore appears as a tall and willowy man in the prime of his middle age, with a sharp goatee and large eerie eyes that are oddly lustful and predatory. His face is formed into either a constant frown of disdain, or an unnerving grin – neither of which is too comforting to behold. Theodore's face possesses rather hollow cheek bones, glaring eyes that stare out from deeply-set sockets, and deep rosy-red lips that are full and curve with an evil allure when he smiles. His hair is black and worn in the typical monastic tonsure. In all, Theodore is a morbid character that possesses very dark desires and motivations; he is fond of his "pets" and several of his more important underlings, but beyond this he cares very little for the daily affairs of maintaining the "charade" of goodness - this he leaves to his obedient underling, *Alexander*.

With the time of the Nameless One approaching, Theodore perceives himself as destined to bring the Order's foul god into this world, and foolishly believes nothing can stop them.

THE RED ORDER

BROTHER ALEXI, OBESE HEAD COOK

The cheerful Brother Alexi is a plump and rotund fellow, with a loud and boisterous laugh that is renowned in the Monastery for its tremendous volume. Alexi is a happy fellow, with an unshakable positive outlook on life – he is always one to curb frightening rumors or put a light cast on even the direst portents. He is generous when it comes to his job, often to the dismay of the Elders, who must constantly scold him for shortages of food and wine.

BROTHER AUGUSTUS, BLIND LIBRARIAN

The Librarian of The Monastery is a senile old fool who is repugnantly ugly and supremely “upsetting” in appearance. Both of his eyes are clouded over with milky white cataracts, though he seems expertly aware of his surroundings despite his blindness – apparently his senses have more than compensated for his loss of sight...even extending into the realm of the unseen.

It is said his senses of smell and hearing are so fine that he detect even a silent intruder into his Library from a good distance. Unknown to most, however, Augustus’ blindness has also given him a form of “extra-sensory perception”, a perception that has permitted him to view horrors and marvels that even other members of the Red Order cannot comprehend. A madman, Augustus is nearly a mindless, babbling fool, his idiot behavior checked only by the quiet routine of his day – maintaining the library, putting out candles, organizing shelves, and patrolling the dark recesses of the tower.

The Abbot has a personal dislike for Augustus, whom he is afraid will somehow threaten the plans of the Red Order. As such the senile old Augustus’ days are numbered.

BROTHER BENEDICT, NEAR-DEAF INSTRUCTOR

The other school instructor, Brother Benedict is an old man like Matthias The Greater, and is always seen in long flowing robes with an ear trumpet up to one ear. Benedict is nearly deaf, yet he holds a vast store of knowledge in his venerable mind. He is looked up to by many of the students not only as a comical figure, but in contrast, also as a wise and fatherly scholar.

BROTHER BORS, CELLARER OF THE INNER SANCTUM

“Holder of The Keys”, the stocky and tight-lipped Brother Bors is officially in charge of all household affairs in the Upper Ward of the Monastery – including maintaining the buildings and chambers, as well as the general organization of the Order’s Bursars. Brother Bors is a huge, almost ape-like man, with a massive stature that looks like it would take at least four men to bring low in a physical contest. He is like a silent, menacing “Frankenstein” figure that strikes fear

and intimidation in those who bump into him or get in his way.

The towering giant spent much of his early life honing his body into an instrument of destruction, before being seduced by the call of the Red Order. He now uses the strength of his huge fists to silently strangle those who threaten his masters – including those who find out too much about the secret chambers of the Upper Ward. The PC’s are unlikely to encounter Bors until well into the adventure, as he generally remains in the Upper Ward at all times.

BROTHER BRZIAC, DERANGED BREWER’S ASSISTANT

Before the recent rash of deaths Brother Brziac was known only as a demented youth, one who would often drool for hours on end and didn’t pose a threat to anyone. Generally left alone in the cellars to chase rats, welcome only at masses and during prayer by the kinder monks of the Monastery (Dmitri, Camillus, and Constantine for instance), no one would have suspected him of murder. But that, in fact, is the allegation that has been leveled at him in recent days.

Brziac is in fact *mentally challenged* though he is gifted in a way that very few others are – he is *telepathic*. But this “gift” has also been his undoing. One day the poor fool snuck up into the Upper Ward – despite warnings by others – and came too close to Prior Alexander –and was driven completely insane by the surface thoughts of his grotesque and fiendish intelligence. Brziac, in his insanity, fled to the warrens beneath the Monastery and became a self-imposed recluse, fearing the evil masters he had uncovered. It is this sudden reversal of his generally good and childish nature that has alarmed the monks and caused them to suspect him of the evil that has stricken the Monastery in recent days.

BROTHER CAMILLUS, FASTIDIOUS BREWER

Though usually calm, friendly, and fastidious, the Brewer, Brother Camillus, has recently become worried and nervous. He feels something terrible is happening in the Monastery and is becoming slightly paranoid. Camillus is the responsible overseer of the Monastery’s brewery, and holds all the keys to the cellars. A kind man, it was Camillus who allowed Brziac to live in the wine cellars despite the objections of many other monks; but the demented boy’s recent strange behavior (and rumors of his involvement in the murders) have left Camillus worried – and afraid he will be blamed. Still, he is a reasonable man who may prove to be a useful ally or source of information for the PC’s. He has a particular suspicion towards the two masters, Alexander and Theodore, whom he has seen overlook others (like himself) for appointment to their secretive “Inner Circle”, instead favoring young and relatively foolish youths. He does not, however, realize the significance of this.

THE RED ORDER

BROTHER CONSTANTINE, RELIGIOUS SACRIST

Though genuinely a benevolent and good-natured man, quiet and nervous behavior has recently come over Brother Constantine – the sacrist and minister of the Monastery. Brother Constantine is deeply concerned about the younger monks of the Monastery, who he realizes have picked up on rumors about the recent deaths and the unnatural spread of disease in the region. Having lived here all his life, Constantine knows most of the place like the back of his hand – and is subtly afraid of his masters, the Abbot and Prior, who only seem to get more cruel and more isolated in their mountaintop pinnacle by the year. He is also quite concerned about their regular acceptance of impressionable youths into their “Inner Circle”, who disappear into the pinnacle and are seldom seen as lively as they once were, bearing only lax, serene faces and dire dispositions (victims of the *tavar seeds* used to brainwash the Bursars upon initiation).

While he is in charge of the *Cathedral* (on the lower level of the Monastery mount), Constantine has no part in the demonic affairs that pervade most of the other authority figures of the citadel. He also has felt an extreme prejudice by the Bursars against him and the Lesser Bursars for years, and is beginning to unravel, in his mind, the true nature of his “masters”...

BROTHER DMITRI, CELLARER OF THE LOWER PALISADE

Steward of household affairs in the Lower Ward, Brother Dmitri is a burly man with sandy red hair and a fair complexion - and is a hard, no-nonsense sort of fellow. Though he often seems grumpy and short-tempered, he is actually a well-meaning and fatherly master to his novices. In addition to his intimate knowledge of the other monks and the Monastery itself, Dmitri is also aware of the true identity of Moski, a young girl posed as a monk currently hiding in the citadel. Dmitri has little to speak of in the way of good words for either the Abbot or Prior, though he does not suspect anything ill of them; he merely thinks them to be harsh masters.

It is possible for female PCs – probably masquerading as men themselves – to get on Dmitri’s good side; of all the monks in the Monastery, he is the one to have the most sympathy for those hiding out among the cloister.

BROTHER MALACHI, SADISTIC SURGEON

Brother Malachi is a dark-skinned man whose appearance is most notable for his deep amber eyes, almost perpetually frozen open in a wide-eyed stare as if glaring menacingly at all who approach. He never has a smile on his elongated face, though most attribute this to his rather morbid occupation in the Monastery. Malachi is the cloister’s *surgeon*, and it is his duty to tend to the ill – monks and, on rare occasion, peasants from the squatter village outside the

citadel.

Though not a spellcaster, Malachi is knowledgeable enough in medieval medicine and might otherwise be considered a good ally – if it were not for the fact that he is a sadist, thoroughly malicious and cruel. Though few suspect it, in many of his operations Malachi attempts to cause as much pain as possible (as anyone with medical knowledge in his presence during an operation will discover), and may even *poison* needy peasants for the sheer malicious pleasure of seeing them writhe and die. Malachi, though a vile creature himself, is not privileged to the Red Order’s secrets (the Prior senses he would make an unreliable convert); his machinations are entirely his own.

BROTHER MATTHIAS THE GREATER, HEAD INSTRUCTOR

One of the oldest monks at Caporetto (and perhaps a bit senile), Brother Matthias is completely bald with extremely poor eyesight - and an equally bad temper brought on by strict entrenched values and a chronic arthritic condition that leaves him utterly miserable. He is from the “old school” of monastic society and is extremely hard on the younger monks, even those who mean only the best. Although Brother Matthias holds considerable power among the Bursars, he is *not* a member of the Red Order’s “inner circle”. Because he is actually a stoic follower of the monastic institution, he is deemed as something of a nuisance to the true “inner circle’s” leadership, though they deem it best to let him live out his natural life before filling his position with one of their own (he is, after all, almost 100 years old).

Note that Brother Matthias is one of the few remaining monks who still knows the runic code system of the *Library* rooms. Rather foolishly, Matthias actually *trusts* the Prior and Abbot, thinking their harsh attitudes are “what young monks need these days”.

BROTHER MATTHIAS THE LESSER, MILLER

Young Matthias has light hair and a pair of sky blue eyes; strong yet quiet, Brother Matthias prefers to spend his off time with the animals in and around the Monastery (when allowed). In the rules mentioned on page 7, it states that the monks may never leave the monastery for any reason, at all. Wouldn’t that be the case here as well? Totally oblivious to the foul nature of his masters, Matthias has no reason to fear anyone. Still, he is disturbed by the physician, Malachi, whom he has observed cruelly treat certain patients (peasants) through the Infirmary window. He is unlikely, however, to ever bring up his suspicions due to his shy, quiet, and reserved demeanor.

BROTHER MOSKI, SCULLERY ‘BOY’

The young Brother Moski appears to be a light skinned youth with almost feminine mannerisms; very hard-

THE RED ORDER

working, cautious, and seemingly paranoid among the hardier and stockier men of the Monastery. In fact, Moski is a *girl*, her hair cut short to conceal her true gender and identity. Moski joined the Monastery in hopes of gaining sanctuary from the law outside; she was once a petty thief (a rumor heard in the village hints at her presence), but is now the scullery girl around the Lower Palisade. She does many of the menial jobs others look down upon, and though she despises the work, she knows she must remain quiet if she is to maintain the charade.

Moski's true identity is known only to Brother Dmitri, who has vowed to keep it a secret in hopes that by showing her kindness she will conform to a purer, holier life and be truly "saved".

BROTHER PHOCAS, INSIPID CHECKER

Assistant to Brother Alexi, Phocas is a lanky youth with thick, curly red hair, plagued with a constantly runny nose – and chronic sniffles. Brother Phocas is dull, serene, and often absent-minded. Although he sometimes finds it hard to keep track of where things are, he is an excellent master of the quill and logs superb records.

BROTHER SVEN, FRIENDLY CHAMBERLAIN

Master of the *Common House*, the kindly Brother Sven has a ring of curly white hair around his brow, his elderly face often filled with joy. It is Brother Sven's duties to tend to lay travelers and other visitors (who, by the rules of their deity's church, may not be refused at least *some* form of aid if they ask at the gates of the Monastery), and he runs the *Common House* in the Lower Ward.

Sven is a trustworthy sort, having served in this position for years, though his concerns lay mainly in maintaining order rather than investigating the strange rumors afflicting the Monastery and its cloister. He will have nothing to say of the Prior and Abbot other than that they are strict and serious individuals to whom proper respect should always be given.

BROTHER TROVECH, AFFABLE HUSBANDER

Thick-boned and muscular, Brother Trovech is a friendly man with a particular kindness and curiosity for newcomers to the Monastery. In truth, however, Trovech is nothing less than an assassin and trusted follower of the evil Abbot and his "inner circle", and though he resides in the Outer Ward with the Lesser Bursars (masquerading as one of them), he is in fact an agent sent to spy on the other monks (Dmitri, Sven, etc.) to make sure they are ignorant of the Red Order's plans.

Trovech's sleuth-like persona should be a major concern for the PC's at the beginning of the adventure, as he persistently tries to find out who they are and why they've

joined the monkhood. Though they may perceive his curiosity as being purely innocent, any reason for suspecting the PC's results in him reporting to the Prior or Abbot – a fact that may have catastrophic consequences for the would-be infiltrators.

BROTHER XAVIER, TRAVELING FRIAR

Appearing as a thin and darkly-tanned individual from regions unknown, Brother Xavier has a pair of dark brown eyes and an innocuous smile...one that is capable of slipping into a much more malicious grin when his guard is down.

Xavier was once a student of monastic martial arts, but gave up his calling when he was seduced to the worship of the "nameless one". Xavier is now a part of the evil cult that lies at the heart of the Red Order, though he himself spends most of his time *outside* the Monastery, traveling to and from the cities of the north in the guise of a friar. He is something of a "spy" for the Red Order, keeping tabs on events beyond of the mountains to make sure the Order's activities remain forgotten to the outside world, or else wandering and collecting funds in the manner of a pardoner to help finance the Order's existence. He has also been known to pursue rumors or legends pertaining to magical books or doomsday prophecies in the name of the Order as well – pursuits that often have him scouring the far ends of the earth for weeks, months, or even years at a time.

Brother Xavier is a very tricky individual, and hardly one to give himself away; he is also extremely ruthless and quite resourceful. Luckily for the characters he only appears later on in the adventure, and thus has little chance to reveal the PCs' intentions before it is too late.

BROTHER YOLO, SACRIST'S ASSISTANT

The rather quiet Brother Yolo is a good man with an uncannily quick mind, that would have made him a good merchant. Despite his handsome and youthful appearance, Yolo is totally devoted to the pure and simplistic monastic way of life, and has long since given up the desire to return to the laity despite the harsh reality of this existence.

Unknown to all, Brother Yolo is in fact an agent of the *Ordo Vermis*, and is an informant for that mystic organization that has kept tabs on the goings-on in Caporetto for years. In addition, he is aware of a few secret places in the Monastery, and may covertly direct the PC's during their secret investigation – especially once his master, Constantine, is found *murdered*.

PRIOR ALEXANDER, MYSTERIOUS MASTER

Second-in-charge of the Monastery, the elegant Prior Alexander exudes an aura of preciseness and neatness that seems suited for the cloistered life; he is outwardly strict and inflexible, harsh in his administration of spot punishments

THE RED ORDER

on the novices of the Lower Ward, something that appeals to the old-school monastic followers who know nothing of his true identity.

Alexander's flair for finding things out is quite remarkable, and most lesser monks of the Monastery half-jokingly whisper that the Prior "has eyes everywhere" – his finger continually on the pulse of the Order's affairs. The Prior manages to maintain this reputation not only through intimidation, but also through the activities of his "agents" (including Brother Trovech, who acts as a mole in the Lower Palisade, as well as Brother Bors and all of the Bursars living in the Upper Ward). He also keeps tabs on the monks through secret castings of *detect thoughts*, to find out what each man fears, thinks, or believes. He uses this information to keep the day-to-day affairs of the Order in harmony and, more importantly, to maintain ignorance of the foul nature of the cult of the Nameless One.

Unknown to most – and certainly a secret he will attempt to veil throughout the story – the Prior is not a human (though he appears to be so) but rather something far more fiendish: a *barghest* whose presence has become wrapped up with the cult's quest to bring about the Nameless One's reign on earth.

Though he has no natural human form, Alexander possesses a *hat of disguise* that he uses to assume human appearance before leaving his quarters. When donned he generally appears as a lanky, bony man with broad shoulders, an intimidating and discerning glare in his sparkling gray eyes. These same eyes exude an aura of undeniable mystery about him that is both fascinating and unnerving.

Though in many ways he is much more competent than his master, Alexander is nonetheless loyal to the Abbot, Theodore. He is himself exceptionally cunning, often taking care of problems before they ever arise (and avoiding catastrophe for the cult), a fact that has earned the unspoken gratitude of the Abbot on numerous occasions. Alexander knows of his master's need to rest (as a vampire), and is acutely aware of Theodore's tendency to favor "less than diplomatic" solutions to problems, and is thus very adept in running the affairs of the Red Order when the Abbot is not "available" (such as during the daylight hours, or when a matter simply doesn't interest him).

Finally, as if these accomplishments weren't enough, Alexander is also something of an accomplished wizard; a student of Anastasius (the original leader of the Red Order, before passing on into a state of perpetual undeath), he has access to a number of useful spells that he may put to use if he discovers the PCs' identities during the adventure...

TYPICAL MONKS

The typical monk of Caporetto is likely a well-meaning youngster, a *novice*; most are from the villages and towns populating the kingdoms of the south, though others have come far from the great cities of the north as well to learn from the legendary *Library* of Caporetto. In general, though prescient of the dreams and general malaise overcoming the

Monastery, most do not suspect the reality behind the Red Order's purpose.

The DM, when describing or introducing lesser monks, should come up with appropriate names to flesh them out. Typical names for minor personalities might include – *Nikolai, Wenceslaus, Yuri, Justinian, Andrescu, Cassius, Augustine, Milos, Piotyr, Gregori, Vasily, Josef, Paulinus, Stephan*, etc.

Typical Lesser Monks, Commoner 1: HP 4 (see appendix).

Typical Elders, Commoner 5: HP 19 (see appendix).

INQUIRIES

If at any time the PC's decide to ask about the recent events in the Monastery, they will be met with varied stories and opinions. No one seems to know exactly what really happened, only fragments of a giant puzzle. The DM must use his own discretion when providing hints in conversations (you may require the use of *Gather Information* checks to pull anything out of the tight-lipped monks at all).

THE MURDERS

Brother Callistus's dismembered body was found in the dark cellars below the Monastery. There was no doubt that it was murder, and many of the monks suspect it was the doing of Brother Brziac (who, they will tell new-comers, is an "insane and demonic little man" who is only kept about due to the kindness of the Brewer). Everyone among the lesser monks fear Brziac, and will warn against entering the wine cellars where he dwells.

Brother Milos, a Lesser Bursar, was found four days past, both rigid and withered. The surgeon's assistants, if questioned, can tell of a pair of strange marks that were found on his neck – like a vampire's bite (though Malachi will not speak of such things). In addition, nearly all the monks in the Monastery know that the body was drained of all its fluids. His body cannot be examined, however, for the monks burned it out of fear.

THE NIGHTMARES

Many monks have left the Monastery due to the strange aura of evil that has come over its inhabitants. While this is not overwhelming, it is definitely noticeable and ever-present. Many monks have been suffering from nightmares as of late, dreams filled with darkness and visions of horror. None will say of what they have seen – as they seldom remember – only that they feel an outstanding evil, a threat to their very humanity.

THE BLACK PLAGUE

The monks will speak of the disease freely, but with great pity and sadness. Every day more peasants succumb to the disease, and the monks bury them in the village graveyard, while Constantine says the last rites. All the monks secretly dread going near the villagers.

THE RED ORDER

Of the disease itself, they can only describe its effects; swollen black blemishes, open and runny sores, and intense pain. Victims live in despair and fear, watching their loved ones and companions die as each day goes by. They are too weak to and many have been kicked out of their group homes out of fear of contagion.

THE GHOSTS

Many of the monks in the Monastery are aware of the ghostly apparitions which some claim to have seen. Unlike the common reaction to ghost stories, due to the murders and overall feeling of evil as of late, most of the monks take the stories seriously, or at least give the haunted areas a wide berth.

According to several monks, lights have been seen dancing in the Monastery graveyard at night, flickering on and off. Other monks claim to have seen dwindling lights in the windows of the great *Library* (which overlooks the rest of the Monastery), and fear it may be haunted. Of course, the older monks such as Matthias the Greater and Benedict claim this is just fiction, and are angered by the insinuation of the *Library* being “haunted”.

DM’s Note: Not all of the stories around the Monastery are true. In addition to common knowledge, there are whispered rumors and tales in and out of the Monastery.

RUMORS

The following pieces of information should only be gleaned from monks or village peasants if the PC’s manage to get them to confide in the party – generally requiring a *Gather Information* check (DC 12 to get villagers to talk, DC 16 for monks as PC’s must contend with the threat of being punished for gossiping). Rumors, being as they are, are not entirely true, nor entirely false. If the DM wishes, he can expand on these for plot twists or future ideas.

#1: The plague has come to end us all. The villagers have already suffered the effects of this foul disease, rotting away in front of their families and loved-ones. Each day cartloads of peasants are taken to the graveyard to be buried, and soon there won’t be any room left. May the gods have mercy on us.

#2: Something foul is going on up in the Monastery. Many peasants have gone there for treatment for the Black Death, and they’ve never been heard from again. Not even their dead bodies have been returned for burial.

#3: An old man of the village went mad before dying a few days ago of the disease. His last words were cryptic and perhaps only insane murmurs; he proclaimed the coming of something called “the nameless one” in the near future, and declared the world was coming to an End.

#4: To the south lie the forested mountains of the legendary brigand prince, the Black Arrow. He and his men have declared a war against the rich and prosperous that rule the kingdom to the south, and have been taking care of the ill and sick from this awful disease.

#5: Several weeks ago a village girl was reprimanded

for being a thief, but she escaped right under the nose of the authorities. Brigandage is beginning to look like the only way to make a living these days...

#6: There is a rumor that some of the villagers have turned to *cannibalism*. An elderly man, taking care of his granddaughter after her parents died of the plague, was attacked a few nights past and left for dead. His daughter was taken – screaming and kicking – to be hacked apart, boiled in a dinner pot, and shared among the community.

#7: Some of the monks have been talking about leaving the Monastery; the recent murders have them scared and shaken. Some believe that the gods are punishing the weak, while others say the plague has begun to poison even our ranks.

#8: Strange lights have been seen dancing in the Monastery graveyard at night; many monastic residents fear that the cemetery is haunted, and none venture out into that part of the grounds at night.

#9: The murders of late are the work of demons! Some of the monks have begun to indulge in forbidden pleasures, amongst themselves, and their flesh has burnt with the demons of faithlessness. May their deaths be a lesson to us all.

#10: The body of Brother Milos, found just four days ago, was as pale as a ghost, his figure rigid and withered. I heard tell that strange marks were found upon his neck, and that all the blood had been drained from his body. Demons are surely upon us!

#11: Brother Brziac, the fool, is *possessed*! One cold night, just a few weeks ago, he began ranting and raving like a lunatic, about dark things and shadowy creatures - about the end of the world. As his speech is dangerous and disruptive, he has been confined to the cellars beneath the winery by Brother Camillus.

#12: Rats infest the catacombs that exist beneath the Monastery. Sometimes, if you’re in the latrine and you’re very quiet, you can hear them moving through the tunnels below!

DM’s Note: The first five rumors can only be gleaned in the village, the other seven only in the Monastery.

INTERROGATIONS

If, at any time during the adventure the party is successful in capturing any of the *evil* Red Monks, they will have an opportunity to interrogate them. As DM you can play this by ear, but if you feel the timing isn’t right for the PC’s to learn about the plots of the Red Order, you can give the PC’s a variety of red herrings.

While each what they know obviously varies from monk to monk, most are only vaguely aware of their true “master”, a creature known to them only as “the faceless one”. They will praise his unholy name, and curse those who dare to stand in his way, each working himself into a wide-eyed zealous frenzy that ultimately drives his heart into contractions – killing him in a burst of berserk shouting and dancing! The “nameless one”, it seems, can claim his followers with or without the PCs’ consent...

THE RED ORDER

Other members of the “inner circle” (such as Augustus, Brother Bors, etc) will defy capture at *all costs*. If this is unavoidable (they are *charmed*, for example), and you still feel that it is too early for the PC’s to learn too much, you can use another trick. Some powerful “magical force” will seem to suddenly manifest to prevent their capture and questioning; such a figure will go raving *mad* (as the “nameless one” personally reaches from his invisible shadow realm, through time and space, and “touches” them), leaping from the sides of the pinnacle to fall to their deaths below...

However, do not use the “nameless one’s” ability to silence his own to simply confound or deny the PC’s an opportunity to get quick answers; if you do, your players will think it impossible, improbable, and ultimately frustrating. Instead, use the ability to present to the characters a feeling of dread and futility – it is the idea that this “nameless one”, whatever he really is, can reach his own followers invisibly wherever in the world they are, regardless of any protection they might be afforded, and do what he will with them. The idea of such a power, invisible and horrible, spawning madness and suicidal mania in those he touches, should be terrifying enough!

INFILTRATING THE INNER CIRCLE

At some point during the course of the adventure the PC’s will probably try to infiltrate the inner circle of Bursars that comprise the “true” Red Order.

Attempts to infiltrate the Order might include trying to gain entrance to the Inner Circle, or, failing this, simply sneaking in at night under the cover of darkness into the Upper Ward and crashing the Red Order’s blasphemous festivities in the *Dark Chapel* (or, alternatively, for a more dramatic end to the adventure, at the *Dimensional Rift* as the monks, altogether, prepare to bring the “nameless one” into this world at the scenario’s conclusion). Remember, however, that it is generally up to the players to devise a plan of action in any event – do not guide them by hand in this most perilous hour!

Generally speaking, during the day the enigmatic monks of the Red Order’s “inner circle” will most often be found all over the Upper Palisade, either in the *Scriptorium*, in the *Refectory*, or in the *Dormitory* (the latter especially at night). They will typically be found in groups of 1-4, though major personalities (Brother Bors, Prior Alexander, etc.) will usually be found alone or with other major NPC’s contemplating the Order’s actions or engaging in other lewd amusements.

If the PC’s attempt, through their own clever actions, to attract the attention of the Prior or Abbot, hoping to be chosen as new oblates, by all means let them. The Prior does most of the “selection” and informs each would-be “oblate” how they are to be chosen, the benefits of being a member of the “inner circle”, and when they will be initiated – as a group – on Day 6, “sometime after Compline”. From

there, the PC’s need only wait to be admitted without a hitch into the Upper Ward!

TOOLS FOR FIGHTING THE RED ORDER

This section is included to give the DM an idea of some of the assets clever players may think of putting to use against the monks of the Red Order. Since for a good part of the adventure they will not have their equipment, the relevance of these items cannot be understated.

Holy Symbols: Should they learn of his nature and catch on to what he really is, there are a number of holy symbols (and a few mirrors) that wise PC’s might think to steal and keep until their final confrontation with the Abbot, Theodore.

Poisons: Several locations in the Monastery have small doses of poison that could be used (with perhaps some risk) to great effect by PC’s willing to use them.

True Seeing: The *scroll of true seeing* lost in Brziac’s underground abode might be useful in seeing through the disguise of the Prior, giving the PC’s an early indication of his malevolent nature.

Weapon Cache: Unless they manage to secure their own weapons, the secret cache of equipment beneath the Monastery (to which the PC’s are directed) contains some magical weapons that will be essential to killing Alexander and Theodore (both of whom have damage reduction).

MONASTERY KEY

Caporetto’s ancient monastery is a crumbling yet nigh-invincible fortress, located high up in these isolated and rugged snow-swept mountains. The following is a detailed key of the various locations open to the monks of the order... and other places that remain a secret to all but a select few...

THE LOWER PALISADE (OUTER WARD)

The ring of stonework and buildings that line the bottom level of the great Monastery is known as the *Lower Palisade*, or the “Outer Ward”. Night and day a thin mist covers the avenues from low clouds clinging to the mountainous heights, while the somber chanting of monks in the distance emanates a haunting melody that echoes throughout the Monastery grounds.

A. TOWERS

These towers flank the causeway that leads onto the mountain, connecting the Monastery to the “village” of Caporetto. Each tower is square in shape, with a hanging battlement on the second floor, which is topped by a deep red roof (apparently in somewhat poor condition from a glance). These towers are kept locked, with only the Cellarer (Brother Dmitri) having the keys.

At the beginning of Prime, when the bells of the *Cathedral* are rung, the doors to these towers are opened

THE RED ORDER

and from four to eight lesser monks take iron pots of vegetables, porridge, loaves of bread, and jugs of wine, and from the top floor, lower them through shuttered holes to the crowds of peasants who gather on the bridge below. At times the gathering crowds can become quite anxious and even violent amongst themselves, thus the need for caution when dispensing such goods.

B. OLD WATCHTOWER

This slender square tower rises up above most of the surrounding buildings of the grounds, and provides an excellent view of the causeway and gates leading to the Monastery. Although it might have once been used for defense, the tower is currently in poor shape, lacking shutters for the windows, locks for the doors, etc. Most of the masonry appears damaged as well.

This tower is considered “off-limits” to visitors and monks alike, as it is quite dangerous and unstable. There is a 1 in 20 chance per 10 minutes (cumulative) per person that the floor gives way as one reaches the second floor, dropping the victim twenty feet into the chamber below.

The tower is, ultimately, empty and utterly abandoned as a result of this danger.

C. COMMON HOUSE

The common guesthouse sits on the lower grounds of the Monastery, and unlike some others in the monastic commune is actually well maintained. As a travelers’ hostel, the house is open to all visitors to the Monastery, year-round. The common house’s maintenance and operation are the duties of the Chamberlain, Brother Sven, a middle-aged clergyman who oversees the house with an additional staff of three lay monks - who serve as scullery boys and menial servants.

The first floor of the common house possesses a small refectory for the meals of visitors, adorned with a large wooden table and a dozen or so simple chairs. The walls are plain and unpainted inside, yet hung with somber paintings of a generally religious nature. Torches are set into the walls at regular intervals, but are only kept lit when travelers are staying at the hostel. The upstairs level of the house contains small cluttered rooms (almost as spartan as those of the monks), each of which contains only a wooden bunk with straw mattress, a bronze mirror and washbasin, and a small wooden chest (no lock) by the window for the storage of modest goods.

D. CHAMBERLAIN’S RESIDENCE

This two-room building is rather plain and unassuming, inside and out. The entry chamber is dominated by a round wooden table, upon which sits an old bronze lantern and a glass vial containing two pints of lantern oil, as well as a plain wooden tinderbox. The walls of the place are sparse; the adjoining room contains little more than a straw cot, a linen closet, and an iron symbol (use whatever symbol is appropriate to the deity selected for the setting) nailed

against the eastern wall – the few accouterments of the good-natured Chamberlain, Sven.

E. INFIRMARY

The *Infirmary* is where the sick and ill of the Monastery come for treatment - or to be excused from the rather strict regimen of monastic life while healing. This two-level building consists of two great open rooms, each lined with small straw cots in a neat and orderly manner. At any given time, there will be only 1d6 monks (and perhaps 1d4 peasants from the village) being treated here. Any peasants here will be seriously ill (leprosy, plague, etc.), while the monks will most probably have only lesser ailments – something which may interest visiting PC’s.

The residence of the monastery’s surgeon, Brother Malachi, is located on the top floor of the infirmary. His quarters are bare and not unlike those of the Lesser Bursars of the Lower Palisade. Malachi keeps the key to the medicine closet on his person at all times (though an old key that he lost long ago can be found hidden in the *Library*).

Creatures: Because a confrontation with Malachi may occur during the course of the adventure, his statistics are given here:

Brother Malachi, Expert 7: HP 24 (see appendix).

Treasure: A small room in the back of the first floor is *locked* (Pick Locks check at DC 25 to open), and contains rows of jugs and small burlap sacks filled with a variety of typical medicinal herbs. In the jars and sacks can be found (among other more common ingredients) pickled snake’s tongues, bits of honeycomb, vials of sweet oil, etc. (these are various spell components, recognizable with a Spellcraft check at DC 13; while Malachi himself is not a spellcaster, he has on occasion been asked to store spell components for Prior Alexander in this storage area for use in his experiments with Anastasius’ preserved spellbook).

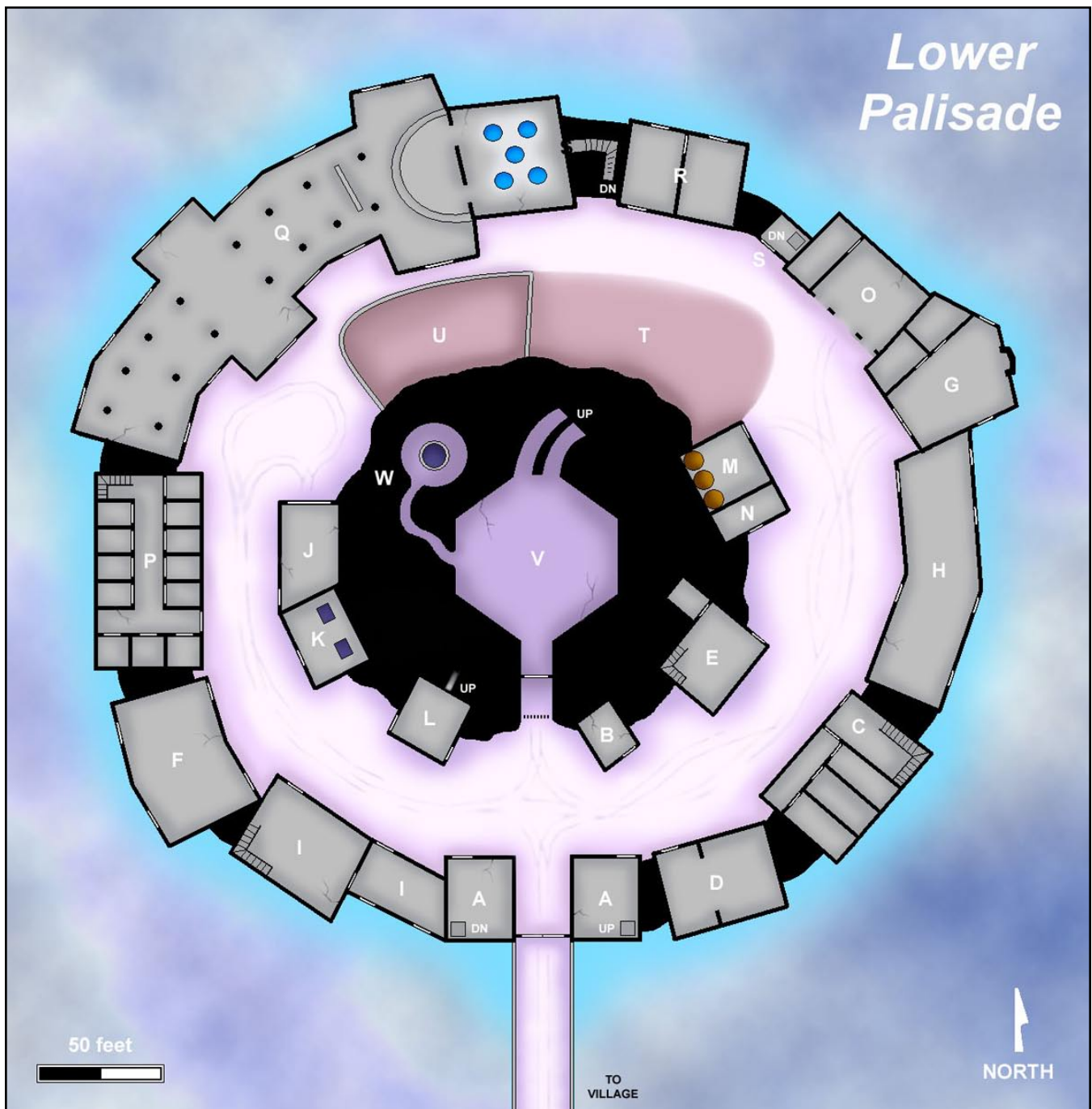
In addition to these components there is a bottle or two of *oil of taggit* (ten doses altogether) for rendering patients unconscious, and over two gallons of hard alcohol for surgery in heavy earthenware jugs. However, a Search check (DC 20) also uncovers a beaker of *arsenic* (four doses), a small phial of *bloodroot* poison (two doses), and a jar of *black lotus extract* (two doses), all which are secreted behind the stacks of heavy jugs. See page 80 of the DMG for details on these poisons.

DM’s Note: These latter items were stolen by Brother Malachi from the *Library*, and he sometimes uses them on unwitting village patients to kill them merely out of sadistic glee.

F. CELLARER’S RESIDENCE

This small building is the residence of Brother Dmitri, the Cellarer. Possessing only one large chamber, it is furnished in simple yet sturdy items, including a central table, a set of chairs, and a comfortable cot. In addition, there is a wardrobe (nearly empty), and a small bookshelf containing several mundane religious writings (of no real value). The chamber has no ceiling, extending up to the second floor,

THE RED ORDER



making the room much larger than most. This also makes it quite cold, however, and a fire is almost constantly maintained in the large stone fireplace. There is nothing else of value here.

C. KITCHENS

This huge stone house is often crowded with three monks preparing the meals for the brethren of the Order. All food is prepared here, and meals are delivered to the *Refectory* on this level as well as up to the *Inner Ward*. The kitchens are run by Brother Alexi and his two assistant chefs, both of whom are minor monks of little consequence. *Note that anyone entering the kitchens while Alexi is present will*

be assumed to be trying to steal food – and will be chased away with a rolling pin!

A connecting room to the northeast of the kitchens proper is the *larder*, lined with wooden bars at the ceiling from which hang wicked iron hooks. On several of these hooks hang raw sides of beef, mutton, and ropes of thick sausage, while on the floor are smatterings of fat, sinew, and caked blood. The northwestern room is stocked with small casks of stored water, orange earthenware jugs filled with pepper and salt (as well as other herbs - though oddly no *garlic* is to be found!), and sacks filled with oats, flour, carrots, potatoes, dried fruit, nuts, and reaped wheat (for use in the preparation of porridge). Bladders filled with lard, honey,

THE RED ORDER

butter, and syrups rest neatly on the floor.

The second floor of the kitchen houses the apartments of the Head Cook, Alexi, and his two young assistants. Brother Alexi sleeps in a large yet spartan room, adorned with little more than a reed carpet, wooden cot, and iron chandelier; his assistants live in a smaller and equally functional chamber, next to his.

Treasure: An unassuming parchment scroll lies forgotten among the bladders and jugs on the floor of the first floor larder, and can be found with a DC 14 Search check (this is found to be *Handout #3*).

H. REFECTORY

The *Refectory* (dining hall) is adorned by two great wooden tables, with benches along each for seating the twenty-odd monks who frequent this place during meal times. Bronze candelabra on the tables hold half-melted candles, shedding dim light on the somber chamber. The refectory is generally unoccupied, except during mealtimes when it is filled with hungry aspirants in silent activity.

L. SCHOOL

The south part of this two-sectioned building is used by the monks and instructors as a *school* of sorts. Here younger monks receive religious teachings as well as instruction on the basic rules of the Order. The room is bare except for several torches on the walls, and some twenty plain workbenches.

The northern part of the school is its “offices”, consisting of two separate floors. The first floor is a neat chamber with a desk and set of chairs, as well as a locked metal coffer (Pick Locks DC 20 to open) against the western wall – filled with ledgers and scrolls of little or no value to the PCs. The desk is used by Brother Phocas (the checker) during the day, and any form of disturbance will generally annoy him during his working hours!

The second floor is reached via a rickety wooden staircase, and is divided into two rooms and a narrow hallway; the first room is the residence of Brother Benedict, and contains a straw cot, and a low table. The second room is the quarters of Brother Matthias the Greater, and is carpeted with a small straw mat, and the walls are decorated with a pair of featureless red wall hangings. The room also contains a small table, a cot, and a rustic wooden holy symbol (of the same lawfully-aligned deity the Monastery is dedicated to) over the doorway.

Treasure: a dusty tapestry depicting -quite explicitly - the End of the world decorates Brother Benedict's chambers. Made of faded orange, red, and gold threads, the tapestry, if cleaned, might fetch a price of 150 gp in a foreign market.

J. STABLES

This low stone building is opened along the north wall and set with a pair of sturdy wooden gates (which can be barred from the inside). The interior is damp and musty, with bits of moldy hay littered about the dirty floor. Small wooden

stalls along the walls are used for keeping the horses of travelers (though there are none at this time). The loft above the main stables contains bales of hay, neatly stacked along the edge of the balcony, hiding a sectioned-off “room” above. This is where Brother Trovech, the Husband, makes his rather modest quarters.

Trovech keeps a plain wooden cot and low table, as well as a small wooden chest hidden in a bale of hay (only detectable through a tedious search, DC 18; see below for its contents). Finally, a spare pitchfork lies against one of the bales of hay, which Trovech might very well grab if surprised in his quarters!

Treasure: In the chest are a trio of finely-crafted daggers (*masterwork* quality), and a small black vial (looking like an inkwell) stopped with a dull black stone and filled with six doses of *large scorpion venom* (see page 80 of the DMG). These items will not be present at Hesperum on the final night of the adventure (see *Specific Events*), as Brother Trovech will have them on his person.

K. BATH HOUSE

The *Bath House* is a squat dark building filled with steam from the hot waters of its huge sunken tub. The walls were once tiled in dark stone, but moisture and heat have made many of the tiles fall away leaving bare patches of stone underneath. A large square bath sits in the center of the room (half beneath the ground, half above), while three cauldrons line the northern wall, under which red-hot embers are kept blazing during the daylight hours. The walls are lined with shelves which hold earthenware jugs filled with lime leaves (added to steaming water for perfume, this creates a something of a rare luxury for the monks of the Monastery), cumbersome blocks of soap, and oils for a more relaxed bathing experience.

As stated, fires are kept up under the large bronze vats to keep the water heated, and the water in the tub is also regularly blended so that the temperature is maintained at a comfortable level.

L. LATRINES

This huge building is rather dark and can be locked from the inside with a simple latch. The walls and floor of the latrine house are made of a fine white marble, though the corners are stained with the dirt and grime of many years. A long stone bench against the north wall is set three feet above a series of small pits, through which human waste falls through to the *Cess Pit* below. These holes stink with a malodorous rancor, but anyone making a Listen check (DC 18) while near them will be able to detect the faint sounds of *rats* below...

The *Latrines* are regularly cleaned by the rather smallish Brother Moski, and there is a 25% chance that, at any given time, he will be here seeing to his unenviable duties.

DM's Note: Brother Moski *alone* is aware of a latrine chute that runs just behind the wall of the latrine house, leading from the *Cess Pit* below, up (at a sharp angle) to the *Latrines* in the Inner Sanctum. This dark and horrid-

THE RED ORDER

smelling chute can be negotiated by a slender person of Medium-size or smaller (either an Escape Artist check at DC 20, or a Climb check at DC 25, is required to traverse the slick tunnel). Access to the chute requires some chipping away at the walls, however (requiring at least some sharp implements and roughly ten minutes of labor).

M. GRANERIES

Huge wooden stores run from ceiling to floor along the west wall of this huge building. Deliberately kept dry to prevent the growth of mold. Flour and grain dust the floor and walls, while a great millstone sits in the south part near the stone wall. Sacks of grain and wheat (from the last merchant to visit the Monastery), overflowing with their bounty, sit along the walls, while flour and meal is ground on the millstone by at least two lesser monks during the day.

The second floor of the building leaves room for the granaries (which extend upwards like silos), and houses a small loft where Matthias the lesser maintains a cot and a bundle of blankets. A small table sits by the cot, upon which sits a candle and simple holy symbol.

N. HEN HOUSE

This small building is old and decrepit, with wooden pens set up against the walls containing at least a dozen chickens and roosters. While the house is messy and the floor covered in a fine sprinkling of grain, the house is necessary element to the balanced meals of the Monastery – it is meticulously looked after by *both* Alexi and Matthias the Lesser, who count chickens and eggs regularly to account for possible theft.

O. BREWERY

The *Brewery* is a large open-faced building on the northern edge of the Monastery's Lower Palisade. Made of sturdy brick and flagstone, the brewing-house is kept locked during the night to keep the younger (and more susceptible) monks from stealing in! All the wine made here is used solely by the monastic populace; it is used in special feasts and during daily masses. Other wine is given to the peasants during daily charitable donation, but usually only the lowest-grade discards.

The brewer's hall contains a huge wooden vat in one corner, which is usually filled high with grapes, tapped so that the wine can be collected. During the day, 1d2 lesser monks will be found methodically stomping the grapes, while 1d4 others will be filling casks with the stuff and putting them away in rows cluttering the floor and walls.

The brewery master, Brother Camillus, usually sits in the adjoining office, penning inventory while his underlings work in the hall. Camillus' office contains a few utilitarian pieces of furniture (a chair, desk, bookcase, etc), shelves filled with inventory scrolls, but nothing of real value.

P. DORMITORY

The quarters of the Lesser Bursars is a large building on

the west side of the mountain peak. Built of sturdy wood and stone, the *Dormitory* houses some twenty-four monks in plain wooden cots in individual cells (a dozen per floor). None of the rooms contain any form of substantial valuables, since each monk has made a vow of poverty before entering the Monastery.

Q. CATHEDRAL

The *Cathedral* occupies the entire northwestern section of the Lower Ward, and curves around the ledge, forming a natural barrier. Made of stone, this formidable structure appears massive and almost "foreboding"; during the early morning it is usually obscured by a heavy mist, and only the leering faces of snow-shrouded gargoyles can be seen through the haze.

The cathedral is cared for by Brother Constantine (the Sacrist), though all the monks of the Monastery tend to it when the need arises. In addition to church services, the monks gather here at Matins and Vespers to sing praise to the god of the Monastery (again, the identity of this god will vary depending on which campaign setting you use, but in general this should be a deity of lawful neutral or lawful good alignment, and related to knowledge, learning, or secrets). There are large wooden choirs set up along the middle walls, where the monks receive instruction on voice and song.

The northeastern part of the cathedral is a small sanctuary only accessible to the Sacrist, Prior, or Abbot (anyone else seen entering that area will be warned first, and punished through flogging on a second offense). The entire chamber is vaulted and set with white stones, while five small fountains in the center of the room spout crystal clear water into bluish basins. The ceiling of the chamber is decorated with a multitude of celestial figures, dressed in cream-colored garb, staring solemnly down at those who enter the chamber. This chapel is a masterwork of masonry, dating back at least two or three centuries – though age is, inevitably, beginning to show.

Finally, a secret door (DC 15) in the north wall leads down to the *Crypts* of the Monastery; this secret door is reasonably well hidden and can only be opened by pushing on a loose stone in the wall (which exact stone is known only to the Sacrist, Abbot, and Prior). In past times the monks used this secret passage to take their dead brethren down into the catacombs for burial, but this tradition has long been abandoned (the Abbot and Prior, knowing what actually *lives* down there, prefer to keep the entire existence of the catacombs as forgotten as possible).

Treasure: The central fountain of the sanctuary is ringed by a series of six small stones, which resemble turtle eggs. Unknown to all but the Sacrist, these stones are part of an ingenious *mechanism*. When each "egg" is pushed down on (like a button), one by one in a certain combination, a secret compartment opens on the stem of the fountain, revealing a tiny hole. Inside, covered in a thick shroud of cobwebs, is an *amulet of undead turning*.

For someone who doesn't already know the combination,

THE RED ORDER

a Disable Device check, at DC 25, is required to figure the mechanism out.

DM's Note: The existence of the *amulet*, by tradition, is a secret passed down only from Sacrist to Sacrist, and Brother Constantine will only mention the amulet's presence if seriously troubled by events as they unfold in the Monastery. If asked, he knows only that the amulet was placed there – and kept hidden – by the long line of Sacrists of Caporetto to “provide protection for the Cathedral in time of great need”...though beyond this cryptic legacy Constantine knows nothing of the amulet's powers.

R. SACRIST'S RESIDENCE

This small stone building is well kept despite being covered in a velvety blanket of creeping ivy. A small wisp of smoke is often seen coming from the chimney of the building, and it seems a relatively peaceful sight against the macabre and archaic backdrop of the rest of the Monastery.

This structure is the residence of Brother Constantine the Sacrist, and is divided into two separate chambers. The first is a living area, complete with a private study table and a bookshelf stacked with religious works (some by Constantine himself). An iron candelabra sits on the table, as well as a personal scribing set – quills snipped for the comfort of Constantine's hand alone. The adjoining room is the quarters of Constantine; it is bare, much like a larger version of a simple monk's cell. Only a small cot, a box of tallow candles and tinder reserve, and an old tapestry on one wall adorn the small chamber.

Treasure: The tapestry in Constantine's room depicts a young monk stroking a gigantic turtle's back and wearing a glowing amulet made of turtle eggs; his other hand is poised as if touching one of the eggs, and the symbol of the deity of the Monastery can be seen blazing in the sky above. This curious tapestry, exceptionally well made, might fetch a price of 200 gp in a large city.

S. STAIRWELL

This small stone building is connected unassumingly to the *Brewery* - but is universally shunned by all the monks of the Monastery. The thick oaken door to the place is kept perpetually *locked* (Pick Locks DC 25; the key is on Brother Camillus' person alone) at all times.

Once inside, one will see a small winding stone staircase leading down into the suffocating darkness below. A faint scent of stagnancy and rot comes from the depths, and it is evident by the recent layer of dust that this building is generally avoided by any of sound mind. Oddly, a small wooden platter sits near the stairs, where an empty bowl, wooden cup, and trace remains of food lie.

DM's Note: The monks only enter here at meal times to leave food for Brother Brziac (see later for more on this enigmatic figure), before quickly leaving - in fear he might be listening for their arrival at the door and come to get them. In truth, Brziac (who is as much afraid of the others as they are of him) comes up and eats the food only when no one is near (he can detect the presence of those in the

area, so he can't be easily caught), and then returns to the subterranean depths below...

T. GARDENS

This area is walled off much like the *Cemetery* (which it borders), and is filled with a variety of hanging vines, tiny plots of celery, carrots, potatoes, and other staple vegetables grown by the monks. The *Gardens* are worked by the majority of monks during the later part of the day, and are closed during the night to prevent the lesser monks from stealing. Though the crop here is quite prosperous for their constricted size, they only *supplement* the food of the Monastery (they certainly cannot sustain the large population); much is given to the Monastery from charitable lords and passing merchants on the road through the mountains, rounding out their diet.

U. CEMETERY

This long section of the Outer Ward is surrounded by a low, decrepit stone wall (only two or three feet high), apparently in good need of repair and regular maintenance. Inside, those patches of the ground not covered in snow can be seen a sickly mossy color, dotted with small stone and wooden headstones with names of monks who died here in the past – all done in a flowery, formal hand. There are some *sixty* tombstones, and an additional six or seven *unmarked* graves. All graves contain small wooden coffins that contain the remains of dead monks (no treasure).

Note that though the PCs may never find this out, some of these graves have been opened from below (by the ghouls who reside in the *Twisting Passages*), and the remains *removed*. In these few, tunnels lead down into the darkness below...

At night, flickering lights can sometimes be seen bobbing up and down among the cold gray tombstones during spring and summer, but despite rumor, these are only innocent fireflies.

V. ENTRANCE CAVERN

This massive vaulted chamber is set into the rock some thirty feet beyond a great iron portcullis and a pair of huge wooden doors – doors that separate the Lower Palisade from the interior depths of the mountain itself. The entire chamber is perpetually dark and overwhelmingly damp, lit only by strange *fungus-pots* (each is a plain metal or earthenware pot, filled with a rare phosphorescent fungus that gives off a faint luminescence as it hung from the wall) set into the walls at regular intervals - to shed just enough light to navigate by.

Set into the north wall across from the barred entry is a pair of great winding stairways, which lead up into the mountain's great pinnacle of rock. A metal crank and pulley system lies between these, used for raising and lowering the portcullis (a combined Strength of 48 is needed to operate this mechanism; usually four or more monks are required to open it).

THE RED ORDER

W. CISTERN

Inside the mountain pinnacle, this small round cave contains a large circular “well” at its very center. The cistern is filled nearly to the rim with cold water collected naturally from the mountain (rivulets in the stone overhead feed rainwater and melted snow through to the cistern itself). The well is kept immaculately clean - this is, after all, the Monastery’s sole source of fresh water for both drinking and baths.

Roughly during Lauds (in the early morning), four to six Bursars will bring out buckets from this room to supply the buildings and dormitories in the Lower Ward. This is one of the few times when the portcullis into the pinnacle is raised (PC’s attempting to infiltrate the pinnacle might be wise to take advantage of this when timing a stealthy foray).

There is enough water in the cistern to maintain the Monastery for nearly a year without need of being refilled. Also, as stated, a slow trickle of mountain water makes its way into this well, ensuring it restocks itself naturally after a time even if depleted in an emergency.

SUBTERRANEAN LOCATIONS

Below ground lie the following keyed areas, all of which are nearly unknown to all but the oldest of monks. Although the wine cellars are often used, the rat-infested tunnels and mysteriously shunned crypts are far from frequently visited...

A. STORAGE CELLAR

This dark chamber has long been empty and is presently little more than a dusty hole filled with a variety of empty barrels and dusty sacks. Several old bags of rotten grain sit in the northeastern corner, concealing a secret door (found with a Search check, DC 30, to find; DC 20 if the PC’s already know a secret door is there) that opens into a small corridor that leads to the *Secret Armory*.

Only Brother Yolo is aware of the secret door’s existence.

B. SECRET ARMORY

This forgotten cellar can only be accessed from the *Storage Cellar*. Lined with old metal racks, the armory is cold and dusty. Along these racks hang a number of weapons (of below-average quality due to their relative age) that clever PC’s might put to use in any assault of the Red Order’s inner circle.

Although the PC’s are unlikely to realize this, this room was stocked several decades ago when suspicions were first aroused about the newcomers to the Monastery (Anastasius and his followers); unfortunately, all who knew about the stash were discovered and killed, and it was subsequently forgotten by all. Brother Yolo found it mistakenly when exploring several years ago, but never actually told anyone of his find.

Several small rat holes can be found along the north wall of this chamber, and if anyone comes near to listen, they will hear, with a Listen check (DC 12), the sounds of rats echoing *behind* the wall - indicating that there is a series

of tunnels behind it. There is no way to enter the *Twisting Passages* from this room, however, but it is apparent that there *must* be other passages underground besides those already encountered.

Treasure: The racks hold five nonmagical longswords hanging from baldrics, two *longswords* +1 in unassuming leather sheaths, a grime-encrusted (but easily cleaned) *heavy mace* +1, and two heavy crossbows. There are also 50 *crossbow bolts* +1 in a wooden barrel, eight short spears on a badly rusted rack, a pair of tarnished but usable ranseurs (on the same rack), and five suits of chainmail on feather-stuffed dummies.

In a barrel against the south wall are a bundle of oil-coated torches (ten in all), still flammable, and nearby sits a tinderbox with adequate flint and steel to strike them up. Three bundles of rope (each a full one hundred feet in length), numerous grapples, a small iron mallet, and a dozen pitons lie in a dusty pile in one corner.

DM’s Note: If the PC’s as a group have a strong reliance on Weapon Focus, Weapon Specialization, and other weapon-specific abilities and feats (such as certain prestige class abilities) making up for other shortcomings (such as a lack of spellcasters), you might want to replace some of the weapons above with weapons of the appropriate type so that they are not completely without tools for the coming conflict with the Abbot and his minions.

C. WINE CELLARS

This roughly L-shaped chamber is uniformly dark, damp, and *cold*. If a light source is present, the walls will be seen lined with large wooden casks (filled with the wine made in the *Brewery*), for a total of over thirty casks. There are small torch sconces near the stairs leading up, but the torches are ominously *missing*. Several dark tunnels can be seen leading off in different directions, though a horrible, unnatural stench rises from each like some dreadful “warning”. None of the monks (not even Brother Camillus, the Brewer) like being down here, especially since Brother Brziac’s recent slip into insanity...

D. TWISTING PASSAGES

The other passages beyond the *Wine Cellars* twist and turn and ultimately lead in a number of different directions. How they came to be is unknown, and if anything exists deep within, it is likewise a mystery...

These passages are in fact home to hundreds of mundane rats, which congregate lividly in a mass near the area where the passages break into the walls of the *Cess Pit*. In addition, ghouls also inhabit some of these tunnels, and some of the tunnels actually twist and lead up to the *Cemetery* (see above) – an area from which the ghouls have looted for “food” under the cover of night.

E. DARK CAVE

Brother Brziac’s secret cavern, damp and oppressively dark, lies deep within the winery’s labyrinthian cellars.

THE RED ORDER

Filled with an awful stench, a blanket of litter, and other offensive debris, one might mistake it for a disused cesspit if it were not for the numerous lit candles adorning the walls, floors, and holes that spread out all over its interior. There are nearly *six hundred* candles across this chamber, though their purpose for being so arranged cannot readily be determined...

The chamber itself is generally dark and unadorned, with natural vaulted alcoves, the walls carved with effigies of strange figures - most of which are little more than twisted faces in the dim torchlight which would-be intruders walk by. The stone is of an odd dark blue variety, strangely cold and textureless, and the whole place is almost deprived of color and character – it is, in a word, *alien*.

During most times of the day and night, Brother Brziac can be found huddled in one corner of this squalid cave. Babbling and nearly foaming at the mouth, Brziac chants seemingly meaningless phrases while taking excruciating care of his menagerie of candles...“to keep the darkness at bay”.

If characters come here Brother Brziac will shrink away from them and into a ring of candles that provide a constant source of light to “protect him”. As they enter, however, he will open his wide lunatic eyes and begin spouting off a rambling tirade:

“Back! Back! Brziac not want to hurt you! Stay back! The shadows...are you shadows?! Keep away... No hurt Brziac! Me know you...know what you...what you...what you want! Not like other brothers...no... not like them at all! You want to make way for the shadows! Make way for the Beast! Wait...no...no... Brziac wrong...you not like them, not like the cruel masters...you want something else, yes! You come here not as brothers...you tricky! Brziac see you – see what you doing! Hee hee hee! Go now, before shadows come. Moon and Sun be coming closer – soon they crash together and the shadows come ...come for the world! Must be ready...with the gods...must make amends...must be ready ...”

Attempting to glean further details isn’t easy. Brziac continues this tirade, unending, for he is quite insane. In between phrases he scoops up spiders and roaches and devours them right in front of the PCs. Attempts to physically pry more information is generally fruitless (and likely to provoke a violent response from him as well), though he will insistently speak of “shadows” all around him, waiting for his guard to go down, and the inevitable “joining” of the sun and moon – and, of course, the “coming of the Beast” (his name for the god worshipped by the Abbot and his minions).

DM Note: Though crippled in many ways, Brziac nonetheless has a psychic perception of feelings, moods, attitudes, and thoughts. A form of psionic *empathy* (above on page 10 it states he’s *telepathic*) that resulted from his complicated birth (which also killed his mother), this

enables him to read emotions, thoughts, and the like at all times. He is unable to direct this line of detection, and thus reads every strong emotion around him that people are feeling. Even though he is insane, he still retains this terrible ability regardless.

Being psychic, Brziac has a subconscious awareness of the future – and of the coming eclipse which will, if left unchecked, bring about the arrival of the Red Order’s nameless deity, high up in the tower Library.

Brother Brziac, Commoner 4: HP 22 (see appendix).

Brziac is totally insane (and quite retarded), with only brief periods of cognizance. If he feels threatened, or confused, he is very likely to simply attack in a berserk terror those confronting him.

Treasure: Amidst the filth and refuse of this chamber is a *scroll of true seeing*, part of a collection of scrolls Brother Brziac stole from the Library before being locked into the subterranean part of the Monastery. The scroll is tattered and soiled, and will only be recognized for its value with a Search check (DC 17) or *detect magic* spell.

F. CESS PIT

This flagstone-lined chimney is several centuries old and quite decrepit, and some eighty feet deep. The chamber is roughly cigar-shaped (from top to bottom), and about thirty feet of it is filled with packed human waste - as well as a swarm of rats, which have broken through from the passages in the subterranean tunnels of the Monastery. The distant pinnacle of the pit has a series of square holes in it, from which dim light can be seen shining down (these holes lead up to the *Latrines*).

G. CISTERN WELL

The walls of the cistern are made of tightly fitting flagstone, to keep the water pure from the crumbly, earthy rock of the pinnacle. The cistern extends some sixty feet down, and is filled with fresh water runoff from the mountain itself. It is regularly plumbed for the Monastery’s consumption.

H. HALL OF THE DEAD

This small, forgotten chamber is accessed via a secret door, which is opened by pressing on a slightly discolored flagstone in the wall outside (Search check DC 20 to notice). The chamber contains large clay jugs along the south wall and some few stone-carving tools lying on a small wooden table (now badly rotten and easily broken) to the east. A large, moldy wooden table that is bloodstained dominates the center of the room, and several wicked iron instruments lay on its surface.

The clay jugs, covered in cobwebs, hold a variety of musty fragrant spices, dried rice, and vinegary formaldehyde (each in separate containers). These are (or were, rather) used in embalming dead monks. The few remaining tools – daggers and hooks – could conceivably be used as weapons in a pinch, though they are normally only employed in the embalming process.

THE RED ORDER

Treasure: A small locked cabinet (DC 15 to Pick Locks check due to a weak latch) shrouded with a heavy veil of cobwebs contains two *scrolls of bless*. The monks once used scrolls like these to bless their dead before interment in the catacombs, but Anastasius put an end to that practice centuries ago when he took control of the Monastery.

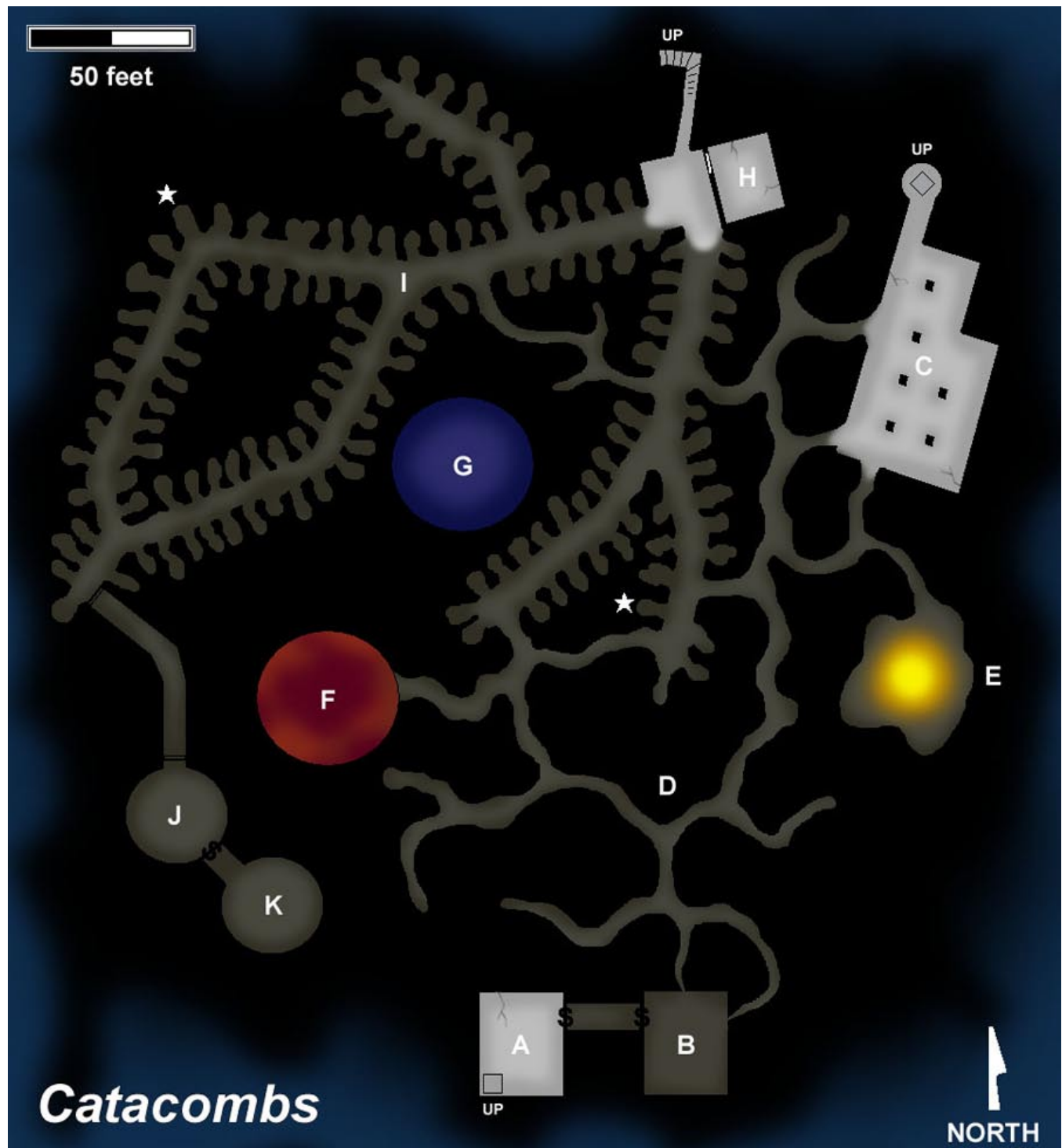
I. CRYPTS

These warrens consist of a number of tunnels that leads off in different directions. Crude burial niches line the walls

all over these tunnels, with epitaphs in formal script written above the entry to each crypt. Should torchlight illuminate these low earthy tunnels, it is soon evident that some of the niches have been forcefully opened...

Treasure: A Search check (DC 15) in those areas marked with a *star* uncovers the following objects of interest:

One of these crypts holds the remains of an old monk who was himself a master artisan; he was buried with a collection of aquamarine bracelets (he wished to be buried with his finest work; the bracelets are of solid aquamarine).



THE RED ORDER

There are six of these bracelets, each worth 100 gp.

Still another crypt holds the bones and tattered robes of Brother Vicus, a one-time member of the original cloister who died on crusade, brought here to be interred many years after his death. At his side will be found a *holy morningstar* +1.

Creatures: In addition some of the old monks of the evil Order who were buried here have not been content with death's peaceful slumber. Eleven of these long-dead creatures have animated into walking corpses, who infest the twisting passages to the south through a hole dug in one of the burial niches.

Ghouls (11): hp 24, 24, 24, 23, 22, 22, 20, 20, 13, 13, and 13; *Monster Manual* 97.

DM's Note: Only 1d4+1 of the ghouls will be found in the *Crypts* at any given time, as the others will be in the *Twisting Passages* hunting rats for food. They will be glad to have a change of diet when the PC's arrive...

J. TOMB OF THE ANCIENT MASTER

A huge stone slab covers the entrance to the corridor that leads to this forbidden chamber. This slab is covered in prayers (a *read magic* spell or similar means of translation reveals constant references to something called "the nameless one"), and bears the following strange riddle-like inscription in Common:

*The weakest of monks give in to me;
The strongest of monks despise me;
And the wisest of monks manipulate me –
What am I?*

The answer to the riddle is "evil" – the speaking of which will cause the stone slab to slowly open, as if pushed by an unseen hand, to reveal the pitch-black depths beyond. If the characters are unable to come up with this answer, the circular slab may be forced open instead (break DC 28). Either upon speaking the answer or forcing the slab, access to the chamber beyond will be gained.

The tomb appears to be a rather decorative burial chamber, circular and domed in shape, whose walls are painted in absolute black (making it look endlessly huge), with only a long stone sarcophagus in the center of the room to offset this darkness. This "coffin" has obviously been opened, as the heavy stone lid lies idly to the side...

Stone Slab: 6 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 90.

Creature: There is a 25% chance that *Anastasius* will be here at any given time; if not he will be in the *Secret Laboratory* (see below).

"Anastasius", Mohrg (1): hp 127; *Monster Manual* 137.

Once the leader of the Red Order in life and behind the orchestration of many murders to cement his follower's secret sanctuary among the monks of Caporetto, Anastasius was given immortality in death – as a *mohrg* – as a reward for his wicked conversion of so many youths to the Red Order's cause. Despite the raw physical power of his

undead form, the skeletal Anastasius longs to live again, for he has been all but forgotten by his former servitors. Condemned to centuries in this underground crypt, he has become even more insane than he was in life.

Treasure: Around his wrists Anastasius wears a pair of sinewy golden bracers, each set with a cluster of brilliant rubies (worth 500 gp each).

Development: Though they fear him and usually avoid the tunnels leading to his chambers, the ghouls in the *Crypts* and *Twisting Passages* were once Anastasius' followers and even in undeath are drawn to defend him. Should sounds of fighting emanate from this area the ghouls will immediately begin to converge on this location to help their master do battle.

GM's Note: It is possible that the PCs mistake the mohrg as the cause behind the evil and murders at the Monastery, but in truth this is not the case. He has largely been forgotten by his former servants, who will continue their preparations for the ritual at *Hesperum*, Day 6, regardless of whether or not the mohrg is destroyed.

K. SECRET LABORATORY

This secret space is concealed by a hidden doorway (Search check, DC 25).

As the secret door from the tomb creaks open, torchlight will reveal an ancient chamber beyond, with a vaulted ceiling tiled in dark azure pieces of fragmented stone. Statues of winged celestials, strangely unnerving despite their otherwise angelic appearance, flank the entranceway. Each holds an extended finger to its lips as if suggesting the intruder were stumbling upon a place that must forever be kept a secret.

This entire chamber is cluttered with strange apparatus from the floor to the ceiling, including many glass beakers, test tubes, and flasks. Some of these beakers still contain various liquids (despite their age).

This is where the Dead Master, Anastasius, once created potions to assist his followers, and to this day his undead form often wanders here, lamenting its inability to create a potion or elixir to bring it back to the world of the living.

Creature: If he was not already encountered in the *Tomb of The Ancient Master*, Anastasius will be present here.

Treasure: There are an equivalent of five potions in the containers on the various tables, including a potion of *neutralize poison*, *potion of wisdom*, *potion of glibness*, and two doses of *oil of timelessness*.

In addition, a collection of dusty reagents can be found here in old bottles, an old alembic, and among various boxes and coffers. This collection includes a ruby lens in a gold loop (worth 1,500 gp), grave dirt, brackish water, bat fur, pieces of coal, unholy water, and silver dust (about 150 gp worth); these are spell components for *analyze dweomer*, *create undead*, *darkness*, and *desecrate*, all spells Anastasius can no longer cast.

THE RED ORDER

THE INNER SANCTUM

The upper level of the Monastery is foreboding and shrouded in a cloak of palpable mystery. The ancient battlements which hang over the lower grounds are adorned with stone gargoyles, which can be seen vaguely in the mists, seemingly hiding from the prying eyes of observers from below. The Inner Sanctum (as it is known), is only accessible via the *Entrance Cavern*.

The *Entrance* cavern, as stated before, is opened only at specific times during the day; otherwise, it is barred by a giant portcullis raised and lowered only by the monks of the Red Order who dwell in the Inner Sanctum. This prevents inquisitive monks from stumbling onto the true purpose of the Red Order (on the surface, however, this exclusion is explained as merely being a means of keeping the knowledge of the great *Library* within the walls of Caporetto). Despite this, there are several times during the day when PC's can sneak into the Inner Sanctum, as the portcullis is raised. These times are as follows:

- **Matins:** At this time, during the dark of early morning, the portcullis is raised to allow the monks of the Inner Sanctum to join the other monks in prayer at the *Cathedral*. The portcullis remains open until the monks return.
- **Lauds:** At this time the portcullis is raised to allow Bursars to take water from the *Cistern* to supply the Lower Palisade. The portcullis only remains open for a short duration (10-20 minutes).
- **Prime:** The portcullis remains closed.
- **Terce:** The portcullis is raised at the start of Terce to allow students from the Lower Palisade up into the Inner Sanctum, where they are closely watched and guarded as they move to and from the *Scriptorium* for study.
- **Sext:** The portcullis remains closed.
- **Nones:** Moski is allowed into the Inner Sanctum to clean the latrines; the portcullis only remains open for a moment, as it is closed behind him for the duration of his work. It is again raised and quickly lowered when he leaves.
- **Vespers:** Again, as at Matins, the portcullis is raised to allow monks from the Inner Sanctum down to the *Cathedral* for prayer. The portcullis remains until the end of the hour, at which time it is closed for the night.
- **Compline:** The portcullis remains closed.
- **Hesperum:** The portcullis remains closed.

FUNGUS-POTS

Note that there are no torches in use in the Inner Sanctum (the monks who have given themselves to the nameless deity of their masters revel in darkness, and any natural light is an abomination to them) - which may seem strange to the PC's. Where torch sconces would normally adorn the walls, there are instead small iron pots overflowing with strange fungus-like moss; this fungus lets off eerie light. The fungal

lights come in different colors - pale green, vibrant red, and deep blue – and illuminate roughly the same area as a dim candle.

A. STORES

This small chamber located near the stairs leading down to the first level of the mountain is kept *locked* (DC 20) at all times, and is found to contain racks of recently-woven red robes, several sets of sturdy sandals, etc – all mundane and certainly not revealing anything of note.

B. DORMITORY

This large building appears rather plain from the outside, and on the interior is likewise quite unexceptional. Both floors of the structure are sectioned off into small cells for the habitation of trusted monks of the Order, and each room is decorated only with a straw cot, small wooden chest, and a fungus-pot. There are enough rooms to house some twenty monks individually.

C. BARBICAN

Two towers and a long stony overhang lie over the edge of the cliff here, and cast a long shadow along the weather-beaten rock face.

The keys to this structure are kept by Brother Bors, the Cellarer, though the Abbot also has a duplicate set. The lock on the main door requires a Pick Locks check at DC 20 to open.

The insides of this structure are remarkably dim, despite a few illuminating fungus-pots here and there to provide some meager light. Though there are a few decorative arrow-slits here as well, they are usually shuttered tight; if opened, they provide an excellent bird's-eye view of the Monastery below.

D. TOWER OF THE HOUNDS

This great circular tower is one of the more imposing features of the upper part of the Monastery. Connected to a similar tower by the *Barbican*, this tower hangs over the edge of the pinnacle, providing an excellent view of the Monastery below from on high. The tower is always kept *locked* (Pick Locks, DC 25, to open), in no small part due to the creatures that are secretly kenneled here.

The Abbot, from an aristocratic family in life, was once quite fond of hunting (it didn't matter whether the prey was animal or human to him, the joy of the hunt was all the same, even before he became a monk in the Red Order). Years past, he was rewarded by the "nameless one" with a pack of fiendish wolves.

Creatures: The twelve wolves resemble normal animals (except for the spiked iron collars worn about their necks), though their eyes sometimes seem to have a fiendish intelligence of their own – especially when they are excited during the hunt for humanoid prey. Though the Abbot rarely leaves the Monastery to hunt outside of the spring months, his forays often coincide with inexplicable disappearances

THE RED ORDER

of villagers and the odd forester...

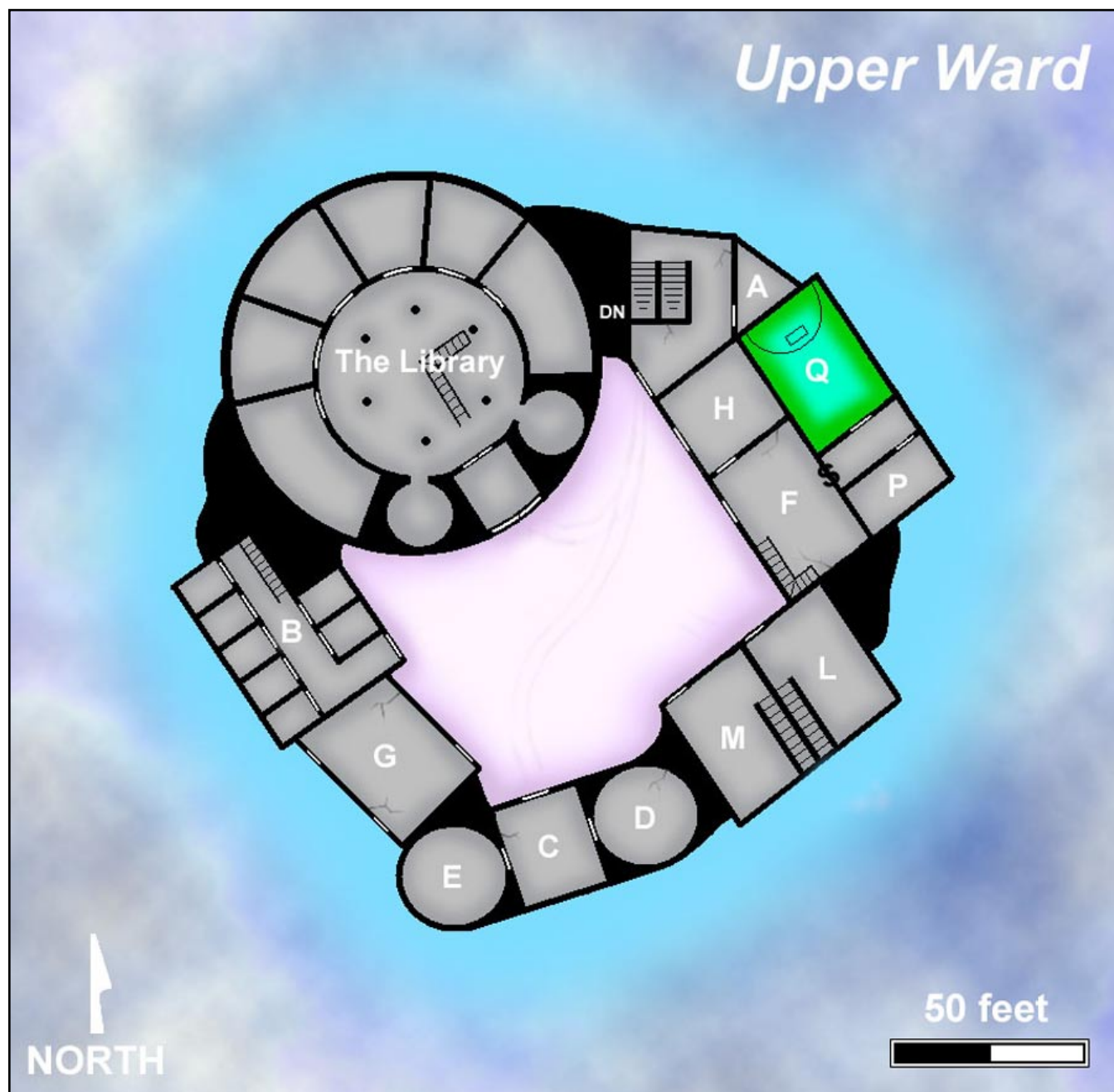
Abyssal Wolves (12): hp 20, 20, 20, 20, 19, 18, 18, 16, 16, 14, 13, and 13 (see appendix).

Development: Though the door is locked the wolves are not otherwise tied up or chained, and will attack anyone they don't recognize who comes through the door. Any attack here is likely to alert Bursars (allow Listen checks), who will arrive 2-4 rounds later with Brother Bors to reprimand the PC's. If the PC's come up with an excuse for nosing around without supervision (requiring a Bluff check) they may get off with a warning and an escort to the Lower Palisade – though from then on Brother Bors will have Brother Trovech keep a closer eye on their activities.

E. TOWER OF THE ROOST

This lofty tower is where the prized “hunting owls” of the Abbot, Theodore, are kept in pampered luxury. The two beasts, *Orao* and *Iskra*, are large and finely groomed, each possessing a pair of striking golden eyes. Unlike the masters' wolves, these animals are not Abyssal-born, but nonetheless seem to harbor an unnatural sentience and affinity for hunting.

The two birds are kept here in large finely wrought silver cages, each closed by a small latch (though not locked). At the bottom of one cage is a partially eaten *human hand*, almost blue in coloration from decay - it is apparent that this was the creatures' latest meal.



THE RED ORDER

Creatures: The Abbot's two prized hunting owls are magnificent and majestic, though pampered and unnaturally cruel. Each is a cunning hunter, with extremely keen eyesight.

Owls (2): hp 8 and 8. *Monster Manual* 199.

Treasure: Each of the hunting owls wears a small silver bell around its heel (worth 10 gp each). The cages they are kept in are also each worth 100 gp (though they are extremely large, designed to give the owls a great deal of space to stretch their wings).

In a wooden cabinet by the twin cages are kept a pair of fine black leather gauntlets, chased with rough jewels, used as the Abbot's personal falconry gloves (as a matching pair they are worth 250 gp; apart they are worth only 100 gp apiece). In addition, there is a set of tools for cleaning and sharpening the claws of the owls in the cabinet.

F. REFECTORY

This great hall has a horseshoe shaped table in the center of it, large enough to seat at least twenty persons. From the ceilings hang great bronze chandeliers (oddly, no candles are present), and fungus-pots sit in iron sconces along the walls. Ancient tapestries of a disturbing nature (men and women being goaded into the mouth of Leviathan, the gargantuan draconic creature sometimes used by religious artists to represent the gates of the Abyss) cover large expanses of the bare flagstone, creating an ever-present feeling of impending damnation - and a general uneasiness even to those without the religious fervor of true monks.

G. LATRINES

This dark building houses the latrines of the Upper Ward. Similar in appearance to those in the palisade below, there is no lock here however, and the pits immediately lead into a series of copper pipes which twist and turn, eventually leading to the subterranean *Cess Pit*. In addition, there are a pair of washbasins by the door, and a pair of bronze pitchers filled with water. A few old and musty wooden cupboards line the walls, containing rows of linen and other mundane items (ideal places to stash weapons and equipment for future use when the PC's come here to raid the Red Order).

DM's Note: A forgotten series of chutes connects this latrine house with its counterpart in the Lower Palisade.

H. UPPER WARD KITCHENS

This large building in the Upper Palisade is impressive seen from either below or from this level; its huge bleak walls hang over the edge of the cliff. Huge bats thrive in its rafters - and take to the twilight sky every night as the sun begins to dip low over the foggy mountains.

The first level of this building is used as a kitchen for the preparation of meals for the Bursars; it contains nothing of any real interest to the PC's short of knives and other implements that might be stolen and smuggled out of the Upper Ward as weapons.

I. MEETING CHAMBER

This upper story chamber (above the Refectory) is a marvelous meeting room, used by the Red Order for secret high-level meetings. A wooden table dominates the room, in the center of which is a large silver decanter filled with fine wine. Several gem-chased silver goblets sit ready for drinking, and large opulent chairs with black cushions line the table itself.

Treasure: The silver decanter and jeweled goblets on the table are worth a combined total of 250 gp.

J. CELLARER'S RESIDENCE

The level above the Upper Ward Kitchens is reserved as the residence of Brother Bors (the Cellarer of Caporetto) and is kept in virtual darkness during most of the day. The room itself is rather sparsely furnished; a bed, a wardrobe, and broken mirror against one wall are all that decorate the place.

Only a small ebony *figurine* of an exotic slave girl sits near the bed; other than this there appear to be few other adornments.

Creature: The *figurine* is a magical "amusement" of a twisted kind, among the most cherished belongings of the otherwise quiet and withdrawn Cellarer. If cast or laid upon the ground, the *figurine* animates and springs to life (not unlike a typical *figurine of wondrous power*). Its animation is accompanied by eerie oriental music (similar to a *ghost sound* spell, noise level equivalent to eight humans playing music and lasting for as long as the figurine is animated) that seems to come from literally nowhere.

Upon activation the animated female figure immediately begins to dance in a wild and alluring fashion - the dancer, a resembling a beautiful dark-skinned woman, is well formed and lithe, her body writhing with the sensuous motions of an ebony flame. Her eyes flash like the facets of a golden gem, and she entrances all watching with the obscene twisting of her beautiful, voluptuous form.

The "dancer" is, in fact, a *succubus* spirit trapped in the figurine by its master, used solely for his most base entertainments. However, once activated by someone other than her master (Brother Bors), the succubus realizes they are intruders and tries to destroy them.

The succubus *figurine* will remain animated until she is killed, at which time she reverts to figurine form and cracks, becoming non-magical.

Succubus (1): hp 42; *Monster Manual* 41.

Treasure: In the bottom of the wardrobe is a *potion of bull strength* and two *potions of cure moderate wounds*; note that if these items are taken by the PC's Brother Bors will not have these during the final encounter at *Hesperum*, Day 6 (See *Specific Events*).

GM's Note: A secret door hidden in Brother Bors' quarters (Search check DC 25) leads to the *Chapel Balcony*.

K. CHAPEL BALCONY

Only reached via secret door from the *Cellarer's Residence*,

THE RED ORDER

this darkened area constitutes an almost forgotten balcony that overlooks the chapel below from a height of 20 feet (see *Dark Chapel*, below).

Should the PC's discover the secret door during the course of their investigations, it might be possible for the characters to hide up here and wait for one of the Red Order's nightly ceremonies – and witness the orgies that take place there, as well as see firsthand who is involved with the cult (in general this will include the Abbot, Prior, Cellarer, Brother Trovech, and all of the Bursars).

Development: Though they usually hold wicked services here each night at *Hesperum*, keep in mind that on Day 6 the members of the inner circle will not have a ceremony here as usual; instead they will ascend to the top of the *Library* for their final ritual.

L. PRIOR'S RESIDENCE

The door to this building is protected by an arcane lock spell, cast by Prior Alexander (a 6th level spellcaster), increasing the break DC by +10.

The chamber inside is the rather simple residence of Alexander, Prior of Caporetto (second in charge of the entire Monastery). The room is small and cramped, with thick flagstone walls and a fireplace set in one wall. A comfortable wood-and-straw cot sits near the fire, while a desk stacked with ledgers and scrolls lies opposite the bed. On this desk sits a crystal decanter filled with expensive brandy, two glasses, and a small silver chalice in which sits a *human brain* chilled on ice. This is sure to sicken the group and bring the sudden realization that the Prior is, indeed, anything but a human monk.

A beautiful *orrery*, not unlike the one found in the *Library*, is kept in this chamber by the Prior

Anyone studying the orrery and making a Knowledge (arcana) check at DC 20 will realize that the orrery accurately depicts the cosmos (of the particular game world in which the adventure takes place) at the current time. A second check, at DC 15, will allow the character in question to use the orrery to predict that in only a few days their planet's moon will come between it and the Sun, creating an *eclipse*. What significance this might have, however, is open to speculation.

Treasure: A small wooden chest bound with iron bands sits at the base of Alexander's bed. The chest is locked with another *arcane lock* and contains three volumes dealing with jewelsmithing as well as a black velvet sack holding eight polished lapis lazuli gems (worth 50 gp each), each roughly the size and shape of a stress-relieving "sooth-stone".

A folded piece of parchment (*Handout #8*) also sits in this chest, along with the Prior's *spellbook* (see *Specific Events* for statistics of the Prior). The latter is protected by an *illusory script* spell, with the *suggestion* that anyone reading the book immediately close it, leave the room, and inform a superior of his or her unauthorized intrusion into the Prior's quarters.

The orrery, if somehow removed despite its considerable size, might fetch a price of 1,000 gp in a large city.

Development: If the Prior becomes aware that PC's have been poking around his quarters he will obviously be alerted to the fact that someone is on to his true identity – and will act accordingly. Each day after he suspects someone has invaded his home he will judiciously apply a *charm person* spell to a random monk from the Lower Palisade in an attempt to learn who has been asking questions and why (giving him an idea of who might be an agent of outside forces infiltrating the Monastery). He may even go so far as to cast *detect thoughts* in any future public gathering of the monastic population (for example, during morning prayers in the *Cathedral* when all monks are present), quietly switching his attention from target to target trying to detect surface thoughts such as deception, suspicion, etc. to give away would-be enemies.

DM's Note: Should the Prior catch on to who the PC's really are, it may prove a bit difficult to maintain the continuity of the adventure, as the Prior will surely act to destroy them. However, as an alternative to him singling out the PC's it may be possible that, while casting *detect thoughts*, he manages to be sidetracked by the thoughts of other monks. For example, since Brother Moski has a secret that leaves him constantly on edge, Alexander might be distracted by Moski's deception and think *he* is the agent. Or, alternatively, he might sense Brother Yolo's dual identity and stop his divination there. Of course this might mean Moski or Yolo *dies* to protect the identity of the PC's, something that is unlikely to sit well with the heroes!

The Prior's strategy of casting *detect thoughts* applies not just if he suspects someone has been in his room, but also if Brother Trovech has reported to him any suspicious activity on the PCs' part from the beginning. Should he find out who the "spies" are in the Red Order's midst he will generally order Brother Trovech to do away with them; failing this (which means Trovech probably dies), the Prior himself may pay a visit, with Brother Bors tagging along...

M. ABBOT'S RESIDENCE

The door to this building is locked (Pick Locks checks must be made at DC 25).

Inside lies what are ostensibly the apartments of the Abbot Theodore, current head of the Monastery of Caporetto. Certainly large and comfortable enough for a man of his position, the walls are remarkably subdued with only a few furnishings. A heavy and functional desk of mahogany sits in the center of the room, piled high with neatly ordered stacks of official papers, logs, and scrolls. A wooden screen partitions the southern half of the room, beyond which can be found a reading stand and bed (comparatively luxurious compared to the cots of the lesser monks).

A great fireplace - always found lit with a heatless flame (the product of a *continual flame* spell cast by the Monastery's original founding Abbot) - takes up yet another wall. The floor, made of cold stone, is covered in a thick crimson rug that appropriately resembles the color of *blood*...

The Abbot may, on occasion, see monks guilty of some

THE RED ORDER

infraction or another here in his apartments, to dispense punishment. A few whips hang from the wall behind the desk for this very purpose.

Treasure: In a small leathery sack on his desk, Theodore keeps a gold-plated seal stamp (for official matters; it is worth 50 gp), and a beautiful carnelian ring (actually a *ring of djinni calling*). On the table in a small sandalwood box are a number of crimson candles (also used for seals); the box itself is finely made and worth 100 gp. In addition, a collection of his personal poems and prose - all of which are no more than the ramblings of a sick madman - sit in an iron chest nearby, but these have little value whatsoever. Stuffed among these poems, however, is a telling piece from a series of journals he kept regularly (before being persuaded by the Prior to burn them); the contents of this page are found as *Handout #10*.

Development: “Zephyr” is the name of the djinni that inhabits the carnelian ring. Like a normal djinni in a *ring of djinni calling* Zephyr is required to serve the commands of the possessor of his ring, though deep down he longs to be free of his current malevolent owner. Though he will behave as an obedient servant to any master who dons his ring (Theodore included), he has no compunction against making his distaste for villainous men understood. As such, Theodore seldom calls him, having tired of moral debates and Zephyr’s barely veiled condemnations of his activities.

Zephyr, Djinni (1): hp 45; *Monster Manual* 94.

Short of slaying him the only way to permanently release Zephyr is by verbally declaring one’s intent to let him free, *permanently*. If absolved of his duties (by the PC’s, for example) the ring becomes non-magical and Zephyr is freed. However Zephyr will immediately become a loyal ally, serving his new “friends” (now that they are no longer masters) for the adventure’s duration. Thereafter he will bid his liberators farewell, and depart in a puff of smoke.

N. TREASURY

The Monastery’s treasury is located on the level above the Prior’s personal quarters, high up in the fortress pinnacle. This huge vaulted chamber is closed off with a truly massive iron door, further reinforced with great diamond-shaped studs and decorative metal bands.

Despite the portal’s thickness (four inches), a Listen check at DC 15 through the door will reveal what sounds to be *heavy breathing* - of an unnatural sort - coming from beyond. A foul smell clings to the air all around, even on the other side of the entrance portal, a mixture of reptilian odors, wet fur, and rotten flesh.

The door is locked from the *outside*, with a series of three sturdy iron padlocks (to bypass the locks, three Pick Locks checks must be made, each at DC 25).

Inside, the chamber is stocked with fantastic treasures and is guarded by a strange yet powerful beast: a *chimera*, originally found and brought here by Brother Xavier during his travels. It has since become one of Abbot Theodore’s favorite “pets” (along with his owls and wolves). Through pampering and regular feedings, it has become a most

hideous guardian.

Iron Door: 4 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 120.

Chimera (1): hp 78; *Monster Manual* 35.

Treasure: The chimera guards a vast cache of treasures gleaned through centuries of the Red Order’s deviant machinations across the world. The Monastery vault contains the following precious things:

12,000 cp, 10,000 sp, and 20,000 gp, kept in three separate iron chests (DC 20 to Pick Locks checks); the lion’s share of these coins are donations from ignorant kings and princes, ostensibly used to fund the Great Library’s maintenance. Three gem-chased coffers (worth 100 gp each; each is also locked, DC 25 to Pick Locks checks) contain foreign and rare coins collected by the Abbot during the many centuries of his life; these include eight ancient jeweled “coins” (actually small pieces of jewelry, each is worth 100 gp), 200 gold coins from a bygone era (each worth 2 gp to a collector), and 250 pp, these last inscribed with the faces of ancient and unrecognizable emperors of the distant East.

In addition to the chests there is a pile of miscellaneous treasure accumulated by Brother Trovech during his travels, including among them a *small steel shield +1*, a pair of beautiful *masterwork* falchions, a highly-decorative suit of scalemail (though quite old and dusty this proves to be a suit of *scalemail +1 of invulnerability*), three *potions of cure moderate wounds*, eight bolts of crimson-colored silk (worth 100 gp each), and a collection of no less than 26 pearls in a black velvet sack (each worth 100 gp).

A stack of eighteen silver bars (worth 100 gp apiece) sits in a separate pile; these are legitimate gifts to the Order by followers of the same deity of knowledge and learning that the Monastery was originally built to venerate.

Finally, any items openly forfeited by the party upon entering the Monastery of Caporetto will be found neatly stored here, including all money, weapons, and armor, but not spellbooks or scrolls (these will be found in the *Magical Studies* room of the *Library*).

A hand-written report is also kept with these last items, written by Brother Trovech, which speaks of any suspicions he may have of each newcomer to the Monastery (in case the PCs don’t realize Trovech is a spy, they will now).

O. ABBOT’S RESTING PLACE

The staircase to the second level of the Abbot’s apartments ends abruptly in a stone wall, with no possible reason or explanation. In reality there is a room beyond, protected by a secret door (Search, DC 20 to locate).

As intruders enter this chamber, a layer of dust and a fine latticework of cobwebs are blown up in their path. There are absolutely no lights present (the windows were bricked up long ago, though the closed shutters prevent anyone outside from seeing this), and in fact the entire chamber is affected by a *deeper darkness* spell (applicable only to those who do not follow the “nameless one”) resulting from the casting of an *unhallow* spell by the Abbot - all efforts to protect his secret resting place.

THE RED ORDER

At the center of the room rests a long black coffin made from ornate stained wood and chased with silver filigree in dizzying patterns and swirls. Should anyone approach and open it, they find a fine layer of dark soil lining the bottom...

Though the PC's are not likely to notice it due to the *deeper darkness*, a large black tapestry – depicting a great winged demon whose arms and tail are obscenely wrapped around a naked girl (a mere child, by the look of her wide, innocent eyes) – hangs over everything present. Other hangings on the various walls of the chamber are similarly disturbing and unnerving; it is obvious the Abbot's tastes border on the truly obscene.

GM's Note: During the day the Abbot, Theodore, is generally found here sleeping in his coffin. If the PC's manage to encounter him alone, in this state, they may have a good chance to either kill him outright (assuming they have magical weapons and/or wooden stakes), or steal his ring to close the *gate* at the top of the *Library*.

P. SECRET LARDER

This chamber is closed off by a heavy iron door that is kept locked with a large metal padlock (Pick Locks DC 20 to open). The room itself is cold and emanates a strange, sickly scent...

Once illuminated, it will become evident that this is some form of meat storage, though hanging from the metal hooks in the ceiling are pale, cold, *human bodies*, all of which are dead and motionless. A telling red fluid trickles down onto the floor, and stacked against the walls are clear glass jars filled with human blood (kept relatively fresh by the temperature of the room).

Examination will further reveal that some of the bodies have their heads deliberately split open, almost with surgical precision, their brains removed for some unknown and ghastly purpose.

Treasure: A sack of powdered *tavar seeds* (a total of 13 doses; see page 40 for details on this new drug) is kept here, for use in brainwashing recruits to the inner circle.

DM's Note: This room is used as storage for “food” eaten by the Prior and the Abbot (as well as his pets). The bodies are those of villagers, plague victims and others who were not likely to be remembered if they went missing. The meat is fresh and sufficient to feed the evil occupants for some time.

Q. DARK CHAPEL

This great vaulted room is hidden behind a series of secret doors (each requires a Search check, DC 25 to find) that only the monks of the Red Order are aware of.

The inner circle of monks of the Order, having given themselves over and become trusted brethren, gather here at 12:00 every night during *Hesperum* to honor their twisted shadow-deity. Every so often, once a month or so at the high-point of midnight, their faceless “god” sometimes appears to them in the form of a pure and liquid shadow, and with it watching on with unseen eyes, the monks hold

despicable orgies and other bizarre alien rituals in his accursed presence.

Lined with sickly green pillars of a strange ugly stone, the walls and ceiling are covered in dark and featureless masonry, almost *too* geometric in shape and angles for the comfort of the sane human mind. Only the eerily glowing fungus-pots set here and there shed any form of light upon the foreboding - and very evil - chamber.

Low wooden pews, carved with dizzying yet subtle designs, face the far northern part of the chamber, which is itself dominated by a low stone dais where there sits an *altar* to some demonic entity. Black marble statues sit on either side of the altar, depicting faceless, sexless figures holding crystal balls swirling with a purple smoke – these let off a steady, thick, and choking incense throughout the unholy sanctuary. The altar itself is stained with the remnants of human blood, and a fancy gold chalice sits upon it, filled with a good amount of the congealing human essence.

This evil place is the *Chapel* of the Red Order, where they practice bizarre rituals in the name of their faceless demon-lord. This area is affected by a continuous *unhallow* spell (with *detect good* tied to it to reveal intruders and/or imposters).

Treasure: The blood-filled goblet upon the altar stone is worth 75 gp.

LIBRARY OF CAPORETTO

This huge legendary structure lies on the northern ledge of the Upper Ward, and is an impressive and imposing sight for miles around. Sturdy stone buttresses run up the sides of this great building, while the pinnacle roof is topped by a giant brass dome, which glimmers softly in any light the sky can provide.

This building is the famed library of Caporetto, and is said to contain *thousands* of volumes on various subjects ranging from the mundane - to the utmost bizarre. Each room of the library covers a different subject of study, a science, or some bizarre mystery, allegedly comprising one of the most complete libraries of knowledge in all the known world.

Doors and Runes: Each individual room of the library (above the first floor) lies behind a massive wooden door that is bound with iron bands and locked with a sturdy key lock (Pick Locks checks are made at DC 25).

No labeling of these individual rooms seems to exist, except for a curious stone tile above each doorway (resembling a *keystone*), with a strange, unidentifiable *rune*. These runes are part of a unique code of identification, the deciphering of which is traditionally known only to the Monastery's Librarian, Abbot, and Head Instructor.

Though some locks may be stronger than others, unless otherwise specified all library rooms require a Pick Locks check (DC 20) to open.

Library Doors: 4 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 40.

Riddles: In addition to the rune-encoded doors, access to each floor above the first level is restricted by a *password*, clues to which are given in the form of a riddle. Only once the proper password is given will a door open (they can be

THE RED ORDER

forced open, however; statistics for these portals are given below).

Note that *all* Elders at Caporetto know the answer to the riddle of the second floor's *ward*, while only the Librarian, the Abbot, the Prior, and the Head Instructor know the answers to the third and fourth floors.

Riddle Doors: 6 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 90.

A. SCRIPTORIUM

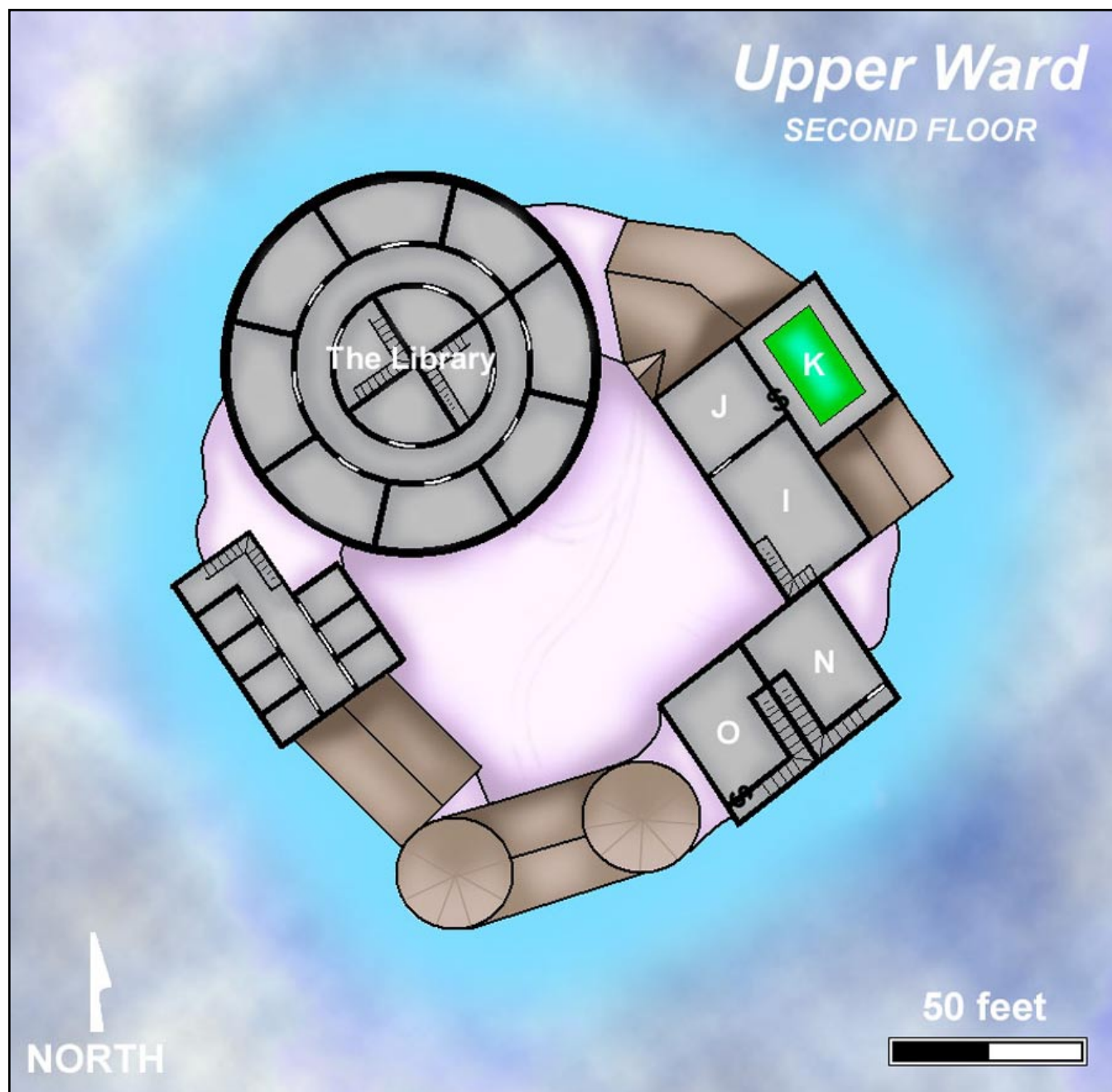
Large wooden tables and benches dominate the center of this monstrous chamber, with open volumes and blank scrolls being illuminated by monks clutter these throughout. This chamber is where the monks of the Order work during the day, copying Biblical verse and religious writings onto

scrolls and parchment tomes – either for practice or working on a true masterpiece of artistry.

This huge room is lit by candles and chandeliers that are carefully extinguished each night by the blind, slightly mad Librarian, Augustus, to prevent any accidental fires. The *Scriptorium* is kept locked (DC 25 to Pick Locks checks) during the evening, with Brother Augustus holding the only set of keys.

B. CARRELLS

These side rooms do not have locks, but are small, private, and extremely resistant to the passage of sound. A small wooden writing desk sits against the far wall of each, while a small brass oil lamp sits on a stand by the door.



THE RED ORDER

These rooms are used by the monks for private study or illumination, sometimes well into the evening if need be.

C. STORAGE

This locked room (Pick Locks at DC 20) is stocked with shelves lined with rolls of parchment and vellum, kept in tightly packed bundles, their quality ranging from poor to excellent. All of those on the south and east walls are blank, while the shelves on the other walls are filled with the monks' religious works and illuminations. A large set of drawers in the center of the room are filled with inks (both colored and otherwise), simple quills, and blocks of paste for erasing mistakes. In addition, the entire room is lit by bluish fungus-pots, casting a cold glow over every surface.

A number of other smaller storage rooms exist in the Library (marked "st" on the Library map); these are all locked (DC 20), and contain all manner of surplus stores – thread and yarn for the repair of bindings, boxes of candles, ink pots and quills, etc. Some even have small "plots" (simply night soil in old wooden crates) for growing the phosphorescent fungus used in the Order's fungus pots.

D. LIBRARIAN'S RESIDENCE

This chamber opposite the *Storage* is extremely dark, and possesses neither torches nor fungus-pots (why should it when the inhabitant is *blind*?). Cold and damp, the room only contains a small wooden cot and a chest filled with spare crimson garments. A series of disturbing illustrations, painted on the walls and floor, depict weird alien designs and patterns that portray nothing ever seen by mortal man before...

SECOND FLOOR

The huge stone portal here is emblazoned with weird circular designs, apparently forming some kind of "magic circle" across the doorway itself. Written within in a flowery hand are these words:

*The key to eternity, to unlock man's soul;
Learning it all makes one whole.
Thousands of volumes fill this place –
Yet none but the wisest feel Its true embrace.*

The answer to this riddle is "knowledge". Once this has been answered *aloud*, the invisible spirit of the circle will open the door with a low rumble, revealing the second floor and all its priceless library chambers.

E. BREWING

This room is locked with a more complex lock than most (Pick Locks at DC 28), though once opened it will be evident that there is actually little cause for such care. The room is stacked with books on alcohol, brewing, and the intricacies of fermentation. While none of this seems to warrant such a sturdy lock, the PC's should remember that it is quite a temptation in a monastery to try to brew one's

own wine (which, by the way, was attempted some years ago, resulting in the offending monk being lashed thirty times). Other than these books, there is nothing of value to the party.

F. CANDLEMAKING

A more mundane room of sorts, this chamber is found to be a cluttered mess. Several mythical tomes, stolen from the chamber of *Legends And Myths*, lie open on the work desk, and it appears a candle is being made on this desk - though quite sloppily. This is in fact the work of Brother Augustus, who is following a (bogus) recipe for making a so-called "candle of ghost-warding" (in an attempt ward off the *wisps* that haunt the *Library*) from the descriptions in the tomes... without success.

Treasure: The collection of stolen books, which describe a variety of "magical candles" and the (inaccurate) means to create them, might be worth 250 gp if sold to a person of suitable gullibility. Any true spellcaster would easily be able to recognize the books as a collection of fakes.

G. ENGINEERING

This dark chamber appears to have been locked once (DC 25) - and forgotten - a long time ago. Melted candle stubs sit in bronze holders on a stained and dusty wooden table, covered with drafting sheets and writing instruments.

A strange contraption sits in the northern corner, made of wood and paper, appearing somewhat like a wheeled cart sporting a great wooden umbrella above it.

Treasure: The strange contraption is in fact the prototype of a *helixpteron*, a pedal-operated "flying machine" resembling a helicopter (the "umbrella" is its rotor assembly) with folding, fan-like wings that sweep out from its rickety sides to swish air back and forth as if "swimming" through the air.

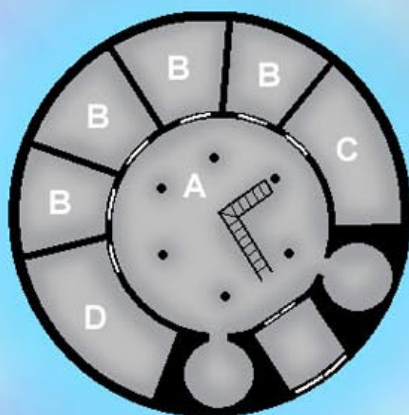
The flying machine has room for three Medium-sized people to sit in a row. Operation of the flying machine requires at least one person (in the front) to pedal continuously, a full-round action that requires the user's entire attention. Any disruption or failure to peddle on a given round results in the vehicle falling from the sky 30 feet per round, until peddling once more starts up again. Except for its other characteristics (see below) the *helixpteron* otherwise performs as if a *fly* spell were cast, but of course it cannot be dispelled (it is not magical, after all). The machine itself is Huge (getting it out of the building will be impossible, short of blowing open the wall of the Library) and made of wood, making it relatively delicate.

Should the PC's somehow manage to extract this machine without damaging it, they might find a buyer for it among alchemic circles (or others interested in such engineering curiosities); a reasonable asking price for this unique creation would be 5,000 gp.

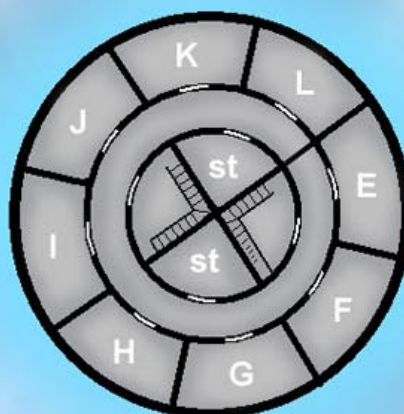
In addition to the curious "flying machine", a small wooden scroll tube hidden away in the cobwebs (Search check DC 18) contains maps of the entire Monastery - except for the subterranean chambers and the library proper.

THE RED ORDER

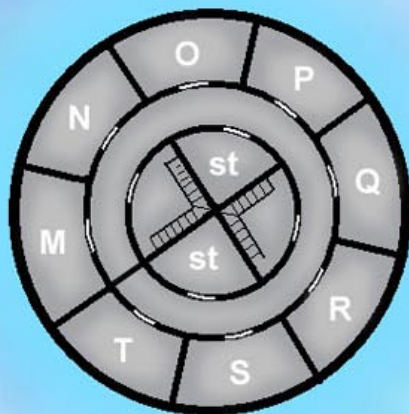
The Library



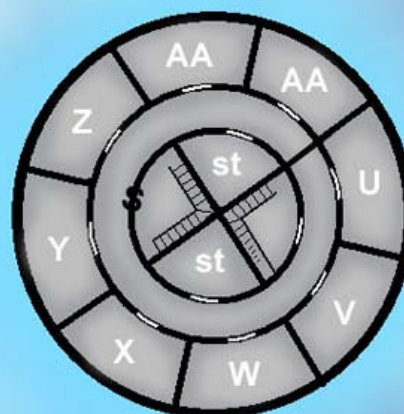
First Floor



Second Floor



Third Floor



Fourth Floor



Fifth Floor



NORTH

50 feet



Helixpteron: Speed fly 30 ft. (clumsy), AC 8 (-2 size), Hit Points 20, SQ hardness 5.

H. FARMING AND AGRICULTURE

This rather plain room is filled with tomes on agricultural subjects, ranging from meteorological studies to local

almanacs (none of these books will be of any use to the PC's). In addition, small wooden boxes along the far wall contain hundreds of dried seeds from various plants, fruits, and vegetables. These are used in yearly planting.

THE RED ORDER

I. HERALDRY

Huge leather-bound tomes line the walls of this cold stone room. Upon examination, it is apparent that these books all relate to the nature and deciphering of heraldic symbols and coats of arms, though most pertain only to the noble houses of the south. Most of these books are valueless except to nobles and heralds from that region.

J. JEWELSMITHING

This room appears to be frequently used, and the worktable in the center of the room is cluttered with hand-written notes on the quality of a collection of lapis lazuli gems (written by Prior Alexander to describe the gemstones in his quarters, prior to cutting and polishing them).

A single set of *masterwork jewelsmithing tools* (giving a +2 bonus to associated craft checks) sits in a small wooden casket (closed with a latch) lying by the main bench. The books contain illustrations and detailed descriptions of rare gemstones and finer pieces of valuable crystal – but sadly no examples are present herein.

K. LAW

Much of this room is found to be in excellent order, as the books are neatly arranged and stored on the shelves. These books pertain to local as well as foreign law, and all are written in a southern dialect of the Common tongue.

While these books may have some educational value to the monks, they are quite common on both sides of the mountains and thus are of little interest to the PC's.

L. MASONRY AND SCULPTURE

This ancient room contains worktables that seem to have been abandoned some time ago, as the amount of dust accumulated on their surfaces suggests.

The center of the room contains a life-sized statue of startling realism, appearing to be some sort of demon or gargoyle pointing out towards the sky with a look of vile contempt – and accusation – etched into its face. It is, however, merely a long-dead monk's creation, and nothing of any real interest to searchers.

THIRD FLOOR

Like the level below it, this floor is barred by a heavy stone door, covered in a unique enchanted circle. Written on its face are the words of the following riddle:

*A delicate dancer, her legs are weak;
Her kiss is madness, her size is meek;
On her back rests time, in her eyes lies fear;
She holds darkness very dear.*

The answer to this simple riddle is “spider”. Once this has been answered, the door opens, revealing the third floor of the *Library*.

M. ETIQUETTE AND MANNERS

This cluttered stone chamber seems to have long gone into disuse, as is evident in the thin layer of choking dust that is swept up as the door is first opened. Several old tomes lie on the central worktable, however, while the walls are stacked with books on manners and courtly etiquette. Though these are fancifully illustrated and in many cases written in a beautiful, poetic style, they are of no use to the characters.

Treasure: One of these books is considered by to be a classical masterpiece on the art of courtly love, and if dusted off and taken to a distant market (in any large city where there are courtiers to appreciate its value), it could be sold for 250 gp.

N. POETRY

This chamber holds shelves filled with some of the most famous foreign works of poetry, ranging from classic tales of monsters and gods to unusual local legends of the mountain country, all composed artistically in the form of structured prose, music, and song. Several of these books have obviously been pored over many times (several generations ago Caporetto was renowned as a center of poetic composition, thanks to one acolyte who had been quite a gifted student of it), as is evident in their weathered appearance. Other than these books, there is nothing else of interest in the room.

Treasure: The entire collection of poetry, some forty volumes in all, are worth 200 gp.

O. HERBS AND PLANTS

This room was apparently once used as a storehouse, though most of the burlap sacks and clay jars that line the walls have long since been looted (most of the herbs and ingredients were moved to the “lab” in the *Chemistry* chamber). Still, many books on basic herbalism and plant lore lie on shelves and on the cluttered table in the center of the room.

Treasure: The collection of books here is quite extensive, including many treatises formerly thought lost by scholars of the world. Three of these books, each more than two centuries old and covering bizarre herbs found only at the corners of the world, would fetch a price of 500 gp (apiece) in a large city.

P. LOVECRAFT

This room features an unusually strong lock (DC 25 to Pick Locks checks).

Slightly suggestive art is both present in the tapestries on the walls and illuminated in the clutter of anonymously written books cluttering this decrepit chamber – a chamber which, by all standards, certainly should NOT exist in a monastery!

Several depictions on the wall hangings show young court ladies curtsying, holding their skirts just a little *too* high (or otherwise bordering on the obscene), while others depict the

THE RED ORDER

famed harems of infidel foreigners in exquisitely graphic detail. The books, too, are all almost universally vile and suggestive, filled not only with crude depictions but also lewd poetry and lengthy stories of the most shocking nature.

Many of these books, in particular, were created by various generations of monks of Caporetto either as jokes or as means to cope with the monotony of their “celibate” lives. Invariably confiscated during the reign of Theodore, they were allegedly “burned” (and their authors punished), but in reality most were secretly stockpiled here where they are shared among the wicked monks of the Red Order for their amusement.

Treasure: The only thing here of any real value (except to the monks) is a figurine made from semi-precious carnelian, sitting on the desk by a melted candle stub. It is done in the shape of a nearly naked nun, exposing herself as she bends over to fix her stockings. The statuette – currently used as a paperweight – is worth 75 gp.

Q. ASTROLOGY

This cavernous chamber is apparently one of great value to the Elders of Caporetto; several fungus-pots sit on the walls, shedding a lustrous scarlet light across the entirety of the place. The narrow window to the chamber stands open, a long metal telescope on a rickety tripod peering out towards the sky.

Most striking of all is the room’s ceiling, which has been painted a deep, dark blue with gold filigree depicting stars and over a hundred individual heavenly bodies. Any character succeeding at a Knowledge (arcana) check at DC 15 will realize that the entire ceiling is, in fact, a wholly accurate map of the heavens used to plot the movement of the stars.

The majority of this room is dominated by a large brass *orrery* (ten feet across and weighing almost a ton) that at present reveals the current positions of the major planets as well as the campaign world, its moon, and the sun. Making a Knowledge (arcana) check at DC 20 reveals that the orrery’s planetary arrangement is exact to the *hour*.

A second check, at DC 15, will allow anyone studying the orrery to realize that a *full solar eclipse* is soon coming to this part of the world, within a matter of days.

Treasure: Piles of hand-written notes are piled high on this table, and volumes of astronomical books lie open on the floor and on the shelves along the walls. Among the notes is a small leather journal (the most relevant entry is detailed as *Handout #9*).

Many of these books are truly impressive works of science and esoteric lore, some more than ten centuries old and yet stunningly accurate in their calculations and predictions of astronomical events far into the future. The entire collection of books would be worth 5,000 gp to a serious astronomer.

The orrery here, unlike the smaller one in the *Prior’s Residence*, is far too large to be salvaged as treasure.

R. CALLIGRAPHY

This room is rather mundane, though it is frequently entered (in fact, the lock is a little loose, requiring only a DC of 17 to open) by those allowed in on a regular basis. The shelves are filled with books on proper penmanship, the basic fundamentals of mixing inks and preparing vellum sheets, etc. There is nothing of value in the room.

S. CHEMISTRY

This dark and dank room was once the favorite room of Anastasius the Master, but has long since fallen in to disuse by all except for his magical student, Prior Alexander.

The room itself is dominated by several tables, all of which are cluttered with glass spheres, tubes, and beakers of all shapes, and sizes. Many of these lie cracked and broken, or so covered in dust and cobwebs that they are hardly recognizable.

Treasure: Though no potions are to be found among the alchemic equipment, there are a variety of reagents including powdered pearls, a number of owl feathers, a bottle of wine, strips of cured leather, a jar of gold dust (450 gp worth), 16 copper pieces, several incense sticks, a stoppered inkwell (filled with 50 gp worth of lead-based ink), a mortar and pestle containing powdered talc, a collection of glass eyes, a small box filled with curious loops of hide (from a displacer beast), silver dust, powdered herring scales, and a jar of will-o’-wisp essence (components stockpiled by Prior Alexander for practicing the spells preserved in his spellbook).

T. CRYPTOGRAPHY

This room is dark and cluttered with books of a no-nonsense appearance. Lacking decoration except for a sturdy wooden table and a pair of chairs, the chamber contains volumes of books on different languages.

Treasure: A thorough search (requiring a good deal of time) of the books will reveal a number of volumes concerning the translation of rare dialects of the Common tongue, many of which are only found spoken by desert peoples of the East. These books were among the original texts taken by the monks of the Order when they traveled east before encountering their dark god and converting to his worship. The books themselves are curios, worth a total of 300 gp to a linguist or other collector.

One of the cabinets here also contains a pair of *scrolls of comprehend languages*.

FOURTH FLOOR

Like the lower levels before it, this level is barred by a mighty stone door. Written on its face is the following riddle:

*It is never safe to say my name aloud,
Nor share my story with another;
Even the most trusted friend, once told my nature
Changes my nature entirely.*

THE RED ORDER

The answer to this riddle is “a secret”. Once this has been answered, the door opens, revealing the dark fourth level of the great *Library*.

U. LEGENDS AND MYTHS

The cold stone walls of this great room have been fabulously illuminated with thick and colorful tapestries that depict inspiring scenes of legend. The collection of books that lie all about seem almost peripheral when compared to their striking beauty.

The north wall is decorated by a scene of the goddess of love rising from the frothy waves of the sea; the south wall is adorned with a depiction of a great knight slaying a dragon. The east wall holds a tapestry which is both enchanting and haunting, depicting a dryad dancing among the moss-covered ruins of some forgotten woodland castle; and finally the west wall is hung with yet another remarkable tapestry, this one depicting an army of skeletons looting, butchering, and pillaging a burning city.

Treasure: Made with a mixture of silk threads and spun silver, the first tapestry is worth 100 gp. Though it was once beautiful, the second tapestry has been ruined with a deliberate splash of red paint, and is now all but worthless. The third tapestry, though striking, is of mundane make and thus would fetch (at best) a price of 25 gp. The final tapestry, though dark and unnerving, is adorned with small garnets hanging from its numerous tassels, and is thus innately valuable (worth 75 gp).

Though the collection is extensive, none of the books here are of any real value.

V. MAGICAL STUDIES

This murky room is lit only with dimly glowing mounds of fluorescent fungus, sitting in overflowing black braziers in each corner. The window of the room is shuttered and padlocked, preventing any natural light from slipping in.

The only thing that stands out is a pedestal near the center of the room where a black book lies, along with the stubs of several candles.

Creatures: This important chamber is guarded by a pair of shadows, hiding in the darkness of the wooden rafters overhead (taking a 10 they have a Hide of 18 against opposing Spot checks).

The creatures were placed here by Prior Alexander as guardians of a powerful *spellbook* (once belonging to the long-dead master Anastasius), and will drop down to floor level once the PCs enter to cut off their means of escape.

Shadows (2): hp 60 (see appendix).

Treasure: The book on the pedestal proves to be a dilapidated *spellbook*. Though many pages are missing, it still contains the spells *Nystul's undetectable aura*, *silent image*, *misdirection*, *illusory script*, *illusory wall*, *shadow conjuration*, and *greater shadow conjuration*.

There is also a rich collection of magical texts here describing magical rituals and methodology (useful to

students of arcana), worth a total of 1,250 gp to a collector, wizard, or alchemist.

Development: Spellbooks and magical scrolls confiscated from the party upon entering the Monastery will be here, kept in an unlocked wooden chest on the floor.

W. MEDICINE

This chamber is filled with medical volumes, including some written by physicians famous throughout the known world. A few appear quite ancient and valuable. The room is apparently entered often (by Brother Malachi), though no signs of *who* exactly visits so regularly are apparent.

Treasure: Leather-bound and studded with rough gemstones by previous monastic residents of Caporetto, the vast collection of medical texts here would be worth a small fortune if taken from the *Library*. Though ransacking this place would take time and a lot of effort, the entire collection would be worth a combined total of 750 gp.

X. METALLURGY

This room contains several books on the study of metals and their composition.

Treasure: Although much of the material is mundane, one of the works is actually by the legendary Magnum Albertum, and contains descriptions of strange unheard-of metals that exceed the metals of the surface world in both strength and beauty (the book would be worth at least 100 gp to a smith or craftsman – but its authenticity is subject to debate).

Finally, a small burlap sack on the central worktable, tied with a leather strap, is filled with a fine silver dust (the dust is worth a total of 75 gp and can be used as a spell component for several castings of the *desecrate* spell).

Y. POISONS

This dark room contains old musty volumes on the study of natural poisons of the world, as well as the manufacturing of antidotes. The former section seems well used; the latter all but forgotten under layers of dust and cobwebs.

A yellowed vellum chart against one wall depicts various poisonous herbs (including *bloodroot*, *deathblade*, *malyss root*, *sassone leaf*, *terinav root*, and the rare *black lotus*), and describes their symptoms and suggested treatments. Several iron pots and clouded glass jars sit on shelves along the south wall, but these were looted long ago for some unknown reason.

Treasure: A Search check (DC 18) will uncover a small iron *key* that has somehow slipped under one of the room's numerous bookshelves. The key once belonged to Brother Malachi, and opens the locked door to the medicine closet in the *Infirmary*.

One of the cabinets here contains a supply of *tavar seeds* (see page 40 for details of how this drug affects those who ingest it), though these have not yet been refined into a working drug.

THE RED ORDER

Z. THEOLOGY

This room is seldom entered except by the various Instructors. In fact, it is shunned completely by the Abbot and the Prior, who refuse to enter it at all, for it still remains dedicated to the study of the Monastery's patron god. As a result, the Abbot (on some other pretense) has seen fit to order the room locked when not in use; the lock consists of a heavy padlock of impressive strength (Pick Locks at DC 25 to open).

Once entered the room appears to be adorned with a series of modest tapestries depicting not only the god venerated by the Monastery (a lawful or good-aligned god of knowledge, learning, or secrets), but also other good-aligned gods appropriate to the campaign world.

The walls are stacked with a number of well-worn books on *hagiography* (the study of saintly heroes), scrolls, and religious chapbooks.

Treasure: A Search check, DC 15, reveals a small steel strongbox (locked, DC 15) hidden under some books. It contains the following items:

Four glass vials filled with *holy water*, three sharpened *wooden stakes*, a number of *holy wafers* stolen from the Cathedral (good for stuffing a vampire's mouth before severing the head), and a polished *silver mirror* (to test a vampire's reflection).

In addition to these items there is a small shred of paper – *Handout #5*.

DM's Note: These strange items were hoarded by Brother Callistus, (who was murdered for meddling with the affairs of the Red Order), and since none of the monks could open the box, it was brought here and forgotten. If the PC's manage to find this box and open it, they will have some very useful weapons for their fight against the Red Order!

AA. EMPTY CHAMBERS

These two chambers are dusty and filled with cobwebs, lacking any furnishings whatsoever (though the DM may, if he so wishes, have old moldy wooden items stashed here for storage – these might, in a pinch, make ideal *wooden stakes* if broken apart). The windows of these chambers, so far up, give a breathtaking if dizzying view of the Monastery and the mountains for miles around.

FIFTH FLOOR

Access to the fifth and final floor is only attainable by passing through a well-concealed secret door on the third floor (see map), which appears to be little more than a sealed-up, abandoned room. Finding the correct stone to push on the wall is extremely difficult, requiring a Search check at DC 30.

BB. DIMENSIONAL CONDUIT

The roof of this massive vaulted chamber is domed like a great observatory, painted a dark shade of azure so as to appear reminiscent of the night sky here in the mountains. Small crushed crystals set into the stone glimmer off

torchlight like a collection of stars, and the center of the room is dominated by a strange discoloration on the floor – it *absorbs* all light and yet draws shadows towards it at the same time. It is, in fact, a hole torn in the very fabric of reality.

Around this remarkable “tear”, a trio of shallow grooves in the stone floor form a triangle enclosing the dimensional “blemish”. Silver dust appears to fill parts of these grooves, while some of the metal has been deliberately blown away in places for an unknown reason.

As characters enter this nightmare vault, they will hear distant yet truly terrifying shrieks coming from the hole itself. If they are so bold as to *look* at the hole, they will see twisted and disfigured spirits and phantoms pressing against the dimensional conduit as if it were made of glass.

To any character making a Knowledge (arcane or the planes) check, at DC 17, it will be obvious that this is a semi-permanent *gate* to one of the countless layers of the Abyss. The silver dust constituted a *magic circle against evil* spell intended to surround the *gate* during “negotiations” with the entities brought through.

It appears that whoever created this “gate” deliberately disturbed the circle so as to allow the demonic entities beyond the *gate* to enter our world freely. There is simply no telling how many creatures have already made the extra-planar journey via this *gate*.

Because it is reinforced by the will of the faceless, malevolent god that dwells on the other side of it, the only way to destroy or dispel the *gate* is to use a special item – Theodore's *signet ring*.

Creatures: If characters stay longer than a few minutes in this blasphemous place, there is a 1 in 10 chance per round that a flock of *quasits* (50% of the time), *shadows* (25% of the time), or a single *night hag* (25% of the time) will spring forth from the inky “blemish”, attracted by the presence of intruders in the conduit chamber. Once on the PCs' side of the gate the creatures will either attack outright, or fly past them with a haunting laugh and disappear, only to re-emerge in the *Cemetery* or *Library* during a stormy night some time in the future.

Quasits (5): hp 24, 24, 22, 20, and 13; *Monster Manual* 41.

Shadows (5): hp 36, 35, 34, 33, and 32; *Monster Manual* 161.

Night Hag (1): hp 70; *Monster Manual* 140.

WISPS OF THE LIBRARY

The *Library* is haunted by a pair of *will-o'-wisps* which only appear at night when few are present in the dark tower. Appearing as glowing orbs of sickly green and red light, the illumination cast by their spherical ghost-forms can be seen far away – even by those in the courtyard below. No one in the Monastery knows what they really are (most suspect they are ghosts), not even the Abbot and his loyal conspirators.

All monks in the Monastery will refuse to enter the *Library* when these creatures are obviously out and about.

THE RED ORDER

Will-O'-Wisps (2): hp 50 and 50; *Monster Manual* 183.

The wisps retire to the *Crypts* during the day (traveling straight through the earth), though they won't ever be encountered anywhere but the *Library* at night.

DM's Note: The wisps are fully aware of the extraplanar gate on the top level of the *Library*, and may in fact lead characters to it (for example, by making the PCs aware of the secret trapdoor by passing through it).

SPECIFIC EVENTS

Fundamentally, this adventure is impossible to plan out like an ordinary structured scenario, since the characters will be sneaking around the Monastery grounds in the order *they* decide upon. The DM has no way to foretell what they'll do - so just let them. Of course, you as the DM will have to decide what happens with or without their consent, noting the various NPC personalities, where the population will be at certain times of the day, and the general course of events as they unfold along the timeline herein.

Note, however, despite the otherwise loosely based structure of this scenario, a few events *will* happen regardless of how the PC's proceed - or fail to proceed. These are known as *Specific Events*, and are described below, noting when they happen, which day, and how they will affect the scenario's course.

DAY 1

- **Nones:** The PC's arrive at the Monastery, and are introduced to Brother Sven, master of the *Common House*.
- **Vespers:** The PC's partake of their ceremonial "last meal".
- **Compline:** The PC's are taken to their quarters, met by Brother Trovech, and instructed in the rules of the Order. They are searched and their items are taken.
- **Hesperum:** At night one of the PC's has a vague and haunting dream, hinting at the fate of one of the murdered monks.

DAY 2

- **Matins:** The PC's are awakened and taken to the *Cathedral*, where they are officially inducted into the monastic tradition. The PC's catch their first glimpse of the Abbot and the Prior.
- **Lauds:** The PC's receive official instruction, meet their fellow initiates, and are introduced to Brother Matthias the Greater.
- **Prime:** The monks gather to distribute food to the local peasants as part of daily charity. Brother Trovech attempts to learn more about the PC's.
- **Terce:** The new monks are taken to the *Library* by Brother Dmitri, where the PC's get not only a glimpse of that fabled place, but also the Upper Ward of the Monastery grounds.
- **Sext:** At mealtime the PC's meet for the first time Brothers Alexi, Benedict, Matthias The Lesser, Moski,

Phocas, Sven, and Yolo.

- **Nones:** The PC's and other new monks are assigned tasks to perform about the grounds. At this time the PC's have a chance to meet Brother Constantine, as well as explore the Lower Palisade for clues.
- **Vespers:** The new monks are taken to the *Cathedral* for choir practice. If the PC's haven't yet met him, they now get their first impression of Brother Constantine.
- **Compline:** Nothing unusual occurs.
- **Hesperum:** PC's sleep soundly, except for one, who has a strange premonition of the *eclipse* that will soon affect this part of the world.

DAY 3

- **Matins:** Nothing unusual occurs.
- **Lauds:** Early this morning the PC's meet Brother Camillus, the Brewer, for the first time, and hear the tale of the mad Brother Brziac. The PC's are given access to the subterranean areas of the Monastery.
- **Prime:** During charity the PC's help an old man to the Infirmary, where he is killed by Brother Malachi. The PC's may confront Malachi about this sadistic act of cruelty and murder.
- **Terce:** Nothing unusual occurs.
- **Sext:** Nothing unusual occurs.
- **Nones:** Nothing unusual occurs.
- **Vespers:** One of the PC's is mistakenly attacked by the Abbot's beloved hunting owls, resulting in a patronizing apology from the Abbot.
- **Compline:** Nothing unusual occurs. *Though they won't be witness to it, one lesser monk, Brother Ambrose, uses this time to escape out his cell's window, fleeing from the Monastery with what he knows about its terrible secret.*
- **Hesperum:** One of the PC's is awakened by terrible dreams, only to be attacked by a *night hag* in his cell.

DAY 4

- **Matins:** Nothing unusual occurs.
- **Lauds:** Brother Constantine is murdered; investigation reveals evidence that a vampire is at work in Caporetto.
- **Prime:** During charity the PC's are contacted by a mysterious agent of the *Ordo Vermis* in the village below the Monastery. His message reaffirms the need to infiltrate the inner circle of the Red Order in the coming days.
- **Terce:** Nothing unusual occurs.
- **Sext:** The PC's notice Moski sneaking away during dinner and follow him to the Bath House, where they uncover his true identity. The PC's may be able to use Moski's secret as leverage to secure a secret way into the Upper Ward.
- **Nones:** Assuming they made a deal with Moski, the PC's are taken up to the Upper Ward to clean latrines. They can use this opportunity to poke around the Upper Ward without supervision.
- **Vespers:** At Vespers the PC's learn of Brother

THE RED ORDER

Ambrose's flight from the Monastery, and have a chance to investigate his room before Brother Trovech clears his things out. The PC's receive valuable clues pertaining to a cache of useful items hidden in the *Library*.

- **Compline:** Nothing unusual occurs.
- **Hesperum:** Unless the PC's use this time to explore, one of their number is plagued by more haunting dreams. *In addition, unless she has been slain, the night hag will again visit the PC she visited the night before.*

DAY 5

- **Matins:** Nothing unusual occurs.
- **Lauds:** After daily instruction one of the PC's finds a strange note in his cell. This note gives directions to a secret cache of weapons beneath the Monastery.
- **Prime:** The PC's hear that other monks have begun to abandon the Monastery due to recent events. They also have the opportunity during this period to sneak away and attempt to find the cache of weapons hinted at in the mysterious letter.
- **Terce:** As the monks venture to the *Library* they stop in the upper courtyard to gaze at the coming eclipse. Brother Augustus, the blind librarian, is pushed from an upper story window of the *Library* to his death.
- **Sext:** Brother Xavier arrives at the Monastery and is greeted by his fellow conspirators. If present the PC's may get a glimpse of Brother Ambrose's severed head, evidence that Xavier caught him after he escaped and killed him.
- **Nones:** At the behest of the Abbot and Prior, Brother Trovech descends into cellars and murders Brother Brziac.
- **Vespers:** Brother Phocas attempts to desert Caporetto by lowering himself in a food basket over the walls.
- **Compline:** Nothing unusual occurs.
- **Hesperum:** A final dream visits the PC's. *In addition, unless she has been slain, the night hag will again visit the PC she visited previously.*

DAY 6

- **Matins:** After morning prayers the Prior selects a handful of unwitting acolytes to "join" the Bursars of the inner circle. These men are, in fact, slated to be sacrifices at the ritual that night. *Though they do not witness it, the wicked Malachi flees under the cover of darkness around this time, never to return.*
- **Lauds:** During instruction Matthias The Greater's lesson degenerates into incoherent and babbling, a side effect of the growing shadow of the "nameless one".
- **Prime:** Eerily no one shows up for daily charity. The Monastery is shunned by the peasants, who also sense the evil that is growing behind its walls.
- **Terce:** Nothing unusual occurs.
- **Sext:** Brother Dmitri approaches the PC's and tries to persuade them to flee the Monastery with him, Moski,

and the other Lesser Bursars.

- **Nones:** Nothing unusual occurs.
- **Vespers:** Nothing unusual occurs.
- **Compline:** Bursars from the Upper Ward descend to the Lower Palisade and gather the oblates that will unwittingly participate in the final ritual at Hesperum.
- **Hesperum:** The final hour. The oblates selected for sacrifice are given a drugged meal before being led to the top of the *Library*, where they are thrust through the gate to feed the ritual that will bring the "nameless one" to this world.

NONES, DAY 1

Today the player characters first arrive at the Monastery. They will receive a brief glimpse of the decrepit village surrounding the Monastery, and get a chance to learn a few rumors while there. But before long, they will be drawn inevitably towards the Monastery itself - the object of their quest.

Refer to the beginning of this scenario for the description of the Monastery as they come within, and then continue.

The party (and perhaps a handful of other oblates coming from all over the southern kingdoms seeking to join the Order as well) will be met by Brother Sven as a group immediately after they arrive; he will introduce himself and announce that it is his duty to greet all new *oblates* (new members) who wish to join the Order. He assumes the PC's (and any others) are there for this reason.

If the PC's agree to this assumption, Sven welcomes one and all with a most friendly manner, and will relate to them the rules of the Order while he leads them to the *Common House*. Here the newcomers amongst them will be holed-up until Vespers in common rooms; they will then receive their "last meal" before being officially ordained as lesser monks (see below).

As they are confined to the *Common House*, the PC's will be able to talk of their initial observations of the Monastery (whether privately or among the other oblates); they may find some of the Order's rules quite odd, and may comment on these to the openly-talkative and hospitable Brother Sven. He, of course, will explain that although some of these rules seem hard or unfair, they have been made to test the loyalty and obedience of the monks, and to weed out those who do not have the right "mettle" for the cloistered life.

VESPERS, DAY 1

Later that evening, the characters are awakened by Brother Sven who carries with him a lit lantern. He informs them it is time for them to come and eat in the *Common House's* private refectory. He continues to tell them that the Order traditionally allows all new initiates to partake of a grand feast before they face the restrictions of a monastic diet for the rest of their lives. This is a kind of farewell to the "good life".

The meal consists of a fat baked ham, hard bread, and a stew of steamed vegetables. Wine from the cellars has been

THE RED ORDER

provided and is served from a good number of clay jugs placed around the table. There is enough food present to fill the stomachs of twenty hungry men – and the other oblates are all eager to indulge themselves this one last time.

Brother Sven will stay with the oblates, answering questions as truthfully and as helpfully as possible (see his description for an idea of his personality and views about the other monks).

If asked about the recent murders or the nightmares, which have been affecting the monks (assuming the PC's have heard rumors), Sven will grow quiet, and say that he knows nothing of the latter phenomena. Of the murders he seems distressed, unable to provide any answers, and his mood changes for the rest of the night. Brother Sven dismisses the more fantastic rumors, and for the whole affair he can only express a genuine sorrow – but little first-hand knowledge of these astonishing events. He hopes the deaths were natural, and comments that Malachi, the monk's physician, has been known to make mistakes before – perhaps he exaggerated the odd circumstances surrounding the Brothers' deaths?

COMPLINE, DAY 1

After their meal, the new monks are met by Brother Trovech, who has been sent by Brother Dmitri to show the new oblates to their quarters and dictate to them the rules pertaining to their proper dormitory behavior.

Trovech appears to be very friendly and polite, unafraid of whispering rumors (most of which are very false!) or answering questions. According to Trovech, the recent murders were the work of “foul and treacherous blasphemers”...

“The murders? Oh, you mean Brothers Callistus and Milos! Yes, it was a pity what happened to the both of them.” He looks both ways to see if anyone is listening. Seeing that no one is near, he continues, “But if you ask me, they were deserving of such a punishment. I heard tell they were conspirators of the darkest kind, in league with demonic forces. Didn't you feel something when you first arrived here - a feeling of dread? I tell you, there was something wrong with those two...don't going asking about them, you may stumble upon something you might regret.”

As they come to their line of cells, Trovech smiles and points them out, indicating that fresh clothes have been put on the bed, and that he must collect their gear – “all monks must forfeit their worldly treasures and finances”. Afterwards, Trovech walks into each room hesitantly; explaining that he is supposed to search each room to make sure nothing is hidden.

Trovech must make a Search check (see his statistics) to discover anything concealed by the PC's. If he finds anything incriminating (such as the notice given them by the agent of the *Ordo Vermis*), he only makes a quiet note of it, and passes word on to the Abbot. *From that point on*

Trovech will be assigned to following the PC's around and attempting to find out their true motivations here.

After he has confiscated all the characters' items, Brother Trovech will ask if he can help the PC's further (in any way), before saying good night and disappearing down the hall.

HESPERUM, DAY 1

That night, whichever character among the party who has the highest Wisdom score will experience Dream #2 (see The Horror Of Dreams).

DM's Note: When reading this excerpt to the player, you might want to take him or her aside into another room so that the others do not know the full details of the dreamer's experiences.

MATINS, DAY 2

In the pre-dawn hours of the next day, the PC's are abruptly awakened by the whispers of the Elders, and are led by candlelight to the Cathedral for nightly prayers.

You awaken suddenly by the sound of whispers breaking the dead silence of the darkness-enshrouded monastery. Struggling to adjust to the darkness of your room, your door suddenly opens and you are illuminated by the flickering light of a single candle. Standing there, peering into your room, is the familiar face of Brother Sven. Behind him, moving through the hallway with mere shuffles of their voluminous robes, are other monks, walking by the light of their own candles.

“Awaken, brethren,” comes Sven's amused voice through the darkness, “'tis time to arise for dawn prayers...”

You rise after only a few seconds, half-mesmerized by fatigue, following Sven out and into the bitter cold night air. Within minutes you are awake, holding candles of your own in your hands, walking in procession with dozens of others towards the towering black spires of the Cathedral.

Entering the cathedral, it is thankfully much warmer inside, where the light of hundreds of candles illuminates the other monks of Caporetto - sitting in ranks in the wooden pews - in a silence now broken only by the shuffling of feet.

Taking your place amongst the others, you wait in the dim light as the final few monks begin to enter.

Once everyone has taken their place, all heads lower in respect. One by one you follow suit, not wanting to attract attention to yourselves. But something draws quick glances as a few more figures enter the room.

One by one, a train of monks in all-concealing red robes enter, wordlessly, in procession. Their faces are obscured in shadow, and they take their place on the opposite side of the room, in dark pews among the shadows. Finally two tall figures in similar crimson robes enter behind, and the doors to the cathedral are

THE RED ORDER

shut after them with a quiet thud.

The first of these last two figures is tall and imposing, his hood pulled back to reveal a face more striking than any you have seen before - strong and severe, the flesh waxy and tight, as if an unreal mask were worn over his aging skull. Lips curl down in a look of zealous disdain and self-righteousness, while dark dazzling eyes take in the scene of the collected brethren without so much as a word.

The second, also tall but more willowy of form, has a striking handsomeness to himself, despite his hollow cheeks, thin moustache, and slick goatee. His eyes seem suspended in the shadows, catching the light of stray candles like dancing fireflies in pools of limitless black. He seems by far more sinister than his companion, who steps aside to allow him to take the highest pew in the cathedral's dark and shadowy interior. As he sits, the collected brethren at once become obediently silent, and you now realize that this must be the Monastery's Abbot.

The Abbot raises his narrow finger, and the Sacrist motions for all brethren to follow his lead in song. Within moments, the strange and eerie silence of the night is broken by the echoing collaboration of monastic voices lost in harmonious song.

You are finally one with the group.

At this point allow the PC's to each make a Spot check (DC 12). If one (or more) makes the check, casually mention to the character(s) that he notices a beautiful ring on the Abbot's finger - a glimmering ruby, oval in shape, set on a precious band of gleaming gold. It is only visible momentarily when the Abbot raises his hand, again vanishing among voluminous robes as he sits back to listen to the monks in their nightly song. *Do not mention any other significance to this ring.*

The song session lasts for an hour, at which time the Abbot nods simply and approvingly, and then retires with his cadre of Red Order monks. Following their departure, the other monks are sent back to their cells in silence once more for the rest of the night.

DM's Note: Characters who have some means of seeing through disguises (such as having a concealed gem or seeing, or casting a true seeing spell beforehand) may be able to see through the *change self* effect of the Prior's *hat of disguise*. If this is the case they see not the Prior in his human form, but as a bargest walking and talking among men.

Apparently all others are deceived by the ruse, and you may wish to allow the Prior a Spot or Sense Motive check to notice the reactions of PC's who seem surprised by his appearance here.

LAUDS, DAY 2

At Lauds, the PC's and other monks are gathered and brought to the *School* for the first of their morning lessons. At this point, the DM should role-play conversations with

fellow monks on the way to the School (almost like children going to their first class, with various monks seeking to get to know one another, learn of their origins, etc), allowing a brief chance to get an idea of the monastery; perhaps one or two pass a rumor to the PC(s) before class starts with a severe hush from the schoolmaster, Matthias the Greater.

Lauds passes by slowly and tortuously for the group, split up among the population of students (and unable to converse); they are expected to read and recite the rules of the Order, the hourly prayers in proper order, and various excerpts from the holy book of the Monastery's patron deity.

Brother Matthias imposes a nasty impression on newcomers, being a harsh, strict, and merciless instructor that has no patience even for those unfamiliar with Caporetto's strict regimen.

DM's Note: Though they may suspect otherwise, Matthias is simply weeding out the weak by being exceptionally harsh in the first few days of their novitiate. Those who cannot keep up or withstand the discipline at this point are likely to be dismissed by day or week's end; few young aspirants last longer than a month.

PRIME, DAY 2

At Prime, the PC's and a few other monks are called upon to aid in the charity services of the monastery - feeding the poor who have (by the time they ascend their towers) congregated in a howling, shouting, and screaming mass on the bridge below, just outside the gates.

To their surprise, Brother Trovech, the man who met them upon their initiation in the order, joins them. He acts apparently very friendly and charming, and will help with the feeding of the peasants. Taking hold of a huge sack of potatoes, he loads up the PC's' buckets one by one.

Looking over the edge as they prepare to feed the assembled mass of starving, diseased peasants, the PC's are almost overcome not only by the noise (screams and desperate cries for merciful donations), but the smell and sight of these ill and plague-ridden crowds.

Trovech merely smiles; looking over the edge, calling out to them though his voice is easily lost in the din. As the PC's lower the buckets of food and jugs of wine, Trovech peels an apple with a sharp-edged dagger drawn from his robes (whether the PC's make note of this knife or not is up to the players), savoring it as if actually *amused* by the sight of poverty below.

After a time Trovech offers to share a drink with his new friends, pulling from his robes a secret flask of wine from the *Brewery* - if the PC's resist, he tells them that it's okay and that he won't tell. Trovech is attempting to gain the trust of the PC's by portraying himself as a more "loose" member of the Order - and someone they can relate to. He is, ultimately, trying to comb the newcomers for potential threats to the Monastery's secret coterie, as he is one of their more trusted rank-and-file (and also an accomplished killer).

If the encounter proves fruitless for Trovech, he will soon tire of the PC's and say his farewell, ensuring them that he won't tell about the wine (if they don't). He then

THE RED ORDER

scales down the tower and vanishes among the monks in the courtyard.

If Trovech is given reason to suspect the PC's, he will not immediately act, but will wait until the next day during the group's visit to the *Library* to detach himself and let his superiors in on his suspicions...

TERCE, DAY 2

At Terce the PC's are allowed in the great sacred library of Caporetto for the first time; and are overcome with awe at the size, antiquity, and sheer mystery of the place.

Their trip to the *Library* starts when Brother Dmitri gathers the newcomers and other lesser monks together shortly after Prime, under the chilly wet fog of the mid-morning hour – and beneath the shadow of the great mountain pinnacle. Numerous monks, having been at the Monastery for perhaps a week or month longer than the others, treat their peers with a perceptible disdain – congregating together and apart from any newcomers in the assembled pack.

Before they set out, Brother Dmitri begins by instructing the excited monks – in no uncertain terms – once more the rules of the Order (as pertain to the *Library*). He also mentions that they are now entering the region of the Monastery grounds that are reserved only for the most trusted members – and that they must show proper respect and care during their visit not to upset, disturb, or get in the way. That includes not wandering off to explore or intrude upon the studies of the other monks. Anyone doing so – now or any time in the future – will be expelled from the Monastery *permanently*!

Once Dmitri feels he has made his point, he turns and motions for the gatekeepers behind the pinnacle's portcullis to raise it. Minutes of the heavy iron gate rising into the rock seem like hours, as anticipation grows among the monastic novices to see, once and for all, this legendary repository of lost knowledge.

The group of monks are ordered into a neat line, single-file, and are led by Dmitri into the pinnacle, through its cool and echoing caverns, and up its great stone stairs. Higher and higher the party of monks go, until the candles provided by their master begin to flutter in the thinning air.

At long last they arrive at the pinnacle's top, the inner sanctum of the Monastery – and through the low arch that leads to the foot of the awesome *Library* itself. High above the wet earthy ground of the tight courtyard can be seen the towering walls of the great structure, bathed in a fragmentary beam of sunlight through the overcast sky, the bronze dome of its summit lost in the low-hanging clouds.

One by one the monks enter and are reminded to remain quiet by Dmitri in turn. Excited youngsters separate into groups to begin their first efforts at transcription and calligraphic instruction; for the next few hours Dmitri walks among them, in the *Scriptorium*, watching, observing, and correcting with stern glances the behavior and errors of the new students.

Throughout this the PC's are expected to conform to the same strict instruction. While they work, they notice other monks of the inner Order (*Bursars*), dressed in their all-concealing red robes, lurking in the *Carrells* with private works or objects of study, or forming into small, quiet groups simply to watch and study their lessers with a subtle disdain. If approached they glare at the intruder with a look of surprise (at what they perceive as audacity), turn up their noses flagrantly, and walk off.

As Sext approaches, Dmitri gathers his young charges amongst the *Scriptorium's* rooms and issues them back through the arch, down the great stairs, and to the Lower Palisade once more. Once out of Dmitri's presence, the monks begin to excitedly murmur about the *Library*, what they think lies beyond its Scriptorium walls, etc.

DM's Note: The experience here is meant to give a hint of the grand beauty and mystery of the great library – and to give a subtle glimpse (if the PC's think to specify) of the inner courtyard of the Upper Palisade – which will, soon enough, be the object of the PC's attempt to bring down the Order!

SEXT, DAY 2

Seated together in the Refectory, the gathering of monks is immense – elbow-to-elbow you sit with companions and strangers alike, anticipating the long-awaited first meal of the day. Your early rise and lengthy visit to the great library has left each of you famished with hunger.

A figure across the room finally rises, and the assembly of monks come to a rapid hush. It is a sputtering old codger, Matthias The Greater, rising to get the attention of all gathered. Once he has everyone's silence, the old instructor folds his liver-spotted hands and leads the congregation in prayer.

Entering the refectory is the rather good-natured Brother Alexis – head cook of the Monastery – and a pair of helpers, bearing between them a large wooden platter piled high with food. A few of the more seasoned monks bow their heads as Alexi enters, and the monk – with a proud flourish – presents the meal to the awaiting assembly.

Plain hard bread, a meal of bubbling porridge gruel, a few boiled eggs (quickly snatched-up by the elder monks), and some crumbly cheese compose the entire "feast"!

Though other new arrivals – like yourselves – wonder what happened to the same generosity as the night before, the other monks eagerly realize this is all they're going to get – and immediately take what they can before the food is gone.

Present in the *Refectory* are a good portion of the monks of the Lower Palisade – Alexi, Benedict, Dmitri, Matthias The Greater, Matthias The Lesser, Moski, Phocas, Sven, and Yolo. There is also the majority of Lesser Bursars here as well (of little significance, but adding to the crowded feeling

THE RED ORDER

of the dining hall), giving the PC's a chance to get to know a few of the various personalities of the story. Conversation will generally be light, but it gives the players a chance to get a general idea of who holds what position at the Monastery.

NONES, DAY 2

By Nones the PC's are once again set to the tedious manual labor that, it is evident, takes up the majority of a Lesser Bursar's life at the Monastery. Toiling beneath the shadow of the alluring, tempting pinnacle of the Great Library, the PC's and a large number of novices are set to work.

Each character is given the choice to either work either in the *Garden* orchard or in cleaning the *Refectory/Dormitories* of the Lower Palisade. Dmitri ensures that no one shirks his duty, but a Bluff check (against his Sense Motive) may convince Dmitri to put the character to work in the *Cathedral* – light duty that entails only the refilling of candle stubs and perhaps some sweeping of the pews.

This period of labor, though seemingly tedious, gives the DM a chance to role-play, and allows PC's to meet different personalities on a more discreet level. Most monks are much more willing to talk as they work in the chill morning air to make the work go by faster; certainly a few rumors will be passed the PC's way during the work. In addition, a few monks will admit – in whispers – to have had dreams of “running” and feeling a “terrible fear” from some unknown pursuer; these dreams are oddly similar to those experienced by the PC's during the *Hesperum* hours of night. This talk will bring a general gloom about the monks thereafter, and anyone speaking too much of them will be avoided by the others for fear of “trouble”.

In addition, as the monks are largely spread-out in the *Gardens*, characters may be able to sneak away from the pack during their labors and scout out the Lower Palisade for clues or suspicious activity. Finally, a character working in the *Cathedral* may, if making a good impression on Brother Constantine (who always tends the church during Nones), be invited to view the *Chapel* or even visit his residence for some conversation – giving the PC's an early impression that Constantine may be one of their only allies in their investigations.

VESPERS, DAY 2

As the sun sets over the bitterly cold mountains, a light snow begins to fall. Though it is getting colder, Brother Dmitri is determined to get his new students up to par in the choir. Though tired, the monks (PC's included) are led to the *Cathedral* for evening practice.

During the evening's lessons in the *Cathedral*, Brother Dmitri is driven to his limit by the ineptitude of the PC's as singers (this assumes they have no skill; he could just as easily be impressed by a PC who actually has ranks in Perform).

If the PC's have not yet met him, the presence of Brother Constantine, the Sacrist, is made evident during practice, as he watches on – greatly amused – at the efforts of Dmitri to

shape these novices to his ideal. The characters will get the idea that though a solemn and withdrawn man, Constantine seems a solid and benevolent sort. Dmitri, however, may be a little more suspect by the color of his reddening cheeks and his boiling anger!

HESPERUM, DAY 2

This night, the PC's are – thankfully – unaffected by the evil dreams and visions affecting most of the Monastery's populace, though a strange restlessness hangs over each the whole night through. The snoring of other monks elsewhere in the *Dormitories* is perhaps the cause, but one cannot be certain.

Choose one character at random. To that character describe an odd “electricity” in the air that, to him, is simply unshakable. If the player of such a character specifically specifies getting up or looking about, he will feel drawn to his shuttered window to peer out.

Outside, the Monastery grounds are dead and silent, a thick heavy fog hanging like a drifting carpet over the stone yard outside. The cemetery seems ominously draped in this mist; even the withering orchards seem forbidding with the coils of fog creeping through them.

But overhead is an even stranger sight...though offset by the towering, almost menacing height of the Great Library, over even this can be seen the moon, its color somehow tinted to a horrible red shade – as if it were full and heavy with blood!

In the distance, even at this early hour, the awful light of this moon is made stranger by a thin ribbon of golden-purple light on the far horizon, just barely peeking through the mountains. The sun, barely recognizable on the horizon, seems to be trying to fight against the moon for supremacy of the sky.

It's as if...*as if the sun and moon would soon come together in some climactic battle in the days to come.*

DM's Note: Though the PC may not realize this, he is seeing the coming of a full solar eclipse in the next few days).

LAUDS, DAY 3

Early the next morning, as the sun rises on the horizon (casting a deep reddish-orange aura over the mountains), one of the PC's is contacted by a busy Brother Dmitri who hastily sends him over to Callistus, the Brewer.

Arriving, Callistus greets the PC in his brewery, where he and a number of lesser monks are going about their daily affairs. Once the PC arrives, Camillus smiles and introduces himself (if they haven't already made his acquaintance), and leads the PC into his quarters for a quiet request.

If they haven't already heard the rumors, Camillus will proceed to tell the characters about “poor Brother Brziac”, and about the strange events of late. Camillus will generally stay away from implicating Brziac in the murders, of course, and it is obvious he is genuinely concerned for the poor idiot down in the cellars.

In any event, Camillus informs the PC that none of his

THE RED ORDER

monks are willing to risk the cellars to feed Brziac any longer – they are all too afraid. Though he has threatened disciplinary action for their unanimous refusal, he cannot in good conscience force them to do something he also is somewhat hesitant to risk. Therefore, he is looking for *volunteers*...

Brother Camillus asks the PC to take some food and wine to the *Stairwell* and down into the *Wine Cellars*, and leave some food for poor Brziac to come and get. He does not recommend the character seek out Brziac in the tunnels - “they are far too dark, dangerous, and unpredictable; not even I know what lives down there” – only find an open place to leave the food for him.

If the PC accepts, he is given this task indefinitely, and is handed over the key to the stairs to the cellars. Each day, at Lauds (before everyone else’s meal), Brziac is to be fed...

This encounter gives the PC’s the opportunity to not only find out the truth about the crazed Brother Brziac, but also a chance to explore the tunnels beneath the Monastery. Since the character is trusted with the key from this point on, the group can conceivably come back at any time, in force, if need be!

PRIME, DAY 3

During the dispensation of charity to the peasants the following day, a rather telling event occurs.

The PC’s, working one of the towers despite the cold wind buffeting them at its summit, suddenly realize that the crowd is signaling that one of their number needs medical care. Descending to permit him entrance, they find a small family of peasants – all ashen and sickly – carrying with them their even sicker grandfather on a soiled blanket.

Any character with ranks in Profession (apothecary, herbalist, or a similar medical profession) will realize this man is suffering from a high fever. If not given even simple treatment he will surely die. With some explanation the PC’s are eventually given permission to take the poor old man from the gates to the *Infirmary*.

When the PC’s arrive, Brother Malachi meets them at the door to his hospital, pulling back his long red hood to get a look at his new “patient”. With a cursory glance he nods as if accepting this new arrival, and *orders* the PC’s to place him on a nearby cot,. They are then hurriedly rushed out of the *Infirmary* and back to their duties.

Only about ten minutes later, however, from atop the tower the characters see a pair of lesser monks carrying a burdensome bundle of cloth towards the *Cemetery* – and the *Infirmary* door slams shut behind them. As they struggle to balance its weight, the two stumble and fall, and the body within the bundle slips out into the mud of the courtyard. Impossibly, the face on the cadaver is none other than the old man they just delivered to the doctor, Malachi, for care! He is dead!

If the PC’s try to intervene, the two assistants prove to be oblivious – they were summoned by Malachi to take the body away for burial (a common task, they insist, at the *Infirmary*). They will not protest if the PC’s examine the

body.

Even a casual search (no check required) will reveal that the old man, who was only suffering a fever, has died almost instantly. His tongue is swollen and his eyes dilated; a character making a Profession (apothecary or herbalist) check at DC 15 will realize he has been *poisoned*.

If the PC’s confront Malachi he protests their intrusion into the “busy hospital” with all his “wailing patients”. He will deny having poisoned the man, claiming he died of an acute disease that he could not treat.

Since no one in the Monastery has any medical training other than Malachi, accusations inevitably prove ineffective against him; but here on out, the doctor will be wary of the PCs and perhaps even seek to poison *them*...

NONES, DAY 3

After being set to work during Nones, this period again allows the PC’s to explore the grounds of the Monastery - if they can sneak away (either alone or as a group). If they got into any trouble before, Brother Dmitri will certainly be keeping an eye out for them – he hates *slackers*...

VESPERS, DAY 3

A rather startling and horrible attack takes place during Vespers of their third day at the Monastery. The DM should choose one PC at random and have the following encounter occur while he walks innocently along in the Lower Palisade as night falls.

Allow the character in question to make a Listen check (DC 30); if he fails, read the following:

You are gripped with surprise as the twilight air is filled with the beating of velvety wings. Suddenly from the purplish darkness of the night sky comes a pair of beautiful white owls, screeching as they swarm around your head. Pecking and clawing, they leave deep gashes across your face, which bleed profusely.

The two owls, *Orao* and *Iskra* have been released to “feed” by the Abbot – and they have picked the lone PC as their target. For two full rounds the creatures will claw and tear at their victim (see *The Tower Of The Roost*) mercilessly. After two rounds of attacking viciously, assuming they live, read the following:

As you strike blindly at the flying beasts, they suddenly disappear, landing on an outstretched glove coming out of the deepening darkness of dusk. “Excuse them”, a deep voice growls, “They know no better”. Out from the shadows of the growing night steps the shadowy figure of Theodore, the Monastery’ Abbot.

Theodore’s eyes glare at the PC, as if expecting his apology to be promptly – and gratefully – accepted. A number of his loyal Bursars from the Upper Palisade gather in his shadow, almost as if to intimidate the PC into backing off. Regardless of the character’s response, seconds later,

THE RED ORDER

the Abbot and his followers will return once more to the pinnacle for the night.

HESPERUM, DAY 3

That night, choose one PC of chaotic alignment from the group; that character will experience *Dream #3*, and a visit from a *night hag* (see *The Horror Of Dreams*, detailed below).

LAUDS, DAY 4

As you sit in the lecture hall early the next day, listening to the droning voice of Brother Matthias The Greater, you all begin to feel numb from his harsh and nasal tone. In fact, if it weren't for the yelling of his deaf-eared preaching, you would have fallen asleep an hour ago. Beside him sits Brother Malachi, the surgeon, who today is guest-lecturing on how the monks must keep themselves apart from the peasants outside for fear of contaminating the Monastery as well.

Suddenly the door to the chamber bursts open, and you see the stricken face of a young monk, Matthias The Lesser, look in. He opens his mouth, but can barely speak.

"Brother Malachi, Brother Malachi, you must come quickly! One of our brethren is dead!" With that he takes off, and Malachi slowly rises to follow. Class has apparently ended abruptly!

A crowd follows Matthias and Malachi as they make their way across the Monastery grounds. Matthias leads the group to the mist-enshrouded graveyard, where there lies the body of Brother Constantine! His body is somehow different - his skin pale and viscid, his eyes sunken in their sockets. He appears very slender, without the same vitality and strength he once possessed.

He is wrapped in his red robes, one slipper missing.

If any character comes close enough to the Sacrist's corpse and makes a Search check (DC 15), he will notice two small red holes on the back of Constantine's neck; a Profession (apothecary or herbalist) check, at DC 10, will reveal that Constantine appears to have been *drained of his blood*...tell-tale signs of a *vampire*!

Malachi stares at the back of the corpse's neck, and then glances around nervously. He commands the lesser monks to bundle up the body and bring it back to the Infirmary, where the cadaver can be examined. As the group stands silently, afraid of the dead man, he repeats his order in a harsher tone. Only two monks from the assembled mass step forward to help and lift the body, and the crowd parts to let them through as if they were carrying a plague victim.

Malachi takes the body back to the *Infirmary*, and covers it with a sheet. He demands that everyone leave, and locks himself up in the hospital for the rest of the day. The PC's

— and the other monks in the Lower Palisade — are left to wonder about the sudden death of the closest thing the Monastery has to a "priest" — an omen, perhaps?

PRIME, DAY 4

This encounter occurs when the monks have gathered in the towers that flank the entrance to the Monastery. The PC's have been once again been called upon to help in the feeding and distribution to the mass of peasants who have come to benefit from the Monastery's generosity.

You and your fellows are gathering buckets full of food and are tying them to hooks, upon which they are slowly lowered into the dirty hands that stretch from the crowd below. Cries of pitiful thanksgiving and begging for more meet your ears, but many of the other monks on the tower seem hardened to their pleas.

Lowering yet another bucket into the crowd, you stop and sit against the tower wall to catch your breath and wipe your brow. You feel a tug on the bucket's rope, indicating it is empty, and you pull until it comes back up.

Yet the bucket isn't empty. At the bottom of the pail sits a folded piece of parchment! You glance quickly over the edge, but all you see is a motley group of beggars and lepers calling for more bread and water. Making sure no one is watching, you take the paper and hide it in your robes, filled with anticipation.

Allow all characters present to make a Spot check, DC 18, to notice a cloaked figure limp out of sight quickly, into the shadows of the fog-covered village. Though the figure has been seen, there is no way to tell who exactly it was.

The mysterious message (see *Handout #6*) brought up in the bucket reads as follows:

You must act quickly! Our source has informed us of the initiation of several more monks from the Lower Ward into the trusted ranks of the Inner Circle, sometime in the next few days. You must join these men by also becoming trusted members, and penetrate the veil of secrecy that surrounds their Inner Sanctum. Much is depending on your celerity. May God be with you!

The note is unsigned, and bears no inscription.

SEXT, DAY 4

This encounter occurs when the monks have gathered for their daily meal in the middle of the day. The event is thrown in as a sort of "red herring", but may be made into something highly useful.

You have gathered in the Refectory with the rest of the Lesser Bursars for your mid-day meal. The smell of the steaming pots of broth is both inviting and comforting, and you sit patiently while the cook, Alexi,

THE RED ORDER

and his assistants begin to serve the meal, handing out loaves of bread and bowls of hardy soup.

Allow each character present to make a Spot check (DC 10); to whoever succeeds, read the following:

As you begin to eat, out of the corner of your eye you notice Brother Dmitri speaking to Brother Moski in a low whisper, and the latter departs suspiciously out the door when no one is looking. Dmitri looks around to see if anyone was watching, and with a relieved look goes back to his table, and sits down to eat.

If any of the characters decides to follow Brother Moski, he will first have to ask permission from one of the Elders; either Matthias The Greater, Benedict, Malachi, Constantine, Sven, or Dmitri. In the case of the latter, Dmitri will seem uneasy and will ask twice if it is really important - but permission will be granted to leave if an adequate excuse is given (you may want to require a Bluff check against the superior's Sense Motive).

Assuming the PC(s) manages to get away, as he leaves the Refectory he barely notices Moski sneaking around the grounds. He slips quietly into the *Bath House* with a bundle of towels, his eyes glancing around cautiously.

If they follow Moski they will come to the door, to find it locked; a Pick Locks check (DC 15) is required to open it without startling the occupant and causing a scene. If they come in, they will meet a very surprised Moski, having a bath:

As you open the door, steam pours out of the dark room. As you enter, your eyes widen as you see the sight before you; Moski sits in the bath, naked. Yet "his" body is different - Moski is a woman! With a gasp she grabs her towel and covers her body, and backs away from you, frightened.

If the character(s) asked for permission from Dmitri, he will have followed them and will slip in behind them quietly. Moski will immediately beg that they do not tell anyone the truth about her. Dmitri will be very worried, and admit shamefully that he has been hiding her identity all along - he has begun to treat her as a "daughter" of sorts, and has taken great pains (at the risk of his own position) to take care of her.

If the PCs are still suspicious and do not give their word of secrecy, Moski will try to strike a deal with them; she will tell them all she knows (perhaps a rumor or two, nothing else), and the fact that she is highly suspicious of the Bursars and all those who live in the Upper Ward. It is her duty to clean that place every day, and she has noticed that there is something very *eerie* going on up there; the monks stare at her almost *evilily*, and she has heard strange noises from the towers - like the terrible howls of tortured dogs and hounds.

Any deals made with Moski will probably go something

like this - in exchange for their trust, she may be able to sneak them their equipment when she comes up to clean the Upper Ward during Nones (after they have been initiated as members of the Inner Circle, of course), or she may even take one or more PC's as an "assistant" when she cleans, in case they want to explore. Also, she may tell the group of the latrine chute running behind the walls of the *Latrine* - a secret tunnel connecting the Lower Palisade with the Inner Sanctum - an ideal way of sneaking in under the cover of darkness!

NONES, DAY 4

If the characters have made a deal with Moski to keep her secret safe, they may now be taken up into the Inner Sanctum as her "assistants" to scout.

Now is a good time to let the PC's investigate a little of the Upper Ward. Continuously stress the fact that at any moment they may be discovered. Moski herself will, of course, be working in the *Latrine* area, but once the Red Order monks have escorted them there, they will depart to the *Library* or *Dormitories* (they do not suspect anything), allowing the PC's to sneak out.

This episode may be hard for the DM to consider, as many different things can happen. Ideally, however, the PC's will only sneak around, observe, etc. Perhaps they will accidentally stumble upon the mad Brother Augustus in his room in the Great Library, witness the lewd and suggestive paintings in the personal quarters of the Abbot, or sneak upon the members of the Order during a brief ceremony in the *Secret Chapel* - just enough to give them the impression that something wholly evil is taking place among the monks of this so-called "inner circle".

In any case, the PC's should now get the idea of the true purpose of the Order, and an understanding of its true evil and vile nature - without attracting too much attention to themselves.

VESPERS, DAY 4

By nightfall the characters find themselves once more singing Gregorian chant by the light of candles in the great Cathedral. In the absence of Brother Constantine, however, the church itself seems dark, gloomy, and alone; a sentimentality that is reflected in every good member of the cloister. Even Brothers Dmitri, Matthias The Elder, and Benedict seem aware of the hole left in the community by Constantine's recent death.

As Compline approaches, song recital comes to an end and the monks begin to depart. The elders gather to comfort each other and the most impressionable and affected monks, walking off towards the Dormitories. In their absence, a few lesser monks begin talking amongst themselves about the terrible things that have gone on in these last few days.

Among their conversations, one of the young monks mentions the sudden disappearance of yet another monk, Brother Ambrose, and how he fled suddenly. Most of the monks seem surprised as this fellow whispers how Ambrose was "filled with terror" from "bizarre dreams" - and he fled

THE RED ORDER

last night around Hesperum. The others make little note, but the PC's pick up one other thing – that Brother Ambrose left a few curious possessions in his cell, which Trovech will likely collect in the morrow.

This is a hint that the PC's might want to visit Brother Ambrose's cell this evening before Trovech searches and takes anything he might have had in the morning!

To do so, the PC's must sneak out of their cells that night, under the cover of darkness, and locate Ambrose's room – now cold and unoccupied, its shutters still open from when he fled out the window last night. Inside, the PC's find the following:

- A bundle of twisted sheets, as if Ambrose had been working on a rope for several days and testing it for strength – apparently he used the rope to escape down the walls to the causeway under the cover of night.
- A small wooden holy symbol, snapped in two as if mistakenly broken while clenched in frightened hands.
- A shred of a journal page, apparently forgotten in Brother Ambrose's flight. This page is *Handout #4*.
- A strange *key* with a phrase barely visible on its brass face; the lettering reads “Library Theology Room” (this key opens the *Theology* chamber in the *Library*, where Brother Callistus hid a cache of some use; Ambrose was unable to use the key, afraid of the *wisps* that haunt the tower).

There will be nothing else found in Brother Ambrose's chambers, but these items alone should spur the PC's on with ever more urgency to explore the *Library*!

HESPERUM, DAY 4

That night, one of two things will likely occur, depending on the PCs' actions up to this point. Considering the evidence they have already found (assuming they have), they may wish to attempt to sneak out under the cover of darkness and attempt to find a way into the Caporetto pinnacle – and also into the *Library* to find out what, exactly, was of so much interest to Brother Ambrose in the *Theology* chamber of the high tower.

This rather risky course of events requires the DM to consider the location of the various NPC's by night; while in general the Lower Ward will be dead and dark due to the late hour, an encounter with Malachi or Trovech (attempting to murder them by sneaking into their rooms at night) might occur. Also, they will risk discovery if they attempt to bypass the portcullis up the pinnacle, and any wandering members of the order in the Upper Palisade. However, the discovery of the secret cache high in the tower is of a high priority; the items there will be high essential to their destruction of the Red Order.

If they do choose to remain in their *Dormitory* for the night instead of risking the *Library*, one randomly determined PC will experience the next telling dream, *Dream #4* (see *The Horror Of Dreams*, later).

LAUDS, DAY 5

After daily lessons in the *School*, the characters are relieved to get back to their cells for their one hour of private contemplation. Upon entering his room, however, the leader of the party sees a small note folded and placed at the foot of the bed. The note (show the players *Handout #7*) reads as follows:

I am a friend. I am also aware of your position, and that you are in need of equipment for your special task. A secret cache of weapons exists under the Monastery; to reach it you must enter the southwestern tower of the Lower Ward, and climb down the ladder to the storage chamber below. Hidden behind some sacks of grain is a concealed passage that leads to a tunnel that in turn leads to the secret armory. Be careful, and good luck!

PRIME, DAY 5

During Prime the PC's are, as always, expected to join the monks undertaking the overwhelming task of feeding the mass of peasants that grow ever larger by the day at the doorstep of the Monastery. However, by day it becomes obvious that the numbers of Lesser Bursars is beginning to thin – a few of their former peers are missing from the group, and rumor has it some have begun to slip out during the night and flee the cursed Monastery once and for all.

During this height of chaos and confusion the PC's may find the perfect distraction – distraction enough to descend the tower, search for the secret cellar, and proceed to the destination mentioned in their mysterious letter.

This done, the PC's will now have an adequate supply of arms for their eventual assault against the Upper Ward. They should therefore make arrangements with Moski to have their weapons cached in the proper place...

TERCE, DAY 5

At Terce a heavy fog has blown over the Monastery; the cries of the begging peasants and lepers has faded as they retreat to their decrepit hamlet outside the walls and across the great chasm. The fog is cold, icy, and thick, obscuring the mountain pinnacle some thirty or forty feet above the Lower Palisade.

Today the PC's will once again ascend to the great *Library* for daily calligraphy lessons in the *Scriptorium*. Yet everyone assembling today seems overcome with a quiet reservation, a sense of impending unease. Brother Dmitri once more leads his flock up the pinnacle and to the Upper Ward.

As the group emerges in the shadow of the Great Library, however, the assembly of young monks – even Dmitri himself – seem stunned and frozen in their tracks by what they see.

Here, in the Upper Ward, above the heavy fog layer that obscures it from below, the monks have a clear view of the sky – an ashen gray sky with an amber haze stretching as far as the eye can see. But above this terrible twilight sky –

THE RED ORDER

despite being only noon – all eyes can see two great spheres in the sky. The sun, glowing a fading orange in this dusky light, seems to be inching ever closer to the approaching rebel moon – itself a deep and sanguineous red.

Something terrible is going on in the sky. The monks all mutter breathlessly about what they see; even Brother Dmitri is at a loss for words at this celestial occurrence.

Just then, suddenly, from high up in the *Library*, a window flutters open, attracting everyone's attention in the courtyard below. Even the solemn, eerie monks that generally stand idly by watching the Lesser Bursars' approach seem suddenly drawn to watch.

Far, far, up, the tiny figure of the Librarian, the blind Augustus, can be seen flailing his arms towards the sky, as if pointing out the two approaching orbs.

“The sky! The sky! Do you not see?!?! An event the world has not known for One Thousand Years! Have you not had the Dreams? Have you not seen the Beast?! Brother Brziac was right all along! The planets come together! The sun and moon combine! In the coming days ... The Shadow Realm awakens!!!!”

Suddenly, the blind Librarian seems to lurch forward, his body contorts, and he falls abruptly from his distant perch. The young monks in the yard scream as he falls to a sudden broken death in the Courtyard below, just a few feet from a wide-eyed and terrified Brother Dmitri.

At this point, all characters present may make a Spot check (DC 20) – success indicating that he saw, at that moment, a hand come from behind Augustus in his window and give him a hard shove – sending him to his death. The identity of his killer is not known, but oddly, a glimmering *ring* was seen on one of the hand's five fingers...

Today's session in the Library is cut suddenly short due to this unexpected death. The Librarian's body is taken briefly to the Infirmary before being taken to the Cemetery for a brief ceremony before the Sext meal.

SEXT, DAY 5

In the *Refectory*, it seems all hell has broken loose. The monks are murmuring amongst themselves about the strange sun and moon seen today, almost forgetting their meals. Rumors of “portents”, of the “End of Days”, and other doomsday whispers are rife amongst the novices and acolytes.

Even among the Elders, Brothers Dmitri, Matthias The Greater, Benedict, etc, there is much disagreement and open argument. Brother Dmitri explicitly describes what he and the others saw; Benedict has trouble hearing every detail (much to Dmitri's annoyance), while Matthias instantly leaps upon Dmitri's account to claim that this is a “sign”. Brother Camillus, listening quietly, mentions that they would all be better off had Constantine not died so mysteriously – his spiritual guidance would have been a welcome comfort now.

All in all, the monks and elders of the Lower Ward are

at a standstill about not only what to do, but what to *think*, about the strange celestial sight that now hangs over the Monastery!

A SEPARATE EVENT

Elsewhere, however, PC's not witnessing the arguments in the *Refectory* will notice the arrival of a new figure at the Monastery gates. A coterie of Red Order Bursars from the Upper Palisade have descended to the Lower Ward in a group (perhaps half a dozen, along with the Prior, Alexander) to welcome this new, unexpected arrival.

As they watch, the PC's see Brother Xavier, a dark-skinned friar, enter and relinquish his train of mules (and one or two young servants) to the care of a doting Brother Sven, who quickly goes his own way without question. Then Xavier and Alexander embrace like brothers, and begin muttering amongst themselves.

As they continue to watch, the PC's notice Xavier finally make a motion for one of his servants to bring forth a heavy sack. The PC's, smart enough to hide and watch, are unseen; apparently the monks think the coast is clear.

Xavier presents the sack to his master, the Prior, who smiles a cold creeping grin as he takes the sack in hand, opens it, and stares in. The smile grows even larger.

Xavier bows as if pleased by his master's delight, before being permitted to take his leave and join the rest of the Inner Circle. Alexander passes the sack on to one of his lesser lieutenants, who all of the sudden stumbles and drops the sack.

At this point, allow each character to make a Spot check at DC 12 – success indicates that, for a brief moment, they were able to see what almost fell out of the sack as it hit the earth. It was a human head – but not just any head, the head of Brother Ambrose (the young monk who tried to escape)!

Alexander hisses at this underling and the assembly suddenly turns to make sure no one saw the event. The others quickly take the package – and Xavier's things – back up into the pinnacle before the Sext meal convenes. Alexander is the last to follow them up before the portcullis closes; he looks out across the yard, his eyes sweeping the shadows, as if making sure no one saw what just happened.

Apparently satisfied, he withdraws as well.

DM's Note: Brother Xavier has once more returned to the Monastery after a long absence in the lands south of the mountains; he has heard rumor of a mysterious “counter-order” that is attempting to infiltrate the Monastery, and he brings word of this very danger to the Abbot and Prior. However, they do not, as yet, know the actual identity of these agents. In addition, Xavier encountered and murdered Brother Ambrose whom he met on the high road, and who mistakenly thought Xavier would aid him in gaining help – only to be killed and beheaded.

NONES, DAY 5

At Nones, despite the strange occurrences of the day, everyone is expected to once more go out and tend the fields. But as the Lesser Bursars walk amongst the

THE RED ORDER

withering stalks, the clouds soon thin and the morning's celestial scene is once more vividly shown to *all* the brethren.

During this time most of the monks relax their work, instead glaring through shrouded eyes at the sky above, wondering out loud amongst themselves what this could possibly be. Most, if not all, expect some kind of terrible evil; few, if any, suggest it is a "benevolent" sign of any kind.

The Elders, too, move to an upper-story window of one of the buildings and observe as best they can this remarkable sight.

With so much confusion going on in the Lower Palisade, it takes a truly observant PC to notice a figure stalking the shadows of the Lower Ward (check Listen or Spot checks against his Hide or Move Silently results). The figure is Brother Trovech, who has now been instructed by the Prior to finally descend into the Wine Cellars, find the mad Brziac (whom they rightly believe knows too much), and murder him. If the PC's have not yet spoken with Brziac, Trovech's mission may kill off one of their best sources of information!

The PC's can also slip away from sight and descend into the Wine Cellars to pursue Trovech; allow Trovech to make appropriate Listen or Spot checks to notice he is being followed (if he does, he will attempt to ambush the PC's and murder them as well; the time for playing nice is over).

Trovech will kill Brziac by slitting his throat mid-way through Nones. No one hears his screams, except anyone in the tunnels following Trovech at the time. Alternatively, if the PC's intercept him, Trovech will turn on them instead. Only if he or the PC's are killed, will his mission end.

Regardless, the PC's will be stumped as the *why* Trovech wanted to kill the poor miserable hunchback – and who sent him to do it.

VESPERS, DAY 5

Vespers is rather uneventful, and with the excitement of the eclipse having passed somewhat, the monks are shuffled to the *Cathedral* for prayer and song. If for some reason the PC's manage to avoid the Vespers call, or otherwise manage to be in the Lower Palisade while the others are gone, they will have a rather interesting encounter.

Under the dark shadow of the gloomy purple twilight, a figure is seen scampering from the *Schoolhouse*, clumsily attempting to hide in the shadows of the building overhangs as he makes his way towards one of the gatehouse towers. Looking about to see if anyone follows, he ascends the tower (closing the door behind him), gets one of the supply buckets ready (the kind used to feed the masses at arms-length), and *gets in*!

If not stopped, the monk will lower himself (and a bundle of books) to the bridge, sneak off in the growing darkness, never to be seen again.

If he is intercepted, however, the monk proves to be Brother Phocas, the Monastery checker, sneaking away. He will almost leap from his skin if caught. He is terribly

frightened, and begs the PC's not to tell anyone he is running away.

If asked why, Brother Phocas expresses a terrible "unease" about the goings-on in the Monastery. The murders have been a great strain, but the strange conjunction in the sky is just too much.

If asked why, he pulls an old book from his stack and shows them a picture within; it is an old representation of the cosmos, with the planets orbiting the earth, each pushed or pulled in turn by winged angels – all at the direction of the gods. This, Phocas says, is the universe, and how the planets orbit one another in the manner proscribed by ancient tradition.

He then points expressively towards the dusky red sun and moon in the twilight night sky and mutters his belief:

This," he says, "is a blasphemy to the gods. Something is wrong, something that is affecting even their powers, and the order of the universe. I fear a terrible event will soon occur...and I have no doubt that this Monastery, this isolated citadel often forgotten by men, is at the center of it all."

Phocas has taken what few belongings are his and is attempting to make it out under the cover of night. If the PC's do not prevent him from doing so, he will leave permanently.

HESPERUM, DAY 5

Tonight another PC, randomly determined from the group, will experience the final dream, *Dream #5* (see *The Horror Of Dreams*, detailed below), a telling vision of the horror that will soon visit the Monastery if they fail in their efforts!

MATINS, DAY 6

This is the final day before the ritual to summon the "nameless one" into their world. The DM should now present to the PC's a genuine air of importance and climax in the following scenes.

At Matins, culled by the terror of their own nightmarish dreams, the PC's wordlessly join the similarly subdued Lesser Bursars in the Cathedral for nightly prayer. Their opportunity to infiltrate the order is about to reveal itself.

The PC's notice, as prayer begins, that the monks seem quiet, withdrawn, and individually *scared* – as if many had similar dreams of their own. Even Dmitri, normally involved in the affairs of his brethren, seems distracted by quiet, unnerving thoughts. Only the monks of the Red Order, having descended with their masters, the Prior and Abbot, from their pinnacle sanctuary, seem unaware and unaffected by this miasmal gloom.

What's worse, while the former group is rattled by the inexplicable presence of both sun and moon in the sky – now slowly crossing paths mid-heaven – the latter seem almost oblivious, unconcerned, about the event.

At the end of the session, as the monks begin to leave, each PC may make a Spot check (DC 12). Those that do

THE RED ORDER

notice a few Lesser Bursars (none of the important NPC's, however) taken aside by the Prior, Alexander, for a quiet conversation under the Cathedral's awning. If they listen without being discovered, it seems to go as follows:

"Yes, come here children. No need to kneel, child – I wish to speak with you. As you know, our inner circle only accepts a small number each year or so among it's ranks. Those that we do choose are individuals of great merit and ability – not mere aspirants like so many others you see here, who come only for scholarly learning, or duty to their 'god'. No. We choose those, like yourselves, who have that fire, that spark, within. Ah, yes, do not think we would overlook you. You seem surprised. Do not be. You have potential beyond your dreams."

"I want you each to become the next oblates to our Order. We have been watching your progress here. You are exemplary. You will comprise the last of a class of thirteen we are now reviewing for acceptance into the Order. Congratulations."

"Do not speak of this to anyone – consider it an initial test of your faith. I will send brothers to come get you soon – tonight – and bring you to the pinnacle for your initiation, a celebratory meal. From there, the secrets of our Blessed Order will be revealed to you..."

The youngsters seem joyous of this honor (little do they know), and thank the Prior profusely before he and the other Red Monks leave – the Prior apparently satisfied having duped them so easily into being their next "sacrifices".

If questioned, the new "oblates" are speechless – they have absolutely no idea why they were picked for such a private brotherhood. Cunning PC's will know these few lads as simpletons among their peers – perhaps this has something to do with their being chosen!

The PC's must now realize that there will be thirteen novices chosen to join the Inner Circle – and that they *must* be part of that thirteen to gain admittance to the Upper Ward for whatever important, monstrous event they have been anticipating. The characters may try to gain acceptance of their own (see *Infiltrating The Inner Circle*), or attempt to convince their peers to let them go instead.

If the latter is attempted, the excited young monks seem surprised – they then react as if the PC's were jealous. A Bluff check (DC 15) is needed to convince them to let the PC's take their place instead; else they will refuse and shun the characters from then on.

LAUDS, DAY 6

During the morning session of school, only Matthias The Elder is present to instruct the few remaining students. It seems a few fled in the early morning hours – and many pews remain eerily empty. Brother Benedict, normally also one of their professors, has apparently taken ill and is resting. Matthias has taken this opportunity to expound

publicly on his opinion of the current state of the Sun and Moon above – entering into a long monologue that is full of idiotic, backwards ideas of the cosmos and the potential meaning of the event. Characters present for the entire lecture realize, that Matthias may have finally gone off the deep end – he will continue his nonsensical tirade about the "stars being right" even as more and more students play sick or simply get up and leave.

PRIME, DAY 6

Today the PC's are stunned. No one from the fog-blanketed village crosses the great stone causeway to beg for food. From their tower top perch, the PC's can see one of two figures staring at the Monastery from afar, but none approach. Today there will be no feeding.

DM's Note: The peasants, though diseased and desperate, are now completely and utterly afraid of the Monastery and its unidentifiable source of evil. From this point out they will shun the fortress until the adventure's end.

SEXT, DAY 6

At Sext Brother Dmitri approaches the PC's who have been admitted (most likely through their own trickery of other would-be "oblates") into the Red Order. He seems very concerned. He takes them aside during the evening meal.

Dmitri asks each PC why he has accepted this "honor". He tries to dissuade them subtly at first, telling of "hardships" and other "trials" that "no one knows about". Dmitri is bluffing, but he has become attached to the PC's and does not want them to go and endanger themselves.

At last, his efforts confounded, he confides in them that he has been having bizarre dreams (if asked to describe them, they are uncannily similar to the ones the PC's have been having), and that he simply does not trust the "inner circle" – especially the Prior and, most of all, the Abbot. He is ashamed to admit this distrust, but looking up towards the eclipse forming ever steadily in the twilight sky, he seems to firm up, strengthen his resolve.

Dmitri tells the PC's that if they wish to flee now, he will join them, and take Moski with them as well. He knows a large number of the Lesser Bursars are going to attempt to leave by Prime tomorrow; he hopes to make preparations to take the sick Benedict, and the senile old Matthias, with them. Malachi (if not already dead) seems to have slipped out under the cover of darkness early this morning.

If the characters wish to stay, he wishes them good luck. But he admits they will likely never see one another again.

DM's Note: This is just one last final farewell between PC's and NPC's the characters may have gotten attached to. If the players cultivated other friendships from among the monks, these friends will also express their uncertainty about their masters and their own desires to flee, en masse, at Prime tomorrow).

THE RED ORDER

NONES THROUGH VESPERS, DAY 6

6

Between Sext and Compline, the unease and uncertainty amongst the monks degenerates into quiet chaos. The monks of the Inner Circle keep themselves confined to their place in the Upper Ward for the remaining hours, awaiting their final ritual tonight.

Down below, amongst the Lesser Bursars, everyone is contemplating an exodus from the Monastery the next day. Though no one openly speaks of it (except, perhaps, in small groups), the tension is prevalent.

COMPLINE, DAY 6

At this point the climax of the adventure begins. At Compline, all who have been accepted into the ranks of the Order are each awakened by strange noises in the hallway outside, and the gentle creak of doors being opened in the pitch darkness of the night. A handful of monks from the Inner Circle arrive to gather up the “oblates” and bring them up to the Upper Palisade for their initiation.

Those PC’s who have been accepted are likewise awakened and expected to join the others, quietly stealing through the portcullis and into the Upper Ward. The portcullis is watched and closes soon behind the group, so anyone NOT accepted will have to follow another way (e.g. Moski’s latrine chute).

HESPERUM, DAY 6

Those taken from their rooms to join the other “oblates” are taken up through the pinnacle, through the arch and into the courtyard:

As you follow the methodic train of red-clad monks through the arch and into the star-lit Upper Palisade, your eyes momentarily look up from your pretend chanting to the sky above. It is a phenomenal – yet terrible – sight to behold.

The night sky is pitch black except for the glimmer of distant stars in the tenebrous heavens. The streaming parade of constellations seems like an insignificant smudge now, in the light of something ever more dramatic hanging mid-sky.

There, to all eyes, can be seen a giant black orb – the moon – unusually massive as it slumps low in the sky, almost blotting out the rest of the cosmos in its magnitude. Its pure blackness is absolute except for a thin ring around its edges where a fiery yellow corona from the blotted-out sun – even at this hour – can be seen dying in its growing presence. The eclipsing of the sun is complete; in only an hour or so, you are sure, the last waning light of its fiery face will be gone for good, and whatever horrible event is planned will be let loose upon this unholy place.

The PC’s are taken into the *Refectory* and left to wait. Into the dark, fungus-lit room enters a massive figure (Brother

Bors), who wordlessly scans the faces of the new arrivals. He does not seem to notice anything unusual. After a few minutes, from behind him come a number of Red Order acolytes, carrying what appears to be a bland meal – enough for thirteen to feast. Bors motions wordlessly for the thirteen young men of the party to partake of the feast – it will be their “last meal” before becoming officially ordained.

This feast is, of course, drugged (the drug is a strange oriental poison, made from crushed *tavar seeds*, blended indistinguishably with the food and drink of the meal). Anyone partaking of the food and wine will be subject to the poison

Tavar Seed Poison – ingested DC 20, initial damage 0, secondary damage *special*, price 2,000 gp.

Those who succumb to the poison suffer no ill effects at first. When the secondary damage kicks in, however, the victim enters a zombie-like stupor, obeying any and all commands as if affected by a *suggestion* spell. Other symptoms include:

- The victim stares, glassy-eyed, straight ahead;
- The victim can speak, but only in low murmurs as if half-asleep;
- The victim cannot think for himself; he must be given orders or led in a group like a witless child;
- The victim responds to verbal commands, to the letter. Even commands of a dangerous nature are followed without question;
- The victim is oblivious to the surreal or supernatural; ghosts, demons, and the like do not frighten him.

Characters who have reasons to suspect the feast will not eat, and instead only pretend to consume their meals.

At the dinner’s end (about a half-hour later), the other monks return. The dark-skinned Xavier will enter the room, look to Bors, and – after receiving an affirmative nod – command the assembly of brainwashed oblats to form a line and join the other monks in the Upper Ward’s courtyard outside...

THE RITUAL

If the PC’s continue to play along, the train of oblats is joined by any remaining Bursars in the Upper Ward (including Bors, Trovech – if alive – and a collection of others descending from their dormitories), and shuffle quietly – while murmuring their backwards chant – under the dark entrance of the *Library* and up its winding stone stairs.

The congregation continues, their progress lit only by lanterns of glowing green fungus, up and up and up into the *Library*, until at long last the monks issue into the great domed attic – where (if they haven’t yet seen it) the PC’s become witness to the blasphemous *Dimensional Conduit* and its bottomless rift into the Abyss itself. The Abbot, Theodore, is present, standing before the Conduit; his right-hand, the Prior Alexander, is nearby aiding his master

THE RED ORDER

in the preparatory words of the *ritual*. A small number of wordless, brainwashed monks stand nearby to assist them.

Now is a good time to describe to the PC's the electricity and dread of their current situation. They are now at the highest point of the Monastery, nearly five hundred feet above the Lower Ward (and their innocent brethren, all fast asleep). They are amid the mass of the Red Order's zealous, brainwashed, and crazed minions. All members of the Inner Circle are present, arrayed about the room, either watching the proceedings or immersed in them.

The *Dimensional Conduit* crackles with a deafening roar of power, electricity, and magical energy as the words spilling from Theodore's mouth grow louder and more elaborate. A few lesser monks move to remove the last vestiges of the *magic circle against evil* that once sealed off the *gate*. The darkness seems to come alive with noise – a deafening hum for sure, but also the perceptible screams of men and women, tortured souls of all kinds from all times in the world's history, and the whoosh of things best unseen flying near the planar portal but only peering through, their ghostly faces pressing against the blackness and taking shape on the other side – the prime material – to peer amusedly at the proceedings taking place therein.

If they have not acted yet, now is the time. Any further delay and the ritual will be complete.

At that point, Theodore turns and raises his ring for the new oblates to see, using it to focus their attention as he commands them to come forward to him. Taking a ritual dagger presented him by two other monks; he brings first one, then another, of the young monks forward to plunge the dagger into their hearts. One by one they stumble and fall into the black abyss of the *gate*. As they pass through, their silent, drug-induced spell is broken and their horrified screams can be heard echoing from Beyond.

Theodore will continue massacring the new recruits at a rate of one per round with his dagger, until all 13 have been killed (of course, the PC's are unlikely to take part in this, since to do so would mean their obvious death).

Tactics: Any battle taking place now will not shake Theodore from his duties (or any of the *charmed* monks) – he is too enraptured by the magical energies and the monumental nature of the moment to be distracted. His killings will continue.

Alexander, however, will be surprised (like the others), but will immediately realize the danger of this situation and order any cognizant monks remaining to block and buy time for Theodore's ritual. If need be, he will certainly enter the fray as well. Brothers Xavier and Bors, always lingering in back (with Trovech, if he is still alive), will instantly leap on the PC's if they engage in combat, also aware that this moment is the climax of their mortal lives.

Development: At this point it is a matter of time – the PC's must hack their way to Theodore and stop him before 13 sacrifices are made and cast through the *gate*. Once the monks realize that they cannot complete the ritual because the PC's have turned against them (especially if they are doing too well to be beaten physically), Alexander and

several others make a terrific decision.

One by one, as any remaining monks buy time, Alexander and as many others are needed to complete the ritual move to the *gate* and deliberately throw *themselves* through, one at a time, one per round – *killing themselves in the process but also completing the ritual!*

The PC's *must* prevent this from happening! The suicides of the Red Monks should both horrify and sicken the PC's, but their duty remains unchanged; they must stop the ritual by killing every last monk in the chamber.

RACING AGAINST TIME

If they succeed before time runs out, they have prevented the ritual's completion and the *gate* will flux, distort in its place, groan with a wicked shudder, and begin to collapse in on itself. If still present, the Abbot Theodore screams and is sucked in through the *gate* as punishment for failing the “nameless one”. As the last monks remaining are killed, the PC's realize they must flee – the *gate's* implosion has begun to shake apart the *Library* walls, and soon the entire Upper Palisade will COLLAPSE!

Once they flee, however, and the upper monastery disintegrates behind them, they have cause to celebrate – they have destroyed the plans of the Red Order.

If they fail, however, an even more terrible fate awaits not only them, but the world as well. A hand composed of pure living shadow emerges from the darkness of the conduit, grasping each PC, one by one (one per round), attempting to pull them through despite all attempts to fight it off.

The hand of the “nameless one” is similar to a *Bigby's grasping hand* spell (it is not the demon lord's actual hand, but an extension of his native plane powers, and thus attacks against it will have no effect), used to grapple those enemies present in the great vault. The hand's attack bonus to make contact is +33, with a +38 to its grapple checks for being Large. The attack does no physical damage, but due to its immense strength the “nameless one”, once in a successful grapple, will be able to literally lift up and draw any Medium-size or smaller creatures in its grasp through the *gate* on the following round.

The hand may be *dispelled* (*dispel* attempts are checked against a 16th level caster), but it will reform one round after it has been thwarted, to continue its attacks against those still in the conduit chamber.

Those sucked in through the *gate* are assumed to never be seen again, but their screams of horror (at whatever it is they have seen on the other side) will haunt any survivors for the rest of their tortured lives.

DM's Note: Note that instead of just writing them off as “dead” if they are grasped by the demon lord's shadowy hand, you can instead continue the “nameless one's” battle with grappled PC's on the other side. This would entail having to come up with details of his native Abyssal plane, however, as well as statistics for the “nameless one” himself.

THE RED ORDER

FAILURE

Even if the PC's flee in the face of their failure, the darkness isn't over. Though they may flee the Monastery and even the mountains themselves, the "nameless one" has come – and cannot be stopped. The eclipse does not diminish or go away; the sky remains dark as if suspended in an eternal night from which there is no escape.

As the shadow spreads over the lands both north and south, men are stricken mad, livestock fall from disease. From caves all over the mountains come clouds of millions of bats, augmented by shadows, quasits, and demons of living darkness. These swoop from the skies to pluck lone men on the high roads, or attack the tower tops of castles and cities of kingdoms south of the great mountain range. Fires spread, but the smoke from the numerous conflagrations soon cloaks this last fiery light, shrouding the sky in ashy darkness for hundreds of miles.

Rivers overflow with the diseased bodies of the dead; animals go wild, possessed by spirits, attacking men and women and children everywhere. In the cities, rats explode from the sewers, and locusts descend like a rain of fire from the pitch-black skies. Anyone outdoors, even in the greatest of cities, are eaten alive by hordes of vermin and insect; those who barricade themselves inside buildings face a creeping insanity amongst their number, ending in the taking

of their own lives as they laugh uncontrollably about the "Victory of The Nameless One".

In a week, all of the great cities of the southern lands are laid to waste. The petty princes there gather what few survivors there are (including adventurers and other powerful figures native to that region) and attempt to find a cause behind the invasion. But there is little time left.

In two weeks, the darkness of the "nameless one" sweeps over the mountains and into northern lands. The PCs' homeland, too, begins to darken as the shadow touches that place. The greatest cities of the north soon become congested with refugees fleeing and seeking sanctuary against the onslaught of Darkness.

But there is no sanctuary. No safety. No escape.

The Nameless One has arrived, and the End of Days has come!

STATISTICS FOR THE FINAL BATTLE

Regardless of where and what the PC's are doing, at *Hesperum* (Day 6), all the Red Monks will be gathered at the *Dimensional Conduit* for their unholy service to the "nameless one". Hopefully the PC's will be there, one way or another, to uncover the plot and bring an end to the Red Order's anarchic plans from within. The characteristics for the major threats to the PCs' efforts are given below, including the mindless monks of the Inner Circle as well as the agents of the Order.

Bursars (16): hp 4 each; see page 10 for the statistics of a typical monk of the Red Order.

The *sixteen* Bursars (plus any Lesser Bursars brainwashed for the ritual) are considered absolute fanatics, and will fight to the death regardless of the odds if so directed. Having lost much of their sanity and humanity, each is merely a shadowy reflection of his former self, with a dulled memory of loves, fears, and desires; no emotion beyond a lasting loyalty and compulsion to *obey* the Prior, Abbot, and the other members of the "inner circle" presides in their twisted minds.

Brother Trovech, Rogue 5/Assassin 1: hp 35 (see appendix).

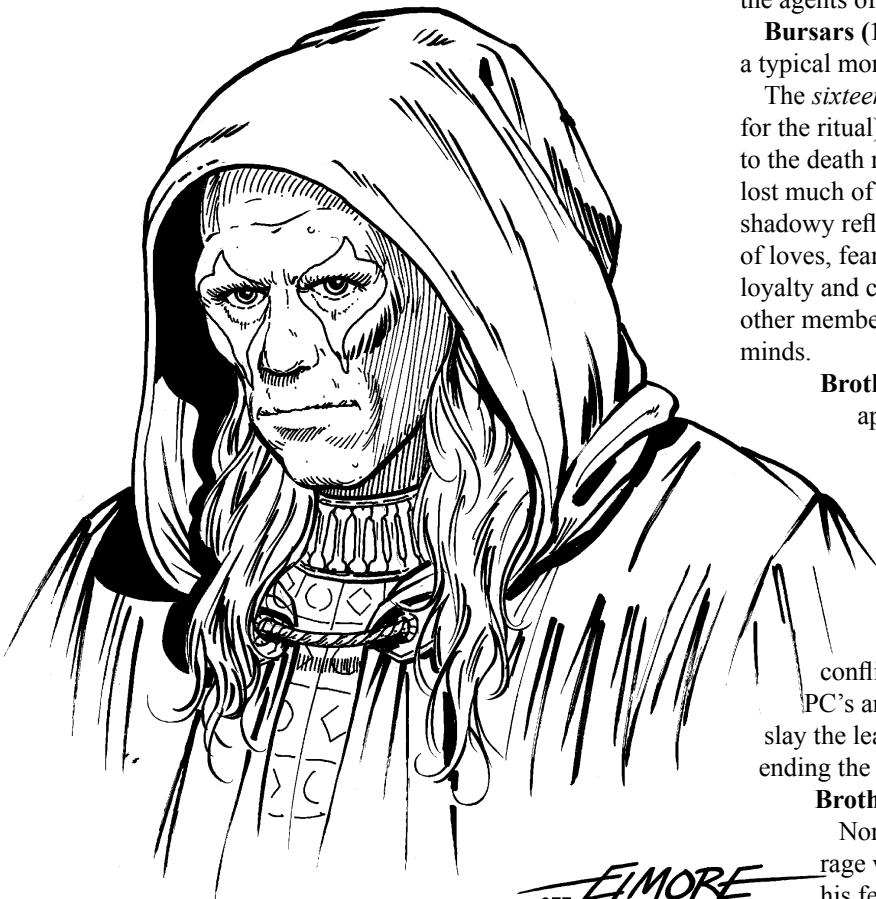
Assuming he was not discovered and killed while trying to murder Brother

Brziac, Brother Trovech is now – finally – revealed to one and all as the spy and assassin that he is. Particularly cunning, he will not be above attempting to get

"lost" in the crowd and confusion of the final conflict, only to emerge at the precise moment the PC's are weakest (or unsuspecting) to backstab and slay the leader of the group – or anyone on the verge of ending the Order's ritual!

Brother Bors, Monk 6: hp 60 (see appendix).

Normally quiet, Bors will break into a wide-eyed rage when he realizes the PC's have tricked him and his fellow conspirators.



077 **ELMORE**

THE RED ORDER

Brother Xavier, Monk 5/Fighter 2: hp 65 (see appendix).

At this point, however, Xavier will abandon his false air of innocence and engage the Order's enemies with ruthless zeal. Unlike Brother Bors he does have a calm about him and will choose his targets wisely, but will always seek to protect his masters (the Prior and Abbot) above all other considerations during the fight. In his mind, if the ritual fails, there will always be another chance...assuming his masters survive.

Prior Alexander, Barghest Wizard 6: hp 78 (see appendix).

Development: Being quite practical Alexander will have prepared for the possibility of infiltration by casting *mage armor*, *resist elements (fire)*, and *see invisibility* before the ritual.

Abbot Theodore, Vampire Cleric 10: hp 80 (see appendix).

The Abbot, Theodore, was given the gift of eternal life when he sold his soul to the "nameless one". Like his former master, Anastasius, and his companion Alexander, his service to the enigmatic demon lord beyond the *gate* has resulted in great physical and mental changes that have left him obsessive, psychotic, and utterly inhuman. In the final battle, Theodore will simply attempt to finish the ritual; he will only strike out if forced to, to complete the summoning of his unearthly master.

Development: Though confident they cannot fail, Theodore has taken Alexander's advice and prepared himself before the ritual by casting two *virtues*, *resist elements (fire)*, and *unhallow* on the *Dimensional Conduit* chamber (with a *bane* spell affecting all who do not worship the "nameless one").

The Ring Of The Red Abbot: This object appears to be a fantastic platinum ring set with a large spherical ruby with an eerie glow of its own - as if it were indeed *magical*. This item of unknown origin was needed to create the *Dimensional Conduit* that links this world with the Abyss; it is also the sole item capable of destroying the *gate* and permanently closing it. The ring itself has been passed down from Abbot to Abbot as the symbol of their corrupt leadership and as a means of opening the gate every few decades for the cult's more important rituals.

To destroy the *gate* the *ring* need only be cast at the black portal, at which time the black conduit will shatter like so many shards of glass, fragments of screaming shadow-stuff flying in all directions. Both the *gate* and the *ring* will be destroyed utterly.

If the PC's are unable to acquire the *ring* themselves (Theodore wears it), when and if the Abbot is drawn into the *gate* at the adventure's end the fact that he is wearing the *ring* as he goes through it causes the *gate* to shatter behind him, bringing the Red Order's machinations to a violent end.

THE END?

Once the evil Red Order has been exterminated and all its members destroyed, and the foul "nameless one" has been thwarted, there will be significant changes in the land almost overnight. The bizarre diseases which plagued the area will diminish to only a few scattered cases as the years pass, and the crops will begin to once again flourish the following spring, as the lingering shadow of the "nameless one" is dispelled from the mountains. Healthy children will once more be borne to the women of the Monastery's village, and prosperity will come to that once-decrepit hamlet known as Caporetto.

As for the Monastery, however, it will fall into a state of disrepair as the monks leave for other religious institutions throughout the lands north and south of the barren mountains – afraid of the curse that was once so well-entrenched within Caporetto's walls. Over time the stones of the great buildings will corrode and become overgrown with ravenous ivy leaves, and all the villagers (and merchants too) will shun the old ruins as a place that has seen great evil – and fell from a great internal corruption that ate it up like a gross cancer at its heart. None shall ever reside there again, and efforts are even taken to collapse the great stone bridge connecting the haunted pinnacle with the village and high road, cutting the Monastery completely off from the world outside.

As for the books and tomes of the *Library* (if its contents can be salvaged), these will inevitably be scattered throughout the continent, from the war-torn lands of the south to the metropolitan cities of the north. Taken by the monks during the chaos after the Order's collapse, it is a desperate attempt by the scholars – young and elderly alike – to bring the *Library's* famous (or infamous) knowledge to the rest of world, now that Caporetto is no more. Perhaps one of these monks, overcome by a sense of selfishness and greed (and perhaps even *directed* by a disembodied whisper), will find a forgotten grimoire or cursed tome among the looted ruins, and secret it off to a far-away land, spreading the word of the "nameless one" to another distant corner of the world...and the Shadow will begin anew...

APPENDICES

THE TOUCH OF THE SHADOW

Throughout this scenario, the effects of the "nameless one" have been hinted at and mentioned, in the halls of Caporetto and in the whispers of the monks of the Red Order. The "touch" of the "nameless one" is the effect of his personal attentions; he graces each and every one of his followers, upon initiation, with this obscene "touch", in one way or another. The touch can be good, or it can be bad, but it most often has the effect of transforming the human body - a direct affront to the gods' creation.

Whenever a worshipper of the "nameless one" is subjected to the touch of the Shadow, the DM may consider giving any of a number of unique abilities or forms to that

THE RED ORDER

creature; some are only driven mad, others kept sane but subtly corrupted within. Still others are totally transformed, or given the gift of unlife (as the Abbot, Theodore). Some might be killed outright and brought back as revenant spirits or ghosts, with powerful supernatural abilities.

THE HORROR OF DREAMS

This section details the magical dreams which are semi-psionic reflections emitted by the sheer evil of the “nameless one”. These dreams occur at different times, and it is suggested that each affect a different PC every time, to allow every one to share in gathering clues for the good of the group. Thus each should be read only to the dreamer, and to no other.

DREAM 1 – THE FALSE PRIEST

It seems as if you have entered a foggy forest clearing where eerie music plays on your ears. Around you young boys in red robes dance in the mist, around a huge stage upon which stands a great throne. A man sits in the throne, holding a golden orb in one hand and a scepter in the other. He wears a religious crown, and his face, though smiling like a child's puppet, is eerie - as if it were just a mask covering something more sinister beneath.

As you step closer, the mists begin to get colder, and a biting wind whips wildly through your hair. The eyes of the seated man suddenly glow like hot embers, and cracks begin to form on his grinning face. In an instant his face shatters like broken glass, and underneath, all you see is darkness, save for a pair of glowing red eyes...

DREAM 2 – THE FATE OF BROTHER MILOS

From the darkness you hear the pounding of a nearby heart. Terror grips you when you realize it is your heart that pounds so loudly, as you run wildly through the dark and featureless maze of tunnels that surround you.

You cannot stop, no matter what - something is behind you, following you, hunting you. You can hear the thing's hastened footsteps; you can hear distant giggles and babbles, echoing throughout the subterranean maze. You shriek in fear as you hear it turn the corner behind you, and moan delightfully now that it is only moments away.

The voice, even just a laugh, seems oddly familiar...

You dash to a nearby door, massive and made of iron. You scream in horror as you find it locked and fastened against your entry. You hear predatory giggling behind you, as the creature – whatever it is – seethes toward you. You turn and scream, to behold hellish red eyes moving down the passage, followed by conspiratorial giggling and whispering from other figures in the darkness...

DREAM 3 – THE SHADOWY SHE-CREATURE

This dream only occurs if there is a character of chaotic alignment among the party; if none of the characters is chaotic this event will not occur.

You are not sure if you are asleep or awake. The unusually warm night air causes you to toss and turn in your bed, and you perceive your surroundings, yet it everything is dark and indistinct. In your dream – if that is what it is - you find yourself in your room staring blankly into the suffocating darkness.

An eerie feeling comes over you, as if you are not alone. Suddenly you hear whispers and several spindly limbs, made entirely of shadow, begin to caress your body.

You gasp as these spectral hands tear your shirt open and begin to merge as one on top of you, appearing as a withered woman made from the stuff of shadow. Her eyes are glowing pinpoints of light, and her fingers are deathly cold to the touch. She sits on your chest, preventing you from getting up; she parts her lips and bends forward, locking you in a hideous embrace, and at once the icy, foul breath of the creature seizes you. She begins to suck the air out of your mouth, and you immediately start to choke.

The creature is a *night hag* that has been haunting the grounds of the Monastery in *ethereal* form, having slipped into the prime material plane via the *Dimensional Conduit* at the top of the *Library*.

The night hag is currently using her *dream haunting* ability (see *Monster Manual* page 140) to drain Constitution. The character is in fact asleep; though aware of the night hag's presence, he cannot wake himself. She will drain one permanent point of Constitution by dawn, at which time she will dissolve into a mass of wailing shadows as the sounds of other monks in the halls outside alert her to the beginning of a new day.

Night Hag (1): hp 28; *Monster Manual* 140.

The night hag will continue to visit the same PC each night until the end of the adventure (or until she is killed or driven off).

DREAM 4 – THE BATTLE IN THE SKY

The sky glows a deep and dusky violet, tinged towards the horizon with an amber halo as if the world itself were on fire just out of sight across the mountains.

Your dream is eerily silent, but far above, your eyes catch sight of two majestic spheres coming ever closer in this ill, haunting sky of unnatural shadows and subdued colors.

The Sun's once-golden brilliance has now faded to a dull orange haze, its disc watery and indistinct. It seems weak now, its light barely able to bathe the tall

THE RED ORDER

wind-swept mountains whose own heights begin to give birth to long deep shadows of their own...

The Moon also vies for control of this dying sky. But it is no longer the moon you knew – it is a deep and awful color; turning with each minute darker, darker, and darker, until at long last, as it inches ever closer to colliding with the great celestial Sun, it is but a pure black sphere of outrageous proportions.

Then, as it nears ever closer to the fading, burning Sun, suddenly its own form seems to degenerate, disintegrate. Its round edge suddenly wobbles, wriggles to life, and smudges in the Sun's approaching direction – like fingers of pure shadow reaching, groping, grasping to extinguish this competitive light.

As these shadowy tendrils – now alive and with a definite human form like living creatures – are born, they pour from the black disc of the Moon and seemingly attack the Sun, finally bringing to an end its reign over the earth.

The sky turns from its violet color to a deep purple, then a dusky grayish-lapis blue ... though the Sun's dying radiance can be seen at high noon, the stars can be seen twinkling in the sky. But the Moon does not seem to crush the Sun, or devour it. No, not even its power can destroy the latter's eternal brilliance.

Instead, the black disc of the Moon, comes between earth and Sun, blocking out its reddish light, and all at once the mountainous country is batched in a cloak of deep tenebrous shadow as far as the eye can see.

And as the shadow stretches over the land, approaching a mile a minute over the peaks towards the Monastery, at the fore of the darkness can be seen screaming and tearing shapes, made of pure shadow-stuff, reaching and laughing insanely as they come...

DREAM 5 – THE DAY OF THE BEAST

The world seems to be turned on its side, even as your eyes only vaguely distinguish your surroundings. You stand on solid earth, but you feel...ethereal. This must be a dream, but something...something isn't right. Not at all.

The Monastery seems suspended in time and space; the sky is a hazy, vibrant shade of a dull red, stars barely visible as orange points in the cosmos. Your head leans back to scry the two great orbs above – sun and moon – now conjunct. A dismal shadow has been cast over the world, the fiery corona of the sun all but extinguished in the moon's dark embrace.

You walk about the Monastery, but it is empty, dusty, and forlorn. The scamper of sandaled feet no longer echoes here; the clamor of the cathedral's bells do not ring. The gardens are dead and withered, and a cold wind blows unchecked through what were once neat rows awaiting next year's planting.

You continue to wander, as if pulled by an invisible

hand. You approach the pinnacle, that monumental rock face that leads towards the mysterious inner sanctum of the order. The portcullis is up; the darkness beckons to you.

As you step in, your head spins, and you feel a rush as if you were ascending stairs, stairs, and more stairs in a blur.

Finally, you emerge into the light of the upper courtyard, the sky now filled with the image of the terrible conjunction, like some growing hole in the universe expanding with each passing moment.

Suddenly, you turn and enter a building, pass another door, and enter into a quiet black room.

From the darkness come whispers of a demonic kind, like sexless children and monsters laughing at you, just out of sight, within arm's reach but utterly invisible. They're all around!

You recoil, but find yourself frozen.

Then, all of a sudden, the darkness is broken as the very ground of the abyssal chamber is ripped open.

A hideous, faceless being arises from the twisted stone floor of this unholy place, yellow strokes of lightning shooting from its hands as it ascends. Orange fire licks out from the darkness below it, from the hole it issues from, while its gigantic shape, cloaked in shadow, finally emerges into full view. From its pure black form, gigantic and limber like a fey dancer in the night, only a pair of glowing red eyes shine through, burrowing into the core of your very being. As you stand, unable to move for the terror slicing through your ice-cold veins, it murmurs an unholy discord of whispers that seem unfitting for its colossal size and shape.

What is this beast that rises before you? You are gripped by a great sense of fear and evil, and as the creature comes forward, its eyes fix peculiarly upon you. Although the room is baking like an oven, a sinister chill freezes you in your place, and the whispers of the thing suddenly rise into insane giggles and slobbering squeals.

It reaches for you.

You turn to flee, and see the walls of the room have collapsed behind you, revealing the reddish sky and the empty and world spanning out beyond. You see the mountains descend into hills, hills into plains, and the sudden appearance of walled cities, ports, and ships in their harbors.

But everything is empty. Everything is dead. As the shadow of this rising creature extends like a cape over the withering countryside, no life resists, nothing comes to meet it, and the walls of stone cities and castles crumble before it.

There is simply no stopping it.

You awaken with the terrible realization that this was merely a premonition of what is soon to come.

THE RED ORDER

HANDOUTS

The following are handouts meant to be cut out and given to the party as they are found. Many provide clues as to the nature of the Red Order, its leaders, and the events that have been going on in the Monastery.

HANDOUT #1

A SLIP OF PAPER:

There is an old well located in the woods to the east of this place. Meet me there at midnight.

HANDOUT #3

A shred of paper:

2 lbs. of flour, 2 lbs. of salt, 1 1.2 lbs. sugar, 1 pint of honey, 1 whole boar, 6 sacks of rice, 12 pints of blood. No more garlic – the Abbot will have my hide!

HANDOUT #4

A hastily written note:

What was that metal box found on Brother Callistus? The thought of what might be within frightens me to the bone; could he have known what was going on, and perhaps – no, I best not think that – but what if they had him killed? I begin to wonder if we should have locked that box up in the Library – I fear we may have made a fatal mistake. I pray that my soul will be saved from the coming darkness.

HANDOUT #5

A fragment from an old journal:

I have found evidence from the recent shadows over our cloister of the existence of a foul *vampyr*, demon of the night. Who it might be, and where he lurks, are yet unknown to me. I must put aside my fears and feelings of dread when I wonder how it came to reside within these monastery walls. Why have the gods not purged it from our ranks? Perhaps I shall never know, but I shall at least be prepared; I have stashed some traditional items I feel may be of use to me in combating this demon if I ever get the chance. Until then may the gods protect me in my sleep.

HANDOUT #6

A secret message:

You must act quickly! Our source has informed us of the initiation of several more monks from the Lower Ward into the trusted ranks of the Inner Circle, sometime in the next few days. You must join these men by also becoming trusted members, and penetrate the veil of secrecy that surrounds their Inner Sanctum. Much is depending on your celerity. May the gods be with you!

HANDOUT #2

A small chapbook filled with prayers:

PRAYERS OF THE ORDER

Matins

Underneath the Midnight stars
Barefoot we shuffle to prayer;
Candles in hand, thoughts in devotion
Into the Lord's most holy lair

Lauds

The sun rises on the horizon
Casting cheer upon us like a song
Today the Lord shall hear our praise
In litany and psalm

Prime

The strongest of hearts bear the burden
With bread, wine, and kindness
We share with the lame and tormented
And those stricken ill with blindness

Terce

In silence and solitude we ply the pen,
In the scriptorium for endless hours.
The image of Our Lord is ne'er forgotten;
Our manuscripts bloom like flowers.

Sext

As brothers we break our bread,
With wine and goblets too;
We meditate on the Lord's Love
While feasting on the sacred brew

Nones

With idleness comes damnation
So our souls are left no latitude;
From the fields and orchards
We word the gods' gifts with gratitude

Vespers

As the twilight falls upon us
We retreat for solemn chant
We sing aloud The Word
In every worldly cant

Compline

There is no need to fear the night
As the candles burn down low
The Lord blesses each as we pass into
the Realm of Darkness
Into the hands of the nameless one
below

THE RED ORDER

HANDOUT #7

A secret message:

I am a friend. I am also aware of your position, and that you are in need of equipment for your special task. A secret cache of weapons exists under the Monastery; to reach it you must enter the southwestern tower of the Lower Ward, and climb down the ladder to the storage chamber below. Hidden behind some sacks of grain is a concealed passage that leads to a tunnel that in turn leads to the secret armory. Be careful, and good luck!

HANDOUT #8

A hand-written scribble:

The Stars Are right!

My dear Brother, I have been watching the cosmos for some time now and I suspect the time has come for that which we have waited for. In due time we shall see the coming of the Nameless One, and we shall be rewarded! We must maintain the charade for a little while longer, and be wary – I have divined the coming of an outside force, which may threaten us.

Hail the Nameless One!

HANDOUT #9

A shred of paper:

7th of January, Year of The Shadow

I have seen the moving of the Great body and the protraction of such by myself has led me to believe the Time has come at last! Soon shall our world, our Sun, and our Moon be in concordance, and the Great Shadow shall spill across the land like the palm of the Nameless One. Praise His Name, for this time the mere likeness of men shall not be enough to conquer or faceless lord – the world shall finally be His!

Hail the Nameless One!

HANDOUT #10

A forgotten page torn from a book:

I've done it once again. I can rest now, my hunger placated. Spring always brings it out in me, stronger and more vital every year. We went on the hunt today, into the forests surrounding the Monastery; the wolves have been patient all winter long and like me, I could see in their eyes their yearning for the chase.

Brother Dmitri did not “approve” of the Abbot of the Monastery going on such a foray, and even had the gall to lecture me – ME – on setting a bad example for the younger monks. The fool. He has the blood of a commoner, I can smell it. If he only knew who I was. WHAT I was. If he knew it would destroy his mind.

Ah, but the hunt lasted for hours. At first we chased foxes, but then a peasant from the little village came into view. I don't know what he was doing so deep in the woods – no doubt poaching, desperate for a meal. He was lean and miserable...yet sharp. Somehow he could see through our ruse, our disguises. When he saw us, the wolves and I at their head, true terror came into his eyes. He knew his fate. He ran, screaming, a mad dash into the forest. But we were too quick.

That day I knelt with my beloved wolves and fed from his torn, shredded body. Oh, the delight! The hunger has waned, if only for a time. We are masters of this world.

APPENDIX: NPC STATISTICS

FANTASY 3.5 STATISTICS

Typical Lesser Monks, Commoner 1: CR 1/2; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 1d4+1; hp 5; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (touch 11, flat-footed 10); Atk +0 melee (1d6 quarterstaff); AL LN; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Craft (any) +9, Handle Animal +1, Listen +6, Profession (any) +6, Spot +6, Use Rope +3. Endurance, Skill Focus (Craft (any)).

Possessions: Quarterstaff, red robes, sandals (or slippers).

Typical Elders, Commoner 5: CR 4; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 5d4+5; hp 20; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10 (touch 10, flat-footed 10); Atk +3 melee (1d6+1 quarterstaff); AL LN; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Craft (any) +12*, Craft (any) +10, Handle Animal +3, Listen +8, Profession (any two skills) +10, Sense Motive +5, Spot +8, Use Rope +3. Endurance, Iron Will, Skill Focus (one Craft).

Possessions: Quarterstaff, red robes, sandals (or slippers).

Brother Malachi, Expert 7: CR 6; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 7d6+7; hp 34; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10 (touch 10, flat-footed 10); Atk +6 melee (1d6+1 quarterstaff); AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +9; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +7, Craft (alchemy) +15, Craft (poison making) +15, Diplomacy +1, Forgery +4, Heal +8, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Listen +6, Move Silently +2, Open Lock +4, Profession (apothecary) +12, Profession (herbalist) +12, Search +4, Sense Motive +4, Spot +6. Alertness, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Craft (alchemy)), Skill Focus (Craft (poisonmaking)).

Possessions: Quarterstaff, dagger (this will be poisoned with *black lotus extract* if Brother Malachi has time to prepare for a fight against the PCs), red robes, sandals.

Brother Brziac, Commoner 4: CR 3; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 4d4+12; hp 23; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (touch 11, flat-footed 10); Atk +4 melee (1d6+2 quarterstaff); SQ *empathic*; AL CN; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +3, Craft (candlemaking) +0, Jump +3, Listen +5, Move Silently +2, Spot +5. Alertness, Improved Initiative, Iron Will.

Empathic (Sp): Brziac is considered to be under the effect of a continual *detect thoughts* spell (DC 12), which he cannot turn off or shut out.

Possessions: Soiled red robes, quarterstaff, pouch filled with candles and stubs stolen from the *Cathedral*, concealed pouch filled with dead beetles and spiders.

Brziac is totally insane (and quite retarded), with only brief periods of cognizance. If he feels threatened, or confused, he is very likely to simply attack in a berserk terror those confronting him.

Ghouls (11): CR1; Medium-size Undead; HD 2d12; hp 24, 24, 24, 23, 22, 22, 20, 20, 13, 13, and 13; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (touch 12, flat-footed 12); Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis bite); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis bite) and 2 claws +0 melee (1d3 plus paralysis); SA ghoul fever, paralysis; SQ darkvision 60 ft, undead traits, +2 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 15, Con –, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12

Skills and Feats: Balance +6, Climb +5, Hide +6, Jump +5, Move Silently +6, Spot +7; Multiattack

“Anastasius”, Mohrg (1): CR 8; Medium-size Undead; HD 14d12; hp 127; Init +9; Spd 30 ft.; AC 23 (touch 14, flat-footed 14); Atk +12 melee (1d6+7 slam) or +12 melee touch (tongue, paralysis); Full Atk +12 melee (1d6+7 slam) and +12 melee touch (tongue, paralysis); SA Improved grab, paralyzing touch, create spawn; SQ darkvision 60 ft; undead traits; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +10, Will +9; Str 21, Dex 19, Con –, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 10

Skills and Feats: Climb +13, Hide +21, Listen +11, Move Silently +21, Spot +15, Swim +9; Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility

Abyssal Wolves (12): CR 1; Medium-size Animals; HD 2d8+4; hp 20, 20, 20, 20, 19, 18, 18, 16, 16, 14, 13, and 13; Init +2; Spd 50 ft.; AC 14 (touch 12, flat-footed 12); Atk +3 melee (1d6+1 bite); SA *smite good* (+2 damage), trip, SQ darkvision 60 ft., cold and fire resistance 5, scent, SR 4; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Hide +3, Listen +6, Move Silently +4, Spot +4, Survival +1 (+5 when tracking by scent). Weapon finesse

Owls (2): CR 1/4; Tiny Animal; HD 1d8; hp 4 and 4; Init +3; Spd 10 ft, fly 40 ft; AC 17 (touch 15, flat-footed 14); Atk +5 melee (1d4-3 talons); SQ low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 4, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 4

Skills and Feats: Listen +14, Move Silently +17, Spot +6 (+14 in shadowy illumination); Weapon Finesse

Succubus (1): CR 7; Medium Outsider (Chaotic, Extraplanar, Evil); HD 6d8+6; hp 42; Init +1; Spd 30 ft, fly 50 ft; AC 20 (touch 11, flat-footed 19); Full Atk +7/+7 melee (1d6+1/1d6+1 claws); SA energy drain, spell-like abilities, *summon demon*; SQ DR 10/cold iron or good, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to electricity and poison, resistance to acid 10, resistance to cold 10, resistance to fire

THE RED ORDER

10, SR 18, telepathy 100ft, tongues; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +7; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 26

Skills and Feats: Bluff +19, Concentration +13, Diplomacy +12, Disguise +17 (+27 when using *polymorph* ability), Escape artist +10, Hide +10, Intimidate +19, Knowledge (any one) +12, Listen +19, Move silently +10, Search +12, Spot +19, Survival +2 (+4 following tracks), Use rope +1 (+3 with bindings); Dodge, Mobility, Persuasive

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*charm monster* (DC 22), *detect good*, *detect thoughts* (DC 20), *ethereal jaunt* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *polymorph* (humanoid form only, no limit on duration), *suggestion* (DC 21), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only). Caster level 12th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Zephyr, Djinni (1): CR 5; Large Outsider (Air, Extraplanar); HD 7d8+14; hp 45; Init +8; Spd 20 ft, fly 60 ft (perfect); AC 16 (touch 13, flat-footed 12); Atk +10 melee (1d8+4 slam); Full Atk +10/+10 melee (1d8+4/1d8+4 2 slams); SA Air mastery, spell-like abilities, whirlwind; SQ darkvision 60 ft, immunity to acid, *plane shift*, telepathy 100 ft; AL CG; SV Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +7; Str 18, Dex 19, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 15

Skills and Feats: Appraise +12, Concentration +12, Craft (any one) +12, Diplomacy +4, Escape artist +14, Knowledge (any one) +12, Listen +12, Move silently +12, Spellcraft +12, Spot +12, Use rope +4 (+6 with bindings); Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*invisibility* (self only); 1/day—*create food and water*; *create wine* (as *create water*, but wine instead), *major creation* (created vegetable matter is permanent), *persistent image* (DC 17), *wind walk*. Once per day, a djinni can assume *gaseous form* (as the spell) for up to 1 hour. Caster level 20th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Chimera (1): CR 7; Large Magical Beast; HD 9d10+27; hp 76; Init +1; Spd 30 ft, fly 50 ft (good); AC 19 (touch 10, flat-footed 18); Atk +12 melee (2d6+4 bite); Full Atk +12 melee (2d6+4 bite) and +12 melee (1d8+4 bite) and +10 melee (1d6+2 2 claws); SA breath weapon; SQ Darkvision 60 ft, low-light vision, scent; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +6; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 10

Skills and Feats: Hide +1, Listen +9, Spot +9; Alertness, Hover, Iron Will, Multiattack

Shadows (2): CR 3; Medium-size Undead (Incorporeal); HD 3d12; hp 19 and 19; Init +2; Spd fly 40 ft. (good); AC 13 (touch 13, flat-footed 11); Atk +3 melee (1d6 temporary strength, incorporeal touch); SA strength damage, create spawn; SQ darkvision 60 ft, undead traits, incorporeal traits, +2 turn resistance; AL CE; Fort +1; Ref +3; Will +4; Str —, Dex 14, Con —, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Hide +8 (+12 in shadowy illumination), Listen +7, Search +4, Spot +7; Alertness, Dodge.

Quasits (5): CR 2; Tiny Outsider (Chaotic, Extraplanar, Evil); HD 3d8; hp 24, 24, 22, 20, and 13; Init +7; Spd 20 ft, fly 50 ft (perfect); AC 18 (touch 15, flat-footed 15); Atk +8 melee (1d3-1 plus poison claw); Full Atk +8 melee (1d3-1 plus poison 2 claws) and +3 melee (1d4-1 bite); SA poison, spell-like abilities; SQ alternate form, DR 5/cold iron or good, Darkvision 60 ft, fast healing 2, immunity to poison; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 8, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10

Skills and Feats: Bluff +6, Diplomacy +2, Disguise +0, Hide +17, Intimidate +2, Knowledge (any one) +6, Listen +7, Move silently +9, Search +6, Spellcraft +6, Spot +6; Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*detect good*, *detect magic*, and *invisibility* (self only); 1/day—*cause fear* (as the spell, except that its area is a 30-foot radius from the quasit, save DC 11). Caster level 6th.

The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Once per week a quasit can use *commune* to ask six questions. The ability otherwise works as the spell (caster level 12th).

Shadows (5): hp 36, 35, 34, 33, and 32;

Night Hag (1): CR 9; Medium Outsider (Evil, Extraplanar); HD 8d8+32; hp 68; Init +1; Spd 20 ft; AC 22 (touch 11, flat-footed 21); Atk +12 melee (2d6+6 plus disease bite); SA spell-like abilities, dream haunting; SQ DR 10/cold iron and magic, immunity to fire, immunity to cold, immunity to charm, immunity to *sleep*, immunity to fear, SR 25; AL NE; SV Fort +12, Ref +9, Will +10; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 12

Skills and Feats: Bluff +12, Concentration +15, Diplomacy +5, Disguise +1 (+3 acting), Intimidate +14, Listen +15, Ride +12, Sense motive +13, Spellcraft +11, Spot +15; Alertness, Combat Casting, Mounted Combat

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*detect chaos*, *detect evil*, *detect good*, *detect law*, *detect magic*, *magic missile*, *polymorph* (self only), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 12), *sleep* (DC 12). Caster level 8th. A night hag can use *etherealness* at will (caster level 16th) so long as it possesses its *heartstone* (see below). The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Possessions: heartstone

Will-O'-Wisps (2): CR 6; Small Aberration (Air); HD 9d8; hp 40 and 40; Init +13; AC 29 (touch 29, flat-footed 20); Atk +16 melee touch (2d8 electricity shock); SQ Darkvision 60', immunity to magic, natural invisibility; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +12, Will +9; Str 1, Dex 29, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 12

Skills and Feats: Bluff +13, Diplomacy +3, Disguise +1 (+3 acting), Intimidate +3, Listen +17, Search +14, Spot +17, Survival +3 (+5 following tracks); Alertness, Blind-Fight, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Bursars (16): see Typical Lesser Monks

THE RED ORDER

Brother Trovech, Rogue 5 / Assassin 1: CR 6; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 6d6; hp 35; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft; AC 15 (touch 13, flat-footed 12); Atk +5 melee (1d4+1/19-20 masterwork dagger) or +8 ranged (1d4+1/19-20 masterwork dagger); SA death attack (DC 12), sneak attack +4d6; SQ evasion, poison use, trap sense +1, trapfinding, uncanny dodge (Dex to AC); AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +9, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +3, Balance +5, Bluff +11, Disguise +8, Escape artist +6, Forgery +3, Gather information +11, Hide +11, Jump +3, Move silently +11, Open lock +5, Search +10, Sense Motive +4, Sleight of hand +9, Spot +5, Tumble +7; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot

Assassin spells known: (1, DC 11 + spell level): 1st – disguise self, true strike

Possessions: red robes, bracers of armor +2, three masterwork daggers (poisoned with large scorpion venom).

Brother Bors, Monk 6: CR 6; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 6d8+12 plus 3; hp 60; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 50 ft; AC 14 (touch 14, flat-footed 13); Atk +4 melee (1d8+2 unarmed); Full Atk +3/+3 melee (1d8+2 unarmed); SA flurry of blows, *ki* strike (magic); SQ evasion, slow fall 30 ft, still mind, purity of body; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +7; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8

Skills and Feats: Balance +7, Climb +9, Hide +6, Jump +6, Listen +11, Move Silently +6, Spot +6, Tumble +10; Deflect Arrows, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Power Attack, Toughness

Possessions: Red robes, *potion of bull strength*, two *potions of cure moderate wounds*.

Brother Xavier, Monk 5 / Fighter 2: CR 7; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 5d8 + 2d10 + 7; hp 65; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 40 ft; AC 15 (touch 15, flat-footed 13); Atk +9 melee (2d4+4/15-20 +1 *keen falchion*) or +7 melee (1d8+2 unarmed); Full Atk +9 melee (2d4+4/15-20 +1 *keen falchion*) or +6/+6 melee (1d8+2 unarmed); SQ flurry of blows, *ki* strike (magic); SQ evasion, slow fall 20 ft, still mind, purity of body; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 10

Skills and Feats: Bluff +3, Diplomacy +8, Escape Artist +4, Hide +5, Knowledge (arcana) +1, Listen +4, Move Silently +5, Ride +6, Sense Motive +3, Tumble +6; Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Power Attack, Track, Weapon Focus (falchion)

Possessions: Red robes, *keen falchion* +1, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, two *potions of glibness*.

Prior Alexander, Barghest Wizard 6: CR 10; Medium-size Outsider (Evil, Extraplanar, Lawful, Shapechanger); HD 6d4 + 6d8 + 12; hp 74; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft; AC 18 (touch 12, flat-footed 16); Atk

+12 melee (1d6+3 bite); Full Atk +12 melee (1d6+3 bite) and +7 melee (1d4+1 2 claws); SA feed, spell-like abilities; SQ change shape, DR 5/magic, darkvision 60 ft, scent; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +9, Will +12; Str 17, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 14

Skills and Feats: Bluff +11, Concentration +10, Craft (alchemy) +11, Hide +11 (+15 when in wolf form), Intimidate +13, Jump +12, Listen +11, Move Silently +11, Spellcraft +10, Spot +11, Survival +11 (+13 following tracks); Brew Potion, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (Divination), Track

Spellbook: 0 – all; 1st – identify, mage armor, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement; 2nd – arcane lock, detect thoughts, hypnotic pattern, resist energy, see invisibility; 3rd – clairsentience/clairvoyance, displacement, illusory script, magic circle against chaos, magic circle against good, secret page

Spells prepared: (4/4/4/3, DC 13 (14 for Divination) + spell level): 0 – daze (x3), ghost sound; 1st – mage armor, magic missile (x2), ray of enfeeblement; 2nd – arcane lock, detect thoughts, resist energy, see invisibility; 3rd – clairsentience/clairvoyance, displacement, magic circle against good.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*blink*, *levitate*, *misdirection* (DC 14), *rage* (DC 15); 1/day—*charm monster* (DC 16), *crushing despair* (DC 16), *dimension door*. Caster level equals the barghest's HD.

The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Feed (Su): When a barghest slays a humanoid opponent, it can feed on the corpse, devouring both flesh and life force, as a full-round action. Feeding destroys the victim's body and prevents any form of raising or resurrection that requires part of the corpse. There is a 50% chance that a *wish*, *miracle*, or *true resurrection* spell can restore a devoured victim to life. Check once for each destroyed creature. If the check fails, the creature cannot be brought back to life by mortal magic.

A barghest advances in Hit Dice by consuming corpses in this fashion. For every three suitable corpses a barghest devours, it gains 1 Hit Die, and its Strength, Constitution, and natural armor increase by +1. Its attack bonus and saves improve as normal for an outsider of its Hit Dice, and it gains skill points, feats, and ability score improvements normally.

The barghest only advances by consuming the corpses of creatures whose Hit Dice or levels are equal to or greater than its own current total. A barghest that reaches 9 Hit Dice through feeding immediately becomes a greater barghest upon completion of the act.

Change Shape (Su): A barghest can assume the shape of a goblin or a wolf as a standard action. In goblin form, a barghest cannot use its natural weapons but can wield weapons and wear armor. In wolf form, a barghest loses its claw attacks but retains its bite attack.

Pass Without Trace (Ex): A barghest in wolf form can use pass without trace (as the spell) as a free action.

Possessions: spellbook, hat of disguise, red robes

THE RED ORDER

Abbot Theodore, Vampire Cleric 10: CR 12; Medium-size Undead; HD 10d12; hp 80; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); AC 18 (touch 12, flat-footed 16); Atk +12 melee (1d4+5 dagger) or +12 melee (1d6+7 slam); Full Atk +12 melee (1d4+5 dagger) and +7 melee (1d6+2 slam); SA blood drain, children of the night, dominate, create spawn, energy drain; SQ alternate form, DR 10/silver and magic, fast healing 5, gaseous form, cold resistance 10, electricity resistance 10, spider climb, turn resistance +4; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +12; Str 20, Dex 14, Con –, Int 16, Wis 20, Cha 16

Skills and Feats: Bluff +16, Concentration +13, Diplomacy +11, Hide +12, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (nature) +5, Knowledge (religion) +5, Listen +15, Move silently +10, Sense motive +18, Spellcraft +7, Spot +15, Survival +8; Alertness, Blind Fight, Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Lighting Reflexes, Track.

Spells Prepared: (6/6+1/5+1/4+1/4+1/3+1, Evil and Destruction domains, DC 15 (16 for evil spells) + spell level): 0 – guidance (x2), resistance (x2), virtue (x2); 1st – command, detect good, divine favor, entropic shield, protection from good* (x), sanctuary, shield of faith; 2nd – augury, desecrate*, enthrall, resist energy, sound burst, undetectable alignment; 3rd – bestow curse, contagion*, deeper darkness, dispel magic, magic circle against good; 4th – divine power, freedom of movement, inflict critical wounds* (x2), lesser planar ally (usually a night hag); 5th – break enchantment, dispel good*, greater command, unhallow

Possessions: red robes, dagger, ring of the red abbot

Night Hag (1): hp 28; *Monster Manual*.

LEGENDS OF EXCALIBUR STATISTICS

Typical Lesser Monks, Common/Serf Commoner 1: CR 1/2; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 1d4+1; hp 5; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; AC 11 (touch 11, flat-footed 11); Atk +1 melee (1d6+1 quarterstaff); SQ fealty, illiterate, worker; AL Oath of Loyalty (Monastery of Caporetto); Nobility 20; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 8

Skills and Feats: Bluff +0, Craft (any) +10, Diplomacy +0, Disguise +0, Gather Information +0, Handle Animal +4, Listen +4, Perform +0, Ride +3, Spot +4, Use Rope +2; Endurance, Handle Animal, Skill Focus (Craft (any))

Possessions: Quarterstaff, red robes, sandals (or slippers).

Typical Elders, Common/Serf Commoner 5: CR 4; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 5d4+5; hp 20; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; AC 11 (touch 11, flat-footed 11); Atk +3 melee (1d6+1 quarterstaff); SQ fealty, illiterate, worker; AL Oath of Loyalty (Monastery of Caporetto); Nobility 26; SV Fort +2,

Ref +2, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 8

Skills and Feats: Bluff +0, Craft (any) +14, Diplomacy +0, Disguise +0, Gather Information +0, Handle Animal +7, Listen +6, Perform +0, Profession (any) +6, Ride +3, Spot +6, Use Rope +3; Endurance, Handle Animal, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Craft (any))

Possessions: Quarterstaff, red robes, sandals (or slippers).

Brother Malachi, Middle Class Expert 7: CR 6; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 7d6+7; hp 34; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10 (touch 10, flat-footed 10); Atk +6 melee (1d6+1 quarterstaff); SQ fealty, stuck in the middle with you; AL Sadism, Oath of Loyalty (Monastery at Caporetto); Nobility 17; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +9; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +7, Craft (alchemy) +15, Craft (poison making) +15, Diplomacy +3, Forgery +4, Heal +8, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Listen +6, Move Silently +2, Open Lock +4, Profession (apothecary) +12, Profession (herbalist) +12, Search +4, Sense Motive +4, Spot +6. Alertness, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Craft (alchemy)), Skill Focus (Craft (poisonmaking)).

Possessions: Quarterstaff, dagger (this will be poisoned with *black lotus extract* if Brother Malachi has time to prepare for a fight against the PCs), red robes, sandals.

Brother Brziac, Common/Serf Commoner 4: CR 3; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 4d4+12; hp 23; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (touch 11, flat-footed 10); Atk +5 melee (1d6+3 quarterstaff); SQ *empathic*, fealty, illiterate, worker; AL Survival; Nobility 18; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 6, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +4, Craft (candlemaking) +1, Jump +4, Listen +5, Move Silently +2, Spot +5. Alertness, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Iron Will.

Empathic (Sp): Brziac is considered to be under the effect of a continual *detect thoughts* spell (DC 12), which he cannot turn off or shut out.

Possessions: Soiled red robes, quarterstaff, pouch filled with candles and stubs stolen from the *Cathedral*, concealed pouch filled with dead beetles and spiders.

Brziac is totally insane (and quite retarded), with only brief periods of cognizance. If he feels threatened, or confused, he is very likely to simply attack in a berserk terror those confronting him.

Ghouls (11): CR 1; Medium-size Undead; HD 2d12; hp 24, 24, 24, 23, 22, 22, 20, 20, 13, 13, and 13; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; AC 14 (touch 12, flat-footed 12); Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis bite); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis bite) and 2 claws +0 melee (1d3 plus paralysis); SA ghoul fever, paralysis; SQ darkvision 60 ft, undead traits, +2 turn resistance; AL Eat Flesh; Nobility 73; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 15, Con –, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12

Skills and Feats: Balance +6, Bluff +3, Climb +5,

THE RED ORDER

Diplomacy +3, Disguise +3, Gather Information +3, Hide +6, Jump +5, Move Silently +6, Perform +3, Spot +7; Multiattack

“Anastasius”, Mohrg (1): CR 8; Medium-size Undead; HD 14d12; hp 127; Init +9; Spd 30 ft; AC 23 (touch 14, flat-footed 14); Atk +12 melee (1d6+7 slam) or +12 melee touch (tongue, paralysis); Full Atk +12 melee (1d6+7 slam) and +12 melee touch (tongue, paralysis); SA Improved grab, paralyzing touch, create spawn; SQ darkvision 60 ft; undead traits; AL Rebirth; Nobility 84; SV Fort +4, Ref +10, Will +9; Str 21, Dex 19, Con —, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 10

Skills and Feats: Bluff +4; Climb +13, Diplomacy +4, Disguise +4, Gather Information +4, Hide +21, Listen +11, Move Silently +21, Perform +4, Spot +15, Swim +9; Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility

Abyssal Wolves (12): CR 1; Medium-size Animals; HD 2d8+4; hp 20, 20, 20, 20, 19, 18, 18, 16, 16, 14, 13, and 13; Init +2; Spd 50 ft.; AC 14 (touch 12, flat-footed 12); Atk +3 melee (1d6+1 bite); SA *smite* (+2 damage), trip, SQ darkvision 60 ft., cold and fire resistance 5, scent, SR 4; AL —; Nobility 63; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +1, Hide +3, Listen +6, Move Silently +4, Spot +4, Survival +1 (+5 when tracking by scent). Weapon finesse

Owls (2): CR 1/4; Tiny Animal; HD 1d8; hp 4 and 4; Init +3; Spd 10 ft, fly 40 ft; AC 17 (touch 15, flat-footed 14); Atk +5 melee (1d4-3 talons); SQ low-light vision; AL —; Nobility —; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 4, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 4

Skills and Feats: Listen +14, Move Silently +17, Spot +6 (+14 in shadowy illumination); Weapon Finesse

Succubus (1): CR 7; Medium Outsider (Chaotic, Extraplanar, Evil); HD 6d8+6; hp 42; Init +1; Spd 30 ft, fly 50 ft; AC 20 (touch 11, flat-footed 19); Full Atk +7/+7 melee (1d6+1/1d6+1 claws); SA energy drain, spell-like abilities, *summon demon*; SQ DR 10/cold iron or good, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to electricity and poison, resistance to acid 10, resistance to cold 10, resistance to fire 10, SR 18, telepathy 100ft, tongues; AL Oath of Allegiance (Brother Bors); Nobility 59; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +7; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 26

Skills and Feats: Bluff +21, Concentration +13, Diplomacy +14, Disguise +19 (+29 when using *polymorph* ability), Escape artist +10, Gather Information +10, Hide +10, Intimidate +19, Knowledge (any one) +12, Listen +19, Move silently +10, Perform +10, Search +12, Spot +19, Survival +2 (+4 following tracks), Use rope +1 (+3 with bindings); Dodge, Mobility, Persuasive

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*charm monster* (DC 22), *detect good*, *detect thoughts* (DC 20), *ethereal jaunt* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *polymorph* (humanoid form

only, no limit on duration), *suggestion* (DC 21), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only). Caster level 12th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Zephyr, Djinni (1): CR 5; Large Outsider (Air, Extraplanar); HD 7d8+14; hp 45; Init +8; Spd 20 ft, fly 60 ft (perfect); AC 16 (touch 13, flat-footed 12); Atk +10 melee (1d8+4 slam); Full Atk +10/+10 melee (1d8+4/1d8+4 2 slams); SA Air mastery, spell-like abilities, whirlwind; SQ darkvision 60 ft, immunity to acid, *plane shift*, telepathy 100 ft; AL freedom from the ring; Nobility 87; SV Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +7; Str 18, Dex 19, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 15

Skills and Feats: Appraise +12, Bluff +6, Concentration +12, Craft (any one) +12, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +6, Escape artist +14, Gather Information +6, Knowledge (any one) +12, Listen +12, Move silently +12, Perform +6, Spellcraft +12, Spot +12, Use rope +4 (+6 with bindings); Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*invisibility* (self only); 1/day—*create food and water*, *create wine* (as *create water*, but wine instead), *major creation* (created vegetable matter is permanent), *persistent image* (DC 17), *wind walk*. Once per day, a djinni can assume *gaseous form* (as the spell) for up to 1 hour. Caster level 20th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Chimera (1): CR 7; Large Magical Beast; HD 9d10+27; hp 76; Init +1; Spd 30 ft, fly 50 ft (good); AC 19 (touch 10, flat-footed 18); Atk +12 melee (2d6+4 bite); Full Atk +12 melee (2d6+4 bite) and +12 melee (1d8+4 bite) and +10 melee (1d6+2 2 claws); SA breath weapon; SQ Darkvision 60 ft, low-light vision, scent; AL Prior Theodore; Nobility 64; SV Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +6; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 10

Skills and Feats: Bluff +3, Hide +1, Listen +9, Spot +9; Alertness, Hover, Iron Will, Multiattack

Shadows (2): CR 3; Medium-size Undead (Incorporeal); HD 3d12; hp 19 and 19; Init +2; Spd fly 40 ft. (good); AC 13 (touch 13, flat-footed 11); Atk +3 melee (1d6 temporary strength, incorporeal touch); SA strength damage, create spawn; SQ darkvision 60 ft, undead traits, incorporeal traits, +2 turn resistance; AL kill living; Nobility 34; Fort +1; Ref +3; Will +4; Str —, Dex 14, Con —, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +2, Hide +8 (+12 in shadowy illumination), Listen +7, Search +4, Spot +7; Alertness, Dodge.

Quasits (5): CR 2; Tiny Outsider (Chaotic, Extraplanar, Evil); HD 3d8; hp 24, 24, 22, 20, and 13; Init +7; Spd 20 ft, fly 50 ft (perfect); AC 18 (touch 15, flat-footed 15); Atk +8 melee (1d3-1 plus poison claw); Full Atk +8 melee (1d3-1 plus poison 2 claws) and +3 melee (1d4-1 bite); SA poison, spell-like abilities; SQ alternate form, DR 5/cold iron or good, Darkvision 60 ft, fast healing 2, immunity to poison; AL nameless demon master; Nobility 42; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 8, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10

THE RED ORDER

Skills and Feats: Bluff +8, Diplomacy +4, Disguise +2, Gather Information +2, Hide +17, Intimidate +2, Knowledge (any one) +6, Listen +7, Move silently +9, Perform +2, Search +6, Spellcraft +6, Spot +6; Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*detect good, detect magic, and invisibility* (self only); 1/day—*cause fear* (as the spell, except that its area is a 30-foot radius from the quasit, save DC 11). Caster level 6th.

The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Once per week a quasit can use *commune* to ask six questions. The ability otherwise works as the spell (caster level 12th).

Night Hag (1): CR 9; Medium Outsider (Evil, Extraplanar); HD 8d8+32; hp 68; Init +1; Spd 20 ft; AC 22 (touch 11, flat-footed 21); Atk +12 melee (2d6+6 plus disease bite); SA spell-like abilities, dream haunting; SQ DR 10/cold iron and magic, immunity to fire, immunity to cold, immunity to charm, immunity to *sleep*, immunity to fear, SR 25; AL unnamed demon master; Nobility 54; SV Fort +12, Ref +9, Will +10; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 12

Skills and Feats: Bluff +14, Concentration +15, Diplomacy +7, Disguise +3 (+5 acting), Gather Information +3, Intimidate +14, Listen +15, Perform +3, Ride +12, Sense motive +13, Spellcraft +11, Spot +15; Alertness, Combat Casting, Mounted Combat

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*detect chaos, detect evil, detect good, detect law, detect magic, magic missile, polymorph* (self only), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 12), *sleep* (DC 12). Caster level 8th. A night hag can use *etherealness* at will (caster level 16th) so long as it possesses its *heartstone* (see below). The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Possessions: heartstone

Will-O'-Wisps (2): CR 6; Small Aberration (Air); HD 9d8; hp 40 and 40; Init +13; AC 29 (touch 29, flat-footed 20); Atk +16 melee touch (2d8 electricity shock); SQ Darkvision 60', immunity to magic, natural invisibility; AL –; Nobility –; SV Fort +3, Ref +12, Will +9; Str 1, Dex 29, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 12

Skills and Feats: Bluff +13, Diplomacy +3, Disguise +1 (+3 acting), Intimidate +3, Listen +17, Search +14, Spot +17, Survival +3 (+5 following tracks); Alertness, Blind-Fight, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Bursars (16): see Typical Lesser Monks

Brother Trovech, Base/Criminal Rogue 5 / Assassin 1: CR 6; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 6d6; hp 35; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft; AC 16 (touch 14, flat-footed 12); Atk +5 melee (1d4+1/19-20 masterwork dagger) or +8 ranged (1d4+1/19-20 masterwork dagger); SA death attack (DC 12), sneak attack +4d6; SQ evasion, illiteracy, poison use, survivor, trap sense +1, trapfinding, uncanny dodge (Dex to AC); AL Oath of Allegiance (Abbot Theodore); Nobility 3; SV Fort +1, Ref +9, Will +0; Str 12,

Dex 18, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +3, Balance +6, Bluff +10, Disguise +7, Escape artist +7, Forgery +3, Gather information +10, Hide +13, Jump +3, Move silently +13, Open lock +6, Search +12, Sense Motive +4, Sleight of hand +10, Spot +7, Survival +1, Tumble +8; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Stealthy

Assassin spells known: (2, 2 spell points, DC 11 + spell level); 1st – disguise self, true strike

Possessions: red robes, bracers of armor +2, three masterwork daggers (poisoned with large scorpion venom).

Brother Bors, Middle Class Fighter 6: CR 6; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 6d10+12; hp 60; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft; AC 11 (touch 11, flat-footed 10); Atk +9 melee (1d3+4 unarmed); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d3+4 unarmed); AL Oath of Fealty (Abbot Theodore); Nobility 13; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Intimidate +8, Jump +11; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (unarmed strike), Weapon Specialization (unarmed strike)

Possessions: Red robes, *potion of bull strength*, two *potions of cure moderate wounds*

Brother Xavier, Middle Class Fighter 2 / Robber Baron 5: CR 7; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 5d8 + 2d10 + 7; hp 65; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft; AC 12 (touch 12, flat-footed 10); Atk +8 melee (2d4/15-20 +1 keen falchion); SA; SQ improved feint, knight's warhorse, mounted combat +1, sneak attack +1d6; AL Oath of Fealty (Abbot Theodore); Nobility 12; SV Fort +8 Ref +6, Will +5; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 10

Skills and Feats: Bluff +6, Diplomacy +2, Disguise +4, Forgery +3, Gather Information +10, Hide +5, Intimidate +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +5, Ride +8, Search +4, Sense Motive +4; Dodge, Investigator, Iron Will, Mounted Combat, Negotiator, Persuasive, Weapon Focus (falchion)

Possessions: Red robes, *keen falchion* +1, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, two *potions of glibness*

Prior Alexander, Barghest Hedge Mage 6: CR 10; Medium-size Outsider (Evil, Extraplanar, Lawful, Shapechanger); HD 6d6 + 6d8 +12; hp 78; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft; AC 18 (touch 12, flat-footed 16); Atk +9 melee (1d6+3 bite); Full Atk +9 melee (1d6+3 bite) and +4 melee (1d4+1 2 claws); SA dream reader, feed, lesser prophecy, spell-like abilities, summon familiar, superstition; SQ change shape, DR 5/magic, darkvision 60 ft, scent; AL unnamed demon master; Nobility 82; SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +7; Str 17, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 16

Skills and Feats: Bluff +16, Concentration +7, Diplomacy +17, Disguise +7 (+9 acting), Hide +11 (+15 in wolf form), Intimidate +20, Jump +12, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Listen

THE RED ORDER

+11, Move Silently +11, Perform +7, Search +11, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +11, Spot +11, Survival +11 (+13 following tracks); Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Innate Spell (detect thoughts), Power Surge, Scribe Scroll, Track

Spells Known: (7/4/3/2/1, cost to cast 0/1/2/4/*12, spell points 21, DC 13 + spell level): 0 – arcane mark, daze, detect magic, ghost sound, mage hand, open/close, touch of fatigue; 1st – identify, mage armor, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement; 2nd – arcane lock, detect thoughts, resist energy; 3rd – clairaudience/clairvoyance, displacement; 4th – scrying

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*blink*, *levitate*, *misdirection* (DC 14), *rage* (DC 15); 1/day—*charm monster* (DC 16), *crushing despair* (DC 16), *dimension door*. Caster level equals the barghest's HD.

The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Feed (Su): When a barghest slays a humanoid opponent, it can feed on the corpse, devouring both flesh and life force, as a full-round action. Feeding destroys the victim's body and prevents any form of raising or resurrection that requires part of the corpse. There is a 50% chance that a *wish*, *miracle*, or *true resurrection* spell can restore a devoured victim to life. Check once for each destroyed creature. If the check fails, the creature cannot be brought back to life by mortal magic.

A barghest advances in Hit Dice by consuming corpses in this fashion. For every three suitable corpses a barghest devours, it gains 1 Hit Die, and its Strength, Constitution, and natural armor increase by +1. Its attack bonus and saves improve as normal for an outsider of its Hit Dice, and it gains skill points, feats, and ability score improvements normally.

The barghest only advances by consuming the corpses of creatures whose Hit Dice or levels are equal to or greater than its own current total. A barghest that reaches 9 Hit Dice through feeding immediately becomes a greater barghest upon completion of the act.

Change Shape (Su): A barghest can assume the shape of a goblin or a wolf as a standard action. In goblin form, a barghest cannot use its natural weapons but can wield weapons and wear armor. In wolf form, a barghest loses its claw attacks but retains its bite attack.

Pass Without Trace (Ex): A barghest in wolf form can use pass without trace (as the spell) as a free action.

Possessions: hat of disguise, red robes

Abbot Theodore, Vampire Hedge Mage 10: CR 12: Medium-size Undead; HD 10d12; hp 80; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); AC 18 (touch 12, flat-footed 16); Atk +10 melee (1d4+5 dagger) or +10 melee (1d6+7 slam); Full Atk +10 melee (1d4+5 dagger) and +5 melee (1d6+2 slam); SA blood drain, children of the night, dominate, create spawn, energy drain; SQ alternate form, dream reader, lesser prophecy, prophecy, summon familiar, superstition; DR 10/silver and magic, fast healing 5, gaseous form, cold resistance 10, electricity resistance 10, spider

climb, turn resistance +4; AL unnamed demon master; Nobility 43; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +11; Str 20, Dex 14, Con –, Int 16, Wis 18, Cha 18

Skills and Feats: Bluff +14, Concentration +17, Diplomacy +19, Gather Information +19, Hide +10, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Listen +14, Move Silently +10, Perform +6, Prophecy +27, Search +11, Sense Motive +12, Spellcraft +16, Spot +14; Alertness, Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Greater Spell Penetration, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Lighting Reflexes, Power Source (Priest), Power Surge, Spell Penetration

Spells Known: (9/5/4/3/3/1, cost to cast 0/1/2/3/4/6, spell points 50, DC 14 + spell level): 0 – arcane mark, detect magic, flare, light, mage hand, message, open/close, prestidigitation, resistance; 1st – cause fear, charm person, mage armor, ray of enfeeblement, shield; 2nd – arcane lock, hypnotic pattern, resist energy, summon swarm; 3rd – dispel magic, slow, suggestion; 4th – contagion, dimension door, scrying; 5th – break enchantment

Possessions: red robes, dagger, ring of the red abbot

Night Hag (1): see prior entry

THE RED ORDER

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