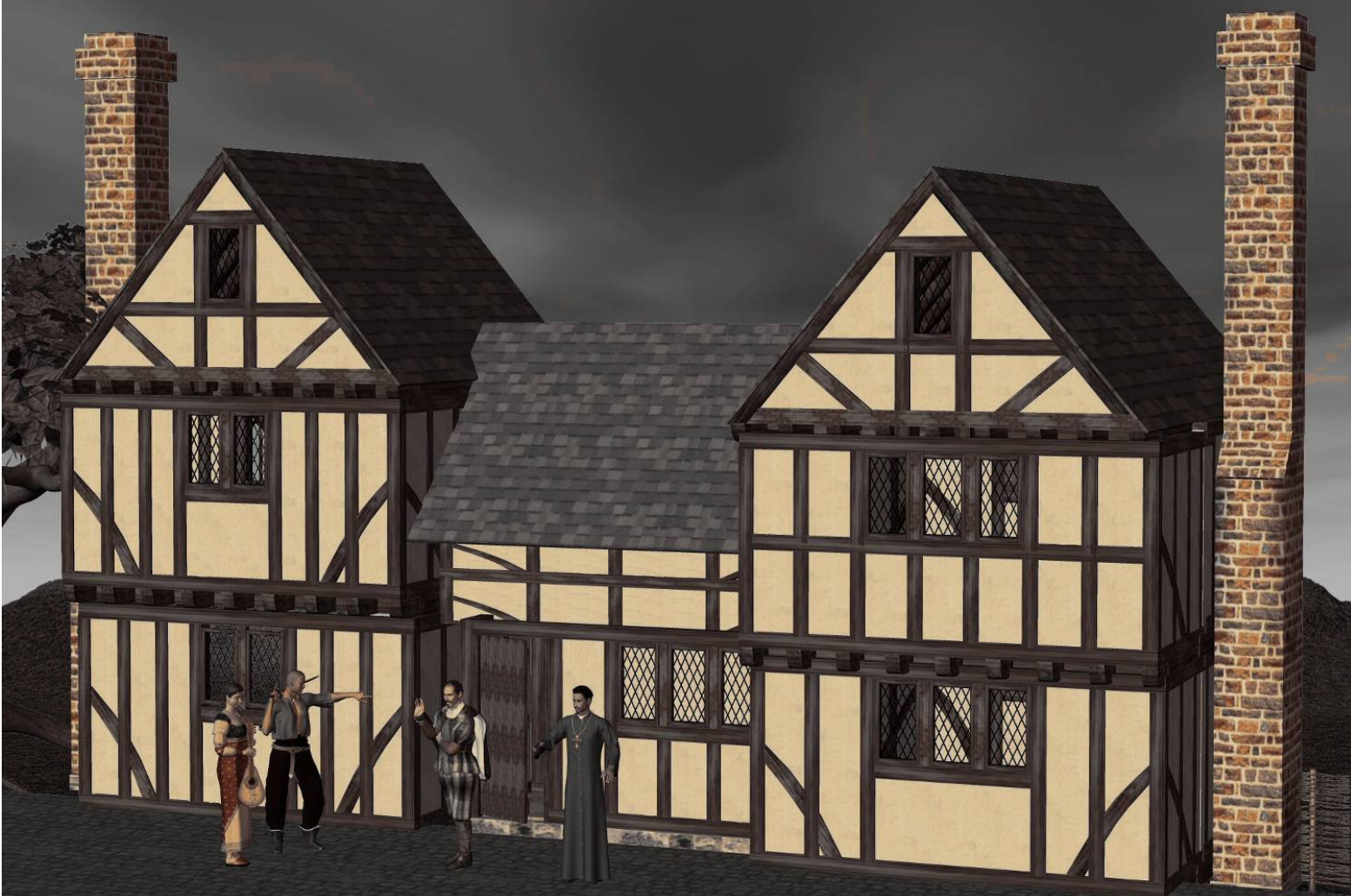


# STRANGE DAYS IN NAYLAND

AN INVESTIGATIVE SCENARIO FOR THE MAELSTROM RPG



# MAELSTROM



## Strange days in Nayland

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## **CAST OF CHARACTERS:**

|                               |                               |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>William Howell</i>         | <i>Innkeeper</i>              |
| <i>Hugh Carter</i>            | <i>A Cursed Farmer</i>        |
| <i>Margerie Bayle</i>         | <i>A Deceased maidservant</i> |
| <i>Sir Richard Alston</i>     | <i>A Local Wool Merchant</i>  |
| <i>Father Walterus Little</i> | <i>The Village Priest</i>     |
| <i>Old Mother Alice</i>       | <i>A Wisewoman</i>            |
| <i>Arnold Bozan</i>           | <i>An Inept Thief</i>         |
| <i>Peter Butter</i>           | <i>A Thug leader</i>          |
| <i>Jasper Crouse</i>          | <i>A Thug</i>                 |
| <i>Gilbert Spilman</i>        | <i>A Thug</i>                 |
| <i>Nicolai Reynaldes</i>      | <i>A Male Witch</i>           |
|                               |                               |
| <i>Gilbert Percy</i>          | <i>A Young Noble</i>          |
| <i>Jasper Haywarde</i>        | <i>A Mercenary</i>            |
| <i>Robert Slauter</i>         | <i>A Labourer</i>             |
| <i>Isabell Kente</i>          | <i>A Minstrel</i>             |

## **SYNOPSIS**

*The Characters arrive at a small Suffolk town, and are required to investigate the apparent suicide of a young pregnant maidservant and the curse placed on the rumoured father. They must defend themselves against those who wish to keep the truth hidden, and find out exactly what happened. They must then track down the source of the curse, and undo it.....if they can!*

The following adventure is designed to be primarily investigative, with some combat and action mixed in. As such, it is important for the Referee to read through before running, to ensure an understanding of the background. Notes for referees are provided in **bold**, and text suitable for reading out loud is given in *italics*. It goes without saying that players should never read the adventure below.

*“It is summer in the year 1540. Henry the Eighth is on the throne of England, and has divorced the foreign princess Anne of Cleves, his fourth wife. Thomas Cromwell, one of the powers behind the throne, has been executed for Treason, and the King has just married Catherine Howard. The Monasteries are being closed, and their Brothers turned out onto the streets with only a meagre pension. The hot, dry summer has suddenly turned with a vengeance, and the heavens have opened.....”*

The player characters have been travelling the roads of East Anglia, and are en route from Sudbury to Colchester, there to attend the famous markets. They have been caught in the torrential storms that are drenching the land, and have sought shelter in the small town of Nayland. The ford across the river Stour is impassable during the current storms, so the characters have little option but to stay in the town. The characters arrive on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August.

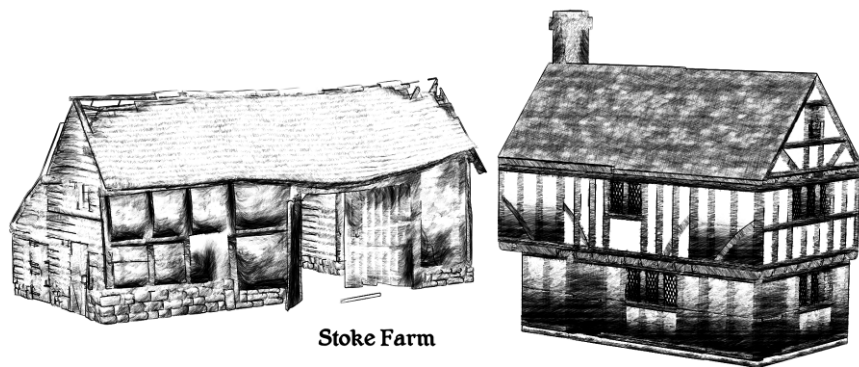
**Referee Note: It is obviously essential that the characters remain in the town for the adventure to take place. If the characters insist on leaving, point out that attempting to ford the raging river would be suicidal, and to travel the roads without shelter will almost certainly lead to illness.**

**If the characters still insist on leaving, have them struggle through mud and water, and make very poor time until they are a couple of miles from the town. Then have them attacked by desperate bandits (assign 35 to all stats, and have the same number of bandits as characters) armed with clubs. The characters should win, but will be injured. Point out that to struggle on injured in such bad weather is likely to end in disaster.**

The small town does have an Inn, the White Hart, although this is heavily overcrowded with travellers sheltering from the weather. Even the stable lofts are crowded with poorer folk.

The Innkeeper, William Howell, feels truly sorry for the newly arrived characters, but still has no option but to turn them away. He does however suggest, with a wry smile, that Hugh Carter may have lodging space in his farmhouse. He may be found on the edge of town on the Ipswich road.

This will be the only opportunity the characters get for lodging, so they should take it unless they wish to sleep in the



rain. Stoke Farm stands several hundred yards away from the main Ipswich road, amongst overgrown fields and a wild orchard. The door is answered by an unkempt and depressed looking farmer – Hugh Carter, who immediately invites the characters in out of the rain.



The interior, and exterior, of the house are somewhat run-down, but the quality craftsmanship is obvious. Hugh will allow the characters to stay, and is somewhat indifferent to any payment. After turning down coin, he will somewhat hesitantly suggest that the characters could help him, where no-one else could? If asked further, he will say: “*My life and my farm are ruined, and both are near their end. My fields will grow no corn and my animals died. As for myself..... I am under a curse for my actions, and none can help,*

*despite no evil intent.*

*It began just over a year ago, when one of my servants, Margerie Bayle, became pregnant. Being unmarried, suspicion in the town immediately fell upon me as being the father. I swear it was not me! Margerie had no other family in the town to go to, so she was forced to stay here with me. And then.....a week later.....she.....um.....threw herself into the river and drowned. I was of course distraught, for I cared deeply for her, but again the townspeople blamed me. A month later all of my animals had died, and my crops no longer grew. I have a growth inside, and my will to live fades. But IT WAS NOT ME!”*

Hugh will offer his life savings (£4) if the characters can save his life and his farm, although he would of course prefer it if they did it from the goodness of their hearts.

**Referee Note: Again, the adventure depends on the characters accepting the challenge. The referee should appeal to whatever desires drive the characters.**

By the end of Hugh's story, there is time for a meal of beans and bacon, and bed. The rooms allocated to the characters are well appointed, but dusty and stuffy.

## **4<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 1540**

There is no let up in the rain on this day, so the characters must get wet following the trail!

It is suggested that all persuasion saving throws are made secretly to keep the players guessing.

The characters can approach several important members of the town for information, and/or try and gather information by gossiping in the Inn. With the exception of gossip in the Inn, only one character may make a persuasion attempt with each personality. The imparted gossip will not be gained just by asking outright, but will be worked into the conversation. There will be nothing to gain from a repeat visit. These characters are dealt with in turn:

**Referee Note: Obviously, the characters need to find out who was the father, and find out why she killed herself.**

### **SIR RICHARD ALSTON**

Sir Richard is a wealthy cloth merchant, who is from several generations of wool traders. The family fortune derived from fleeces and the finished cloth, and allowed the building of Alston Court, a substantial house, some 20 years ago.

Sir Richard is also the local Magistrate, and is the nearest thing to local nobility.

The characters may, with a successful Persuasion saving throw, gain access to Sir Richard. If they do, and act respectfully, they may be able to get some information:



| <b>PERSUASION<br/>SAVING<br/>THROW:</b> | <b>RESULT:</b>   |
|---|--|
| <b>Critical failure</b>                 | <i>It is dreadful. Father Walterus should have done more. After all, he was....er.....her priest. Yes.</i>   |
| <b>Failure</b>                          | <i>Why should I talk to people like you? Nothing to say, so please leave.</i>  |
| <b>Success</b>                          | <i>It is a real waste, I am sure the father would have looked after it. Whoever he was.</i>  |
| <b>Critical Success</b>                 | <i>Margerie was a very beautiful girl.....and that baby would have been.....why oh why did she do it.....i would have...If only that man had not...(here he orders the characters out, and will lose his temper if they do not leave).</i> |

**Referee Note:** Sir Richard was of course the father of the unborn baby, and knows it. He would have looked after the baby, and probably named it as his heir one day. However, he is loathe to admit it now, and instead may put the blame on the priest (Critical failure). He also used to employ Margerie as a part-time washerwoman. He blames Hugh Carter for her suicide. His other servants will not even talk to the characters, as they value their jobs too highly.

The only incriminating evidence at the court (should the characters break in) is a letter of introduction, written by Sir Edmund Gibes about one Nicolai Reynaldes. This is in the desk drawer in the study.

### **FATHER WALTERUS LITLE – PARISH PRIEST**

Father Walterus is the young Parish priest, given the position by Sir Richard Alston, and thus is greatly in his debt. Father Walterus is of a nervous disposition, and often stutters when under stress. He will happily meet the characters, but fears he will be of little help to them. He does not believe in the earthly power of witches, and will dismiss any suggestion of curses. Walterus lives in a small cottage next to the church.



| <b>PERSUASION<br/>SAVING<br/>THROW:</b> | <b>RESULT:</b>   |
|---|--|
| <b>Critical failure</b>                 | <i>I don't know why she spent so much time at the White Hart. She never seemed to drink much.</i>  |
| <b>Failure</b>                          | <i>Why should I talk to people like you? Nothing to say, so please leave.</i>  |
| <b>Success</b>                          | <i>She was always a happy girl. Until she got pregnant anyway. But then carrying a bastard is never a good thing, even for a lowly servant.</i>                  |
| <b>Critical Success</b>                 | <i>She would have been well looked after. She had no reason to do that. Why did she not come to me? I could have reassured her! They both had a rosy future.</i> |

**Referee Note:** Father Walterus knows (but has no proof) that Sir Richard was the father, and rightly assumes he would have taken responsibility. However, he dislikes William Howell, and thinks he had something to do with her death (thus the critical failure).

### **WILLIAM HOWELL – INNKEEPER**

William is the owner and proprietor of the White Hart, the only Inn or Tavern in Nayland. The mainstay of his trade is local, but there are a steady stream of travellers who require accommodation. He is middle aged, thin and grey haired. Unusually for an Innkeeper, he is also fairly short tempered. He can easily turn from light-hearted joking to raging temper in a matter of minutes.

He has heard the rumours about Hugh's predicament, and feels that he has probably brought it upon himself.



| PERSUASION<br>SAVING<br>THROW: | RESULT:   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>Critical failure</b>        | <i>It must have been the devils child! She went very wild after she got pregnant.</i>   |
| <b>Failure</b>                 | <i>Why should I talk to people like you? Nothing to say, so please leave.</i>   |
| <b>Success</b>                 | <i>She was a very popular girl, and attracted many a male eye, even (especially) the older man.</i>                                 |
| <b>Critical Success</b>        | <i>She had several jobs she could have gone to, one here, one at the farm, and one at the court! Why would she do such a thing?</i> |

**Referee Note:** William Howell also paid a few pennies to Margerie when she helped out in the bar room at busy times. He was quite fond of her, but was worried by her change in personality after she got pregnant.

### OLD MOTHER ALICE - WISEWOMAN

The characters will only find out about Old Mother Alice from other information, and will not stumble upon her by themselves. Alice lives in one for the small cottages on the main street, and makes a living by supplying herbal remedies (there is no Herbalist in Nayland) and love charms and delivering babies. She is very old (70's), has only 1 tooth and cackles. Oh, and she has several cats.



Of course, the characters will immediately suspect her of being the witch, but the townspeople will vigorously defend her, as they rely so much on her services.

| PERSUASION<br>SAVING<br>THROW: | RESULT:  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Critical failure</b>        | <i>She always was on the lookout for extra pennies, even if she got em behind the stables....</i>                    |
| <b>Failure</b>                 | <i>Get away. Don't want to talk.</i>   |
| <b>Success</b>                 | <i>Blessed weren't she. A face like that and look what it got her!</i>   |
| <b>Critical Success</b>        | <i>That would have been a right-noble baby, oh yes. Good stock that. Growing well she was....hehehe.....(cackle)</i> |

**Referee Note:** Margerie consulted Old Mother Alice when she first got pregnant, just to make sure. The old lady found out who the father was, but will never say out loud (as a justice of the peace, Sir Richard would probably have her burnt as a witch).

## GOSSIP

This category is supplied for general gossip on the streets or in the Inn. Attempts in the Inn must be supplemented with drinks (at Referee's discretion), but receive a +20 bonus to the Persuasion saving throw. Street gossip receives no bonus.

**Referee Note:** Feed the information as appropriate for the Persuasion saving throw to the characters, and then put a line through that result. If, on a subsequent attempt, they get the same result, use the next column for the received information. The characters (as a group) may keep rolling gossip attempts until they give up or have heard the third result from any row.

It is recommended that unless the players are extremely well-versed in investigative style games, that the amongst the first 2 or 3 results, the Referee assigns a Success and a Critical Success, irrespective of the dice roll. This gives the characters a little more specific information, and ensures that they have something to go on.

| <b>PERSUASION<br/>SAVING<br/>THROW:</b> | <b>RESULT 1:</b>  | <b>RESULT 2:</b>  | <b>RESULT 3:</b>  |
|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Critical failure</b>                 | <i>It was a travelling soldier who was the father I tell you!</i> | <i>Apparently, she travelled to Colchester a lot!</i>                         | <i>Some say it were the king himself! Or one of his bishops.</i>            |
| <b>Failure</b>                          | <i>No idea who you are. Go away.</i>                              | <i>We don't really like strangers round here.</i>                             | <i>I have nothing to say.</i>   |
| <b>Success</b>                          | <i>I did hear she was being paid very well at the court.</i>      | <i>My bother's, wife's sister says that she had her own bed at the court.</i> | <i>They do say that Sir Richard was forever making sheep's eyes at her!</i> |

|                         |  |  |  |
|-------------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>Critical Success</b> | <i>There is a strange chap that moved into the town a while ago, but I haven't really seen him around.</i> | <i>I think that weird chap living out at Wiston Farm is behind this!</i> | <i>That stranger has been to the court a few times! Maybe he is selling things to Sir Richard. He is definitely a weird one.</i> |
|-------------------------|--|--|--|

**Referee Note:** There are several wild rumours abound, none of them even remotely true. The characters will find plenty of people to disprove any critical failure result.

There has been a bit of town gossip about the attention paid to Margerie by Sir Richard, but no-one really takes it seriously.

The “Stranger” is actually Nicolai Reynaldes, the witch. He moved into Wiston Farm just over 2 months ago. He met Sir Richard due to a mutual contact, and ended up being employed by him to curse Hugh Carter. He has had no contact with the town otherwise, living on supplies sent by Sir Richards servants.

### **Encounter with a Thief**

As the characters leave the Inn (or head down the main street if they do not visit the Inn), one of them (noble or professional ideally) is jostled by a short sallow fellow in a tattered shirt. The jostled character may make a Perception saving throw to notice that their purse has been cut from their belt and taken (with all carried money in it). If this saving throw is failed, the thief gets 20' away down the main street before dropping the bag and spilling the coins onto the cobbles. All characters must make a Perception saving throw, but only those who roll a critical failure will not notice the dropped money.

The thief is an opportunist named Arnold Bozan, nominally a weaver but very poor at it, so he has ended up as a thief. Unfortunately for him, he is not particularly good at that either. His first petty crime resulted in a night in the stocks, and his second the loss of his left hand.

Arnold will attempt to escape, and will try and lose the characters in the lanes and few alleys of the town. This should be handled by Speed saving throws. Everyone running should make one saving throw per round, and successes added to a tally for each character. Arnold starts with one success already to represent his head start, and he escapes if he ever has 4 more successes than anyone chasing, or if the chasers give up. If a character has a higher total of successes, he catches Arnold. Other characters arrive an appropriate number of rounds later.

Arnold will fight to the death, because he knows that the penalty for thieving again will be hanging. He knows nothing about the curse or the investigation.

The townsfolk do not know Arnold, and he will disappear into the countryside if he escapes.

**Referee Note: This encounter may be moved to any other part of the adventure, as it has no bearing on the investigation itself. It must also be noted that if all of the characters give chase, the money lying on the ground will have disappeared by the time the characters return.**

## 5<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 1540

The rain continues, as will the characters investigations. However, as the characters return to Stoke Farm (whatever the time), and open the door, they will be confronted by the following scene:

*“You see Hugh sitting in a chair with a rough-looking man holding his arms from behind. Another ruffian stands in front of him with a knife in his hand, and another ruffian with a club stands near the door. At the sound of the door opening, all three turn, and the knife wielder starts to grin. He chuckles to himself, and says “Ah. Saved us going out looking. This is a friendly warning. Get out of town, and leave our friend here to his misery. Or you may find yourself amongst the detritus floating downriver!” The other thugs look to be readying themselves for a fight.”*

Unless the characters pack up and leave there and then, the thugs will not leave voluntarily. They will also not let the characters leave the house, unless they take all of their belongings, and even then will escort them several miles up the road. The thugs will wait in the barn at Stoke farm until nightfall to see if the characters return.

If the characters refuse to leave, a fight will ensue. The thugs will set out to maim and/or kill the characters if they can. If the characters choose to (or accidentally) kill the thugs, they will be investigated by the town constable, and will be viewed with fear and suspicion by the townspeople.

**Referee Note: If there are only one or two characters, or the group as a whole are weak in combat, reduce the number of thugs by one, or have Hugh help out. It is important however that Hugh is not killed or seriously injured.**

No-one in town will admit to knowing the thugs, and it appears they are not local. Try and ensure at least one of the thugs survives, even if badly injured. He/they will be locked in a secure cellar under the Inn by the Town Constable, to be tried at the next county court session.

That night, the thugs are strangled in their locked cell by something with long fingers and talons/long fingernails.

**Referee Note: A creature of the night bound into an amulet possessed by Nicolai was the assassin, although the amulet is now useless. He hired the thugs to silence the characters before they got too close to him or his employer.**

## 6<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 1540

The next morning, which is dry, the whole town will be buzzing with the gossip regarding the murder of the thugs. A persuasion saving throw by any of the characters will reveal:

| <b>PERSUASION<br/>SAVING<br/>THROW:</b> | <b>RESULT:</b>   |
|---|--|
| <b>Critical failure</b>                 | <i>I hear they were actually poisoned. Must be the Inn food!</i>   |
| <b>Failure</b>                          | <i>It were the papists what done it.</i>   |
| <b>Success</b>                          | <i>Sir Richard was going to deal with them personally first thing this morning. In private.</i>  |
| <b>Critical Success</b>                 | <i>That new chap at Wiston Farm was standing at the back of the Inn for ages last night! He must have had something to do with it!</i> |

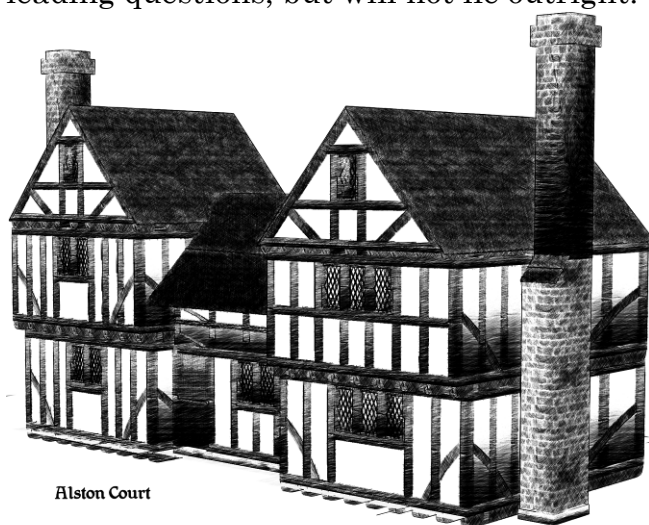
**Referee Note:** By now, the characters should have their suspicions about Sir Richard and/or Nicolai. The next section will depend on who they go to see first.

If the characters do not know who to approach, and seem to have exhausted all of their options, the Referee has two options. The first is to have the river subside and the characters leave without solving the mystery. This option is generally unsatisfying and would be a major anti-climax. The second, better, option is to force an ending. This is almost certainly easiest to do by having a servant of Sir Richard visit the characters in an agitated state. This servant is the one who has been taking food etc to Nicolai, and can know as much of the backstory as required to enlighten the characters. This should only be done though, if the players themselves are struggling badly.

### VISIT TO SIR RICHARD

When the characters visit Sir Richard, he will be expecting them. If the characters describe, even roughly, the actual events, he will confess all. He is fairly shaken, as he intended to banish the thugs, and did not want them killed. He is also worried for his own safety, as he intends to send Nicolai away after Hugh has lost everything (but before Hugh dies).

If the characters instead question Sir Richard, he will try and evade any leading questions, but will not lie outright. Eventually, the characters should get at the truth.

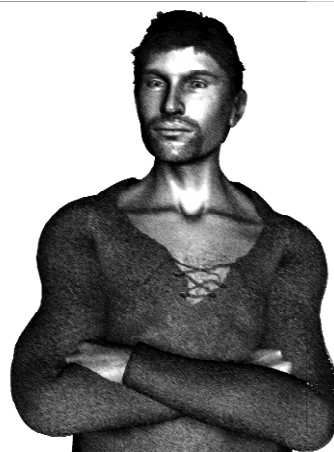


If the characters have already faced Nicolai and defeated him, Sir Richard will offer the characters a purse of monies to leave town straight away and never mention this. He will also promise to restore the farm and reputation of Hugh. If the characters attempt blackmail or threats, he will threaten to arrest

them and have them charged as witches (and will shout for help if necessary).

### Visit to Nicolai

As the Characters approach Wiston Farm, they see Nicolai and another, armed, man approaching. If the characters roughly describe the actual events (maybe after speaking to Sir Richard), Nicolai will fly into a rage at being betrayed, and will madly attack the characters, accompanied by his (silent) companion. Use the stats for Peter Butter, but arm him with a Sword (2-20). Neither will retreat or surrender, knowing full well the penalties for being a witch.



If the characters instead question Nicolai without any apparent knowledge, he will just walk on, and say he is busy.

If the characters ever return to see him, they will again meet him on a road outside the village.

When Nicolai and his companion are dead (or unconscious), their flesh will start to smoke, and then pale blue flames will crawl over their flesh and clothes. Water cannot extinguish the flames, and within an hour, the bodies will be mostly destroyed, leaving their clothing intact. Presumably the characters will fetch someone else to witness this.

**Referee Note: If the Referee wishes to link this adventure into a longer witch or magic themed campaign, an optional handout has been provided to give to the characters. This is a letter that will be found within the clothing after the body**

**has gone. This letter implies an illicit magical organisation, although the specific details can be decided by the referee depending on how the campaign is to proceed.**

There is nothing incriminating in Wiston Farm to link Nicolai to Sir Richard, and the characters will not be believed if they accuse Sir Richard. The town will assume Nicolai was behind the curse on Hugh, who indeed improves markedly within a day or so.

Once matters have been settled, Sir Richard buys more stock for Stoke Farm, and Hughes health improves daily. The town gossips about the possible father of Margerie's baby, but not in any serious fashion. Within a couple of days, the river has subsided enough for the river to be forded, allowing the characters to go on their way, with the eternal thanks (and life savings if they wish) of Hugh Carter.

**Referee Note: Actual Events**

**These events are for the use of the Referee only and should never be disclosed as written to the players.**

In the summer of 1539, Margerie Bayle, a servant to Hugh Carter became pregnant. She had attracted the attention of Sir Richard Alston when earning a few extra pennies at Alston Court as a part-time washerwoman. Sir Richard demanded she keep quiet about who was the father, even though he intended to look after them both well, and maybe even name the child (his only child) as his heir.

Margerie however saw this as Sir Richard attempting to avoid any responsibility, and fearing for her reputation and future, she threw herself into the river and drowned.

Sir Richard was devastated, and heard some gossip that implied Hugh Carter, her main employer, had driven her to despair because she would not name the father. As further gossip suggested that Hugh himself was the father, Sir Richard saw the perfect scapegoat.

At that point, Nicolai Reynaldes arrived in town with his companion, and came to see Sir Richard with a letter of introduction from a mutual acquaintance, another Merchant. During their dinner together, Nicolai noticed the anger inside Sir Richard and offered to do something about it for a small fee, payable on completion. Although not told how, Sir Richard agreed.

When Hugh Carter began to get ill, and his farm began to fail, Sir Richard was at first pleased, then slightly worried, as he did not want Hugh to die. However, he was also too scared of what Nicolai might do if he reneged on their deal.

Enter the characters.....

## The White Hart

The White Hart is a small Inn on the side road in Nayland. Established some 150 years ago by an ancestor of the current owner, William Howell, it is moderately successful, selling ale and stronger drinks to locals, and providing food and accommodation to travellers on the Suffolk roads.



It has 4 guest rooms, each with a large double bed (and a truckle bed that rolls underneath on small wheels). It also has a dormitory with 8 straw-mattressed beds, each with a small lockable chest for belongings. All of the accommodation is fairly clean, although William Howell does have a special set of sheets and blankets reserved for any nobility that may visit (at an extra cost of course!).

The food is also of reasonable quality, and is usual standard country fayre. All of the ale and beer is brewed in the small brewhouse at the rear of the Inn.

Extra services are offered, such as stabling, hot baths, laundry and equipment repair (by local craftsmen).

At the times of the characters arrival, the Inn is packed to bursting, with travellers even sleeping in the stable hay lofts and on the floor of the common room. There are also lots of locals frequenting the Inn, as no agricultural work can be done in the torrential rain.

### Price List:

|                                    |     |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| Pint of Ale                        | ½ d |
| Pint of Beer                       | 1d  |
| Mug of Wine                        | 3d  |
| Mug of Spirits                     | 5d  |
| Venison pastie                     | 1d  |
| Roasted rabbit with bread sauce    | 2d  |
| Lamb stew with chicken and raisins | 2d  |
| Baked fish with spices and prunes  | 3d  |
| Apple fritters                     | 1d  |
| Spiced Custard                     | 1d  |
| Private Room (per night)           | 10d |
| Dormitory Bed (per night)          | 3d  |
| Stabling (per night)               | 1d  |
| Bath                               | 2d  |
| Laundry (per item)                 | 1d  |

## Nayland

The small town of Nayland has 478 residents in the town itself, with another 60 or so in the nearby farmsteads. The wealth of the town has, over the past few centuries, been built upon the wool trade. The town itself only has a small area of farmland given over to the production of food, which is mainly imported from the nearby village of Wiston. The vast majority of the local land is used for the keeping of sheep and the resulting wool crop.

The processing and working of the wool is the main employment in the town, with most of the wool trade being controlled by a few rich merchants. The influx of cash has however made the town wealthy, with a fine 15<sup>th</sup> Century Church and a small but luxurious guildhall. There is no longer any Lord of the Manor, with that social position being taken by Sir Richard Alston.

There are several nearby villages, with Stoke-by-Nayland to the north east, Leavenheath to the north west (on the Sudbury road), Wiston to the west and Great Horkelesley to the south on the Colchester road.

There are several market towns nearby with Sudbury lying 10 miles to the north west, Hadleigh 9 miles to the north west and the great wool town of Lavenham 13 miles to the north. Dominating the area is the ancient walled city of Colchester, 7 miles to the south.

The countryside consists of gentle rolling hills with a few arable fields scattered between the open pasture and deciduous woodland. The countryside is criss-crossed by small tracks, rivers and streams. The land is fertile and green, and supports frequent smallholdings and farms.

There are a range of tradesmen and craftsmen in the village (and marked on the map):

|                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Inn – The White Hart | (see above)        |
| Blacksmith           | Richard Stocke     |
| Tanner               | Christopher Etkins |
| Butcher              | Robart Gyblet      |
| Baker                | Peter Kimppe       |

None of the above craftsmen will have any specific information regarding the investigation, and will have a standard range of items for sale.

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Othert MAP – REGION  
MAP + Guildhall

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## Other Encounters

The table below may be used to generate the occupants of houses visited at random, the identity of locals approached in the Inn, or encountered around the town. The GM must determine the details, and the numbers, but a column for their demeanour is also given.

These encounters have no specific information regarding the investigation, but the characters will not know that, and the Referee may use these to cause uncertainty.

| 1D100 Roll | ENCOUNTER                      | DEMEANOUR        |
|------------|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 01-10      | Tradesman (see above)          | Fawning          |
| 11-20      | Child                          | Friendly         |
| 21-30      | Woman                          | Drunk-friendly   |
| 31-40      | Shepherd                       | Pleasant         |
| 41-50      | Traveller (Referee determines) | Neutral          |
| 51-60      | Servant                        | Wary             |
| 61-70      | Wool-worker                    | Stand-offish     |
| 71-80      | Labourer                       | Irritated        |
| 81-90      | Weaver                         | Drunk-aggressive |
| 91-100     | Local Tough                    | Openly Hostile   |

## NON-PLAYER CHARACTER STATISTICS:

**Referee Note:** These statistics are placed together for ease of use. If the characters are particularly experienced, feel free to modify these appropriately.

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### Hugh Carter

|                |    |            |        |
|----------------|----|------------|--------|
| Attack Skill:  | 26 | Age:       | 26     |
| Defence Skill: | 22 | Living:    | Farmer |
| Knowledge:     | 34 | Wounds:    |        |
| Will:          | 15 |            |        |
| Endurance:     | 17 |            |        |
| Persuasion:    | 26 | Abilities: | None   |
| Perception:    | 16 |            |        |
| Speed:         | 22 |            |        |
| Agility:       | 14 |            |        |

These stats represent the effects of the curse on Hugh, which has reduced his Attack Skill, Defence Skill and Persuasion by 10 points, and his Will, Endurance, Perception, Agility and Speed by 20 points each.

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### Sir Richard Alston

|                |    |            |          |
|----------------|----|------------|----------|
| Attack Skill:  | 37 | Age:       | 42       |
| Defence Skill: | 41 | Living:    | Merchant |
| Knowledge:     | 51 | Wounds:    |          |
| Will:          | 36 |            |          |
| Endurance:     | 40 |            |          |
| Persuasion:    | 59 | Abilities: | None     |
| Perception:    | 44 |            |          |
| Speed:         | 33 |            |          |
| Agility:       | 36 |            |          |

Sir Richard was not born into the Nobility, only a wealthy Merchant family. However, his wealth and business contacts earned him powerful friends at court, and a knighthood. He had no wish to get involved with anything more than local politics, and is content to focus on his business interests, especially given he has no wife or children.

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## **William Howell**

|                |    |            |           |
|----------------|----|------------|-----------|
| Attack Skill:  | 40 | Age:       | 33        |
| Defence Skill: | 42 | Living:    | Innkeeper |
| Knowledge:     | 38 | Wounds:    |           |
| Will:          | 33 |            |           |
| Endurance:     | 42 |            |           |
| Persuasion:    | 44 | Abilities: | None      |
| Perception:    | 39 |            |           |
| Speed:         | 31 |            |           |
| Agility:       | 34 |            |           |

William Howell inherited the White Hart from his father, and has continued to manage it in the same way. A moderately successful business, it has provided a living for him, his wife, and their two young sons.

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## **Father Walterus Litle**

|                |    |            |                    |
|----------------|----|------------|--------------------|
| Attack Skill:  | 30 | Age:       | 24                 |
| Defence Skill: | 30 | Living:    | Priest             |
| Knowledge:     | 55 | Wounds:    |                    |
| Will:          | 48 |            |                    |
| Endurance:     | 32 |            |                    |
| Persuasion:    | 41 | Abilities: | Preaching 21       |
| Perception:    | 36 |            | Power over spirits |
| Speed:         | 31 |            | Deliverance 2      |
| Agility:       | 32 |            |                    |

Father Walterus was born in nearby Higham, and was trained at Cambridge University. He was offered the position of Parish Priest by Sir Richard, but secretly doubts he has the ability to be a good priest.

---

## **Old Mother Alice**

|                |    |            |              |
|----------------|----|------------|--------------|
| Attack Skill:  | 16 | Age:       | 74           |
| Defence Skill: | 21 | Living:    | Wisewomsn    |
| Knowledge:     | 48 | Wounds:    |              |
| Will:          | 44 |            |              |
| Endurance:     | 29 |            |              |
| Persuasion:    | 38 | Abilities: | As Herbalist |
| Perception:    | 46 |            |              |
| Speed:         | 25 |            |              |
| Agility:       | 20 |            |              |

Having lived in Nayland all of her life, Alice knows the town and its people intimately. She is both local healer and midwife, and, as such, is very loyal to the townspeople, and they to her.

### **Arnold Bozan – Thief**

|                |    |            |                        |
|----------------|----|------------|------------------------|
| Attack Skill:  | 37 | Age:       | 29                     |
| Defence Skill: | 39 | Living:    | Rogue (Thief) - Weaver |
| Knowledge:     | 32 | Wounds:    |                        |
| Will:          | 27 |            |                        |
| Endurance:     | 38 | Abilities: | Sleight of hand        |
| Persuasion:    | 34 |            |                        |
| Perception:    | 42 | Equipment: | Dagger (1-10)          |
| Speed:         | 37 |            |                        |
| Agility:       | 40 |            |                        |

Arnold Bozan actually lives in Colchester, where his family are weavers, but had visited Nayland to see what he could steal. He was trapped by the rain and the rising river, and has run out of money to pay for accommodation. He is thus fairly desperate to get some cash for food and a room.

### **Peter Butter – Thug Leader**

|                |    |            |                    |
|----------------|----|------------|--------------------|
| Attack Skill:  | 42 | Age:       | 24                 |
| Defence Skill: | 44 | Living:    | Rogue (general)    |
| Knowledge:     | 30 | Wounds:    |                    |
| Will:          | 32 |            |                    |
| Endurance:     | 41 | Abilities: | None               |
| Persuasion:    | 30 |            |                    |
| Perception:    | 36 | Equipment: | Dagger (1-10)      |
| Speed:         | 41 |            | Leather Jerkin (3) |
| Agility:       | 37 |            |                    |

Peter Butter was born and raised in Portsmouth, the illegitimate son of a Navy sailor. He grew up surrounded by hard drinking and hard fighting men. He naturally fell into a life of thuggery, but a run-in with the army meant he had to leave the port. Together with Jasper and Gilbert, his childhood cronies, he has been wandering the highways, making a living from muggings and strongarm work.

## **Jasper Crouse / Gilbert Spilman - Thugs**

|                |    |            |                 |
|----------------|----|------------|-----------------|
| Attack Skill:  | 37 | Age:       | 22 / 19         |
| Defence Skill: | 35 | Living:    | Rogue (general) |
| Knowledge:     | 30 | Wounds:    |                 |
| Will:          | 30 |            |                 |
| Endurance:     | 36 | Abilities: | None            |
| Persuasion:    | 30 |            |                 |
| Perception:    | 34 | Equipment: | Club (1-10)     |
| Speed:         | 35 |            |                 |
| Agility:       | 33 |            |                 |

Jasper and Gilbert are minor thugs. Not bright enough to carve out their own business, they follow Peter like sheep, and hit whoever he tells them to hit.

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## Nicolai Reynaldes

|                |    |            |         |
|----------------|----|------------|---------|
| Attack Skill:  | 38 | Age:       | 42      |
| Defence Skill: | 34 | Living:    | Witch   |
| Knowledge:     | 61 | Wounds:    |         |
| Will:          | 57 |            |         |
| Endurance:     | 35 |            |         |
| Persuasion:    | 30 | Abilities: | Cursing |
| Perception:    | 32 |            |         |
| Speed:         | 34 |            |         |
| Agility:       | 31 |            |         |

Born Nicholas Reynolds, Nicolai changed his name to appear more exotic. His father was a wealthy architect, but Nicholai ignored his academic studies when he discovered he was able to curse people. More investigation into the black and forbidden arts focused this ability, and he soon found a market for his talents. Noblemen wishing to do away with rivals, Merchants wanting to thin out the competition, and all by natural causes! Nicolai arrived recently in Nayland, just in time to be hired by Sir Richard.

Cursing – Cursing is an ability related to magical use, but which is limited to causing illness and discomfort to an enemy. The same 5 grades of curses are used, depending on the likelihood of the curse being natural. Thus giving someone a bad cold in the middle of winter might be a grade 1, but making a person's legs fall off spontaneously would be a grade 5. The one main limitation is that the curser needs to have something of the target, such as a nail clipping, lock of hair or bloodstained cloth. Curses disappear upon the death of the Curser. The only exception is if the caster curses as they die. They do not need a physical link, and the curse does not lift at death. The only way to remove a curse would be to see a mage or someone else with the cursing ability. They can remove a curse by casting a spell of one difficulty higher than the original curse. The curse on Hugh was a level 3 difficulty.

**Referee Note: If the players create their own characters, and one is a Mage, an attempt to remove the curse from Hugh will cause him intense pain, enough to convince the characters he will die if the attempt continues.**

## **Using the Pregenerated Characters**

There are four Pregenerated characters supplied with this adventure, which will enable you to get up and running very quickly. These characters are also well suited to this sort of adventure, and will provide most of the skills required. However, it is perfectly reasonable for the players to create their own characters if required.

If the pregenerated characters are used, the notes below provide a rationale for them being on the road together at Nayland:

Gilbert has hired Jasper Haywarde as a bodyguard, almost immediately after leaving the family home. He doesn't quite trust Jasper, although he seems more loyal than most mercenaries. Robert Slauter has been hired as a general servant and dogsbody. Gilbert knows about his larcenous past, and has been careful to keep temptation out of sight. Isabell Kente had also been travelling with Robert (they had a double act where she entertained the crowd with song, whilst Robert stole money pouches). Gilbert has reluctantly offered her a small wage to entertain him on the road, and start writing a ballad about him to present to his father when he returns home.

If Gilbert has not been chosen, then it is easy to have Robert and Isabell travelling with Jasper for safety.