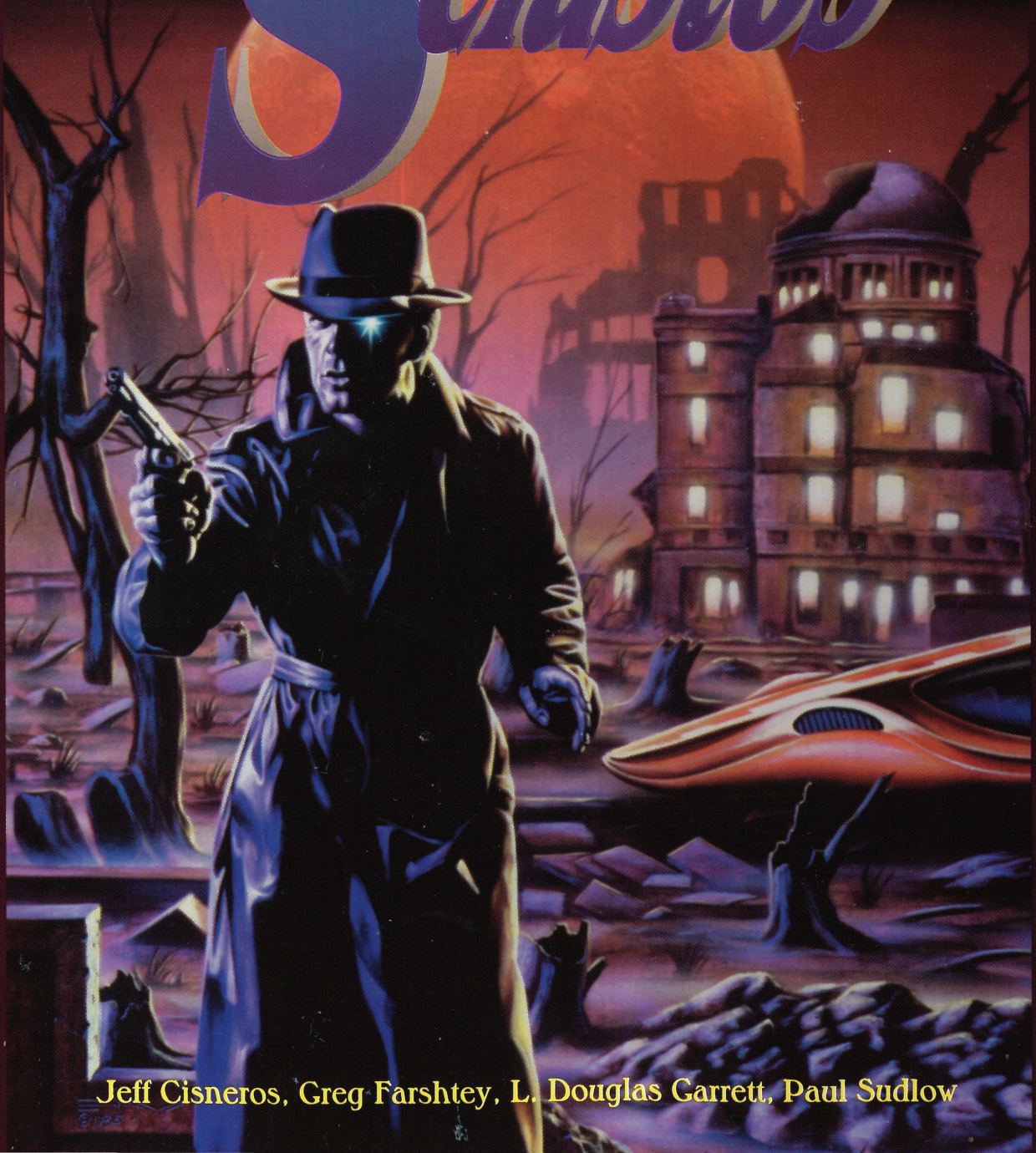


Shadows of Selastos



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Shadows of Selastos

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INTRODUCTION

Eddie Willis sat in an Oasis bar, nursing his fourth ale. It had been a particularly bad day — not that there were any really good days in the mines. Not when you were one of a handful of Humans stuck working in an airless hole with a bunch of stinking Undead.

The bartender shoved another glass in front of him. He didn't remember ordering it, but then, forgetting was what this was all supposed to be about, right? He dug into his pocket for a few coins, but the burly Hugor shook him off.

"Guy over there bought it," the bartender said slowly. "Wants to talk to you."

Eddie looked around. A sharpie in a custom-tailored suit lifted his glass in a mock salute and started over. His cologne reached Eddie about a minute before he did.

"Go ahead, drink up," the man said, a thin smile on his lips.

Eddie turned back to the bar. "I can buy my own booze. Thanks, anyway."

"Sure you can, sure you can," the man said, sitting down on the stool next to him. "Never thought you couldn't. But you look like a right guy — somebody who'd know to answer the door when opportunity's knocking."

Eddie didn't answer.

"Listen, Mac," the man continued, his voice dropping a register. "I'm looking for a guy like you to do a little job for me. Do it right, and there's a hundred in it for you."

That attracted Eddie's attention. He had to dig a lot of ore to make a hundred. He gave the guy a closer look — yeah, he looked like he could afford to drop a few *selasts*.

"What kind of job?"

"Nothing crooked, pal, I promise," the guy said, smiling again. "Just a little pick-up and delivery. You take this here package." He opened his jacket and flashed a small bundle wrapped in brown paper. "Bring it to a guy I know and



pick up something from him. Real simple.”

“How do I know you’re on the level?”

“Tell you what,” the guy said, drawing out his wallet and taking a bill from it. “Here’s fifty. You’ll get the other fifty when you get back. Okay?”

Eddie took the crisp fifty *selast* note in his hand. It was more money than he’d seen at once in a long, long time. Before he knew it, the guy had slipped him the package and was gone.

Suddenly, it felt like every eye in the room was on him. Eddie stood and tucked the package safely away in his coat pocket, then started for the door. He had never felt so conspicuous, as if everyone in the place knew what he was carrying and they’d all be waiting for him to come back.

The address he was supposed to go to was written in thick black ink on top of the package. The thing was heavy, whatever it was — for an instant, he was tempted to open it up. Maybe it was more dough, or jewels, or something he could sell ... but then he started thinking about the risks. If he opened it and the guy found out about it, he could kiss the rest of the money goodbye. *And maybe a whole lot else ...*

The address was an upscale house in Gaskill. Eddie looked nervously around him as he knocked on the door. His knuckles hadn’t rapped more than twice before the door opened, revealing a short, rotund little man dressed like an herb salesman.

“Come in, come in,” the man said, beaming. “Make yourself at home.”

Inside the house, it was bright and cheery. The furniture wasn’t plush, but it was comfortable. The rooms were well-lit, the windows covered with lace curtains, the whole place practically stood up and said “Welcome.” It made Eddie a little nervous.

His host must have noticed him looking around the room. The little man smiled and said, “Oh, yes, the furnishings. Well, I say if you’re going to decorate, you should try to make things as cheery as you can. Don’t you agree?”

Eddie mumbled something and held out the package. The little man chuckled and began to rip it open with his pudgy little fingers. Beneath the wrapping there was a cardboard box. Eddie watched, fascinated, as the man opened the box to reveal ... nothing.

“Hey,” Eddie said, eyes narrowed. “What the hell is going on here?”

With a shrug, the little man threw the box

over his shoulder. Then he reached out and seized Eddie’s arm in a fantastically strong grip. “Paid you for a delivery, did he?” he said, cheerfully. “That Blair — such a rascal! He works for me, you know — helps me find just what meets my needs.”

Now the little man smiled, revealing a pearly white set of fangs. “And guess what? Tonight, you’re it!”

With that, he began dragging Eddie across the room. The miner struggled and shouted, but it didn’t make any difference. The little man threw him on to the floor and then began fishing in a drawer for dropcloths.

“I know they’re here somewhere ...”

Eddie made a break for it. *Out the door, into the street*, he thought, *I can lose myself in the alleys ...*

He didn’t make it four steps. The little man pinned him to the ground. “That wasn’t very nice. I don’t want to have to tie you up, so behave yourself.”

“But you can’t —”

“Don’t be silly, of course I can.” The little man stood up and brushed himself off. “Don’t fool yourself, my boy. Just because I live in a comfortable little house, instead of a cobwebbed crypt, I’m no less interested in your blood. But after all, I didn’t like dark and dank tombs when I lived — why should I want to reside in one now? Now I’d appreciate it if you’d stop crying and act like a man.”

The little man opened another drawer, let out a little cry of delight, and took out a pristine white cloth. He laid the cloth on the floor near Eddie’s head and bent low, teeth bared.

Eddie finally managed a scream.

The little man winced. “Don’t be such a baby!” he scolded. “It only hurts for a minute!”

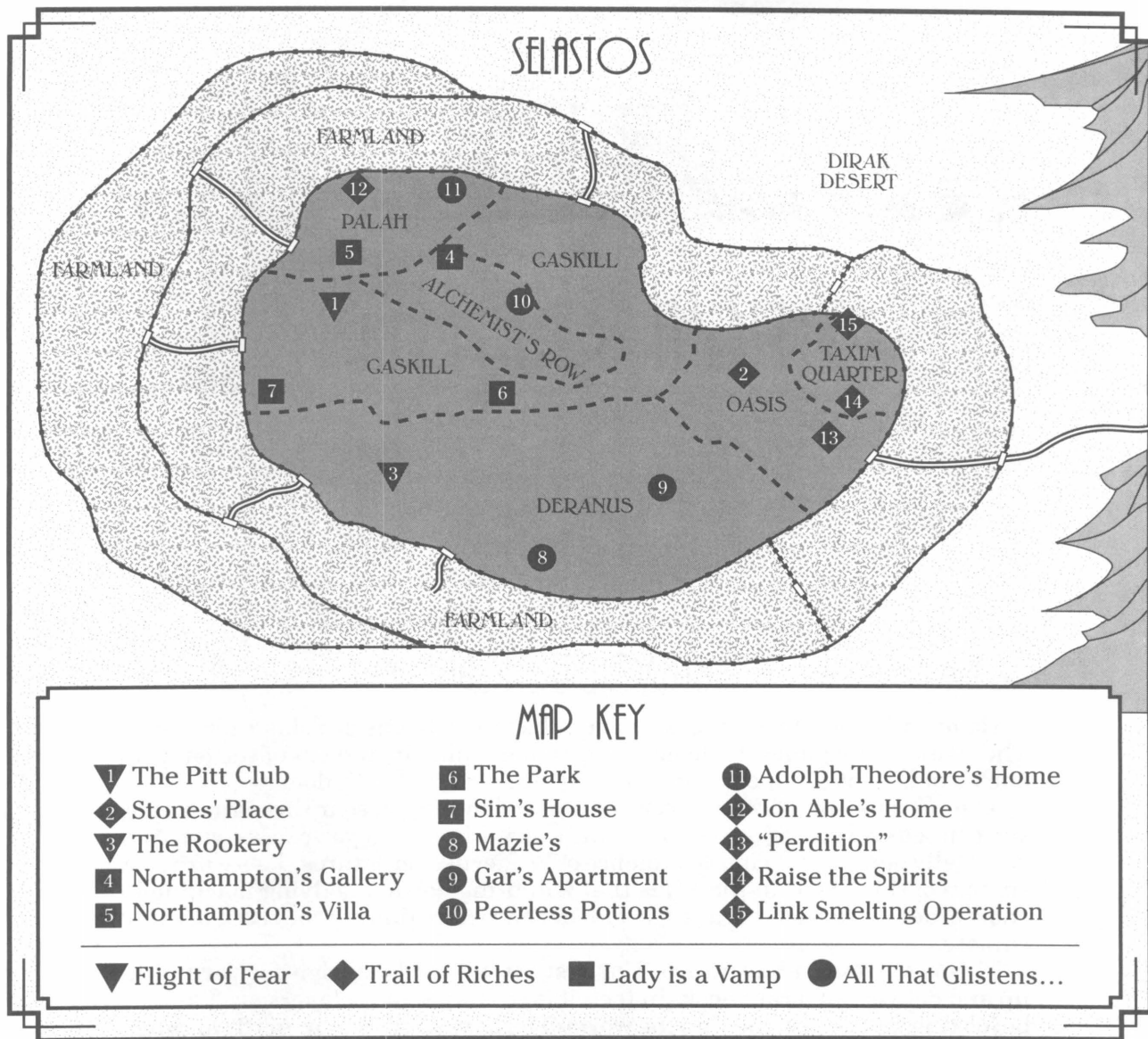
When it was all over but the scrubbing, there was a second knock at the door. This time, it was Blair.

“Everything go all right?”

“Yes. But that’s the third time you’ve used the ‘mysterious package’ this month. You need new material, my friend.”

Blair knelt down beside the cooling corpse of Eddie Willis. Being careful not to get blood on his hands, he reached into the dead man’s vest pocket and retrieved his 50 *selasts*.

“Tough luck, pal,” he said softly, in the only eulogy Eddie would get. “But that’s life in the big city.”



SECRETS OF SELASTOS

Selastos is a city of great opportunity — and greater dangers. Even as the demonically possessed Taxim dig gold out of the nearby mountains, the Big Rich work on ways to make more. Selastos is a fairly new city, but it's got the same old problems: crime, vice, greed, and an Undead population explosion that just won't quit.

Into the midst of all this walk your player characters in this, the first *Bloodshadows* adventure collection. From the mines of the Ranlus to the mansions of Palah, your party of adventurers will tackle dark and deadly mysteries and run up against muscle and magic in their quest for some semi-honest dough.

Before running the adventures in this book, it's recommended that you review Chapter Four, "Selastos," in *The World of Bloodshadows*. This will give you a basic overview of the city, its districts, its high- and lowlights, and the people who make it move. All of this will be a big help to you in guiding your players through the adventure in this book.

THIS VOLUME

This book contains four short adventures for use with *The World of Bloodshadows*, all of them set in the city of Selastos, as well as character templates. You will need *The World of Bloodshadows* and *MasterBook* to play.

CHAPTER
ONE

FLIGHT OF FEAR

INTRODUCTION

No one flies on Marl, at least no one that the citizens of Selastos know of. There are no dirigibles, balloons, or airplanes going in and out of the city. No one spends a lot of time wondering why not — it just isn't done.

The reasons are, of course, very practical ones: if you soar through the air, you can see everything below you ... and everything below you can see you. And you really don't want a mass audience of Wilderness creatures. There are also rumors of things out in the wilds that will bring down any flying machine in short order. In this adventure, the player characters find out the truth of those rumors.

This is a two-part adventure. The first act is a fairly straightforward pick-up and delivery of a rare book. In fact, it is so simple that players are likely to be looking for the hook behind the worm. The payback comes in Act Two, when the original owners of the book come looking for it.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Lamar Felanio heads one of the more powerful merchant cartels in Selastos. Though much of his business is legitimate, Felanio does not consider himself bound by legalities, and deals in black market goods as well. He is powerful enough to do so with impunity, and has friends in high places to ensure he is left alone.

But Felanio is not content with the current state of affairs. In an effort to get ahead of his competition, he has been investigating new methods of transportation, and has settled on air transport as a method of circumventing the hazards of the Wilderness. Various cults and organizations warn of similar



hazards in the air, but Felanio is a pioneer, and as long as the possibility exists that there is a more cost-effective way of transporting goods over land, he is the man to find it.

Felanio has spent the better part of a year sending agents hither and yon for ancient documents dealing with aerial gates (such documents are scarce, since flying is not a common pursuit). When at last one of his couriers located an extremely rare tome called the *Codex Celestia* (rare because it is thought by knowledgeable scholars to be relatively accurate) in far-off Gantherburg, he arranged to have it sent back to Selastos via Galitia.

The courier, Orlando DeMille, is due to arrive in the Selastos area via caravan in a few days. The *Codex Celestia* is in many ways as dangerous to possess as a flying machine, due to its great rarity and value among sorcerers. Felanio wants to keep possible competitors, and others who may desire the book for their own purposes, ignorant of the fact he owns it as long as possible. This means sending a group of outsiders to make the actual pick-up — people who have no way of knowing the value or significance of the book they transport.

ACT ONE: LITTLE ERRANDS

Read aloud or paraphrase:

The witch winds that have been whipping the palms ragged in past weeks have tired of their sport and bagged out of town, and you're beginning to suspect they've up and taken business with them. Oh, you've had a few one-nighters, enough to keep the landlord at bay and the cat fed, but pickings have been a mite slim of late.

Naturally, when that note came requesting your presence at the posh Pitt Club, 9 pm sharp this evening, bearing the signature of Lamar Felanio, you figured business and the witch winds had a big falling out.

Besides, you've wanted to get a look at the insides of a club so exclusive half of Palah is still waiting in line. From all reports, the Pitt's music is hot, its singers even hotter, and you figure the business contacts are probably hottest of all. Naturally, since you're not exactly the poster

FELANIO'S NOTE

Dear —.

Some of my associates speak well of you, and suggest you might be entrusted with a rather delicate matter. If you are interested in hearing how you may be of service to me, please contrive to be in the anteroom of the Pitt Club tonight at 9 o'clock, dressed formally. The doormen will allow you to pass if you give them as your name 'Grimwole.'

Since I realize such short notice might inconvenience you, I will be pleased to compensate you for your time — provided, of course, that you feel that your time is worth 50 selasts.

I look forward to meeting you. Pray be discreet regarding this matter.

Yours,

Lamar Felanio
Lamar Felanio

child of *Who's Who in Selastos*, you've kept a sensible distance. The Pitt's bouncers bounce pretty hard.

Each of the characters receives a letter by private post, postmarked the previous day. Inside the envelope is a note on fine vellum (see sidebar for text). The note was sent by Lamar Felanio, a noted businessman in Selastos. If the characters wish to discover something of Felanio before the appointed hour, see "Checking Out Felanio" below. Note that there is only so much they can learn in one afternoon.

SCENE ONE: AN EVENING IN THE PITT THE SITUATION

Standard. The characters have each received a note promising 50 selasts if they will discuss a possible job with Lamar Felanio at

the posh Pitt Club. There they learn the details of the job.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

The Pitt Club is a ritzy joint made up of piles of imported red marble and brass, filled with mirrors and fireplaces that gout illusory flames out onto the dancefloor. The idea was to create a little hotspot with a hell motif, and the non-Human bartenders, bouncers, and waiters sure help the theme along.

The owners sank a lot of money into the place, but it seems to be paying off. Some say they built it around the band, which probably isn't true but sure sounds plausible, since what really sells the place is the music. No one's heard anything like it in Selastos in recent memory. Kind of a driving dance beat that has the other clubs scrambling for musicians who can duplicate the sound. Word has it the band is from *way* out of town, which explains a lot.

As you step up the marble steps to identify yourselves to the impassive bodyguards at the door, you become aware of the envious glances directed at you by the Beautiful People gathered outside, the ones who aren't quite swank enough to make the grade. Looks like the evening isn't going to be a total waste of time, anyhow ...

The Pitt, though only a few months old, is rapidly becoming one of the hottest clubs in town. Its servers and bartenders are Succubi and Incubi, and its bouncers are mostly Elkest, with a few Hugors mixed in. Since many Humans are understandably nervous around such types, the club has an iron-clad rule that the help are not to molest the club guests in any manner, covert or overt.

Those who attract the professional attentions of the bouncers are not so protected, of course, nor are the hopefuls who flock about outside the club every night. *Camber Allens*, the band, plays every night except Monday, and is made up of Humans who are indeed a long way from home. They are very good musicians who make a living traveling to areas that have not yet been exposed to their style of music (they call it *zouk*). For now, they are content to work for Gant LeBlanc, the owner of the Pitt.

THE ACTION

The characters are greeted inside the marbled anteroom by a well-dressed and physically stunning young woman who introduces herself as Candice, an associate of their potential patron (she does not name names, and will stare meaningfully at those who do). Candice is Felanio's right hand woman and bodyguard, one of the few Felanio trusts completely. Candice does not look all that threatening (especially since she is currently using her *facade* spell to appear totally Human), but she is an accomplished martial artist and able combatant.

CANDICE

Species: Succubus

AGILITY 11

Acrobatics 12, climbing 12, dodge 13, maneuver 12, martial arts: gelgin 14, melee combat 13, melee parry 12, stealth 13, unarmed attack 13

DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 13 (pistol 14)

STRENGTH 8

ENDURANCE 8

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 9

First aid 10, perception 12

MIND 8

CONFIDENCE 11

Alteration: vitomancy 13, interrogation 13, intimidation 12, streetwise 14, willpower 12

CHARISMA 10

Charm 12, persuasion 12

Life Points: 6

Alignment: Order 1

Arcane Knowledges: Living forces 3

Spells: *Facade*

Equipment: Ashes to ashes switchblade, damage value STR+4/19; .38 Gelvash revolver, damage value 17, ammo 6; runeslugs (6), charged with *pain* spells.

Description: Candice is Felanio's main problem solver. She serves as his security chief, liaison, interrogator, assassin, spy, and occasionally, lover. Candice (people who call her "Candy" to her face rapidly become bruised) prides herself on escaping what she views as the self-limiting philosophy of her species, and has honed her body into a deadly fighting machine. She often appears to be cheerful and



Paul Daly

relaxed, but looks are deceiving. Candice never relaxes when on the job.

Candice is totally devoted to Felanio, who found her in the gutter years ago and took her under his wing. In public, she makes an effort not to use her powers and expose her Unnatural origins.

THE FAT MAN UPSTAIRS

Read aloud or paraphrase:

After a brief round of introductions, Candice herds you toward the stairs leading to the second level. You follow her up the stairs, onto a balcony overlooking the main dance floor, and into one of the plush private rooms which line the opposite wall.

Seated on a vast leather sofa is Felanio, staring up at you with an expressionless face. If they made 10,000 selast notes, Felanio's mug would be pasted all over them. It's just as well they don't, because his mug, like the rest of him, is rather repulsive. The man is immensely fat. Dressed in a wrinkled white tropical suit, Felanio is perspiring heavily, despite the

mild hurricane generated by the silently spinning ceiling fans. His little wire-rimmed glasses continuously slip down his nose, and he is forever pushing them back up.

Felanio invites the characters to sit in the leather chairs arrayed around his couch, while he slowly sips a *capacho* coffee and tells them what he want of them.

The errand, Felanio explains, is a relatively simple one. As an amateur historian, Felanio collects books describing other areas and cultures of Marl. Such books are understandably hard to come by, and the distance they are required to travel to reach him boosts their price immensely. A courier carrying such a book is due to arrive in the area in a few days, traveling with a large caravan. This man, one Orlando DeMille, is wanted dead by mob boss Norbert Rees for an offense committed years earlier.

The upshot is that DeMille sensibly refuses to enter the city when business brings him to Selastos. Instead, he camps in a clearing about five kilometers beyond the city walls. All the characters must do is travel out to the campsite, get the book from DeMille, and deliver it to Felanio, for a commission of 300 selasts each.



Felanio will answer all questions frankly. He knows the assignment sounds a bit too good to be true. But he is a wealthy man in a bind, and he's heard that the characters are professionals with a habit of taking on odd tasks. If pressed, Felanio admits he would have preferred to give the assignment to a member of his organization, but sadly observes that the arrival of the caravan ties up his more reliable employees, and that he would not trust the task to the roughnecks still available. Think of it, he says, as an audition. It gives him a chance to try out new talent. If the characters do a good job (and how could they not excel as such a simple task?), he may find other services they can perform for him. And everyone knows that Lamar Felanio is a generous patron.

If the characters agree to the deal, Felanio sketches the location of DeMille's usual campsite on a napkin, and tells them DeMille should be there for two days after the caravan arrives. His map indicates that the campsite is about five kilometers out of town, in a stand of huge boulders less than a kilometer off the road to the right. As he says, you can't miss it. He tells them that DeMille does

not know Felanio's name, and he wants the characters to keep it that way.

The characters are to return with the book to Felanio's headquarters, a sprawling warehouse complex in Deranus made up of an interconnecting network of flophouses, brothels, restaurants, tenant housing, shops, and warehouses, known as the Rookery. There the characters can exchange the book for their commissions. A *streetwise* or *Intellect* total of 9 means a character knows where the Rookery is—a 5 means the character has at least heard of it. Felanio will give directions to those who need them.

If they fail to report at the Rookery within three days, Felanio tells them, Candice will come looking for them. This is a situation best avoided, Felanio stresses, since Candice isn't so pleasant when she has to look for people (Candice favors the characters with a stunning smile).

Candice hands one of the characters an envelope. Felanio tells them to give it to DeMille in exchange for the book. The envelope is of fine vellum, and is sealed with red wax. If the characters should break the seal and look inside at some point, the envelope will be found to contain a promissory note drawn from the Alchemical Bank in Galitia for 10,000 selastos, in the name of Orlando DeMille. The note is worth a mint to DeMille, but is worthless to anyone else.

Lastly, Felanio will give each character the promised 50 selastos for coming to the interview. This is the extent to which Felanio will finance the venture until the book is delivered.

LAMAR FELANIO

Species: Human
AGILITY 7

Dodge 8, melee combat 10, unarmed combat 8

DEXTERITY

Fire combat 12

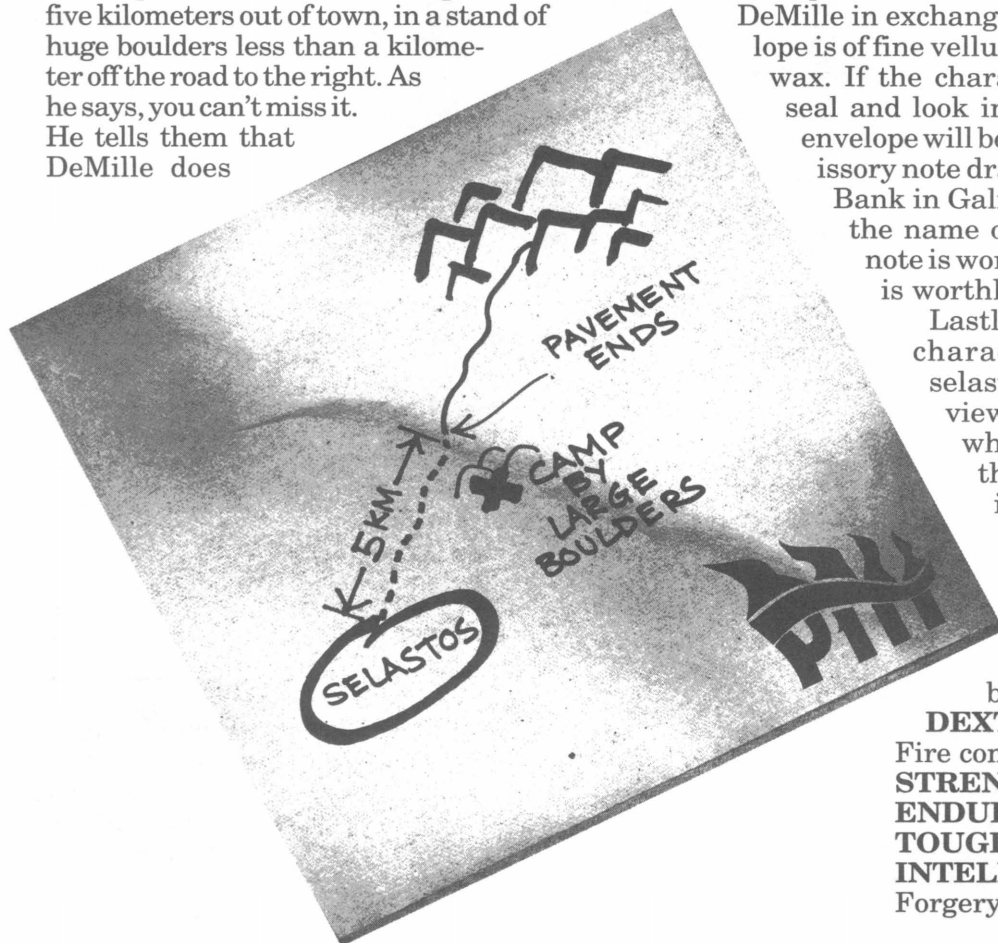
STRENGTH 8

ENDURANCE 8

TOUGHNESS 8

INTELLECT 13

Forgery 15, linguistics 16, navi-



gation 15, perception 18, smuggling 19

MIND 12

Business 18 (intercity commerce 20), cartography 14, language: Relkazar 13, research 16, scholar: Marl history 17

CONFIDENCE 12

Con 15, intimidation 14, streetwise 17, willpower 20

CHARISMA 11

Charm 15, persuasion 16, taunt 13

Life Points: 8

Alignment: Order 4

Equipment: .22 Delken, damage value 15, ammo 6; lightning cane; *revitalize* potion; 40,000 selasts in cash

Background Notes: Lamar Felanio came to Selastos 45 years ago as a caravan drover, and stayed on to forge a formidable trading empire. In his younger days he traveled extensively, establishing new trade routes, making ties with customers and clients across the region, and pursuing his first love, history and the collection of antique history books and maps. Now, he remains in his luxury suite in the Rookery, and directs his network from there. He has more time for his hobbies now, and has learned Relkazar to broaden his research horizons.

Felanio's wife, son, and daughter-in-law died four years ago in a traffic accident. He has chosen his chief lieutenant Candice to be his successor, but she lacks the canny business instinct necessary for the job.

Roleplaying Notes: Felanio is a charming and generous host and patron if paid the proper respect, but a ruthless competitor and implacable enemy. He does not dabble in magic. He hires others to do it for him. Indeed, he dislikes doing work himself, and will delegate as much as possible to others. Fortunately, he is an excellent judge of character, and surrounds himself with able subordinates.

Felanio has ties in the business and criminal communities of Selastos, and has managed to remain on relatively good terms with the powers of the city. His great dream is to develop a trading empire second to none.

CUT TO...

When the characters are ready to tackle this job, cut to Scene Two.

SCENE TWO: MILK RUN THE SITUATION

Standard. The characters may opt to investigate Felanio, and/or travel beyond the city walls to rendezvous with Orlando DeMille. On the way back, they encounter a small group of krads and (hopefully) fight them off.

CHECKING OUT FELANIO

It is likely that the characters will want to investigate Felanio a bit before taking on the job, if only to see what they are getting into. Obtaining basic information on Felanio himself is not particularly difficult, since he is such a prominent figure in the city. Characters may use their contacts (bartenders, streetsingers, hotel dicks, and so on) and assorted skills to assemble a profile of Felanio and his activities and operations if they wish. A brief investigation will yield the information provided under Felanio's profile above.

As far as the story Felanio told the characters is concerned, every word is true. Felanio is an amateur historian, insofar as his interest in geography and new markets takes him. It is also true that the arrival of the next caravan will keep Felanio's employees busy for the next week. His only lie is one of omission: his true motivation in sending the characters out to pick up the book is to prevent both DeMille and his lackeys from learning he possesses the *Codex Ceslestia*.

A streetwise total of 8 will verify that Norbert Rees did indeed have a public and severe falling out with a trader-merchant named Orlando DeMille regarding a deal that soured. He gave DeMille an hour to get out of town, and told him if he ever found him within the city walls again, he'd have the man slain and reanimated just enough to shovel muck. Rees does not care if DeMille skulks outside the city in the brush, so attempts to blackmail Felanio or curry favor with Rees will not succeed.

THE ACTION

Read aloud or paraphrase:

For the past few hours, the dust trail of the approaching caravan has been vis-



ible from the city walls to the east. The marketplaces in Gaskill have been filled with the clamor of frantic activity as merchants shout to one another and hammer at crates bound for Galitia or beyond, or haggle over prime bidding spots at the auction houses. By the looks of things, the head scouts of the column will be sleeping in town tonight, and the rest will be flooding Gaskill and Oasis sometime tomorrow, as soon as the boys at the gates are through with them. At least, that's what the streetsingers seem to think, and they're usually right.

According to Felanio, this is the caravan that Orlando DeMille is traveling with. Provided DeMille is following the same game plan as Felanio, he will be splitting off from the main caravan later and heading for his own little campsite, which means he'll be expecting you tomorrow or the next day.

You've heard that little 'daytrips' outside the city aren't too dangerous as long as you stay within sight of the city walls. You've also heard of guys being turned inside out by flickering shadows a hundred paces from the gate, bloodfly swarms overwhelming eloping lovers, and of the occasional decapitated heads that try to walk back into the city without their bodies. Of course, those tales are probably exaggerated ...

The popular culture of Selastos is saturated with cautionary tales about the dangers of traveling outside the city. But the characters don't have a lot of choice in this situation, and should be all right as long as they eschew heavy transports, which might attract queskworms.

Depending on how blasé the characters are about traveling overland, they may decide to stroll out the gate with a few guns and water bottles, or they may seek to provision themselves as if they were preparing for a trip to Galitia. Preparing for the latter case may better help the characters evade or best the krads.

If the characters venture forth immediately on the first day, they can avoid the chaotic mess at the gates that always ensues with the arrival of a caravan, and the possibility of being caught up in a battle with queskworms.

They will also miss the news brought by the scouts that krad tracks and droppings were found less than two leagues away.

Those who tarry in town a day won't be able to avoid the news, since streetsingers will be belting it out for hours. (See below for details on krads, and share the information with the players, since krads are relatively common menaces in the Dirak Desert.)

RENDEZVOUS

People who spend a lot of time within Selastos tend to forget they are living in the middle of some pretty rugged terrain. The many gardens and irrigated fields of the city generate a level of humidity not natural to the region, and the high walls of the city trap the humid air in. Once the characters are past Selastos' walls, they will immediately notice how dry and hot the air is. It is also refreshingly clear of the smog generated by Selastos' industries, and the faint smell of ozone common to areas where a great deal of magic (particularly alchemy) is worked day in and day out.

The road leading out of town is broad and paved in concrete. It runs due east, twisting and winding through the desert scrub before disappearing into the Pendar mountains. The terrain is rocky and dusty, and the vegetation is sparse and limited to cacti, weeds, and a few strains of dried-out scrub oaks. A few birds can be seen wheeling in the sky, but otherwise the area is very quiet and still. The characters may find this ominous or reassuring. In any case, nothing will befall them on their way out to the campsite.

About five kilometers outside of town, the fine road of concrete plates tapers off into a hard-packed and deeply rutted gravel path, marking the official outer limit of the city's road maintenance program. Just as Felanio promised, there is a large cluster of huge boulders less than a kilometer to the south at this point, on the other side of a rather rocky stretch of difficult terrain.

(Note that the gate to Galitia does not lie in the middle of the paved road — otherwise everyone who ever left the city would know it was there.)

The approach to the boulders cannot be navigated by car or wagon. The way is too



THE CODEx CESLESTIA

The *Codex Ceslestia* was written many hundreds of years ago. No one knows who wrote it, but many scholars familiar with it maintain it was written by a Relkazar while in Human form. Since it is written in an ancient form of the Relkazar language, this seems a safe conclusion.

It is an extremely rare tome, and focuses on the exploration of trans-dimensional gates fixed high in the sky. It plots the location of hundreds of these gates, and theorizes that these were the first gates to come into existence during the Godwar a millenium ago. Most of these gates are very, very far away from Selastos.

Physically, the book is obviously an antique, bound in aged and cracked reptilian leather. The leather is tooled in a complex design of arcane symbols. The interior is a confusing morass of cryptic script and strange illustrations consisting of arcs, circles, and angles.

Those who can read the contemporary Relkazar language (requiring the *language: Relkazar* skill) and have the time can attempt to read the book. The book will take three full days of devoted time to read, after which time the reader must make a *language: Relkazar* roll to determine how much he or she learned. A total of 15 enables them to gather only that the book is about aerial gates, and that the illustrations show the locations of gates in the sky. Those who make a roll of 19 grasp the general flow of the book (though the specifics are too technical for those lacking a background in arcane lore). Those who make a roll of 22 will also discover that, according to the book, there is a ancient gate just a few kilometers from Selastos, hovering at 1000 meters.

This particular copy of the *Codex Ceslestia* is owned by the Tangrel Order of Gantherburg. The Order jealously guards this tome because the knowledge within is potentially very dangerous, and will do anything to get it back.



rocky and uneven for anything but the sure footing of a person or trained mount. The trip takes about an hour. Small, dusky orange lizards can be seen sunning themselves on rocks, and every now and then the characters might glimpse a deep furrow of crushed rock signifying the passing of a queskworm. A *perception* or *Intellect* roll of 8 allows a character to notice an occasional grouping of droppings which obviously came from a rather large animal. These are krad droppings.

As the characters near DeMille's campsite, a thin trail of smoke can be detected emerging from the great rocks ahead. In the center of the boulders is a small dun tent, sheltered from the wind by a particularly grand rock which towers 18 meters over the camp. Tethered near the tent is a mule, DeMille's mount.

Sitting before a small cookfire in the center of the camp is Orlando DeMille. He is cleaning a submachine gun, and waiting for the contents of a tin pot on the fire to come to a boil. He looks up expectantly and a bit nervously when the characters make their presence known.

DeMille is nervous because he saw krad tracks earlier in the day. He is anxious to deliver the book and be off again (he does not intend to wait for the caravan to leave the city). He will be brusque and all-business with the characters, and say nothing about the krads.

The exchange should go without a hitch. DeMille doesn't care who the characters are working for, and won't ask. He hands the





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characters a thick, heavy package, obviously a book well-wrapped in cloth and thin wooden plates. When DeMille receives his envelope, he immediately opens it and examines the contents. If the characters have opened it, he will look sharply at them, but will not comment. As the characters leave, they notice that DeMille has already begun breaking camp.

ORLANDO DEMILLE

Species: Human

AGILITY 9

Beast riding: horse 12, climbing 11, dodge 15, maneuver 10, stealth 13, unarmed combat 11, unarmed parry 12

DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 14

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 8

INTELLECT 10

Camouflage 12, first aid 12, linguistics 13, navigation 13, perception 14, tracking 15

MIND 7

Cartography 13

CONFIDENCE 9

Intimidation 12, smuggling 14, streetwise

13, survival: desert 13, survival: mountains 12

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 10

Life Points: 4

Alignment: None

Equipment: Dagger, damage value STR+4/19; Skandra "Annihilator" submachinegun, damage value 17, ammo 30; 6 *thunder* potions; crystal set; camp equipment

Description: DeMille is a merchant who specializes in small cargoes of value to collectors, often books, coins, statues, and such. He has a large number of clients throughout the region, many of whom maintain a discreet and anonymous distance. He doesn't have much to say to the flunkies who usually make the pickups and deliveries, as long as the payments are prompt and as agreed.

THE KRAD ATTACK

As the characters make their way back to the road, a single krad begins to track them. Allow each character to make a *perception* roll. Those who beat the krad's *stealth* value will detect it creeping from rock to rock some 70 meters back.

The creature has not yet decided whether the group is tasty enough to warrant summoning its fellow pride members, and is tracking them while it makes up its small mind.

If the characters can eliminate it suddenly, it will fail to raise the alarm, and they can escape the pride entirely. In this case, the characters will hear the faint chatter of a machine gun coming from their rear just as they reach the road, followed by a few echoing booms. The pride has found DeMille (who will manage to fight them off, since he has a further role to play in the adventure).

If they flee the lone krad, openly close to do battle, or do nothing, it will trill loudly, summoning its five fellows, who will arrive from different directions over the next five minutes. They will gather some distance away, then close for the attack.

STANDARD KRAD (6)

AGILITY 10

Dodge 12, long jumping 12, maneuver 11, running 13, stealth 12, unarmed combat 11

DEXTERITY 12

ENDURANCE 6

STRENGTH 12

TOUGHNESS 12

INTELLECT 8

Perception 10, tracking 11

MIND 4

CONFIDENCE 6

Willpower 8

CHARISMA 4

Life Points: 1

Natural Tools: Thick scales, armor value TOU+2/14; claws, damage value STR+3/15; teeth, damage value STR+2/14

Description: Krads are desert-dwelling carnivorous lizards the size of small Humans. They move about on their hind legs, though they often use their forearms to help them move stealthily. Their scaled skins are a mottled yellow and ochre, and their large eyes a brilliant green. Krads can run rather fast in short bursts, and are very aggressive animals.

Krads travel in prides of three to five adults with as many adolescents and babies. They are nomadic, and follow the movements of their prey (which sometimes includes Humans).

When hunting, krads will fan out over a large area. A krad which discovers a possible meal will emit a loud trilling alarm, which will bring the

others running. They shy away from large groups of people, but will nonetheless shadow such a group, hoping to pick off stragglers.

CUT TO...

Once the characters have disposed of the krads and returned to Selastos, cut to Scene Three, "Tea at the Rookery."

SCENE THREE: TEA AT THE ROOKERY

THE SITUATION

Standard. The characters deliver the *Codex Ceslestia* to Candice at Felanio's headquarters in Deranus and receive their payment.

The Rookery is the warehouse complex owned by Felanio. It sprawls over two city blocks, and is a network of houses, warehouses, barns, inns, and shops. From the street, and even within the shops that surround the Rookery, there is no sign of the warehouses within. The alleys and rear courtyards end in barred gates and walls. Externally, the buildings are rather rundown and nondescript, as befitting their location in Deranus. So too are the businesses located on the street.

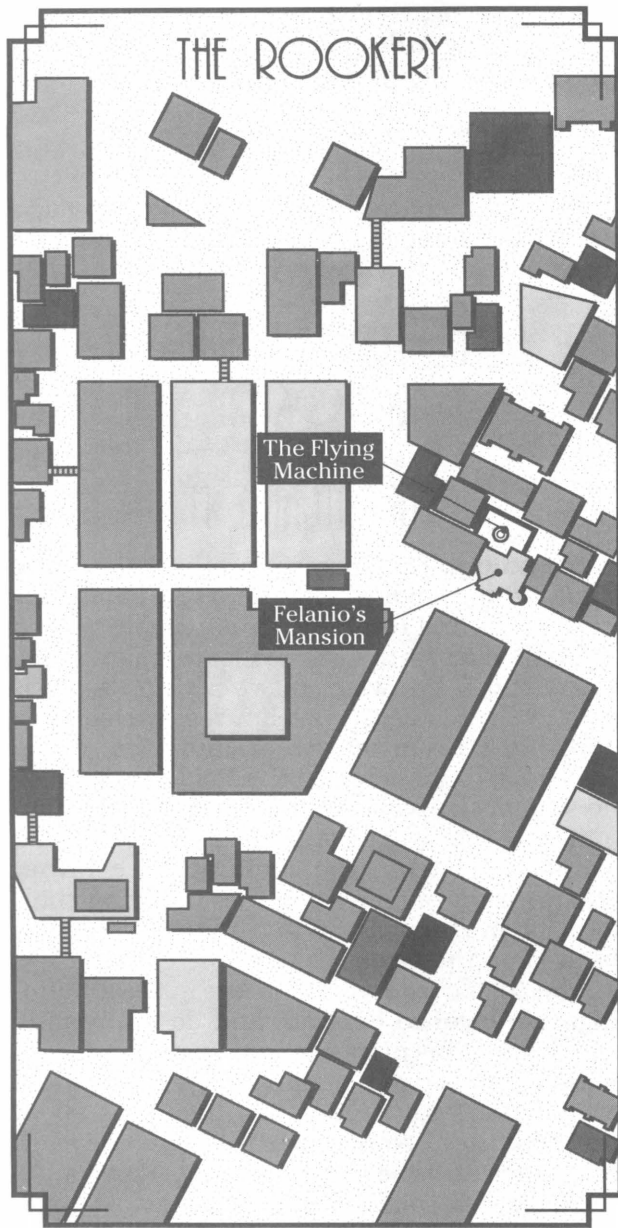
The people who work and live in these buildings are loyal to Felanio, and do not readily speak about his presence in their midst. Those not fully involved in his shipping concerns and other affairs are steadfastly incurious about his activities. Nonetheless, those active in commerce and the underworld do know of the Rookery. The place is one of Selastos' "open secrets."

THE ACTION

The characters may approach the Rookery from any of the buildings surrounding it. They will be intercepted within by a team of guards, who will call inside via hand-held crystal sets to verify that the characters have business within. After a brief wait, another guard will arrive, and escort the characters inside.

The party passes through the rear court-





yard of the establishment, and enters a network of buildings bustling with commerce and well-ordered chaos. Felanio's army of teamsters and dockworkers have turned out to receive the caravan, and are now loading and unloading merchandise. The warehouses and accessways are stacked to the rafters with crates and barrels, and wagons and trucks pack the narrow alleys.

The characters are escorted into a maze of buildings and alleys, past two more check-

points, a department of accountants tracking shipments, a team of technicians seated behind large crystal sets, and are finally ushered into a large brick building. The inside of the building is richly and luxuriously appointed. Carpets line the marbled floors and walls, and potted palms line the walkways. Fine paintings and statuary are everywhere, and from somewhere within comes the faint echo of music being played on a Gerantz turntable.

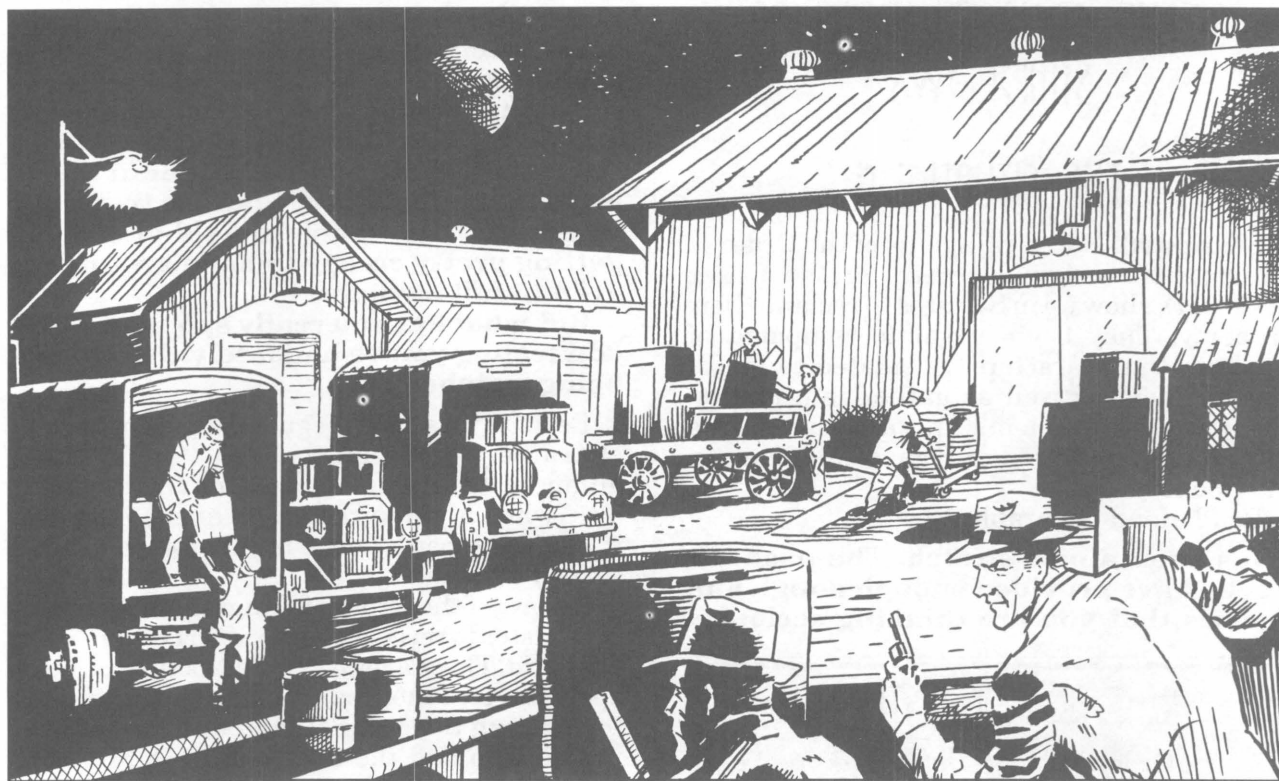
This inner sanctum is the domain of Lamar Felanio. The characters are met in the foyer by Candice, who accompanies them to a small dayroom of wicker and imported pine. Felanio is seated in a large chair, and loudly welcomes the characters. He is obviously very excited, and eagerly asks them if they have the book. He opens the package with trembling hands, and beams and makes soft "oohing" noises as he leafs through its pages. Candice silently serves the characters tea while he does so. Characters who think to examine the book from across the room can readily see that it is in a foreign script.

When Felanio recovers, he expresses his appreciation for the work the characters did, and listens with interest to their description of what occurred. At the end of the interview, he gestures, and Candice gives each character a fat envelope containing the promised 300 selasts. Felanio thanks them again for their work, and regrets that he has work to do. He says he may well contact the group for further work in the future. Candice escorts the characters out to the street and bids them farewell.

CUT TO...

At this point, award the characters two Life Points for a successful venture. It's recommended that, at this point, you move on to the other adventures in this book to allow for the passage of some time in the game universe. Then return here and run the characters through Act Two.

Alternatively, and if your players are in agreement, you can just say "A number of months pass" and let the players choose how their characters spend the time (improving skills, etc.)



ACT TWO: FELANIO'S FOLLY

Several months pass between the first and second acts. The characters have probably spent their payment and moved on to other business. In a campaign setting, several adventures can take place between the two acts.

If you are going to play other adventures between the two acts, it's recommended that Felanio be developed as an occasional patron for the characters, to develop in them a sense of good will towards him, and a desire to maintain good relations. Remember that Felanio is very generous with those who serve him, and may pay in information, favors, and equipment as well as cash. He is not likely to take a personal interest in the characters beyond his business dealings with them, however, since he has hundreds of full-time employees to manage. Above all, he does not do anything for free, and will resent attempts by the characters to take advantage of him.

Felanio has spent the last few months developing a flying machine capable of transporting large cargoes through the air, avoid-

ing the Wilderness hazards. He has hired a number of technomages to build his machine, and they are nearly finished with the prototype. During the interim, the characters may discover hints about his activities, especially if they spend time at the Rookery working for him. Gamemasters may reveal and further develop this information as they see fit:

- He has been seen consulting with a number of scholars, mages, scientists, and craftsmen in the past few months.
- He has been investigating new routes between cities and is seriously researching new gates, in an obvious effort to get ahead of his competition.
- Unmarked cargo has passed into the inner sanctum of the Rookery in past months.

The second act should begin while the characters are still involved in other adventures in Selastos. Only as the hauntings of the Nocturnes become overt should the characters realize that something altogether unrelated to their present activities is occurring.

SCENE ONE: JUMPING AT SHADOWS

THE SITUATION

Standard. Nocturne agents of the Order of Tangrel (the original owners of the *Codex Ceslestia*), show up in Selastos to reclaim their property. They begin a subtle campaign of tracking the characters, calculated to instill fear in them as well as gather information about their movements and associates. The characters are driven to Felanio's hideout in the Rookery.

Read aloud of paraphrase:

It's been a nice stretch. The past few weeks have provided enough dough and bruises that you are thinking seriously

THE ORDER OF TANGREL

The Order of Tangrel is an Oathbreaker (Order) cult based in Gantherburg, a large city located deep within a pine forest some 800 kilometers south of Selastos. The existence of the Order is a secret even in that region, and is unheard of in Galitia and Selastos (few in Selastos have heard of Gantherburg, for that matter).

The goals of the Order are to catalog and document the existence and location of stable gates, and to keep that knowledge from the world at large, believing the gates to a necessary precursor to the resumption of the Godwar. Most of the Order's members are sorcerers, and the Order serves as a school in sorcery for its new and junior members.

The Nocturnes are Tulpa who serve the Order, and travel from city to city tracking down leads on books and maps concerning gates. When a desired item is found, the Nocturne attempts to obtain it. Failing that, the Order dispatches a senior sorcerer to claim it, by any means necessary. The members are generally peaceful people, but fanatical in pursuit of their goals. For them, the end justifies the means.

about taking a nice long vacation. Especially lately. Weird rumors are floating around town about horrible shapes lurking in the shadows, following folks home, and doing who knows what to them. The streetsingers are really on edge out there, and the sentinels have taken to traveling in groups. The whole neighborhood is getting pretty creepy to hang around in, even in full daylight.

But what has you really spooked is the odd feeling you've had lately that you're being watched ...

Eerie things have begun happening in the characters' neighborhoods. People have glimpsed terrifying apparitions in the shadows (when a Vampire cringes at the memory, it *has* to be bad), and a number of folk have turned up dead.

Agents of the Order of Tangrel have arrived in Selastos to recover their property, the *Codex Ceslestia*. These agents, Tulpa Nocturnes, have spent several months tracking down and interrogating the original thief and the various people who had the book before DeMille obtained it. Fresh from an interview with DeMille, the Nocturnes have gated to Selastos, and are seeking the people who obtained the book from DeMille.

THE ACTION

After a few days combing the city, the Nocturnes have located their quarry, and have begun shadowing the characters as they go about their business (there are 12 Nocturnes in all).

For each day, allow the characters two or three *perception* rolls. If they roll a 12 or higher, they have the itchy, uneasy feeling they are being watched, but will not be able to determine who or what is watching them unless they also beat the Nocturne's *stealth* total. In that case, they witness a horrible apparition lurking in the shadows, which fades from sight as soon as it is seen.

Like standard Tulpa, a Nocturne who remains in the same area for a time begins to infect that locale with his or her fear. It is this fear that is affecting folks on the street, and the bad karma is getting worse every day. Everyone passing through the immediate

neighborhoods in which the characters live suffers an *intimidation* attack for every round they spend in the area. On the first day the Nocturnes settle in, the *intimidation* attack's value is 8. For each passing day, the value will increase by +1. Needless to say, the neighborhood will be thinning out some pretty soon, and business for the characters will be drying up, since no one is willingly frequenting their traditional digs (offices, bars, and so on).

As the oppressive feelings of their neighborhoods grows, the characters will begin to realize that these feelings are localized to the areas around their houses and apartments. A few steps away, just around the corner, and all is well again. That this is the case for every character should suggest to them that they are the quarry for whatever unwholesome thing has settled in Selastos.

Once the group has put this together, go on to the next section.

TANGREL NOCTURNE

Species: Tulpa

AGILITY 9

Climbing 10, dodge 11, running 12, stealth 15, unarmed combat 11, unarmed parry 11

DEXTERITY 8

ENDURANCE 8

Resist shock 9

STRENGTH 7

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 10

Deduction 11, divination: necromancy 12, navigation 12, perception 14, tracking 15

MIND 9

CONFIDENCE 12

Interrogation 15, intimidation 14, streetwise 13, survival 13

CHARISMA 8

Shapeshifting 12

Life Points: 4

Alignment: None

Arcane Knowledges: Death 2

Spells: *Speak with dead*

Natural Tools: The Tangrel Tulpa naturally shapeshift into whatever forms those around them fear most. They can teleport, and inspire fear in others, gaining +5 to all *intimidation* and *interrogation* against those in a one meter radius (this can be overcome by a *will-power* or *Confidence* total of 12). They can also become intangible for short periods of time.



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For more information on Tulpa, see pages 27–28 of *The World of Bloodshadows*.

Equipment: Dagger, damage value STR+4/19; Vapor of Passivity; Tangrel Crystal

Description: The Tulpa known as the Tangrel Tulpa, or more simply the Nocturnes, excel in their roles as sapient hounds who sniff out information of interest to their Tangrel masters. They can silently slip into the most impregnable, isolated fortress, obtain the desired information from those both living and dead, and report back to Gantherburg in a matter of days.

The Tangrel Tupla are virtually identical to their cousins more common on this continent, but tend to be somewhat weaker than “normal” Tupla. Nocturnes can become intangible for short periods of time. Other Tulpa refer to Nocturnes as mutant mongrels. Nocturnes are extremely rare in this area of Marl.

THE NOCTURNES STRIKE

Once the Nocturnes feel they’ve sufficiently spooked the characters, they close in for their questioning. Late at night, as each character is slumbering, a Nocturne will pay him or her a visit, during which it will attempt to extract information regarding the *Codex* with all the means at its disposal. The scene plays best if the gamemaster takes each player aside in turn to play this scene out. Keep in mind that most characters are not primed for combat when asleep in their pajamas. Also note that the Nocturnes are loaded for bear, and it is unlikely that the characters will be able to resist them. They are very good at what they do.

If an interview fails to pan out for any reason, the Nocturne will teleport outside and be gone, to try again the next night, when its grip of fear on the neighborhood has grown stronger.

The Nocturne will close in on its quarry late in the evening (or alternative sleeping time if the character has nocturnal habits), and keep watch on the building until the very early hours of the morning. At that time, it will phase into the character’s bedroom, and creep up to his or her bedside, still insubstantial. It will then phase back in, quickly slap a cloth saturated with vapor of passivity over the mouth of the character (successful *unarmed combat* attack). It will then proceed with the interrogation when the drug takes hold, using its *intimidation* skill and bonus (the gamemaster may deem additional bonuses appropriate, considering the situation, and the likelihood that the character is sleeping in an area already imbued with fear). Once the character is cowed, it will proceed to *interrogate* him or her. The drug basically robs the character of his or her initiative, but leaves his or her mind clear enough to answer questions.

The Nocturne will ask what the character

knows about the *Codex Ceslestia*, and who the group gave it to. Since several months have probably passed since the job, and since the characters probably have not heard the book referred to by name, they may have trouble answering the question. After shaking the character around a bit, the Nocturne will rephrase the question, asking him or her what he or she did with the book Orlando DeMille gave the group.

Once the Nocturne has an answer, it will drag the disarmed character outside, and toward a rendezvous location in the blasted remains of a deserted tenement in Deranus. There the character will be left in a corner (with the other characters who have likewise been corralled), while the Nocturnes confer in low, whispery voices. If the characters gave conflicting answers in their individual interviews, the interrogations will continue until the Nocturnes know that Felanio has the *Codex*.

At this point, the Nocturnes will try *intimidating* the characters one last time and warn them to stay away from Felanio and the *Codex* in future, if they know what’s good for them. The Nocturnes will then teleport away, in search of Felanio.

A TIME OUT

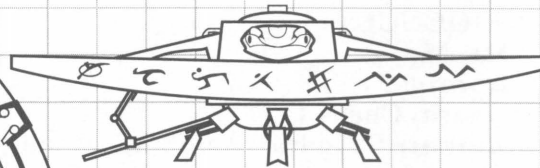
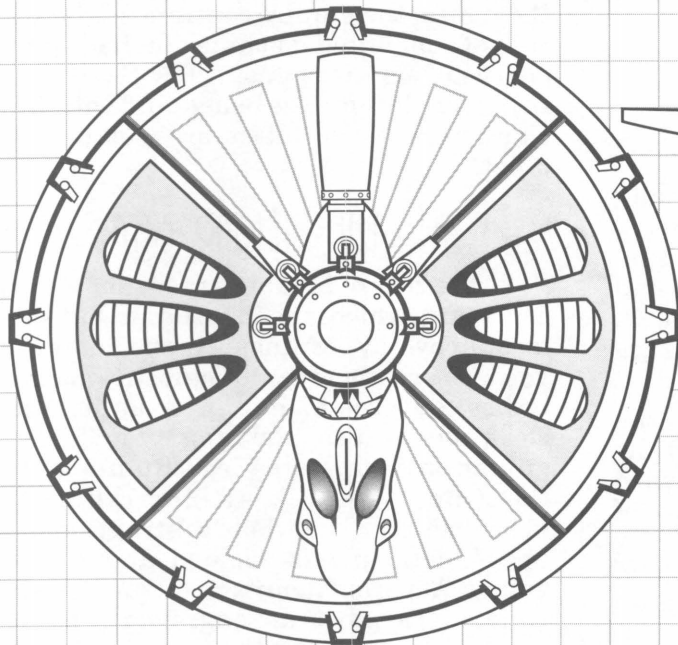
If Felanio has been developed as a patron of the characters, they will likely head for the Rookery to warn him that trouble is on the way. Even if that is not the case, it would be prudent to tell him that they were forced to betray him and offer to help undo the damage, because if he beats off the Nocturnes, he will be looking for their hides. Their only other option then will be to get out of town and stay out for the next 30 years or so.

The characters may not head directly to the Rookery, however. If not, the gamemaster should hold off the events of the climax until they arrive. Who knows how long it will take the Nocturnes to discover Felanio’s location and assemble their assault force?

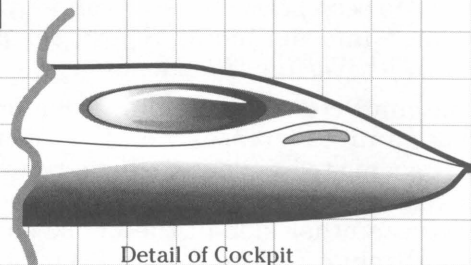
CUT TO...

When the characters are ready to go to the Rookery, cut to Scene Two, “The Battle of the Rookery.”

THE FLYING MACHINE



Side View



Detail of Cockpit

SCENE TWO: THE BATTLE OF THE ROOKERY

THE SITUATION

Dramatic. While in the Rookery, the characters become involved in a battle between Felanio's men and the Order of Tangrel. The entire complex is overrun, and the characters are pressed back to the berth of the still-untested aircraft Felanio has been building.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

As you enter the Rookery, you see no sign of the usual shopkeepers and guards. The usual sounds of men and trucks in the inner alleys and garages is absent. The only sounds you can make out are faint screams and the chatter of gunfire coming from somewhere ahead. A strange, musky odor permeates the air.

The Nocturnes have infiltrated the complex, along with a band of Sketh they recruited in Selastos. Together, the Nocturnes and Sketh are doing a fine job of scaring the daylights out

of the Rookery's inhabitants, and bringing chaos to the place as they close in on Felanio. The intruders are making excellent use of their special abilities to inflict damage and avoid injury, and have already killed several dozen of Felanio's workers and bodyguards.

As the characters move deeper into the Rookery, they see bloody bodies sprawled on the pavement and in the offices. Occasionally, muddled workers will race by, but will not be able to tell anyone what they are fleeing. Always ahead are the sounds of battle and the screams of terrified men.

The characters encounter a team of ram-paging Sketh on their way to Felanio's abode, who will close to do combat. They will first attempt to strike and confuse their targets, then backpedal to use their weapons.

SKETH MARAUDERS

Species: Sketh

AGILITY 13

Climbing 14, dodge 15, maneuver 17, running 15, stealth 19, unarmed combat 17, unarmed parry 15

DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 11



ENDURANCE 9
STRENGTH 7
TOUGHNESS 10
INTELLECT 7
MIND 6
CONFIDENCE 9
CHARISMA 8

Life Points: 2

Alignment: Chaos 1

Equipment: Skandra “Annihilator” sub-machine gun, damage value 17, ammo 30

Background Notes: Sketh have the special abilities “Blur,” “Speed,” “Confusion,” and receive +3 to *perception* checks involving smell.

For more information on Sketh, see pages 25–26 of *The World of Bloodshadows*.

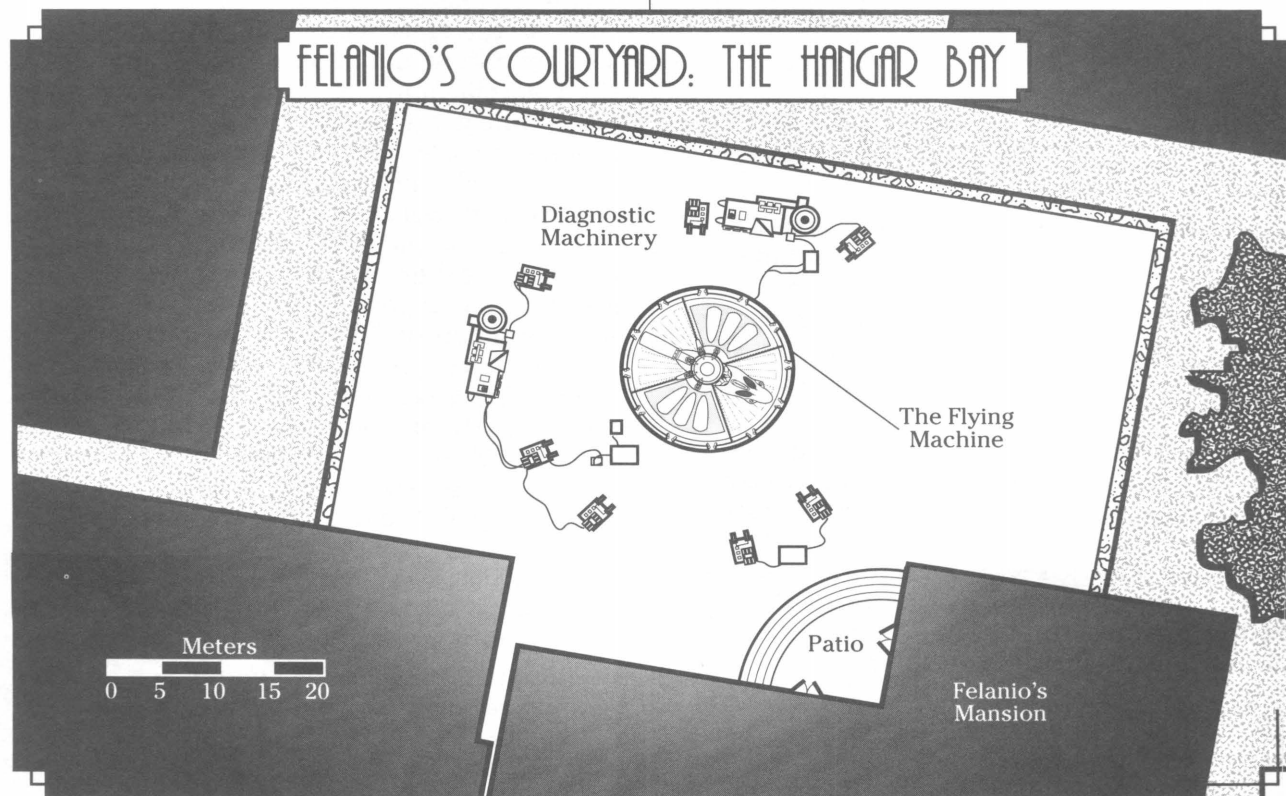
As the characters near Felanio’s manor, the sound of gunfire increases, and echoes off the walls. It seems to be coming from a courtyard to the rear of the house. There is no way of reaching the other side of the house save by passing through it. The featureless backs of two other buildings butt against Felanio’s house, and offer no egress.

Inside, Felanio’s house is a mess. The Sketh have rampaged through the interior, smash-

ing furniture and fixtures, and defacing what they couldn’t destroy. Bodies of servants and guards litter the hallways. From the rear of the house, the gunfire continues. The throaty roar of a mounted machine gun has joined the chorus of smaller guns. A few Sketh are still traipsing through the house, and will stalk the characters if the latter are not being very quiet.

THE HANGAR BAY

To the rear of Felanio’s mansion is a walled courtyard, which is open to the air, but shielded from above by awnings. At the center of the yard, surrounded by diagnostic machinery, lathes, and scaffolding, is a large, shallow, sleek convex disk, standing a few feet off the ground on thick, stubby legs. Running through the center of the disk is a large cylinder, open at the bottom. The whole contraption is made up of metal plates welded and riveted together. At various points on its surface, strange runes and symbols are engraved or painted. A ramp gives access to the inner surface of the strange platform.



The characters will not have a great deal of time to dwell on the tableau, because a battle is raging in and around Felanio's flying machine. Nocturnes and Sketh are tearing into a cluster of dazed and confused men at the opposite side of the disk wearing blue aprons (the technomancers), while several defenders are firing into their ranks from the top of the disk, where heavy machine guns are mounted.

Felanio himself is near the door where the characters emerge, flanked by Candice and surrounded by a pile of bodies, both friend and foe. Candice is howling, hosing the crowd of circling Sketh and Nocturnes with a Skandra Annihilator, and sucking the life out of any that dares to approach (this may be the first time the characters see her for what she is).

The characters may involve themselves in the battle as they wish. There are six Nocturnes and 12 Sketh remaining in the courtyard, and two dozen guards and technomancer engineers (many of whom have become dazed as a result of the Sketh's special ability).

STANDARD ROOKERY GUARD

Species: Human

AGILITY 9

Dodge 13, maneuver 10, melee combat 14, stealth 11, unarmed combat 11

DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 13

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 8

Perception 13, tracking 9

MIND 8

CONFIDENCE 8

Intimidation 10, streetwise 13, willpower 10

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 10

Life Points: 5

Alignment: Order 1

Equipment: .38 revolver, damage value 17, ammo 6; fireball runeslugs (4); bulletproof vest, armor value TOU+6/22

Description: Felanio's guards are a cut above sentinels, mainly because Felanio pays better. A few will be considerably better than the average.

STANDARD TECHNOMANCER

Species: Human

AGILITY 8

Dodge 9, unarmed combat 10

DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 10, thrown weapons 11

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 9

Apportation: technomancy 13, perception 11, science: aeronautics 13

MIND 10

Conjuration: technomancy 14, research: magical engines 14

CONFIDENCE 8

Willpower 10

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 10

Life Points: 5

Alignment: Oathbreaker/Chaos 1

Arcane Knowledges: Metal 3, inanimate forces 1

Spells: *Bullet, dagger, dark cloud, rain of razors*

Equipment: Various tools seized in the hangar (treat as clubs); spell components in a belt pouch

Description: The technomancers Felanio has hired all have their own specialties, not reflected in the above stats. The spells listed above are those that might come into play in the combat. The technomancers may have other spells at their disposal.

As things reach a fevered pitch, several of the technomancers break free of the melee on the other side of the room, and race up the ramp of the disk. With a grinding of gears, the ramp folds up flush with the disk's outer surface, and an odd whining noise begins to build in volume in the courtyard. Gouts of wind emerging from the underside of the platform kick up dust and loose debris, as the whine builds to an ear-piercing scream. Felanio can be seen mouthing something to the technomancers, and waving his arms. The battle-shudders to a halt as all watch in amazement as the craft rises slowly, wobbles violently, and then begins to rise again, ripping the canvas awnings from their posts as it gathers speed and altitude.

As the fleeing flying machine shrinks to the size of a small button, something happens in the sky around it. The fleecy clouds surrounding the craft warp and shimmer, and a huge,





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purplish, gelatinous monstrosity, a hundred meters long, emerges from nothingness, snapping a horrible, bone-white beak twenty meters long. For several long moments, it circles the craft, as it wobbles and heads back toward the ground. Then, with a gurgling roar, the creature sends out a number of long, blubbery pseudopods, and seizes the aircraft. It pulls it toward its body, and disappears with it in a thunderous boom which shatters windows all over town. A few tiny bodies can be seen falling back to earth in its wake.

The surviving Nocturnes and Sketh will withdraw from the battle soon afterwards, since one of the Nocturnes found the *Codex Celestia* and gated back to Gantherburg with it.

AFTERMATH

Needless to say, the doings at the Rookery will garner a great deal of attention about town. The characters may play a large or small

role in the newspaper coverage, depending on their wishes and what role they played in the battle. Felanio, if he survives, will certainly be grateful for any efforts to save his bulky hide, though his joy will be more than counterbalanced by the loss of his airship, and the *Codex*, and he might well blame the characters. The most prudent action the characters could take regarding Felanio would be to stay out of his way for a while, as Candice will suggest to characters too obtuse to figure it out.

Felanio may, of course, play a role in future adventures, as may the Nocturnes and their masters in Gantherburg.

AWARDS

Although this may not feel like a victory, if the characters delivered the book and saved Felanio, they did as well as they could do in this one. Award them two Life Points for surviving the adventure, and additional Skill Points to exceptionally good roleplayers.



CHAPTER
TWO

THE LADY IS A VAMP

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

A particularly nasty strain of Unnatural called a Verex has made its way into Selastos in the unknowing guise of a dealer in enchanted art named Silas Northampton. They are one and the same person, but Northampton is completely unaware of his “Jekyll and Hyde” nature.

The nature of the beast is that once a month, or after sufficient stress, he manifests his carnivorous form and must go out to feed in a voracious frenzy that lasts until the next sunrise. The victim, often someone known to the “normal” Northampton, is set upon and drained of life energy by the Unnatural. The ravaged corpse is then abandoned and the Unnatural moves on to his next victim. As many as three victims have been taken in a single night, and more than that is possible.

The corpse of a victim appears normal for two days, and is often found and taken to the morgue, but no memory of the murder remains. After two days, the corpse disappears. Somewhere nearby, the body reforms in one of two conditions. The victim is, most likely, partially infected and returns to life as an Unnatural in its carnivorous phase with all the Compensations of Northampton’s Unnatural form, but none of the Advantages and little or no memory.

This new Unnatural will go into dependency starvation and kill and kill again in a futile attempt to satiate the hunger. Eventually it will die, but not before it has claimed a number of lives.

In the unlikely case of a complete infection, the victim gains all the Advantages and Compensations of Northampton’s Unnatural, but with no memory of the event except while in carnivorous form. The rather confused person may or may not try to explain his amnesia by investigating his own “murder.”



As our story begins, Northampton has been in Selastos for a little over one month, and has just had a frenzy, which he has gone to some lengths to conceal. One of his victims from that frenzy has become partially infected and one fully.

ACT ONE: THE LADY VANISHES

The characters are contacted by Harvey Sims, a newscribe for the *Selastos Conjurer*. He has a small problem: he's somehow managed to lose two days out of his life. He went home last Tuesday, accompanied by his friend, Lori Pict. The next thing he remembers, it was Thursday and Lori was attacking him like a madwoman. He managed to fight her off and she escaped through a window.

He reported it to the sentinels, who seemed uninterested — but later he learned of a “dangerous Unnatural” sighting that matched Lori’s description. He’s anxious to find Lori, save her from whatever madness has claimed her, and find out what happened during the missing two days.

SCENE ONE: JUST ANOTHER DAY AT THE OFFICE

THE SITUATION

Standard. The natural leader of the party, perhaps an ex-sentinel or a private eye, or any character with sentinel or newscribe contacts, is having a late breakfast in a decent coffee shop called Maggie’s near their office with other members of the party. Harvey Sims will come in and inquire about the party. He is directed to them, but he may not make the best first impression.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

As most folks see it, the only thing better than a good ale in the evening is a strong cup of coffee in the morning. Today is one of those days when they’re proved right. You managed to drag yourself by the office, then into Maggie’s a little after ten to start getting serious about returning to the land of the living (well, as much as you can in this town).

Maggs is working the counter, but one of her girls comes over to shine a ray of sunshine into your morning. Oh yeah, she wants to take your order, too.

MAGGIE’S

You should either use this location for the scene or set it in the player characters’ favorite “greasy spoon.” In the second case, use the descriptive text and the Action, below, but replace the description and local people with those that the player characters are familiar. If the player character do not yet have such a haunt, they should. Spend a little time introducing them to Maggie, the girls and the “new” coffee shop that just opened near the office.

Maggie’s is a pretty average looking lunch counter and coffee shop. The main room is big enough for a U-shaped counter that seats 16 and a dozen booths for four around the walls. The front of the building is all windows and doors, with a great view of the street. In the back is the short-order kitchen, a store room, two washrooms, and the delivery entrance.

The difference is the food, and the help. The owner and number one waitress, Magnolia Tompkins, is a real talent at the short-order food trade. A former wage slave in an Oasis restaurant, Maggie saved her money, cut some deals, and finally opened her own place. She knows everything there is to know about running one of these joints and hires only good people to work for her.

Her kitchen is run by Eddie “Two-Minute” Sanduval, the only man in Selastos who can cook a three minute egg in two minutes. He is a real miracle worker, and even when the lunch trade is lined up to the door, there’s rarely a wait for an order.

Maggie also has four girls who divide up the breakfast and lunch shifts, and a busboy named Max who must be at least one hundred years old. The service is good, the food is great, and you can eat breakfast any time. Nothing on the menu costs more than a couple selasts, and it all tastes like it should cost twice as much.

The mid-day shift has just come on, with Maggie running the counter and Charlene waiting the booths. Mary Ann is working the cash box and filling the take-out orders. Sarah and Bobbi are both going off-shift, but Bobbi is still waiting a few booths until her ride shows





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up. Max is either gathering up dishes or is in the back, washing.

MAGGIE TOMPKINS

Species: Human

AGILITY 8

Dodge 10, unarmed combat 9

DEXTERITY 8

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 9

Cantrips 10, deduction 10, first aid 10, perception 11, trick 10

MIND 8

Business 10 (restaurant 12)

CONFIDENCE 9

Con 10, intimidation 10, streetwise 9 (Selastos 11)

CHARISMA 10

Charm 12, persuasion 11, taunt 11

Life Points: 3

Alignment: Neutral

Spells: *Clean, heat*

Arcane Knowledges: None

Equipment: None

Description: Maggie was a real heart-

breaker when she was younger, and she still looks pretty good for 40 years old. She has deep brown eyes, and brown hair worn in a sort of a page boy cut pushed back with a colored hair band. She has a light brown complexion and her skin is perfect and free of worry lines. She still dresses as a waitress, even in her own shop, and is commonly mistaken for the hired help by those who don't know her.

THE ACTION

The player characters present are seated at a booth back along the wall, away from the front windows. As the characters present are getting done ordering their meal from Charlene, they may notice a rather disheveled looking man make his way into the restaurant and ask a couple questions of Mary Ann. After answering his first question, she shakes her head to each of the following. It seems that he is looking for the player characters and is becoming more distraught with each failed inquiry.

If one of the characters has a *Connection* card showing, he knows Harvey Sims already. This could relate to an earlier adventure, with you finally putting a name on a previously

nameless newscribe they met some time ago. By the same token, the character might have connections with sentinels or some other paper in town, and know Sims that way.

Another possibility is that Sims has heard of the characters through his own sources and believes they might be just the people to help him.

At some point, it should be obvious that the player characters should intervene. If they fail to do so, the man will turn to leave. If the characters do not approach him, or plan to follow him outside, Sims will spot the player character who was recommended and slowly approach the booth.

Sims looks like something the lassiter dragged in. He is unshaven, and plainly unwashed for a couple of days. His clothes are damaged and torn, and he has several minor bruises on his face and hands. Less obvious are the large, but faded discolorations on his neck from a severe throttling in the past couple of days (*perception* or *Intellect* total of 10 to notice these). He is not apparently ensorcelled, nor does he appear to be anything but living Human to any spell. But a successful *detect magic* rite will pick up signs that Sims passed through a gate recently. If they do not check Sims in the first few hour after their meeting, the residual magic energy clinging to him will fade and nothing unusual can be detected about him. The effects of the gate are masking his true nature.

If you have worked Harvey Sims into a *Connection* for one of the player characters, they will know one another by sight. Otherwise, Sims introduces himself rather hesitantly and seem to be more than a little confused. If someone points out the state of his clothing, he will be distracted from whatever line of conversation was going on and show embarrassment at his condition. Use this to convey to the player characters the fact that Sims is suffering from some sort of tremendous shock and is not his usual self.

SIMS' STORY

Sims will tell the characters his story, at least as much as he knows: last Tuesday, he spent the day digging up a story on Alchemists' Row. He doesn't remember what it was, and his scribepad is missing. He says the last

thing he remembers of that night is sitting on the front steps of his home, having a drink with his photographer, Lori Pict. They've worked together for a year. He'll then get sidetracked and tell them all about how Lori keeps the camera gear and the spare film in the trunk and so she takes the car home with her instead of him dropping her off.

Any skilled student of the human condition among the player characters should be able to tell that Sims seems very protective of his co-worker. One of the characters will probably have to ask a question or say something to get him back on track, or else he'll go on to how Lori brings an extra lunch on Tuesdays because he always gets up late that morning (he has Bowling League on Mondays, see, and ...)

When he picks up the story again, he says that when he woke up this morning, about 4 a.m., he was in his living room, sprawled half off the sofa. He was still dressed in the clothes he'd worn to work on Tuesday, but his head and shoulders hurt when he tried to move.

As he slowly looked around, he heard a low growl from somewhere in the room. He froze, but it didn't help. Someone grabbed him and started beating the daylight out of him with blows to the head. He managed to fend off the punches, but then the attacker started to choke him. This probably should have killed him, but he managed to hit the assailant with a table lamp and broke free.

When he was able to get the lights on, he was shocked to see that the person attacking him was Lori. She was totally deranged and a white foam surrounded her mouth, like that of a rabid dog. She, too, was wearing the same clothes that she had on Tuesday except for her jacket, which was missing. She seemed to have broken a few fingers.

The two stood there, staring at each other, for several seconds. She seemed to be trying to say something to him, but then the madness returned to her eyes and she launched herself at him. He grabbed a fireplace poker and struck her with it, and she fled through a front window. By the time he reached it, she had disappeared into the night.

During the telling of this story, Sims loses what was left of his control and starts crying. Anyone seated near the player characters has turned away or moved to *feign polite ignorance*. If the characters want to have this part



of the discussion in their office, that's all right, so long as it does not take any extra time.

When he regains his composure, Sims will tell how he looked for her for about ten minutes and then called the sentinels. When they arrived, they took down Lori's description and the account of what happened. Then he overheard one of them on his car crystal set asking for permission to shoot on sight what was obviously a Wilderness creature loose in the city.

Panicked that they might kill Lori by mistake — he's certain she's just ill — he came looking for someone to help him. One of the streetsingers recommended the player characters, and here he is.

If prompted for the specifics of the job, Harvey will say that he wants the characters to find Lori, find out what happened to the two missing days, and discover the cause of these strange events. He'll try to appeal to them as friends (if he's friends with any of the characters), and if that fails, he'll offer 50 selasts a day, plus expenses, and 25 selasts up front.

HARVEY SIMS

Species: Human Verex

AGILITY 8/9

Climbing NA/10, dodge 9/11, unarmed combat 9/11

DEXTERITY 8/8

Fire combat 9/NA, lock picking 9/NA

ENDURANCE 8/9

STRENGTH 8/12

TOUGHNESS 9/11

INTELLECT 9/7

Deduction 9/NA, first aid 10/NA, perception 12/10, trick 10/8

MIND 9/7

Business 10/NA, scholar: journalism 11/NA

CONFIDENCE 9/8

Con 10/11, interrogation 10/NA, intimidation 10/14, streetwise 10/9, willpower 10/11

CHARISMA 9/8

Charm 10/NA, persuasion 10/NA

Life Points: 2

Note: Numbers before the slash refer to Sims in his standard completely Human form, in which he is unaware of his dual nature. Those after the slash refer to him when the Verex side of his nature takes control.

Equipment: New scribe pad; pen; press pass

Note: Sims is *heavily wounded*.

Background Notes: Sims has been fully infected by the attack of a Verex, but has no memory of the attack and no awareness of what has happened to him. Advantages: Special Abilities (CIII): Hardiness I; Special Abilities (CIV): Attack Form Resistance (Non-Enchanted Weapons); Life Drain (Physical), Verex must cause a wound in an *unarmed combat* attack for power to work. Compensations: Advantage Flaw (CIII): Allergy I, to direct sunlight; Ability Loss I, add +5 to *perception* checks when in direct sunlight; Infection I Quirks: Dependency (Major (CIII)), must drain life energy.

Description: Harvey Sims is, at 26 years old, one of the most promising of the young newscribes on the City beat of the *Selastos Conjuror*. His story on how a Quarter-Moon Street ward boss tried to vote the elementary school rolls in the last Gaskill Alderman's race is considered the finest example of reporting in Selastos this year. Sims is 1.8 meters tall, blonde haired, with a thin mustache and hazel eyes. He usually dresses well for a newscribe.

CUT TO...

There are a number of places for the characters to start their investigation, all of which are covered in Scene Two. So once the characters head back to any of their offices, or some private room, cut to the next scene.

SCENE TWO: GATHER YE PUZZLE PIECES, WHILE YE MAY...

THE SITUATION

Standard. This scene details some of the ways the characters can begin their investigation into Lori's attack on Sims and subsequent disappearance. At some point, someone should notice that Sims is in bad shape (maybe he passes out) and get him to a healer.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

On the face of it, it seems like an open and shut case. Lori Pict is either some kind of Unnatural, insane, or possessed. But Sims insists that she's always been the sanest, sweetest woman he's ever

known. Still, he can't offer a better explanation for what happened. But he's firm on his demand that the characters save her from being shot down by the sentinels.

THE ACTION

Below you'll find the outcomes of some possible quests for information launched by the characters at the onset of this investigation. Give the player characters some time to decide what they want to do and in what order, then look over the material in this scene as it becomes necessary.

THE HEALER'S REPORT

If the characters get Sims to a healer, they can get a report from him on the newscrite's condition. Sims' injuries include a strained neck and several bruised ribs, suffered no more than 24 hours ago; massive injuries to the muscles of the throat, perhaps caused by an attempted strangulation; severe bruising of the muscles of the lower back and left side of the torso, consistent with body weight injury caused by several days of untended coma; a hairline fracture of his cheekbone and several facial contusions, and several sprains and contusions on both hands and wrists. All in all, a horrific amount of blunt trauma.

Also, while there's no direct evidence of Unnatural attack, he seems unusually weak, even for a man in his condition.

THE SENTINELS' REPORT

This is the report prepared at 4:40 a.m. by the sentinel who interviewed Sims and is in charge of the investigation. This can be acquired by the party by calling in favors, through old contacts on the force, or by bribing someone with access to the file room in the appropriate Gaskill precinct house. If things go poorly for the party, or they like re-inventing the wheel, this same information can be gained by going out to Sims' house and surveying the scene there.

If they travel to the crime scene, the detective assigned to the case is an undistinguished investigator named Rick Malone. Use the standard Sentinel Detective stats on page 50 of *The World of Bloodshadows* for him, but play him

as a self-centered son-of-a-gun who hates private detectives, cheap beer, and anything Unnatural.

Summary: The sentinels were called at 4:21 a.m. First patrol car reached the house at 4:25 a.m.. On the scene was one individual, the homeowner, Harvey NMI Sims. No other witnesses were present. Sims told the sentinels a confused story about being invisible for two days. He then claimed he had been attacked by his co-worker, one Lori Jo Pict, who he had driven off with a poker. Broken window in the living room supports his contention that she fled through it.

Sims was detained for questioning. Medical treatment for injuries he had sustained was recommended but refused.

A description of the suspect was obtained and it was determined that she had displayed abilities uncharacteristic of a Human being. Given this, a request was filed for the services of the Flying Squad, equipped to pursue a possible Wilderness creature.

Officers in the district were given the suspect's description and warned that she should be considered armed and extremely dangerous.

Addenda: Detective's Interview Report: Detective Richard Malone was assigned to the case and arrived on the scene at 6:50 a.m. At that time, he determined that Sims was actively interfering with the investigation of the crime scene. Sims was detained and questioned again, at which time he recanted his invisibility claims and stated that he was suffering from amnesia covering a period of approximately 60 hours and ending at 4:00 a.m. the morning of the incident.

Sims confirmed that Lori Jo Pict was his assailant, but refused to answer questions about her and insisted she was no danger to herself or others.

Addenda: Crime Scene Report: The primary scene of the crime is as Sims described it, and there are signs of a struggle in the living room of the house. Furniture was overturned or damaged by impact and the right front window was shattered outward. No signs of forced entry on the first floor have been found.

No impressions in the carpet were found to substantiate Sims' story of lying half-off the sofa for any length of time.

The upstairs master bedroom was found to



be locked from the inside. There were obvious signs of a struggle within. Bedding was partially torn and pulled off onto the floor. Door to the closet was partially caved in from an impact. A .32 caliber Delken snub-nosed pistol was found on the floor, two shots having been fired from it. No bullet holes were found in the room, nor was there any quantity of blood visible that would have been consistent with a gunshot wound.

A jacket containing two pencils, one scribepad and a small screwdriver was found on the floor near the bed. Laundry tags in the jacket's lining identified it as belonging to the suspect.

Impressions left in the bed and carpet show that two bodies lay in this room for a number of days.

The window leading to a small balcony on the north side of the house was discovered to be unlocked. Evidence of movement by one or more individuals was found on the balcony.

Case Status: The suspect was trailed roughly three blocks from Sims' house, but the tracks were lost when suspect crossed the parking lot of the local railrunner station. Witnesses claim the suspect was behaving in a deranged manner at the time.

The Flying Squad, aided by a small group of Wilderness scouts, are currently in pursuit of the suspect. Patrols in Gaskill have been doubled. Detective Malone believes the suspect to be an Unnatural or a Human possessed by some form of Unnatural.

BACKGROUND CHECK

If one of the characters knew Sims prior to the adventure, he can probably vouch for the newscribe. If not, it should be fairly easy to find corroboration for his story. Checking at the *Conjurer* will uncover a copyboy willing to confirm that both Sims and Pict were missing from their jobs over Wednesday and Thursday. Calls to their homes were unanswered. The sentinels were notified of the disappearances, but stated that they wouldn't be able to start looking for them until Friday.

TALKING TO SIMS

By the afternoon, Sims will be in shape to talk. Bathed, shaved and dressed in a good suit of clothes, he still looks fatigued and in

shock. His concerns for Lori are uppermost in his mind and he doesn't want to listen to any worries about his own health. He is totally focused on thwarting the sentinels' pursuit of her and will state his belief that Wilderness scouts won't be of much use in an urban area. The characters would have a good chance of finding her before the law did.

If the characters mention any of the information they have gathered, Sims will confirm his role in the whole matter but can't shed any light on what went on in the bedroom.

If the characters search Sims' car, they will find his scribepad and briefcase in the trunk, along with Lori's camera equipment. There is still film inside, which the characters can send off for development. It will be ready the next day.

If the characters look at Sims' scribepad (or somehow get a look at Lori's, which is currently in the sentinels' Property Room), they can get the pair's agenda for Tuesday. In addition, there are a number of cryptic notes referring to art being smuggled out of Galitia and sold at Selastos' Northhampton Gallery next week.

This is an important clue for Act Two, but the characters should be dissuaded from pursuing it until they find Lori. If the characters really want to look into it now, Sims will get angry and insist they do something to save his friend.

BRAINSTORM

At this point, Sims will suddenly get an idea of someplace Lori might be hiding. Read aloud or paraphrase:

Sims suddenly gets a look of revelation on his face. "Maybe ..." he begins. "Listen, the first job Lori and I ever did together was a 'state of the city' piece last year. We went out to the edge of Gaskill, near one of the big Deranus factory complexes. The locals were pretty pathetic — metalsmiths, mostly, who'd been put out of work when the factories went Taxim.

"Anyway, since they didn't have anything better to do, they built a park on a vacant lot nearby for their kids to play in. It was already starting to fall apart from neglect, but Lori fell in love with the place, especially this crude little

treehouse. She'd had one like it when she was a kid, she said. She used the image of the empty treehouse in the shadow of the factory as the hook for her story — 'ruin of a neighborhood's dreams,' that kind of thing.

"I thought it was kind of corny, myself, but it won her a Photoscribe's Award last year. If she's running — if she's scared — she might go there. Anyway, it's worth a try."

CUT TO...

Hopefully the characters agree, because this is their chance to track down Lori before the sentinels find her. When they're ready to head out for the park, cut to Scene Three, "Out of Her Tree."

SCENE THREE: OUT OF HER TREE

THE SITUATION

Dramatic. The characters arrive at the Gaskill park, encounter the now horribly changed Lori Pict, and learn some more of just what went on that fateful night.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

It's just before sunset when you reach the park, and the place is even more run-down than Sims remembered. The ground is littered with trash and scrap, and what little of the playground equipment is left standing is covered with a fine layer of soot from the nearby factories.

THE ACTION

Let the characters look around the park a little. A *perception* or *Intellect* total of 7 will allow them to see tracks and other signs that the homeless have been sleeping here. Off to the right, there's a stand of trees. Behind them, on the ground, is the body of a man clad in rags. He's dead, strangled, his head almost twisted clean off.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

Sims suddenly holds his hand up and freezes in place. Then it comes — from high up in one of the trees, a strained voice calls out, "Harvey ..."

If the characters look up, they'll spot a young woman wearing torn clothing seated on a tree branch about 3.5 meters off the ground. The limb is one of four upon which rests the treehouse.

This is Lori Pict. She's half-crazed from dependency starvation, longing for the life energy of another being to sate the hunger inside. At the moment, though, she's close to coherent. Seeing her like this is too much for Sims, who is virtually paralyzed and barely able to reply to any questions.

At the first sign of violence from any of the characters, Lori will go into a frenzy and attack. If they try and reason with her, she will climb down slowly to a lower branch and try to talk. Her current *Mind* value is 5 (see below) — she must generate a *Mind* total of 8 to be able to talk intelligibly.

Lori knows she was attacked by an Unnatural at Sims' house Tuesday night, and that Sims was attacked as well. Part of what has had her on the edge of madness is that she thought she saw the creature kill Sims. She can tell the party what happened that night, but getting the story out of her requires *Critical Skill Resolution* (see page 128 of *MasterBook*). The critical skill is *charm*, with *persuasion* to be used in case of a *critical problem*.

If at any point the characters get a *possible setback* (or, in any case, immediately after Step D of the *Critical Skill Resolution* has been completed), the Flying Squad will roar up and start piling out of their squad cars. When this happens, Lori will lose it completely and attack.

LORI PICT

Species: Human Verex

AGILITY 11 (8)

Climbing 12 (9), dodge 13 (10), unarmed combat 14 (11)

DEXTERITY 9 (6)

ENDURANCE 11 (8)

Resist shock 12 (9)

STRENGTH 11 (14)





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TOUGHNESS 11 (8)

INTELLECT 8 (5)

Perception 9 (6)

MIND 8 (5)

CONFIDENCE 9 (6)

Intimidation 12 (9)

CHARISMA 10 (7)

Life Points: 5

Note: The attribute and skill values in parentheses are currently in effect for Lori, owing to the effects of her dependency starvation (see below).

Alignment: Neutral

Spells: None

Arcane Knowledges: None

Equipment: None

Background Notes: Lori has been partially infected by the Northampton Verex. She currently suffers from the Compensations Advantage Flaw (CIII): Ability Loss I, (add +5 to the difficulty of perception checks when in daylight), Allergy I (direct sunlight); Quirks: Dependency (Major)(CIII), Lori must drain life energy from a victim at least once a day.

However, as she was only partially infected, Lori does not have the special ability "Life Drain (Physical)," and so cannot sate her hunger. She is doomed to die and is currently at roughly day three of the dependency starvation cycle (see page 80 of *The World of Bloodshadows*). This explains the drop in her attribute values and the increase in her Strength. Lori should be treated as *lightly wounded* in combat.

Description: Prior to Northampton's attack, Lori was a girl-next-door type with a beautiful smile and shoulder-length brown hair. She had a bit of a tomboy streak but was still all woman — now she's half scared little girl and half murderous Unnatural.

Step A: If the characters are successful in the initial stage of the Critical Skill Resolution, Lori will tell them that she is in love with Sims. They had had a few drinks together and gone upstairs to do ... "um, something."

Step B: Lori describes how someone snuck in through the open balcony window and attacked them. She was struck down. Sims grabbed a pistol and shot the assailant twice, with no visible effect.

Step C: The attacker threw Sims against the closet door and began to choke him. When

he was unconscious, the man turned to her. His strength seemed superhuman and he began to choke her.

Step D: As he strangled her, she could feel her strength draining away. She did her best to resist, but died as a result of his attack. In her last moments of life, she recognized her attacker from a recent photo assignment.

She lay dead for two days after the attack. Then the next thing she knew, she was in the living room with Sims and she had to — *had to* — drain his life. But when she tried, nothing happened ...

WITH EXTREME PREJUDICE...

When the Flying Squad shows up, eight heavily armed sentinels will get out, accompanied by Detective Malone (use the stats on page of pages 49–50 of *The World of Bloodshadows*). They are all armed with Degan "Guardian" rifles, loaded with *lightning* runeslugs. Two of the sentinels also carry Gelvash "Thunder" shotguns loaded with *fire-ball* runeslugs.

The fight will be chaotic, with Lori dodging away from any massed attack and assaulting everyone but Sims. Meanwhile, Sims will be trying to keep the sentinels from killing her. The characters will be caught in the middle, and worse, a target of her attack if they get too close to her. The sentinels will not fire on the characters unless the latter fire on them first.

The fight can really only end one way: Lori dies for the second time. Even if they capture her alive, she will die from dependency starvation within a matter of a few days, at most. If the characters did think of some way to rid her of the infection, that curse is the only thing keeping her "alive," and she'll fall as soon as it's destroyed.

As she dies, Lori will mutter that she loves Sims, and then say, "The photos ... the art gallery ..."

Hopefully, Sims won't get killed (a second time). If the sentinels open fire on him, he will go into his frenzy and attack them, but try not to let this happen — it would spoil later scenes in the adventure. The same is true of the characters getting into a pitched battle with the sentinels, but there may not be much you can do to avoid this one.



After it's all over, play up the tragedy of it. Sims will sink to his knees over Lori's body, a broken man mourning his lost love ...

CUT TO...

Lori is dead — but her true killer was the figure who attacked her at Sims' house. When the characters are ready to avenge her, cut to Act Two.

ACT AWARDS

Award the characters two Life Points for completing this act.

ACT TWO: THE FINE ART OF MURDER

SCENE ONE: ROGUE'S GALLERY

THE SITUATION

Standard. As the act begins, the characters should know that Lori was infected by her assailant; that her attacker was someone Lori and Sims evidently met while they were out trolling for stories on Tuesday; and, if they found the load of film in Lori's camera, all

those photos were shot on Tuesday.

They should also have guessed that Sims was attacked by the same person — but seems to have escaped the curse (this assumes he did not reveal himself in the last scene of Act One). If the truth about him did come out, you may need to modify the path the characters take to the attack in Scene Two of this act.

This scene governs the characters' investigation of Lori's dying clue, the art gallery. Read aloud or paraphrase:

The more you look at things, the more it seems that there must be some connection between Lori's fate and the Northampton Art Gallery. Maybe the smuggling operation referred to in all the notes brought a Wilderness creature into the city, along with all that enchanted art. The whole thing stinks like a Taxim at high noon.

The Northampton Art Gallery is a brand new set-up in the nicest part of Alchemists' Row, near Palah. It occupies a narrow three-story brownstone with a nice facade. The gallery proper is on the first and second floor, and the offices are upstairs on the third. The rear of the place is a big loading dock with a ramp for trucks and easy access to the service elevator. The place is unobtrusively guarded by hired security men and is lousy with alarms. This should not surprise anybody with any idea of how much money some pieces of enchanted art can command. Of course, it's not legal to bring in enchanted art that hasn't been screened for dangerous magic first ... but no one would do that, right? And then there's the fact that Galitia's Big Rich would skin anyone who tried to get it out of their burg.

The Gallery staff is composed entirely of Humans, and they dress and maintain themselves in a lifestyle appropriate for a business that trades exclusively with the rich. They're a haughty bunch, and can be downright rude to anyone who does not match their idea of a customer. The characters will have to make a great first impression to even get in the front door.

The manager of the Gallery is Dr. Aaron Dibner, an expert on Galitian enchanted art and a completely amoral man. Dibner spends most of his day on the telephone, dealing with clients and arranging the receipt of newly



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arrived good through Customs. He is Silas Northampton's right-hand man, and the party can learn about Northampton's short history in Selastos from him.

DR. AARON DIBNER

Species: Human

AGILITY 7

DEXTERITY 8

ENDURANCE 7

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 10

Divination: sorcery 11, divination: wizardry 13, linguistics 11, smuggling 12

MIND 9

Business 11 (art gallery 13), scholar: art history 12 (enchanted art 14)

CONFIDENCE 10

Bribery 12, summoning: sorcery 11, summoning: wizardry 12

CHARISMA 9

Life Points: 4

Alignment: Order 1

Equipment: None

Spells: Gamemaster's choice.

Arcane Knowledge: *Magic 1, Enchanted 3, Entity 1, Dimension 2*

Description: Dr. Dibner is a balding man of average height, in his early 40s. He maintains a strictly aristocratic bearing and even speaks with a heavy accent (which is false). Dibner knows a great deal about enchanted art, particularly Galitian enchanted art, but is largely oblivious to the dangers inherent in items of such power and age. To him, the past is just a trove to be mined and sold.

THE ACTION

Hopefully, the characters have Lori's pictures at this point. If they don't, maybe Sims had them developed and gives them to the party. Somewhere in these photos of the art gallery is the face of the man who attacked the couple. Unfortunately, Sims' damaged memory makes it impossible for him to recognize anyone. Still, it's possible that someone at the gallery might remember something of note that occurred during their visit Tuesday, or someone might lack an alibi for Tuesday evening.

When the party gets inside the Gallery, they will be intercepted within five steps of the door by Bernhardt Pflugg, one of the stuffiest members of the sales staff. Based on appearances and the first few words of conversation, Pflugg will decide whether to continue to talk with the party or show them the door. If the party offends him, he will try, in his condescending way, to politely escort them back outside with the minimum of fuss. If the party protests too loudly, or tries anything violent, several of the security guards will approach and see them outside.

BERNHARDT PFLUGG

Species: Human

AGILITY 7

DEXTERITY 7

ENDURANCE 7

STRENGTH 7

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 9

Cantrips 10, deduction 11, linguistics 13, perception 14, trick 13

MIND 9

Business 11 (art gallery 12), scholar: art history 12

CONFIDENCE 9

Intimidation 10, willpower 11

CHARISMA 9

Persuasion 11

Life Points: 2

Spells: *Heat*

Arcane Knowledge: None

Use the standard sentinel stats on pages 49–50 of *The World of Bloodshadows* for the gallery guards. If the characters start a fight with them, the sentinels will be called and will arrive in about three minutes. This would be a huge mess — unless the characters defeat the entire security staff and grab Dibner, they'll miss an important clue. If you have to, maybe you can find a way for the characters to cut a deal with the sentinels and get in on the investigation that way. Otherwise, they're going to spend the night in a cell.

There's one other problem with the "huge melee at the gallery" scenario. When Northampton hears about a fight at his place of business, he'll assume the characters are mercenaries sent by his enemies in Galitia and most likely skip town. This will blow the



rest of the act and leave the party with an open-ended pursuit of Northampton, as well as the risk of Sims going into a frenzy and killing them. Unless your player characters are belligerent and none too bright, they should be able to avoid this fate.

More likely, the characters will smooth-talk Pflugg into letting them come in and talk to Dr. Dibner. If they brought Sims along with them, Pflugg will claim to have met him previously and be more cooperative. If they get tossed out nicely, give the most charming of the party members a chance to come back about a hour later and make friends with Pflugg. Either way, the party should get in to see Dr. Dibner.

Any party members with the arcane knowledges *magic*, *inanimate forces*, *enchanted* or *entity* will be able to perceive the wondrous nature of the artwork that fills this gallery (via *perception* totals). All the items downstairs have very little magic in them, but the visual effects are truly beautiful. These items are valued between 1000 and 5000 selasts.

When the party goes upstairs, they will notice that the quality of the works is much higher in this area. Among the displays are painted chronomantic landscapes, ancient works of long-forgotten cults, and even statues of awesome beings useful in Demonic summoning. These works are likely priceless, but the Gallery has them for sale at outrageous prices. You should consider the asking price to be in the order of hundreds of thousands of selasts.

When the characters get in to talk to Dr. Dibner, make them wait an extra minute while he writes down some notes regarding his last phone call. Dibner will then graciously greet the party members in an entirely condescending way. He tells them that he knows they are not here to buy any of the collection. He then asks them directly what it is that they want to know.

The characters can ask whatever they wish, but only when it is clear that they are going to insist on answers will they get any. He will respond best to *charm* and *persuasion* attempts, but *trick* and *intimidation* can be used if he persists in being evasive. Three Solid successes on interaction attempts should be enough to get him talking.

When the characters show him the photo-

graphs, read aloud or paraphrase:

“Oh, I see you have some of the photographs Mr. Sims took when he visited last Tuesday. Oh, that’s not right, is it? Mr. Sims is a reporter. The girl was the photostcribe, wasn’t she? Charming girl. How is she?”

Dibner will be shocked to hear about Lori’s death, and skeptical that anyone at the Gallery could have anything to do with her condition. He will resist the idea of presenting an accounting of all employees’ whereabouts on the day in question, but will relent if the other choice is a juicy story in Sims’ paper.

Dibner can personally vouch for the whereabouts of Pflugg and another employee, Mr. Axelrod. They were at the Galley until 2:00 a.m. uncrating a delivery. Two other employees, Jacobs and Wills, share an apartment in Gaskill and can provide alibis for each other. Arnold Haymarket, the part-time security man pictured in one of the photos, moonlights for a bank and his presence there would have been captured on a conjurevid.

In fact, the only person whose whereabouts can’t be accounted for is Silas Northampton, the owner. Dibner will recommend they talk to him if they want any information on how he spent the evening.

The characters can confirm Dibner’s answers in a series of interviews with the staff. Furthermore, they will learn that Northampton spent almost an hour showing Sims and Pict around the Gallery and conversing with them. Jacobs will even go so far as to comment on the apparent friendliness between Northampton and the reporters. The amnesiac condition of Harvey Sims will likely have to be talked around, or explained in an incomplete way to prevent Jacobs from becoming unnerved.

After all the interviews have been completed, the only loose end remaining is Silas Northampton. The party can learn of his recent arrival in Selastos and his wealth and connections, including a possible tie to gangster Norbert Rees. It seems that Rees is one of the Northampton Gallery’s best customers, not that this information is casually proffered. But it is a hook for later adventures involving Rees and enchanted art of a sinister nature.

The party can find out where Northampton’s



villa is in Palah, and they will be given the phone number of Northampton's personal secretary.

CUT TO...

If the characters call first, they will get an invitation to meet with Northampton at his villa in Palah. If not, they will have to find another way inside. Either way, cut to Scene Two.

SCENE TWO: JUSTICE IS SERVED

THE SITUATION

Dramatic. The party goes to Northampton's villa, either by invitation or through subterfuge. *It is important that Sims comes along* — and he can be expected to insist on it. They will arrive at about sunset unless they do something underhanded to gain access earlier.

Northampton will be smooth and urbane and deny all knowledge of any possible crime when confronted by the party. However, he did have one of his unexplained fainting spells that night, which he is unwilling to mention.

If the situation becomes too stressful or violent, his Unnatural side will come to the fore and he will attack the characters.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

You've got to love the way the rich live. Every house is a mansion, with a full courtyard and grounds. No cheap brick construction in this neighborhood, pal. These places are all stone and enchantments with a price tag higher than your lifetime income. That one over there with the wrought iron gate across the driveway, that's Northampton's place. Whew! What a shack to hang your hat in.

The Villa al-Dirak, or "House of the Desert Winds," is the home of Silas Northampton. This estate was previously the property of a successful sorcerer who disappeared while exploring gates about five years ago. The property sat vacant in probate until last summer, when it was acquired by a reputable real estate firm for a fraction of its original value.

They invested a substantial sum in redecorating the house and restoring the landscaping.

When Silas Northampton decided to move to Selastos, he retained an agent to find him a suitable manor. The agent recommended this villa, and cash was provided for the purchase. Northampton has lived here less than two months, but he has already made several changes in the decor, primarily to show off his personal art collection.

The property is about four acres, dominated by a two-story manor house of 19 rooms. The property also contains a carriage house with six garages, a full size swimming pool with an adjacent guest bungalow, a Galitian statue garden, and a small stand of fruit trees in manicured rows. Inside the manor house, the visitor is greeted with a slate floored entrance hall with a cathedral ceiling, a sweeping black oak stairway leading to the upstairs rooms and a full gallery balcony around the entrance hall.

Across the entrance hall is the main living room, furnished with heavy hardwood furniture with opulent blue velvet upholstery. The remainder of the downstairs includes several rooms for the help; a formal dining room off the living room; two sitting rooms on opposite sides of the entrance hall; a conservatory room with a grand piano and access to the crystal-paned aviary and the garden; the breakfast room, and a well-stocked kitchen area.

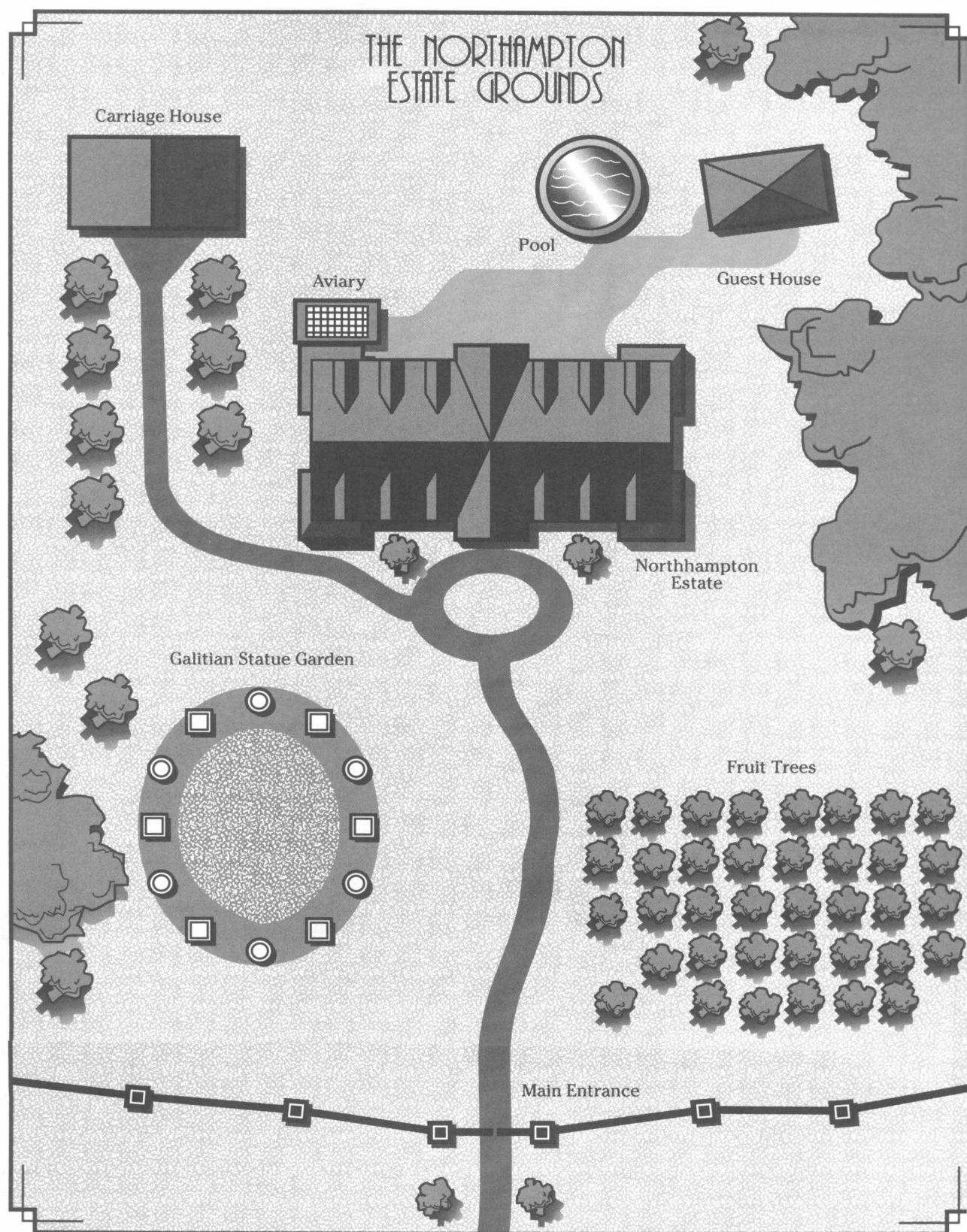
Upstairs are several bedrooms for guests and personal retainers; the master bedroom; a private room for the display of the cream of his art collection; and Silas Northampton's personal study.

The perimeter of the house and property are patrolled by Northampton's private retainers, and may be *alarmed* if so desired. All of the important rooms in the house and those items of art that are of substantial value are charged with *alarms*, although these will be turned off by the staff if they are in use. The upstairs display room and the study are separately *alarmed* and can only be turned off by Northampton. All interior doors can be locked with a key.

THE ACTION

The party may have reached Northampton by means of stealth and subterfuge, in which case they must brave the guards and *alarm*





spells and find a way into the manor house. If they succeed in this, they may choose the site for their confrontation with Silas Northampton. He will, of course, be surprised and offended. He will try to call for help, but will stop if threatened.

Remember that he knows nothing of what he did while possessed of the lust for life energy. He will plead with the party not to harm him and promise them anything to get them to leave. When things reach this point, the stress will cause the Unnatural in him to emerge and he will attack. Cut to "But I'm Feeling Much Better Now ..."

A more likely scenario is that the party called Northampton's secretary and were invited to come up to the manor after dinner so that Silas can clear his good name of any possible accusations. A limousine will be sent for the party and they will be driven up to the villa. Upon their arrival, the butler will see them into one of the sitting rooms until Northampton can receive them in the conservatory. Northampton will be open and polite when they meet him, although it should be obvious to the party that the household staff has been alerted to be prepared for any complications.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

Northampton takes a seat and says, "I'm very glad you were able to come up here on such short notice. You have expressed interest in my whereabouts last Tuesday. Please, let me put you at ease on this whole matter. I have no idea what you may think I have done, but I am very interested in disabusing you of any misapprehensions you might have. I am no night owl out painting the town, gentlemen. I can assure you that I was here in my home all evening, and my staff can corroborate that, if need be."

SILAS NORTHAMPTON

Species: Human Verex

AGILITY 8/10

Climbing NA/11, dodge 9/12, unarmed combat 9/13

DEXTERITY 8/8

ENDURANCE 9/10

Resist shock NA/13

STRENGTH 8/13

TOUGHNESS 10/11

INTELLECT 8/7

Linguistics 9/NA, perception 10/8, smuggling 9/NA (art 11/NA)

MIND 9/7

Business 11/NA, conjuration: wizardry 13/NA, research 10/NA, scholar: archaeology 10/NA, scholar: art 10/NA (ancient 12/NA)

CONFIDENCE 10/9

Con 12/11, intimidation 11/15, willpower 12/14

CHARISMA 8/7

Charm 9/NA, persuasion 9/NA

Life Points: 6

Note: Numbers before the slash refer to Northampton in his standard completely Human form, in which he is unaware of his dual nature. Those after the slash refer to him when the Verex side of his nature takes control.

Alignment: Chaos 8

Spells: *Mystic chains*

Arcane Knowledges: Magic 4

Background Notes: Special Abilities (CIII): Hardiness I; Special Abilities (CIV): Attack Form Resistance (Non-Enchanted Weapons); Life Drain (Physical), Verex must cause a wound in an *unarmed combat* attack for power to work. Compensations: Advantage Flaw (CIII): Allergy I, to direct sunlight; Ability Loss I, add +5 to *perception* checks when in direct sunlight; Infection I; Quirks: Dependency (Major)(CIII) must drain life energy.

Description: Northampton appears imposing and intimidating. He's tall with black hair and a Van Dyke beard. He has piercing green eyes and arched eyebrows that frame his stare when he focuses on someone. He is dressed in suit trousers and a silk shirt, with a blue velvet smoking jacket open to the waist. He smokes fine imported cigarettes on occasion.

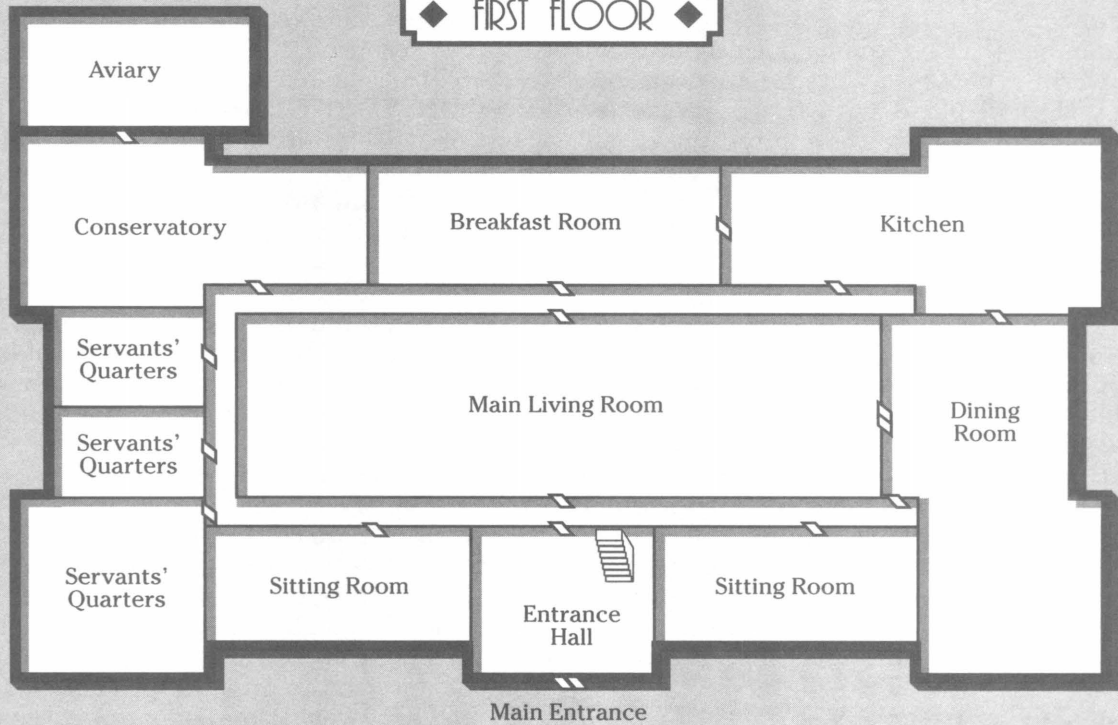
When the Verex is dominant, he becomes deranged and his eyes glow a dull red.

Of course, the butler will back his employer's story. He also knows of Northampton's fainting spell, but will not mention it unless explicitly asked by the party. Treat the butler as a normal Human with attribute values of 8.

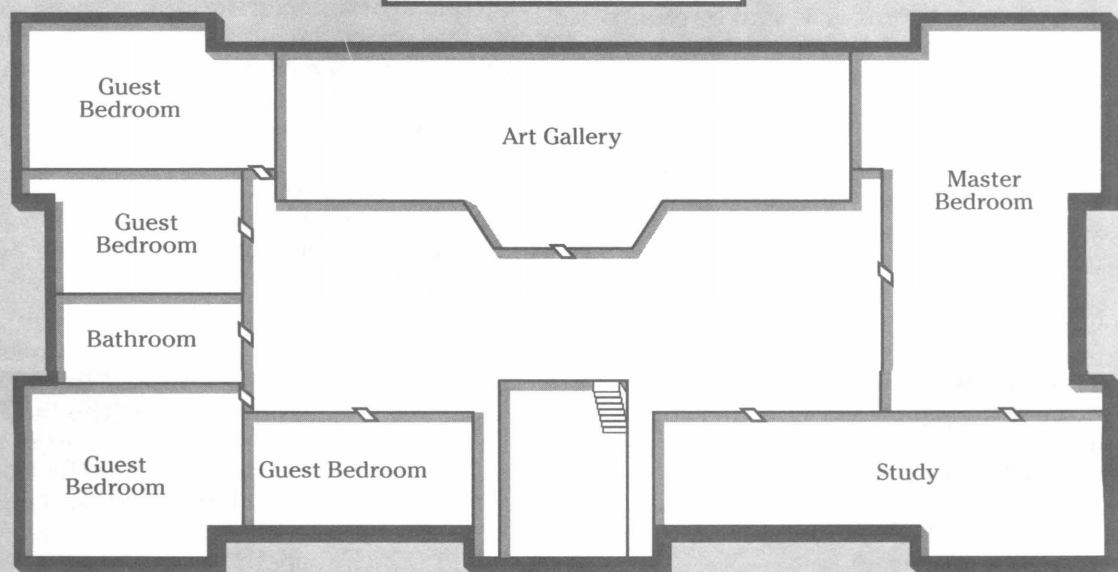
The characters may get the feeling that Northampton and his butler are covering something up, as indeed they are — the aforementioned fainting spell. If they *press the issue*, Northampton will finally admit to having had

THE NORTHAMPTON ESTATE

◆ FIRST FLOOR ◆



◆ SECOND FLOOR ◆





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a “moment of weakness” that night. He’ll go on to explain that he has a weak heart and on rare occasions, faints. He’ll explain that he’s had this condition for months, and doesn’t see what it has to do with anything.

The butler will put in that he aided Northampton to his bedroom and eased him into bed. He then left the room and locked the door with the spare key, as instructed. The next morning, Northampton was still in his bed when the butler went to check on him. These things happen from time to time, and the butler considers it part of his job.

If the characters ask anything more about his condition, Northampton will angrily insist he has seen a healer and there is nothing wrong with him. But this will be sufficient stress for the Verex to take control — call for a *perception* check. On a 12, they notice Northampton’s expression becoming almost feral as madness takes over.

BUT I FEEL MUCH BETTER NOW...

The party may begin this combat in various states of surprise, both from the speed of the transformation and the sudden horror of the

realization that they are in a closed room with a psychotic Unnatural. A character who failed to gain at least a Marginal success on his *perception* check should be considered *completely surprised* for the first round of combat. Characters who gained a Solid success are *partially surprised*. Characters with a Good success or better are not surprised at all.

The battle takes place in the conservatory, which is a 7x12 meter room with a grand piano and several heavy chairs and sofas. A large fireplace with a screened front dominates one wall of the room, but no fire is lit. There are exterior doors leading to the aviary and the garden, and heavy double doors to the hallway, and they are closed but not locked.

Northampton will try to kill or maim as many of the party as quickly as possible. After the initial rush, it will use the first opportunity to grab a character by the throat and begin strangling him and draining life from him, all the while using the character’s body to shield itself from attack by the remaining party members. If it can do so, it will drain that character to death and grow stronger.

During the battle, Sims will be gripped by stark terror and try to hide in a corner or cower

someplace until the combat is over. Northampton will not target him. But if the party is being defeated, it will trigger Sims' own transformation and he will attack Northampton. (Of course, once Northampton is dead, Sims will turn on the party ... but you can't have everything.)

Note: If Sims never manifests as a Verex during the battle, he will in about two weeks. This could form the basis for a future adventure, as the characters track down the killer, wondering if Northampton has somehow returned.

AFTERMATH

The party needs to make certain they have killed Northampton. If any of the party was

killed by him, arrangements will have to be made to deal with their remains. If this is not done within two days, the party member will rise again as a Verex. Total destruction of the remains is the only recourse.

If the characters inform the sentinels about the enchanted art being smuggled out of Galitia, they will investigate and shut down the Northampton Gallery. This will annoy Norbert Rees, and he will likely blame the party when their role in this becomes known.

AWARDS

Award the characters three Life Points for completing this adventure. Feel free to dole out a few Skill Points to exceptional roleplayers.



CHAPTER THREE

ALL THAT GLISTENS ...

"All that glistens is not blood ..."

— Old Undead saying

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Adolphe Theodore has enjoyed a prosperous career as an alchemist in the city of Selastos. He's mixed more than his share of profitable potions, salted away a fair amount of gold (the real stuff, not that stuff they sell in the stalls on Alchemists' Row), and sports enough of a reputation that city Elders make use of him when they need something done discreetly.

But none of it's enough to save him ...

An experiment that went wrong left Theodore with a sorcerous plague that no healer could hope to cure. In desperation, Theodore created a Homunculus of himself, with a young, strong body. He intended to transfer his own soul through dark rites into the body, when the conditions were right — but when the Homunculus found out what was to be his fate, he fled and vanished into the slums of Selastos.

That was three months ago. Since then, Theodore has created two more Homunculi and both have followed in their predecessor's footsteps. Driven to madness, the alchemist has begun stalking his creations, determined to kill them in a manner reminiscent of the way in which he will die, when the plague takes its toll.

In this adventure, the characters are hired by a man who believes his life is in danger. He is strangely secretive, but pays them well — in gold — to guard his rooms by night. One night, the characters hear a scuffle and walk in to discover their charge hanging from the rafters, his gold stolen.

Investigation reveals that something demonic has been at work here. More,



this is the second killing in the last week, both committed by strangulation. The characters will be even more shocked to discover that both victims were approximately the same age — and virtually identical to each other — and that there may yet be a third man targeted for destruction.

As the characters get closer, they find themselves targets of Theodore and the Unnaturals he has hired to do his dirty work.

SCENE ONE: HANGING BY A THREAD

THE SITUATION

Standard. The characters can begin this adventure virtually anywhere. The assumption is that at least one of them is known in Selastos for his work (on one side of the law or the other) and their prospective employer will contact him. He can then draw the rest of the party into the situation.

Once you have determined which character should be the initial contact, read or paraphrase the following:

The telegram was unexpected, but a chance at a few selasts is never unwelcome. It's addressed to you, and reads simply, "Wish to retain your services. STOP. Believe my life to be in danger. STOP. Meet me under the bridge at 5th and Prospect at 1 a.m. STOP. D.B. Ell."

You don't know who this character Ell is, but it's only the color of his money that really matters, right?

The characters can make whatever preparations they wish to prior to the meet. Checking a telephone directory will turn up no "D.B. Ell," nor are there any other records on him anywhere in the city. Of course, it could be an alias ... or a set-up. Player characters should plan accordingly.

THE ACTION

At the appointed hour, the characters should be at or near the bridge in question, located deep in the Deranus district. Two minutes

past 1:00, a lone figure will appear, wearing a trenchcoat and a hat pulled down low over his eyes. Black curly hair spills out from under the hat.

He pauses at the sight of the party, almost as if thinking of making a run for it. Then he steps forward cautiously and addresses the group.

"I'm taking a risk just by being here. But I run a greater one if I rely solely on my ability to stay hidden. That's why I called for your help."

Ell will explain that an unnamed friend recommended one of the characters. He will further explain that he has reason to believe someone may be planning to kill him within the next few days. He is taking steps to escape the situation, but needs protection in the meantime.

He will not identify who is after him, although he will assure the characters if they ask that it is not the mob or the sentinels. He's committed no crime — he was simply, he says with a shrug, "born at the wrong time."

He doesn't have a great deal of money, but can offer the characters 200 selasts, 25 up front, the rest when the situation has been resolved. If the characters accept, he produces the money — in gold coins. Then he asks them to accompany them back to his rooms.

Ell has no automobile, but will agree to ride if the characters have one. If not, they will have to walk, working their way through back alleys, etc. to make sure they're not being followed.

D.B. ELL

Species: Human Homunculus

AGILITY 8

Dodge 9, melee combat 9, stealth 9

DEXTERITY 8

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 8

Perception 9

MIND 8

CONFIDENCE 8

Willpower 9

CHARISMA 8

Life Points: 1

Alignment: Neutral

HOMUNCULUS

A Homunculus is an artificial being created through the use of alchemy. Although its name literally means “little man,” the size of the Homunculus is limited only by the normal limits for the species it is emulating and the amount of elixir used in its creation.

The elixir must contain the blood and flesh of the species the alchemist wants the Homunculus to be of — Human, Hugor, etc. It is also possible to modify the ingredients so that the Homunculus comes out as a duplicate of a specific individual (as Theodore does in this adventure). How rapidly the Homunculus grows is also dependent on the ingredients used.

A Human Homunculus normally begins with all attribute values at 7, 8 if the spell was particularly powerful. It will normally not have any skills, but intelligent Homunculi are fast learners. They are self-aware, but are also often creatures of their environment, evil if they have been bred to evil (though this is by no means always the case). Homunculi can often be identified by the lack of any markings on their bodies, even “character lines” on their faces.

A Human Homunculus will have an identical number of Advantages and Compensations as a Human (3CI, 2CII, 1CIII). It is recommended that the Homunculus have the “Learning Curve (Positive)” Advantage, and should have the “Cultural Unfamiliarity” Compensation at some level. It must take the “Prejudice (CII)” Compensation, as it is non-Human.

It is rare, but not impossible, for Human Homunculi to have special abilities. However, should the alchemist add a bit of Shapeshifter blood or tissue to the mix, etc., the being might be created with some of that creature’s talents.

It is also possible to create purely Unnatural Homunculi. Note that the above refers to Homunculi conceived without use of the *create Homunculus* spell.

Equipment: A few gold coins — nowhere near as much money as he’s promising the characters, and the clothes on his back.

Description: Ell is one of three Homunculi created by alchemist Adolphe Theodore to serve as receptacles for his intelligence, prior to his death from plague. Learning of what was planned for him, Ell escaped and went into hiding.

A LITTLE NIGHT WORK

Ell is living in a rundown boarding house called “Mazie’s” on a Deranus back street. He unlocks the side door and leads the characters up a darkened staircase and into his second floor room. The furnishings are sparse — a bed and a chest of drawers, one window overlooking the street — and his only possessions seem to be some clothes and a small wooden chest.

If the characters press him, Ell will explain that he had been working as a meat-cutter until he could raise enough money to buy passage out of the city. But by the time he had enough, he learned that his life was in danger and now he’s afraid to go with one of the caravans. Again, he’ll refuse to be any more specific about the nature of the threat than he has been, although he may hint that he expects to be strangled.

If asked why he didn’t just go to the sentinels, he will shrug and admit that he has no real proof and they would never believe him. And he has no reason to trust in the law ... it doesn’t protect everyone equally. (That’s all he’ll have to say on that subject.)

His suggestion is that the characters station themselves downstairs, in the hall outside, etc. There are two entrances to the building, front and side, and two sets of stairs — both need to be covered. But he’ll let the characters make their own arrangements. His only restriction — and he’s firm on this — is that no one stay in the room with him overnight. Again, he won’t explain the whys and wherefores, he just refuses.

Let the characters get into position and let the waiting begin. Two becomes three and three becomes four and nothing seems to be happening. When something does, how it plays out will be determined by whether or not the characters have stationed someone outside on the street.





Paul Daly

If They Haven't: Cut right to "D.B. and the Night Visitor."

If They Have: If a character is stationed where he can see Ell's window, he will see a winged figure alight near there, unlatch the windows and go into the room. This is a Relkazar in the employ of Theodore, sent to kill Ell.

It's assumed the character will immediately shout a warning. The other characters may then break in and attack. The Relkazar will attempt to kill Ell by strangling him and then flee. It is okay for the characters to kill the Relkazar in the course of this combat — it does not cause any significant problems down the line in the story. It is also all right if Ell survives the attack — he'll be shaken enough to provide the characters with at least a little more information (we'll deal with that a little later).

Relkazar **AGILITY 9**

Dodge 10, flight: wings 10, melee combat 11, unarmed combat 12, unarmed parry 10

DEXTERITY 7

Fire combat 8, vehicle piloting: wheeled 8

ENDURANCE 10 **STRENGTH 15 (13)** **INTELLECT 8**

Perception 9, trick 9

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 8

Con 9, intimidation 10, willpower 9

CHARISMA 8

Taunt 10

Life Points: 4

Natural Tools: Wings, speed value 10; claws, damage value STR+3/18; hide, armor value TOU+6/19

Description: This particular Relkazar is down on his luck and took this job rather than possessing yet another panhandler. He'll do the best he can for the money, but he doesn't have any personal grudge against Ell (other than the kind Relkazar have for just about everyone).

For more information on Relkazar, see pages 24–25 of *The World of Bloodshadows*.

D.B. AND THE NIGHT VISITOR

If the characters haven't posted someone outside, they'll have no clue something is go-

ing on inside the room. Call for a *perception* check for the character or characters closest to the door — on a 13, they hear the slightest sounds of a scuffle from inside. In the time it will take them to get in (the door is locked from the inside), the Relkazar will have done his work. Ell will be hanging from the rafters, very dead. A telltale bruise on his forehead will show where he was slugged before being lifted into the noose.

The characters can do some checking of the room. A Mind total of 8 will reveal that the killer had to have great strength to have lifted the unconscious body high enough to get it in the noose (or haul the rope up to hang him, if the noose was fitted on the floor). There is nothing remarkable about the knots in the rope.

The window is the obvious avenue of escape. An Intellect or *perception* check of 9 will reveal claw marks in the wood. A *scholar: demonic lore* total of 10 will show these to possibly have been left by a small number of demonic species, including the Relkazar.

The chest Ell kept has not been touched. It is full of personal articles — a timepiece, keys to the apartment, his billfold — but absolutely no licenses or anything else that would confirm his identity. There is a small scrap of paper with a scrawled name and address, “Terence Gar, Edgeware Rd., Deranus.” There are also a small number of gold coins, nowhere near as much as he’d promised the characters. A *perception* check of 10 will reveal that this gold was probably alchemically produced, and on the back of each coin are the engraved initials “E.V.”

A Mind total of 15 will reveal what those initials stand for (they are the initials of the alchemist who made the gold) — failure just means the characters will have to ask an alchemist or at a bank to find out, if they have a mind to.

A *perception* or *medicine* total of 9 will reveal that Ell’s body seems to have no other marks on it other than the bruise — no scars, vaccinations, nothing. This might seem justifiably strange to the characters.

IF ELL SURVIVES

If Ell survives, the Relkazar being either killed or driven off, he will be badly shaken, of course. He will announce to the characters that

he is going to go deeper into hiding, but will stay in touch with them through an intermediary.

He will then begin gathering his belongings, stop and think for a moment, and hand the characters the scrap of paper with Gar’s address on it. He won’t explain what it means, just that it is something they might want to look into. He will also hand them a few more gold coins — a *perception* check with an identical difficulty number to the one above will reveal the “E.V.” mark. He’ll claim ignorance about what the initials stand for.

CUT TO...

At this point, the characters have two possible leads, but still no clear idea of why anyone might want Ell dead. The most obvious clue is the name and address — but the “E.V.” might also prove to be important. Whichever they choose to pursue, cut to Scene Two, “Dead Again.”

SCENE TWO: DEAD AGAIN

THE SITUATION

Standard. The characters have two clues to the mystery surrounding D.B. Ell. If they choose to pursue the alchemist’s mark on the gold, now or later, cut to “Fool’s Gold.” If they track down Gar at the address given, read aloud or paraphrase:

Edgeware Road is in the heart of a laborer’s neighborhood. Mill workers, apprentices in various crafts, and some retired miners call the area home. Gar’s address is a brownstone much like many others that line the streets.

THE ACTION

When the characters enter the building, they can find Gar’s name on one of the mail slots — Apartment 5A. When they get upstairs, they’ll spot a little old man in clothes at least 10 years out of date leaving the apartment.

If the characters mistake him for Gar or ask him his identity, he’ll explain *that he is the building super*. Gar? He was murdered two



weeks ago — strangled. Sentinels had already been all over the place, but hadn't found anything to give them a reason why anyone would want the man dead.

The super can't tell the characters too much about the late tenant — Gar kept pretty much to himself and worked the night shift at a flesh mill (so no one had any interest in getting close to him, let alone chatting with him). He didn't seem to have very much in the way of possessions, but what's left is still in the apartment.

The characters can, if they wish, pass themselves off as relatives or friends of Gar's (the old man is pretty easily persuaded, especially since there's nothing worth stealing in the apartment). If they ask about the funeral, etc., he'll explain that as far as he knows the body is still in the sentinel morgue. Nobody claimed it.

THE APARTMENT

Inside the apartment, there's not even a stick of furniture. The super will explain that Gar had been renting the place about two months. He always paid in advance and in gold — the super will pull one of the coins out of his pocket to show the characters. A Mind total of 8 will reveal that it is identical to the ones in Ell's apartment, down to the alchemist's mark.

There is very little to be found here. The super will tell the characters that Gar was killed on his way home from work, dragged into an alley and strangled. According to the sentinels, there was no robbery.



If asked, the super can provide only a very vague description of Gar. However, what little he can tell should match Ell's, in terms of height, weight and other general things.

SOMEONE'S ROTTEN IN DERANUS...

Regardless of where the characters are heading when they leave the brownstone, they will be spotted by a gang of Karkas hired by Theodore. There should be one less Karkas than there are player characters.

The Karkas will stick to alleys, etc. and try to follow the characters unnoticed (generate *stealth* totals for them occasionally, in case the characters decide to check and see if they're being followed). As soon as the characters are in a lonely enough spot, the Karkas will attack.

KARKAS GANG MEMBERS

AGILITY 8

Dodge 10, maneuver 9, stealth 10, unarmed combat 12, unarmed parry 10

DEXTERITY 8

ENDURANCE 10

STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 11

INTELLECT 9

Perception 11, tracking 12, trick 10

MIND 8

CONFIDENCE 9

Intimidation 11, scramble: physical 10, streetwise 10, willpower 12

CHARISMA 9

Taunt 11

Life Points: 2

Alignment: Neutral

Description: Karkas are Undead with yellow-green, mottled skin (often covered with sores) and blank white eyes. The cells of a Karkas' body are capable of independent locomotion, and when the body is torn apart, the parts will move toward each other and reattach. The only way to prevent this for these particular Karkas is to incinerate the pieces.

Note: In general, Karkas do not like combat. This particular group needed the money badly, but fortified themselves with a few shots before attacking. For that reason, add +1 to the difficulty number of all their Agility and Dexterity-related actions in this battle.

Background Notes: The Karkas have the "Attribute Adjustment (Physical)" Special



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Ability. This allows them to scramble their target's physical attributes, rearranging them by taking some points from one or more attributes and adding them to others. No one attribute may be increased or decreased by more than four points.

To do this, the Karkas must first make a successful *unarmed combat* attack on his target. He may then choose, as a multi-action, to perform a *scramble* attack. The *scramble*:physical total is compared to the target's *willpower* or Confidence. If the attack is successful, the Karkas may rearrange his victim's attributes.

The change lasts for a value of time equal to the result points of the *scramble* attack versus the target's *willpower* or Confidence, as read on the Value Chart in the *MasterBook*. A character whose attributes have been scrambled cannot be scrambled a second time until the effects of the first wears off.

DOUBLE EXPOSURE

If the characters go to the nearest sentinel station and start asking questions about Gar, they'll get a frosty reception. If they try to pass themselves off as his relatives, they'll have to produce proof.

All of this means that the characters are going to have to find some indirect way to get into the morgue to see Gar's body (if that's what they want to do). This means trickery or bribery.

Use the standard sentinel stats on page 49 of *The World of Bloodshadows* for the sentinels.

MORQUE ATTENDANT

AGILITY 7

Dodge 8, stealth 8

DEXTERITY 7

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 9

Deduction 11, divination: necromancy 13, perception 11, trick 11

MIND 10

Medicine 12

CONFIDENCE 9

Bribery 10, intimidation 10, willpower 11

CHARISMA 7

Life Points: 1

Spells: *Speak to dead*

Arcane Knowledges: Death 2

Description: This particular morgue attendant goes against the stereotype. He's a fat, jovial man, a little past middle age, always with a bad morgue joke on his lips. He has a wife and 11 children, so he's willing to talk money with the characters.

When the characters finally get a look at Gar's body, call for Intellect or *perception* checks. On an 8, the characters can tell that, except for a scar on his face and a thin moustache, Gar could be Ell's twin brother.

The morgue attendant will note that, other than that scar and the bruises from being strangled, the corpse doesn't have a mark on him. "You'd almost think," he laughs, "the guy'd been born yesterday."

If the characters ask to see the articles found on the body, the attendant will comply. Gar was wearing the simple clothing of a mill worker (which stinks to high heaven of treated flesh), a few more gold coins, and some paper money. No papers or other identification on him.

FOOL'S GOLD

If the characters have not yet solved the mystery of the "E.V." mark, they can ask at any alchemists' shop to get the explanation for it. If they want to know who "E.V." is, though, they'll have to ask at the offices of the Alchemists' Guild.

The Guild offices are located in Alchemists' Row. When they enter, they'll find the reception office filled with potion-pourers looking to patent their potables. They'll have to fight their way through the crowd to get to the receptionist.

Once there, she'll automatically hand them a form and a pen and ask them to fill it out. It's intended for alchemists to list what makes their potions unique and deserving of a patent. The characters will have to spend a fair amount of time explaining to her just what they're there for before they'll get to see the assistant to the junior Guild vice-chariman.

And he'll tell them Guild membership records are sealed.

That's right — it's bribing time again! (Figure a difficulty number of 8 for this one — assistants to junior Guild vice-chairmen don't get paid all that well.)

When the characters examine the records, they'll find only one alchemist in town with

those initials — Edward Voke, on Retort Place in Alchemists' Row. He applied for and was granted a license by the Guild roughly three months ago.

CUT TO...

When the characters are ready to check out Voke and his connection to Gar and Ell, cut to Scene Three, "Hollow Pursuits."

SCENE THREE: HOLLOW PURSUITS

THE SITUATION

Dramatic. The characters travel to Edward Voke's alchemy shop, "Peerless Potions," to try and discover his connection, if any, to Gar and Ell. When they get there, read aloud or paraphrase:

"Peerless Potions' is one of a number of small alchemy shops on Retort Place, virtually indistinguishable from the others. A sign in the window reads, 'E. Voke, Prop.' Inside, it's cluttered with ingredients, glassware, burners, tongs and other tools of the alchemist's trade.

A teenager in a white smock stands behind the counter and smiles when you walk in. 'Peerless Potions. May I help you find something?'"

THE ACTION

If the characters ask the kid about Mr. Voke, he'll tell them that the proprietor has been in Galitia on business for the last few days, but is expected back at the store this evening. If they somehow convince the clerk to let them see the client list (consider him to be *hostile* to the idea), they will find no mention of either Gar or Ell.

WILLIS HERM (STORE CLERK)

AGILITY 8

Climbing 9, dodge 9, maneuver 9, swimming 9, unarmed combat 9

DEXTERITY 8

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 8
TOUGHNESS 10
INTELLECT 8

First aid 9, science: chemistry 9

MIND 7

Conjuration: alchemy 8

CONFIDENCE 9

Intimidation 10, streetwise 12, willpower 11

CHARISMA 9

Charm 10, persuasion 10

Life Points: 1

Spells: None as yet

Arcane Knowledges: Avian 1

Description: Willis is a young, eager apprentice alchemist, working his way through school by sorting ingredients and making deliveries.

If the characters describe Gar or Ell (and there's not a lot of differences in the descriptions), the kid will vaguely remember making deliveries to both. He isn't sure what was in the boxes he brought, but he is surprised that the orders weren't listed in the records. Usually, Mr. Voke is so good about that sort of thing.

There's not a lot the characters can do until Voke gets back. The kid suggests they come back around six — the shop will be closed, but if it's important, he's sure Voke will make time to talk to them.

Allow the characters to do whatever they wish. Any potion listed in the "Equipment" section of the *The World of Bloodshadows* is available here, and the characters can purchase some of them or ingredients, if they choose to. If they have established any contacts in Selastos, they might check with them to see if they have any information on the case (they won't). Or they might just get a meal and some sleep.

HOLLOW, AND HOW ARE YOU?

Voke will finally show up around six. The first thing the characters will notice is his uncanny resemblance to Ell (and Gar, too) — too uncanny to be a coincidence. He will be polite to the characters, but noticeably wary.

EDWARD VOKE

Species: Human Homunculus

AGILITY 8

Dodge 9, maneuver 9, melee combat 9,

stealth 9, unarmed combat 10

DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 9

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 8

Deduction 10, divination: alchemy 12, perception 11, trick 11

MIND 9

Conjuration: alchemy 11

CONFIDENCE 8

Alteration: alchemy 11, con 10, intimidation 10, willpower 10

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 9, taunt 9

Life Points: 2

Alignment: Neutral

Equipment: Voke has access to at least one sample of all the alchemical potions listed in the "Equipment" chapter of *The World of Bloodshadows*; .38 Gelvash, damage value 17, ammo 6

Spells: Voke knows the spells to create cheap versions of the alchemical potions listed in *The World of Bloodshadows*.

Arcane Knowledges: Fire 2, metal 1, light 1

Description: Voke is the first of the Homunculi created by Adolphe Theodore. After he escaped from his creator, he followed in his footsteps and became an alchemist, losing himself amongst the hustle and bustle of Alchemists' Row.

Voke has been supplying the other two Homunculi with money as they need it from the supply of gold he's created. He took Gar's death as a warning that Theodore was hunting them down, and warned Ell. He does not yet know of Ell's death (if he is dead), as he's been out of town.

He is currently making arrangements to leave Selastos permanently.

The characters will have to be very, very careful how they handle Voke. They're dealing with a man who knows his life to be in danger every minute he is in Selastos and is extremely suspicious of anyone and everyone he doesn't know.

He will ask the characters to state their business. If they mention Gar or Ell, he will at first deny any connection to them and dismiss claims that they resemble him ("Coincidence, I suppose," he'll say).



The best way for the characters to get him to admit that he knows the two is to produce the gold coins. Although Voke could just as easily deny knowledge of how the two got them, he knows that only his two doubles had those coins to spend (he has yet to deliver that particular order to the purchaser). Now his suspicions are crystallized — he knows Gar is dead, and if this group has some of his coins, they must have been the killers!

First chance he gets, Voke will casually make his way to the cash register and try to draw his .38 on the characters. He will not shoot (and if the characters shoot, you might want to arrange for them to miss, or at least only wound him). In fact, he's not sure just what to do with the characters — he has no real wish to kill them (although disposing of the bodies is no real problem for an alchemist), but turning them in to the sentinels is out of the question. He has no real proof, and no wish to admit what he is to the authorities.

This means the characters have a stay of execution and will need to talk their way out of this. They are going to have to do some serious persuading to convince Voke of their identity. But during the argument, they can get a little

information. For example, at some point, Voke will say:

“You can’t fool me. You’re working for Theodore. Did he pay you — or create you? What do three lives go for these days?”

Voke will eventually realize his only options are to kill the characters or put them out of the way until he can escape Selastos. Before he decides which, the characters had better have convinced them of their innocence.

Once they have done so, it will be easier to get the whole story out of him. Read aloud or paraphrase:

“I suppose you could say that Gar, Ell and I are ... brothers,” Voke begins. **“We shared the same parents, at any rate — Adolphe Theodore and his laboratory.”**

“Theodore is a supremely talented alchemist — but a sick, twisted, bitter old man, too. Despite all his money, he’s dying from a plague no healer could save him from. Eventually, his lungs will stop working and he’ll suffocate to death.”

“But before that could happen, he intended to do whatever he could to pro-



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long his miserable existence. So he created me — a Homunculus in his own image, or at least, that of himself as a young man. He intended to use a spell to transfer his soul into this body, forcing mine into non-existence.

“He had made me better than he knew. I was alive, and I was aware — and when a condition of the ritual required I be left alone, I took the opportunity to escape.”

Voke goes on to explain that he stayed in hiding for a few weeks after his escape, until he was certain Theodore was not looking for him. Then he began applying some of the things he had learned by watching and listening in the alchemist’s lab. Soon, he had a small business going — not too successful, as he didn’t want to attract attention.

It was some time later that he discovered first Gar’s existence, and then Ell’s. Theodore had tried twice more and failed twice more. Out of some strange feeling of kinship, he tried to help the two of them out, and rapidly discovered that one of the differences between the three was that Gar and Ell were not as bright as he. Theodore had no doubt purposely changed the components of the potion to dull their intellect just a little, in the hope that they wouldn’t be so rebellious.

Unfortunately, the third failure must have snapped the alchemist. At least, that’s Voke’s theory — he has no doubt that Theodore is behind Gar’s murder (and Ell’s, too, if he’s been informed of that). And he’s certain that he’s next, so he plans to head for Galitia on the next caravan, and from there to Dela, Gimm ... maybe even Guildsport.

If the characters ask, he will give them the address of Theodore’s house in the Palah district.

Just as he reaches this point in the story, one wall of the shop crashes in and a Hollow Man stands revealed. The Demon has been dispatched by Theodore to kill Voke, and won’t hesitate to off anyone else who gets in his way. But remember that his primary focus is Voke and he won’t be easily lured away from his target.

HOLLOW MAN

AGILITY 13

Dodge 16, maneuver 15, melee combat 17, melee parry 16, stealth 15, unarmed combat 18, unarmed parry 15

DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 16

ENDURANCE 12

STRENGTH 19

TOUGHNESS 16

INTELLECT 11

Apportation: technomancy 18, deduction 13, perception 17, trick 16

MIND 10

Conjuration: photomancy 16

CONFIDENCE 10

Intimidation 14, willpower 12

CHARISMA 8

Taunt 18

Life Points: 6

Spells: *Rain of razors, dark cloud*

Arcane Knowledges: Darkness 1, metal 2

Equipment: Cleaver, damage value STR+5/

20

Description: Hollow Men are Demons who inhabit the shells of dead Humans. They’re composed of the skins of dead people, which looks like dry, cracked leather. A yellowish-red glow burns through the cracks, eye-holes and mouth of the creature.

Hollow Men feed on the blood of the living, wringing it out of their victims.

Hollow Men ignore shock, K and O damage. They are TOU+10 against non-enchanted bullets and TOU+5 against rapiers and daggers.

This particular Hollow Man has not fed recently, and so suffers +5 to any damage from fire.

This is going to be an extremely difficult battle for the characters, you should know that going in. You may need to arrange for some distractions to keep the Hollow Man from grinding them into paste and give them a chance to plan and win.

One possibility is to have some alchemical potions be upset during the battle and let the characters see the Hollow Man shying away from fire. At least that way, they’ll have some clue to how to fight the thing. (Note that the Hollow Man is a one-track Demon — he knows nothing of Theodore’s plans, nor does he care, so there’s not really any information the characters could get from interrogating him.)

AFTERMATH

If the Hollow Man kills Voke, he will immediately try to depart and lose all interest in the characters. As long as Voke lives, the Demon will keep fighting.



If he does escape, the characters can easily trail the Demon. But it will disappear (returning from whence it came) long before it reaches Theodore's.

If the characters have not gotten Theodore's address from Voke, they can find it with a search of his shop (*perception* total of 9). The address is in the Palah district of Selastos.

If Voke survives the battle, he will join the characters in assaulting Theodore's house, if they will have him.

CUT TO...

When the characters are ready to head to Palah, cut to Scene Four.

SCENE FOUR: THE PERILS OF PALAH

THE SITUATION

Standard. The characters have the great fun of trying to get into the Palah district and then making it into Theodore's house.

Palah is the most exclusive district in Selastos and is patrolled by its own private security force — and they don't take kindly to strangers. How this scene plays out depends largely on how the characters are traveling: if on foot or using mass transit, they can count on trouble with the Palah guards. If they somehow get a hold of an automobile that looks halfway decent, they might — repeat, *might* — be able to bluff their way in.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

You can tell when you cross that invisible border line between Alchemists' Row and Palah. There are no signs or gates — but the houses get noticeably nicer, the air more rarefied, the lawns and the ladies well-tended. This is a haunt of the rich, and you can almost hear the change jingling in their pockets as the "spectres" go by.

THE ACTION

If the characters are on foot, they're going to stick out like a sore thumb. *Nobody* walks in

Palah — they drive from the front yard to the back yard, if need be. If they're driving, but the car isn't ritzy enough, the characters can count on being hassled by the private security, who are everywhere in Palah.

PALAH SECURITY MAN

Species: Human

AGILITY 9

Dodge 11, maneuver 10, melee combat 13, unarmed combat 12

DEXTERITY 10

Fire combat 13

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 8

Perception 9, tracking 9

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 9

Interrogation 10, intimidation 10, willpower 10

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 9

Life Points: 3

Equipment: .38 revolver, damage value 17, ammo 6; runeslugs, various; hand-held crystal set; baton, damage value STR+3/18

Description: Most Palah security men are ex-sentinels or would-be sentinels, and almost invariably they have attitude problems. Non-residents who have no business in the district are considered fair game for whatever humiliations the security men feel like visiting upon them.

The security men won't start right out with violence. Most likely, they'll question the characters first, in a very hostile way, about what they're doing in the district. If they say they're on the way to see Theodore, they'll "offer" to call the alchemist first and get him to vouch for them. They may want to search the characters for weapons, etc.

If the characters can convince the private cops that they have a legitimate reason for being in Palah, they'll be allowed to pass. If they fail, they may be escorted out of the district and have to find another way in. If they fail and annoy the security men, they may get knocked around a little before they get thrown out, or worse, dragged down to the company headquarters for interrogation.

NOT SO NICE PLACE TO VISIT...

Theodore's house is a two-story affair, surrounded by a wrought-iron fence. Of course, you know it's not just a fence — it's got a *freeze* spell (effect value 19) charged into it. Touch any part of the fence and you're chilled to the bone.

There are ways around this, of course. The spell only works on animate objects, so if the characters wear gloves, wrap cloth around their hands, go over by way of a ladder, etc., they'll avoid that trap.

Then it's on to the next one. The lawn has *plant cuffs* wards scattered across it (Strength of 16) — step on the wrong spot and there are vines wrapping around your legs. There you'll stay until Theodore — or the gardener — show up.

The last little surprise is on the front door-knob. The door's unlocked — but touching the knob releases a *rain of razors* spell (effect value 18) charged into the door, so whoever goes first gets sliced and diced.

(Full stats for all three of these spells can be found in *The World of Bloodshadows*.)

The windows on the first floor are locked, but there are no enchanted seals in place. *Lock*

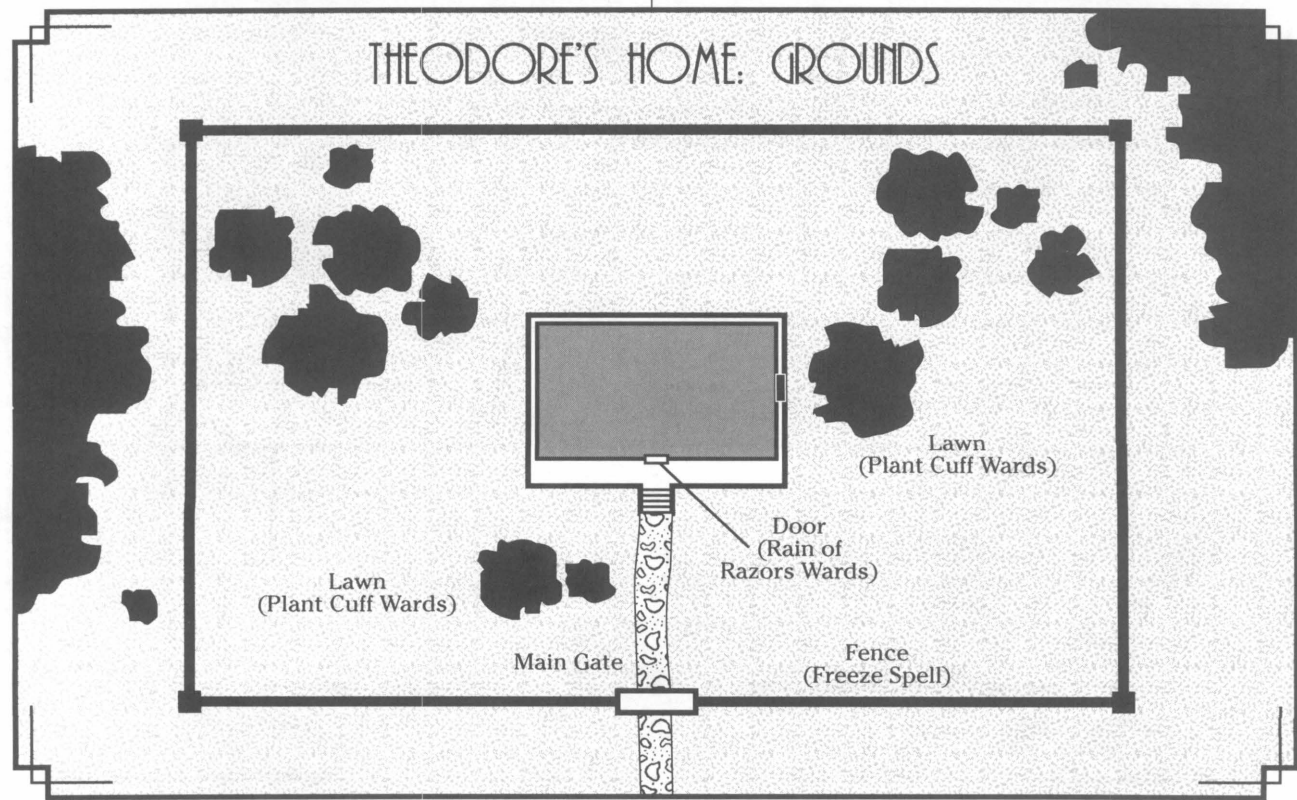
picking difficulty is 8. Inside, the place is completely dark, and for good reason — the interior floor for a radius of about a meter around each window is gone, eaten by acid. Characters who don't look before they climb inside will fall four meters on to the hard basement floor. (*Perception* or *Intellect* total of 10 to notice the missing floor, unless the characters have a light source with them or the character can see in darkness — then reduce the difficulty to 6.)

Unless a character has the power of flight, he's going to have to leap over the hole. Difficulty number of the *long jumping* total is 9.

EXPLORING THE HOUSE

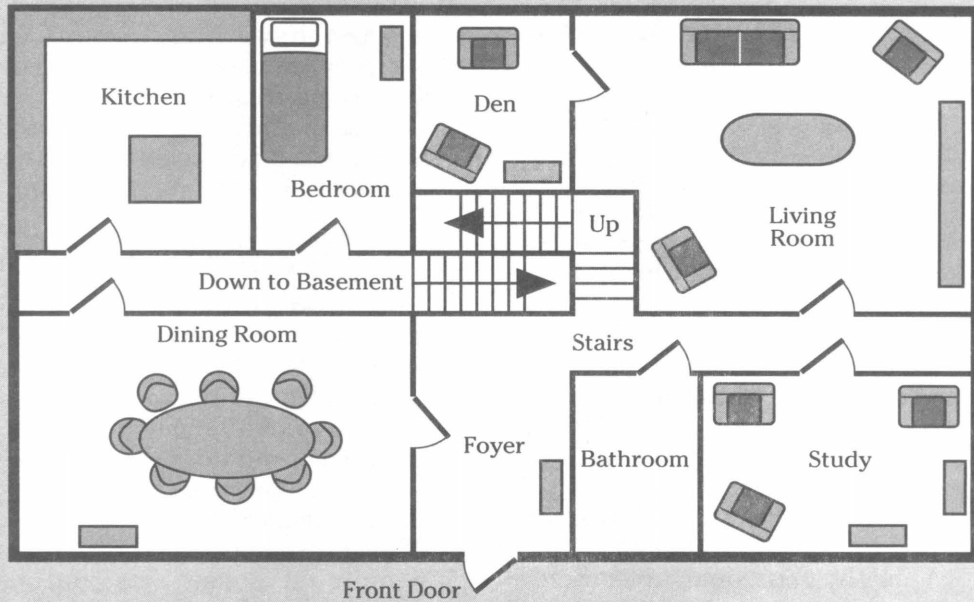
Once inside, the characters have two stories and a basement they can explore. Take a look at the maps on page 58 as you run them through the building, and note that there is no one there to challenge them. But when they reach the second floor corridor marked "X" on the map, cut to "The Gate," below.

There is very little for the characters to find in Theodore's house: some alchemical texts, a few mutated house pets, but not much of anything else. It's basically your standard,

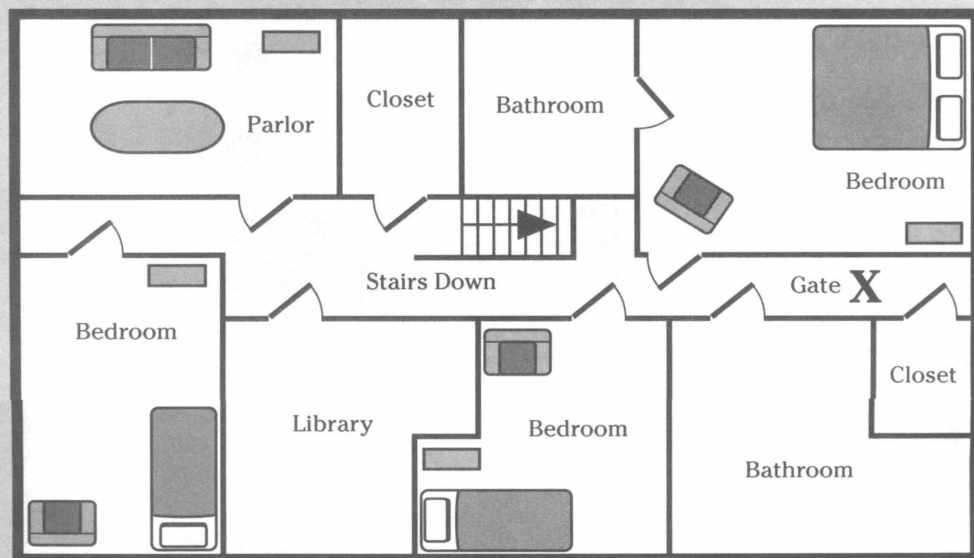


THEODORE'S HOME

◆ FIRST FLOOR ◆



◆ SECOND FLOOR ◆



run-of-the mill twisted, dying alchemist's home. But there's no reason you can't play it up really creepy and let the player characters think every room they enter might be their last.

Once one of the characters goes down corridor X, cut to "The Gate."

THE GATE

This particular corridor is currently home to a slashtor, who has carried a mobile gate with him (how did it get into the house, you ask? Well, maybe Theodore somehow domesticated one ... or maybe you just don't know. It's



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a bizarre Wilderness creature and it's there, and the characters won't have a lot of time to discuss the why of it.)

When the first character walks down that hallway, he will disappear to the eyes of the characters behind him. They will still be able to hear his voice, however.

The character himself will see himself as only in a particularly dark portion of the hallway. When he turns around, he'll see his partners and be able to converse with them. The others will obviously know there is something strange going on, but this character most likely won't. He can walk back to his friends if he wishes to.

Once all the characters — or all those who decide to go — are inside the gate, it closes behind them. Suddenly, they can't see or hear anyone left behind anymore. And something is looming before them ...

If some of the characters elect to remain behind, you may need to find some other way to get them into Scene Four or Scene Five. Maybe there's another gate somewhere, a secret passage, whatever — your choice.

CUT TO...

Once the gate shuts behind the characters, cut to Scene Four, "Um, We Were Just Leaving."

SCENE FOUR: UM, WE WERE JUST LEAVING...

THE SITUATION

Dramatic. The characters have stumbled into a gate, and stumbling out again won't be so easy. But they need to get through it to reach Theodore's workshop and the resolution of this adventure, so ...

Read aloud or paraphrase:

Suddenly, space itself seems to warp around you, twisting the way it does when you've had a few ales too many. Those of you who haven't experienced this before have heard of it — you've wandered into a gate!

Behind and before you, all is dark. Then you see what looks like a door in the distance — the way out? Or another gate to another place?

Before you can answer that question, something slithers out of the darkness and looms between you and that other doorway.

THE ACTION

Okay, there's good news and there's bad news for the player characters. The bad news is that they're up against a slashtor, one of the deadlier Wilderness creatures. The good news is that they don't actually have to defeat it to survive this scene and get where they're going — they just have to get past it. The actual gate itself is not very large, and the slashtor has no real interest in venturing outside of it — it's not so much hunting prey right now as angry at being disturbed.

Of course, that won't stop it from attacking. And maneuvering room around the beast is pretty limited, so this won't be easy. Note that going back is not an option — the gate going in that direction is shut tight.

SLASHTOR

AGILITY 8

Dodge 12, stealth 15 (hiding in gate 17), unarmed combat 19, unarmed parry 16

DEXTERITY 5

ENDURANCE 18

STRENGTH 16

TOUGHNESS 19

INTELLECT 5

Perception 11, tracking 11, trick 11

MIND 4

Conjuration: sorcery 15

CONFIDENCE 6

Intimidation 17, survival: Wilderness 10, willpower 16

CHARISMA 5

Life Points: 4

Spells: Gate

Arcane Knowledges: Dimension 5

Natural Tools: Cilia, damage value STR+9/25 — slashtor can make up to four single attacks per round without incurring multi-action penalty; claws, damage value STR+2/18

BEYOND THE BEAST

Once the characters have defeated or gotten past the slashtor (it will not pursue them), they find themselves in some place *other*. This particular gate does not lead to someplace else on Marl, but a completely different dimension. In truth, the slashtor was feeling nostalgic while creating this one, and it goes back to its old hatching grounds.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

You take a step and find yourself standing atop a disk in what seems to be empty space. A series of disks lead down, like a staircase, but to where? In the distance, you can still see that other door, waiting for you.

There's no natural light source, but somehow you can still see. And you wish you couldn't — all around you are swirling geometric shapes, with strange sacs hanging off them. Periodically, you hear strange cries or something moving nearby, but there's nothing there when you look. All you do know is that this place is nothing like anywhere on Marl you've ever seen.

The characters only means of egress are those disk steps — moving down them is a simple action, but if the characters try to do something really stupid and fall off ... well, they better hope someone catches them, or they're going to be falling a real long time ...

There's nothing here that's really a threat to the characters — but they don't know that! At some point, have one of the sacs start to tear open and let the characters see that there's an infant slashtor inside. Again, it's not interested in attacking them, but it should be nasty enough in appearance to give them a start and prompt them to want to get out of here, but fast.

The disk staircase will eventually lead the characters to that other door, which is a gate itself. On the way, though, mess with their minds — let them see things, hear things completely and totally bizarre, really let your imagination go wild. The purpose of all this is not to hurt them or drive them crazy, just to show them that there are worlds beyond the nice, safe (?) one they know.

Once the characters reach the other gate, cut to Scene Five, "Blood, Sweat and Alchemy."

SCENE FIVE: BLOOD, SWEAT AND ALCHEMY

THE SITUATION

Dramatic. The characters pass through the second gate to find themselves in Adolphe Theodore's workshop, where he has just recently completed work on yet another Homunculus. This one, though, is a good deal more powerful — and loyal — than its predecessors, thanks to Theodore really overdoing his alterations on the spell and mixing more than a few of the wrong ingredients into the brew that made this baby. The characters will have to dispose of this Homunculus to get at Theodore.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

You emerge into what looks like a basement laboratory. The figure in the far corner looks like a much older version of Voke and Ell, and you need only look at the pallor of his skin and hear his hacking cough to know he isn't far from kicking off.

Then your attention is drawn to the figure beside him. His features make it clear he's yet another Homunculus, but he seems bigger, more powerful than any of the others you have encountered. He turns at the sound of your entry and snarls.

The alchemist had been in the process of drawing blood from his creation when you entered. At the sight of you, he drops the vial and the blood splatters on the floor. There is the sound of something sizzling and before your startled eyes, the blood eats a hole in the stone floor.

THE ACTION

The characters are in the sub-basement laboratory of Adolphe Theodore. It is not attached to the house as, say, the basement is — Theodore has arranged matters so that you can only reach this room via gate, and the gate passes through the hatching area of the slashtors (so not many make it this far).

He has only recently completed the creation

of his crowning achievement, who he has named "Alpha" (preferring to forget the three Homunculi who went before). Alpha is taller and stronger than any of his previous works and completely loyal to his creator.

Of course, there are a few flaws in the elixir. For instance, there's the little fact that Alpha is almost completely insane. And the strange mixture of alchemical ingredients used in his creation has altered his blood and other bodily fluids so that they now have the composition and effects of various alchemical potions. Their composition constantly changes, but in effect, Alpha is a walking menace.

You can expect that Theodore will send Alpha against the player characters, confident in his abilities. Theodore will initially try to stay out of the combat, but will toss a potion or two if the opportunity presents itself. Theodore is really not that much of a combat threat, and all the spells he knows can only be charged into potions.

If the player characters are having too easy of a time of it, any of the Unnaturals who survived earlier combats can appear through the gate and join in the combat.

ALPHA

Species: Human Homunculus

AGILITY 10

Acrobatics 11, dodge 13, maneuver 11, unarmed combat 12, unarmed parry 12

DEXTERITY 10

Thrown weapons 11

ENDURANCE 12

Resist shock 13

STRENGTH 13

Lifting 14

TOUGHNESS 12

INTELLECT 10

Perception 11, trick 11

MIND 10

CONFIDENCE 10

Intimidation 12, willpower 12

CHARISMA 10

Life Points: 1

Alignment: Neutral

Background Notes: Alpha's bodily fluids — blood, sweat, etc. — are composed of alchemical potions. He is immune to both the positive and negative effects of these potions. However, should he, say, flick a drop of sweat at a wall during combat, the wall might very well explode (if he





was sweating *thunder* potion at the time). Alpha has no control over which potions are being perspired at any given time. Effects on player characters of contact with these potions could be positive or negative, depending on the elixir in effect at the time.

To determine which potions are at work in a round, roll a die on the "Alpha Alchemy Chart" below and apply the results.

Description: Alpha is Theodore's ultimate achievement — a strong, loyal Homunculus who will not object to turning possession of his body over to his creator. Unfortunately, at the moment, Alpha is more than a little unstable, both mentally and physically, owing to the strange elixirs employed in his creation.

Note that Theodore's tinkering with the spells and rites involved have resulted in a Homunculus with higher than average stats and skill values.

STANDARD HOMUNCULUS

AGILITY 8
DEXTERITY 8
ENDURANCE 8
STRENGTH 8
TOUGHNESS 9
INTELLECT 8
MIND 8
CONFIDENCE 8
CHARISMA 8
Life Points: 1
Alignment: Neutral

Description: These Homunculi resemble Alpha, but do not have his stature or his powers. Although their mental attribute values are average, they are new to the world — add +2 to all *trick* and *taunt* attempts made against them.

ADOLPH THEODORE

Species: Human
AGILITY 7
Dodge 8, stealth 9
DEXTERITY 10
Thrown weapons 14
ENDURANCE 7
STRENGTH 7
TOUGHNESS 9
INTELLECT 12
Deduction 16, divination: alchemy 20, first aid 15, perception 17, science: chemistry 19, trick 18
MIND 11

ALPHA ALCHEMY CHART

Die	Potion in Effect
1	Blind
2	Potion of Power
3	Smokescreen
4	Revitalize
5	Stench
6	Tar Pit
7	Eagle Eyes
8	Thunder
9	Toughen
10	A new and previously untested potion. If a drop lands on the floor, a new Homunculus grows immediately. This being will be of the standard variety, with attributes of 8 and no skill points. It will not have Alpha's special abilities, but will join him in attacking the characters.

Conjuration: alchemy 21, medicine 18, scholar: alchemical formulae 19

CONFIDENCE 10

Alteration: alchemy 20, intimidation 17, willpower 18

CHARISMA 8

Summoning: alchemy 19

Life Points: 4

Alignment: Order 7

Spells: Theodore knows the spells needed to create the alchemical potions listed in *The World of Bloodshadows*, along with a number of others.

Equipment: Theodore has the following potions on hand at the start of this scene: *blind* (1), *smokescreen* (1), *stench* (3), *tar pit* (2), *thunder* (2)

Description: Theodore is an aged and very talented alchemist suffering from a plague of a sorcerous nature. He will cough violently throughout the scene.

He is also tremendously stubborn, which is why he has refused to accept his fate and persisted in creating Homunculi in an effort to cheat death.



AFTER THE BATTLE

There are basically three possible fates for Theodore: the characters could kill him in battle; the characters could turn him over to the sentinels (though have fun hustling a resident out of Palah past the security men); the characters could intend to turn him in, only to have him die of the plague before they can, coughing his life away.

The characters will have to return through the gates to get back to Theodore's house and the outside world. However, the slashtor (if it still lives) will not molest them this time — it's

"trained" only to attack those strangers who come in from outside, not those who try to leave.

If Voke is still alive, he will reward the characters with 1000 selasts in gold. If he's dead, the characters could probably find about that much somewhere in Theodore's workshop, so they'll get some money out of this deal.

ADVENTURE AWARD

Award the characters four Life Points for surviving this adventure. Toss in a few Skill Points to exceptionally good roleplayers.



CHAPTER FOUR

TRAIL OF RICHES

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Not all of the gold ore from Jon Able's mines has been making it to the smelter, a circumstance that has made the mining magnate extremely unhappy. His own security forces have been unable to smash what he is convinced must be a smuggling ring, so in desperation he has decided to hire outsiders. The price: 2000 selasts. The job: dangerous in the extreme.

What Able does not realize — or can't prove — is that his primary competitor, Theo "Ace" Link, is the man behind the vanishing gold. Link has recruited Taxim miners in Able's employ and persuaded them to ferry the stolen gold to a private smelter. There, the gold is turned into bars and then moved again, this time by truck to a house in Deranus. Then it leaves the city in one of Link's regularly scheduled caravans. When it arrives in Galitia, it is converted into hard currency and deposited in one of Link's numerous hidden bank accounts.

The operation is simple. Being reanimated corpses largely incapable of feeling pain, the Taxim make ideal smugglers. They merely cut themselves open and fill their chest cavities with ore. When they leave the mine, they travel to a certain warehouse in the Taxim Quarter of the city and drop off the contraband. The amounts taken out in this manner have been small, and it is only now, after several months, that Able has realized he's being robbed.

Link has covered his tracks well. The Taxim have no idea who they are working for, nor does the warehouse manager (a professional smuggler) — he receives his pay-off via a contact, and doesn't care who's really behind all this (though he may suspect Link). The truckers are in the pay of a private firm, retained by Link again through an intermediary.



SCENE ONE: A GOLDEN PROPOSITION

THE SITUATION

Standard. The characters start this adventure in a rundown nightclub called Stone's Place, in the Oasis district of Selastos. There they will be approached by Roland Garros, a middle-man for Jon Able. Garros will inquire about their availability and suggest they speak to his employer (who he will not identify).

STONE'S PLACE

Archie Stone used to be an idealist, now he's just your average, run-of-the-mill cynic. He grew up in Selastos dreaming of exploring the Wilderness of Marl, and much to his later regret, he got his wish. The members of an entire merchant caravan were torn to pieces in front of his eyes by something he couldn't see. He survived by hiding in one of the wagons and eventually made his way back to Selastos. After years of drinking himself into a stupor, he finally found work as a bartender. Eventually, he saved enough to get his own place, and has vowed never to leave the city.

Stone's Place is unusual for Selastos — it's fairly clean, mostly honest, and the drinks are only a little watered down. Although Archie has no objection to whores plying their trade in his club, he doesn't keep a stable himself. Entertainment is an Orris piano player (who doubles as the piano) named Nek and a Human torch singer named Kathleen.

ARCHIE STONE

Species: Human

AGILITY 9

Dodge 12, melee combat 13, unarmed combat 13

DEXTERITY 10

Fire combat 12, thrown weapons 12 (dagger 14)

ENDURANCE 7

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 9

First aid 12, perception 12

MIND 11

Business 15

CONFIDENCE 9

Alteration: vitomancy 14, intimidation 11, streetwise 10 (selastos 12), willpower 11

CHARISMA 10

Life Points: 4

Alignment: Order 2

Equipment: Throwing daggers (5), damage value STR +2/17; .44 Karr Automatic pistol, damage value 20, ammo 6

Spells: *Charm, glass jaw*

Arcane Knowledges: *Folk 2*

Description: Tall and thin, with sandy-brown hair, grey-blue eyes and a perpetually sad mien. A cynic with a touch of romantic left in him, Archie is always glad to give friends a hand as long as it doesn't involve his leaving the city.

THE ACTION

Give the characters ten minutes to shoot the breeze, then call for a *perception* or Intellect check. On a 10, one of them notices a man in a cheap, wrinkled three-piece suit in conversation with Archie. The owner hands the man a glass of ale, nods, and gestures toward the characters.

If any of the characters has a Connection card showing, he recognizes the man as Roland Garros, known as a "fixer of problems" for one of the big movers in town. Odds are good he's looking for freelancers to handle some unpleasantness.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

The man approaches your table and removes his hat. "Excuse me, gents. Mind if I sit down? Archie there tells me you boys might be looking for some honest work."

If the characters says yes, he continues:

"That's fine, just fine. My employer is looking for some reliable ... and discreet ... help. There's two grand in it for you, if you do the job right. Interested?"

Garros will give the characters a few moments to discuss the matter, but under no circumstances will he reveal the name of his employer. If he gets a yes, he will say:

"All right, here's the story: my employer has been the victim of a theft. Now, he's a businessman and knows there will al-



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ways be some till tipping, but what's being snatched is no penny-ante amount. He wants the thieves stopped and his ... material ... back. If you're agreeable, he'd like to meet with you and explain the rest himself."

Garros won't explain what the "material" is, preferring to save that for Able to do. If the characters agree to go along with him, he will pay their tab and usher them outside. There they'll find an elementally-powered Signer sedan. Once they're all inside (or inside and on the running boards, depending on the size of the party), the driver will head off to the Palah district.

ROLAND GARROS

Species: Human

AGILITY 9

Dodge 10, melee combat 12, unarmed combat 10, maneuver 11

DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 13

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 11

Perception 12

MIND 10

Business 11, conjuration: photomancy 13

CONFIDENCE 12

Alteration: photomancy 13, alteration: vitomancy 13, con 13

CHARISMA 9

Charm 11, persuasion 12

Life Points: 4

Alignment: Order 3

Spells: *Blind, sun burn, truth*

Arcane Knowledges: Light 2

Equipment: Garros has been well provided for by his boss. He always has enough cash on hand to "spread around," as well as a .38 Gelvash revolver, damage value 17, ammo 6

Roleplaying Notes: Garros has a slight accent, having been raised in the Eldred section of Galitia, so pronounce some words a little differently. He has a quick temper and a sign of imminent explosion is when his voice goes soft. He smokes cheroots and drinks only Tarik ale.

TRUTH

Skill: *Alteration: vitomancy*

Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge:
Living forces

Difficulty Number: 10

Feedback: 10

Effect Value: 19

Range: 0 (Touch)

Speed: 0

Duration: 17 (30 minutes)

Cast Time: 9 (1 minute)

Modifiers:

Concentration: 1 minute (DN 9)

Incantation: Complex (DN 8)

Gesture: Putting hand on subject's forehead

This spell allows for the caster to ask questions and have them answered truthfully for up to 30 minutes. The spell does not allow for complex questions — basic, "yes or no" questions are the only ones that will work.

The spell is cast by concentrating for a full minute (*willpower* difficulty of 9), and reciting the incantation (Mind difficulty of 8) and placing the palm of the hand on the subject's forehead. Then all the caster has to do is ask a question and the subject will answer as truthfully as possible. The effect value is measured against the target's *willpower*.

The subject can generate a *willpower* total against a difficulty number of the effect value of the spell. If successful, the spell has no effect upon him.

READY, WILLING AND ABLE

The trip will be uneventful. When Garros' sedan approaches the border of the Palah district, one of the private guards will approach the sedan. He will talk to Garros for just a moment and send the car on through. After a few minutes of driving, the sedan will approach the gates of Jon Able's estate. Garros will make a few motions and mutter some words and the gates will swing open.

The mansion of Jon Able is huge, constructed entirely of black and white marble. The lawn is decorated with statues apparently made of steel. The car will pull around the back. The player characters will be led inside to a large den. After a silver golem butler serves drinks and departs, Able himself will enter the room.

JON ABLE

Species: Human

AGILITY 8

Beast riding: horse 12, dodge 10, maneuver 10, melee combat 11, unarmed combat 10

DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 14, thrown weapons 12

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 8

INTELLECT 10

Divination: vitomancy 15, language: Gris 11, language: Hugor 11, perception 13, trick 14

MIND 11

Business 22 (manufacturing 24)

CONFIDENCE 12

Alteration: vitomancy 13, con 16, faith: Ison 17, intimidation 16, willpower 17

CHARISMA 10

Charm 13, persuasion 14

Life Points: 8

Alignment: Order 13

Arcane Knowledges: Folk 5, Life 3, Metal 3

Spells: *Charm, communicate with animal*

Equipment: He has access to any and all available in Selastos and Galitia, and much that isn't.

Roleplaying Notes: Able, Selastos' wealthiest man, has become something of a recluse in recent years. It is a measure of how disturbed he is by these gold thefts that he is meeting in person with the player characters.

For further information on Jon Able, see page 54 of *The World of Bloodshadows*.

Able will sit down and look at every party member. His gaze is piercing, but he only affords each person a brief glance. An *Idea* card will allow a character to notice all the signs of a powerful spellcaster sensing things far beyond what his eyes could tell him. Have each party member make a *willpower* or *Confidence* check against a difficulty number of 17. Those who succeed will be able to hold his gaze. Those who fail will avert their eyes and a chill will run down their spines.

Able will dismiss Garros and then begin speaking to the characters. Read aloud or paraphrase:

"I have a small problem. Someone is stealing what is mine — ore from my gold mines — and I will not tolerate that. In

the grand scheme of things, the amount I have lost might seem a pittance — but it belonged to me.

"My offer is 2000 selasts for you to track down the smugglers and identify the person or persons behind this. If you agree, you will receive 500 now and 1500 when the job is done.

"One last thing: after tonight, you will not meet with me again. Garros will be your contact and relay any information you uncover to me. It would be most unwise of you to discuss who you are employed by with anyone. Is that quite clear?"

Able will tell the group that most of the smuggling seems to be centered in Mines #2 and #7. He has arranged to provide them with credentials as mine inspectors for the city. He will not reveal exactly how much money he has lost thus far, saying the characters do not need to know.

When the questions are done, he will summon Garros and have the group escorted out. As the car passes the statues on the way out, call for *perception* or *Intellect* totals — on a 14, the characters will notice that at least some of the statues are in fact sorcerously altered Human beings.

CUT TO...

Having accepted the job, the logical course is to head to the mines to check things out. When the characters go there, cut to Scene Two, "An Inspector Calls ..."

SCENE TWO: AN INSPECTOR CALLS...

THE SITUATION

Standard. The credentials (expertly forged) are the characters' pass to the mines. The characters have the option of getting in touch with Louis "Spade" Parcell, the shaftboss, or staging a "surprise inspection."

Regardless of which they choose, they will meet both Parcell and Gel Lenard, the Grani



Mining Guild representative. A visit to Mine #2 will allow the characters to be caught in the middle of a cave-in, which will kill a fair number of Taxim.

After their time in the mines, the characters will stumble upon an Oasis prostitute with some interesting info on doings in the Taxim Quarter.

THE ACTION

If the characters did not notify Parcell first, he will be *hostile* to them upon their arrival (Parcell hates bureaucrats with a passion). If they did let him know they were coming to inspect the shafts, Parcell will be *neutral*, but barely cooperative.

The characters should have no trouble securing reliable transport to the Able mines. The only route to the mines is through Oasis, and even in the day, the squalor of the district is obvious. As the characters watch, a small number of sentinels will raid a brothel and drag a few Human women out, tossing them in the back of a wagon for transport to jail.

When the characters reach the mines, they can flash their credentials at the guard and get inside. Once they're in, read aloud or paraphrase:

As you approach the mine office, you see the Taxim shuffling in and out of the shaft entrances. Nothing seems out the ordinary.

A guy wearing a sweat-stained shirt and a hardhat approaches you, looking you over as if you were Undead yourselves.

"Name's Parcell, I'm the shaftboss here," he says. "What brings you down here? Somebody been filing complaints again? Or do you just need a way to earn your paycheck this week?"

LOUIE "SPADE" PARCELL

Species: Human

AGILITY 9

Dodge 12, unarmed combat 12

DEXTERITY 9

Fire Combat 11

ENDURANCE 10

Resist shock 11

STRENGTH 9

Lifting 12

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 9

Perception 11, science: mining 15

MIND 8

Business 10

CONFIDENCE 9

Alteration: vitomancy 11, intimidation 14, willpower 13

CHARISMA 7

Summoning: elemental 10, persuasion 10

Life Points: 4

Alignment: Order 2

Arcane Knowledges: Living forces 2, Earth

1

Spells: *First Aid, Summon Baton*

Equipment: Gelvash "Thunder" shotgun, damage value 21, ammo 2; pain baton, damage value STR +4/19 + spell effect value (13).

Roleplaying Notes: Parcell was one of the few Humans to work an Able mine in the last few decades. His loyalty and knowledge of the mining business led Able to have him made shaftboss.

His job is to handle the paperwork (which he hates) and to stop trouble before it starts. For that, he has his trusty baton, and if things get out of hand, his shotgun.

The caster need only hold out his hand and say "Come here" to get his baton to appear. As long as it is no more than a kilometer away, the weapon will be transported.

The characters won't get much out of Parcell, other than complaints about all the safety regulations the city keeps imposing. Have him ask a few direct questions about "Section 17, Subsection 2, Paragraph 4" of the Mine Safety Code, just to make the characters sweat a little.

Eventually, he'll give up and walk away. Give the characters a moment to look around, then have them be approached by Gel Lenard, the Mining Guild rep.

GEL LENARD

Species: Grani

AGILITY 7

Dodge 8, unarmed combat 9, unarmed parry 9

DEXTERITY 8

ENDURANCE 12

STRENGTH 12



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Lifting 14

TOUGHNESS 18 (13)

INTELLECT 9

Demolitions 12, first aid 10, perception 11, science: mining 12

MIND 9

CONFIDENCE 8

Intimidation 10, willpower 10

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 10, shapeshifting 10

Life Points: 3

Description: Lenard is a Grani, a shapeshifter whose body is composed of a strange, stone-like material. A Grani can change the shape of his body or a portion of it and are able to move despite being made of rock. They consume stone for nutrition.

Grani can sense how “healthy” the earth is beneath their feet. Although it is very rare for them to work in any area that is being mined, as it makes them uncomfortable, Lenard is well-paid for his talents. He can tell simply by standing in a shaft whether the vein nearby has been tapped out.

Lenard represents the few Human and other non-Taxim miners (the Taxim have their own union). He knows a great deal about what has

been going on in the mine, but not being an employee of Able’s, sees no need to share what he knows.

Lenard always prefers to watch and listen to learn about others. If the characters are pleasant to him, he will be pleasant in return.

TOURING THE TUNNELS

Lenard will ask what brings the inspectors to the mines. The best excuse is the one Parcell suggested: complaints about the safety of the shafts. The characters don’t have to specify who made the complaints.

The Mining Guild rep will offer to take them on a tour, beginning with Shaft #2. He will chat amiably with the characters as they go. All around, Taxim are using picks and shovels to loosen the ore from its bed. The mine is close and badly ventilated, since Taxim don’t need to breathe. Lenard explains that part of his job is to make sure working conditions stay at a standard in which non-Taxim can operate comfortably.

After a few moments, read the following:

So far, you’ve seen nothing suspicious. The Taxim are occupied with their work

and take little notice of you. The only sounds are their tools biting into the earth and the groaning of the timbers that support the roof of the shaft.

An *Alertness* card or an *Intellect* or *perception* total of 9 will allow the characters to notice that one of the roof timbers is splintering and the shaft is about to collapse. (If they fail the check, Lenard will notice.) The party has one round to escape the mine. This is not intended to kill characters, but if one does something really stupid ... well, forget the healer and call the necromancer.

If all the characters make it out safely, read aloud or paraphrase:

You dust yourselves off and check to make sure all your pieces are where they're supposed to be. You made it out safely—the Taxim weren't so lucky. None of them emerged from the tunnel mouth.

Parcell will come over to see what happened. If any of the characters says anything about the dead Taxim, he'll shrug it off and point out that the demons inside them have probably moved on to other bodies by now. And if not ... well, there are plenty more in the Quarter where they came from.

There is nothing sinister about this cave-in (though the characters are free to think there is, if they choose to). It was caused by increasingly lax safety measures.

Once everyone is sure that they're all right, Lenard will take them to shaft #7.

SHAFT NUMBER 7

This mine shaft is similar to #2, save that it won't cave in. Lenard will give the characters a thorough tour. Just before either lunch break or quitting time (depending on when the characters visited the mines), the group will come upon some Taxim digging ore by hand. On an *Intellect* or *perception* check of 13, a *solid* success will tell the characters that something is not quite right here. A *good* success will allow them to spot a Taxim surreptitiously slipping a few handfuls of ore inside his shirt (at least, that's what it looks like—actually, it's going inside himself). On a *superior* success, the characters will notice that more than one Taxim is doing this.

At this point, the whistle will blow and the

Taxim will depart the mine. The ones doing the smuggling will depart the area completely and start back for the Quarter.

The characters might wish to follow, but if they start, Lenard will restrain them. He has noticed their interest in the Taxim activities, guessed they're not mine inspectors, and will admit he knows something strange is going on. But he also knows that any perceived harassment of Taxim laborers could spark another strike (relations are touchy between the city and its Undead at the moment) and bring Selastos grinding to a halt. The characters have to be subtle, and he will recommend they seek out a "lady of the evening" named Lucia in Oasis if they want information on Taxim activities.

If the characters didn't notice the smuggling, Lenard will still have noticed their unusual interest in the Taxim and know they aren't really inspectors. He will give them the same information about the city's labor problems and recommend Lucia.

Of course, the characters might decide to go to Garros with this. But his reaction is that it's not any big revelation that the Taxim are involved, and Able isn't paying two grand to learn what he already knows.

If the characters simply decide to wander around the Taxim Quarter, they might eventually find the bar the miners hang out in. In that case, cut to Scene Three. If they prefer to meet Lucia, cut to "Lucia," below.

LUCIA

Finding Lucia means traveling to the Oasis red-stone district. Once there, they will learn that their quarry is also known as "Crazy Lucia," for reasons the other streetwalkers won't share. "You'll find out," is all they'll say.

With enough persuasion (and a little money), they'll find out that Lucia frequents the border of Oasis and the Taxim Quarter, specifically a street known as "Perdition."

When the group finds "Perdition," read or paraphrase the following:

As you walk through "Perdition," you realize that the quality of life here is worse than anywhere else in Oasis. The shadows seem longer and the occasional moan of something a long way from Hu-

man echoes down the alleyways. There's a feeling that something is dogging your heels, like a legbreaker that won't quit, but you know there'll be nothing there when you turn around.

Finally, you spot a weakly glowing red-stone on a corner and a shabbily-dressed young woman standing beneath it.

"Lookin' for a good time? Lucia'll make it right for ya ... two selasts, and no questions."

Lucia is a prostitute who, in times of desperation, has wandered into the Taxim Quarter to drum up business. That is what earned her her nickname — that and the fact that her sanity isn't what it once was, not surprising considering the company she's been keeping.

Money is the only thing the characters can offer her. Toss enough her way — say 10 selasts or more — and she'll tell what she knows.

"CRAZY" LUCIA

Species: Human

AGILITY 8

Running 9, stealth 11, unarmed combat 10

DEXTERITY 7

ENDURANCE 7

STRENGTH 7

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 8

Perception 10, trick 10

MIND 6

CONFIDENCE 8

Bribery 9, con 9, intimidation 10, streetwise 10, willpower 9

CHARISMA 9

Persuasion 10, taunt 11

Life Points: 2

Description: Like this neighborhood, Lucia has seen better days. She's seen things — and done things — no Human should have to. While she talks, her attention wanders, so it may take a long while to get the full story out of her.

Lucia will explain to the characters that she wandered into the Taxim Quarter one night and one of the Undead tried to pick her up. He didn't have the money she asked for and she was going to turn him down — then he suddenly produced what looked like gold ore ... the real thing!

All the while, he kept babbling about helping out some important man and something about a warehouse. She would have forgotten the whole thing, except it was the first time she'd ever been paid in gold dust. It won't take much coaxing to get her to produce a little of it, but she won't let the characters touch it.

Lucia doesn't know anything else, but she will describe the Taxim — tall, brown hair, missing his right eye — and say that he's a regular at a Quarter dive called "Raise the Spirits."

CUT TO...

Once they have gotten this information from "Crazy Lucia," the characters can proceed to Scene Three, "Belly Up to The Gold Bar."

SCENE THREE: BELLY UP TO THE GOLD BAR

THE SITUATION

Standard. Lucia has pointed the characters in the direction of one of the more popular bars in the Taxim Quarter and one of the Undead involved in the smuggling operation.

When the characters locate and try to talk to him, he will be uncooperative and a brawl will break out. After this, the characters can tail him back to the warehouse.

THE ACTION

As the group enters the Taxim Quarter, read aloud or paraphrase:

The Taxim Quarter definitely lives up to its black reputation. Garbage is piled up on the streets and sidewalks of this miserable place, and the smell of decay is almost enough to gag you. Drunken Undead can be seen passed out in alleys or staggering to the hovels that serve as homes in this part of Selastos.

After ten minutes — it feels like ten hours — of traveling through this district, you reach your destination.

The first thing the player characters will notice when they step into the bar is the cold





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stares they receive from the Taxim. The living aren't welcome here. If the party sits down at a table or at the bar, they can forget about getting any service. Eventually, the bartender will approach and say, with a sneer, "Sorry about the wait. My waitresses don't serve warmflesh ... except for dinner."

(Note: This is a highly charged situation, and should be roleplayed that way. The party members should really feel they could cut the tension with a knife.)

The bartender may not like the living, but he likes their money well enough. Slip him

some and describe the Taxim they're looking for and the characters will be rewarded by having their man, named Brom, pointed out. He's sitting in a corner nursing a drink. (A Mind total of 8 will mark Brom as one of the Taxim the characters saw in shaft #7.)

When the party approaches Brom, he'll just glance at them and turn back to his drink. It will be up to the party to make the first move.

Brom does recognize the characters as having been in the mine that day and so should be regarded as an *enemy* for purposes of interaction.

The only answers the characters will get from Brom are grunts. At some point, he will "take offense" at something they ask or say and take a swing at the nearest character. This will set off an all-out brawl in the bar, which will end only when the characters defeat all the Taxim, retreat or get tossed out of the bar.

TAXIM MINER (20)

AGILITY 8

Climbing 9, dodge 9, melee combat 10, unarmed combat 9

DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 10

ENDURANCE 11

Resist shock 12

STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 14 (11)

INTELLECT 7

Perception 8, trick 8

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 9

Con 10, intimidation 10, streetwise 10, willpower 10

CHARISMA 5

Taunt 9

Life Points: 3

Description: Taxim are demonically possessed Undead, gifted with intelligence (but no morality) and the source of most of the cheap labor in Selastos. For more information on Taxim, see pages 59 and 60 of *The World of Bloodshadows*.

If the characters win the fight, they will notice Brom slip out of the place and can tail him. If they lose the fight, they will be tossed out on their ears, but can linger in the neighborhood long enough to see Brom stagger out and walk unsteadily away. Again, tailing him becomes an option.

TO TAIL A TAXIM

If the characters lose the fight and give the impression they are leaving the neighborhood, they won't be pursued. Once this is established, they may watch the bar from a safe distance until they spy Brom leaving.

Once they start tailing him, make a few rolls, just to make the player characters nervous. But Brom is so loaded that he wouldn't notice a a herd of *sabvas* behind him unless they tapped him on the shoulder.

After 15 minutes, Brom will lead them to a dilapidated old warehouse. He's met by an Elkist guard at the entrance, who talks to him for a few moments and then lets him in. (Make sure, as you run this scene, that you check your map of the warehouse to note the positions of the Elkist guards.)

Read aloud or paraphrase:

The night is cold and clammy and the air has a sour tinge to it. Brom finally staggers to a stop in front of an old warehouse. Light spills from the second-floor windows of the building.

You see the Taxim speaking to an Elkist at the entrance. Then the Elkist steps aside and Brom knocks on the door. An instant later, it is opened and a large figure looms within. Suddenly, Brom is yanked inside as if he were a rag doll and the door closes abruptly.

THE SMELT OF GOLD

The only way to spy on the inside of the building is through the second story windows. There is a single glowlamp pole on a nearby corner which, if climbed, would allow a character to see through them. (Only one person would be able to see at a time, so the rest of the group would probably have to stay in the shadows.)

It will take two *climbing* or *Agility* rolls of 9 to reach the top of the glowlamp pole. Once the character is in position to see through the windows, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The first thing that grabs your attention is the pool of liquid gold in a large vat attached to an enclosed chamber. It looks like a crude, but effective smelting operation. Several Hugors can be seen lifting



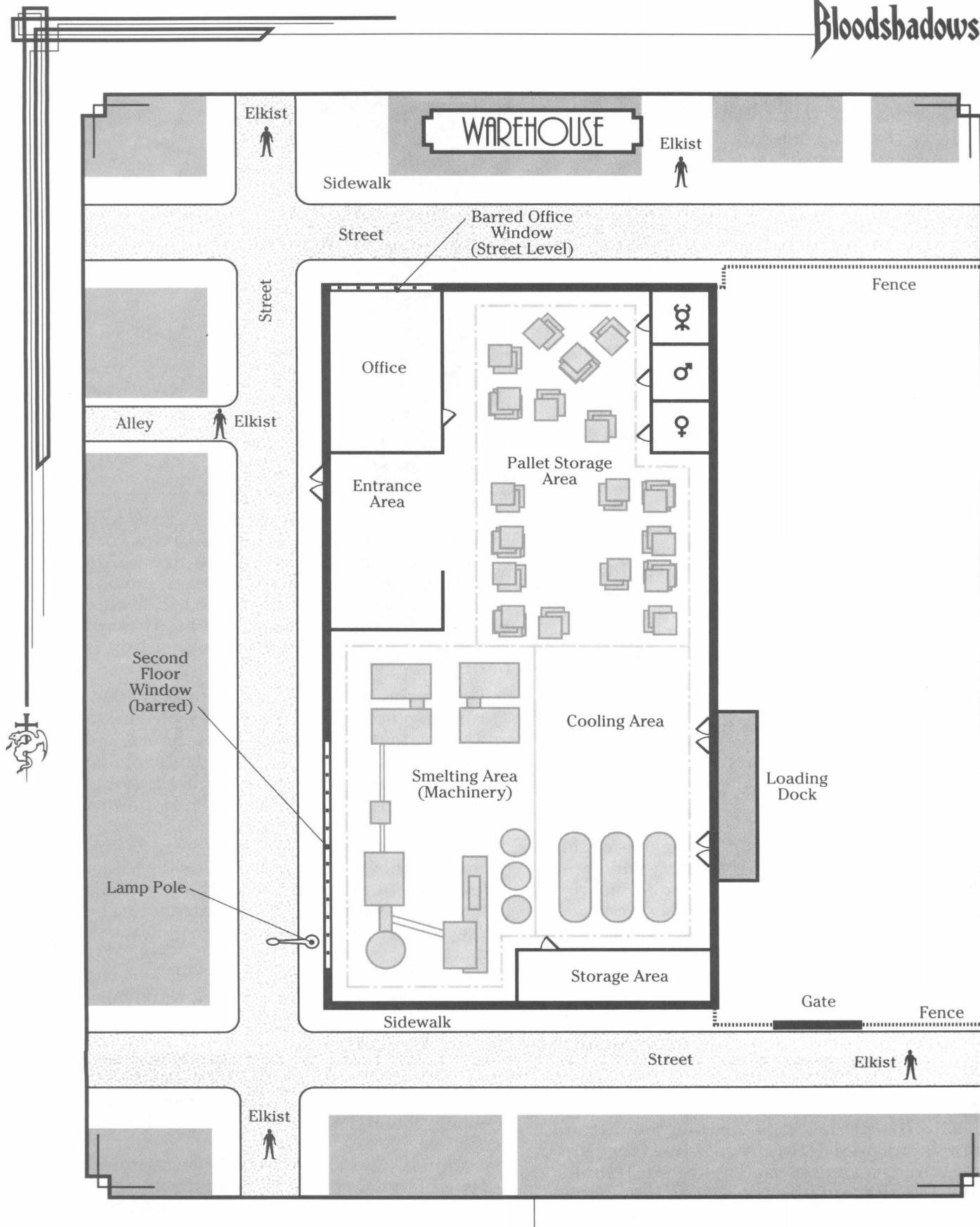
the small, but quite heavy ingots and loading the completely cooled bars into transfer cases. Several cases are being lifted by what could only be sorcerous means and transported to the other side of the building, no doubt the location of the loading dock. The whole operation is being supervised by a Gris.

This is indeed Link's smelting operation. The ore is placed in the chamber, which heats and separates the impurities from the ore, and then the liquid gold is transferred to a holding chamber. After the chamber is full, the liquid gold is poured into molds where it is allowed to cool down and form gold bars.

While the characters are gathering this information, they are spotted by one of the Elkist guards in the neighborhood, who alerts his fellows (all save the one by the entrance). The Elkist will try to sneak up on the characters and attack.

If the battle is going badly for the Elkist, the one at the entrance will notify the warehouse and literally dozens of Hugors will pour out to join the fight. The characters might not relish being overwhelmed by force of numbers, but remember that this is not some small-time operation they've happened upon. There's a lot of money behind it and they're playing for keeps.

Eventually, the characters will get captured — some of them, at least. When this happens, they will be dragged into the warehouse, tied



up, and dumped in the warehouse office. Any characters who escape can attempt to rescue their comrades during Scene Four.

ELKISTS (5)

AGILITY 9

Dodge 11, melee combat 12, unarmed combat 12

DEXTERITY 8

ENDURANCE 9

Resist shock 10

STRENGTH 11

TOUGHNESS 11

INTELLECT 8

Tracking 10

MIND 8

CONFIDENCE 8

Streetwise 11, willpower 11

CHARISMA 8

Life Points: 5

Alignment: Neutral

Background Notes: An Elkist can cause any part of its body — arms, legs, hands, feet, head, neck, torso — to become intangible, though not more than one part at a time. They may also “trade up” intangible parts, causing one to fade and another to become substantial at the same time.

For more on Elkist, see pages 30–31 of *The World of Bloodshadows*.

Equipment: Blackjack, damage value STR +3/18

STANDARD HUGOR

AGILITY 9

Dodge 10, melee combat 11, unarmed combat 12, unarmed parry 11

DEXTERITY 7

ENDURANCE 13

Resist shock 14

STRENGTH 13

Lifting 14

TOUGHNESS 12

INTELLECT 7

MIND 6

CONFIDENCE 7

Intimidation 12, willpower 9

CHARISMA 6

Life Points: 1

Equipment: None

CUT TO...

Once the group (or members of it) have been captured and taken into the warehouse, cut to Scene Four, “All Tied Up and Nowhere To Go.”

SCENE FOUR: ALL TIED UP AND NOWHERE TO GO

THE SITUATION

Standard. The party has been captured and are trussed like turkeys in the warehouse office. The chief smuggler on this end of the operation, a Gris named Harley, will talk to them for a few minutes and then decide they’d be better off dead. The group will have to decide how best to get out of the situation.

Before they leave the warehouse, they’ll have the chance to learn some more information about the operation, including the drop point for the gold. By the end of the scene, they’ll know the how, if not the who.

As the scene opens, much of the party may be unconscious. If so, they will awaken with splitting headaches. Nothing like a good black-jack massage to add a new perspective. The group will have a few minutes to take stock, then Harley will enter, accompanied by a Hugor.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

“I hear you mugs have been snooping around where you ain’t got no business,” the Gris says. “Can’t have that. I’m running a legit operation here and you’re disturbing my workers. Derk, pick one of ’em up.”

The Hugor will choose one of the captives at random and get him on his feet, then hold him still.

“Now if you guys don’t make with some answers, I’m gonna break every bone in your pal here. I’ll start with the fingers, then the arms ... and if I still ain’t satisfied, I’ll break legs. I like breaking legs — reminds me of the good old days.”

To get his point across, Harley will slug the captive in the stomach, hard. Then he’ll ask the characters who they’re working for — if



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they don't answer to his satisfaction, he'll hit his chosen victim again (now might be a good time to use those "bleeding" rules on page 77 of the *MasterBook*).

The characters have two options: tell the truth or try to con Harley. He'll readily believe Able hired them, if they give him the straight story. He'll then say something about checking on their story and leave with the Hugor. In truth, he's going to tell the Elkist that they can kill the party as soon as the boss gives the okay.

HARLEY

Species: Gris

AGILITY 9

Melee combat 13, stealth 11, unarmed combat 11

DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 11

ENDURANCE 11

Resist shock 14

STRENGTH 12

INTELLECT 9

Camouflage 10, perception 11, science: metallurgy 14, smuggling 14

MIND 8

Business 13

CONFIDENCE 8

Bribery 10, interrogation 10, intimidation 14, streetwise 11

CHARISMA 6

Taunt 9

Life Points: 5

Alignment: Golden. Harley's on the side of whoever has the most cash.

Description: Harley is typical of his species: ill-tempered, ill-mannered, and ill-looking. He started out as a leg-breaker for a syndicate boss and moved up to smuggling liquor and now gold. His only virtue is persistence.

Once Harley is gone, the characters can try to slip out of their bonds. If there is a Shapeshifter in the group who can significantly reduce his size, he can get free easily. An Agility total of 12 is needed to wriggle free, or a Strength total of 14 will allow characters to snap the bonds.

If the characters have had it too easy up to now, or you're just feeling sadistic, arrange to have them bound with the results of a *mystic chains* spell with a duration of say, an hour (by the time the spell expired, the characters would have been shot, so Harley doesn't care that they'd fade eventually). The chains have a Strength of 18.

Once the characters are free, call for a *perception* total. On an 8, the characters notice a pad on the desk with an address scribbled on it (at the head of a column of figures), "32 Crawford Rd."

The characters now need a means of escape (one that might be provided by their partners, if any got away). There is a barred window

(bars have Strength of 17) in the office, or they can try the door. It's not locked, but there is a Hugor standing guard outside.

If the characters manage to remove the bars, it's a simple action to climb out the window and reach the street. There may be some Elkist about — call for *stealth* totals often until the characters are safely away from the building.

If the characters go by way of the door, they will have to take out the Hugor quickly and quietly. There are two possible exits, the main doors and the loading dock — the main doors are a lot closer to where the characters are, but there is an Elkist outside of it who would have to be dealt with.

MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR

Checking a city map will reveal that Crawford Rd. is in the Deranus district, the industrial heart of Selastos. Number 32 is a broken down, two-story house that looks well over a century old. (Of course, most hundred year old abandoned houses don't have a padlock on the basement door.)

If the characters choose to check out the outside of the house, call for some *perception* totals. On an 8, the characters will realize the house is not as old as it at first appeared — its condition has been artificially created, perhaps so that people would ignore the place.

All the doors and windows are locked (note that there are no windows in the basement). The basement wing doors also have a doorseal on them. A *lock picking* total of 12 will undo the locks, but the cellar doors would also require a successful *destroy magic* spell to eliminate the doorseal.

Once the characters get inside, they can look around a little. No one is apparently here now, but it's obvious the place has been used recently. They can search the first and second floors, but the door to the basement is locked. A *lock picking* total of 13 is required to undo the lock.

The basement is dark. If the characters have a light source of their own, they can use it. The floor of the basement is covered with crates, but what's in them can't be seen from the top of the stairs. The characters will have to go down and see for themselves.

The basement is not unguarded, however. A

Werepanther lurks below, hired to guard the gold (for that is what's in those crates). He will wait until the characters are down the stairs before attacking, going for the high ground on the steps to try to prevent their escape.

WEREPANTHER

AGILITY 10/12

Climbing 11/13, dodge 12/13, long jumping NA/13, maneuver 11/13, running 11/13, stealth 13/14, unarmed combat 13/15

DEXTERITY 8/4

Fire combat 9/NA

ENDURANCE 8/10

STRENGTH 10/12

TOUGHNESS 10/11

INTELLECT 8/8

Perception 9/10, tracking 9/10, trick 9/9

MIND 8/5

CONFIDENCE 8/9

Intimidation 9/11, willpower 10/10

CHARISMA 8

Shapeshifting 9

Life Points: 3

Natural Tools: Claws, damage value STR+3/15; teeth, damage value STR+4/16

Once the characters have disposed of the Werepanther, they can inspect the crates. They are, as mentioned above, filled with gold, smelted from the ore stolen from Able's mines. It is possible that, at this point, the characters may want to get in touch with Garros — if so, let them. He will come out to see the scene for himself.

CUT TO...

Even as the characters hear the sound of a truck pulling up outside, cut to Scene Five, "He Who Has the Gold Makes the Rules."

SCENE FIVE: HE WHO HAS THE GOLD MAKES THE RULES

THE SITUATION

Dramatic. The truck arriving at the house is the one slated to pick up the gold and then join one of Link's caravans to ferry it out of the



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city. If the characters can capture the driver and his assistants, they can interrogate him to find out who he works for.

Once they have the information, they will discover that Link planned for the possibility of someone finding out his connection to the operation. The basement is one big deathtrap and the characters will have to run a gauntlet to get to Able's mansion.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

Outside, you can hear the sounds of a truck pulling up and the sounds of cab doors opening and closing. This is followed by the voices of Hugors coming toward the wing doors.

THE ACTION

Two Hugors and a Human driver named Zeke are there to pick up the crates of gold and ferry them to Galitia as part of a merchant caravan. This is a great chance for the characters to ambush them.

If the characters attack, Zeke will try to let the Hugors do the lion's share of the fighting while he makes his escape. It is important that the characters capture him alive, as he has the information they need. That means, as the gamemaster, you have to try and keep him alive — wounded, fine, but not dead. He needs to be able to answer questions.

ZEKE

Species: Human

AGILITY 8

Dodge 10, melee combat 9, running 10

DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 11, vehicle piloting: wheeled 13

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 11

TOUGHNESS 11

INTELLECT 8

First aid 11, perception 10, vehicle mechanic: wheeled 10

MIND 8

CONFIDENCE 8

Willpower 10

CHARISMA 8

Life Points: 2

Equipment: Brass knuckles, damage value STR+4/19; blackjack, damage value STR+3/18

Description: Zeke is just a guy trying to make a living. He found out by accident that

"Ace" Link is behind the smuggling operation, and hasn't breathed a word about it to anyone out of fear.

The characters will need to *interrogate* Zeke to get the information out of him (if Garros is there, he can help, using his *truth* spell). But he is badly frightened of what Link might do to him, so the base difficulty of the attempt is a 15. The characters might want to *intimidate* Zeke first, threatening him early and often. They need to make him more afraid of them than he is of Link.

If successfully *interrogated*, Zeke will reveal that he has been coming to this house once a week for some time now, loading up crates and then joining a trade caravan to Galitia. Once in the city, he breaks off from the rest of the trucks and delivers his load to the main branch of the Alchemical Bank. He found out accidentally that "Ace" Link has been paying his wages, and has been living in fear ever since.

BAD CHOICE OF WORDS

Link is no fool, though. On the off-chance he might be betrayed, Link had numerous wards invested in the basement, to be triggered if one of his employees speaks his name there. As soon as the words are uttered, the doors in the basement slam shut and doorseals come into existence. *Destroy magic* spells are required to undo the seals, or a special passkey (Zeke had such a key, but one of the wards causes it to crumble). It's also possible to blast through the doors (the doors have a Toughness of 13).

Ten seconds after the doors shut, *fireball* spells warding into things go off. All of a sudden, the characters find themselves caught in a literal crossfire of damage value 20 fireballs. Have fun with this scene — fire is streaking all over the place, lighting up the stairs, the crates, anything that can burn. Characters who stay close to the floor and make lots of *maneuver* rolls should be able to make it to the door, at least, and then work on getting out.

Though this is a potentially lethal scene, you don't have to kill the player characters. It's much more fun to scare the hell out of them.

BURNING RUBBER

When the characters make it out of the basement, they'll find an Endel truck waiting outside (speed 125/80, Toughness 18). They

can pile in and head for Able's estate to reveal Link's connection to him.

But it's not going to be as easy as all that. One of the Hugors was magically tagged and Link is aware of what went on at the house. He has dispatched six Signer sedans loaded with gunmen (all with *fire combat* values of 10 and Skandra "Annihilators," damage value 17) to stop the characters cold. Make this a dramatic chase through the narrows streets and alleys of Selastos. The characters will have to do some fast driving and faster thinking to get out of this.

By this time, the characters are essentially fated to win the adventure, so the chase is designed more for the purposes of tension and excitement, a good pay-off to the adventure. Once the characters reach the vicinity of the Able estate, Able's security guards will emerge and use their firepower to drive off Link's men.

AFTERMATH

Once Able has been informed of what happened, he will authorize Garros to give the characters the remainder of the money they're owed, in cash. He will assure them that Link will be "dealt with" in due time.

He will also suggest that they might be able to do business with him at some point in the future. Finally, Able will remind them that Link will doubtless not appreciate their efficiency, and they might wish to lie low for a weeks or so.

AWARDS

Award the characters four Life Points at the end of this adventure, and an additional one to two Skill Points for those who roleplayed exceptionally well.





BloodshadowsTM

CHARACTER PROFILES



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CHARACTER SHEET

KARKAS

SPECIES Karkas	ALIGNMENT Order 1	HEIGHT	MASS	AGE	SEX Male
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ATTRIBUTES AGILITY 8 Dodge 9, melee combat 9, melee parry 9, stealth 11, unarmed combat 9 DEXTERITY 8 Fire combat 9 ENDURANCE 10 STRENGTH 10 INTELLECT 8 Perception 9, tracking 9, trick 9 MIND 8 CONFIDENCE 8 Alteration: vitomancy 10, gambling 9, scramble 9, streetwise 9, willpower 9 CHARISMA 8	DERIVED ATTRIBUTES <div> <div>11</div> TOUGHNESS </div> <div> <div>13</div> TOUGHNESS (w/armor) </div> <div> <div>6</div> MRG (Movement Rate, Ground) </div> <div> <div>4</div> MRS (Movement Rate, Swimming) </div> <div> <div>3</div> MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing) </div> <div> <div>3</div> MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping) </div>		COMBAT BOX <div> <div>WOUND LEVEL</div> <div> <input type="radio"/> <i>Light</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Moderate</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Heavy</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Incapacitated</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Mortal</i> </div> </div> <div> <div>MODIFIERS</div> <div> no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text </div> </div>	<div> <div>K</div> <div>O</div> </div>
	LIFE POINTS 5	SKILL POINTS	SHOCK CAPACITY	SHOCK TAKEN

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Special Abilities (CIV): Immortality (can only be killed permanently by being burned to death), Regeneration, Attribute Adjustment (physical).

Compensations: Prejudice (CII), non-Human prejudice; Advantage Flaws (CIV): Rot II, Allergy II (fire).

DESCRIPTION

It's not easy being an Undead. Waking up every morning not sure if you'll still be aboveground, or if some joker slapped you in a hole for giggles. For a while, you eked out a living in the fight game, upping some mug's punching power — problem was, he usually couldn't hit the broad side of a queskworm anymore when you were done. Now you pick up dough here and there, doing whatever needs doing. You've learned to make liberal use of that *facade* spell — it's enough to fool most people if they're not too bright and don't take any deep breaths while you're around.

Spells: *Facade*.

Arcane Knowledges: Living forces 1.

EQUIPMENT

.38 Gelvash revolver; blackjack; leather coat, armor value TOU+2/17.



"Gee, pal, guess you don't know your own strength, huh?"

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	26	31	36	41
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	+5

Bloodshadows

CHARACTER SHEET

SUCCUBUS

SPECIES Succubus	ALIGNMENT Order 1	HEIGHT	MASS	AGE	SEX Female
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ATTRIBUTES AGILITY 8 Dodge 9, melee combat 10, stealth 9 DEXTERITY 7 ENDURANCE 8 STRENGTH 8 INTELLECT 8 Linguistics 9, perception 9, trick 9 MIND 7 CONFIDENCE 10 Alteration: vitomancy 12, streetwise 11, willpower 12 CHARISMA 12 Charm 18, persuasion 14, taunt 13	DERIVED ATTRIBUTES <div> <div>9</div> TOUGHNESS </div> <div> <div>9</div> TOUGHNESS (w/armor) </div> <div> <div>6</div> MRG (Movement Rate, Ground) </div> <div> <div>4</div> MRS (Movement Rate, Swimming) </div> <div> <div>2</div> MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing) </div> <div> <div>2</div> MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping) </div>		COMBAT BOX <div> <div>WOUND LEVEL</div> <div> <input type="radio"/> <i>Light</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Moderate</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Heavy</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Incapacitated</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Mortal</i> </div> </div> <div> <div>MODIFIERS</div> <div> no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text </div> </div>
	LIFE POINTS 5	SKILL POINTS	SHOCK CAPACITY
			SHOCK TAKEN

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Cultures (CI), you have a fair amount of knowledge of one other city (player's choice); Skill Bonus (CI), +1 to bonus numbers of *charm*, *persuasion* and *taunt* checks; Additional Skill Adds (CIII), +3 to *charm*; Special Abilities (CIV): Life Drain (Mental).

Compensations: Quirks (CI), you are extraordinarily vain about your appearance; Debt (CII), you owe a substantial amount of money in gambling debts to a local mobster; Prejudice (CII), non-Human prejudice; Quirks (CII), you are a compulsive gambler; Quirks (CIII): Dependency (Major).

DESCRIPTION

Your looks are your livelihood. Is it any wonder you can't pass a mirror without looking at it? Unfortunately, your beauty can't make dice come up the way you want or charm an Undead dealer quite enough, at least not all the time. The result is that you owe a good deal of money and you haven't got it — that's why you're willing to take on just about any job, on either side of the law. Sometimes, it means working with people you don't like or who don't like you much — but dough is dough, right? As long as they keep their paws to themselves ...

Spells: *Charm*, *facade*.

Arcane Knowledges: Living forces 1.

EQUIPMENT

.22 Delken; dagger; cards; 75 *selasts*.



**"Tell me one of your secrets...
and maybe I'll tell you one of
mine."**

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	26	31	36	41
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	+5

GRIS BOUNCER

SPECIES Gris	ALIGNMENT Neutral	HEIGHT	MASS	AGE	SEX Male
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ATTRIBUTES	DERIVED ATTRIBUTES	COMBAT BOX	K	O
AGILITY 9 Dodge 11, maneuver 10, melee combat 13 (bat 14), unarmed combat 12 DEXTERITY 8 Fire combat 9, vehicle piloting: wheeled 9 ENDURANCE 11 Resist shock 12 STRENGTH 12 Lifting 13 INTELLECT 8 Perception 9, trick 10 MIND 7 CONFIDENCE 7 Intimidation 10, willpower 8 CHARISMA 6	<div>11</div> TOUGHNESS <div>11</div> TOUGHNESS (w/armor) <div>7</div> MRG (Movement Rate, Ground) <div>5</div> MRS (Movement Rate, Swimming) <div>3</div> MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing) <div>3</div> MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping) LIFE POINTS 5	WOUND LEVEL <input type="radio"/> Light <input type="radio"/> Moderate <input type="radio"/> Heavy <input type="radio"/> Incapacitated <input type="radio"/> Mortal	MODIFIERS no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text	
	SKILL POINTS	SHOCK CAPACITY SHOCK TAKEN		

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Additional Skill Adds (CI), +1 to *intimidation*; Contacts (CI), you have numerous low-level contacts in the local mobs; Additional Skill Adds (CII), +2 to *melee combat*; Contacts (CII), you have a friend among the sentinels; Trademark Specialization (CII) (bat); Special Abilities (CIII): Omnivorousness, Enhanced Senses (+3 to *perception* checks involving sight).

Compensations: Employed (CI); Infamy (CI); Enemy (CII), a gambler you tossed out on his ear has vowed revenge; Prejudice (CII), non-Human prejudice; Price (CII), sentinel contact demands dangerous favors in return for his help; Quirk (CIII): Phobic (you are deathly afraid of corpses and can't stand the sight of them — this applies to walking dead as well).

DESCRIPTION

Okay, so maybe you're not the most well-liked Unnatural in town. But you are one of the better paid — you and your trusty bat have been keeping people out of joints where they don't belong for a lot of years. Sometimes just the sight of you is enough to stop trouble before it starts.

Of course, it never hurts to pick up a little money on the side. If you hear about a job that will let you crack some skulls — just to keep in practice — you'll take it. And if your partners don't like it, well, maybe you'll practice on them.

EQUIPMENT

Bat, damage value STR+5; 50 *selasts*; smoke rings (3), each with two charges apiece.



**"I'll take on any guy living!
Just keep 'im away after he's
dead, will ya?"**

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	26	31	36	41
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	+5

Bloodshadows

CHARACTER SHEET

NEWSCRIBE

SPECIES Human	ALIGNMENT Neutral	HEIGHT	MASS	AGE	SEX Male
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ATTRIBUTES AGILITY 8 Dodge 9, unarmed combat 9 DEXTERITY 7 ENDURANCE 9 STRENGTH 8 INTELLECT 9 Perception 13 MIND 8 Artist: writer 9, conjuration: vitomancy 10, research 10, scholar: alchemy 9 CONFIDENCE 10 Con 11, interrogation 11, intimidation 11, streetwise 11, willpower 11 CHARISMA 9 Charm 10, persuasion 10	DERIVED ATTRIBUTES <div> <div>10</div> TOUGHNESS </div> <div> <div>10</div> TOUGHNESS (w/armor) </div> <div> <div>6</div> MRG (Movement Rate, Ground) </div> <div> <div>4</div> MRS (Movement Rate, Swimming) </div> <div> <div>2</div> MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing) </div> <div> <div>2</div> MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping) </div>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>COMBAT BOX</td> <td>K O</td> </tr> <tr> <td> WOUND LEVEL <input type="radio"/> <i>Light</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Moderate</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Heavy</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Incapacitated</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Mortal</i> </td> <td> MODIFIERS no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text </td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">SHOCK CAPACITY</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">SHOCK TAKEN</td> </tr> </table>	COMBAT BOX	K O	WOUND LEVEL <input type="radio"/> <i>Light</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Moderate</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Heavy</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Incapacitated</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Mortal</i>	MODIFIERS no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text	SHOCK CAPACITY		SHOCK TAKEN	
COMBAT BOX	K O									
WOUND LEVEL <input type="radio"/> <i>Light</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Moderate</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Heavy</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Incapacitated</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Mortal</i>	MODIFIERS no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text									
SHOCK CAPACITY										
SHOCK TAKEN										
	LIFE POINTS 5	SKILL POINTS								

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Additional Skill Adds (CI), +1 to *perception*; Contacts (CI), you have a number of contacts among street people; Fame (CI), you have some reputation for your crime reporting; Contacts (CII), you have contacts within the press; Luck (CII); Learning Curve (Positive) (CIII).

Compensations: Advantage Flaw (CI), your street-level contacts require long negotiation on price before coming across with info; Employed (CI), you work for a newspaper; Bigot (CI), you are prejudiced against all Unnaturals; Enemy (CII), members of the Alchemists' Guild violently dislike you because of an expose you wrote; Handicap (CII), you have a bum leg due to a *thunder* potion explosion — add +3 to the difficulty of all Agility-related actions; Burn-Out (CIII), if you fail to protect the anonymity of your sources, you will lose all your street-level contacts.

DESCRIPTION

You started out at the bottom — potions editor for a weekly. Then came your big break, a scoop on the Alchemists' Guild using cut-rate components but charging full price (they're still mad about that one!) Some people might see you a little cold-hearted, a little too concerned with getting the story without worrying about who gets hurt. But that's the only way to get ahead in this game.

You'll take chances if there's a headline in it — but the important thing is that you need something to print. Otherwise, it's your job, pal.

Spells: *Pain*.

Arcane Knowledges: Folk 1.

EQUIPMENT

Scribepad; heatstone; glowstone; Signer Sedan.



“‘Suspect’ foul play? I passed that three stiffs ago.”

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	26	31	36	41
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	+5

Bloodshadows™

CHARACTER SHEET

JETSETTER

SPECIES Human	ALIGNMENT Order 1	HEIGHT	MASS	AGE	SEX Male
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ATTRIBUTES AGILITY 8 Beast riding: horse 9, melee combat 8 (rapier 9), swimming 9 DEXTERITY 8 Fire combat 9, vehicle piloting: wheeled 9 ENDURANCE 8 STRENGTH 8 INTELLECT 7 Linguistics 8, perception 8 MIND 9 Business 12 CONFIDENCE 10 Alteration: wizardry 12, con 11, gambling 11, intimidation 12, willpower 12 CHARISMA 10 Charm 11, persuasion 11	DERIVED ATTRIBUTES <div> <div>9</div> TOUGHNESS </div> <div> <div>9</div> TOUGHNESS (w/armor) </div> <div> <div>6</div> MRG (Movement Rate, Ground) </div> <div> <div>4</div> MRS (Movement Rate, Swimming) </div> <div> <div>2</div> MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing) </div> <div> <div>2</div> MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping) </div>	COMBAT BOX WOUND LEVEL <div> <input type="radio"/> <i>Light</i> </div> <div> <input type="radio"/> <i>Moderate</i> </div> <div> <input type="radio"/> <i>Heavy</i> </div> <div> <input type="radio"/> <i>Incapacitated</i> </div> <div> <input type="radio"/> <i>Mortal</i> </div>	K <input type="radio"/> MODIFIERS no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text
	LIFE POINTS 5	SKILL POINTS	SHOCK CAPACITY SHOCK TAKEN

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Additional Skill Adds (CI), +1 to *willpower*; Fame (CI), you're known about town as a playboy; Skill Bonus (CI), +1 to bonus number of *charm*, *persuasion* and *con*; Contacts (CIII), your friends include the city's movers and shakers; Wealth (CIII).

Compensations: Bigotry (CI), you are prejudiced against the poor, seeing them as drains on society; Enemy (CI), you, in turn, are disliked by many of your employees; Price (CI), your playboy image causes many to doubt your sincerity; Enemy (CII), you've been targeted by a rival magnate; Advantage Flaw (CIII), your wealth is all contained in a trust fund and you must persuade a board of directors to let you at any of it.

DESCRIPTION

You were born with a silver conjurer's wand in your mouth, and have led a life of wealth and privilege. Lately, though, the world of high finance has begun to bore you. You long for adventure, and as long as you can weave a good enough fable to fool the trust fund board, you've got the money to satisfy your longings. True, it means rubbing elbows with more common folk, but even that isn't so bad ... well, you're willing to tolerate it, anyway, for now. So far, you've never been in any real danger or encountered a situation you couldn't buy your way out of.

Spells: *Lightning bolt*.

Arcane Knowledges: Inanimate forces 1.

EQUIPMENT

Endel Roadster; extensive wardrobe; rapier, damage value STR+6/21; .22 Delken; 3000 *selasts* "walking around money."



"I could buy and sell you. The only question is whether you're worth more dead or alive, old boy."

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	26	31	36	41
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	+5

TECHNOMANCER

SPECIES Human	ALIGNMENT Oathbreaker/Chaos 1	HEIGHT	MASS	AGE	SEX Female
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ATTRIBUTES	DERIVED ATTRIBUTES	COMBAT BOX	K	O
AGILITY 8 Dodge 9, unarmed combat 10 DEXTERITY 9 Fire combat 10, thrown weapons 11 ENDURANCE 8 STRENGTH 8 INTELLECT 9 Apportation: technomancy 12, perception 13, research 11 MIND 10 Conjuration: technomancy 12 CONFIDENCE 8 Intimidation 9, willpower 10 CHARISMA 8 Persuasion 9	<div> <div>9</div> TOUGHNESS </div> <div> <div>9</div> TOUGHNESS (w/armor) </div> <div> <div>6</div> MRG (Movement Rate, Ground) </div> <div> <div>4</div> MRS (Movement Rate, Swimming) </div> <div> <div>3</div> MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing) </div> <div> <div>3</div> MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping) </div>	WOUND LEVEL <input type="radio"/> Light <input type="radio"/> Moderate <input type="radio"/> Heavy <input type="radio"/> Incapacitated <input type="radio"/> Mortal	MODIFIERS no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text	
	LIFE POINTS 5	SKILL POINTS	SHOCK CAPACITY	
			SHOCK TAKEN	

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Equipment (CI), razor wire; Skill Bonus (CI), +1 to *apportation: technomancy, research and conjuration: technomancy*; Wealth (CI); Additional Skill Adds (CII), +2 to *perception*; Luck (CII); Learning Curve (Positive) (CIII).

Compensations: Age (CI), you are just past your prime; Enemy (CI), a local newscribe is determined to prove you are guilty of murdering your husband and his lover; Price (CI), use of the razor wire increases people's suspicion of you; Infamy (CII), you are strongly (and wrongly) suspected of the murders; Prejudice (CII); Quirks (CIII): Vengeful.

DESCRIPTION

You had created a good life for yourself, working for trade magnate Lamar Felanio playing your technomantic trade. But that was before your husband and his lover were found murdered, strangled with razor wire. You lost your job (though you have enough money saved to stay comfortable) and everyone seems to think you did the killings. You take jobs that call for your particular talents now and then while you search for the real killer (you haven't decided yet whether to turn him in or buy him an ale. Maybe you'll do both.)

Arcane Knowledges: Metal 1.

Spells: Bullet, dagger, dark cloud, rain of razors.

EQUIPMENT

Razor wire; .38 Gelvash revolver; throwing dagger; 500 selasts.



"Lots of people use razor wire.
Doesn't prove a thing."

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	26	31	36	41
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	+5

Bloodshadows™

CHARACTER SHEET

GANG MOLL

SPECIES Human	ALIGNMENT Neutral	HEIGHT	MASS	AGE	SEX Female
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ATTRIBUTES AGILITY 8 Stealth 9, unarmed combat 9 DEXTERITY 7 Fire combat 8 ENDURANCE 8 STRENGTH 8 INTELLECT 8 Cantrips 9, first aid 9, perception 9, trick 9 MIND 7 Artist: singer 9 CONFIDENCE 11 Bribery 12, intimidation 12, streetwise 15 CHARISMA 12 Charm 16, persuasion 14, taunt 14	DERIVED ATTRIBUTES <div> <div>9</div> TOUGHNESS </div> <div> <div>9</div> TOUGHNESS (w/armor) </div> <div> <div>6</div> MRG (Movement Rate, Ground) </div> <div> <div>4</div> MRS (Movement Rate, Swimming) </div> <div> <div>2</div> MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing) </div> <div> <div>2</div> MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping) </div>	COMBAT BOX WOUND LEVEL <input type="radio"/> <i>Light</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Moderate</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Heavy</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Incapacitated</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Mortal</i>	K <input type="radio"/> MODIFIERS no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text
	LIFE POINTS 5	SKILL POINTS	SHOCK CAPACITY SHOCK TAKEN

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Additional Skill Adds (CI), +1 to *streetwise*; Fame (CI), you are known as a singer at the Pitt Club in Selastos; Skill Bonus (CI), +1 *charm*, *persuasion* and *taunt*; Contacts (CII), you have friends in the Rees mob; Additional Skill Adds (CII), +2 to *charm*; Additional Attribute Point (CIII), +1 to Charisma.

Compensations: Advantage Flaw (CI), Employed (CI), you work as a torch singer; Infamy (CI), you're known for your associations with gangsters; Bad Luck (CII); Learning Curve (Negative) (CII); Quirks (CIII), you are deathly afraid of any kind of insect.

DESCRIPTION

You don't know if it was your pipes or your legs that first drew that gang boss' attention — and you don't much care. His backing helped you get a job as a singer in a ritzy nightclub, not to mention a few lassiter fur coats. Everything would be jake, except that you have this knack of finding trouble. You seem to just stumble into situations and can't always stumble easily out again. But at least there's never a dull moment ...

Spells: *Heat*.

EQUIPMENT

.22 Delken; lassiter fur coat; gold jewelry; smoke ring.



"Keep your hands to yourself, creep. That's right, all three of 'em!"

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	26	31	36	41
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	+5

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CHARACTER SHEET

WEREPANTHER

SPECIES Human Werepanther	ALIGNMENT Order 1	HEIGHT	MASS	AGE	SEX Male
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ATTRIBUTES AGILITY 10/12 Climbing 11/13, dodge 12/13, long jumping NA/13, maneuver 11/13, running 12/13, stealth 14/16, unarmed combat 13/15 DEXTERITY 8/4 Fire combat 9/NA ENDURANCE 8/10 STRENGTH 10/12 INTELLECT 8/8 Perception 9/19, tracking 9/10, trick 9/9 MIND 8/5 CONFIDENCE 8/9 Intimidation 9/11, willpower 10/10 CHARISMA 8/8 Shapeshifting 9/9	DERIVED ATTRIBUTES <div> <div>10/11</div> TOUGHNESS </div> <div> <div>10/11</div> TOUGHNESS (w/armor) </div> <div> <div>7/9</div> MRG (Movement Rate, Ground) </div> <div> <div>5/6</div> MRS (Movement Rate, Swimming) </div> <div> <div>3/3</div> MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing) </div> <div> <div>3/3</div> MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping) </div>		COMBAT BOX <div> <input type="radio"/> <i>Light</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Moderate</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Heavy</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Incapacitated</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Mortal</i> </div>	<div> <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> O </div> MODIFIERS no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text
	LIFE POINTS 5	SKILL POINTS	SHOCK CAPACITY SHOCK TAKEN	

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Fame (CI), you are known in your immediate neighborhood for keeping the streets clear of criminals and violent Unnaturals; Skill Bonus (CI), +1 to *dodge*, *maneuver* and *unarmed combat*; Additional Skill Adds (CII) (+2 to *stealth*); Special Abilities (CIV): Natural Weaponry (HTH) (teeth), Natural Weaponry (HTH) (claws), Shapeshifting I (panther form).

Compensations: Enemy (CI), you are disliked by a few of the local sentinels, who see you as a vigilante; Quirk (CI), you feel driven to protect your neighborhood; Prejudice (CII), non-Human prejudice; Advantage Flaws (CIV), Ability Loss III (lose all panther abilities when in Human form, Allergy II (gold).

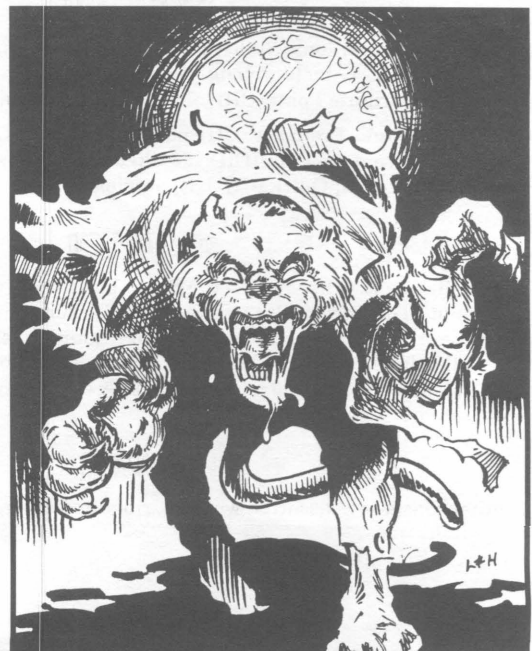
DESCRIPTION

You love what you are — if the family “curse” hadn’t made you a Werecreature, you would have found another way to become one. Your other form has given you the power to protect your neighbors from all sorts of bloodsuckers, not just the ones who take dirt-naps all day. It started out as a job — now it feels more like a mission.

Natural Tools: Claws, damage value STR+3/15; teeth, damage value STR+4/16.

EQUIPMENT

.38 Gelvash.



“You picked the wrong street to work, jerk. Hope you like scars.”

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	26	31	36	41
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	+5

Bloodshadows™

CHARACTER SHEET

SKETHSPAWN

SPECIES Skethspawn	ALIGNMENT Chaos 1	HEIGHT	MASS	AGE	SEX Male
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ATTRIBUTES AGILITY 14 Dodge 15, maneuver 15, melee combat 15, running 17, stealth 16, unarmed combat 15 DEXTERITY 8 Prestidigitation 11 ENDURANCE 8 STRENGTH 8 INTELLECT 8 Smuggling 9, trick 9 MIND 7 CONFIDENCE 9 Con 10, intimidation 10, streetwise 11, willpower 10 CHARISMA 7	DERIVED ATTRIBUTES <div> <div>9</div> TOUGHNESS </div> <div> <div>11</div> TOUGHNESS (w/armor) </div> <div> <div>8</div> MRG (Movement Rate, Ground) </div> <div> <div>5</div> MRS (Movement Rate, Swimming) </div> <div> <div>3</div> MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing) </div> <div> <div>3</div> MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping) </div>	COMBAT BOX WOUND LEVEL <input type="radio"/> <i>Light</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Moderate</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Heavy</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Incapacitated</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Mortal</i>	K <input type="radio"/> MODIFIERS no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text
	LIFE POINTS 5	SKILL POINTS	SHOCK CAPACITY SHOCK TAKEN

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Additional Skill Adds (CI), +1 to *prestidigitation*; Contacts (CI), you have numerous contacts among other Skethspawn and Mongrels; Luck (CII); Additional Attribute Point (CIII), +1 to Agility; Special Abilities (CIV): Speed.

Compensations: Prejudice (CII), non-Human prejudice; Learning Curve (Negative) (CII); Advantage Flaw (CII): if soaked in water, speed is negated; Advantage Flaw (CIII): Stench; Quirk (CIII): Hydrophobia.

DESCRIPTION

Nobody likes a Skethspawn — the Sketh don't want you, and the Humans sure don't want to claim you. But you've learned to survive on the streets by your wits (what there is of them) and your knack for running when there's any danger. Some of the folks that hire you might wrinkle their noses at your smell, or complain when their watches and rings go missing, but they can't deny you're a damn good guide to the seamier sides of the city.

EQUIPMENT

Leather coat, worn; assorted watches, rings and other stolen goods; brass knuckles; switchblade.



"Sorry, sure sorry, yes I am. Ma always said not to run with the knife. That's quite a bleeder, yes it is."

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	26	31	36	41
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	+5

Bloodshadows™

CHARACTER SHEET

CATRARM BODYGUARD

SPECIES Catrarm	ALIGNMENT Neutral	HEIGHT	MASS	AGE	SEX Male
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ATTRIBUTES AGILITY 10/11 Climbing 11/13, dodge 11/13, maneuver 11/14, melee combat 11/NA, stealth 11/13, unarmed combat 11/13 DEXTERITY 10/12 Fire combat 11/NA ENDURANCE 7/5 STRENGTH 7/2 INTELLECT 9/10 Apportation: technomancy 10/NA, perception 11/12, trick 11/12 MIND 9/5 Conjuration: technomancy 10/NA CONFIDENCE 8/6 Con 9/NA, gambling 11/NA, intimidation 9/7, willpower 9/7 CHARISMA 8/8 Shapeshifting 9/9	DERIVED ATTRIBUTES <div> <div>9</div> TOUGHNESS </div> <div> <div>9</div> TOUGHNESS (w/armor) </div> <div> <div>6</div> MRG (Movement Rate, Ground) </div> <div> <div>4</div> MRS (Movement Rate, Swimming) </div> <div> <div>2</div> MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing) </div> <div> <div>2</div> MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping) </div>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>COMBAT BOX</td> <td>K O</td> </tr> <tr> <td> WOUND LEVEL <input type="radio"/> <i>Light</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Moderate</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Heavy</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Incapacitated</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Mortal</i> </td> <td> MODIFIERS no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text </td> </tr> </table>	COMBAT BOX	K O	WOUND LEVEL <input type="radio"/> <i>Light</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Moderate</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Heavy</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Incapacitated</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Mortal</i>	MODIFIERS no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text
COMBAT BOX	K O					
WOUND LEVEL <input type="radio"/> <i>Light</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Moderate</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Heavy</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Incapacitated</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Mortal</i>	MODIFIERS no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text					
	LIFE POINTS 5	SKILL POINTS				
		SHOCK CAPACITY SHOCK TAKEN				

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Fame (CI), you are known for your successful work as a bodyguard; Skill Bonus (CI), +1 to *melee combat, unarmed combat and thrown weapons*; Contacts (CII), you have contacts among the wealthy, many of whom you have worked for; Special Abilities (CIV): Multiple Limbs — able to do four different things at once with their hands without suffering multi-action penalty, Attribute Increase II, +2 to Dexterity.

Compensations: Employed (CI), you have a responsibility to whomever you are bodyguarding; Quirk (CI), you are extremely sensitive to taunts about your extra arms (taunters receive +2 to their skill check on that subject); Prejudice (CII), non-Human prejudice; Quirk (CIII), you are extremely suspicious by nature and have been known to fire into dark rooms to “soften them up.”

DESCRIPTION

You started out as a safe cracker and petty thief, then went legitimate as a bodyguard. You may not be as big and tough as Hugors or some others in that line, but your extra arms give you an advantage. You’ve got a little too hot a temper, though, especially when some mug makes a crack about a “four-fisted drinker” or something like that. Still, you’ve worked for some big names in your time, and aren’t above taking on freelance jobs in between assignments.

EQUIPMENT

.38 Gelvash (2); throwing daggers; blackjack; *thunder* potions (3).



“I could take you with two ... no, make that three arms tied behind my back.”

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	26	31	36	41
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	+5

WEREWOLF/HEALER

SPECIES Human Werewolf	ALIGNMENT Order 1	HEIGHT	MASS	AGE	SEX Female
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ATTRIBUTES		DERIVED ATTRIBUTES		COMBAT BOX		
AGILITY 8/10 Dodge 9/12, long jumping */11, maneuver 9/12, stealth 9/12, unarmed combat 9/12 DEXTERITY 8/7 ENDURANCE 9/10 Resist shock 10/11 STRENGTH 8/12 TOUGHNESS 10/11 INTELLECT 9/7 First aid 10/*, perception 10/9, science: chemistry 11/*, tracking */8 MIND 8/5 Medicine 12/* CONFIDENCE 9/8 Alteration: vitomancy 11/*, intimidation */10, willpower 10/9 CHARISMA 9 Persuasion 10/*, shapeshifting 10, taunt 10/10		9 TOUGHNESS 11 TOUGHNESS (w/armor) 8 MRG (Movement Rate, Ground) 5 MRS (Movement Rate, Swimming) 3 MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing) 3 MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping)		WOUND LEVEL <input type="radio"/> <i>Light</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Moderate</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Heavy</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Incapacitated</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Mortal</i>		K <input type="radio"/>
				MODIFIERS no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text		
		LIFE POINTS 5		SHOCK CAPACITY SHOCK TAKEN		

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Additional Skill Adds (CI), +1 to *medicine*; Wealth (CI); Cultures (CII), you have extensive knowledge of breed cultures, particularly Human/animal breeds; Special Abilities (CIV): Shapeshifting I (wolf form), Fast Reactions, Natural Weaponry (HTH), fangs, Natural Weaponry (HTH), (claws).

Compensations: Enemy (CI), the relative of someone you killed is stalking the Werewolf; Infamy (CII), the Werewolf is wanted for murder by sentinels in Selastos; Achilles Heel (CIII), severe vulnerability to silver when in wolf form — you suffer damage value 15, in addition to any other damage, when touched by silver); Advantage Flaw (CIV) Infection II.

DESCRIPTION

The family curse that turned you into a werewolf on nights of the full moon struck when you were 18. Knowing that there would inevitably be blood on your hands, you chose to learn the healing arts. Perhaps you might one day be able to save someone who had fallen before the Werewolf's claws. Your other self is currently wanted for murder and being stalked by the relative of someone you killed (fortunately, he does not know your Human identity).

Natural Tools: Claws, damage value STR+2/14; fangs, damage value STR+3/15.

Spells: *First aid, heighten agility.*

Arcane Knowledges: Living forces 1.

EQUIPMENT

Knife, damage value STR+3/11; *revitalize* potions (4); hand-held crystal set; first aid kit.



“Getting that slug out will have to wait for tomorrow. I’m going to be ... busy tonight.”

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	26	31	36	41
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	+5

TAXIM DRIVER

SPECIES <i>Taxim</i>	ALIGNMENT <i>Chaos</i>	HEIGHT	MASS	AGE	SEX <i>Female</i>
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ATTRIBUTES	DERIVED ATTRIBUTES		COMBAT BOX	K	O
AGILITY 8 Dodge 9, melee combat 9, unarmed combat 9, unarmed parry 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	TOUGHNESS	WOUND LEVEL <input type="radio"/> <i>Light</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Moderate</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Heavy</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Incapacitated</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Mortal</i>	MODIFIERS no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text	
DEXTERITY 8 Fire combat 9, vehicle piloting: wheeled 12	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	TOUGHNESS (w/armor)			
ENDURANCE 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	MRG (Movement Rate, Ground)			
STRENGTH 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	MRS (Movement Rate, Swimming)			
TOUGHNESS 12 (9)	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing)			
INTELLECT 10 Navigation 11, perception 11, tracking 12, trick 11, vehicle mechanic: wheeled 11	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping)			
MIND 8 Cartography 9	LIFE POINTS 5		SHOCK CAPACITY		
CONFIDENCE 9 Alteration: vitomancy 10, intimidation 10, streetwise (Selastos) 10			SHOCK TAKEN		
CHARISMA 9					

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Additional Skill Adds (CI), +1 to *vehicle piloting: wheeled*; Contacts (CI): (you have friends in the higher echelons of the Taxim labor union in Selastos; Luck (CI); Special Abilities (CIII): Toughened Skin, Possession I.

Compensations: Bigotry (CI), prejudiced against Humans; Employed (CI), by taxi company; Prejudice (CII), non-Human prejudice; Advantage Flaw (CIII): Stench, Cultural Allergy I, *stymied* when in graveyards; Ability Loss I, you lose your toughened skin and your ability to move to a new body when traveling over water.

DESCRIPTION

Even an Undead has to make a living, and you do it by driving a hack. On the side, you run numbers for the Rees mob and act as driver for some of the Taxim Union bigwigs. You're one of the few Taxim cabbies to make any kind of a living outside of the Quarter, maybe because your body only died a few days before you possessed it and still looks pretty good.

Natural Tools: Hide, armor value TOU+3/12.

Spells: *Pain*.

Arcane Knowledges: Folk 1.

EQUIPMENT

Blackjack; .22 Delken revolver; crystal set; tool kit; pocket glowstone; Signer sedan.

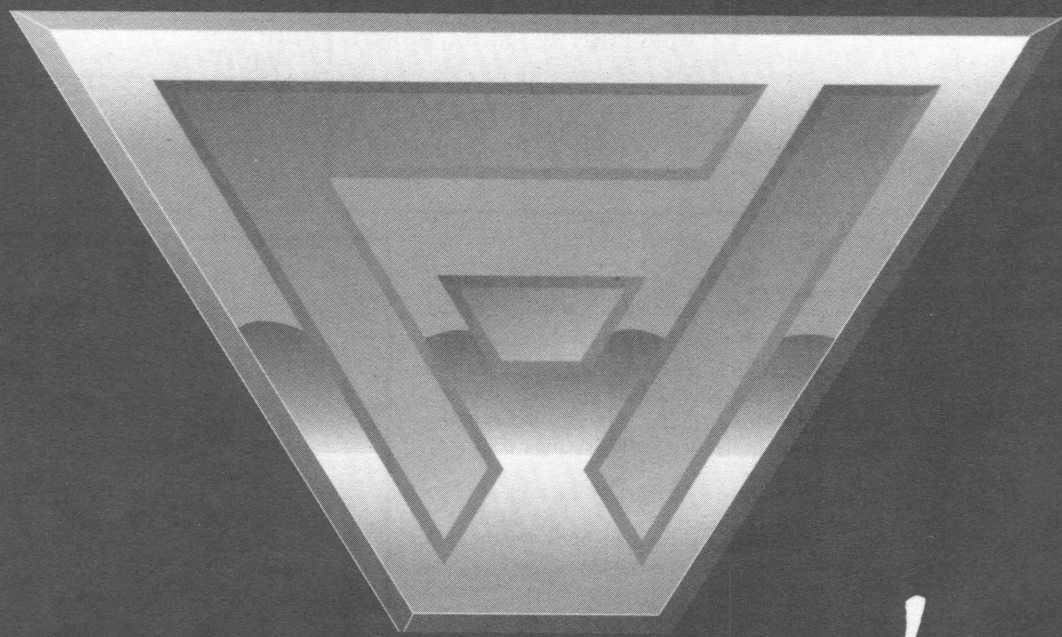


"Hands off the merchandise, bub. I'm just renting, get me?"

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	26	31	36	41
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	+5

FLEET



*A Survivor's
Guide*

Shadows of Selastos

by Jeff Cisneros, Greg Farshtey, L. Douglas Garrett
and Paul Sudlow

Adventures in the City of Gold

Selastos is a city rich with opportunity — and danger. Adventure here and you wind up with your pockets full of gold or your gut full of rune-slugs. There's no middle ground and no second chances. Inside this book, you'll find four chances to prove you have what it takes.

If you can make it here, you'll ... well, you get the idea.

Shadows Of Selastos is an adventure collection for *Bloodshadows*, the *World of Fantasy Noir™*. It includes four adventures set in and around the city of Selastos, as well as additional character templates. A book written by demons, gates in the air, and a man determined to master both; three dead men, a dying alchemist and the ultimate Homunculus; a smuggling operation only an Undead could love; enchanted art, hidden truths and a date gone very, *very* wrong make up the challenges to the player characters.

Shadows of Selastos is an adventure collection intended for use with the *Bloodshadows* game.

A
MASTERBOOK™
Game

