

My Life as the GM

A guide to running
My Life with Master

An evil genius.

Minions with low self-esteem.

Did Igor ever regret robbing graves
for Dr Frankenstein?

The following pages are a step-by-step guide to running My Life with Master, Paul Czege's award-winning and darkly comedic game.

You and four friends can play a Master and the minions struggling with whether to fulfill his evil commands.

Contains:

- an original scenario
- four pre-generated minions
- a Teutonic, snake-wielding, mother-fearing Master



Requires the original My Life with Master (available at www.halfmeme.com) to play.

My Life as the GM

A guide to running My Life with Master

1. Preface

The scenario's origin
Duration

2. Preparing

Pitch the game
Pitch the scenario
Gather materials

3. Rapport

Define 'dysfunction'
Deal with strong
emotional responses

4. Master

Introducing
Dr Oserlinde
Fear and Reason

5. Minions

The character sheets

6. Tutorial

Relationship map

My Life as the GM

A guide to running My Life with Master

7. Starting

Become Dr Oserlinde

8. Round One

Eli

Sofia

Emerson

Otto

9. Round Two

Designate Innocents

10. Subsequent

A list of moves for
GMs in scenes

11. Overtures

Example Overtures

12. Miscellany

Dealing with Otto
Horror Revealed
Oserlinde's Ambitions
Using Innocents

My Life as the GM

A guide to running My Life with Master

13. Endgame

Example situations

Keeping it dramatic

Involving other minions

Denouement

14. Back Matter

Acknowledgements

An option to pay

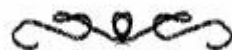
Appendices

List of tasks for minions

The Horror Revealed card

GM reference: How to run
the game

GM reference: The Endgame



Feel free to pirate, torrent or gift this .pdf. I've been developing this guide since 2009. If you play it or get some value out of it, consider repaying me either by:

a) mentioning it online. ([Click here for good places to do that.](#))

b) donating some money to support my future RPG writing.
([Click here for three venues where you can do that.](#))

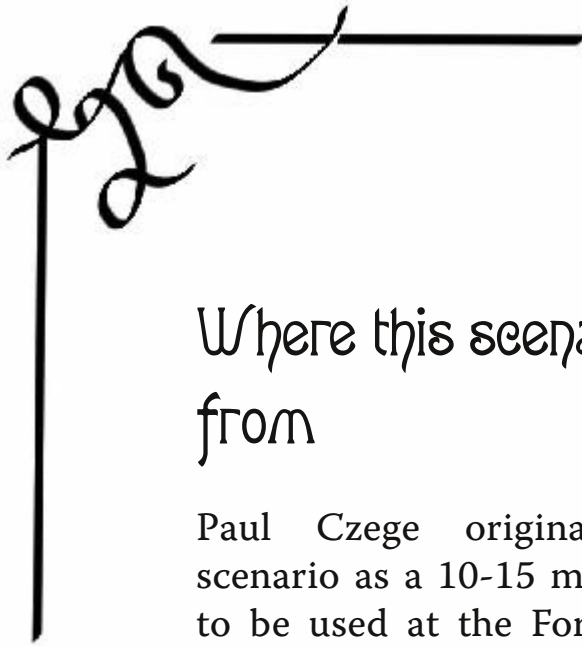
A decorative flourish consisting of a horizontal line that curves upwards and then downwards into a vertical line, with ornate scrollwork at the top right.

PREFACE

The following pages will take you through the process of running a three-hour convention session of *My Life with Master*. It provides you with four pre-generated minions, provides advice on how to pace the session and portray the Master, and suggests possible scenes.

This scenario is broadly divided into seven sections:

- Pitching the game and preparing to run it
- Meeting your players, and setting up the situation
- A starting scene for each character
- Advice and examples for running subsequent scenes
- Advice on running the different types of *My Life with Master* scenes
- Strategies for maintaining interest and momentum in the endgame
- A process for wrapping the game up.



Where this scenario comes from

Paul Czege originally wrote this scenario as a 10-15 minute sales demo to be used at the Forge booth during Gencon 2003. In 2006, Paul and I discussed how to expand it into a three-hour game that I could run at my local convention.

Since then I've run this scenario several times. This article combines our best practices for game mastering My Life with Master in a convention setting.

It also incorporates several tips from Michael S. Miller's excellent essay, [A Manifesto on Mastery](#), which provides a philosophical strategy for running the game.



A short note about duration

This scenario has been playtested by myself and two other groups. These sessions have run between 2.5 to 4.5 hours, due to player decisions during the game and the time taken between rolls.

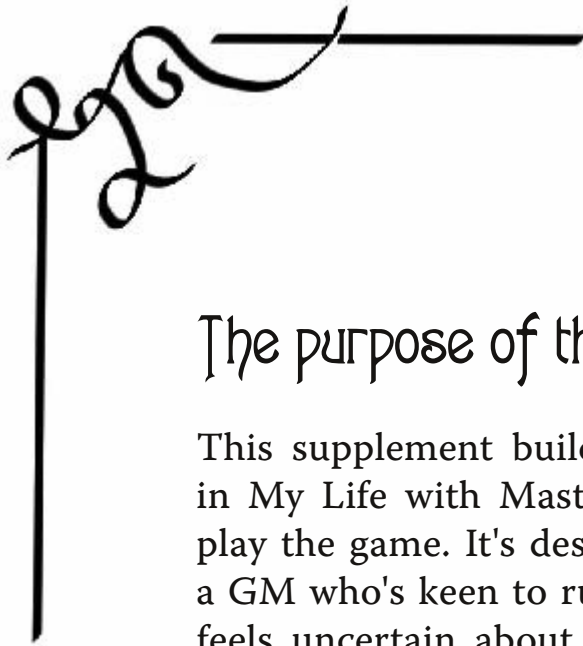
When you run the game, feel free to tell me how long it went for (and give me other feedback).

My contact details are on page 124.

I'll revise the scenario accordingly once I have enough datapoints.



For this first edition of the game, you may need to actively introduce Innocents into Overture scenes (making it easier to gain Love and trigger the Endgame) or accept that the Endgame won't happen (and that this group of minions stays with the Master).



The purpose of this guide

This supplement builds on the advice in *My Life with Master* about how to play the game. It's designed to support a GM who's keen to run the game (but feels uncertain about how to do that) by providing a worked example of how to put a game together.



PREPARING TO RUN THE GAME

Many conventions require you to either advertise your game in advance or do a quick verbal pitch of the game you're going to run.

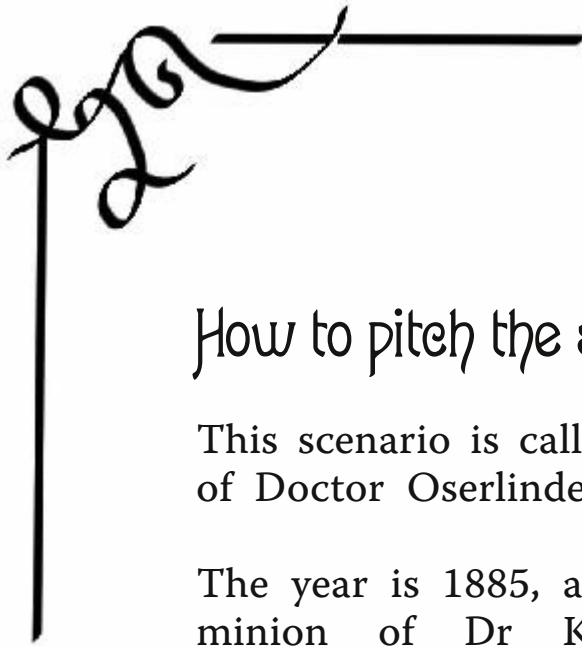


How to pitch the game

My Life with Master is a game about the dysfunctional relationships between a monstrous Master and the minions who try to fulfill his insane commands.

The game has a dark tone, as it dramatises verbal abuse and bullying. The horror of the situation is offset by occasional moments of comedy that arise out of this situation.

Think Dr Frankenstein and Igor, Dracula and Renfield, or Tyra Banks and everyone else on America's Next Top Model.



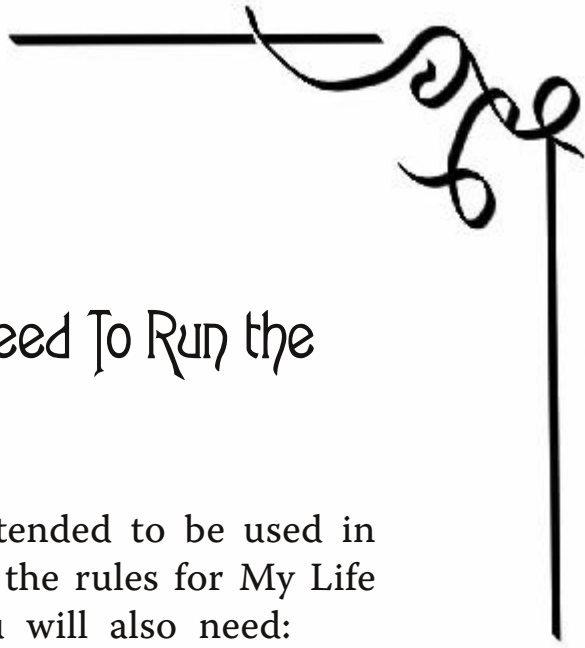
How to pitch the scenario

This scenario is called "The Snakes of Doctor Oserlinde".

The year is 1885, and you are the minion of Dr Karl Oserlinde, proprietor of the Naja health spa (located on a sun-drenched Mediterranean island). Dr Oserlinde pretends to be a medical genius selling a world-famous cure, but really he's using a serum extracted from venomous snakes to mind-control his clients and steal their money.

As Dr Oserlinde's minions, you try to execute his evil schemes, all the while struggling with how to escape his grip, and deciding whether it's just easier to give in and obey.

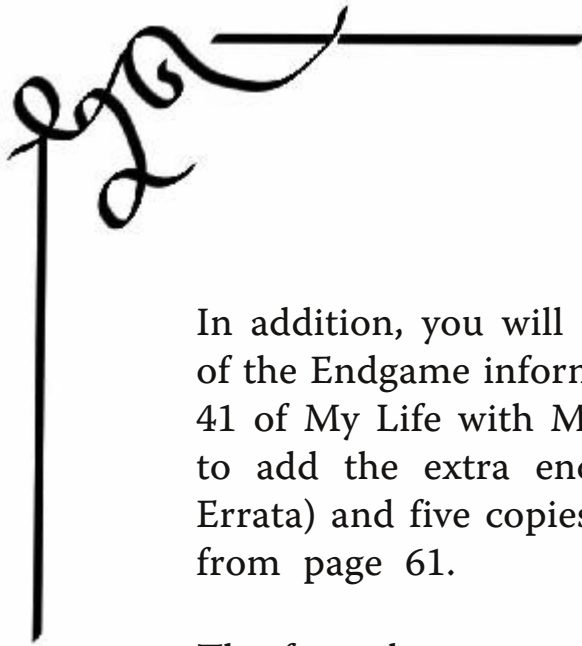
The game is for four players.



What You'll Need To Run the Game

This article is intended to be used in conjunction with the rules for My Life with Master. You will also need:

- The four character sheets
- Two copies of the relationship map
- Something to wear that represents the presence of Dr Oserlinde (I prefer a red scarf, but a hat, glasses, or anything else that you're comfortable using in a slightly sinister fashion would be fine)
- A timer
- A copy of the Horror Revealed card
- Intimacy, Sincerity, and Desperation dice, and lots of d4s

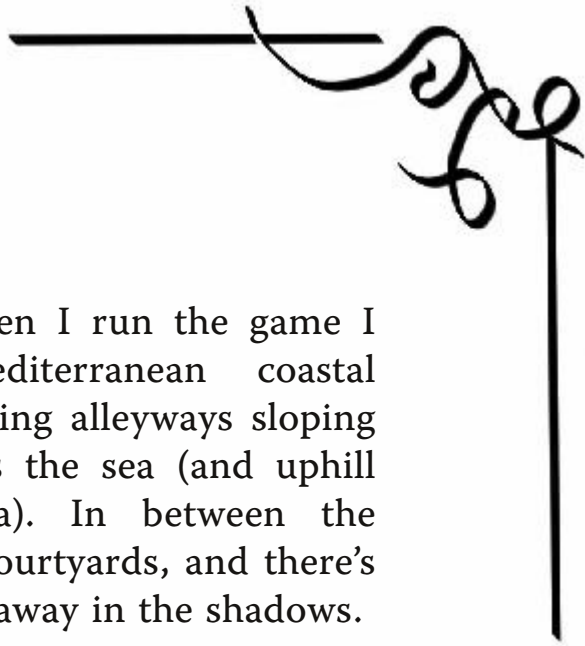


In addition, you will need four copies of the Endgame information from page 41 of *My Life with Master* (remember to add the extra endgame from the Errata) and five copies of the formulae from page 61.

The formulae are not included in this document, at Paul Czege's request. *My Life as the GM* is intended to be a supplement for *My Life with Master*. Including the formulae creates the risk that it could become a replacement for the original game.

Imagine the setting

After reading the scenario, I also recommend you daydream a little bit and think about how you might portray Dr Oserlinde and the minions' Connections. It will also help if you imagine a few places you might find in Dr Oserlinde's spa and on the island, setting up the geography of the island in your mind.



For instance, when I run the game I imagine a Mediterranean coastal village with twisting alleyways sloping downhill towards the sea (and uphill towards the spa). In between the houses are tiny courtyards, and there's a taverna tucked away in the shadows.

Examine the list of commands that Dr Oserlinde could give the minions on page 126. Identify the commands that appeal to you the most.

If you're ever unsure what to say or do while you're running the game, choose a command from the list and have Dr Oserlinde issue it.

ESTABLISHING CREATIVE RAPPORT

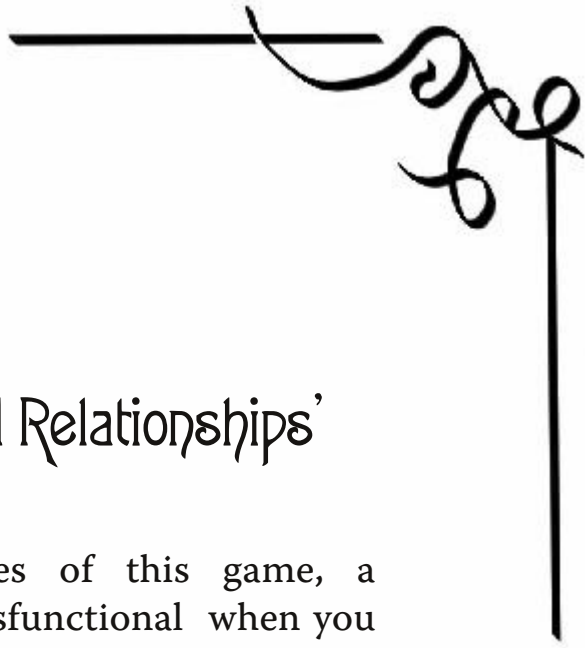
Once the group has sat down at the table, introduce yourself and meet the other players. Find out if anyone's played *My Life with Master* before.

After this, introduce the theme of the game: dysfunctional relationships (see below). Your aim is to get a group of players who may not have met each other before to quickly buy into the game at an emotional level, and to hint to them that underneath all the fun, this game will probably have some emotional weight.

This introduction should take about five minutes and create three effects:

- empathy with the minions
- appreciation for why the minions can't just 'run away'
- recognition that the game is about a situation that happens to real people (not just monsters).

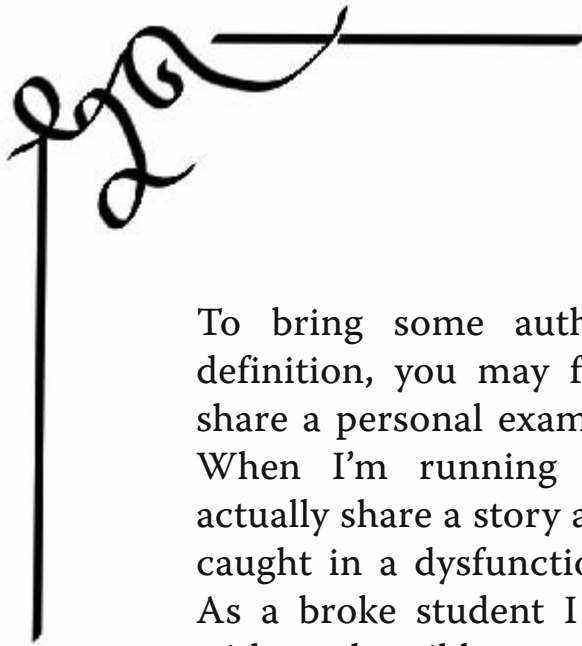




Defining 'Dysfunctional Relationships'

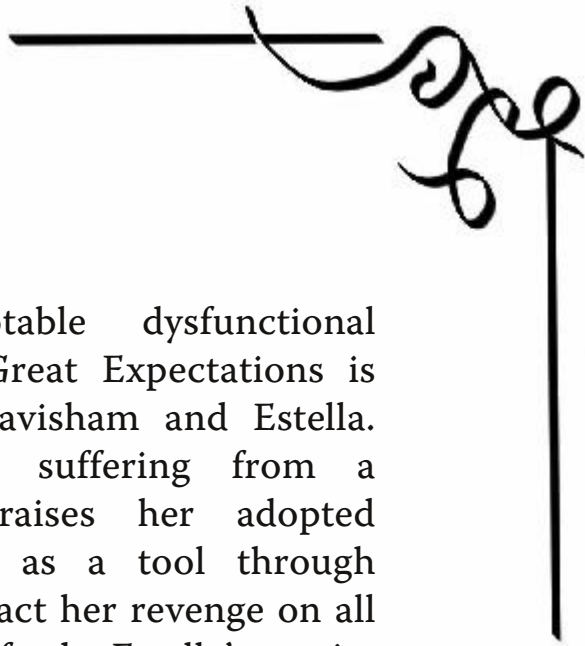
For the purposes of this game, a relationship is dysfunctional when you need someone's approval or support more than they need yours. This gives the other person control over you, and they can do whatever they like to you—including destroy your self-worth.

The person with power over you does this because it's useful or satisfying to them to have you under their thumb. And once they have destroyed your self-worth you feel like you can't break away from the relationship (because they're the only person who will accept you). You may also be reluctant to break out of it because they intermittently reward you with affection or praise.



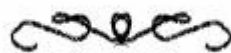
To bring some authenticity to this definition, you may find it helpful to share a personal example of your own. When I'm running this scenario, I actually share a story about a time I got caught in a dysfunctional relationship. As a broke student I ended up living with a horrible roommate, but felt unable to leave because I didn't have 'enough' money. That meant I made myself miserable, putting up with all of their crap and an increasingly unbearable situation.

As an alternative to a personal example, Paul Czege uses a literary one: *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens. It's a story that a lot of people know. And by illustrating that the game can have different contexts from just B-movie horror, you can also help lessen the common initial impression that *My Life with Master* is just a humorous parody.

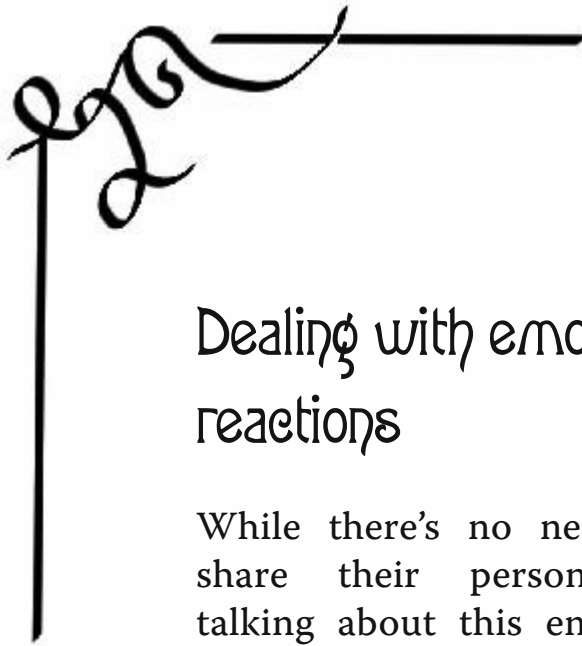


The most notable dysfunctional relationship in *Great Expectations* is between Miss Havisham and Estella. Miss Havisham, suffering from a broken heart, raises her adopted daughter Estella as a tool through whom she can exact her revenge on all men: Havisham feeds Estella's vanity and her aloofness towards others, and encourages Estella to constantly mislead men about her feelings for them.

Continue this introduction until you can see nods of understanding from everyone at the table, and you feel that everybody is starting to be on the same page, emotionally, about the type of story you'll be creating.



Once you reach this understanding, move on to the 'Defining the Master' section.



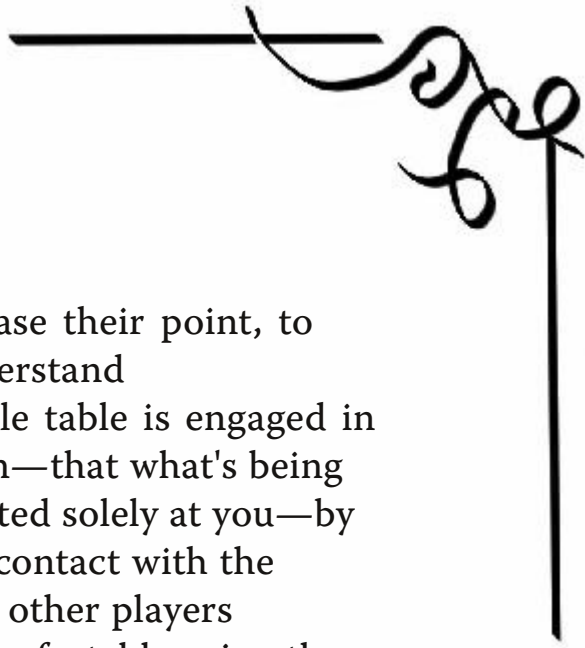
Dealing with emotional reactions

While there's no need for them to share their personal experiences, talking about this emotionally-loaded topic may trigger reactions from other players at the table. This may happen at any time. If someone is triggered, it's best to stop play and have a respectful conversation where you relate to each other as human beings, rather than force the game to start (or continue) so that it can end on time.

Let the conversation go on for a natural length.

On the next page, I've suggested some techniques that may help if the conversation becomes difficult.





- Listen. Paraphrase their point, to ensure you understand
- Ensure the whole table is engaged in the conversation—that what's being said is not directed solely at you—by alternating eye contact with the speaker and the other players
- Ask if they're comfortable using these emotions in the game
- Ask them to remember that it is a memory. Ask what's better in their life now.
- Suggest slow deep breaths
- Respectfully ask if they would be okay moving into the game's next phase
- Take them aside and ask if they'd prefer not to play in this session.

Strong emotional reactions to the subject matter of this game can bring a lot of depth and intensity to the game—but it's absolutely fine for players to drop out at this point.



Dealing with problematic material

During play, someone may introduce an idea that's potentially offensive or transgressive. As GM, take the lead in looking for these moments and checking with the players they're OK with the idea.

If they aren't you can apply one of two techniques:

- A veil: accept the idea but don't describe it in any detail
- A line: the group decides the idea should not be part of the game at all. Undo the introduction and ask the players to approach the scene in a different way.

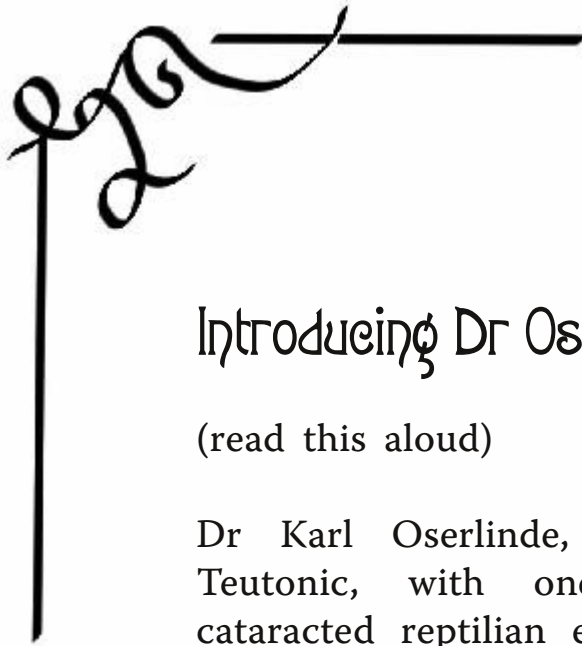


DEFINING THE MASTER

Now you're ready to begin setting up the game itself. Start by reading out the following introduction to the Master of this scenario: Dr Karl Oserlinde.

At this point, you don't need to adopt the persona of Dr Oserlinde when you're reading the introduction. Instead, read it intensely, trying to emphasise for the players the areas of drama and high emotions.

This introduction gets increasingly emotional as it goes on. When I read it, I place particular emphasis on Dr Oserlinde's mother, and his need to end her influence over him. (I've **bolded these sections**, on the following pages.) These will be strands running through the game, justifying Dr Oserlinde's actions.



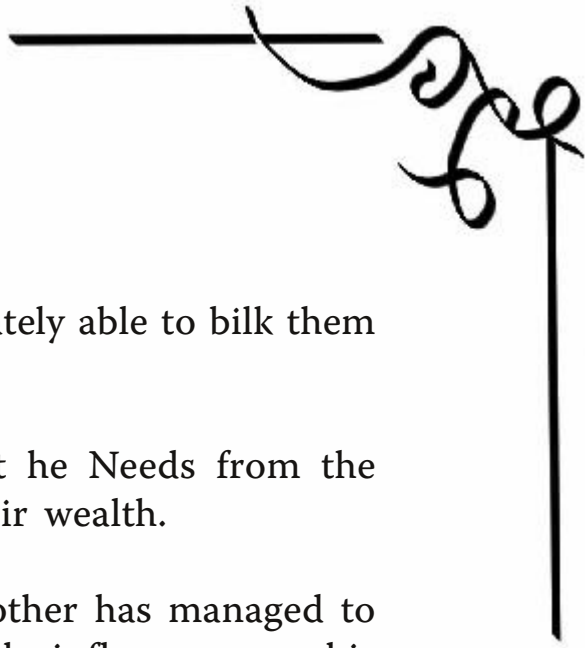
Introducing Dr Oserlinde

(read this aloud)

Dr Karl Oserlinde, 33, pale, and Teutonic, with one bizarre and cataracted reptilian eye. Think linen trousers and white cotton shirts. He was raised from the age of 9 by Hindu snake charmers after his gambling-obsessed mother was thrown into debtor prison.

Dr Oserlinde operates Naja Spa, in an old Roman baths on an island in the Mediterranean, catering to the ailments of wealthy Italians with his “curative” injections of snake venom and local roots.

Rather than actually curing anything, the injections merely make the patients susceptible to his will, so he is initially able to suggest to them that they feel

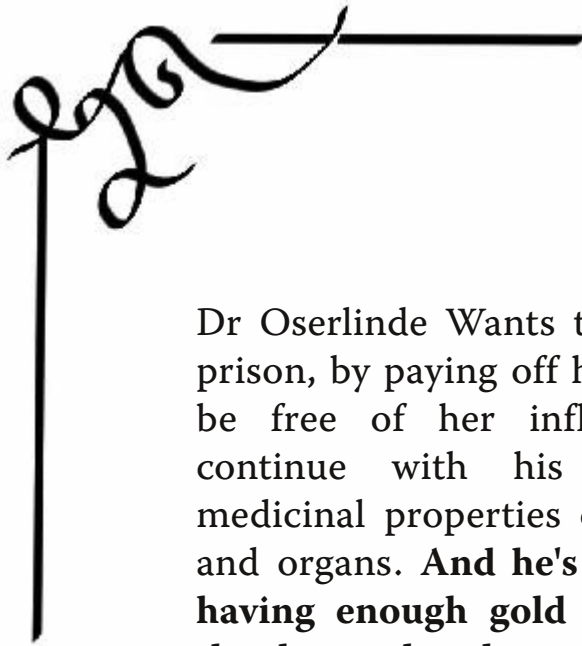


better, and ultimately able to bilk them of their wealth.

And that is what he Needs from the Townspeople: their wealth.

Somehow, his mother has managed to exert an incredible influence over his life these past 24 years, entirely from behind bars, through correspondence. He gets a minimum of one letter from her per day. But that fact alone fails to suggest **the scope of her influence**. She writes letters to dozens of people, most of whom she's never met, a vast network of correspondents she cultivates in service to **managing her son's life**. She makes social arrangements for him, and breaks dealings she doesn't approve of.

And he desperately Wants it to end.

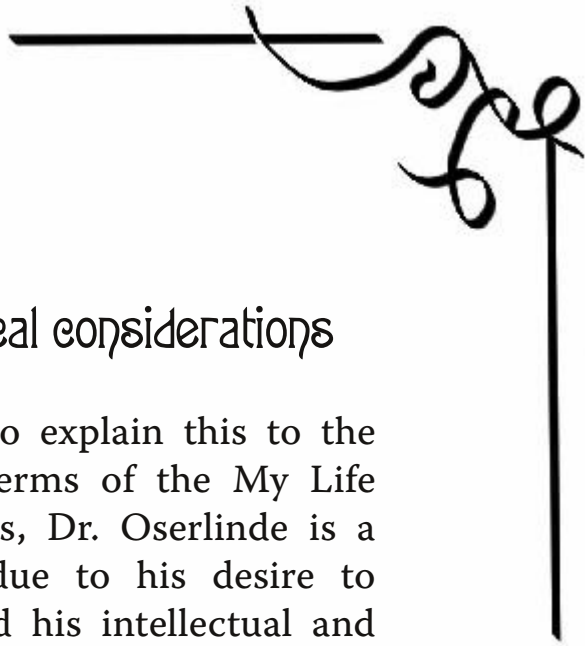


Dr Oserlinde Wants to get her out of prison, by paying off her debts, so he'll be free of her influence and can continue with his study of the medicinal properties of snake venoms and organs. **And he's so very close to having enough gold squirreled away that he can barely stand it.**

Read ['Dr Oserlinde's ambitions'](#) for more information.

The Purpose of this Introduction

Laying all of this information out on the table helps justify the whole dysfunctional situation. It also allows you to quickly introduce Dr Oserlinde's desperation in play (which I'll go into more detail about later).



Some mechanical considerations

You don't need to explain this to the players but, in terms of the My Life with Master rules, Dr. Oserlinde is a Collector-Brain due to his desire to amass wealth and his intellectual and manipulative approach to this goal.

In this scenario, Fear and Reason will be set to the following levels:

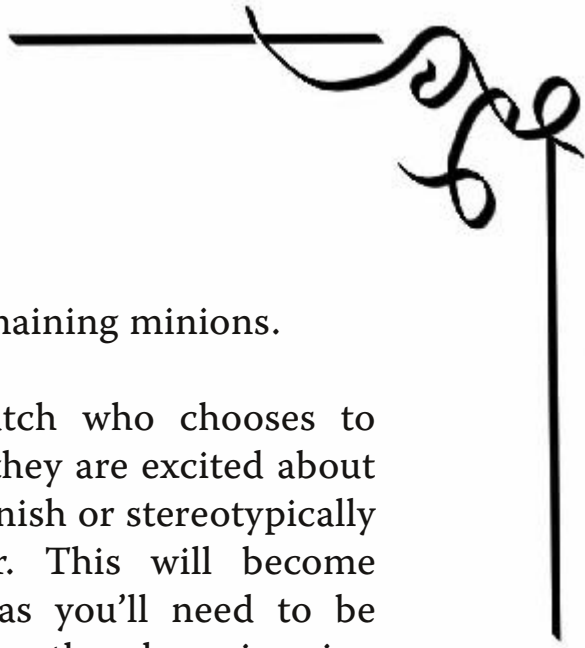
FEAR 3
REASON 3

ASSIGNING THE MINIONS

Read out the following simple introductions to each of the four minions, telling the players to indicate if they're excited by the idea of playing any of them. The four minions are:

- Dr Oserlinde's Biographer, an intellectual who's afraid of dirt (Eli)
- Dr Oserlinde's Snake-handler, deformed and intellectually impaired from Oserlinde's experiments (Otto)
- A discredited Nurse, addicted to morphine, who injects Dr Oserlinde's victims (Sofia)
- The spa's Manager, a plain and simple man forced to do everything else Dr Oserlinde needs (Emerson).

If anyone has a strongly favourable reaction to one of the characters, give it to them.



Distribute the remaining minions.

In particular, watch who chooses to play Otto. See if they are excited about acting in a cartoonish or stereotypically 'Igor-ish' manner. This will become important later, as you'll need to be mindful of whether the player is using these mannerisms to avoid engaging with the emotional truths in the game. See the ['Dealing with Otto' section](#) for more.

The four minions

The following character sheets contain the basic fictional and numerical information you'll need for each minion, as well as some of the formulae you will need to play the game, and some advice to the players on how to get the best experience from playing My Life with Master.

Sofia di Mosa

Sofia, 59 years old, is a discredited nurse who makes the “curative” to Oserlinde's specifications and administers injections under his supervision.

Twenty years ago a patient committed suicide under her care. The subsequent inquiry exposed her morphine addiction.

Rationale

Why can't your minion leave Dr Oserlinde?

• He's the only one who'll employ you • He supplies you with morphine • [Find your own reason]

Abilities

Your minion's unique power (and weakness)

More than human: Can restrain anyone, except the suicidal.

Less than human: Can't get out of bed in the morning unless you've had your morphine.

Connections

Record [Love] in brackets

Antonin Liguria: the one-legged ferry boatman who flirts shamelessly with you. Starting Love 2 []

Theo Padula: Rich, young, syphilitic rakehell. Always trying to steal morphine. Starting Love 1 []

Player advice

Your minion cannot die (until the end). No matter how safely or sensibly you play, their life expectancy is the length of this game. Make it three hours worth living!

At the start of the game, your minion still has the potential to be redeemed—as you play, you'll make judgments about whether that's still true.

Don't be afraid to be a monster, and don't shy away from doing monstrous things.

If you'd like to gain Love with a connection, tell the GM: they'll put you together in an 'Overture' scene. To gain Love, your minion must take an emotional risk. During these scenes, try to break the other players' hearts.

Self Loathing 2 ()

Weariness 2 ()

Fear 3 ()

The threat of Dr Oserlinde

Reason 3 ()

The influence of the Town

You are captured if your
WEARINESS > REASON

You gain GM powers if
SELF-LOATHING
> LOVE + REASON

Aiding a minion: contribute
LOVE - WEARINESS in dice.
If they fail, you suffer too.

Bonus dice: act with
Desperation (+d4), Intimacy
(+d6) or Sincerity (+d8).



Total of Love
across all Connections

Inform the GM if you resist
Dr Oserlinde's command
AND ...

TOTAL LOVE
> (FEAR + WEARINESS)

You can create a new Connection with any islander or visitor to the spa by asking for an Overture with them.

At any point you can ask for Dr Oserlinde's attention, or ask to enter a minion's scene while they're on a mission.

Emerson Miracola

Emerson Miracola, 48, the director of the spa, who handles all the business except the injections and the wealth-taking.

Rationale

Why can't your minion leave Dr Oserlinde?

- He keeps you from bankruptcy due to your gambling (see below)
- You enjoy the challenge of helping him earn money
- [Find your own reason]

Abilities

Your minion's unique power (and weakness)

More than human: Can project your consciousness outside your body, except if wet.

Less than human: Can't refuse to gamble, except with the rich.

Connections

Record [Love] in brackets

The widow Moncada: who's never happy with the service. Starting Love 0 []

Herberto Miracola: your albino nephew, a schoolboy spending a month on the island. Starting Love 3 []

Player advice

Your minion cannot die (until the end). No matter how safely or sensibly you play, their life expectancy is the length of this game. Make it three hours worth living!

At the start of the game, your minion still has the potential to be redeemed—as you play, you'll make judgments about whether that's still true.

Don't be afraid to be a monster, and don't shy away from doing monstrous things.

If you'd like to gain Love with a connection, tell the GM: they'll put you together in an 'Overture' scene. To gain Love, your minion must take an emotional risk. During these scenes, try to break the other players' hearts.

Self Loathing	3	()
Weariness	2	()
Fear	3	()
The threat of Dr Oserlinde		
Reason	3	()
The influence of the Town		

You are captured if your
WEARINESS > REASON

You gain GM powers if
SELF-LOATHING
> LOVE + REASON

Aiding a minion: contribute
LOVE - WEARINESS in dice.
If they fail, you suffer too.

Bonus dice: act with
Desperation (+d4), Intimacy
(+d6) or Sincerity (+d8).

 **Total of Love**
across all Connections

Inform the GM if you resist
Dr Oserlinde's command
AND ...
TOTAL LOVE
> (FEAR + WEARINESS)

You can create a new Connection with any islander or visitor to the spa by asking for an Overture with them.

At any point you can ask for Dr Oserlinde's attention, or ask to enter a minion's scene while they're on a mission.

Otto Struve

Otto Struve, 23, a snake handler, one of Oserlinde's failed experiments.

Otto keeps the snakes fed, and extracts their venom.

Rationale

Why can't your minion leave Dr Oserlinde?

- Life with him is the only thing you've ever known
- You believe he expresses affection through insults and anger
- [Find your own reason]

Abilities

Your minion's unique power (and weakness)

More than human: Lightning fast reflexes, except when cold

Less than human: You trust everyone, except schoolboys

Connections

Record [Love] in brackets

Nora: a little girl who walks on crutches. She's not afraid of you or anything. Starting Love 0 []

Mary Cosetta: the spa's cook. She keeps you well fed, and reminds you of your mother. Starting Love 0 []

Player advice

Your minion cannot die (until the end). No matter how safely or sensibly you play, their life expectancy is the length of this game. Make it three hours worth living!

At the start of the game, your minion still has the potential to be redeemed—as you play, you'll make judgments about whether that's still true.

Don't be afraid to be a monster, and don't shy away from doing monstrous things.

If you'd like to gain Love with a connection, tell the GM: they'll put you together in an 'Overture' scene. To gain Love, your minion must take an emotional risk. During these scenes, try to break the other players' hearts.

Self Loathing	4	()
Weariness	1	()
Fear	3	()
The threat of Dr Oserlinde		
Reason	3	()
The influence of the Town		

You are captured if your
WEARINESS > REASON

You gain GM powers if
SELF-LOATHING
> LOVE + REASON

Aiding a minion: contribute
LOVE - WEARINESS in dice.
If they fail, you suffer too.

Bonus dice: act with
Desperation (+d4), Intimacy
(+d6) or Sincerity (+d8).



Total of Love
across all Connections

Inform the GM if you resist
Dr Oserlinde's command
AND ...
TOTAL LOVE
> (FEAR + WEARINESS)

You can create a new Connection with any islander or visitor to the spa by asking for an Overture with them.

At any point you can ask for Dr Oserlinde's attention, or ask to enter a minion's scene while they're on a mission.

Eli Sabatino

Eli is 28. He is Dr Oserlinde's biographer.

Rationale

Why can't your minion leave Dr Oserlinde?

- You're convinced the finished biography will allow you to fulfil your ambitions
- A scandal means you can't return to Paris
- [Find your own reason]

Abilities

Your minion's unique power (and weakness)

More than human: Can accurately perceive the motives of others when interviewing them, except when cats are around.

Less than human: Can't touch anything unless you use a clean handkerchief to do so.

Connections

Record [Love] in brackets

Claire: a laundry girl. You can't stop thinking about her. Starting Love 0 []

Theo Padula: Rich, young, syphilitic rakehell. Wants to corrupt you. Starting Love 1 []

Player advice

Your minion cannot die (until the end). No matter how safely or sensibly you play, their life expectancy is the length of this game. Make it three hours worth living!

At the start of the game, your minion still has the potential to be redeemed—as you play, you'll make judgments about whether that's still true.

Don't be afraid to be a monster, and don't shy away from doing monstrous things.

If you'd like to gain Love with a connection, tell the GM: they'll put you together in an 'Overture' scene. To gain Love, your minion must take an emotional risk. During these scenes, try to break the other players' hearts.

Self Loathing 3 ()

Weariness 2 ()

Fear 3 ()

The threat of Dr Oserlinde

Reason 3 ()

The influence of the Town

You are captured if your
WEARINESS > REASON

You gain GM powers if
SELF-LOATHING
> LOVE + REASON

Aiding a minion: contribute
LOVE - WEARINESS in dice.
If they fail, you suffer too.

Bonus dice: act with
Desperation (+d4), Intimacy
(+d6) or Sincerity (+d8).



Total of Love
across all Connections

Inform the GM if you resist
Dr Oserlinde's command
AND ...

TOTAL LOVE
> (FEAR + WEARINESS)

You can create a new Connection with any islander or visitor to the spa by asking for an Overture with them.

At any point you can ask for Dr Oserlinde's attention, or ask to enter a minion's scene while they're on a mission.

A BRIEF RULES TUTORIAL

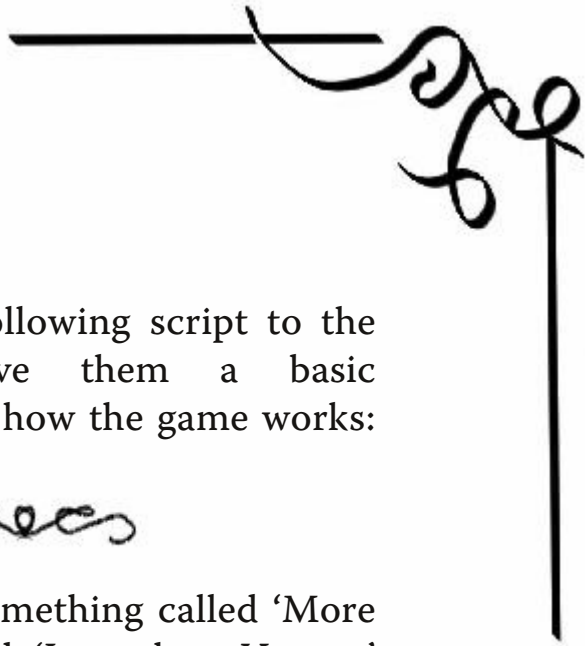
Give the players a chance to study their character sheets. Then read the following explanation aloud about what the stats on the top right of their sheets mean:

Self-Loathing: How much you consider yourself to be a monster and unworthy of love.

Weariness: Decreases your ability to resist Dr Oserlinde.

Connections: These are relationships your minion has with people on the island who are concerned or curious about you. The strength of a Connection's concern is measured by the amount of Love they have for you.



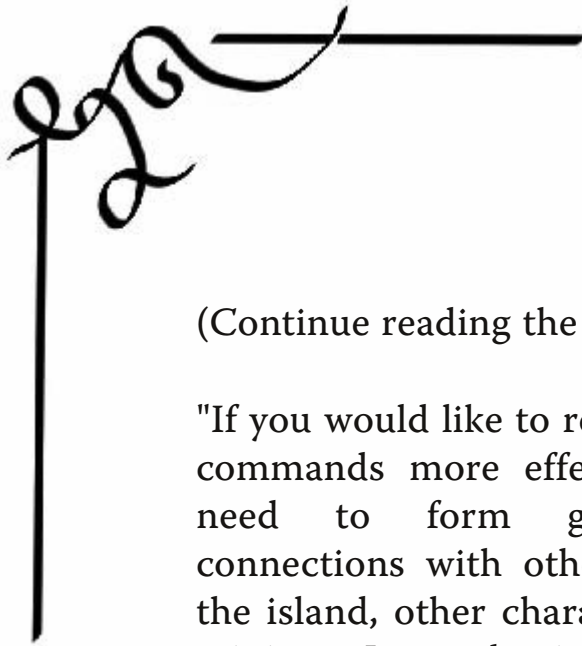


Then read the following script to the players, to give them a basic understanding of how the game works:



"You also have something called 'More than Human' and 'Less than Human' on your character sheet under 'Abilities'. Some of them are probably quite obvious, but we'll talk about them in more detail later on.

"Your characters will be given tasks to complete by Dr Oserlinde. If you would like to resist one of the Doctor's commands, feel free—but you might find you're unable to do that at the start of the game."

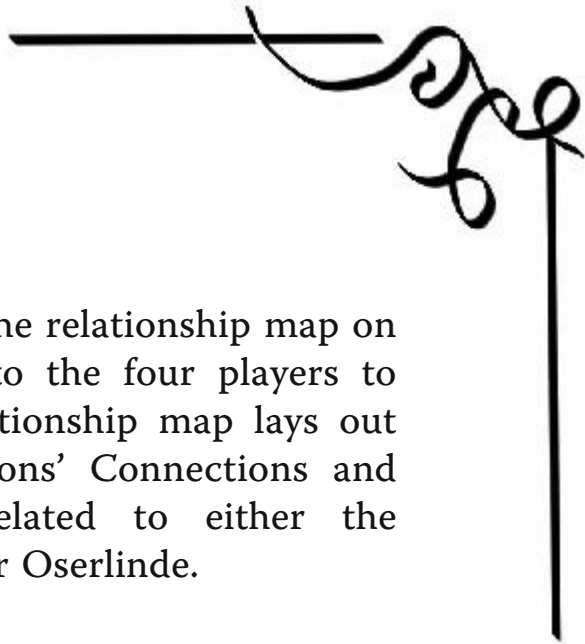


(Continue reading the following aloud:)

"If you would like to resist the Doctor's commands more effectively, you will need to form genuine human connections with other characters on the island, other characters who aren't minions. In mechanical terms, tell me a character you would like to connect with and I'll put you into a scene with them—which will give you a chance to gain Love from them.

"The endgame for this scenario is triggered if you successfully resist one of Dr Oserlinde's commands, and you have enough Love to be able to start a life on your own."



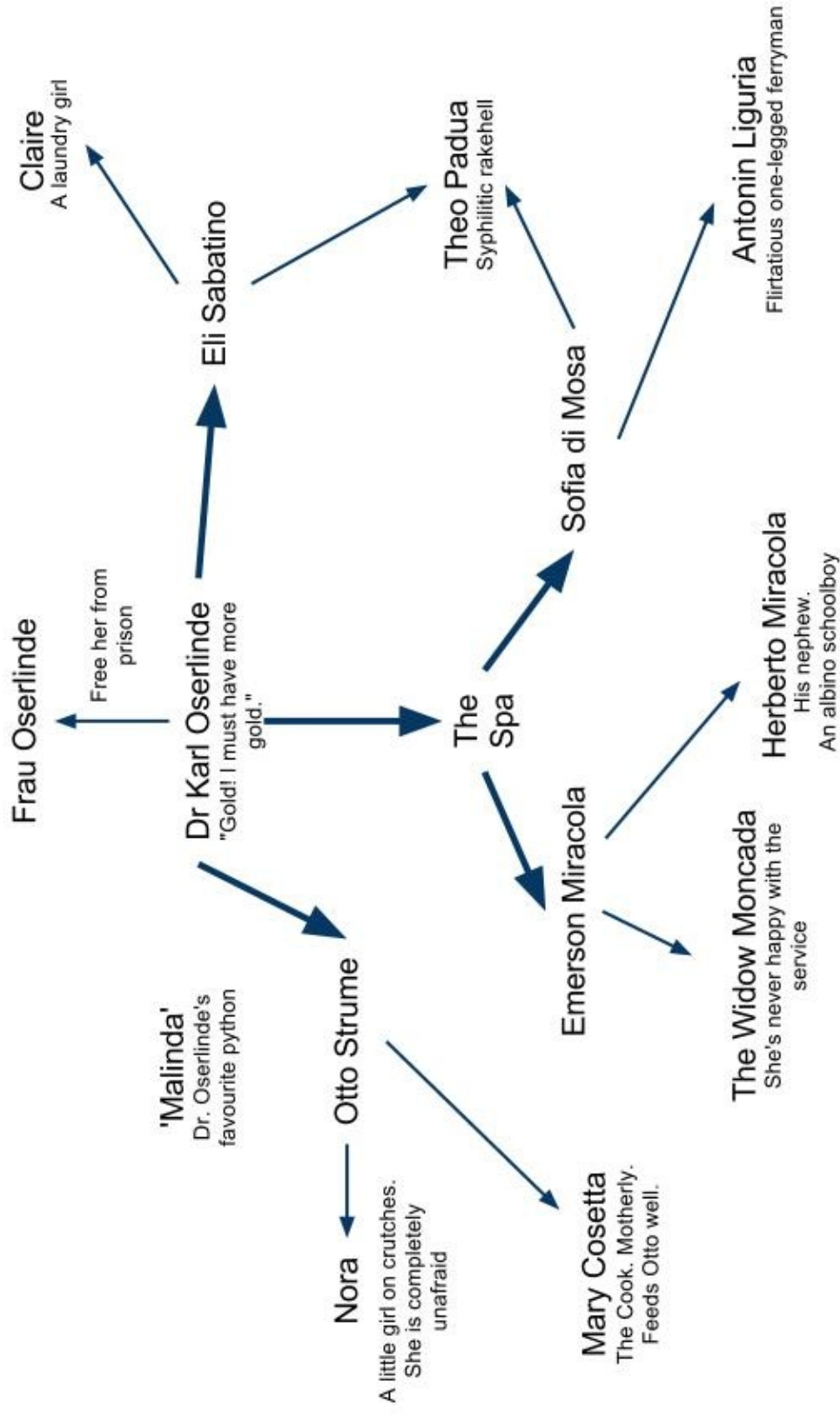


Give a copy of the relationship map on the next page to the four players to share. This relationship map lays out all of the minions' Connections and how they're related to either the minions or to Dr Oserlinde.



Keep a copy of this map for yourself, so you can note down who the Innocents are, and what the current Love scores are.

Set your timer to go off in ninety minutes.



STARTING THE STORY

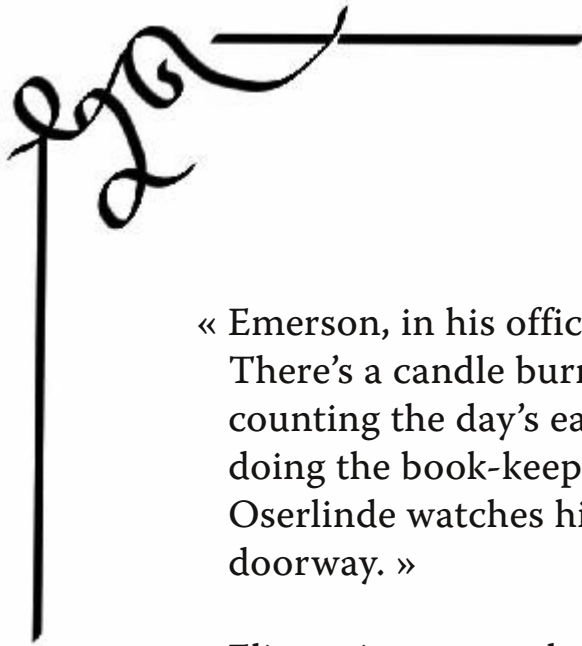
Start the game by asking each player to describe a photo of their character living on the island. This is a black and white photo from the 1880s.

Tell them this photo gives them an opportunity to dramatise what they see as the most interesting things about their minion, and to communicate that to the other players. If a player is unsure what to do, read them one or more of the following examples:



« Sofia, alone in her surgery, one sleeve rolled up over her beefy forearm and elbow. She's twisted some rope around her arm so a vein stands out, and she's just about to inject herself with a syringe full of morphine. »

« Otto, playing in a pit filled with snakes. He's deliriously happy. »



« Emerson, in his office late at night.
There's a candle burning low. He's
counting the day's earnings and
doing the book-keeping. Dr
Oserlinde watches him from the
doorway. »

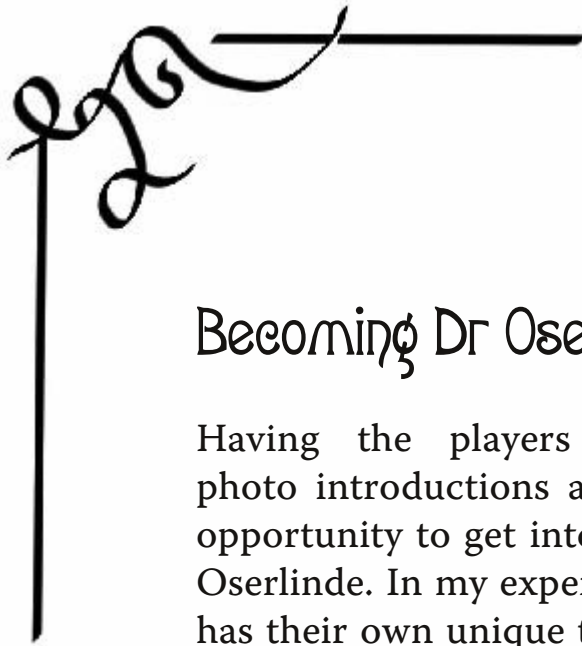
« Eli, staring out at the ocean from the
spa's rooftop. He's alone, depressed.
An unopened journal by his side. »



These photo intros are an opportunity
for people to start slipping into the
time-period and feel of the game. The
game ends with similar photos, so it's
also a nice way of creating a sense of
the story finishing for the players.

During these intros, note anything
you'd like to reincorporate. From the
above examples, Eli broods on the
rooftop; Dr Oserlinde doesn't trust
Emerson with money; Otto's snake pit;
and Sofia is physically powerful.



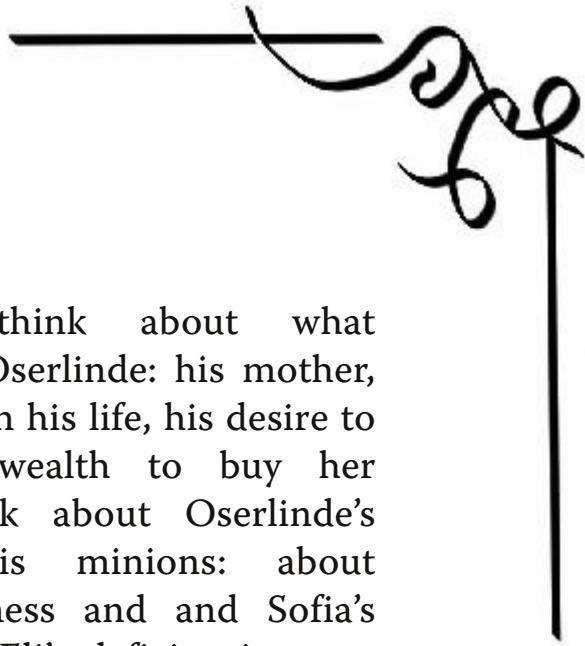


Becoming Dr Oserlinde

Having the players describe these photo introductions also gives you an opportunity to get into character as Dr Oserlinde. In my experience, every GM has their own unique take on being the Master. This is how I do it:

I start shifting my attitude from 'teaching the game' and 'being helpful' into being commanding, confident, and unhesitating.

I imagine what it would be like to be pale, Teutonic, and comfortable with snakes. Would I be snake-like, needing to feel the heat of a fire at all times to warm my blood (but avoiding the Mediterranean sun)? Would I be clinical, or observe people the way a predator would?

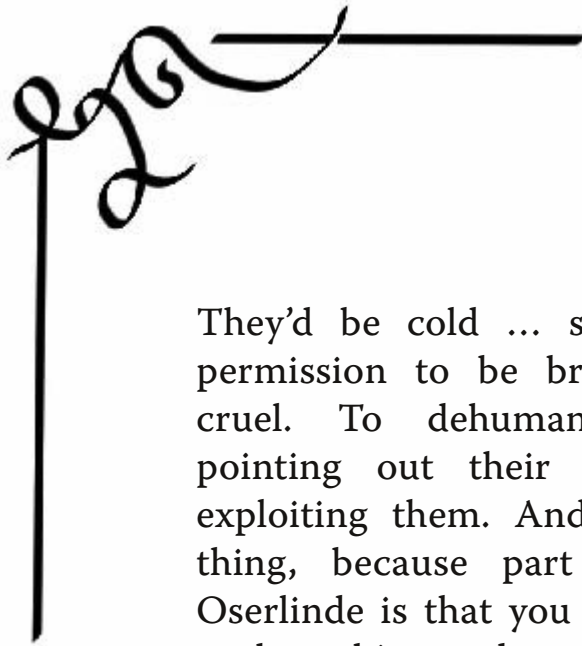


I begin to think about what preoccupies Dr Oserlinde: his mother, her interference in his life, his desire to amass enough wealth to buy her freedom. I think about Oserlinde's opinions of his minions: about Emerson's weakness and Sofia's addiction, about Eli's deficiencies as a man and Otto's deficiencies as a human (as well as his usefulness as a whipping boy).

Essentially, Oserlinde is surrounded by weaklings who will drag him down if he doesn't constantly monitor, bully, and micro-manage them into helping him achieve his goals.

What sort of person thinks like that?

They'd be imperious ... so I straighten my posture, and adopt high-status body language (becoming still, maintaining eye contact, spreading my arms across the table).



They'd be cold ... so I give myself permission to be brutal, direct and cruel. To dehumanise people by pointing out their weaknesses and exploiting them. And this is a good thing, because part of playing Dr Oserlinde is that you want the players to hate him and see him destroyed.

The central trait I adopt as Master is to be in charge of this group of players. I'll refuse to be interrupted or talked over by anyone. If I have to stand up and shout in order to dominate a conversation, I'll do it.

I use my scarf when portraying Dr Oserlinde. I wear it when he's in a scene; touch it to indicate he's aware of what's going on. It subtly signals when Dr Oserlinde is present, either physically or psychologically. I don't explain why I'm doing this; I let the players infer it as the game goes on.

THE FIRST ROUND OF SCENES

Eli

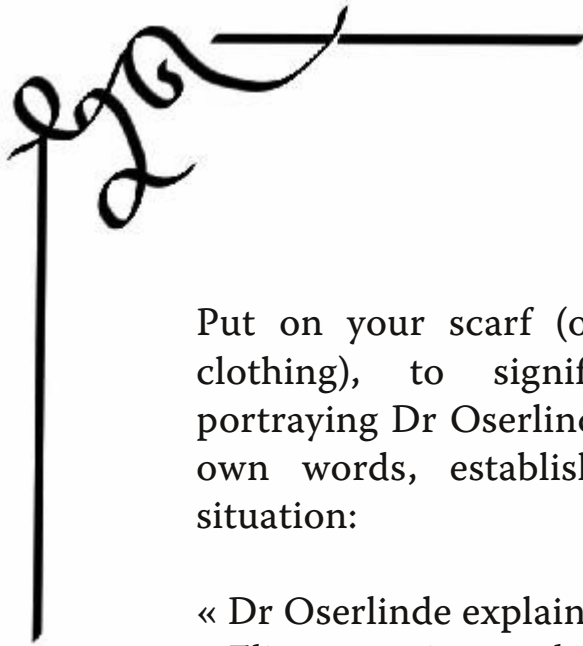
Begin the game with a scene of Dr Oserlinde talking with Eli, his biographer, discussing the next steps Dr Oserlinde wishes Eli to take with the writing.

« Dr Oserlinde has summoned Eli, using a system of pipes spread throughout the spa that Dr Oserlinde can speak (and listen) through. »

Choose a location for this conversation to take place. Possible locations include:

« Dr Oserlinde's study (which is filled with evidence of his mother, such as oil paintings of her and hundreds of her letters) »

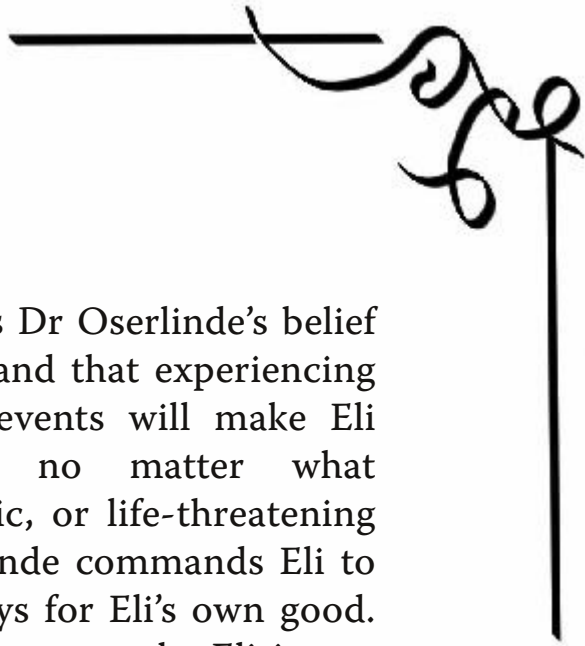
« A balcony at the spa that overlooks the town and ocean. »



Put on your scarf (or other item of clothing), to signify that you're portraying Dr Oserlinde. Then, in your own words, establish the following situation:

« Dr Oserlinde explains that he wants Eli to experience what he (Dr Oserlinde) has been through. He's released his favourite African Rock Python (Malinda) into the woods, to be captured single-handedly. Dr Oserlinde informs Eli that in order to survive and triumph, he will have to 'out-think' the snake. »

« Dr Oserlinde believes that in order for his biography to truly capture his genius, Eli will have to experience every formative event in Dr Oserlinde's life. You could say Dr Oserlinde is a believer in 'method writing'. »

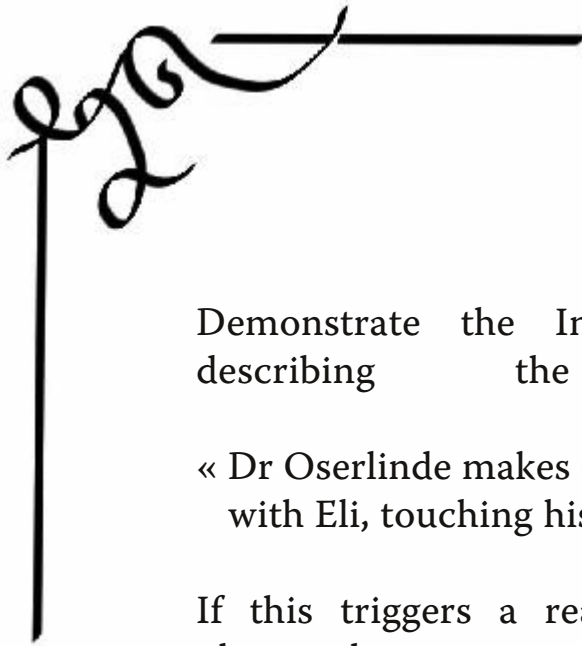


Underlying this is Dr Oserlinde's belief that Eli is weak, and that experiencing these formative events will make Eli stronger. Thus, no matter what degrading, horrific, or life-threatening actions Dr Oserlinde commands Eli to do, they are always for Eli's own good. Dr Oserlinde wants to make Eli into a better, stronger man.

To make him more like Oserlinde.

Play out the conversation between Dr Oserlinde and Eli. Your aim is to make Dr Oserlinde's theory of method writing and his request seem completely reasonable. Do your best to demolish any counter-arguments from Eli.

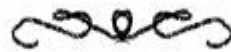
Explain (through playing out the scene) what the Intimacy, Desperation, and Sincerity dice are.



Demonstrate the Intimacy die by describing the following:

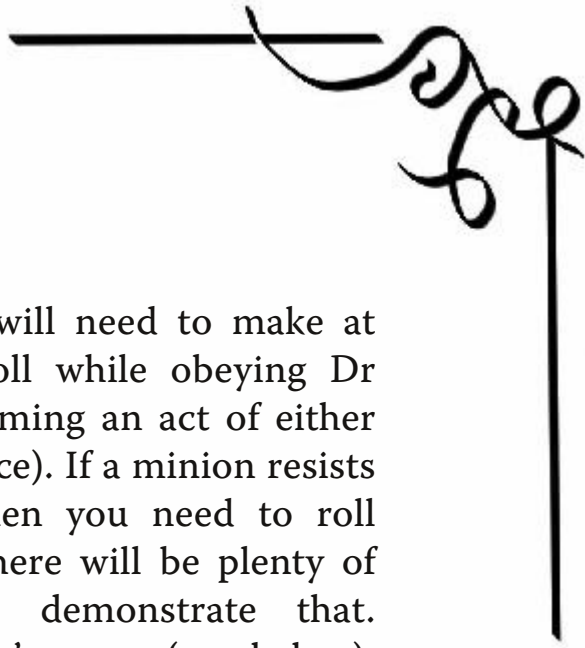
« Dr Oserlinde makes close contact with Eli, touching his shoulder. »

If this triggers a reaction from the player about not wanting to touch people with his bare hands, give Eli's player the Desperation die.



TRIGGERING A CONFLICT

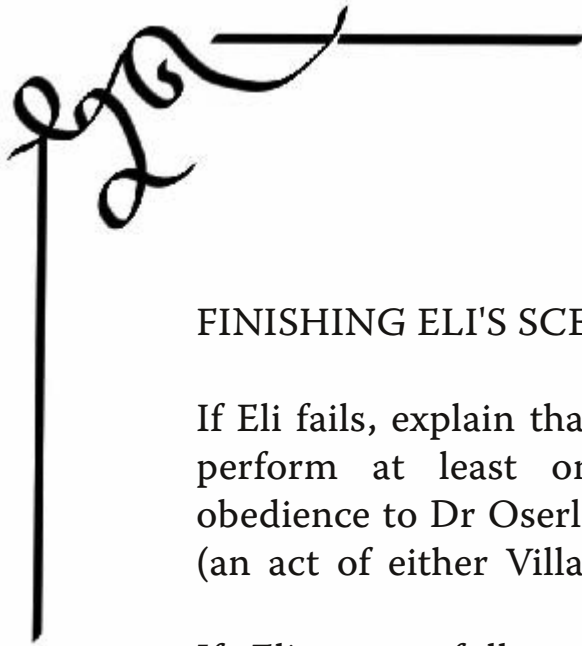
You should expect Eli's player to make some noises about his aversion to being able to touch anything. However, if they're just statements rather than a serious argument, or if Eli agrees to Dr Oserlinde's command to recapture Malinda, then Eli has accepted the command.



Explain that Eli will need to make at least one dice roll while obeying Dr Oserlinde (performing an act of either Villainy or Violence). If a minion resists the command then you need to roll some dice, but there will be plenty of opportunities to demonstrate that. Then cut to Sofia's scene (see below).

If you sense strong resistance from Eli, or if he directly refuses to obey Dr Oserlinde, then tell Eli's player they'll need to roll to resist Dr Oserlinde's command. Consult the sheet of formulae to see what this entails.

Explain that Dr Oserlinde never rolls dice. Make another player roll dice for you. Discard all 4s (except for the 4s on bonus dice). Total the remaining dice in each pool (count the full value of a bonus die). Ties mean the conflict was interrupted in some way.



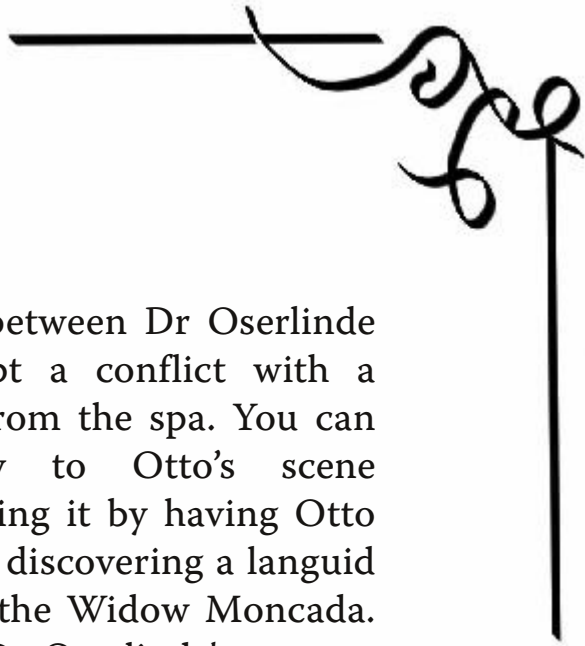
FINISHING ELI'S SCENE

If Eli fails, explain that Eli will need to perform at least one dice roll in obedience to Dr Oserlinde's commands (an act of either Villainy or Violence).

If Eli successfully resists, portray a moment of Dr Oserlinde's rage and frustration then cut away to Sofia's scene (below). Promise Eli's player that you'll come back to them soon and give them the opportunity to start a scene for Eli, describing what he is doing.

At this point, you can explain to the players that this scene lays out the basic dynamic of the game. Dr Oserlinde gives commands; the minion can agree or resist. If you resist successfully and have enough Love, it triggers the end of the game.

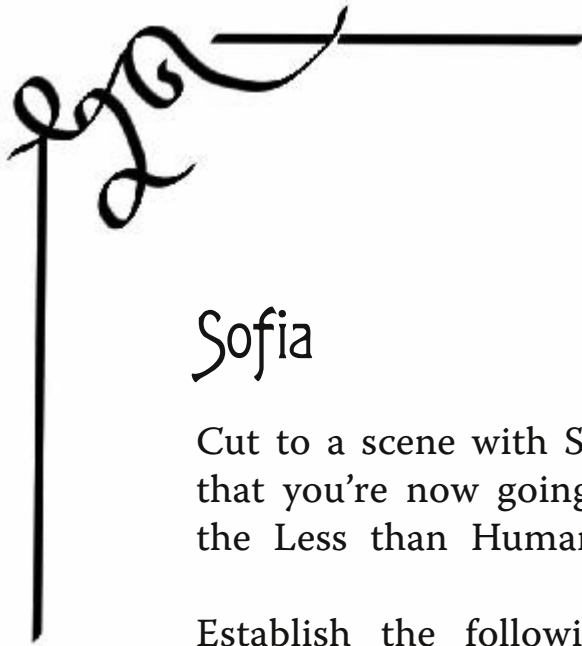




If there is a tie between Dr Oserlinde and Eli, interrupt a conflict with a scream coming from the spa. You can cut immediately to Otto's scene (below), introducing it by having Otto and Dr Oserlinde discovering a languid snake resting on the Widow Moncada. This will justify Dr Oserlinde's request for Otto to exercise the snakes.

Eli can get a scene of his own (perhaps an Overture) before Dr Oserlinde's attention returns to him. And remember that Malinda is still out there, hunting. Feel free to bring her into other scenes—hunting Emerson's nephew, Herberto, for instance.





Sofia

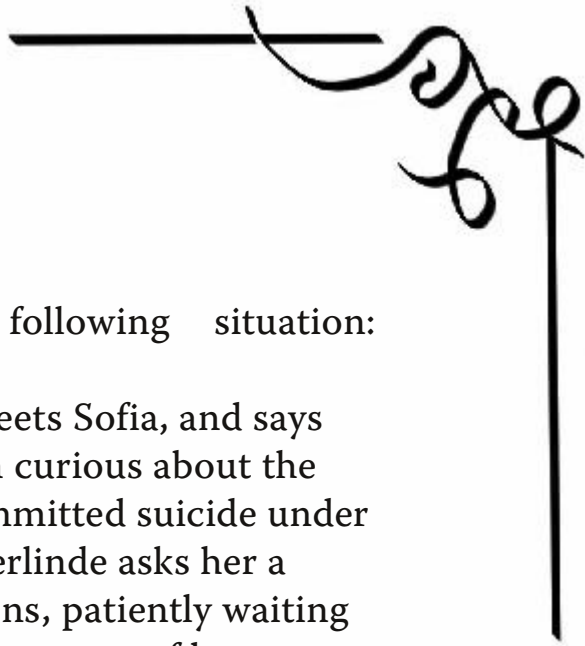
Cut to a scene with Sofia, and explain that you're now going to demonstrate the Less than Human.

Establish the following situation, in your own words:

« Sofia is waking up, in bed. Her cat is hungry; Sophia needs to pee. The morphine is in the other room (so there's no way she can get out of bed, due to her Less than Human). »

Dwell on Sofia's helplessness for a moment, until everyone at the table feels the emotional impact of it. Ask the player to describe Sofia's simple quarters.

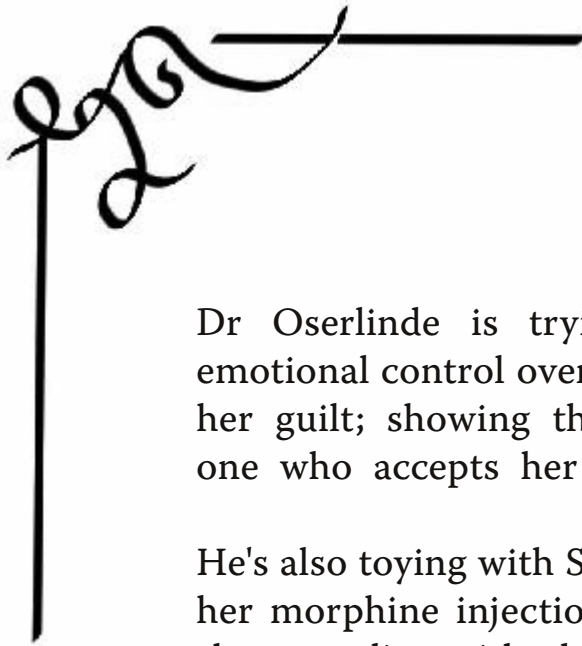
Then describe how Dr Oserlinde enters, in a way that feels right to you.



Play out the following situation:

« Dr Oserlinde greets Sofia, and says he's always been curious about the patient who committed suicide under her care. Dr Oserlinde asks her a series of questions, patiently waiting to draw the answers out of her ... »

- How did Sofia feel when she discovered what the patient had done?
- Did she discover the body?
- Did she feel responsible? Did she regret any of the decisions she'd made?
- How did she feel about losing her license to practice? About losing the respect of her community? About how her family disowned her?



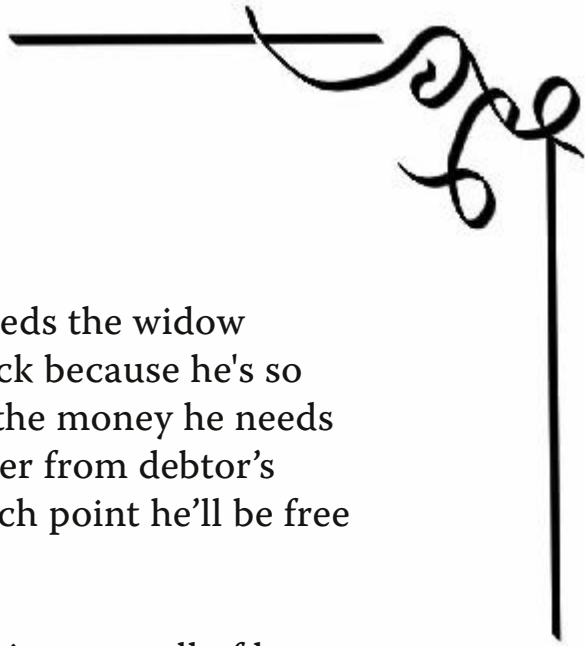
Dr Oserlinde is trying to establish emotional control over Sofia: triggering her guilt; showing that he's the only one who accepts her despite her sin.

He's also toying with Sofia, withholding her morphine injection from her until she complies with the command he's about to give.

« Hint that Oserlinde may have moved the morphine away from her while she was sleeping. Describe Sofia's bladder becoming painfully full as they talk. »

Establish the following:

« Dr Oserlinde orders Sofia to give a triple dose of the injection to the widow Moncada. She's so strong-willed; Dr Oserlinde is getting desperate: Moncada's mind refuses to break under the venom's influence. »



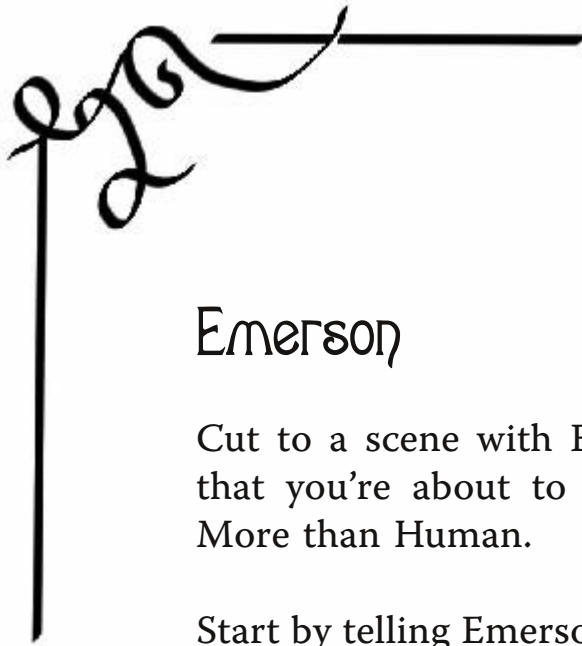
« Dr Oserlinde needs the widow Moncada to crack because he's so close to having the money he needs to free his mother from debtor's prison ... at which point he'll be free of her forever. »

« Moncada must sign over all of her wealth to him. »

Once Sofia agrees to Dr Oserlinde's request or rolls to resist him, move on to Emerson's scene.



In the event of a tie, interrupt the conflict with a letter arriving from Dr Oserlinde's mother. This causes him to rant and rave about Frau Oserlinde's constant interference in his life. Still ranting, Oserlinde can leave Sofia's room—in the process he absently dropping the morphine which rolls towards Sofia's grasp.



Emerson

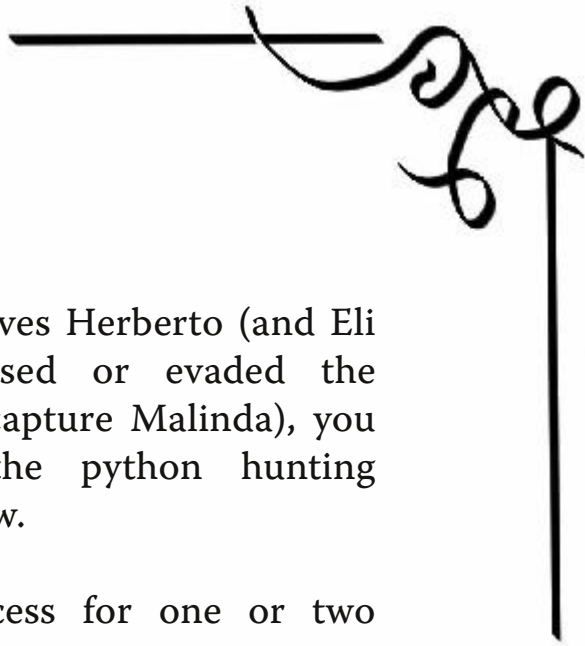
Cut to a scene with Emerson. Explain that you're about to demonstrate the More than Human.

Start by telling Emerson that he's in the middle of projecting his consciousness outside his body.

Ask Emerson's player who Emerson wants to observe. Take notes about who he chooses: you'll want to focus on these characters later as the player's obviously interested in them.

Spend a few moments describing what's happening to the person Emerson's chosen. Then describe the astral wind moving Emerson on.





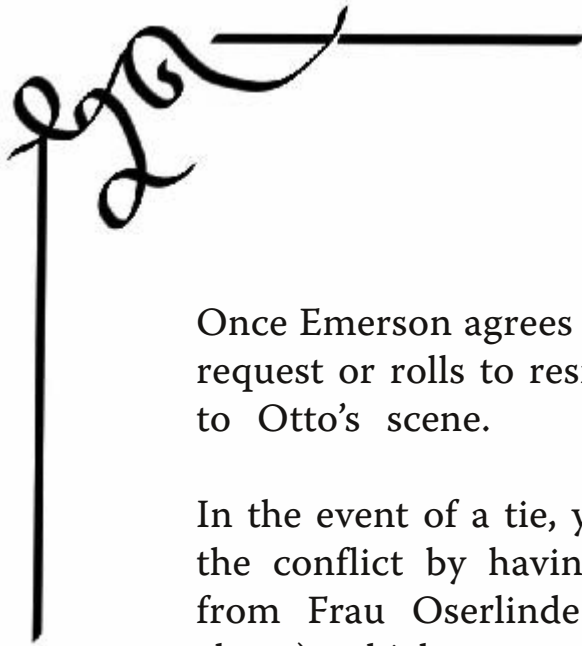
If Emerson observes Herberto (and Eli successfully refused or evaded the command to re-capture Malinda), you could narrate the python hunting Emerson's nephew.

Repeat this process for one or two more characters.

Describe Emerson snapping out of his astral projection, and finding himself in his office at Naja Spa.

Give Emerson the opportunity to make an Overture: ask him if there's anyone he would like to talk to ... but interrupt Emerson's attempt to make an Overture by having Dr Oserlinde arrive.

« Oserlinde is in a hurry and give Emerson an order: Bring the widow Moncada to Sofia at the injection room. »

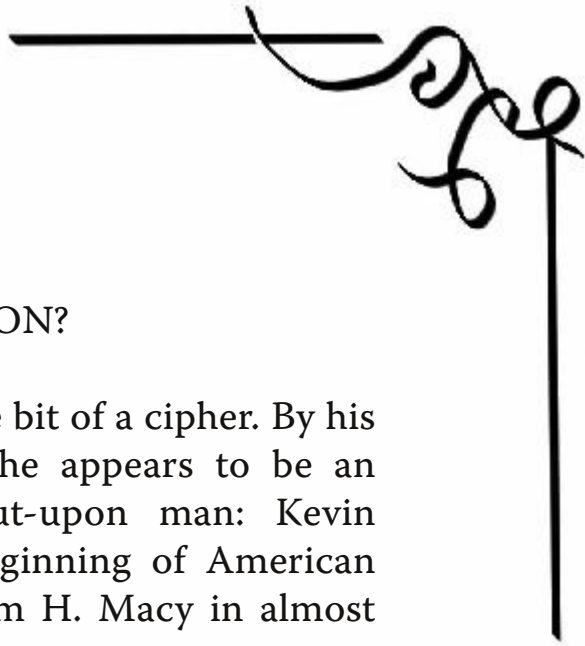


Once Emerson agrees to Dr Oserlinde's request or rolls to resist him, move on to Otto's scene.

In the event of a tie, you can interrupt the conflict by having a letter arrive from Frau Oserlinde (as with Sofia, above), which causes him to rant and rave about his mother's constant interference in his life, before leaving Emerson.

Alternatively, you can interrupt the conflict with a scream coming from the spa and **cut immediately to Otto's scene** (below), introducing it by having Otto and Dr Oserlinde discovering a languid snake resting on the Widow Moncada. This will justify Dr Oserlinde's request for Otto to exercise the snakes.



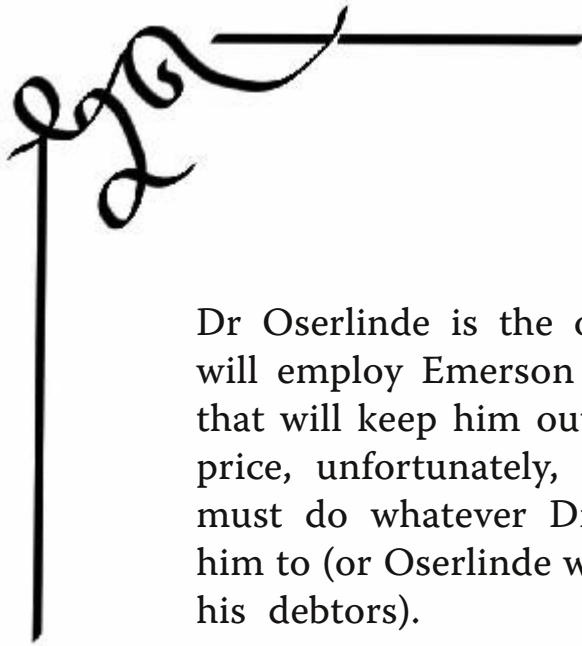


WHO IS EMERSON?

Emerson is a little bit of a cipher. By his character sheet, he appears to be an ordinary and put-upon man: Kevin Spacey at the beginning of *American Beauty*, or William H. Macy in almost any of his films.

What drives Emerson, and what causes him to be under Dr Oserlinde's thrall is undefined. If Emerson's player has some ideas, follow them.

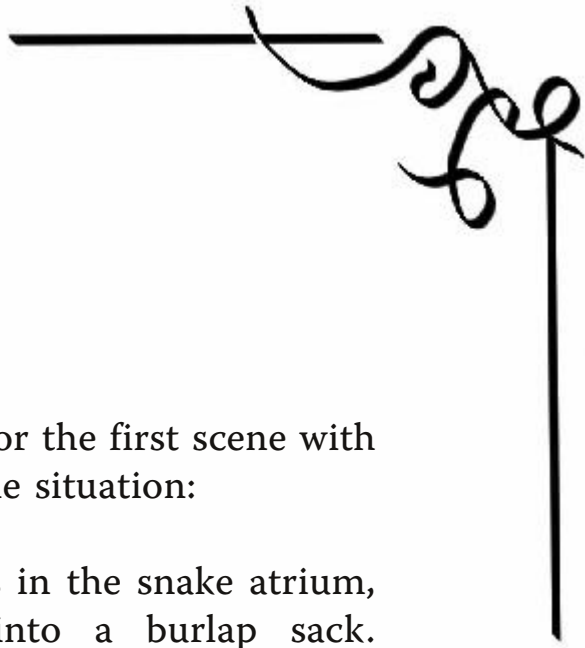
Alternatively, draw from the sketchy information on Emerson's character sheet. Based on his *Less than Human* ('Cannot pass up a game of chance, except with rich opponents'), you can assume that Emerson is a terrible gambler who loses money constantly. This is information that everyone on the island knows, so they are constantly asking him to gamble with them.



Dr Oserlinde is the only person who will employ Emerson at a rate of pay that will keep him out of poverty. The price, unfortunately, is that Emerson must do whatever Dr Oserlinde asks him to (or Oserlinde will expose him to his debtors).

This places an interesting tension on Dr Oserlinde, who wants to use all of his gold to pay off his mother's debtors, but who finds Emerson extremely useful. As a result, Dr Oserlinde will often sublimate his anger towards his mother into anger towards Emerson: in fits of rage, he may even refer to Emerson as 'mother'.

Incidentally, if Emerson is ever involved in a game of chance assume he loses unless he performs an act of Villainy to cheat. And if he fails in that Villainy, expose him to the full wrath of the townsfolk he has cheated.



Otto

Finally, it's time for the first scene with Otto. Establish the situation:

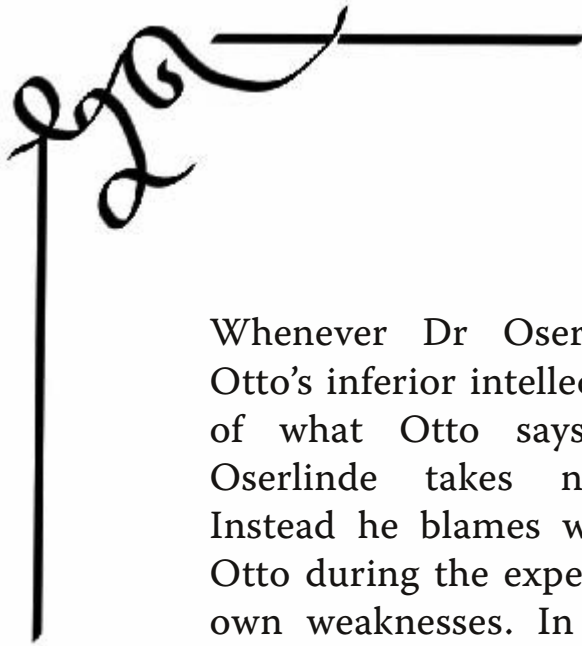
« Dr Oserlinde is in the snake atrium, tossing snakes into a burlap sack. When Otto enters, it's obvious that Dr Oserlinde has been waiting impatiently for him to arrive. »

A NOTE ON HOW TO TREAT OTTO

Otto is described as one of Oserlinde's failed experiments. In other words, Otto's very existence continually reminds Dr Oserlinde of his failures.

As a consequence, when you're playing Dr Oserlinde make sure to treat Otto particularly brutally.



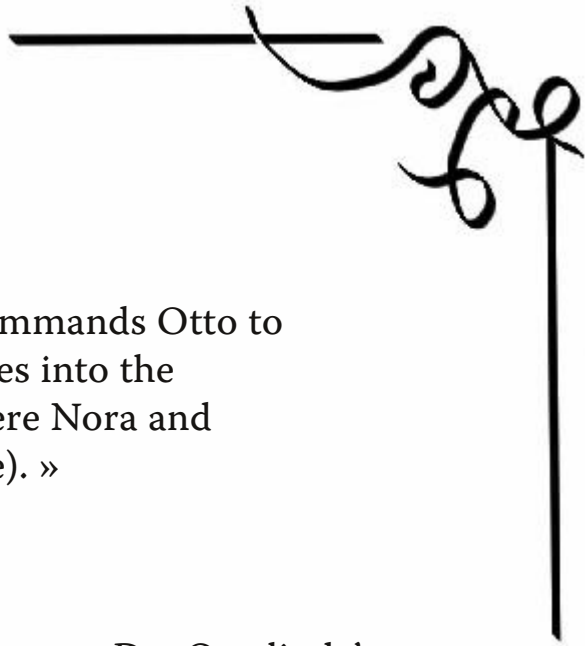


Whenever Dr Oserlinde brings up Otto's inferior intellect or the stupidity of what Otto says and does, Dr Oserlinde takes no responsibility. Instead he blames what happened to Otto during the experiments on Otto's own weaknesses. In rants like these, using offensive words like 'retardation', and 'mongolism' can help portray Dr Oserlinde as a loathsome bastard.

CONTINUING OTTO'S SCENE

« Dr Oserlinde asks Otto to help him collect the snakes into the sack. As they work together, he corrects Otto brutally on his technique. »

« "Venom production has stalled," says Dr Oserlinde. The reason is because the snakes are lethargic. "They're depressed. It's the captivity. They need to hunt." »



« Dr Oserlinde commands Otto to
release the snakes into the
schoolyard (where Nora and
Herberto will be). »

Once Otto agrees to Dr Oserlinde's
request or rolls to resist him, move into
the second round of scenes (see the
next page).

In the event of a tie, you can interrupt
the conflict by having a letter arrive
from Frau Oserlinde (as with Sofia,
above), which causes him to rant and
rave about his mother's constant
interference in his life, before leaving.

Alternatively, you could introduce
Theo Padula, the syphilitic rakehell,
drunkenly singing through the halls of
the spa, disturbing the other patrons.
Dr Oserlinde will leave to put a stop to
that revelry.

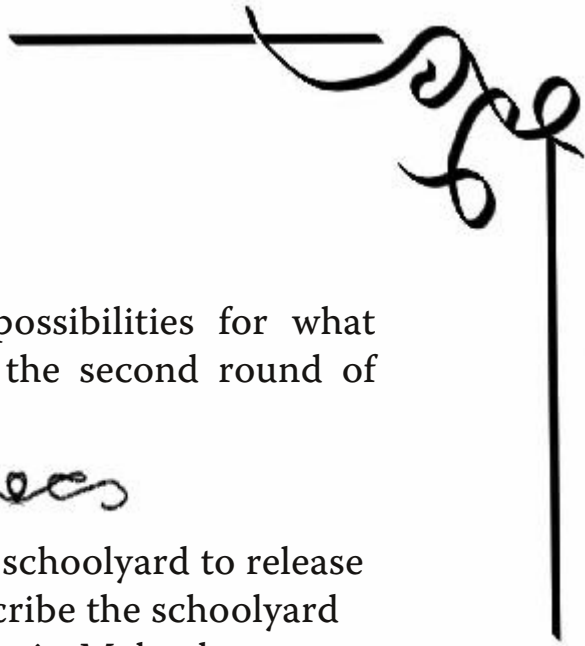
THE SECOND ROUND OF SCENES

In the second round of scenes, start with a scene for each minion who has not resisted Dr Oserlinde's commands. The next three pages have suggested scenes for what happens next to them. Remember: these minions must make at least one dice roll to fulfill Dr Oserlinde's commands.

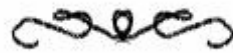
Then play out scenes for minions who successfully resisted or rolled a tie while resisting Dr Oserlinde's commands. When those minions are establishing their scenes, they're free to determine what they do next. Help by doing the following:

- Ask what they do & where they go
- Introduce the minion's Connections
- Describe the consequences of the other minions' actions in the background (if applicable)

These techniques will be expanded on in the 'Subsequent Scenes' section.

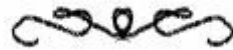


Here are some possibilities for what could happen in the second round of scenes.

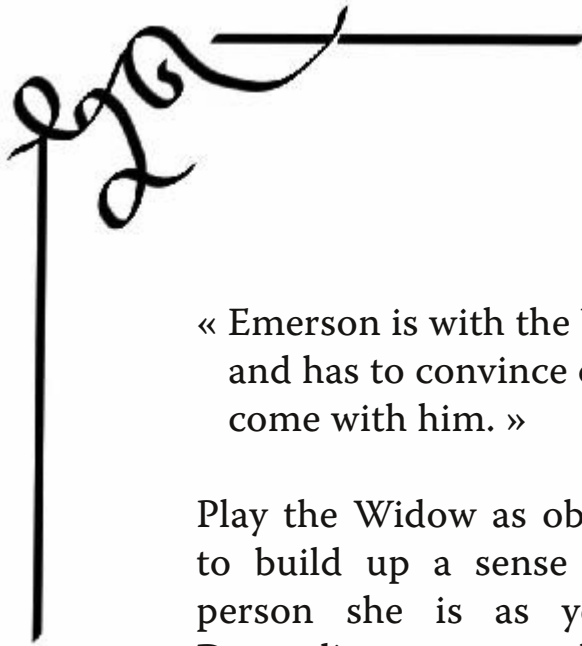


«Otto goes to the schoolyard to release the snakes. Describe the schoolyard and the people in it. Make the location vivid. Ask Otto questions about how he's executing his plan. »

Based on what Otto does, decide whether his dice roll to try and fulfill Dr Oserlinde's commands should be for violence or villainy.



« Eli is in the jungle. Play up his phobia about dirt. Play up being hunted by Malinda the python. Again, make a dice roll for violence or villainy, based on what Eli does during the scene. »

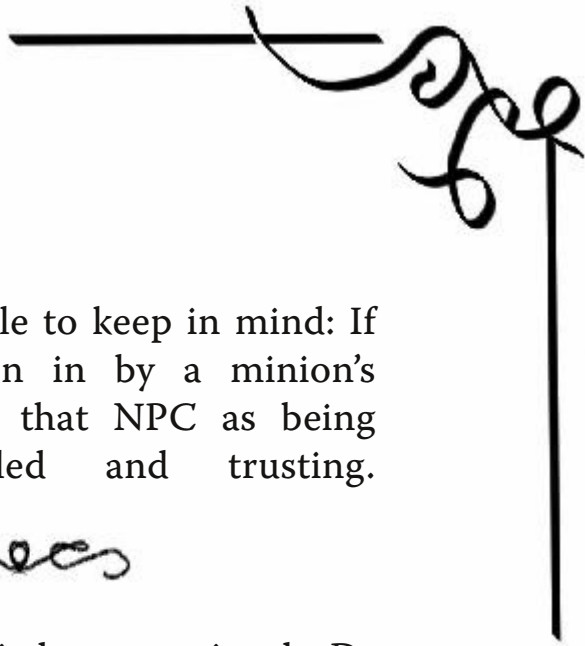


« Emerson is with the Widow Moncada and has to convince or force her to come with him. »

Play the Widow as obstructive and try to build up a sense of what sort of person she is as you portray her. Depending on how Emerson approaches the scene, he may also roll for an Overture as well as having to roll at least once to fulfill Dr Oserlinde's command.

Based on how Emerson's scene plays out, either:

- cut to Sofia injecting the Widow Moncada (and possibly interacting with Emerson), or
- give Sofia an Overture opportunity while she's waiting for the Widow Moncada to arrive, followed by the need to find the Widow herself.

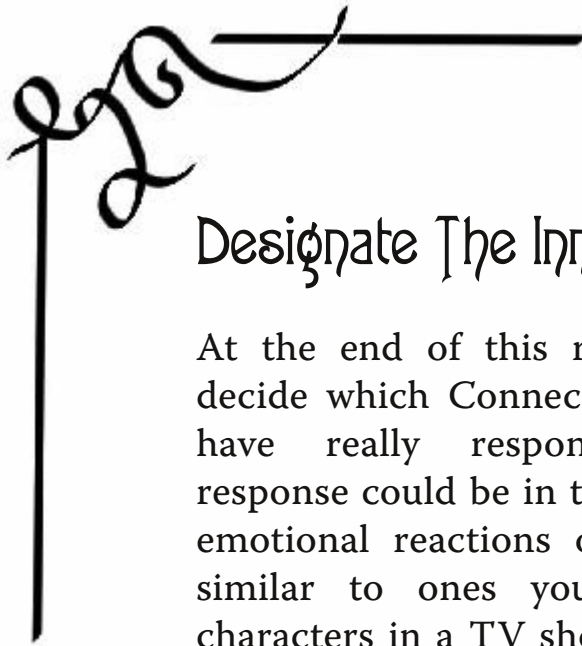


A general principle to keep in mind: If an NPC is taken in by a minion's Villainy, play up that NPC as being completely fooled and trusting.



Minions who tied or resisted Dr Oserlinde's commands have the opportunity to have an Overture scene.





Designate The Innocents

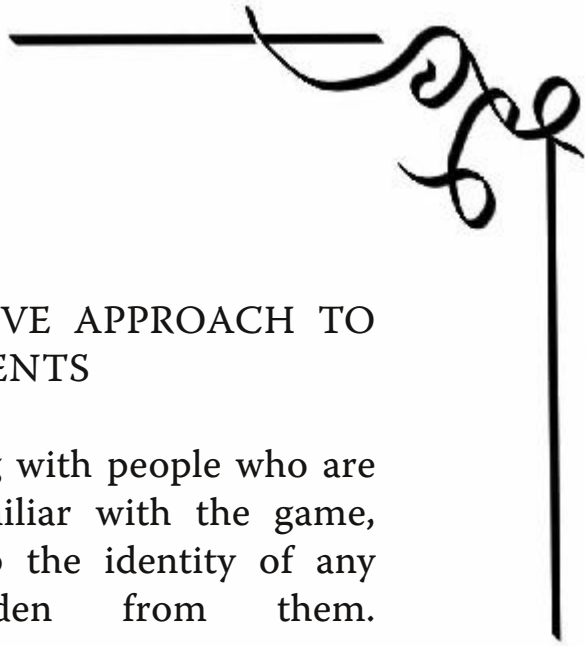
At the end of this round of scenes, decide which Connections the players have really responded to. That response could be in the form of warm emotional reactions or by comments similar to ones you'd make about characters in a TV show you hope will realise they're good for each other.

Designate these Connections as 'Innocents'. Tell the players whenever these Innocents are in a scene the level of Reason will increase by one.

Telling your players who the Innocent(s) are and the effect they have allows players unfamiliar with the system to make informed choices.

Remember: If using this increased Reason in a conflict or overture roll creates a dice pool with no dice (or a negative amount of dice), that side of the conflict rolls a single die.





AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO USING INNOCENTS

If you are playing with people who are already very familiar with the game, feel free to keep the identity of any Innocents hidden from them.

When Paul Czege runs the game, he does not say that an Innocent is now in play. Instead, he waits for the players to have a scene with the Innocent and lets them figure it out themselves by using a different level of Reason for the die rolls.

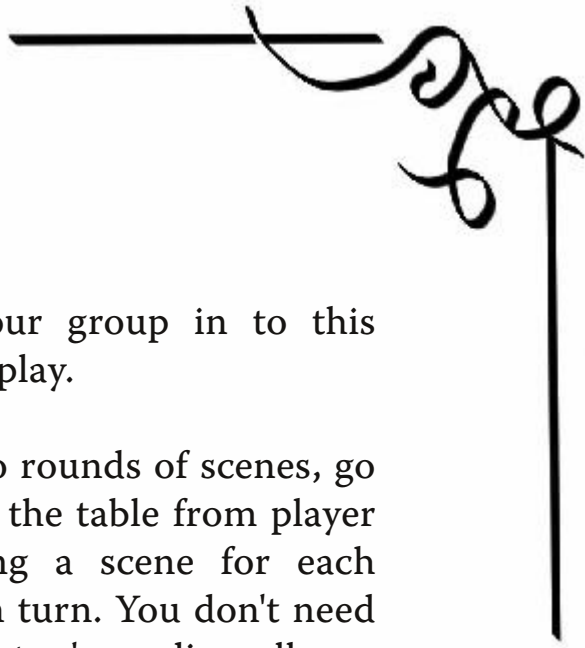
Paul finds this has occasionally created fun confusion when more than one NPC is in the scene, and players guess wrongly about who the Innocent is.

2 SUBSEQUENT SCENES

Here's how Paul describes his vision for how to play My Life with Master:

"When I designed My Life with Master my play style was characterized by fluid scenes involving multiple player characters, a natural enjoyment of roleplay and dialogue without any particular hurry to use the resolution mechanics, and no particular concern for equitable apportionment of screen time.

"To my great frustration, it has subsequently become characterized by formalized stakes-setting, abrupt usage of resolution mechanics, and narration at the expense of roleplay. My Life with Master doesn't have three types of scenes. It has an infinite variety of types of scenes on top of five formulas for conflict resolution."

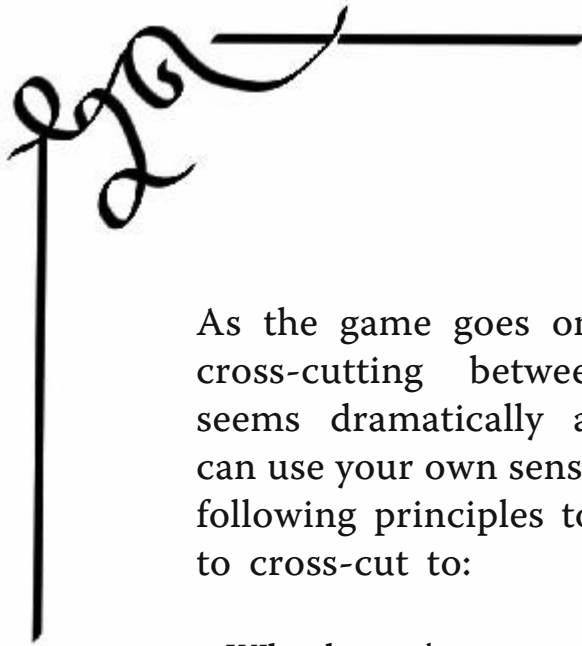


You can ease your group in to this preferred style of play.

After the first two rounds of scenes, go clockwise around the table from player to player, framing a scene for each player's minion in turn. You don't need to limit yourself to 'one die roll per scene', but try to end the current minion's scene on a cliff-hanger or unfinished action. If dice are rolled, use the moment after they hit the table to cut to the next minion's scene.

For instance, Otto is off to kidnap Theo. But pre-kidnapping, Otto makes an Overture to Theo. You can roll for the outcome of that and then continue.

After every conflict, check if Self-Loathing has become greater than Love plus Reason. If so, keep Self-Loathing at its previous level and trigger a Horror Revealed (see below) instead of playing the minion's next scene.



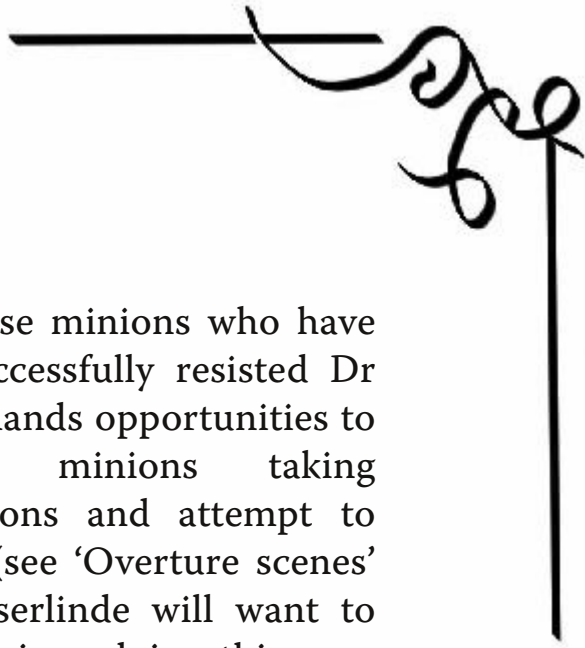
As the game goes on you can begin cross-cutting between minions as seems dramatically appropriate. You can use your own sense of drama or the following principles to determine who to cross-cut to:

- Who haven't you seen for a while?
- Who are you interested in right now?
- What part of the story do you need to understand how things turn out in, before the game can move forward?

Goals, desires, and new commands should naturally emerge as the situation unfolds but if in doubt refer to [the list of tasks](#) in the Appendices.

Dr Oserlinde will want to know about the results of his commands: he will check in on and observe minions at random intervals.





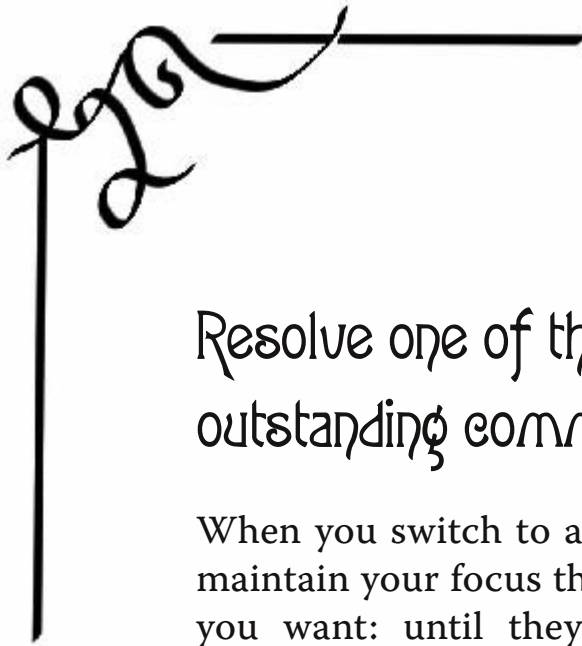
Give players whose minions who have completed or successfully resisted Dr Oserlinde's commands opportunities to describe their minions taking independent actions and attempt to make Overtures (see 'Overture scenes' for ideas). Dr Oserlinde will want to interfere with minions doing this.

If you're in doubt about what to do next, select something from this list:

- Resolve an incomplete command
- Present consequences for the minions' actions and decisions
- Intertwine and escalate situations
- Start a scene between minions
- Have Dr Oserlinde check in or issue a problematic command
- Show how the town has changed
- Trigger a 'Less than Human'
- Offer an Overture opportunity.

The following sections provide examples of each of these options.



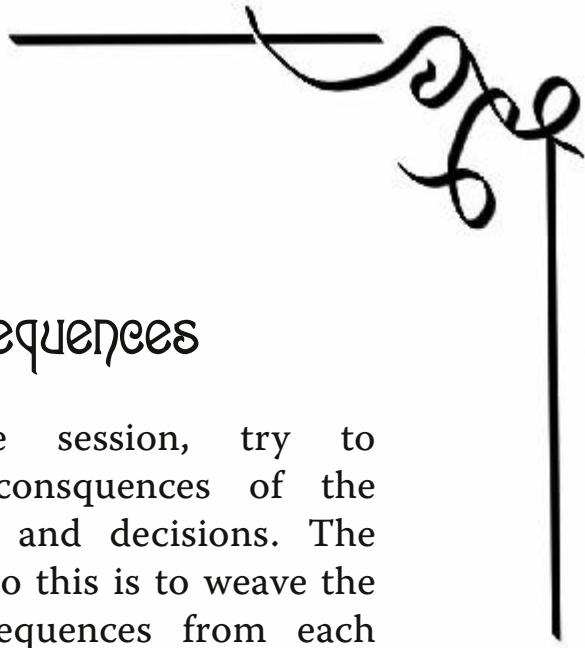


Resolve one of the minions' outstanding commands

When you switch to a minion, you can maintain your focus them for as long as you want: until they've achieved (or abandoned) their mission, until it feels right to cut to another minion, or until other players either inject their minions into the scene to interfere or begin asking for scenes of their own.

Feel free to keep the focus on a minion even after they've fulfilled a command (or reported back about their lack of success) by having Dr Oserlinde issue them another command.



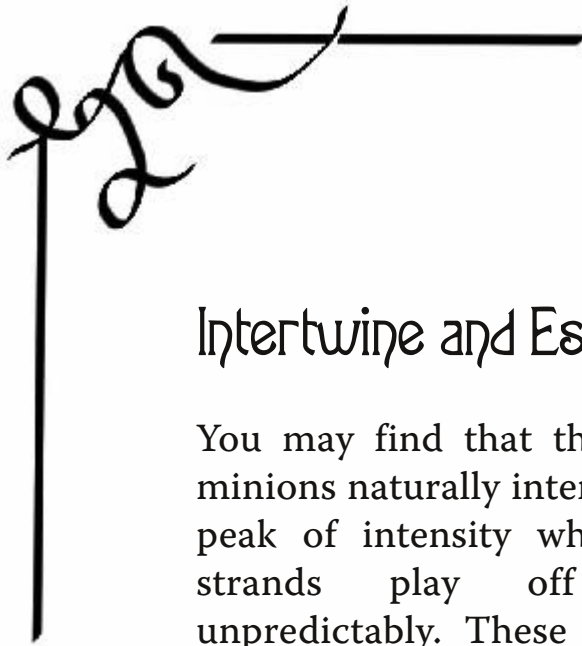


Present consequences

Throughout the session, try to dramatise the consequences of the minions' actions and decisions. The simplest way to do this is to weave the NPCs and consequences from each minion's scene into other minions' scenes.

Think about what the other minions have just done and how the townsfolk and connections would react to it. Choose one thing that the current minion would see that reflects these reactions, and narrate that into the scene. Some simple examples would be to show a funeral procession after a murder, or a shop-owner being evicted after having their money stolen.

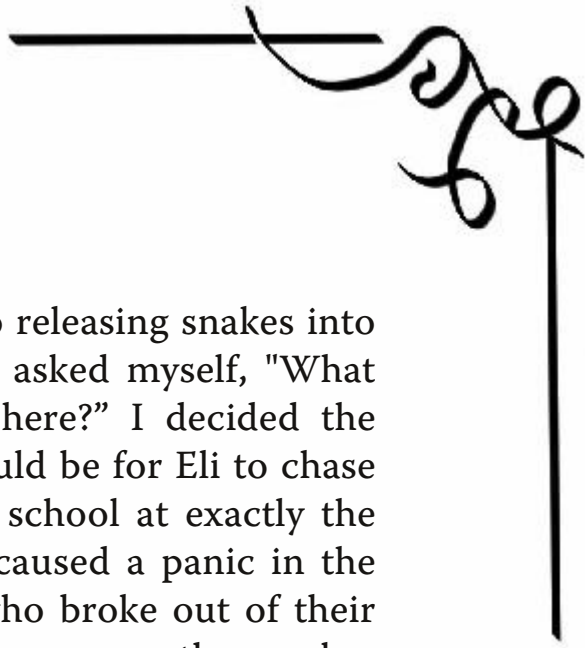




Intertwine and Escalate

You may find that the actions of the minions naturally intertwine to create a peak of intensity where several plot strands play off each other unpredictably. These scenes involving multiple minions can be some of the most fun of the game, and you should encourage them.

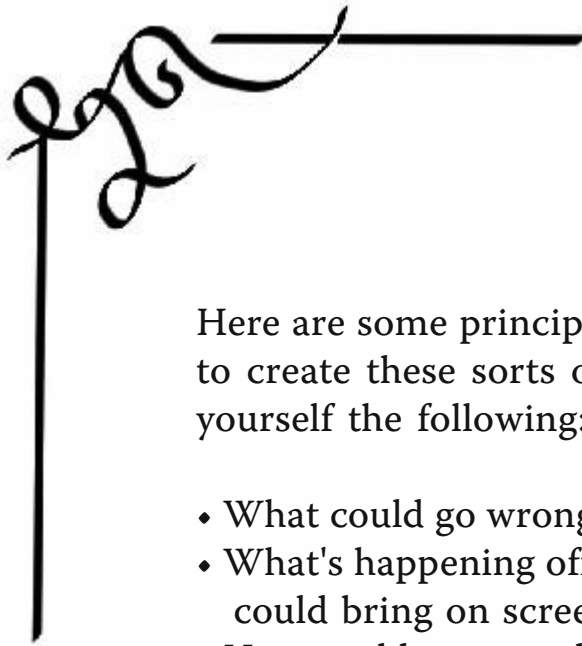
Here's an example from a game I ran: Eli went hunting for Malinda the python but failed to capture her. At the same time, Emerson (following Dr Oserlinde's command) successfully burned Antonin's ferry down to the waterline. Having committed this act of arson, Emerson stole a bicycle to make good on his escape.



I then cut to Otto releasing snakes into the school, and I asked myself, "What could go wrong here?" I decided the obvious thing would be for Eli to chase Malinda into the school at exactly the same time. This caused a panic in the schoolchildren, who broke out of their classes trying to escape the snakes

"What's happening offscreen that this could affect?" I asked myself. I decided that this explosion of runaway children could catch Emerson and knock him off his bike.

At this point, rather than a series of individual scenes, we had created an interrelated situation - basically, an action sequence - that we could resolve. Eli and Otto were still trying to perform their commands; Emerson being knocked off his bike gave him an opportunity to have an Overture scene with his nephew, Herberto.

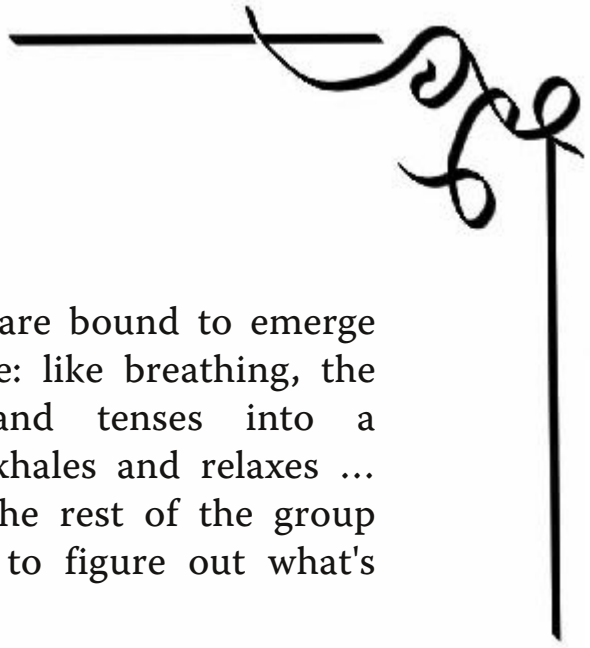


Here are some principles you can apply to create these sorts of situations. Ask yourself the following:

- What could go wrong here?
- What's happening offscreen you could bring on screen?
- How could you put the minions in conflict with each other?
- How you could weave an NPC from another minion's scene into this one?
- Has anything gone wrong for a minion that can spill over chaotically into this minion's life?

To resolve these situations, simply ask the minions involved what they do and ask them to make dice rolls as appropriate.

Let these situations emerge naturally and let them fade away naturally too. There's no need to artificially involve every single minion in every situation.

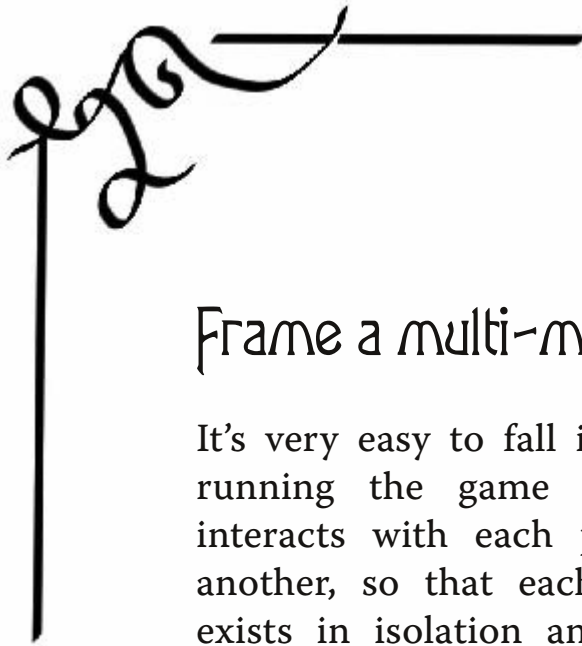


Other situations are bound to emerge later in the game: like breathing, the game inhales and tenses into a situation, then exhales and relaxes ... giving you and the rest of the group and opportunity to figure out what's happening now.

In a three hour session it would be reasonable to expect one (or, at most, two) of these situations to emerge.

After a situation has resolved, it would be polite to frame scenes with minions who were not involved in it (in order to give them some time in the spotlight).



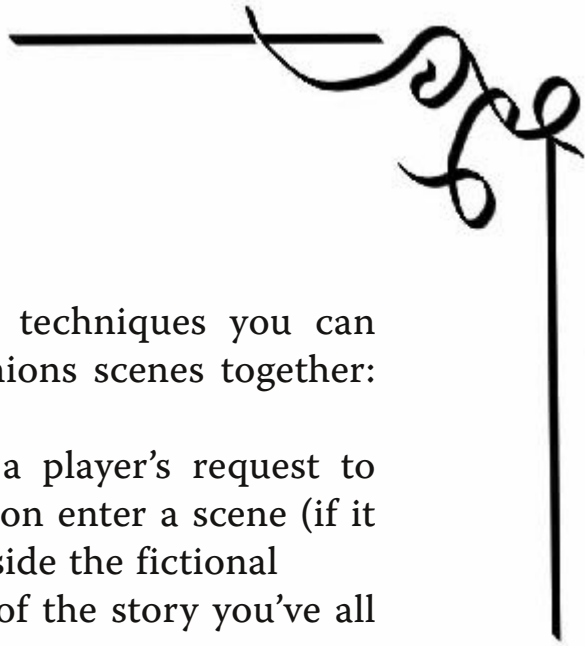


Frame a multi-minion scene

It's very easy to fall into a pattern of running the game where the GM interacts with each player one after another, so that each minion's story exists in isolation and their minions never meet. This means you miss out on opportunities to compare and contrast the minions' experiences of being under Dr Oserlinde's thrall.

Scenes between minions also give the players opportunities to have fun roleplaying in-character together, and they give you time to gather your thoughts and think about the next action or problem you want to contribute to the game.

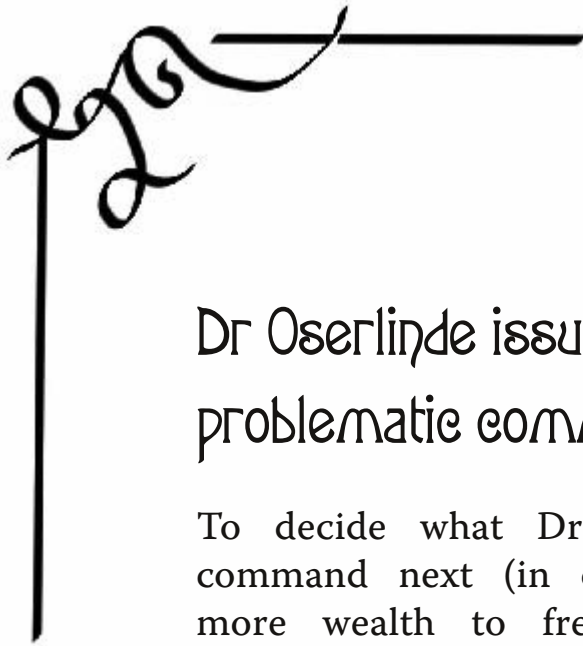




There are a few techniques you can apply to give minions scenes together:

- Always accept a player's request to have their minion enter a scene (if it makes sense inside the fictional circumstances of the story you've all established)
- Have two minions meet either en route to, during, or in the aftermath of executing one of Dr Oserlinde's commands
- Create a moment of calm: there are no orders from Oserlinde; no NPCs nearby to have Overtures with. Just the minions. Give them a few moments to themselves, and observe what do they do and how they are with each other.





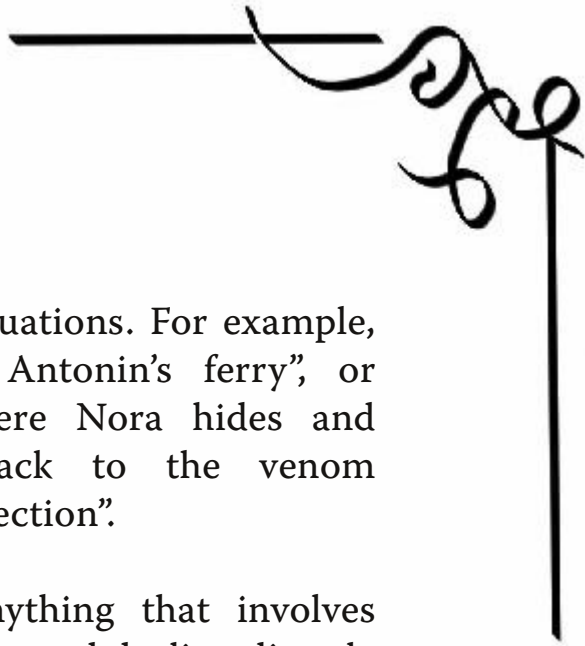
Dr Oserlinde issues a problematic command

To decide what Dr Oserlinde will command next (in order to obtain more wealth to free his mother), identify which Connection is currently carrying the most Love. Now decide how they are vital to helping Dr Oserlinde get Wealthy right now.

Threatening a Connection is an excellent way to maintain the interest of the other players at the table.

The following are the sorts of thematically appropriate tasks I'd expect to see each minion commanded to do:

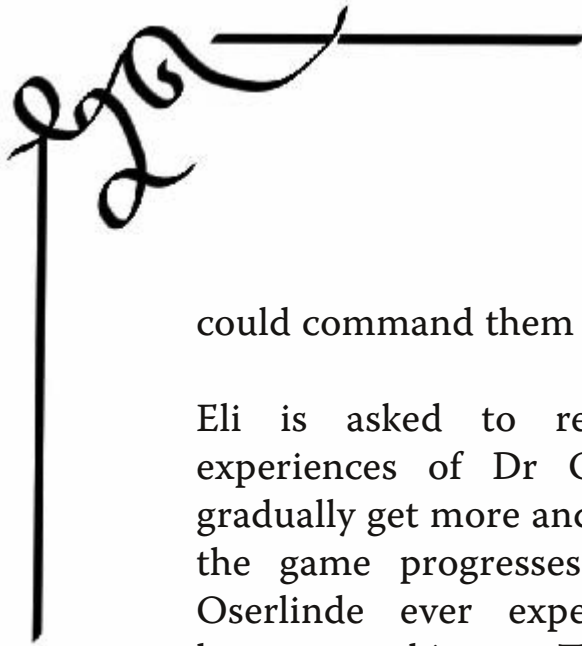
Emerson does all of Dr Oserlinde's other dirty work. He is extremely put upon and thrown into horrible,



compromising situations. For example, “Burning down Antonin’s ferry”, or “Discovering where Nora hides and bringing her back to the venom chambers for injection”.

Sofia handles anything that involves applying the serum and dealing directly with the patients. She is also excellent for restraining people. For example, “Restraining the Widow Moncada if she attempts to leave Naja Spa and returning her to Dr Oserlinde.” A more problematic command might be for Dr Oserlinde to tell Sofia that Clare is interfering with Eli’s development: Sofia needs to take her up to the bell tower and throw her off. Make it look like an accident.

Otto handles snakes and other sundry acts of bastardry, including collecting people. He could be given any of the same example tasks as Sofia (above), and it's possible that Dr Oserlinde



could command them to work together.

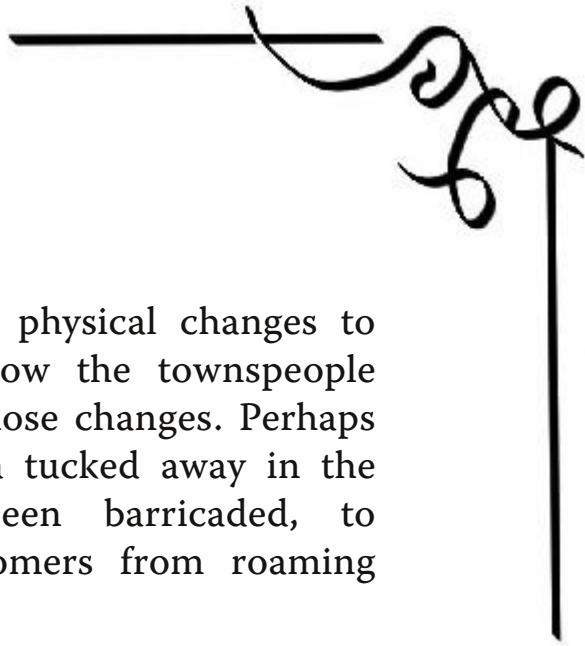
Eli is asked to recreate the life experiences of Dr Oserlinde. These gradually get more and more sinister as the game progresses: the first time Oserlinde ever experimented on a human subject. The first time Oserlinde ever killed someone.



Show how the Town has changed

As the game proceeds and the minions engage with Dr Oserlinde's commands, the town will change and the townspeople will begin to have different reactions to the minions.



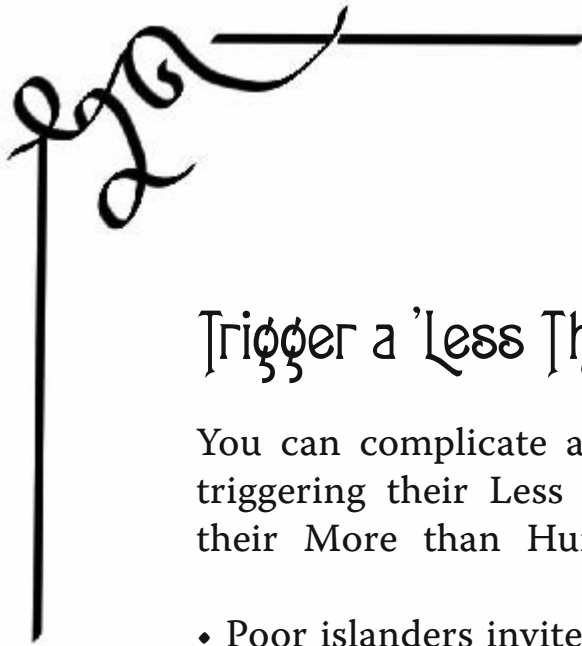


Think about the physical changes to the town and how the townspeople would react to those changes. Perhaps the quiet taverna tucked away in the shadows has been barricaded, to defend the customers from roaming snakes.

Think about the social and emotional changes to the townspeople and how you would visually represent those. Perhaps the taverna has been turned into an impromptu war-room where people are plotting to destroy the minions or Dr Oserlinde.

Remember, though: the landscape in this game is malleable. Adjust it to the needs of the story you're telling and to the current emotions of the game. Perhaps the story suddenly demands that there is a gold-plated statue of Dr Oserlinde in the centre of town. Even though you've never described it before, feel free to put it there.





Trigger a 'Less Than Human'

You can complicate a minion's life by triggering their Less than Human, or their More than Human's exception.

- Poor islanders invite Emerson to play a game of chance
- The island and spa is always full of cats (interfering with Eli's interviews)
- Eli must always use a handkerchief to touch things
- Otto trusts everyone (except schoolboys). Have people lie to him; have Herberto tell him the truth (perhaps giving him a warning)
- Sofia spies someone writing a suicide note. Later, she can find that person attempting to commit suicide
- Have an NPC steal all of the morphine in Sofia's home and surgery.

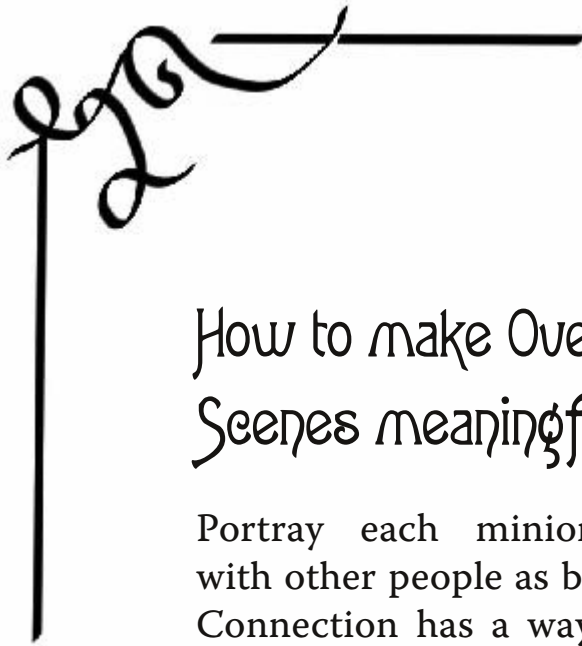


OVERTURE SCENES

When starting an Overture scene (a moment of potential emotional intimacy) with a Connection, bear in mind that they have a life that's continued while they've been 'off-screen'. Ask yourself: What have they been doing since we last saw them? How have they been affected by Dr Oserlinde and the other minions? How happy are they to see the minion?

If the Connection has seen (or has reason to believe) that the minion has performed an act of villainy against them, then that will obviously have to be dealt with too.

If you don't think it's reasonable for the minion to have visited their Connection, decide if the Connection has come to see the minion intentionally or if this is a coincidental meeting. You'll find some examples of how you can frame these scenes, below.

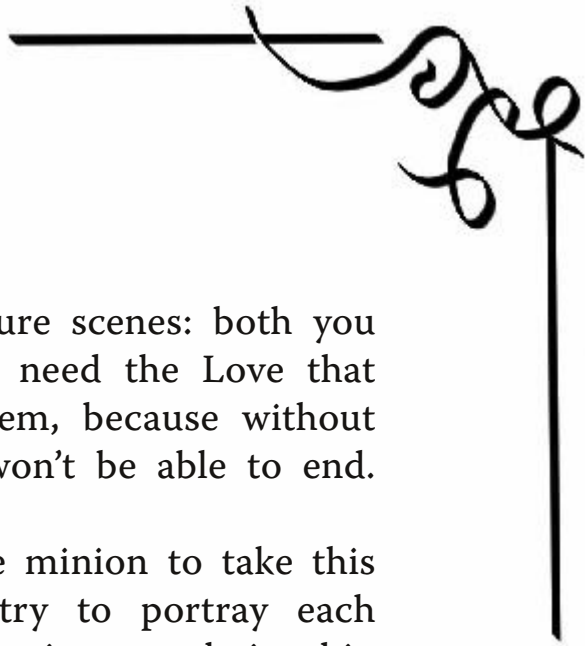


How to make Overture Scenes meaningful

Portray each minion's relationships with other people as being 'stuck'. Each Connection has a way they feel about and react to the minion, and that status quo will remain unless the minion does one specific thing: open up and make themselves emotionally vulnerable (doing something that truly exposes their soul to the Connection).

In the words of the main rules, the minion needs to take an "emotional risk".

Be strict about the minion having to meet this criteria for triggering an Overture. This vulnerability creates the risk of rejection. At the same time, it creates hope in the minion that they will be accepted for who they really are.

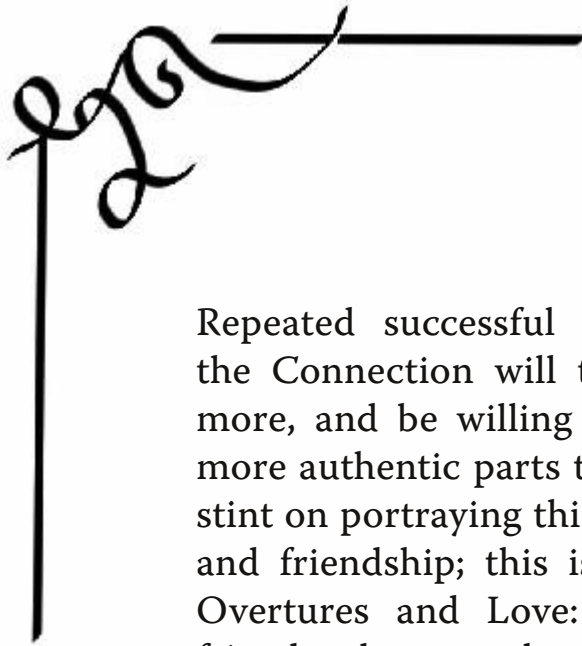


Encourage Overture scenes: both you and the minions need the Love that comes out of them, because without Love the game won't be able to end.

To encourage the minion to take this emotional risk, try to portray each Connection as having a relationship with the minion that is—initially—not very deep. They make the time to talk with them, and may be kind towards them, interested in them, or concerned about them, but it's not a very meaningful relationship in the Connection's mind.

It is only through successful Overtures that the minion will become important to the Connection, that the Connection will think about the minion when they're apart.

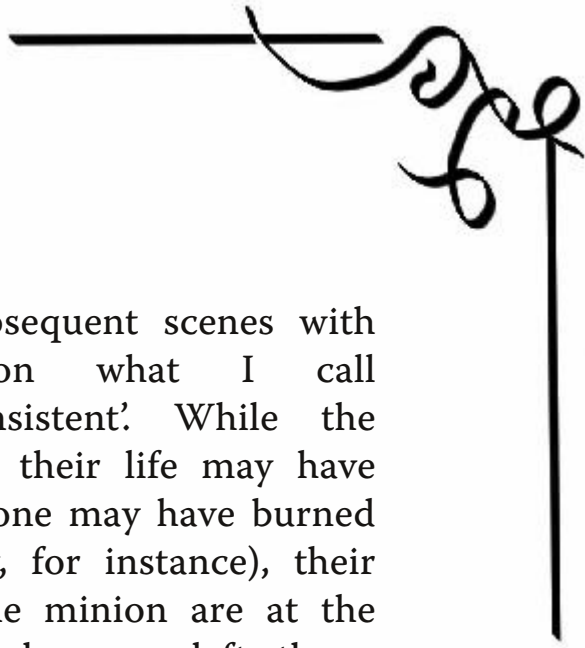
That the Connection will miss them.



Repeated successful Overtures mean the Connection will trust the minion more, and be willing to share deeper, more authentic parts themselves. Don't stint on portraying this deepening trust and friendship; this is the reward for Overtures and Love: to finally have friends who care about you, value you, and who want to connect with you—one human to another.

To dramatise how the Connection has missed or been thinking about the minion, have the Connection:

- continue the conversation they were having in the last scene (they were interested in what the minion had to say!)
- ask the minion how they have been, or if they are doing better (they care!)
- do something for them, like give them a gift (a tangible representation of their love!)

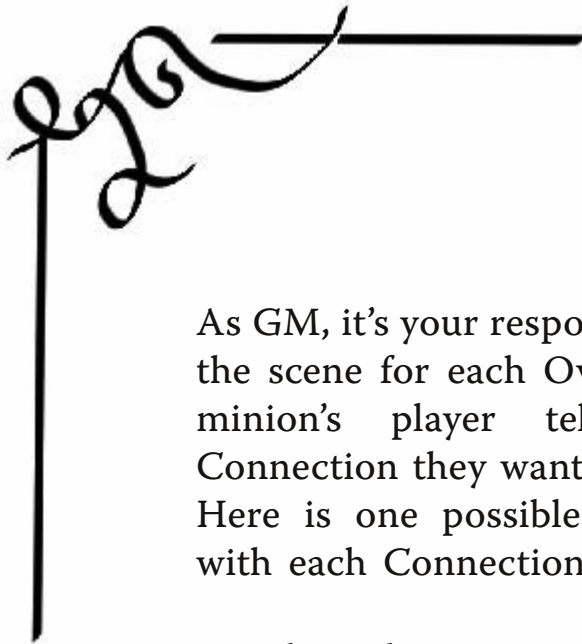


Try to keep subsequent scenes with each Connection what I call 'emotionally consistent'. While the circumstances of their life may have moved on (someone may have burned down their ferry, for instance), their feelings about the minion are at the same point as when we left them.



Example Overture Scenes

As part of your prep, I'd suggest you think about possible scenes you could introduce between the Connections and the minions. This may help you bring the Connections to life in your own mind.

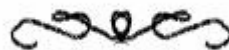


As GM, it's your responsibility to frame the scene for each Overture, after the minion's player tells you which Connection they want to interact with. Here is one possible Overture scene with each Connection:

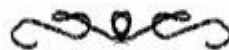
One-legged Antonin sings to himself. Perhaps he will serenade Sofia?

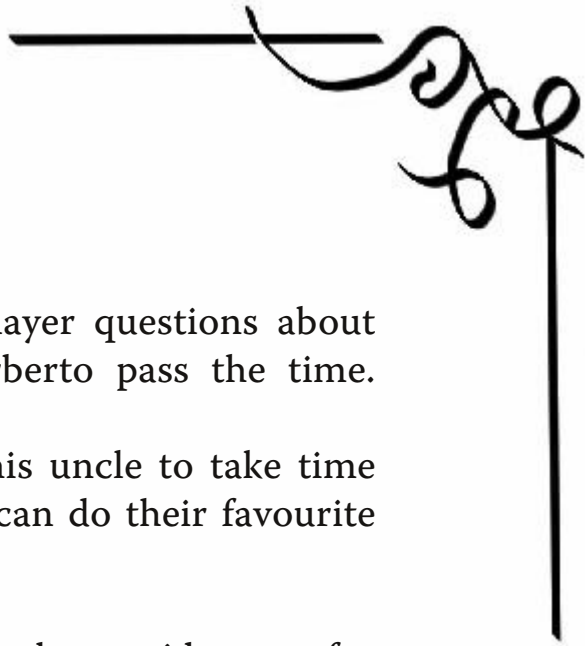


Sofia discovers Theo ransacking the medicinal cabinet in her Injection Room. He's desperate for morphine, reminding Sofia of herself.



The widow Moncada complains to Emerson: she was left unattended and mud-masked, for over 45 minutes.





Ask Emerson's player questions about how he and Herberto pass the time.

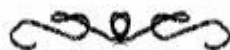
Herberto wants his uncle to take time off work so they can do their favourite activity together.

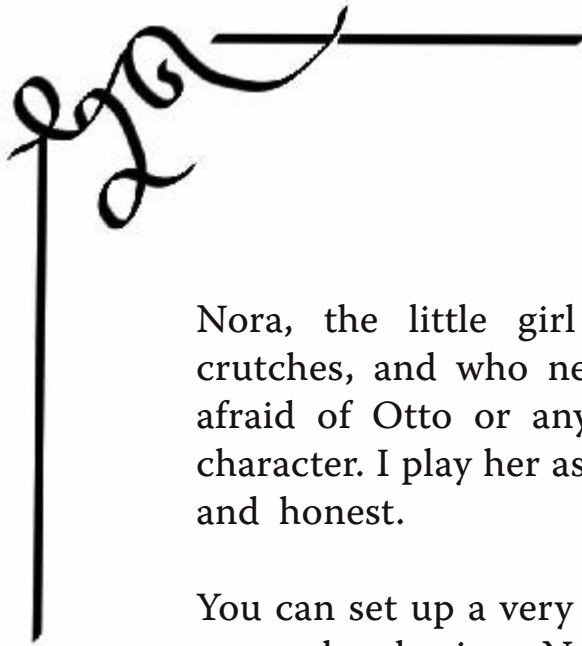
If Emerson's player has no ideas, go for collecting seashells on the shore or tree-leaves in the woods, or playing with a hoop and stick in the streets—depending on which option will create the most chaos for another minion if Emerson travels there.



Mary Cosetta, the cook, offers Otto some food. But her maternalism is obviously superficial. If Otto wants something deeper, more authentic, he'll have to open himself up to her.

Remember: to justify making a roll for an Overture, the minion should break your heart a little bit.





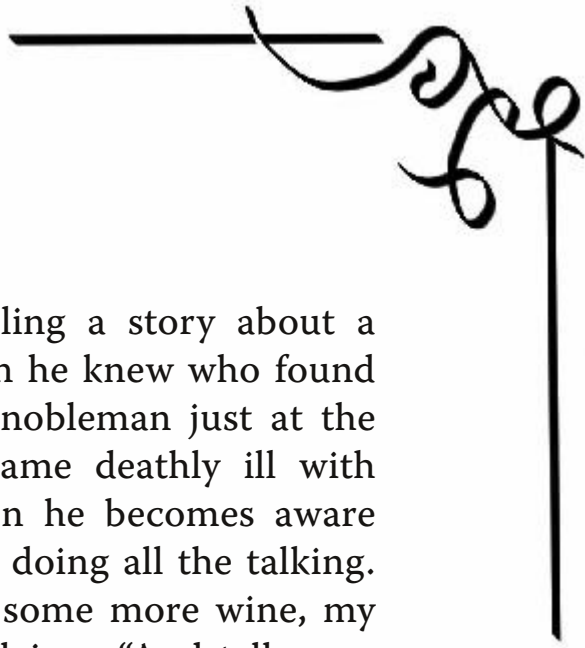
Nora, the little girl who walks on crutches, and who never seems to be afraid of Otto or anything is a great character. I play her as being very blunt and honest.

You can set up a very neutral Overture scene by having Nora follow Otto down the street, or make it a bit more emotionally loaded by having Otto discover Nora being bullied.

Personally, I like to use Nora to reinforce the 'snake' motif in this scenario by having Nora deliver an escaped and highly-venomous snake back to Otto. Don't be afraid to have this snake bite her and place her life in jeopardy if the Overture goes wrong.



Theo Padula has stolen a bottle of wine and dragged Eli somewhere outside, where they are drinking in the sun (or the warm Mediterranean night).



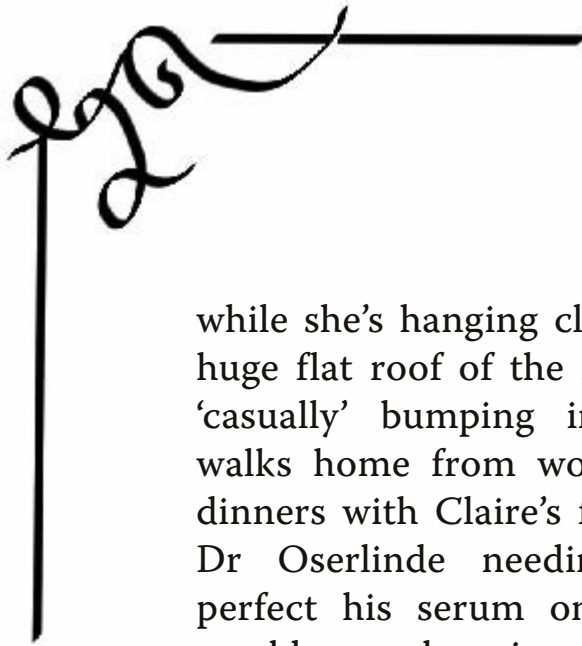
Theo finishes telling a story about a Parisian courtesan he knew who found true love with a nobleman just at the moment she became deathly ill with tuberculosis. Then he becomes aware he's been the one doing all the talking. "Come! Pour me some more wine, my friend!" Theo exclaims. "And tell me a story of your life."

Theo wants to hear something personal from Eli, some experience that has made Eli who he is today.



As for Eli and Claire, the laundry girl he can't stop thinking about: do I really need to give you examples of possible Overture scenes for this relationship? Boy meets girl has been a staple of popular media for over 200 years.

Think 'awkward neurotic writer from the city meets sweet diligent country girl'. Think about interrupting her



while she's hanging clothes out on the huge flat roof of the spa, or about Eli 'casually' bumping into her as she walks home from work. Think about dinners with Claire's family and about Dr Oserlinde needing someone to perfect his serum on, someone who would never be missed.



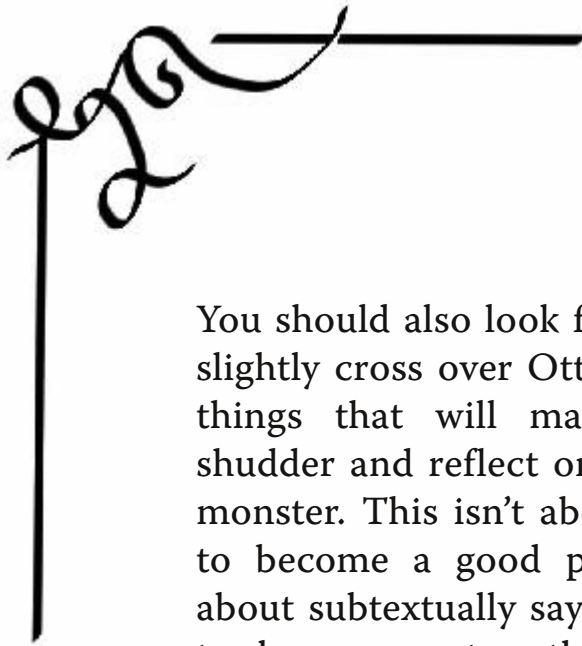
DEALING WITH OTTO

A word of caution: Otto's player can portray him in an exaggerated or cartoonish way: adopting a comedic voice, reveling being a monster, or cringing before Dr Oserlinde's fury.

That's fine, but try to direct the player's focus away from parodying Igor and onto hating Dr Oserlinde.

As Dr Oserlinde, never praise Otto. If his comedic accent annoys you or it seems to be stalling the game for the sake of laughs, have Dr Oserlinde forbid Otto to speak.

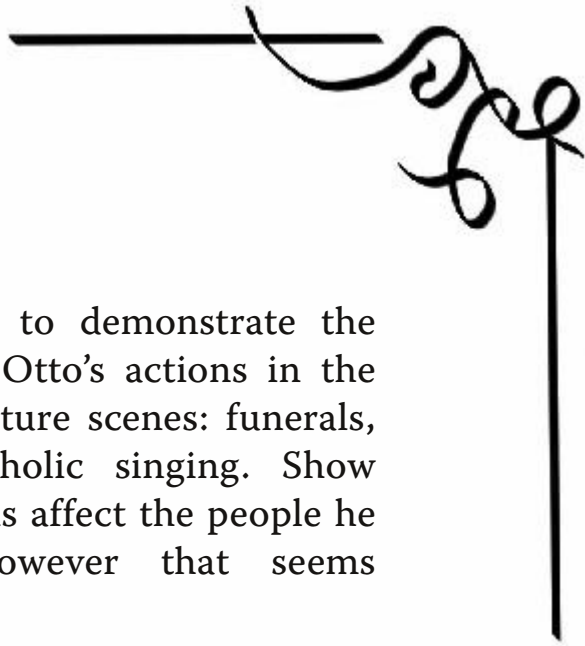
As Dr Oserlinde, castigate and chastise Otto, blaming him for the tiniest error, and forbidding him to react. If he tries to resist, then he has to make a roll to resist Dr Oserlinde's commands. (And if he's successful, you can immediately follow up that scene by giving Otto the option to do whatever he wants, including to have an Overture.)



You should also look for tasks that just slightly cross over Otto's player's lines, things that will make him or her shudder and reflect on Otto's role as a monster. This isn't about causing Otto to become a good person; it's more about subtextually saying, "If you want to be a monster, then this is what monsters do."

Some examples of this include:

- Forcing Otto to threaten, harm, or disadvantage Connections he holds Love for (e.g. stealing church money earmarked to help Nora)
- Commanding Otto to murder a previously-unseen villager. Make them real: someone with a full life filled with people who will miss them. Make them beg. For extra pressure, you can reveal that Otto's act of violence has been witnessed by a more vulnerable NPC.



Also: make sure to demonstrate the consequences of Otto's actions in the background of future scenes: funerals, grieving, melancholic singing. Show how Otto's actions affect the people he cares about, however that seems appropriate.



THE HORROR REVEALED

Hand the Horror Revealed card to any player who triggers a Horror Revealed (see page 36 of the main My Life with Master rules for more detail).

The card says the following:

"You now have an opportunity to describe the horrific consequences of Dr Oserlinde's plans and of the minions' actions. Instead of playing your normal scene, you get to narrate a scene of horror among NPCs in the town.

Keep your Self-Loathing at its previous level rather than increase it.

There are two restrictions on what you can narrate:

- i. Neither Dr Oserlinde or any minion can be part of the scene
- ii. No NPC who is carrying Love for one of the minions can be killed."



Note that, due to the numbers, Otto is likely to get a Horror Revealed from his third scene on.

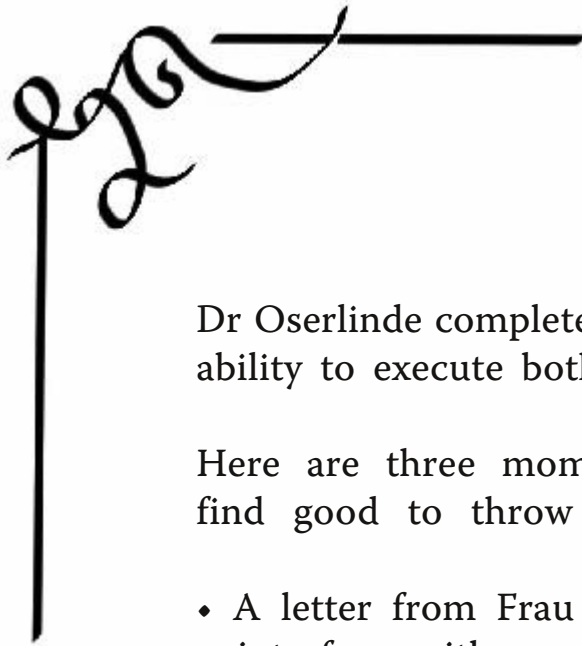
DR OSERLINDE'S AMBITIONS

As a default, in any scene with Dr Oserlinde have him monologue about his mother, about her constant crushing interference with his projects and ambitions. Dr Oserlinde sees himself as a man of destiny, but his mother has a very different idea of what his life should be like.

Dr Oserlinde's goal is to remove his mother's influence over his life by assembling enough gold that he can pay off her debts and get her out of prison. He believes there are two reasons this will work.

Firstly, having paid off her debts gives him the power to have her put back in prison, but under his terms (a nastier prison with no access to visitors or letter-writing implements).

Secondly (but less desireably), he can bring Frau Oserlinde to the spa where he can control her life completely.



Dr Oserlinde completely believes in his ability to execute both of these plans.

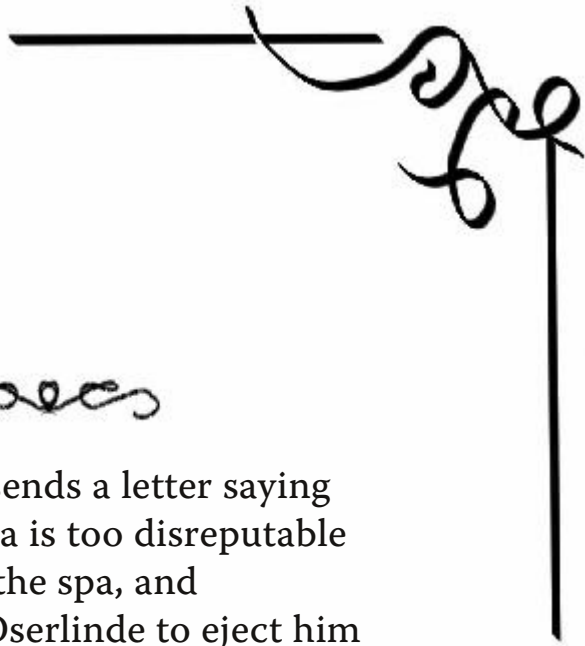
Here are three moments you might find good to throw into the story:

- A letter from Frau Oserlinde interferes with one of Dr Oserlinde's ambitions. He rages about it to a minion and orders them to burn Antonin's ferry, to prevent any more letters arriving.



- Frau Oserlinde sends Dr Oserlinde a fiancée (Fräulein Carla Eisenberg) and insists he marry her. Oserlinde decides it's necessary to either scare Carla off—and if that doesn't work, get one of the minions to make her disappear permanently.





- Frau Oserlinde sends a letter saying that Theo Padula is too disreputable to be a guest at the spa, and commands Dr Oserlinde to eject him from the island. Although Theo is a bountiful source of money, Dr Oserlinde feels he has no choice: he orders a minion to make sure Theo gets on the next ferry.

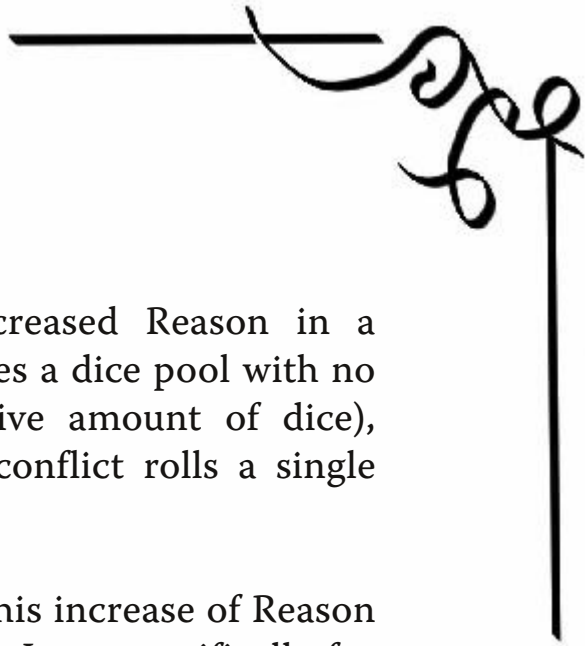
USING INNOCENTS

The Innocent is a vital part of you being able to make sure the game ends within three hours. The mechanical reason to have Innocents is that, because they increase the level of Reason in the scene, they make it easier for minions to gain Love (and, therefore, to be able to resist doing horrible things).

You have already increased Reason (at the end of the second round of scenes).

When your timer goes off at the end of ninety minutes, increase the 'Reason bonus' for Innocents by +1. Decide if there are other Connections who the players have responded to, and whether you want to designate them as additional Innocents.

After this process, all Innocents now add two points of Reason to a scene.



If using this increased Reason in a conflict roll creates a dice pool with no dice (or a negative amount of dice), that side of the conflict rolls a single die.

Please note that this increase of Reason is a special device I use specifically for this scenario, to ensure the game ends in three hours by making it more likely that minions will earn Love.

If your game feels like it might not end within the time you have available to play, you can either:

- increase Reason in the presence of an Innocent by as many points as necessary or
- accept a more ambiguous ending where the minions never break free from Dr Oserlinde (this may be more satisfying for your group).

NB: When an Innocent is killed or violated, Fear goes up by a point.

THE ENDGAME

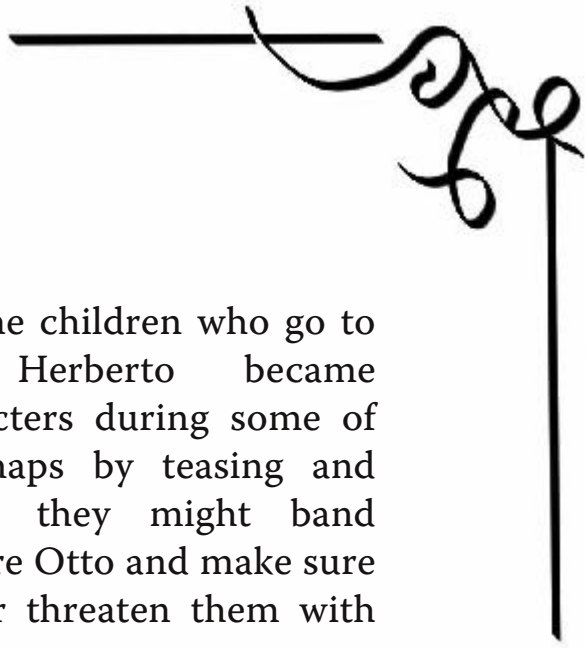
The Endgame begins if a minion resists a command and

LOVE greater than
(FEAR + WEARINESS)

Cut to each of the other minions and aggressively frame them into dangerous and threatening scenes of their own.

When creating these scenes, try to centre them around the following elements:

- people who have been significant to the minion during the game
- events from the game that have been particularly meaningful to the minion
- situations that need closure
- ironic reversals of actions the minion has taken.

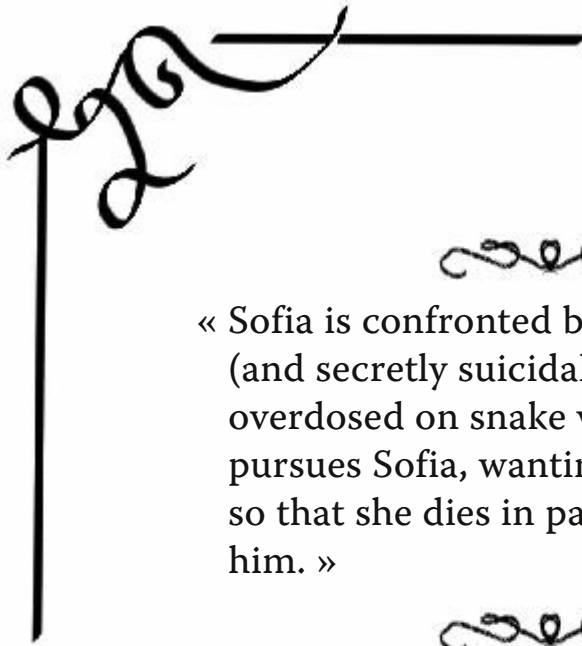


For instance, if the children who go to school with Herberto became prominent characters during some of the scenes (perhaps by teasing and harassing Otto), they might band together to capture Otto and make sure he can no longer threaten them with his snakes.

You can also create scenes by reincorporating elements created during the game. For instance, if Emerson was ordered to burn down Antonin's ferry and Emerson's attempt to follow those orders created significant repercussions, Antonin and some of his burly fisherman friends might try to drown Emerson.

If nothing seems to inspire you, you can use these default situations:

« Otto is attacked by a swarm of his own snakes (possibly endangering one of his connections). »



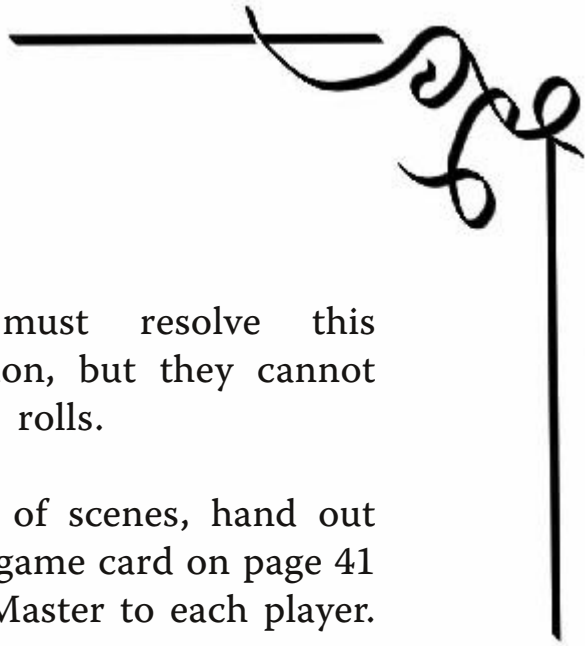
« Sofia is confronted by a deranged (and secretly suicidal) patient: he's overdosed on snake venom, and pursues Sofia, wanting to inject her so that she dies in pain, along with him. »



« Emerson is in the local taverna, losing at a game of dice. He slowly realises – from their increasingly-frequent glances and low mutters – that the townsfolk have become aware that he spies on them astrally. The customers in the taverna accuse Emerson of being a monster. They gather round him and begin pushing him with increasing violence. »



« Eli is accosted by a small group of townsfolk who have discovered his notes for his biography of Dr Oserlinde. They take him out into the jungle to lynch him. »



Each minion must resolve this dangerous situation, but they cannot use Fear in their rolls.

After this round of scenes, hand out copies of the Endgame card on page 41 of *My Life with Master* to each player.

As you hand out the cards, explain that the violent conflict taking place is going to end with Dr Oserlinde's death, and (potentially) the death of the minion who is fighting him. During this climactic battle, everyone will have a chance to determine what happens to their minion after Oserlinde dies.

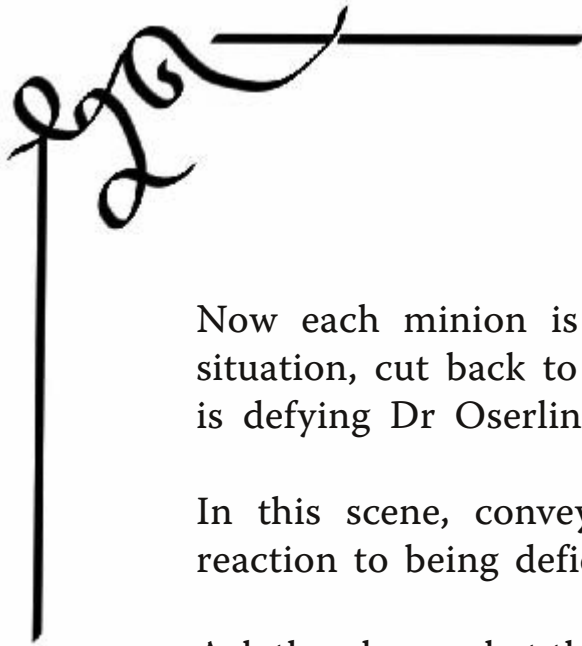
If a player asks why you haven't mentioned the mechanical details of the endgame until now, explain that this scenario has aimed to encourage players to immerse themselves into their minions' situations rather than focus on 'winning' or optimising what happens to their minion.

NB: Tap on this symbol to be taken to the GM reference sheet for running the endgame (page 130).



108

Endgame



Now each minion is in a dangerous situation, cut back to the minion who is defying Dr Oserlinde.

In this scene, convey Dr Oserlinde's reaction to being defied.

Ask the player what their minion wants to say or do to Dr Oserlinde. If necessary, ask what violent action their minion takes towards the Doctor. Then roll the dice:

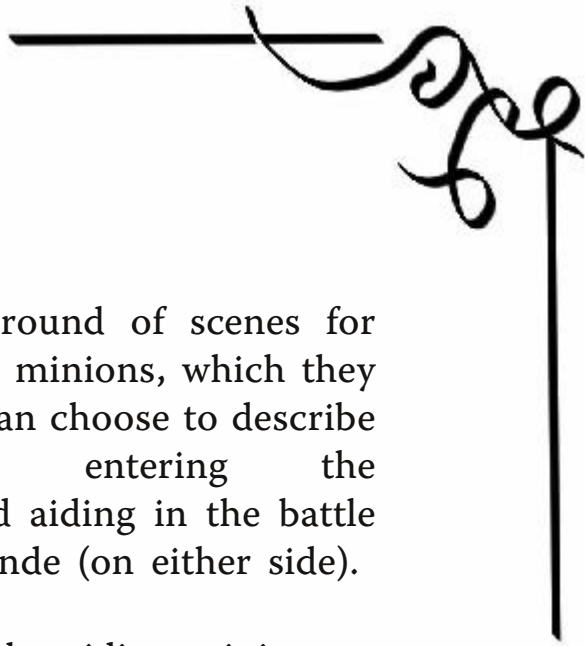
minion (LOVE – WEARINESS)

vs.

Master (FEAR + SELF-LOATHING)

You can roll these dice. If you win, increase the minion's Weariness by one.



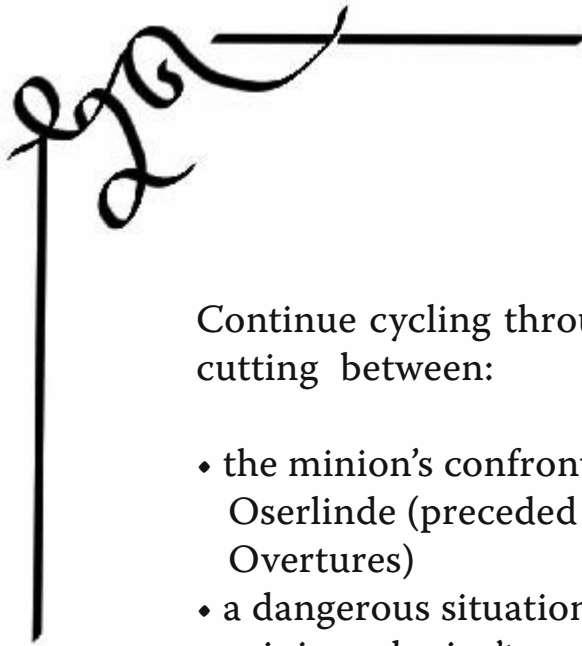


Cut to another round of scenes for each of the other minions, which they frame. A player can choose to describe their minion entering the confrontation and aiding in the battle against Dr Oserlinde (on either side).

If this happens, the aiding minion no longer gets their individual scenes (of being threatened or having the opportunity to make an Overture).

However, Paul Czege notes that if Connections or other NPCs are present during the conflict with Dr Oserlinde, then the aiding minion can make Overtures towards them. The aiding minion makes these Overture rolls prior to rolling to see if Dr Oserlinde has been destroyed.





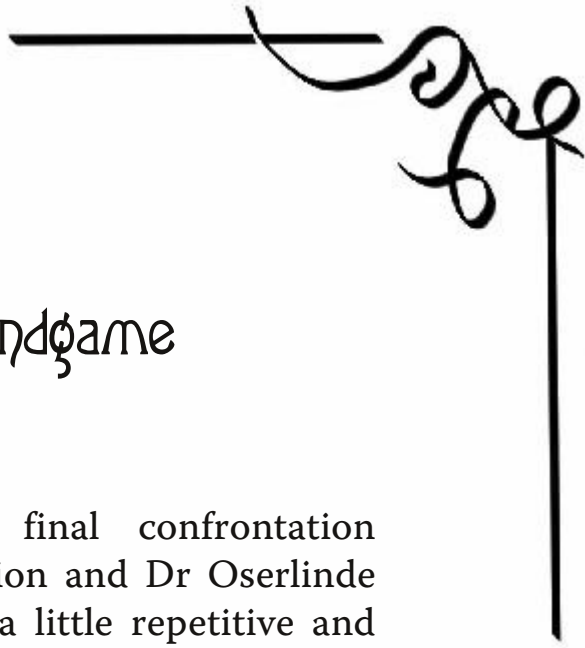
Continue cycling through these scenes, cutting between:

- the minion's confrontation with Dr Oserlinde (preceded by any Overtures)
- a dangerous situation for every minion who isn't confronting Dr Oserlinde
- the minion's confrontation with Dr Oserlinde (preceded by any Overtures)
- a player-framed scene for every minion who isn't confronting Dr Oserlinde.



Play until the resisting minion wins, or until every minions' epilogue is settled. An epilogue is 'settled' when:

- i) it's mathematically obvious which epilogue(s) are the only ones that can be selected, and
- ii) there's no way to change that.

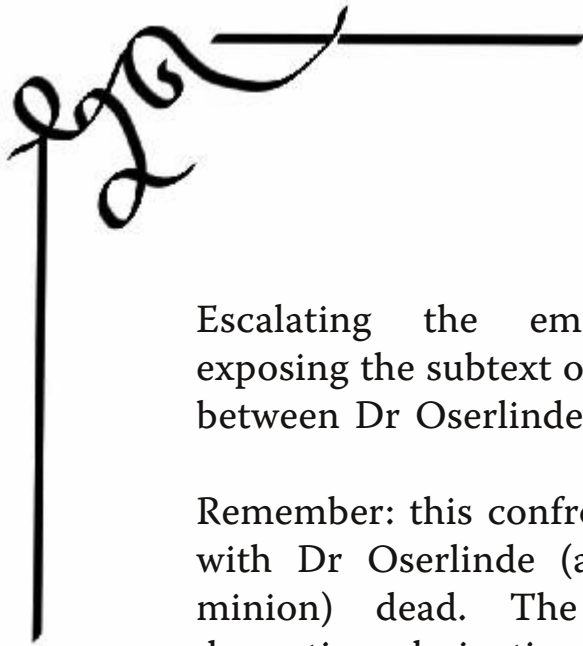


Keeping the Endgame dramatic

Sometimes this final confrontation between the minion and Dr Oserlinde can start to feel a little repetitive and stale. For instance, every time we cut back to the confrontation, the conflict is reduced to the player saying, "I hit him. I hit him again."

There are three techniques you can use to prevent this. The first is simple and already mentioned: ask the player what their minion wants to say or do to Dr Oserlinde. The minion will have a lot of bottled-up feelings they want to make known, both verbally and physically.

The two other techniques you can use to ensure the endgame remains dramatic are to either escalate the emotions or change the location.

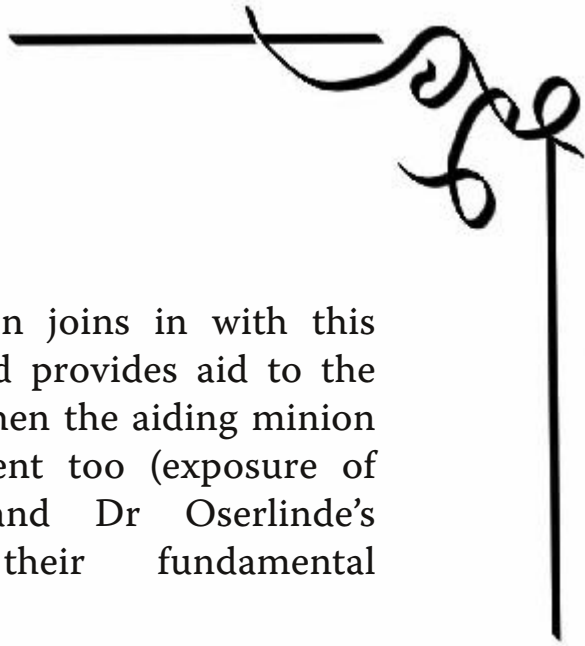


Escalating the emotions involves exposing the subtext of the relationship between Dr Oserlinde and the minion.

Remember: this confrontation will end with Dr Oserlinde (and possibly the minion) dead. The scene is the dramatic culmination of the minion's entire life, and it will be the only chance for these two characters to say everything they've ever wanted to say to each other—as equals.

As Dr Oserlinde, this means bringing every way in which the minion has ever disappointed you out into the light. It means repeating all your previous criticisms of them, and then circling in on and articulating the core of why the minion is a worthless human being.

Try to force the player of the minion to articulate a defence of why the minion has the right to exist. Of why they're a good person.

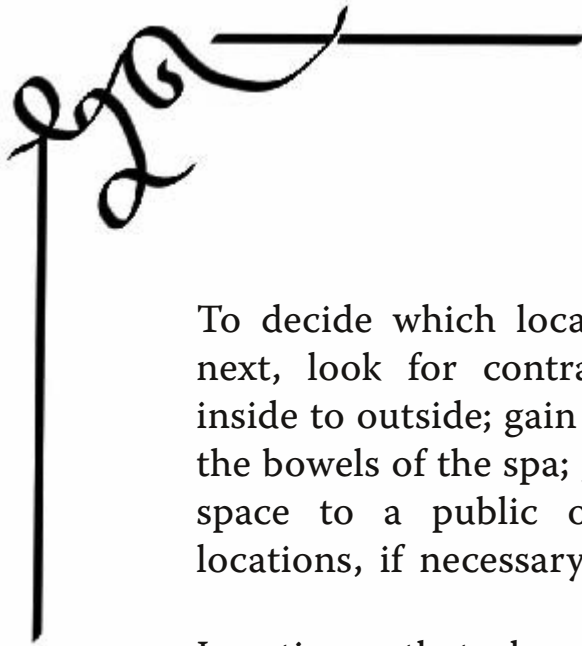


If another minion joins in with this confrontation and provides aid to the defiant minion, then the aiding minion gets this treatment too (exposure of their failings and Dr Oserlinde's critique of their fundamental worthlessness).



While escalating the emotions is probably the best way of ensuring drama and increasing the intensity of the climax, you can also change the location where the confrontation is occurring.

Through play, a mental geography of the spa and its surroundings will have emerged. For instance, when I've run this Dr Oserlinde's study has often had a balcony. Above the balcony is the flat roof where Claire hangs the laundry, and rising above that is a belltower.

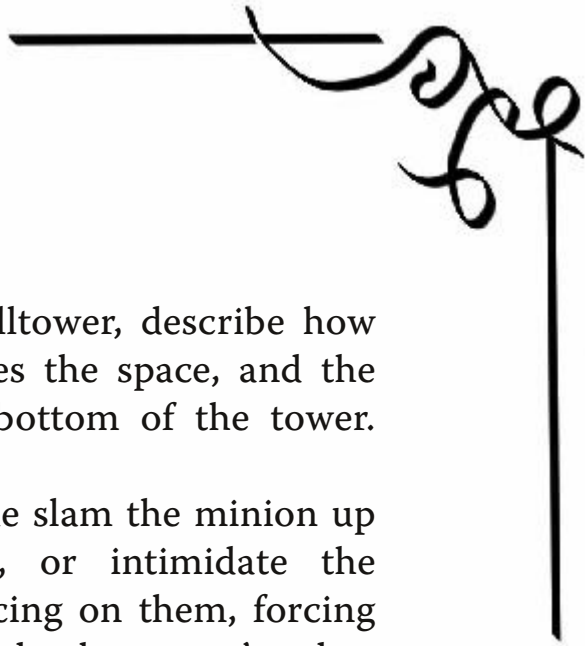


To decide which location to move to next, look for contrasts: move from inside to outside; gain height or go into the bowels of the spa; go from a private space to a public one. Invent new locations, if necessary.

Locations that have an emotional significance to the minion's relationship with Dr Oserlinde also provide good places to move to. For instance, if Dr Oserlinde publicly castigated the minion in the foyer of the spa, a scene set there can draw off that event.

You don't need to describe how the minion and Master move between these locations if you don't want to: simply begin your next scene there.

However, you will want to describe the prominent features of the new location and make them part of the confrontation. For instance, if you've



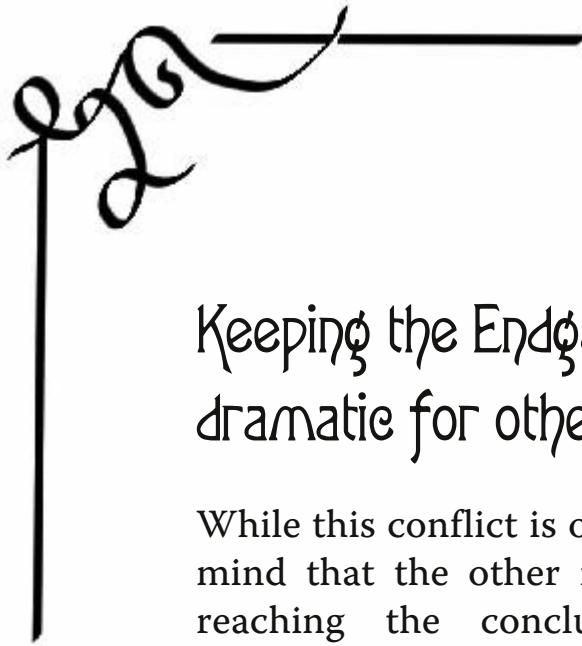
moved to the Belltower, describe how the bell dominates the space, and the long fall to the bottom of the tower.

Have Dr Oserlinde slam the minion up against the bell, or intimidate the minion by advancing on them, forcing them back towards the tower's edge.

And make sure to describe the emotions that the new surroundings bring to the confrontation. Describe the Belltower's vertiginous drop and the storm clouds gathering around it; how Dr Oserlinde's study boils with the oppressive heat of a midday fire, while its walls are covered with the looming portraits of Frau Oserlinde and her penetrating stare.

Make sure to reincorporate props from previous scenes in these locations (especially snakes, syringes filled with venom, gold hidden in wall safes, and letters from Frau Oserlinde).

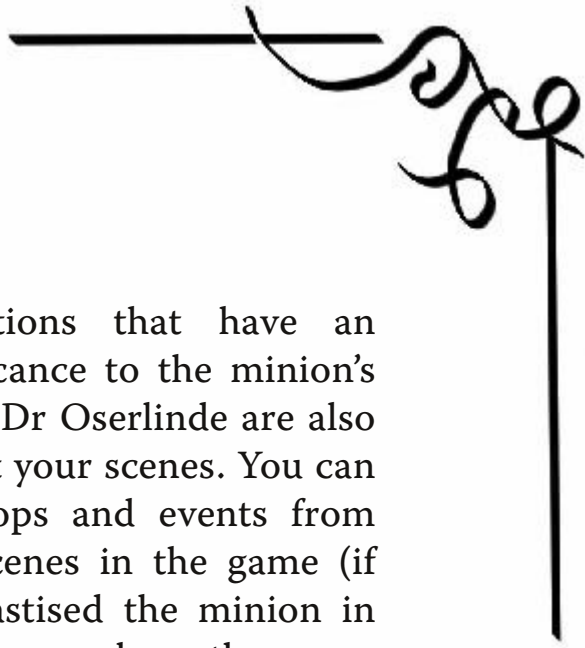




Keeping the Endgame dramatic for other minions

While this conflict is occurring, bear in mind that the other minions are also reaching the conclusions of their stories. During the scenes you frame for the minion (putting them in danger) use the following techniques:

- threaten the minion and the people the minion cares about
- challenge the minion by increasing the intensity, number, or danger of the forces confronting them
- escalate the minion's situation—introduce other elements from the story that were significant to the minion
- attack the minion's emotional weakspots
- give the minion an opportunity to take revenge.



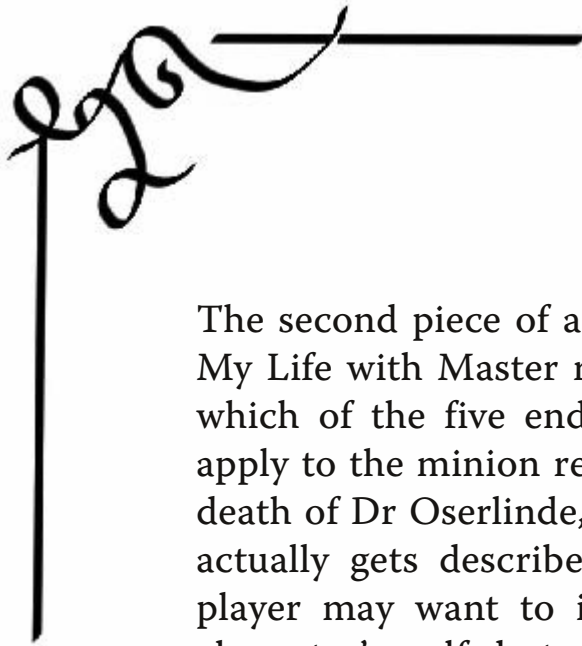
As above, locations that have an emotional significance to the minion's relationship with Dr Oserlinde are also good places to set your scenes. You can reincorporate props and events from these previous scenes in the game (if Dr Oserlinde chastised the minion in the foyer of the spa, perhaps the angry mob decide to hang the minion there).

The Denouement

At some point, the resisting minion will win their violence roll against Dr Oserlinde (or every single minion's epilogue will have become fixed). This is the moment of Dr Oserlinde's death. Trust your instincts on how to play this. I only have two pieces of advice.

The first is to describe the death in a way that gives the players at least some catharsis (that their minions have destroyed this bastard).

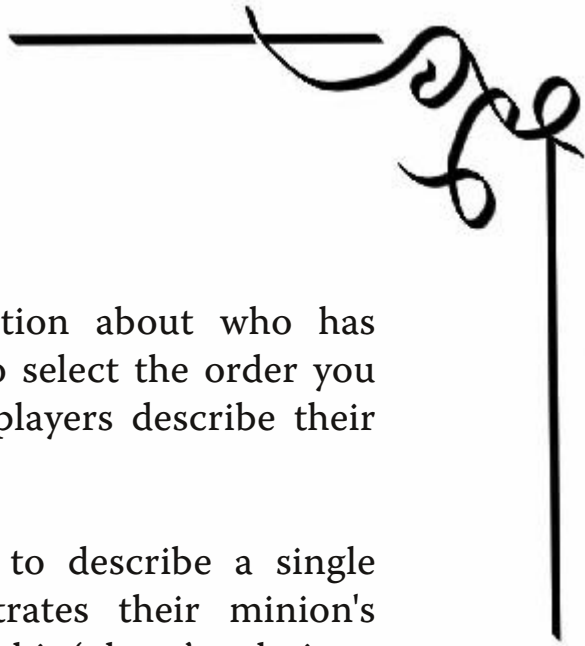




The second piece of advice is from the My Life with Master rules: “Figure out which of the five endgame conditions apply to the minion responsible for the death of Dr Oserlinde, before his death actually gets described.” The minion’s player may want to incorporate their character’s self-destruction (or other epilogue) into Dr Oserlinde’s own final scene. Let the player narrate what happens to their minion.

I also find it satisfying to give the minions who were present at the death a moment or two to react to Dr Oserlinde’s death, to appreciate that they are now free: free of his influence; free to live their own lives.


Once Dr Oserlinde has been killed, ask the players describe which epilogue they want, and (briefly) how they think their minion ended up there.



Use the information about who has which epilogue to select the order you want to see the players describe their epilogues in.

Ask each player to describe a single photo that illustrates their minion's new life. Reusing this 'photo' technique provides a sense of closure. It's also an opportunity to comment on the changes (or not) to the minion's life since those initial photos: Sophia, resting a new child on her beefy forearm; Otto, holding a bouquet of snakes in his hand, threatening a captive villager; Eli, on the spa's rooftop staring at the ocean next to Claire.

Afterwards, feel free to sit around for a little while discussing what you liked, didn't like, moments you found funny or moving, or anything else that came up. It's a nice chance to decompress and to relive the story.

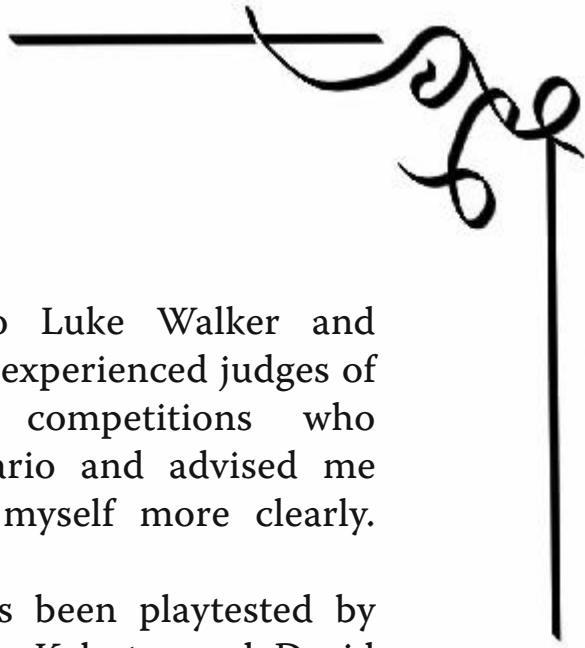
A decorative flourish consisting of a horizontal line with a large, ornate, swirling initial 'L' that extends downwards and to the left, framing the title.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Paul Czege originally wrote this scenario as a 10-15 minute long sales demo to be used at the Forge booth during Gencon 2003. 'The Snakes of Dr Oserlinde' is an expansion of that core, based on discussions I had with Paul about how to expand the demo into a three-hour game that I could run at my local convention.

Thank you, Paul, for your encouragement and your permission to publish this.

Originally, I fully fleshed out this scenario for a proposed publication called 'Magic Missile', edited by Jonathan Walton. Jonathan provided a significant amount of feedback and encouragement as I worked out how to express myself.



Thanks, also, to Luke Walker and Alasdair Sinclair: experienced judges of scenario-writing competitions who edited this scenario and advised me how to express myself more clearly.

This scenario has been playtested by Adrienne Mueller, Kalysto, and David Miessler-Kubaneck. Thank you to you and your groups for your insights and critique.

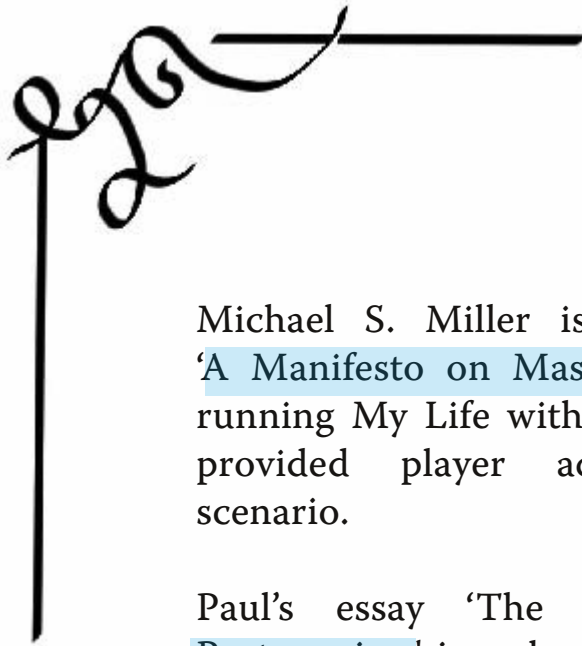
Paul's quote in the Subsequent Scenes section on page 69 is taken from a February 2008 Story Games thread critiquing a number of games.

The robust tone of the thread is explained here by Andy Kitkowski.

Photo (page 9) is © Kenneth Cole Schneider

Photo (page 21) is © Sam Howzit

Photo (page 40) is © Patrick Nouhailler



Michael S. Miller is the author of 'A Manifesto on Mastery', a guide to running My Life with Master. He also provided player advice for this scenario.

Paul's essay 'The Architecture of Protagonism' is a short and interesting read about the theoretical foundation of the game. He also provided player advice for this scenario.

The game, My Life with Master, is available from Half Meme Press.

Thanks to everyone on Google Plus who advised me on the intricacies of layout: including (but not limited to) Grant Robinson, Keane Chan, Victor Gijssbers, Johnstone Metzger and Adam Dray.

And finally, thanks to Simon Carryer and Michael Sands (the Secret Masters of Playtesting) for giving me the final

PAYMENT OPTIONS

Feel free to pirate, torrent or gift this .pdf.

I've been developing this guide since 2009. If you play it or get some value out of it, consider either:

a) **mentioning it online** at places like:

[Story Games](#), [RPG.net](#), Facebook, Google Plus (where I'm [+Steve Hickey](#)), and #MyLifeAsGM on Twitter (where I'm [@SteveHickeyRPG](#))

b) **donating some money** to one of my tip-jars to support my future RPG writing.

Did this guide make you more enthusiastic about running My Life with Master? Or maybe it helped you when you actually played it?

Here are three venues where you can make a donation (of whatever value you feel this guide's been worth to you):

1. [Drive Through RPG](#)
2. [paypal.com](#) (to: wave.goodnight@gmail.com)
3. My website (once the domain name is available):
 - stevehickey.game/mylife
 - stevehickey.games/mylife

If this guide proves popular, I'll update it with art, key images for each of the characters, and (potentially) a new layout.

Appendices

A List of Tasks to assign to minions

Sofia

- Inject the serum
- Deal directly with patients
- Restrain people.
- The Widow Moncada is attempting to leave Naja Spa. Restrain her and return her.
- Clare is interfering with Eli's development (in to a version of Dr Oserlinde). Take her up to the bell tower and throw her off. Make it look like an accident

Otto

- Take Herberto Miracola out to the wilds, where he can be hunted by Malinda ...
- Give Theo an overdose of morphine
- Break in to the church and steal money that has been earmarked to help Nora
- Take aggressive action against one (or more) of the other minions
- Murder a previously unseen resident of the island. Make this victim into a real, genuine human being who sincerely doesn't want to be harmed: they are someone who has a fully-rounded life filled with people who will miss them. For extra pressure, you can reveal that Otto's act of violence has been witnessed by a more vulnerable NPC.

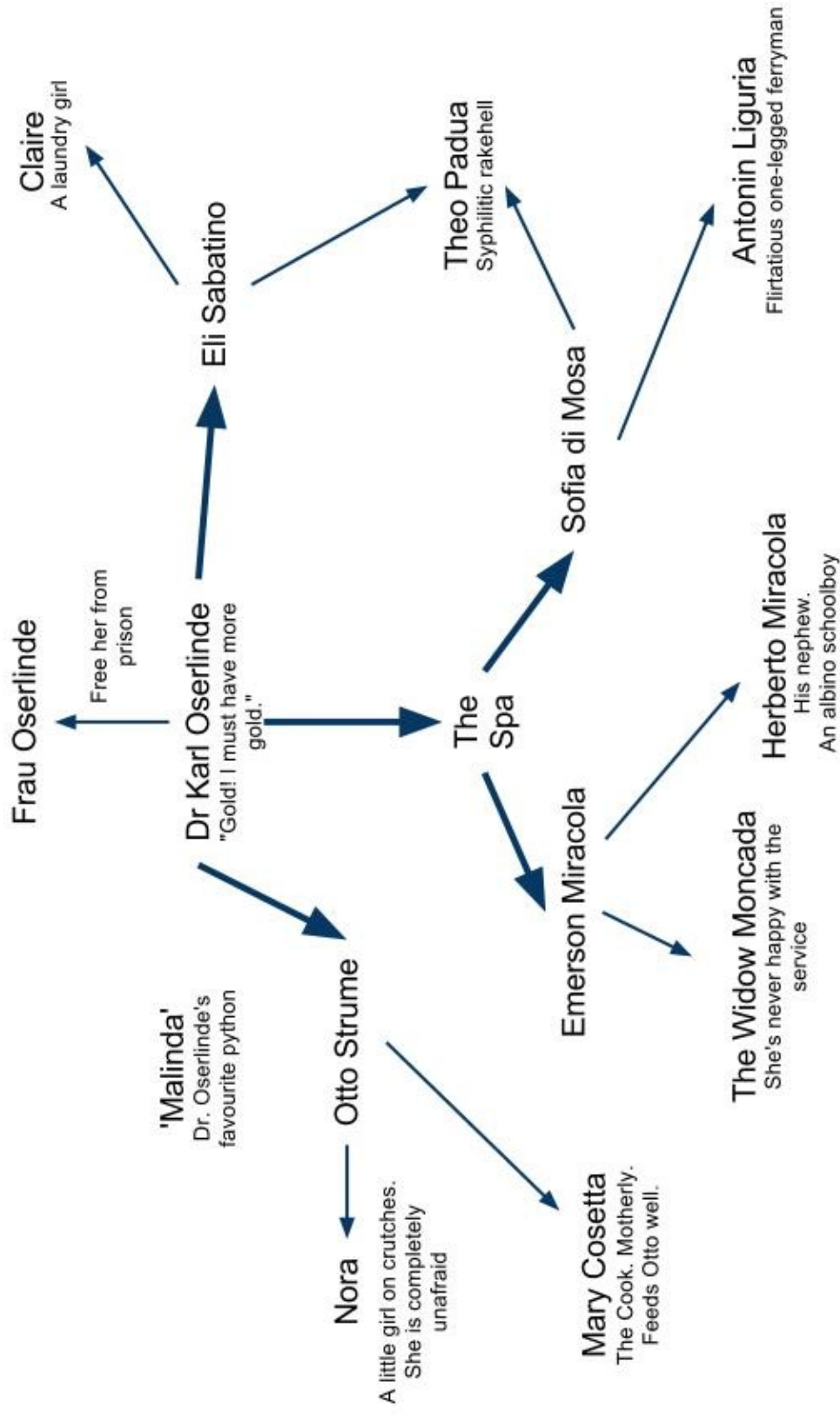
Emerson

- Burn down Antonin's ferry down to the waterline, to prevent any more letters from arriving
- Discover where Nora hides and bring her back to the venom chambers for injection
- Force Mary the Cook to put snake venom into the evening meal and intimidate her into remaining silent
- Scare Fräulein Carla Eisenberg (Dr Oserlinde's fiancée) away—and if that doesn't work, make her disappear permanently
- Respond to Frau Oserlinde's letter saying that Theo Padula is too disreputable to be a guest at the spa by eject Theo from the island and making sure he gets on the next ferry

Eli

- Recreate the first time Oserlinde ever conducted surgery
- Recreate the first time Oserlinde ever experimented on a human subject
- Recreate the first time Oserlinde ever murdered someone
- Interview a patient at the spa to discover where they're hiding their money





The Horror Revealed

You now have an opportunity to describe the horrific consequences of Dr Oserlinde's plans and of the minions' actions. Instead of playing your normal scene, you get to narrate a scene of horror among NPCs in the town.

Keep your Self-Loathing at its previous level rather than increase it.

There are two restrictions on what you can narrate:

- i. Neither Dr Oserlinde or any minion can be part of the scene
- ii. No NPC who is carrying Love for one of the minions can be killed.

GM REFERENCE: Running the game

Introduction

Set timer for
90 minutes

Play first 2 rounds

Designate Innocents

At 90 minutes:

- increase Innocents to +2 Reason
- set timer for 30 minutes before end of session

Continue playing

Encourage Overtures

30 minutes before
end of session:

- increase Innocents to +3 Reason

Endgame

A scene for each minion:

- Focus on them until it feels right to cut away (such as after a dice roll).
NB: Rolls aren't compulsory.
- Always accept a request for a minion to enter a scene, if it makes sense.
- Always accept, if a player asks for a command from Dr Oserlinde.

Consult formulae whenever a minion:

- Resists a command
- Makes an Overture
- Does violence to an NPC
- Performs villainy on an NPC
- Commits violence or villainy on another minion
- Helps another minion

Cut between minions based on:

- who you haven't seen in a while
- who you are interested in
- What you need to know to go on

Want a task for a minion?

In doubt about what to do next?

Intertwine and escalate

- What could go wrong here?
- Show what's happening off-screen
- Put the minions in conflict
- Make different missions collide
- Show an NPC from another minion's scene
- Have something that previously went wrong spill into this scene

After every conflict, if SELF-LOATHING > LOVE + REASON, keep SL the same and do a Horror Revealed.

Trigger Endgame if resisted and LOVE > FEAR + WEARINESS

GM REFERENCE: The Endgame

Cycle through these scenes:

■
A dangerous situation for all minions not confronting Dr Oserlinde.

- Resolve this without using Fear.

- threaten the minion or Connections
- increases the intensity, number, or danger of the forces confronting the minion
- introduce elements/locations that are significant to the minion
- attack emotional weak-spots
- provide opportunities to take revenge

■
Minion vs Dr Oserlinde:

- Give opportunities for Overtures
- minion (LOVE – WEARINESS)

vs.

Master (FEAR + SELF-LOATHING)

- What will the minion do to Oserlinde?
- Oserlinde says why the minion is worthless
- Change locations. Look for contrasts or emotional significance
- Use features of the new location in the confrontation.
- Describe the emotions of the new location.

■
A player-framed scene for each minion not with Dr Oserlinde.

Players' minions can enter the battle against Dr Oserlinde (and aid either side). Aiding minions no longer get individual scenes (but can make Overtures towards anyone present)

■
Minion vs Dr Oserlinde:

- Give opportunities for Overtures
- minion (LOVE – WEARINESS)

vs.

Master (FEAR + SELF-LOATHING)

- Play until the resisting minion wins, or all epilogues are settled.
- Before describing Oserlinde's death, select epilogues. Players may narrate their minion's epilogue in Dr Oserlinde's own final scene.
- Allow minions a moment to react to Oserlinde's death.
- Each player describes a photo of their minion's fate.