



ZEITGEIST™

THE GEARS OF REVOLUTION

PART
4

ALWAYS ON TIME

FROM THE
PEN OF JACOB DRISCOLL



A FANTASY ADVENTURE FOR
MOTIVATED HEROES OF LEVEL 6

COMPLETELY COMPATIBLE WITH THE
PATHFINDER® ROLE-PLAYING GAME





ZEITGEIST Adventure Number 4

Always on Time



A Fantasy
Role-Playing
Adventure by
EN PUBLISHING
7 Rutland Court,
Balaclava Road
Southampton,
Hampshire
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EN Publishing is
an imprint of
EN World.
Please visit
www.enworld.org



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Undercover aboard the famous Avery Coast Railroad, the party must root out a conspirator and get their hands on his eldritch invention before he delivers it into the hands of his masters.

Special Thanks to John Rogers, Michael the OnlineDM,
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INTRODUCTION

Wherein a Lantern Heralds Dark Days

In the previous ZEITGEIST adventure, the party discovered a tiefling philanthropist named Caius Bergeron was a member of a conspiracy known as the Obscurati, which appears hostile to the party's nation, Risur. The party also learned that Caius planned to take a trip by train to a meeting in a foreign city. In *Always on Time*, the party uses that lead to outmaneuver and unmask the conspiracy.

Risur's traditional enemy, the nation of Danor, operates the 3,000-mile-long Avery Coast Railroad, which connects numerous nations. With the support of Risur's Royal Homeland Constabulary, the party will go undercover aboard this train and seek clues to what business Caius was traveling toward. Meanwhile, agents of the Obscurati assemble for a gathering of members of the conspiracy, bringing with them a magic lantern that is key to their ultimate goal.



BACKGROUND

The Obscurati, detailed more fully in the *ZEITGEIST Campaign Guide*, plan to alter the nature of reality. This requires a massive ritual to change the planets in the night sky that imbue this world with different energies and essences. They're still over a year away from the culmination of their plot, but one key component has just been completed.

The Lantern

Luc Jierre, a socially awkward tiefling arcanoscientist with a nervous stutter, has invented a magical lantern. By burning fuel attuned to a specific plane, the device can channel planar energy through its light and suffuse its surroundings with the traits of that plane. This can create a variety of magical effects, making the lantern useful both as a weapon and as a tool of control.

The lantern's settings can be adjusted to change intensity and scope. For instance, if fed fuel attuned to the fiery planet Jiese, the lantern could simply make a single object become highly flammable, or it could allow fire elementals from that world to temporarily enter this world. Since Jiese also influences wars, the lantern could instead stir people toward conflict, either a whole area or just a few targets to whom the lantern has been properly attuned.

The lantern is a prototype, and it will be duplicated in large form in lighthouses across the continent. The Obscurati intend to use these lighthouses to keep the world stable while they transition the planes. More insidiously, the lighthouses will let them placate populations by manipulating their emotions *en masse*.

Recruitment

Luc is not yet a part of the Obscurati. His uncle Sovereign Han Jierre, ruler of Danor and one of the conspiracy's three leaders, encouraged Luc's education, groomed him through life to pursue this invention, and made sure Luc had access to all the resources he needed. Under intense pressure to live up to these expectations, Luc grew up awkward and nervous, but nevertheless brilliant.

ADAPTING THE ADVENTURE.

All the low-level ZEITGEIST adventures assume the PCs are agents of the Royal Homeland Constabulary. If, however, your party is a group of free agents, they might have been hired by the RHC, especially if they had previously uncovered Caius's secrets in *Digging for Lies*.

If you are using this adventure in another setting, the central element of a coastal rail line can be made into a pseudo-medieval pilgrimage route that travels 90 miles in six days. Several later encounters that use the train as a physical space may need to be heavily altered or omitted, but the core of the adventure still works.

Several scenes can be easily used as stand-alone encounters, including a naval engagement against a ship captained by an ice mage (page 13), a rescue of a damsel from a trio of wizards in an arena (page 34), or a cursed island and the dungeon beneath it (page 44).

Nephew of Danor's sovereign, Han Jierre, and brother of the country's Minister of Outsiders Lya Jierre, Luc has always felt inferior to his family. From childhood, his stutter made him socially withdrawn, but he found comfort in the arcanosciences. He could express himself on paper in clear formulae, and he could learn a skill the rest of his family did not possess.

Only recently did Luc realize that his family had been grooming him all along. He resents them somewhat, but cannot deny that he values power. He hopes that his new invention will earn him a place of respect. Now that he has finished the lantern, he expects he'll work on countermeasures to Risuri magical technology, or perhaps improve mana-storage devices, to let magic items last longer in Danor.

Once he's inducted into the Obscurati, he'll be given a major role in Lantern Cell, preparing larger version of his lamp and testing their ability to affect the minds of the public at large. That possibility will enthrall Luc, who has never before had the ability to make people do what he wants.



Luc has been told to take the Avery Coast Railroad from the Danoran capital of Cherage to the eastern terminus, the city of Vendricce. Luc crafted the lantern in Danor's dead magic zone, effectively a giant 'clean room.' Now he brings it for final testing, and he too will be judged whether he is worthy to join the conspiracy.

The Gathering in Vendricce.

The Obscurati have planned a gathering of all the heads of the various Obscurati cells to meet in Vendricce on the 20th of Winter, 500 A.O.V. (After Our Victory). To minimize the risk of discovery, the VIPs will stagger their arrival across a week; Luc Jierre arrives on the 16th. His sister **Lya Jierre** will be waiting to greet him. The party met Lya in Adventure One, *Island at the Axis of the World*, and she is set to marry the king of Risur as part of a peace treaty.

The Ob know that the PCs were investigating Caius Bergeron (during Adventure Three, *Digging for Lies*), but they have no reason to think the party knows about the gathering in Vendricce. And the party's superior, Chief Inspector Stover Delft, encourages them to trust no one.

Spy Mission.

The party's mission is to learn as much about the Obscurati as possible. All they have to go on, though, is the train schedule of a dead tiefling philanthropist. Chief Inspector Delft tasks the PCs to ride the same train and look for anyone Caius might have been meeting. With luck someone will lead the party to a meeting of the conspiracy.

It is important to stress that the PCs are not expected to run in and attack the conspirators when they find them, since they'll be severely outgunned. A victory in this mission would be to learn the identities of key conspirators and escape without being noticed. While we have included plenty of climactic combat, make sure you prepare your players to understand that they're trying to complete a mission, not win the war in one fell swoop.

The Railroad.

The main theater for this adventure is the Avery Coast Railroad, the pride of Danoran technology, and a showcase of the nation's engineering prowess. Though Danor has numerous railroads connecting its cities, the Avery Coast line is the longest in the world, spanning 3,000 miles, from the city of Beaumont on Danor's west coast, through the Malice Lands, Drakr, various minor nations, and finally ending in Vendricce, on Crisillyir's border with Elfaiivar.

See Appendix One: The Avery Coast Railroad (page 58) for extensive details of the train's route, history, design, and crew.

Luc's Entourage.

Before Caius Bergeron was killed, he had already made security arrangements for the train trip with Brianne Kaldeckis, called **Bree**, a Danoran veteran of the Fourth Yerasol War. Caius gave her a gold ring to wear, which has an internal inscription that reads "Oathkeeper Bree's Sword." Any high-ranking member of the conspiracy who sees this inscription knows that Bree is working for Golden Cell, but she is tier five: useful but with no knowledge of the Obscurati's agenda.

Bree has not heard from Caius for a couple months now, and as a good soldier she's trying to complete her mission as best she can. She has enlisted two men as "plainclothes" guards—**Olivert Boone**, a carousing tiefling who performs gunslinging shows around the country; and **Verzubak Tantalovich**, a dwarf mage who manipulates fate and chance. They'll board the train between Beaumont and Cherage.

DEAD AND WILD MAGIC.

Within Danor's borders, magic quickly seeps away. Spells with a casting time of more than 1 round cannot be cast within Danor. Static benefits of magic items function normally over the short term (i.e., you won't have to recalculate the stats on your character sheet). However, most activated powers of items don't function, and after a number of weeks equal to the item's level, its magic will be drained away entirely.

A creature's own innate magical powers still function, such as any spell-like ability granted as a racial ability.

Just beyond Danor's borders, in a broad swath hundreds of miles wide, the fabric of magic is damaged but not destroyed. In these places, known as the Malice Lands, whenever a character casts a spell, uses a magic item power, roll an unmodified 1d20. On a 1, a mishap occurs. This usually takes the form of the power backfiring, manifesting as a free-willed monster, or otherwise going dangerously awry.

TRAIN ROUTE.

The train passes through seven main points during the adventure.

- ♦ **Beaumont.** Major shipyard on the west coast of Danor. Train leaves here the morning of the 11th of Winter.
- ♦ **Cherage.** The Danoran capital, which has an evening curfew. Train arrives on the evening of Winter 11.
- ♦ **Orithea.** The only stable city in the Malice Lands. Train arrives on Winter 12.
- ♦ **Trekthom.** The capital of Drakr. The train arrives on Winter 13.
- ♦ **Nalaam.** A decadent casino city run by mages in the mountainous border states between Drakr and Crisillyir. Train arrives on Winter 14.
- ♦ **Sid Minos.** A haunted island city off the coast of Crisillyir. Train arrives on Winter 15.
- ♦ **Vendricce.** A forested border-city in Crisillyir, where the Obscurati have their palace. Train arrives just before sunset on the 16th of Winter.



Bree knows that Caius wanted her to come with him to a meeting at the Sovereign's mansion in Cherae, so she intends to follow that much of his plan. There she meets Luc and is given clearer instructions.

Luc has an escort of his own, **Ottavia Sacredote**, a deaf elf woman who is a spy within the religious hierarchy of Crisillyir. She is a bit conspicuous, especially in the company of a tiefling, but she's one of the few highly-ranking operatives the Obscurati can spare who is capable of communicating via *sending*, making her invaluable in case anything goes wrong. Also, just in case, a handful of passengers in the common cars are hired mercenaries who will come to Ottavia's aid if she gives the right signal.

Ottavia wears a silver ring that says "Orthodoxy Bolsters Gods," marking her as tier four of lantern cell.

Unrelated Actors.

The challenge for the party is the large number of passengers aboard the train. These include a half-orc businessman from Ber who has run afoul of a criminal syndicate, a Danoran madam who is taking a young high elf woman to sell into slavery, a turncoat Risuri spy, a militia member working with train robbers, and a dirty hobo with an unlikely connection to someone the party has met before.

RING CODE.

Each ring has a three word inscription. The first two words can be anything, as long as their initials are O.B. The number of letters in the third word indicates what tier of the conspiracy he's in. Tier three includes just a handful of cell leaders like Lya Jierre and Roland Stanfield. Tier four members are their trusted servants who nevertheless only grasp a fraction of the conspiracy's scope. Tier five is for useful minions who are not privy to any major secrets.

A gold ring indicates he's part of Golden Cell. A silver ring is Lantern Cell. A bronze ring is Colossus Cell. Other cells use some local tree's wood. Caius wore a gold ring that read "Original Bergeron Gold."

These characters have plotlines of their own that the PCs are likely to get involved with as they try to sort out real leads from red herrings. While each is a distraction from the main mission, if the PCs get involved and help people in need they can benefit greatly later in the campaign. Some of their fellow passengers might even prove instrumental in the success of this mission.

Born deaf, Ottavia was given to a Clergy orphanage where she grew up devout in her faith, despite being an elf in a predominately human religion. She learned to communicate through sign language and even speak, albeit with some difficulty. When she reached maturity she began to hear the whispers of angels, and was trained to use magic. But as she rose in prominence among the Clergy, she began to doubt the purity of those in power.

Though still earnest in her faith, Ottavia was susceptible when an agent of the Obscurati noted her concerns and offered her a chance to make a difference. She believes the conspiracy just to be a group of enlightened thinkers who want to reform society and improve the lot of the poor and weak. In Crisilyir she has been subtly acquiring information to disgrace hierarchs she thinks are abusing their power, while helping promote more generous priests.

Ottavia took an instant liking to Luc when she realized the man knew her sign language. She believes Luc's lantern will be used to shield and illuminate the weak when an inevitable reckoning occurs. Throughout the trip she presses Luc to make sure his creation is used for the right purpose.

Ottavia has an enchanted headband that lets her project her thoughts. This helps her be understood more clearly by people who cannot sign, but makes it nearly impossible for her to lie, so she tries not to use it unless necessary.



FINONA DUVALL.

The PCs learned of Caius's plans by recovering a letter from the philanthropist to a lady friend he was trying to seduce, a tiefling mage named Finona Duvall. The party likely defeated Finona in combat, and even if they spared her she probably died at the hands of an extraplanar monster that ate her brain. But it's possible she survived and could be pressed into service as a double agent, or that one PC might try to pose as her.

This ploy could provide an "in" for the party to more quickly identify Luc and his entourage, so don't be afraid to reward the party for clever thinking. Remember that the focus of the mission is not Luc, but rather whom he's meeting at the end of the line.

COMPARTMENTALIZED SECRETS.

It's important to understand that at the start of the adventure, only Ottavia knows about the Obscurati, and even she just thinks that they are an organization of enlightened thinkers who are opposed to the Clergy. She knows nothing about the Axis Seal, the colossus being built in Flint, or the conspiracy's ultimate plan.

Bree knows she's working for a secret society, but not much else. Boone and Verzubak are just hired muscle, albeit very talented muscle. They don't ask questions.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

The party sails to Beaumont, but on the way the PCs are intercepted by two privateer ships working for the Ob. The party has to lie, fight, or flee in order to reach Beaumont on time.

Their ship drops them off and sails ahead, and will be waiting for them in Trekhom, Sid Minos, and Vendricce, ready to provide supplies, support, and escape at mission's end. However, an experimental Ob submarine stealthily follows their ship's movements.

After some brief down time in Beaumont, the party boards the train and heads out. The first day provides many opportunities for the party to interact with other passengers, to try to get a sense of whom they should be keeping their eyes on. Suspects include **Damata Griento**, a nervous orc businessman who is taking his family on a first-class trip and **Elanor Yanette**, a fat, brusque enchantress accompanied by a veiled woman.

By the time the train stops in Cherage for the first night, Bree, Verzubak, and Boone are all aboard, but they pretend not to know each other. Bree sneaks off into the city to meet with Luc and Ottavia. Overnight, a masterfully athletic hobo stows away on the train. This is Andrei von Recklinghausen, who goes by the name **Mister Mapple**.

The morning of the second day, Luc and Ottavia board the train, but they try to stay out of sight. Also boarding is **Cardiff Hengehill**, a Risuri spy with secrets about the Danoran military. He has regular contact throughout the day with **Malia Baccarin**, a member of the train's militia who is Cardiff's contact with his buyers.

Complications.

Over the next five days, the party has multiple opportunities to observe each suspect, while other threats and mysteries provide their own distractions.

On the second night the train stops in Orithea. While most of the passengers sight-see or conduct innocuous business, Luc and Ottavia

head to the city's lighthouse, where Luc meets with a local Obscurati cell leader. He shows how his lantern works and provides documents to help the local cell convert the lighthouse into a large scale version.

On the third day, bandits raid the train as it travels through the Malice Lands. They provoke a screaming hydra-like beast to emerge from a swamp and attack the train as a distraction, and the PCs have to weigh the risk of blowing their cover with saving the lives of the passengers—possibly even Luc and his crew.

That night the train limps into Trekhom. There Cardiff tries to sell his secrets, while Damata attends a lecture by the famous dwarf philosopher Vlendam Heid. Luc again sneaks away to a lighthouse to show off his invention to another cell leader. Meanwhile, Ottavia receives a *sending* warning her that Risuri agents are after Luc. Luc's bodyguards become more wary and try to figure out who's spying on them.

On the evening of the fourth day, the train reaches Nalaam, where most of the plot-lines of the side characters come to a head. Since he has no Ob cell to meet with, Luc and Ottavia spend the evening preparing surprises for the party.

On the fifth day, as the train pulls into Sid Minos, Luc triggers a replica of his lantern, attuned to the PCs and infused with energy of the planet Nem. The PCs' souls are pulled from their flesh and trapped into a ghostly version of the train. If they do not manage to reach the train's engine and disable the lantern quickly, they'll never be able to reunite with their bodies.

They return to this world just as the train pulls into Sid Minos station. Ottavia boards a carriage and uses illusions of Luc and company to try to lure the party to follow her. She takes a boat to a nearby cursed island, and when night falls undead rise from the sea and attack the party. Ottavia confronts the party above a tomb, which provides safety from the horde of the dead, but also serves as a prison for an ancient demon, **Ashima-Shimtu**. Though bound by magic far greater than anything the

PCs could now overcome, she sees the party as an investment, and she offers to teleport them to Vendricce so they can complete their mission.

Of course the PCs might find their own way out, or simply avoid the trap. However they manage to reach Vendricce, when the train gets to the station it offloads all its passengers except Luc and his remaining guards. Then the train moves to a nearby private depot where a welcome party from the Obscurati waits. The party can spot Lya Jierre meeting with her brother, and there's an opportunity to steal the lantern before an overwhelming force of private security comes to take Luc to the Obscurati Palace.

While it is possible the party might follow discreetly all the way to the palace, they are likely spotted by look-outs at the depot. The fastest escape is to hijack the train and drive it to the harbor, where their ship awaits. But Lya Jierre and other Obscurati forces try to thwart them, and the submarine that has stalked them since the start of their mission blocks the mouth of the harbor. The PCs are outnumbered, and they must survive a gauntlet to reach their ship and escape.

RUNNING AN UNDERCOVER ADVENTURE

While we have included a mix of action scenes and dungeon crawling, a major element of *Always on Time* sees the PCs going undercover and trying not to be detected as foreign agents.

If the players don't seem to be enjoying keeping a low profile, don't penalize them harshly if they fall back on familiar tactics. If the PCs simply attack Luc and company when they realize he's working with the conspiracy, then try to beat information out of him, the party still has to make it to Vendricce to see the gathering. And of course the Ob can have other agents watching the train, who can be responsible for the various threats on the party's life.

See Appendix Two: Investigative Skill Challenges for guidelines on handling PC surveilling and interrogating their marks.

Adventure Layout.

The majority of *Always on Time* occurs during a period of six days it takes the train to travel three thousand miles. Most of the party's investigations and interactions will occur at whatever pace they are comfortable with, but the various suspicious NPCs won't sit around and let themselves be interrogated all day. While the days are spent on the train with the occasional social interactions, the nights take the action into various cities.

We present the scenes that occur at specific locations in chronological order. You'll want to be familiar with the various NPCs in order to handle the PCs investigations, which can turn out countless different ways.

Scene Layout.

Each scene is presented in a format of Title, keywords, and tag-line. Keywords include:

Scene Type: Action, Exploration, Exposition, Puzzle, Social, or Hybrid.

Duration: Montage (a few hours or days), Real-time (a few minutes), or Tactical (round-by-round).



A 40-something half-orc from Ber, Damata has brought his wife and two children on board for a vacation. Though the rest of his family is a boisterous party of new-wealth tourists eager to see the "Old World," Damata is troubled and edging toward manic-depression.

Damata hails from a family of orcish warchiefs in Ber, and he never fit in as a warrior, so he made his wealth in real estate, mostly dealing with Risuri and Danoran elites trying to set up factories. After a decade of success, though, he was suckered into a high-stakes con by a man posing as a Risuri train magnate, planning to build a railroad across the Anthras Mountains to connect the two countries. Damata was dazzled by a slick pitch that involved teleporting him to Flint and taking him to lavish parties.

Seeing vast potential for wealth and needing a huge down payment to buy a stake, Damata took a loan from The Family, a criminal organization based out of Crisillyr. When his 'partner' disappeared with tens of thousands of gold pieces, Damata was on the hook. After begging for mercy, he was told to steal the magical heirlooms and war trophies of family, and bring them to Nalaam where the local mages could convert the items into more liquid wealth. Damata botched an attempt to lie to his wife, and ended up with her and their kids tagging along, expecting to enjoy a vacation while Damata does 'research for his railroad.'

Damata has a *suitcase of holding* full of magic weapons and amulets he stole from his villa at home, about twenty items worth a total of 34,000 gp. He has a hunch he'll never make it home alive, and even if he does, he's pretty sure his family will kill him.

Damata plans to show his family a great vacation—museums, lavish hotels, grand musical venues, fine dining—until they reach Nalaam. Should something happen to him, he's made arrangements with a business associate in Sid Minos to take in his family.

- ♦ **Ejeka, the wife.** A darling in her late-20s, Ejeka is quieter and more reserved than her husband. She has an eye for art and fashion, but sees her major responsibility as shepherding her two boisterous children.
- ♦ **Dabo, the daughter.** Just turned 13, Dabo is something of a spoiled princess who is used to getting her way and speaking her mind. She isn't entirely enthusiastic about the trip, and complains frequently about missing her friends, and how unfair it is that she had to leave for months. She's disgusted by her father's recent maudlin affections, and was raised to think men are supposed to be tougher.
- ♦ **Tarro, the son.** A young boy of 7, Tarro is easily bored, and constantly seeks stimuli from new things, new people, new places, and new ideas. He explores, and is always testing his boundaries with his parents.

NPC Roster.

Because of the large number of NPCs the party will meet, we've compiled two handouts to help you keep track of their various statuses, mannerisms, and role in the adventure. A DM handout lists keywords and traits to help you portray the NPCs, while a player handout details characters whom the PCs would be familiar with at the start of the adventure. Encourage the players to add notes as they meet new people of interest.

More detailed entries are included throughout the adventure close to where the characters are first mentioned.

This hugely fat enchantress travels the Avery Coast, facilitating the buying and selling of valuable people to warehouses or wealthy patrons. By a strict reading of laws she is not technically trafficking in slaves, but rather arranging contractual employment or performing wedding matchmaking. She is a highly loathsome woman: rich, smug, and mostly lacking in empathy.

Since she cannot rely on magic in Danor, she also makes use of powerful drugs and poisons to placate her "products." She's developed quite an immunity herself, and can eat just about anything. Once the train gets through the Malice Lands she starts shamelessly enchanting men who strike her fancy to sleep with her.

Little interested in conversation, she's content to just have feasts in the lounge car and then retire to her room to read erotic poetry. But if someone shamelessly compliments her or draws her into a discussion of celebrity gossip, fashion, or magic, she opens up and brags about her work; with long practice, she can easily and glibly justify her horrible behavior with the premise that it actually helps people.



ELANOR
YANETTE

PACING AND LEVELING.

The party starts this adventure at 6th level. At the adventure's end they should reach 7th level.

FAVORS AND PRESTIGE.

The *Player's Guide* details the Prestige and favors system. Though this adventure takes place far from Risur, the RHC has agents around the world. If the PCs do well at establishing contacts during the Mission Planning montage, they will be able to get at least quick favors handled.

A year ago Dr. Wolfgang von Recklinghausen dabbled in dark magic to stitch together and reanimate dead flesh into a new creation. Thanks to the efforts of his father, the creation regenerates wounds like a troll, and has almost unmatched strength and agility for a human. But as a consequence of the dark magic used in his creation, he drains the soul of anyone he touches.

Wolfgang named his creation Andrei and tried to teach him to be like a son. But Andrei recalled some memories of his former life, and when he finally realized how his "father" had created him he lashed out. Andrei murdered Wolfgang's entire house staff, then drained the life out of the doctor's wife. He nearly killed Wolfgang too, but his father set him on fire and fled.

Andrei eventually recovered, but his home was destroyed. For months he had no thought but to find his father and kill him, but Wolfgang eluded him. Eventually Andrei was reduced to begging and theft, and he wandered until he came to the railroad. He's been stowing away for the past half year, seeing the world and learning voraciously, and has decided to enjoy the pleasures of life instead of dwelling on death and vengeance. But he cannot touch anyone, and he longs for someone he could take as a bride. He has chosen the name Mister Mapple, something he thought sounded safe and pleasant.



MISTER MAPPLE

NPC Roster Tables.

Recurring Characters. Stover Delft, Damata Griento, Andrei von Recklinghausen, Ashima-Shimtu, and Lya Jierre all play prominent roles in later adventures. All other NPCs that appear in this adventure might recur in minor roles, but feel free to do with them as you wish. If anyone important dies, you can replace them with someone thematically similar.

NPC Entry	Page
Assistant Chief Inspector Stover Delft	17
Brianne "Bree" Kaldeckis, war vet	8, 10
Damata Griento, orc businessman	5, 17
Olivert Boone, gunslinger	18, 19
Verzubak Tantalovich, luck mage	18, 19
Elanor Yanette, sex trafficker	6, 18
Isobel Travers, high elf slave	18
"Mister Mapple," Andrei von Recklinghausen, the Creation	6, 21
Luc Jierre, arcanoscientist and inventor	2, 22
Ottavia Sacredote, Obscurati priestess	4, 22
Cardiff Hengehill, turncoat spy	7, 22
Malia Baccarin, treacherous train guard	7, 17
Minister of Outsiders Lya Jierre	52

Incidental NPCs. The following NPCs probably only show up for a single scene, but if the PCs latch on to anyone, you can refer here to remind yourself who is who.

NPC	Page
Candace Coman, RHC double agent	10
Hank Gallagher, reporter/spy	10
Clark Dunstan, docker/spy	10
Miggs Maloney, cop/spy	10
Jessica, Anna, Emilia, Kell-guild thieves	10
Glaz du Sang Magie, Obscurati water mage	12
Jerrial and Auria, privateer captains	13
Xorin Marchand, conductor	15
Kov Marik, train chef	17
Doris Gavagne, piano player	17
Bucher Monmarl, Danoran bureaucrat	20
*Hanse Randall, architect/Obscurati cell leader	24
Rodinn, Malice bandit captain	24
Vankloff Jeanov, dwarf ritualist	29
Ulrik Pevedin, military secrets buyer	29
*Ramos Zoltan, prison magnate/Obscurati cell leader	30
Vlendarn Heid, renowned philosopher	30
Sylvester Fomazelli, Family capodecina	33
Azon the Stoneforger, magical item launderer	33
Lord Kulp, Master of Games	34
Nikola the Necromancer	34
Father Balthazar	34
Jaime the Weevil	34
Cordell Donofrio, Sid Minos businessman	44
Gene, lunatic godhand	48
*Lester Guillory, Risuri engineer/Obscurati tier 4	52
*Dustin Huff, Danoran astronomer/Obscurati tier 4	52
*Emily and Anna Davis, Crisillyiri lobbyists/Obscurati tier 4	52

* Members of the Obscurati

Rewards.

At the end of this adventure, the party's Prestige with Risur should increase by 1 step. If they manage to stymie or confront the conspirators in Vendricce in any way and manage to escape alive, their Prestige with the Obscurati increases by 1. If they rescue Isobel and get her to safety, their Prestige with the Unseen Court will improve. It's very unlikely the party's Prestige with Flint or The Family will change.

At the end of Adventure Three, *Digging for Lies*, each PC should have had gear valued at around 16,000 gp, not counting anything they hid from an office audit. At the start of this adventure, the PCs each receive 6,000 gp worth of stipend and salary.

List of New Magic Items.

New items are presented at the end of the adventure.

- ♦ Luc Jierre's *wayfarer's lantern*, page 65.
- ♦ Bree's *butcher's girdle*, page 64.
- ♦ Ottavia's *headband of roaming thoughts*, page 64.
- ♦ Cardiff's *amulet of the impeccable spy*, page 64.
- ♦ Boone's *demonic pistol*, page 64.
- ♦ Verzubak's *lucky dice ki focus*, page 64.
- ♦ Lya Jierre's *razorburst rapier*, page 64.
- ♦ An apostate godhand's *hands of heaven and hell*, page 64.

A Final Word Before We Start.

We are sensitive to the risk of rail-roading the players in an adventure that literally takes place on a railroad. The players can only score a complete success in their mission if they ride the train to the end, and so we list events that are very likely to occur at various points during the trip. However, do not hesitate to let the party's actions change things dramatically. Fun games are full of dramatic surprises, and a derauling train is certainly that.



CARDIFF
HENGEHILL

Your classic international man of mystery, Cardiff Hengehill spies in Danor without even bothering to conceal his Risuri accent or his memorably handsome face. After years of small time missions that he hoped would earn him a trip back home to retire while he still had his looks, Cardiff finally has achieved an espionage coup. Through contacts, bribery, and burglary, he managed to get a copy of a briefing on Danor's military build-up plans for the next five years.

He's done with Risur, though, and so he plans to sell the documents for 20,000 gold pieces to the Drakrans. Malia, a guard on the train, has arranged the meeting.

Cardiff's usual demeanor is cool disapproval; he tends to keep quiet, leaving other people to fill the awkward silence and risk revealing something. But he can fake interest with remarkable enthusiasm.



MALIA BACCARIN

Dark, lithe, and beautiful, Malia grew up in Danor, though her family was Crisillyiri. She has tangential connections with various criminal organizations in every city along the Avery Coast line, and she enjoys favored status for getting crooks in contact with other crooks in ways that profit everyone. She makes sure to pick up the local newspapers at every stop along the train, and often has a bundle tucked under her arm as she does her duty through the train.

She's a skilled manipulator, and can cajole, goad, or seduce most any man into doing what she wants. Her dream is to retire in a few years with a solid stash of cash, and buy an island villa in Crisillyir.

CHARACTER THEMES IN THE ADVENTURE.

Each ZEITGEIST adventure includes one or more scenes that bring the PCs' character themes (detailed in the *Player's Guide*) to the forefront.

- ♦ Dockers will find friends all along the Avery Coast, making it easier to blend in and send messages to allies at sea. But sufficiently popular dockers might find their fame a liability when trying to travel incognito.
- ♦ Eschatologists get to meet the founder of their movement, Vlendam Heid.
- ♦ Gunsmiths might enjoy shopping for enchanted firearms in Trekhom, where Drakran gunsmiths are experimenting with grenades and rockets.
- ♦ Martial Scientists will get to duel esteemed swordswoman Lya Jierre, and learn her signature severing technique.
- ♦ Skyseers got a lot of attention in the past two adventures. However, they'll have a strong intuitive grasp of Luc's lantern.

- ♦ Spirit Mediums as always provide an invaluable skill in an investigation where dead bodies might show up.
- ♦ Technologists are riding a train. Odds are high they'll get a chance to drive or possibly even crash the train. Who wouldn't enjoy that?
- ♦ Vekeshi Mystics have an opportunity to rescue an enslaved high elf woman, and through Ashima-Shimtu they can learn part of the truth about the Great Malice.
- ♦ Yerasol Veterans will be heading into the homeland of the enemy they faced in the last war. You as GM should look for opportunities to present old rivals who remember the PC. Bree could work for this, but ideally the PC would not be compelled to attack her on sight, either for revenge or to maintain a cover story.



ACT ONE: IF YOU CHOOSE TO ACCEPT

This act covers the party's planning efforts for their spy mission.

MEANWHILE, IN THE NEWS.

While the PCs are buckling down on their mission planning, what's going on in Flint and the rest of Risur?

Fire. Scholars throughout Flint weep as the Miller Memorial Library burns down. The library, which was built over 400 years ago during the first term of Governor Roland Stanfield, contained original copies of some of Risur's oldest literature, poetry, and religious epistles. Police authorities blame poor construction of the building's gaslight lanterns, but some found it suspicious that no adjacent buildings caught fire. The lawyer for a pair of lizardfolk brothers serving a life sentence in prison for arson delivered a statement on their behalf. Though they did not explicitly claim responsibility, they warned that Risur should release them, or else more buildings will burn.

Fireband. Benedict Pemberton, owner of experimental arms manufacturer Pemberton Industries, is on a tour of the nation, speaking with members of parliament and rich power-brokers to promote his new book, *Behold! Science!* In it, he argues that the Risur-Danor peace conference scheduled for early Spring 501 could kill the nation's progress in technological innovation, since without the threat of war there will be no motivation for research. Critics charge he's making a veiled push for war with Ber, about which he makes derogatory claims throughout the book.

Fired! As protests continue in Parity Lake over factory conditions and worker abuses, several owners discharged their entire workforce without notice and brought in police to arrest as trespassers any workers who showed up. The same day, several hundred Beran immigrants arrived at Bosum Strand and were ushered directly to the factories.

Fireworks. The year ends on the 91st of Winter, and that evening the people of Flint can expect a dazzling display of fireworks launched from ships in the harbor. Parades are being organized, including the grand March of Kings, a mobile costume ball with dancers and all manner of extravagant entertainment. A few small factories upstream of Stray River are producing high-quality fireworks, while those in Parity Lake are under watch to make sure nothing burns down.

Ice. Climate researchers at Pardwight University warn that extra soot and smoke in the air from the industrial economy will block sunlight, cooling the planet and causing horrible winters. A spokesman for Eschatologists of Flint United sent a thank you letter to the department, encouraging them to keep spreading evidence of the world's imminent demise.



MISSION PLANNING

Puzzle/Social. Montage. Level 8.

The PCs and Chief Inspector Delft plan a mission in foreign territory.
To set the stage for the adventure, read or paraphrase the following.

Mere days ago you learned the name of the conspiracy: the Obscurati.

They have kept their secrets well. Though twice their plots have endangered Flint, both were accidents—an earthquake released a flood of deadly magical fuel they were refining on Cauldron Hill, and an alien monster freed by their tinkering with ancient magic nearly pulled the RHC headquarters into an insane far realm. You don't know what their ultimate designs are, but what you've seen suggests they have access to many resources.

Your boss, Chief Inspector Stover Delft, asks you to meet him aboard your ship, far from any possible spies. The conspiracy seems overconfident in their ability to keep secrets, and they don't know how much you've learned. But you have a time and place where you know this 'Obscurati' will be gathered: the 20th of Winter, in Vendricce. It's time to plan your next move.

"I apologize for not bringing pastries and coffee," Delft says. "This meeting needs to be as hush-hush as possible. I have the first tiny bits of a plan in my head, but it won't work if any spies get wind of this. Loose lips sink ships and you, constables, are going overseas."

Delft explains the basic idea of the mission:

Caius's letter said he'd be traveling by train from Beaumont, at one end of the Avery Coast Railroad, to Vendricce, the other end. He'd be leaving on the 11th of Winter, and would attend a meeting on the 20th in Vendricce. Delft has a hunch he'll be meeting with someone else from this Obscurati group.

The party will take the same train Caius would have, and they'll look for people he might have been meeting along the way, or others headed to the same meeting. In Vendricce they'll try to recover useful intelligence about the conspiracy, possibly take a prisoner for later interrogation, and then return to Risur. He admits it's complicated, but they have about fifty days to figure out all the details.

Five Elements to a Good Spy Mission.

There are three elements that need to be handled before the party leaves, and two components to the mission itself.

First, **secrecy**. The party must tell as few people as possible what they'll be doing, because they can't know who might be a spy or be under surveillance. Toward that end, they'll need a cover story, a red herring so that any spies won't get suspicious at the lack of activity.

Second, **cover identities**. This will be a difficult operation, requiring them to use false identities as they travel through multiple foreign nations. They'll need documents, appropriate attire, and ways to explain their uncanny martial prowess if anyone sees them get into a fight. They'll be traveling first class, so even if the party has a bunch of weird races, sufficient money tends to get people to overlook such issues.

Third, **contingencies**. The RHC does have agents laying low along the route the PCs will be taking, but it will be a challenge to coordinate them so they can be useful to the party without drawing attention. Also, the nation of Risur has access to many resources, and the more

preparation the party does, the easier time they'll have on their mission.

Once the planning is complete, there's still the actual mission. The party will board a ship—a new vessel, since the one they've previously used is likely being watched—and sail to Beaumont. That leads to the fourth component, **spycraft**. On the train they'll need to identify people of interest without blowing their cover. Delft figures that they can safely contain their investigations to first- and second-class passengers, since he doubts anyone important would ride coach. He reminds them that the big payoff is in Vendricce, so they should be careful not to move too soon and spook someone who might lead to more valuable information.

The final step is **extraction**. They'll have to come up with several ways to get out of Vendricce when the mission is over. Delft would love a quiet escape plan where no one ever knows they were there, but he figures the party won't be so subtle, so they should plan ahead in case they're being pursued by the army or something.

Planning Montage

The players are not expected to decide every detail; instead they'll spend the next few weeks in a sort of 'planning montage,' where the party's clever ideas and/or skill checks determine how well the party prepares for various challenges and contingencies.

To start, show the players the Avery Coast Railroad Brochure hand-out (page 68), and then make sure they know the following key details.

1. The train they want to be on leaves Beaumont at 7:30 AM on the 11th of Winter. It reaches Vendricce at around 5:30 PM on the 16th of Winter. Caius's meeting is supposed to start on the 20th.
2. The party will want to leave for Danor with plenty of time to spare, in case of complications along the way. Delft suggests the 85th of Autumn, about 50 days from now.
3. Delft suggests having the PCs' ship drop them off in Beaumont, then sail ahead. The train moves faster than the boat, but due to terrain it would be possible for their ship to be in Trekhom when the train is scheduled to arrive on the 13th, as a contingency in case things go wrong. It could also be in Sid Minos when the party arrives on the 15th. From there it would still be able to reach Vendricce by the 16th.

TIMELINE.

The ZEITGEIST calendar consists of four seasons of 91 days each. The adventure begins somewhere around the 35th of Autumn, right after the end of *Digging for Lies*. The party's ship sets out for Beaumont on the 85th day of Autumn. They should arrive seven days later, on the 1st of Winter, giving them ten days of leeway in case of delays. On the 11th, the train departs Beaumont, and barring a derailment it will reach Vendricce just before dusk on the 16th.

NEW SHIP?

In Adventures Two and Three, the party likely cruised around on an un-armed cutter, just big enough for a party of adventurers to handle on their own. In *Always on Time*, though, they get access to either a two-masted schooner or a seaworthy steamship, armed with eight light cannons. If you own *Admiral o' the High Seas* (due for release in Summer 2012), the party can instead choose to personalize a Level 10 ship. Otherwise we present two designs in the Player's Handout on page 67—*Roscommon* and *Khalundurrin*.

NUMBER IN THE PARTY.

For each PC fewer than five, reduce the number of successes needed for partial victories and complete victories. For each PC above five, increase the number of successes need by two.

After that, proceed to the montage, which should progress as a collaborative brainstorm. Don't be stingy with answering their questions or even suggesting a few elements they might have overlooked. After all, in-game the PCs have much more time to plan than the players do.

Preparation for Avery Coast Mission.

Key Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Knowledge (History), Perception, Stealth, Sense Motive

Difficulty: Unless otherwise noted, all skill checks are DC 20.

This challenge has three goals which the party pursues simultaneously. Successful skill checks, clever ideas, or good roleplaying can count as successes, and the more successes the party has, the better chance they have for victory in their mission.

Each goal lists tactics that can contribute successes. Some tactics are marked with an asterisk (*). These do not contribute to the main pool of successes, but provide alternate routes to success or make things easier for other checks. It is unlikely the party will succeed at all their goals. That's fine.

- ♦ Goal One: Secrecy.
- ♦ Goal Two: Cover Identities.
- ♦ Goal Three: Contingencies.

Passage of Time.

This montage consists of seven rounds, each roughly a week in length. Handle events week by week. Like any good montage you'll show lots of things happening at once to remind everyone of what's going on. With every round show a little improvement, but to show it all will take too long.

Have each PC choose one goal to pursue, then describe how he'll attempt to reach that goal. If necessary, use a skill check to adjudicate whether the PC succeeds. Once all the PCs have had their turn, a new round starts.

Goal One: Secrecy.

This represents keeping up appearances so that the various spies who are watching the party don't get suspicious, or simply hiding from the spies outright. Sample tactics for this goal include:

- ♦ **Do Busy Work, Leave Fake Paper Trail.** (Bluff, Diplomacy, Sleight of Hand) The PC pretends to be on another case, or actually pursues some minor investigation unrelated to the Obscurati, or files false paperwork. If the party gets at least one success this way each week for five consecutive weeks, the party earns two extra successes, because even spies assume the party can't be faking it for that long.
- ♦ **Act in Secret.** (Stealth) Alternately, a PC might arrange a careful system to ensure that no one can get a look at what the party is really up to. This tactic can contribute no more than four successes to the goal, however.
- ♦ **Locate Spies.*** (Diplomacy, Perception, Sense Motive) If the PCs are going to spend their time faking effort, they ought to make sure those efforts are actually being watched by someone. This doesn't contribute to the main pool of successes, but a success on

A Flinter in his early 40s, Delft gets squinty and condescending when his authority is questioned, but he can recognize talent and good work. Delft chews tobacco, and thinks he looks charming if he grins while sucking on tobacco juices. He walks with a cane because a mimic tore a chunk out of his leg fifteen years ago. He has a habit of poking inanimate objects with the cane before he gets too close to them, and spitting on them when he wants to be extra sure.



this tactic makes the above tactics easier, reducing busy work, fake paper trails, and actions in secret to DC 16.

- ♦ **Turn the Spies.*** (Diplomacy, Intimidate) This risky gambit can only be attempted after the party locates the spies. One success at this tactic establishes contact with the spies. A second success lets the party buy off the spies. For the price of a bribe worth 1,000 gp, the party convinces the spies to deliver false intelligence. (The bribe takes the form of various favors and small items, not a single cash payment, though it is counted from the party stipend.)

The risk, however, is that a failure on either skill check spooks the spies, and they report that they've been discovered. At that point, no matter how many successes the party gets on this goal, they can never achieve a complete victory.

Alternately, after the first check establishes contact with the spies, the party might try to just kill them. The spies are no real threat—equivalent to a handful of low-level rogues—so the party automatically can take them out, but this likewise tips off the spymasters that something's up, so the party cannot achieve a complete victory at this goal.

Results. If after seven weeks the party has eight successes, they get a complete victory; the Obscurati have no idea the party will be heading to Danor, making their enemies much less suspicious.

Six or seven successes are a partial victory; the Obscurati know the party is preparing for a sea voyage, so they make various precautions.

Fewer successes are a failure. The Obscurati pretty much know the party's plans—someone blabbed, or a spy snuck a magical listening device into their office, or they got a member of the party's ship's crew to betray them.

Goal Two: Cover Identities.

Before going undercover in foreign countries, the PCs need to make sure their cover identities will withstand scrutiny. Simply showing up and announcing they're RHC constables will get them tossed out of the country or arrested as spies. Some tactics toward this goal include:

- ♦ **Visas, Passports, Miscellaneous Documents.** (Diplomacy, Linguistics, Sleight of Hand) These items, acquired legally or illegally, provide 'proof' for the party's cover identities. This tactic can contribute no more than three successes.
- ♦ **Look the Part.** (Bluff, Disguise) A PC finds appropriate clothes and accoutrements for the whole party, and makes grooming suggestions to aid the disguise. This tactic can contribute no more than two successes.

- ♦ **Rehearse Personalities.** (Sense Motive, Disguise) A PC can quiz the rest of the party to make sure they won't be tripped up by questions, that they don't answer to the wrong name, and that they all know each other as well as they should. This tactic can contribute no more than three successes.
- ♦ **Finishing Touches.** (Knowledge (Arcana, Dungeoneering, History, Local, or Religion)) The appropriate skill depends on what cover the party is using, but a PC could coach the party on topics their cover identity would know.

Results. A complete victory here means the party not only has pulled together convincing backstories, costumes, and documentation, but they've had a chance to get comfortable with their cover identities. They'll only be discovered if they act overtly out of character (and you as GM should try to remind them before they accidentally do anything that would break their cover).

A partial victory means the identities are hard to pierce, but they won't stand up to close scrutiny. A failure means that their identities are just the minimum sufficient to get them into Danor and onto the train. If they ever raise a fuss or draw attention of the authorities, they'll have to work to avoid discovery.

Goal Three: Contingencies.

Each week a PC can choose to take the necessary steps to prepare for one of the following contingencies. Most of these do not require any sort of skill check to succeed; it's enough for the narrative that the player is making plans. Some are harder to get, though.

- ♦ **Docks and Ports.** If the PCs need to sneak in or out of a city or get contraband delivered, this contingency will ensure they have allies they can turn to at the docks of one of the six coastal cities along the railroad (Nalaam is in the mountains). These allies might only number five or six, and they won't fight for the party, but they'll act as look-outs or do safe favors. The main challenge here is to arrange and communicate codes and signals to people across the sea. After all, the PCs and their allies have likely never met before.

Each time the party chooses this contingency, they can arrange contacts in another city's port. A character with the Docker theme always has a chance of finding friends in port even if the party did not arrange for allies in a given city.

- ♦ **Enclaves.** Each night the train stops in a Danoran-owned enclave with entertainment and lodging. Each time the party pursues this contingency, they can arrange for allies in one of the seven cities along the railroad. As above, these allies won't fight for the party, but they can be a useful extra set of hands.

WHAT SPIES?

A secretary in the RHC office, **Candace Coman**, thinks she's just keeping tabs on the PCs for a reporter, but the reporter is actually **Hank Gallagher**, a spy who delivers his information to an anonymous proxy in Parity Lake. It eventually gets to Lorcan Kell's thieves guild, who pass it on to the Obscurati.

Meanwhile a docker named **Clark Dunstan** watches the party's ship, while an elderly cop named **Miggs Maloney** looks for chatter about the party from other police officers. Both report to a similar chain of command as Gallagher. The only real threat are a trio of Kell guild thieves—**Jessica, Anna, and Emilia**—who watch the PCs' homes and occasionally tail them.

- ♦ **Friendly Passengers.** Each time the party chooses this contingency, they can arrange for one Allied Passenger to be in the coach cars, ready to act when they see the right signal. The stats for Allied Passengers are presented in Appendix One: The Avery Coast Railroad.
- ♦ **Eyes on the Train.** (Diplomacy) With a successful check, a PC can arrange for a low-level RHC agent to get a job aboard the train, likely as cleaning or cook staff. If the party succeeds a second check they can also get someone hired to the train's security detail.
- ♦ **Teleportation.** (Knowledge (Arcana)) If the party is not able to do so themselves, they might need a mage to teleport them, particularly if they get thrown off the train and need to catch up to the next stop. Only Trekhom, Nalaam, Sid Minos, and Vendricce can be teleported into, as they possess the necessary teleportation beacons (cities without beacons are difficult to teleport into or out of, due to latent gold deposits in the ground). A successful check gets a mage in one of those cities to wait on retainer, ready to teleport the party.

These cities' teleportation beacons are in secure facilities under heavy guard. While foreigners are allowed to enter, they will be questioned thoroughly, subjected to mild divinations, and asked to pay for a teleportation visa if they do not already have one (at the cost of 500 gp per person, valid for five years).

- ♦ **Care Package.** (Diplomacy) If the party is capable of *sending*, they can requisition gear from the RHC just as if they were present in person. After first making a Knowledge (Arcana) check to get a mage on retainer in Flint, the party will have to convince the RHC's quartermaster to be ready to hand over requested items to the mage. If successful, the party would be able to cast *sending*, use the normal Prestige rules to requisition items, and then have the items delivered via teleportation to the city of their choice. The time required would be about 8 hours longer than however much time it would normally take.

Results. After the seven weeks of preparation, make a list of what contingencies the party planned for. When they run into trouble during the adventure, encourage them to call upon whatever plans they made in advance, and try not to say no to reasonable suggestions. It's likely the party will make some plans that are never necessary, so if they actually picked the right spot to plan, make sure to reward them for it.



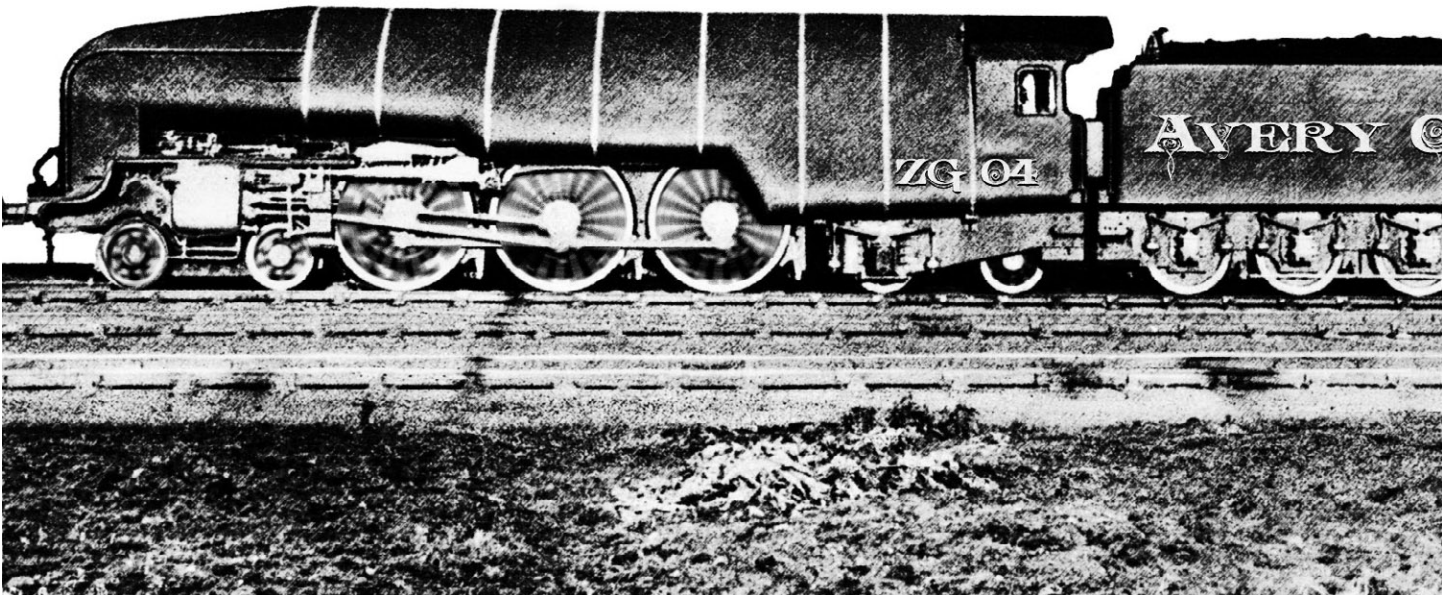
BAH! LET'S START ALREADY!

If your players just want to jump into the mission, they can use the following cover identities. Adjust genders, names, and races as needed. Strange races like warforged and pixies will require more elaborate explanations.

- ♦ **Royston Porcher.** Veteran of the Fourth Yerasol War, turned landowner in the southwestern Risuri province of Blackgap. Now touring the Avery Coast with his bodyguards and former war buddies.
- ♦ **Gary Normanson.** War buddy of Royston's.
- ♦ **Tristan Wolfe.** Another war buddy.
- ♦ **Scottie Butcher.** Mage bodyguard, hired to check for compulsions and illusions.
- ♦ **Chet Foster.** Foreign manservant.

As for secrecy and contingency, assume the party got a partial success on maintaining secrecy; and give them two "spy tokens." During the adventure they can hand over a spy token to get help for one of the contingencies above, as if they'd planned for it.

An Avery Coast Railroad train at full steam along a lonely stretch of track.





ACT TWO: ALL ABOARD

This act covers the party's journey to Danor, and the train's travel through Danor and the Malice Lands.

SIGHTSEEING

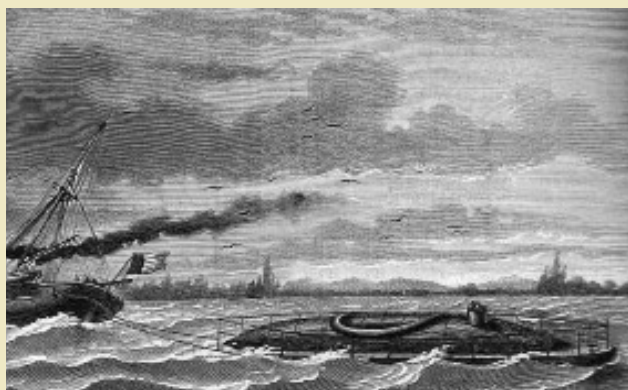
If the PCs take this opportunity to take a look at how things have developed on Axis Island since they left, warships patrol the waters near it. Should the party somehow get onto the island, they find excavations akin to those at the ziggurats, but on a much grander scale. Factories have sprung up around the Axis Fortress, assembling humanoid constructs for manual labor so that no menial workers will be exposed to the island's secrets. A lake is being drained, its feeding streams diverted so that in the coming months the giant Axis Seal can be unearthed. Security is extremely tight.

NAVAL COMBAT RULES

If you want to use detailed rules to determine the results of naval combat, we've provided quick play naval rules which you can download from our website, <http://www.enworld.org/ap>. If you want a more detailed experience, you can purchase our upcoming sourcebook, *Admiral o' the High Seas*, due in Summer 2012.

Escaping is only possible if the party has a rudder. Even then, it's a long endeavor. Every eight hours can each make an appropriate skill check (DC 21) or ability check (DC 15) to help navigate, aid the crew, trick the pursuers, or perhaps hide amid the archipelago. If at least half the party succeeds these checks, they get a victory. They have to rack up three victories to shake the privateers off their tails. If all the PCs fail, it negates one victory. If the party is already out of victories and then all PCs fail, the privateers catch up.

If your players don't care about maneuvering and naval tactics, have their pilot recommend they use the cove as a bottleneck. First the *Canis* attacks, starting 100 feet away and closing 40 feet per round until it stops adjacent. The *Amicus* appears 8 rounds later, sailing up alongside the *Canis* and using it as a bridge to the party. The *Cachalot*'s pods flank the party and attack from the far side.



An Ob vessel tows the Cachalot into position for its subterfuge mission.

DANGEROUS WATERS

Exploration. Montage.

The party sets sail across the Avery Sea, but their route is watched by the Obscurati.

On the night of the night of the 85th of Autumn, Delft wishes the party luck, and then they set out aboard their ship (see page 67: *Roscommon* and *Khalundurrin*). Any skyseer in the party notes that one of the golden motes of Urim has disappeared, likely devoured by Nem. This heralds a change in fortune, and promises secrets will be revealed.

The ship sets out on a seven-day voyage west into the Yerasol Archipelago, then north to Beaumont. It's a well-trafficked merchant route, and though their ship flies Risuri colors, Danor's navy is not supposed to attack. On the fourth day, as they near the archipelago, the party might notice (Perception DC 21) a smoke plume following them a mile or two away, as if coming from a steamship. But there's no sign of an actual vessel. If a PC uses a spyglass eventually he spots a small steam pipe sticking five feet out of the water, emitting the smoke. Just in front of it is a periscope.

Cachalot.

The party's ship is being followed by the *Cachalot*, an experimental submarine powered by both steam and magic. The Obscurati have a handful of these vessels, and they patrol around Axis Island. Each is 110 ft. long, 15 ft. wide, and has a crew of 8 marines and one magitech engineer. They're little more than tubes with pumps, compressed air, and engines, but with the aid of magic they're fast enough to track any ship in the sea. If threatened they can dive to a depth of 30 ft. and easily slip away. Each also carries two smaller submersible pods with mechanical arms. They can be used as escape vehicles, or as delivery devices for spellbombs.

The engineer and captain of the *Cachalot* is a very old Danoran wizard named **Glaz du Sang Magie**. He specializes in hydromancy, but has a fascination for ice and steam as well as liquid water.

Welcome Party.

Obscurati mages on Axis Island regularly cast divinations to see if potential threats might be approaching, but they get lots of false positives because they're paranoid. So when the party approaches, they send a submarine. They also have on their payroll various privateer ships in the archipelago they can magically contact. The Ob's actions vary based on how well the party handled the Secrecy aspect of the planning montage.

Complete Victory. The Ob conspirators aren't sure who's on board the PCs' ship. One of the Cachalot's pods sneaks up and plants a magical tracking device on the bottom of the PCs' ship's hull. The submarine tails them for a day until they get near Danor, where even the seas are part of the dead magic zone. It reports back to base, and the Ob perform more divinations. Eventually they realize who the party is and where they're headed, so they give the Cachalot orders to follow the party's ship all the way to Vendricce.

Partial Victory. As above, but the suspicious Ob also sends two privateer ships to board the party's vessel and look for anything out of the ordinary. This might provoke a fight, but it's not necessary.

Failure. The Ob knows the party are on board and wants to stop them now, so they order the privateers and the Cachalot to attack.

Interception.

The route through the Yerasol Archipelago gets a bit dicey in a few spots, and every captain has his favored stations of passage. One such is a steep wooded island called Rivenstone. The trees here yield soft lumber, good for quick ship repairs but not long-term shipbuilding. There's even a large safe cove with sheltering rock walls, named Colmarr's Folly after a gnome ranger who sank his ship when he sailed too close and cracked his keel. The wreck lies split on either side of the cove's threshold.

In the predawn hours of the fourth day of their journey (89th Autumn), the party's ship passes near Rivenstone. Any PC with darkvision who is on lookout might notice (Perception DC 21) one of the *Cachalot's* pods sneak up under the party's ship in the predawn hours. If not detected, the pod uses its mechanical arm to first jam an enchanted metal spike into the bottom of the ship's hull, which acts as a beacon, making it easy for them to track the party's movements. Then, if the Ob has ordered a boarding or attack, they detach the party's ship's rudder.

If no PC noticed the pod, the party's crew realizes the rudder isn't working within a few minutes, by which point it has drifted away into the night. If the party spots the pod or is wary of sabotage, they might be able to get the rudder and start to reattach it. At best they'll get done just after sunrise, right as the privateers arrive.

THE BATTLE OF COLMARR'S FOLLY

Action. Tactical.

Two ironclad privateers attempt to board the party's vessel, while a submarine lurks nearby.

Two privateer ships—*Canis est Carnes* and *Amicus Selachii*—appear on the horizon and make for the party. Using semaphore, the privateers signal for the party to yield to boarding and search. Once the ships reach close range, the privateers prefer to board and force surrender rather than sink a valuable ship.

Canis est Carnes

Jerial, *Canis* Captain
28 Privateer Crew
2 Privateer Officers

Amicus Selachii

22 Privateer Crewman
4 Privateer Officers
Auria, *Amicus* Captain

Cachalot

8 Obscurati Marines
Glaz du Sang Magie



Each privateer ship individually is an average encounter. Together they're a hard encounter. The *Cachalot* would be a hard encounter, though they withdraw if they don't win as fast as they'd like, so they're more like a challenging encounter. If the party is set upon by all the ships at once, it's equivalent to a very difficult epic encounter.

Terrain.

If the party has a rudder, they can make for the cove, Colmarr's Folly, which presents a bottleneck for the privateers so they can only attack one at a time. Also, because the cove is only about twenty feet deep at its

entrance, the *Cachalot* won't follow because its captain is wary of getting stuck. Of course, the party might simply get caught out in open water.

The *Cachalot* can detach its side pods, each 15 ft. long with a hatch on top. If someone is inside to pilot, they have a speed of 50 ft. underwater, or 20 ft. on the surface.

Tactics.

The privateers aren't particularly clever. Jerial, who wears *buccaneer's breastplate* so he can swim safely and walk on water, leads his crew in melee. Auria has two of her crew hold and load spare muskets for her as she fires from her ship's forecandle at anyone who's out of reach of the main crew. The officers use their fencing skills to try to dark around and make attacks on weaker opponenets.

Aboard the *Cachalot*, Glaz watches through the periscope. Even if he has orders to attack the party, he's wary of risking his ship so he lets the privateers exhaust themselves first. Then he surfaces and pops the hatch so he can conjure an ice storm to trap the party's ship. Four marines swim to the ice floe and climb aboard the party's ship, while the others pair up in the sub's pods. Each pod has one pilot and one man up top, shooting out of the hatch.

If more than half the marines are defeated, or if Glaz feels threatened, he orders a retreat. As many men as possible pile back into the sub, and then it submerges.

Jerial, *Canis* Captain

CR 6

XP 2,400

Male human fighter (two-weapon fighter*) 7

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +7; Senses Perception +1

* See *Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game: Advanced Player's Guide™*

Defense

AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 61 (7d10+14)

Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +3

Defensive Abilities Bravery +2, Defensive Flurry

Offense

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 trident +8/+3 (1d8+3) and masterwork net +8/+3

Special Attacks Twin Blades +1

Statistics

Str 14 Dex 17, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

Base Atk +7; CMB +9; CMD 20

Feats Distance Thrower*, Exotic Weapon Proficiency: Net, Improved Initiative, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Net Adept*, Net and Trident*, Net Maneuvering*, Two-weapon Fighting, Vital Strike

* See *Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game: Ultimate Combat™*

Skills Acrobatics +1, Bluff +1, Climb +1, Escape Artist -3, Fly -3, Intimidate +4, Profession (Sailor) +9, Ride -3, Stealth -1, Swim +3

Languages Common

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, Other Gear +1 trident, *buccaneer's breastplate**, masterwork net

* See *Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game: Advanced Player's Guide™*

Privateer Crewman

CR 1/3

XP 135

Male or female human expert 1

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +0

Defense

AC 12, touch 11, flat-footed 11 (+1 armor, +1 Dex,)

hp 8 (1d8)

Fort +0, **Ref** +1, **Will** +1

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee saber+1 (1d8+1/19-20)

Statistics

Str 12 **Dex** 12, **Con** 11, **Int** 13, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 9

Base Atk +0; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 12

Feats Athletic, Skill Focus (Profession [sailor])

Skills Acrobatics +2, Climb +4, Escape Artist +2, Knowledge (geography) +2, Knowledge (local) +2, Perception +0, Profession (sailor) +6, Stealth +2, Swim +4

Languages Common, Dwarven

Other Gear padded armor, saber (treat as long sword)

Privateer Officer

CR 3

XP 800

Male or female human fighter 4

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +2

Defense

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 36 (4d10+8)

Fort +6, **Ref** +4, **Will** +2

Defensive Abilities Bravery +1

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee masterwork rapier+8 (1d6+2/18-20)

Ranged masterwork pistol+8 (1d8/x4)

Statistics

Str 15 **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 20

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Skill Focus (Profession [Sailor]), Weapon Finesse

Skills Climb +6, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (Geography) +0, Perception +2, Profession (Sailor) +10, Swim +7

Languages Common

SQ Armor Training 1

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of heroism*; **Other Gear** masterwork pistol, masterwork rapier, studded leather

Auria, Amicus Captain

CR 6

XP 2,400

Female human gunslinger (musket master*) 7

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +6; **Senses** Perception +10

* See *Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game: Ultimate Combat*

Defense

AC 20, touch 16, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +4 Dex, +2 dodge)

hp 54 (7d10+14)

Fort +7, **Ref** +9, **Will** +3

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Ranged masterwork musket +9/+4 (1d12+4/x4)

Statistics

Str 8 **Dex** 18, **Con** 14, **Int** 13, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 20

Feats Deadly Aim, Gunsmithing, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Quick Draw, Rapid Reload: Musket Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus: Musket

Skills Acrobatics +13, Bluff +7, Climb +5, Diplomacy +4, Escape Artist +10, Perception +10, Profession (Sailor) +10, Sense Motive +5, Sleight of Hand +11, Swim +8

Languages Common, Elven

SQ covering shot, dead shot, deadeye, deeds, fast musket, grit, gunslinger initiative, musket training, pistol-whip, quick clear, startling shot, steady aim, targeting

Other Gear masterwork musket, mithral chain shirt

Obscurati Marine

CR 1

XP 400

Male or female human fighter 1 / gunslinger 1

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +4

Defense

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 25 (2d10+9)

Fort +7, **Ref** +4, **Will** +0

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee masterwork shortsword+4 (1d6+1/19-20)

Ranged masterwork pistol+5 (1d8/x4 plus 1d6 cold)

Statistics

Str 13 **Dex** 15, **Con** 16, **Int** 12, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 15

Feats Gunsmithing, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +5, Climb +5, Escape Artist +1, Fly +1, Intimidate +4, Perception +4, Ride +1, Survival +4, Swim +5

Languages Common, Elven

SQ deadeye, deeds, grit, gunslinger's dodge, quick clear

Other Gear 10 +1 frost bullets, masterwork pistol, masterwork shortsword, studded leather

Glaz du Sang Magie

CR 7

XP 3,200

Male human wizard 8

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; Senses Perception +5

Defense

AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 11 (+3 Dex, +1 deflection, +1 dodge)

hp 43 (8d6+16)

Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +7

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee masterwork dagger+4 (1d4-1/19-20)

Special Attacks cold blast (1d6+4 DC ☐7)

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 8th; concentration +11)

4th—*fire shield** (DC 19), *ice storm*, *wall of ice* (DC 19)3rd—*dispel magic*, *fireball* (DC 18)*, *hydraulic torrent***, *slow* (DC 16), *water breathing*2nd—*flaming sphere** (DC 17), *invisibility*, *protection from arrows*, *resist energy*, *scorching ray**1st—*burning hands** (DC 16), *color spray* (DC 14), *hydraulic push***, *icicle dagger****, *shield*, *shocking grasp**0 (at will)—*light*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*, *resistance*

School water elementalism**

* change all damage to cold damage

** see *Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game: Advanced Player's Guide**** see *Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game: Ultimate Magic***Statistics**

Str 8 Dex 16, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 10

Base Atk +4; CMB +3 CMD 18

Feats Arcane Strike, Combat Casting, Dodge, Greater Spell Focus (Evocation), Icy Spells*, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (Evocation)

* This feat represents Glaz's ability to change the damage type of certain spells to cold damage.

Skills Diplomacy +4, Escape Artist +7, Knowledge (Arcana) +14, Knowledge (Geography) +14, Knowledge (Planes) +14, Perception +5, Sense Motive +5, Spellcraft +14, Swim +10

Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven, Sylvan

SQ bonded object (dagger), hold breath

Other Gear masterwork dagger, ring of protection +1

Aftermath.

If the party prevails, they sadly can't do much with the extra ships, though if they do manage to seize the *Cachalot* they might decide to trade up to the more advanced vessel. Glaz begs for mercy if defeated, and offers to give the party information about the Obscurati. He doesn't know much they aren't already aware of, but he can give them an idea of what's happening on Axis Island, and might even be willing to lie to the Ob via *sending*, telling them both the PCs' ship and his own sub sank, but that he found his way to an island and does not need rescue.

If the party is defeated and you want to salvage the rest of the adventure, perhaps have them taken to Beaumont as prisoners, where they'd have a chance to escape. They'd probably have to board the train as coach passengers, but they'd still have a chance. If you think your PCs might enjoy owing a favor to the fey, they might be rescued at sea when the privateers are attacked by merfolk agents of Beshela, the archfey who appeared briefly in the first adventure as an ally of Duchess Ethelyn.

ENTERING DANOR**Social. Montage.**

Arriving in Beaumont, the party has a few days to get settled before the mission.

A ship riddled with cannon holes will raise a few eyebrows in the port of Beaumont, but luckily the Obscurati do *not* have allies everywhere, so the party can get into the city easily. A customs agent and his security staff briefly check the party's documents, then welcomes them to Danor.

The PCs should get lodgings appropriate to their cover stories, and they might fill their time by visiting the local military academy Lamar University, attending an opera, or taking in a burlesque show. The city is smaller than Flint, with a thicker stench of industry hanging in the air, but it's full of people like any other. Most dislike Risuri, but they're hardly a faceless enemy nation.

Very little magic works in Danor, and so the city lacks any of the tiny magical flourishes found in every civilized part of Risur. But perhaps the biggest shift is the climate. Just a couple hundred miles north of Flint, Beaumont has no shelter against frigid arctic winds blowing south. While it hasn't begun to snow yet, the temperature drops near freezing at night, weather unheard of in Flint.

NEEDLE IN A HAYSTACK**Social. Real-Time.**

As hundreds of people board at the western terminus of the railroad, the party looks for suspicious characters.

Boarding: Bree, the Griento family, the PCs.

On the morning of the 11th of Winter, the party's train is set to depart at 7:30 AM.

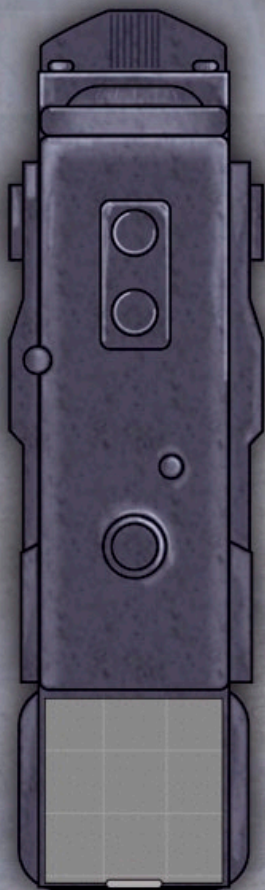
The elaborate architecture of Beaumont's Western Station looms over you: seemingly drooping, heavy with stone depictions of the celestial bodies. Behind you, imposing in its vastness, a giant marble clock face some twenty feet in diameter gives accurate Danoran Standard Time down to the second. Brass numbers dictate the passage of each moment, an exacting feat of engineering that Danor has exported to most of the world.

In front of you is another of Danor's marvels: the Avery Coast train, a great behemoth of black iron, still somehow appearing sinuous as it stretches into the distance in front of you. Windows stud its length, and, at the far end, gray smoke belches out of the smokestack of the locomotive. This is the marvel that is said to have tamed the Malice Lands, and it is working to unite the continent into one grand economy. Brochures announce that the railroad has proven that Danor can accomplish more with intelligence and manpower than most nations can accomplish with mystical secrets and genuflecting to gods.

The train hisses and steam spurts from its edge, casting a white haze over the platform and obscuring some of the other passengers waiting here. There is a whistle, and a man waves at the crowd, welcoming you aboard. He wears a brilliant red and yellow sash emblazoned with the symbol of the Avery Coast Line: a pair of train tracks, woven in an infinity symbol.

The waving man is the train's conductor, the amiable and boisterous **Xorin Marchand**, and when he realizes the party is traveling first class he beams at the chance to impress them. He offers to personally escort them to the rear of the train. Porters can take their luggage, and the whole group boards onto the lavish first class dining car, Car 19, while the crowd of coach passengers waits in line.

Avery Coast Railroad



1



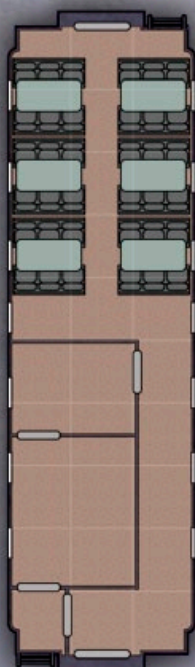
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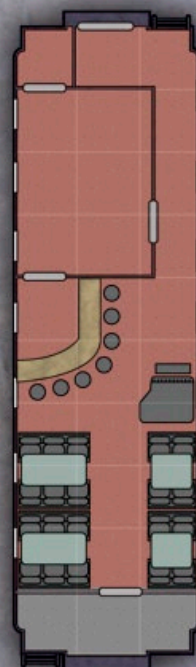
13



14-16



17-18



19

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Xorin introduces the party to **Kov Marik** the first class chef and **Doris Gavagne** the piano player, then escorts them to their suite in Car 17. While the porters deposit their bags, Xorin encourages them to enjoy a complimentary breakfast in the dining car. The party might decline Xorin's tour so they can better watch who else boards the train, and he won't press the matter.

Exploring the Train.

The coach cars are about half-full with workers, and the second-class rooms are also about half-full with businessmen. Only one other suite in first class is occupied. If the party brings their tickets with them they have free run of everything from Car 10 on back, but the crew ask everyone to be in their assigned spaces when the train departs, to make sure they have an accurate count.

Among the hundreds of people on board, there are about forty in the second class rooms, and a family of four in the suite next to the party's. Of the former, only one makes an immediate impression.

Bree.

Brianne Kaldeckis, called "Bree," boards in a fairly sour mood, and if asked, she may confess that she has a friend who was supposed to board with her, who is now missing. Though she has a seat in Car 16, she sits in the first class lounge car, looking for Caius. She knows his mission was secret, though, so she won't give away many details. She's not terribly talkative, and if pressed tries to steer conversations to generic topics like travel and weather. Talking about the war does get her interested, and she's excited to hear how it looked from 'the other side.'

The Grientos.

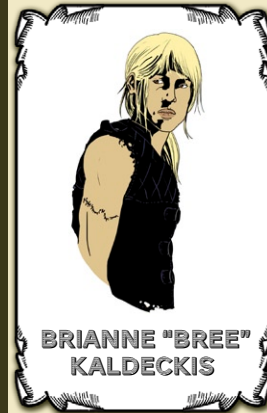
A family of four Beran half-orcs is on board the Avery Coast line, riding it from one end to the other as a sightseeing trip. They are the Grientos, and behave very much like an archetypal tourist family. They are also very "new money," traveling in a first class that they are fairly inexperienced at handling gracefully. They board the train, and take up residence in the first class lounge, in awe of their environment. The husband, Damata, is particularly excitable and chatty, and he tries to strike up conversations about engineering, but hems and haws if anyone brings up sightseeing.

If the PCs haven't already noticed, Tarro the son makes a fuss about Bree's arm scars. Ejeka the wife apologizes and tries to get the boy to drop the topic, but Bree just smiles calmly and tells Tarro that if his sister's arm ever gets cut off, he should hold onto it in case they can sew it back on. This excites Tarro the son to no end, and causes Dabo the daughter to shriek. Damata becomes stricken at the thought of his children being hurt.

Last Check.

At 7:25, train security guard **Malia Baccarin** makes a pass through the first class and second class sections, checking to make sure everyone's in their right section and no rabble snuck in from coach. The beautiful, dark-skinned woman stands out in Danor almost as much as the family of half-orcs.

Malia makes an offer to any men in first or second class, as well as women (like Bree) who look tough. She asks if they'll be staying with the train on to Trekhom. If so, it's traditional for distinguished guests to enjoy a 'safari' of sorts in the Malice Lands. They sit on the roof of the train



BRIANNE "BREE"
KALDECKIS

A 47-year old veteran of the Fourth Yerasol War, Bree lost her right leg and arm to a Risuri summoned jaguar. The same druid who took her limbs kept her from dying, and after the war she was given a peg leg and sent back home to languish in a veteran's community. There she was approached by Dr. Wolfgang von Recklinghausen, whom the party met in Adventure Two, *The Dying Skyseer*. Wolfgang used experimental magical science to attach a recently-dead woman's limbs to Bree. He enchanted a girdle to help with the mending process, which Bree wears to this day.

World-wise and granted a second life, Bree sold her services as a bodyguard. She came to the attention of Caius Bergeron after a clever ploy to thwart a pursuer; she detached her arm and set it across the room with a crossbow. Since her girdle let her control her limb at range, she was able to shoot the foe when he crossed its path. The Obscurati are always drawn to ingenuity, and Dr. von Recklinghausen had already drawn their attention, so Caius hired Bree.

Bree values honor and her word, and gladly serves as bodyguard, but she has turned down offers to serve as a soldier or assassin. She favors sleeveless shirts even in the cold, and is not shy about the massive scar around her right upper arm. When in Danor, her limbs itch at the seams, and she doesn't like to stay in the dead magic zone for more than a week at a time.

with muskets, and with the guidance of the train's security personnel they can shoot at any malice beasts that come at the train. Malia's ulterior motive here is to figure out who might be a threat when her brigand allies attack in the Malice Lands. If anyone's interested, she offers to acquire fine rifles when they're in Cherage, for the low price of 100 gp apiece. See the Arms Dealers sidebar (page 28) for details.

Shortly after the security check, the clock tower outside the station booms out a tune on the half hour. There is a great snapping hiss heard throughout the train, and the behemoth vehicle lurches into action, metal squealing and clicking. The party can feel the train accelerating, slowly but steadily hauling its tons of cargo and passengers up to speeds unmatched except by magic. Beaumont glides past, and soon the scenery of pastoral Danor is flying by at sixty miles an hour.

KESKAY

Social. Montage.

More suspects board at the city of KesKay.

Boarding: Elanor and Isobel, Verzubak, Boone.

The train stops about once an hour at different small cities, waiting just ten minutes for people to board or disembark. No one else boards on first class, but the ranks of second class and coach shuffle gradually through the day. If you need help fleshing out impromptu social interactions between the PCs and these unimportant passengers, see Filler NPCs (page 61).

The train stops in the agricultural hub city of KesKay at 11:17 AM. Out the windows the party can see people gathered on the landing, and amid a crowd of unassuming human workers and businessmen, four people stand out.



Big Pimping.

The people attracting the most attention on the Keskey stop are a pair of travelers joined at the wrists by ornate bracelets of gold. One of them is **Elanor Yanette**, a broad woman, well-dressed in a flowing silken gown, with a constant expression of disdain on her jowls. She escorts a figure wrapped from head to toe in black fabrics, such that it's impossible to tell if it's a man or a woman. Even the eyes are hidden by dark gauze. This is **Isobel Travers**, a high elf woman who was raised by a Danoran family and has just turned twenty. Elanor is taking her to Nalaam, where she'll fetch a stunning price as a trophy wife.

Elanor leads Isobel, and the gazes of hundreds of curious onlookers follow them. The two board, and while their luggage is taken to a suite in Car 18, they head straight for the first class lounge. Elanor demands some food. Isobel sits across from her and never says a word. Occasionally she starts to hum, and Elanor slaps her hand to silence her.

Elanor only lets Isobel eat specially-treated food she brought along, which is laced with drugs that dull the senses and willpower. She'll let Isobel sober up in Nalaam to be presentable to buyers, but she doesn't want her valuables running away. Elanor keeps Isobel veiled to hide that she's a high elf woman, and forces her to wear multiple gold rings and necklaces so she can't teleport. She never lets Isobel leave her sight, and won't blink to kill anyone who tries to steal from her.

A high elf woman just turned 20, Isobel is a third generation Danoran, basically born and raised to breed more high elves. Her host family has a small stable of six high elf women, and they import high elf men to father children. The sons are sold to other Danoran households, half the daughters are kept as future breeding stock, and the rest are trained to be fine wives for wealthy patrons around the continent.

When she's not affected by Elanor's mind-numbing drugs and magic, Isobel does realize that she's basically a slave, but she has no real will to escape because she knows she could never survive on her own.

Among the many skills she was trained to make her a desirable wife, Isobel has a beautiful singing voice, but while drugged she just hums to herself, mostly tragic songs about suicide and revenge.



ISOBEL TRAVERS

Ladies' Man.

Another object of interest is **Olivert Boone**, a tall, refined-looking tiefling, dressed in a long leather coat, wearing an ostentatious red-velvet vest. His horns sprout through a rough hat that he wears to shield his eyes from the sun. He smiles charmingly at the two lovely, high-class looking women who have draped themselves around his shoulders. Once he has stowed his luggage (in Car 14), he makes straight for the common food car (Car 13). He proceeds to buy drinks for the two dozen people there, flirts with some women, and then heads to the first class lounge (Car 19), grinning at the jealous anger of his two lady-friends.

Well, That Was Lucky.

Verzubak Tantalovich, a bleary-eyed and richly dressed dwarf boards in the coach section (Car 10), then makes his way through crowded aisles to his seat in Car 15. As he is passing through the common dining car,

there is a small outcry: a man has choked on a small nut and died. The PCs might investigate or learn later that the dead man was armed with a hidden, poisoned dagger, and he had a portrait in his pocket of a dwarf that sort of resembles Verzubak.

The dagger-armed man truly choked on a nut just as his target was passing by—Verzubak jostled the man by accident, causing him to choke. The dwarf is just that lucky, thanks to a pair of magic dice he uses. Its power is subtle, but it protects him even in Danor's dead magic zone.

Secret Mission.

Bree, Boone, and Verzubak all note each other, but don't interact. Someone hanging out in the first class lounge who makes a very good Sense Motive check (DC 24) can tell that the dwarf is ignoring the others a bit too studiously, but Boone and Bree are good enough liars not to give any tells unless the PCs engage them in close conversation.

NIGHT IN CHERAGE

Social. Real-Time.

It's much harder to keep an eye on suspects when they all get off the train for the night in the capital of Danor.

The train arrives in Cherage at 5:38 PM. A few minutes later another train, heading west from Orithea, pulls up. Both park for the night.

Fifteen minutes outside of Cherage, the train guard Malia asks everyone to please return to their seats to keep an eye on their personal effects. The enclaves are always busy, she says, and it's easy for thieves to hop on board in the commotion and nick unattended valuables.

The majestic city looms on the hills around the station, casting deep purple shadows in the light of the setting sun. Already lights are beginning to turn the city into a shining wonder of wealth and prosperity. The hills shield the city proper from the smoke of its inland industries, but you can still smell soot on the wind.

The conductor and various security staff have repeatedly reminded you of Cherage's curfew for visitors, often pointing out tall buildings that show the scars of old fires. Because the Workers' Riots a generation ago nearly burned the city to the ground, now only those few citizens with proper passes are allowed to travel between city districts after sunset. But you are welcome to enjoy the fine dining and entertainments of the rail enclave.

Cherage is the capital of Danor, built on several hills around a bay. Streets are lit by gas lamps that reflect off the high windows Cheragans are so fond of. Different districts are separated more by elevation and architecture than by actual walls or gates. Police have the authority to ask for identity papers of anyone, and if you're found outside your 'home district' at night, they'll arrest you. The party's train tickets count as a permit for the railroad enclave, which consists of a few city blocks ringed by a 20-ft. wall. The wall is more of a reminder than a blockade: it has many gaps, holes, and unlocked gates that those determined to break curfew can use to get into the rest of the city.

The enclave itself has one cheap hotel for coach passengers and a fancier hotel the party will stay in, located on opposite sides of the train tracks. A handful of cheap bars, one fancy bar, two theaters, four restaurants, and a somewhat conservative dance hall cater to passengers, staying open well past midnight. Other buildings of note include a police station, the office of the city's transportation authority, and a few touristy museums.

The PCs are welcome to sleep in their suite on the train, but most everyone else goes to the hotels.



OLIVERT BOONE

A tiefling with a smile that women swoon for, Boone went adventuring in the Malice Lands at an early age. He charmed many a woman and had to defend himself from jealous husbands. He developed an amazing knack with a pistol, and eventually while exploring burnt-out ruins he stumbled upon a magic urn. When opened, it released a demon that possessed his pistol, granting him nearly unparalleled accuracy, but at a price. His demon pistol demands blood.

Already a misogynist, it wasn't hard for him to switch to killing women after he loved them. He particularly likes bringing women on his adventures and coming back with sad tales of their demise. He came to Bree's attention when he rolled into Danor with chests full of loot from his adventures. She just knows his reputation as a gunslinger, and has no idea he's a serial killer.

When he's amused, he slaps one hand on his chest as a one-handed clap, so he never has to take his pistol hand far from his weapon. He's working this mission for the money (about 3,000 gp), and has no ideological ties to Luc Jierre.



VERZUBAK TANTALOVICH

A bleary-eyed dwarf who only lights up when he's winning at dice, Verzubak has studied the magic and mathematics of luck. Unfortunately, his calculations don't work as well in Danor's dead magic zone, so he ended up owing a few hundred gold pieces to a gambling den in Keskay. But Verzubak still has enough luck that the killer sent for him dies before he even sees the dwarf.

He plans to bet boldly in the Nalaam casinos, which will test his theories to the limits, since magic is forbidden at betting tables. To him, this bodyguard mission is just a way to get seed money for his "research."

Though he looks perpetually tired, he loves to drone on to anyone who'll pay attention. A genuinely nice dwarf, he can find a way to pay a stranger three compliments in a single sentence, and if someone looks like they're getting bored with his talk about numbers and science he'll let them talk and make them feel far more interesting compared to him.

Getting Into Trouble.

The passengers go about their own affairs at night, and the party might decide to follow one or split up to keep tabs on several. See the Tailing a Suspect skill challenge (page 62) for guidelines. If the party gets into trouble, enclave police are equipped to deal with mundane threats, not highly-trained spies and spellcasters. But they can call for reinforcements, and enough carbines and pistols should be sufficient to get even PCs to stand down. If the party comes quietly, the cops will let them go for a small bribe (10 gp apiece). If the party fights, they might end up tossed in an oubliette and held until the Danorans figure out their identities.

Should the party raise red flags but escape, or if they piss off the wrong people, the next morning the police come on the train and insist on searching the party and confiscating any weapons or magic items they find, calling them evidence. They happily explain that the party is free to stay in town and file the proper paperwork to have the items returned to them after the investigation is over. Of course, the same goes for other travelers, so the party's suspects aren't eager to start a fight.

The Grientos.

The family go to a few children-friendly buildings in the enclave, with Damata listing off interesting factoids about construction, engineering, and mathematics to educate his children (“these arches are fascinating constructs, each one using only gravity, placed on a single keystone to keep the entire building erect!” “This building was constructed in the early age after the Great Malice, by a governor who wanted to pay homage to his dead wife, whose stone portraiture makes up the columns...” etc.).

As the family returns to the hotel, however, they cross paths with a group of drunken militia members who are traveling coach. They sling insults, slurs, and half-full bottles at the foreigners. The group claims that all Berans are savages, especially the orcs, and that they deserve only to be enslaved for their own good. Damata attempts to herd his family away from the belligerents, but his daughter Dabo starts crying and runs straight at them (in orcish culture, girl’s temper tantrums tend to be aggressive). If the party doesn’t intervene, Dabo gets savagely beaten and kicked before she can be pulled away, and Tarro receives a black eye after biting one of the militia members’ ankles.

If the party intervenes, the militia members aren’t a real threat (level 1 warriors), but a scuffle will draw attention of the police, who’ll side with the militia.

Elanor & Isobel.

Elanor meets with two Cherage town guard after disembarking; an hour later, after she settles in her hotel room, they return with a travel permit to a wealthy district. She heads out, with Isobel in tow and the guards as

protection, and eventually comes to a rather opulent manor house high upon a hill. She is greeted warmly at the door, and is welcomed inside.

Her host, a high-ranking bureaucrat named **Bucher Monmarl**, flatters Elanor and adores Isobel, hoping to curry favor so some day he might benefit from the woman’s fleshmongering. A few more guests arrive and share a small banquet. Getting a close look would be very tough, but it would yield the purpose of Elanor’s trip.

The Bodyguards.

Bree, Verzubak, and Boone travel independently but act in concert. They all get rooms in the fancy hotel, and then stagger their departure. The plan is for Boone to go to leave around 8 PM, being flamboyant, flirting with women in the hotel lobby, and overall attracting attention. He heads to the ‘cheap’ hotel, where he convinces a 16-year-old woman to come with him to the enclave’s fanciest bar, *L’Wabe du Fonne*. Five minutes behind him, Bree leaves her room and heads to the same bar. Verzubak, who has been sitting in the hotel lobby fiddling with dice and a notebook, watches both people to see if anyone follows them. Then, five minutes later, he goes to the same bar.

If the PCs follow either Boone or Bree, Verzubak notices them if their “Stay Hidden” check (see Tailing a Suspect, page 62) does not beat DC 25. If they are trying to Stay Hidden from Verzubak, they only have to beat DC 20.

The bar is busy enough that the trio can all spend time there without crossing paths. Bree nurses a drink, Boone chats up this evening’s lady, and Verzubak plays the stereotypical Drakran dwarf, drinking, buying



drinks, and laughing at people's jokes. He plays a lot of dice, losing mostly, but winning big once to recoup his stake.

At 9 PM, Verzubak booms out a toast that quiets the room, offering to buy a round if everyone will listen to him for just a minute. His toast is a signal to the other two.

If he saw no one following either: "To those we trust in, and to those who earn our trust. May alcohol forever help bring us together!"

If someone was following Boone: "To adventure, and never waking up in the same town twice. Or at least not the same bed!"

If someone was following Bree: "To the owners of this fine establishment, who will soon be taking a lot of money from me. You give us drink; we give you this toast!"

If both of them were followed: "To the train, which unifies this continent, and to all the lovely people aboard it who will be sleeping off their hangovers tomorrow!"

If he personally is being followed: "All of you care so much for free drinks that you'll listen to a foreigner ramble on, so I suppose I must toast myself! To Verzubak Tantalovich!" (This one elicits laughing boos.)

If Verzubak suspects the PCs have been following, he heads to them right after his toast and buys them a drink first, then suggests they play some dice. This lets his accomplices know who to look out for. After that, the dwarf's job for the night is done. He keeps a wary eye out for clues, but mostly just tries to help everyone have a good time. At 11 PM he joins a small crowd who head out to watch a burlesque show.

Sneaking Out.

A few minutes after Verzubak's toast, Boone suggests he and his young lady friend should find some place private. Boone offers some high-spirited shouts to the other beautiful women around the room, but then he and his friend leave the bar and head out of the rail enclave. They sneak through one of the gates, avoiding any guards. Then they stop in an alleyway and have some private time.

Perhaps ten minutes later, Bree finishes her drink and leaves discreetly. She takes a different route out of the enclave, using an official travel pass to get past the guards. But then she takes a path that goes right past Boone's alley. If anyone followed her, and managed to get out of the enclave, Boone tries to disrupt their pursuit when they come past by stumbling into them, pretending to be drunker than he is, and threatening to challenge them to pistols at dawn. This distraction gives Bree a chance to shake the party, and counts as one failed "keeping up" check.

If the PCs aren't simply following the same streets Bree takes, Boone won't spot them. He's busy, after all.

Bree's Rendezvous.

Bree goes to a carriage depot and hires a ride. In the post-curfew streets of Cherage, following her will be challenging, but she goes to the Sovereign's mansion even if she knows she's being pursued. More and more police roam the streets as the party nears the capital district where all the major government buildings are. The Sovereign's mansion itself has a wide, flat lawn surrounding it, and numerous soldiers guard the walls.

Getting this close ought to yield enough information, but there is almost no chance the party will be able to follow Bree to the actual meeting. The grounds of the mansion are studded with stones gathered from Methia, the former capital of the old holy empire of the Clergy, abandoned after the Great Malice. These stones nullify magic entirely, with the one exception of tieflings' *infernal wrath* power. Spellcasters might be able to scrape by elsewhere in the country, carrying their own mana with them, but here they are powerless.

Inside the mansion, Bree meets with Luc and Ottavia, who did not know about her or Caius. Sovereign Han Jierre, who is one of the heads of the entire Obscurati and knew Caius, makes the connection and tasks Bree with helping keep Luc safe on his journey. They spend the next few hours discussing plans, and then Bree heads back to the rail enclave.

Extracurricular Activity.

After Bree passes Boone, he feels his job for the evening is done. He takes his lady to an even more secluded spot, then stabs her through her heart. He takes her hair and uses it as a brush to coat his demonic pistol, then spends a few minutes disemboweling her. He stretches her limbs spread-eagle, places her liver in her right hand, her heart in her left, then pulls her intestines into a ring around her. When he's finished he walks away, and slowly the blood coating him is absorbed into the pistol, turning the metal crimson. It slowly fades over the coming day.

If the PCs won't give him privacy, he abandons his plan, and is surly the entire next day as the demon in his gun urges him to kill.

If interrupted during the act, Boone flees frantically, trying to hide his face. If cornered or if he knows he's been identified, he fights back. If he gets away, though, he makes a point of finding a police station and reporting that he was attacked by a group of thugs, led by a man with spiky white hair. He claims the woman he left the bar with was taken, and he was left in an alley. The cops eventually find the woman's body, and assume Boone is just a victim.

If he is not interrupted, though, Boone returns to his hotel and sleeps soundly. The next morning there's some talk about a woman who was brutally murdered in the night, but no one links her to the tiefling gunslinger. Boone is going to repeat this procedure every night throughout the journey until he's caught. He's careless on the first night, killing someone he's been seen with, but from then on he picks up strangers and performs his ritual sacrifice with somewhat more discretion.

Eventually, if the PCs don't manage to catch Boone first, Bree figures out what he's been doing and tries to punish him. That's detailed in the scene Three Milestones (page 40).

Mister Mapple.

At some point later in the evening, perhaps as the PCs are returning to their hotel room, a man darts past them, grinning like he's enjoying himself. The shabby-looking gentleman wears nothing but a long coat with patches and holes, and he smells rather pungently of bath oils. Four enclave guards chase after him, but the man runs much faster. It only takes a few moments for the stranger to sprint to the bridge over the train tracks and jump down onto the train, not even breaking stride. He tumbles and rolls to the far side of the train, out of sight of the guards.

This is **Andrei von Recklinghausen**. If the PCs inquire, they learn that the man came to the front counter of the hotel, introduced himself as "Mister Mapple," and asked if anyone was staying in the top floor Mayoral Suite. When he learned no one was, he walked outside and was spotted climbing up the side of the building. (He had pants on at that point.)

After half an hour, the hotel sent people up, and they found Mapple bathing in the suite's tub. He shoved his way past the guards with ease, and actually seemed to take it slow on the stairs down, like he was enjoying being chased. The cops figure there's no use looking for him now.

Mister Mapple, for his part, sneaks onto the train, steals some clothes from random people's luggage, and heads for Car 6. He peels open the wooden paneling on a box of silver religious artifacts that has a lot of cloth padding. He shifts the contents into other boxes and crates, then uses the box as his bed. He sleeps with one eye open.

INTO THE MALICE LANDS

Exposition. Montage.

The railroad heads into an inhospitable region of wild magic.

Boarding: Cardiff Hengehill, Luc Jierre, Ottavia Sacredote.

Once again, the train is set to leave at 7:30 AM. First- and second-class passengers can have porters bring their luggage down from the hotel. If the party got into any trouble the night before, the police might show up around 6:30 to question them and search their suite. Conductor Xorin is aghast that his first-class travelers might be inconvenienced, and so he can manage to keep the party out of jail as long as they don't fight back.

If Boone was unmasked, he tries to sneak back aboard the train. He's taken a ton of precautions, so unless the party explicitly keeps an eye out for him around the cargo cars, he manages to stow away on board. Once he gets to Orithea he'll buy an illusory disguise and pick his mission back up where he left off.

New Passengers.

As the party gets back aboard, they notice Malia the train guard followed by a pair of men carrying a huge chest marked with the logo of a prominent gun manufacturer. These are the rifles she's acquired for the safari. She orders the men to load them into the first class lounge car's supply room.

Just then a tall handsome man with a briefcase strapped to his wrist by a leather cord—**Cardiff Hengehill**—pushes through the crowd, grabs Malia by the arm, and drags her aside for a private conversation. She shakes free of his grasp, but remains professional as she quietly tells him she'll give him a letter later with details on the meeting she has arranged. Cardiff walks off to Car 14 without a word.

A bit later, a very unusual pair arrives at first class: a flat-faced tiefling man with an air of boredom about him walks arm-in-arm with a sternly beautiful elf woman. Geometric tattoos are visible along her hands and neck, which the party might recognize (Knowledge (Religion) DC 15) mark her as an oracle of the Clergy. They are both dressed in quite high fashion, and their luggage is carried on by private servants. Onlookers are abuzz with speculation about them.

Elanor Yanette recognizes **Luc Jierre**, and gossips loudly that he has a reputation as something of a shut-in, since he hasn't been seen in town for a few years. The woman she guesses is a bought bride, and she laments that she wasn't able to arrange the pairing.

Just before they get on the train, the woman, **Ottavia Sacredote**, waves her hands in very precise gestures. Luc pauses, responds with a few gestures of his own, and the woman laughs. She makes one more volley of hand signals, and then Luc thanks the porters, stuttering, "Th-th-the lady s-s-says th-th-thank you." Then they head for their suite in Car 18.

In the very unlikely situation that any PC understands the recently-developed Crisillyiri sign language, Ottavia asked if Luc was nervous, and he said that he's ridden the train plenty of times. If the party was hoping to eavesdrop, they're out of luck.

Across the Border.

Throughout the day the party can cross paths with other guests in the lounge car. The train goes through a city every hour or so, until finally at 4:51 PM it reaches a station at the base of a hilltop fort. This marks the border between Danor and the Malice Lands. Numerous soldiers disembark, leaving the coach section fairly empty. A boisterous band greets them, creating a festive atmosphere for a few minutes before the train moves on.

The air tingles and seems to shift temperature and humidity based on one's emotions (hence why the fort tries so hard to keep its troops

spirits up). Outside the train, the terrain south of the track is a bog with jagged rocks rising out of it; to the north is a flat sheet of ice with cactuses sticking out of it.

Malia the train guard comes through and reminds people that while magic can work, because of the risks it poses they must insist that none be used until the train reaches Orithea. An assistant with her begins moving all the clocks on the train forward one hour. They've entered a new time zone.

Safari Time!

Malia starts rounding up people who were interested in shooting at malice beasts. She hands out rifles to those who are interested, then leads people up to the roof of Car 19. Malia's comfortable walking up top, but she suggests everyone else sit down and plant their feet on the lip along the edge. If anyone falls, the train can stop, but the conductor will be furious for being made late.

The train slows to a leisurely 20 miles per hour (the equivalent of 150 feet per round). This afternoon's safari will have to be brief—the train's schedule can only spare about half an hour—but tomorrow they'll have a couple hours. A keg of beer and pitchers of hot spiced cider are provided to make for a pleasant experience even if no monsters show up.

Feel free to choose a few appropriate CR creatures, mostly natural or elemental beasts, and monstify them with wretched malformations. Some just loiter a few hundred feet away. Some heard the train coming and roar as it rolls past, or charge after it, trying to leap onto its side and climb up. Malia just laughs, confident people in and on the train are safe.

Shooters.

In addition to any PCs who get involved, Bree, Boone, Cardiff, and both Damata Griento and his son Tarro want a crack at the monsters. Cardiff transfers the cord of his briefcase to his ankle instead of his wrist, so it won't bother his shooting. Malia and four other train guards also have rifles, but they don't shoot unless a monster looks like it might be an actual threat.

After the group fires off a few dozen shots, people spot a figure standing atop Car 6, shouting at them and waving a crowbar in the air in frustration. This is Mister Mapple, whose afternoon nap was ruined by all the racket. The PCs should be able to recognize his coat. A few guards go to try to get him down, but he ducks back into one of the cargo cars and hides.

AURORA OVER ORITHEA

Exploration/Social. Montage.

As the train stops for the second night, the party can observe suspicious movements of the enemy.

The train arrives in Orithea at 6:04 PM The train coming from Trek-hom has already arrived.

The evening sky is streaked with the brilliant colors of gold, violet, red, and blue. More than just a sunset, the heavens warp and change the sun's light into an aurora, painting the sky with streaks of iridescent, chaotic color and ribbons of ethereal light.

Like the day before, fifteen minutes outside of Orithea the train guard Malia asks everyone to please return to their seats to keep an eye on their personal effects. The enclaves are always busy, she reminds you, and it's easy for thieves to hop on board in the commotion and nick unattended valuables.

As you roll into Orithea you can spot people mingling atop the odd wobbling spires that rise above so many of the buildings in this city. Almost no structures have straight edges. Out on the coast, even the beam cast by a lighthouse seems to curve on its way out to sea.

Then you enter the Danoran-operated rail enclave, and it's all perpendicular and parallel lines. The layout here is the same as every other nightly stop, with one fancy hotel, one common hotel, and plenty of entertainment. But there's no curfew like in Cherage, and out there await the oddities of Orithea, this one safe oasis in the Malice Lands.

Orithea's city center is smaller than Cherage, but dozens of idiosyncratic suburban farming towns surround it. Once you get outside the rail enclave there are a few places that tourists tend to gather. A series of high towers on hills north of the city give spectacular views of the constant aurora, and the Night Market near the docks is full of crafters hawking their wares and spellcasters promising safe rituals in the dim orange-green light.

In the enclave, the main entertainments are much tamer than in Cherage. Lounge singers backed by strings and pianos are popular, and one theater puts on an elaborate puppetry show. A museum tells the history of the Malice Lands, with a prominent exhibit presenting relics of the first 'Malice State,' Pala, founded by the philosopher William Miller shortly after the Great Malice. Daring travelers can sign up for an over-night trek outside the stable zone, to ruins north of the city, which are seeded with kitschy fake relics of a lost civilization.

Law Enforcement.

Standards are much laxer in Orithea than Cherage, and the city is more welcoming of weirdoes and foreigners. If the party causes trouble and gets caught, the city doesn't want to hold onto prisoners if it can just ship them out, so the party will be held overnight, then escorted to the train by a large complement of guards who ensure the group leaves town.

The Grientos.

The family takes in a puppet show until 8 PM, then heads to a high tower near the center of town—not as good a view as the north hill towers, but a safer spot to watch the aurora. Plus, there's a restaurant. Dabo claims to be a vegetarian, and Tarro ends his meal early to crawl beneath the table, but by and large the night is uneventful. Damata leaves a hefty tip after the meal, and has a romantic dance with Ejeka (much to Dabo and Tarro's disgust).

Elanor & Isobel.

Elanor leaves the hotel at 7 PM for the Night Market, Isobel as always at her side. Unbeknownst to her, Mister Mapple follows her, and the party might cross his path if they're also watching Elanor.

Other shoppers give Elanor a wide berth. She visits a small apothecary that deals in potions of charm and domination, where she purchases a few. On her way back to the rail enclave, Mister Mapple steps into her path and tries to engage Isobel in conversation, reciting a love poem about a troll who desired a princess, all the while wholly ignoring Elanor. Isobel of course is too dazed to respond coherently. Mister Mapple tries to pull aside the veils covering her face. Elanor reacts by reaching for her spell components, but Mister Mapple grabs her wrist and squeezes. He asks if she's willing to risk fighting him here. Elanor screams for help and guards, pretending to be a helpless old woman. At the sudden attention, Mapple backs away, then runs, leaps, and clambers up to a rooftop, out of sight.

Cardiff.

Cardiff takes a carriage to a very luxurious restaurant on top of one of the aurora observing towers, called *Brilliance*. He clearly has gold, and uses it to get a window seat, where he eats a fine steak, completely alone. During the meal he reads from a Dwarven phrasebook, and seems to be preparing for a business meeting. Cardiff leaves the restaurant shortly after his meal, and goes to one of the fancier inns in town for the night, but not one inside the enclave. He is never without his briefcase.

Malia.

Malia lingers at the train as many of the other militia members depart. When they ask her to attend, she confesses that she's worried about some of the freight, and is staying behind to check up on it. She searches the cargo cars and eventually spots Mister Mapple's little nest in the box that once held silver church icons. Malia does not report the disturbance.

She heads to the Night Market. She makes contact with an old witch who offers potions and trinkets. Malia knows the witch, though, and the two of them leave for a nearby inn, where they descend to a basement. Malia pays 75 gold pieces for the witch to use *sending* to contact brigands in the Malice Lands. Tomorrow those brigands will rob the train.

The message is, "Train arrives at nine. Four guards at front. Six guards at caboose, eight hundred feet back. Target car six. Barricade six hundred feet from monster." Afterward, Malia goes to the *Effervescent Cup* back in the enclave, where she meets her fellow train guards.

Mister Mapple.

The stowaway has become intrigued by Isobel, whom he sees as a prisoner. His romantic streak manifests in a stalker-ish way, and he follows her and Elanor to the Night Market, as mentioned above. After Elanor gets him to back off, he flees back to the enclave, climbs the outside wall of the hotel and breaks into Elanor's hotel suite. He finds one of Elanor's bags of drugs and alchemicals to dull the mind, and he concocts a plan, which he'll enact in Trekhom.

Luc's Crew.

Boone, Bree, and Verzubak repeat the procedure from the night before, with just a few adjustments. After everyone gets settled in their rooms, Bree goes by their rooms and Luc and Ottavia's room. She slips a note under the door, explaining what route she wants that particular person to take, but she makes no mention of the others, so that the letter won't by itself reveal they're all working together.

At 7:30 PM, Bree goes to the *Effervescent Cup*. Shortly thereafter, Boone picks up a lady from the fancy hotel and entertains her on the route between the hotel and the bar—they dally on the bridge over the train tracks.

Verzubak waits behind, playing dice with one of the enclave guards and writing mathematic equations in his notebook. Luc and Ottavia go to the concierge desk, and Luc stutteringly asks for advice on a few bars in the area. Then they too head out, Luc carrying a large case that contains his lantern. They pass Boone, who keeps an eye out to see if anyone's watching them. Then Verzubak follows from the hotel.

At the bar, once again they use toasts to signal whether they're being followed. In addition to the ones before (see page 21), they also use:

If Verzubak saw Luc & Ottavia followed: "To meeting strangers, and realizing that you only want to kill about half the people you meet!"

If Boone saw Luc & Ottavia followed: Boone toasts, "I don't want to detract from my own great time, but I just want everyone to raise a glass to my fellow tiefling. He looks a little nervous being out of Danor, so let's show him a good time, ah? Cheers!"

LUC'S CREW REACTS.

The bodyguards try to use the same tactic every night to give Luc & Ottavia cover from being followed. If one of the bodyguards is unavailable—most likely Boone—the others follow as much of the plan as possible. If two of them are out, the one remaining bodyguard just tries to keep watch and slow down pursuers.

If they notice the party following one time, they'll be suspicious, but it's not enough for them to immediately decide the party is spying on them and must be eliminated. If they fumble a few times, though, Luc's crew will look to Ottavia for guidance. She follows the Obscurati guideline of maintaining secrecy first, and will tell everyone to stay as close to the train as possible. They'll try not to do anything to give the spies any more information, and Luc will ask the conductor to make the party vacate their suite and catch the next train. If that still doesn't work, they'll wait until the train has passed Nalaam to eliminate the threat (as detailed in *Three Milestones*, page 40).

If the party ever directly attacks Luc's party, all members who are present will defend each other with lethal force. Any survivors might try to get the party thrown off the train or arrested. Note that while it might make sense for Luc to just leave this train and catch the next day's, doing so will cause the party to miss out of most of the side plots that resolve in Nalaam.

If the party is discreet, though, Luc's crew won't suspect anything until Ottavia receives a *sending* in Trekhom.

Sneaking Out.

As in Cherage, Boone sneaks out with his lady friend. He plants himself in a spot on the way to the Night Market. Ten minutes later Bree departs and heads for the docks, where she pays a handful of dockers to do her a favor, then sits and watches the aurora over the sea.

Finally Luc and Ottavia excuse themselves and head out. They take a route past Boone, into the Night Market, then to a carriage depot. They hire a carriage for the evening and head to the docks, past Bree, toward the city's lighthouse.

If anyone is following them to the Night Market, Boone will again do his 'stumble and get angry' trick to slow the pursuers. If the party follows them to the docks, Bree has her hired dockers delay the party by dropping and shattering crates in the road just after Luc and Ottavia's carriage goes by. If the party's in a carriage of their own, they won't be able to get through the mess and will have to detour around it.

Once Bree's confidant Luc and Ottavia are not being followed, she rendezvouses with them at the lighthouse.

Boone's Next Murder.

After his job is done, Boone takes his lady to an inn, sleeps with her, then slips out. He finds a random woman of the evening, takes her to an alley, and ritually sacrifices her to his pistol, just like in Cherage. The next morning, people again are talking about rumors of a second grisly murder, which leads to suspicions that the killer might be on the train.

Luc & Ottavia.

Luc and Ottavia follow Bree's plan to avoid being observed, but their ultimate goal is to present Luc's invention to a local Obscurati cell leader in Orithea. They meet on a small spit of land that juts into the harbor, at a small support building adjacent to the city's lighthouse, where a crowd of twenty armed guards greet their carriage.

Inside, a wealthy architect named **Hanse Randall** watches Luc show off his lantern, and then magic-using assistants ask questions about how it works, how to recreate it, and how to scale it up to lighthouse size. During the course of these questions, a small accident occurs. The wild magic of the Malice Lands causes the lantern to surge with excess power while burning oil infused with the essence of Mavisha. At exactly 10:14 PM, every fire in the city is transformed into water, leaving the city lit only by the aurora. Simultaneously, a patch of sea around the lighthouse bursts into flames for a moment.

People in Orithea treat this sort of oddity like people living near a fault line would react to a minor earthquake. There's caution, but no one's too worried.

THE SCREAMING MALICE

Action. Tactical.

Train robbers strike while a towering monster distracts the guards.

The train leaves Orithea at 7:30 AM. The complement of first-class suites stays the same, and no one of consequence boards in second class. As in Cherage, if Boone is on the run, he sneaks on board in coach.

As soon as the train's out of Orithea, Malia invites interested parties back up onto the roof of the lounge car for another round of shooting at helpless malice beasts. The same group as before shoots—Bree, Boone, Cardiff, Damata and Tarro Griento (Cardiff again attaches his briefcase strap to his ankle instead of his wrist)—plus six of the train's guards. The terrain changes rapidly, and creatures obediently show up and die. This goes on until 9 AM, when a gang of brigands spring their surprise.

They have laid a huge barricade of logs and explosives atop the rails east of the edge of a swamp, which is home to a horrible psychic monster called a screaming malice. When the train emerges from the swamp's fog, engineer Steeg sees the barricade and pulls on the brakes. Just as Malia predicted, the train manages to stop 100 feet from the barricade. The monster will spring from the swamp and attack the middle and rear of the train, giving the bandits easy access to the freight cars at the front of the train.

Great Train Robbery.

As the train is passing through a fog-filled swampy region, the train lurches and its brakes begin to screech. Everyone on the roof must make an Acrobatics check (DC 14) or fall off the side of the train. Those already seated are safe. The train travels 200 feet before stopping.

Just as the train screeches to a stop, a deafening chorus of roars sounds from the fog. The screaming malice rises from the swamp north of Car 10 and attacks.

8 Malice Bandit Riders

Rodinn, Malice Bandit Captain

9 Malice Beast Steeds (treat as warhorses)

Screaming Malice



Terrain.

The encounter is roughly divided into a swamp section to the west and a desert section to the east, with the train running eastward through them. At the start of the encounter, Cars 1 to 8 are in the desert, Cars 9 to 19 are in the swamp. The boulder barricade the bandits set up is 50 ft. east of the locomotive (Car 1). This barricade is just an illusion, created by the bandit leader Rodinn. Clever PCs might notice that the nearby terrain of swamp and desert would not be insufficient to provide enough boulders.

The screaming malice appears north of Car 10. The assumed course of events is that the PCs make their way down the train to the screaming malice, then fight it off, save passengers from its spawn, or rush onward to the locomotive, to get the train moving. Use the timeline below to keep track of what happens up until when the PCs intervene in a particular location.

Timeline.

Front of Train.

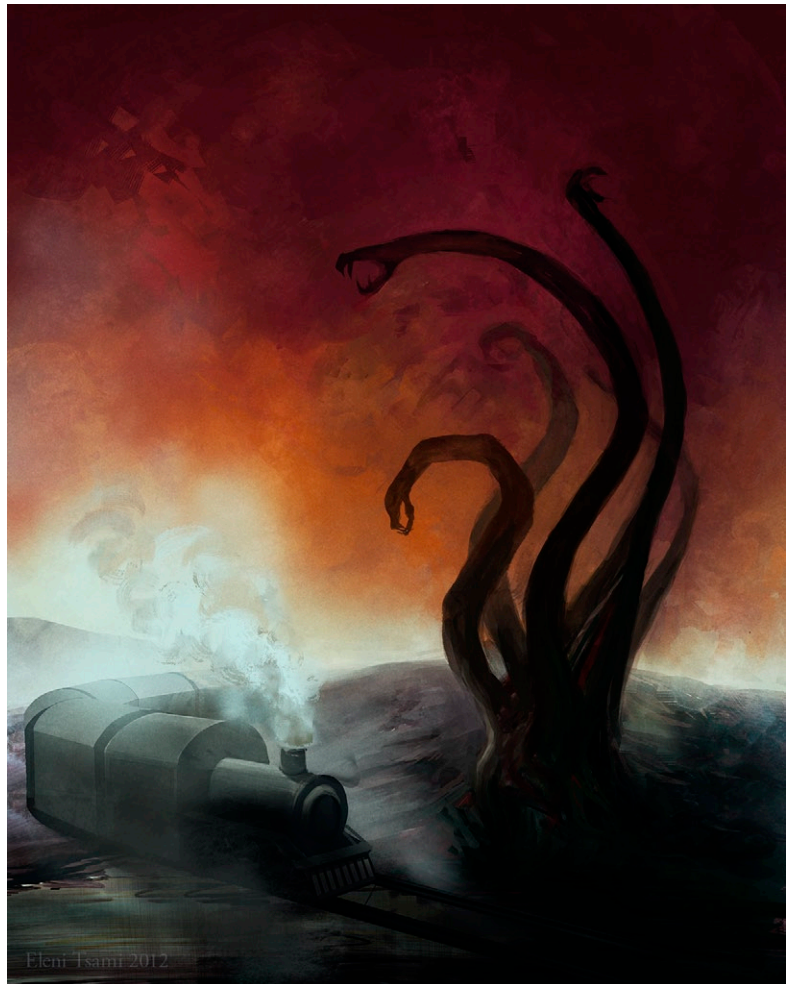
- ♦ **Round One.** Bandits ride in. Chief guard Vodyarika Lerkem leads 3 other guards to the locomotive.
- ♦ **Rounds Two to Five.** Bandits jump their steeds onto the locomotive. They dismount and fire pistols while the steeds claw and bite. They kill one guard per round. Guards knock out one bandit each round. Engineer Steeg surrenders.
- ♦ **Round Six.** Bandits stabilize their wounded, who remain as rear flank.
- ♦ **Rounds Seven to Ten.** Bandit captain and four bandits remount and ride to Car 6.
- ♦ **Rounds Ten to Twelve.** Bandits shoot Mister Mapple, who tries to drive them off. He's left for dead, but will regenerate.
- ♦ **Rounds Thirteen to Twenty.** Bandits steal items of value from Car 6.
- ♦ **Rounds Twenty-One to Thirty.** If no one from rear of train is approaching, bandits quickly grab valuables in Cars 3, 4, and 5. They ride away as soon as they see trouble approaching.

Middle of Train.

- ♦ **Round One.** If any characters are near the front of the train, they may see a lump rising in the black, swampy water below the bridge. The tumescent growth rises, brackish water cascading off of it, revealing something slick, black, and tarry reflecting the dim sunlight. Something like a tentacle shoots suddenly out of it, smashing through the windows of Car 10. Other tendrils—actually long necks capped by amorphous, reptilian heads—rise up and begin to scream.
- ♦ **Round Two.** The head in Car 10 detaches, and the neck pulls back out. A new head regrows. The original head, still screaming, splits apart into four whip-tailed drakes called malice spawn. These begin to kill the passengers.
- ♦ **Round Three to Fourteen.** Each round, the screaming malice moves about half a car-length toward the back of the train. On odd-numbered rounds the malice reaches a new car, then smashes through windows with its head. Every even numbered round it detaches the head, creating new spawn. If not stopped, it reaches Car 16 in round thirteen.
- ♦ **Round Fifteen.** The screaming malice withdraws into the swamp, and its spawn leave the train. They'll merge with their original body, and thus feed the malice.

Rear of Train.

- ♦ **Round One.** People see the screaming malice rise up. The guards are dumbfounded. Tarro Griento screams, and Malia feigns terror



as well. Cardiff detaches his briefcase from his ankle, considers attaching it to his wrist, but decides he needs both mobility and free hands to shoot.

- ♦ **Round Two.** Malia yells for the other guards to go help, and says she'll make sure the first class passengers are safe. She climbs down into the lounge car. Bree and Boone meet gazes, and she nods downward, implying they need to protect Luc.
- ♦ **Round Three.** Damata drags his son down the ladder, and heads into Car 18, shouting warnings as he runs to get his family in Car 17. Bree also climbs down, and she stops outside Luc and Otavia's suite, banging on the door. Boone heads to the connection between Car 18 and 17, keeping an eye on the monster. Verzubak and a lot of other people flee from the second class suites toward the rear of the train.

The above people stay at these locations until the end of the encounter, unless the PCs get them to move.

The other six guards start to nervously approach the screaming malice along the train's roof. Cardiff grabs four of the rifles discarded by Damata, Boone, Bree, and Tarro, and he follows the guards.

- ♦ **Round Four to Eight.** Cardiff and the guards advance one car every two rounds, eventually stopping at Car 16.
- ♦ **Round Nine to Twelve.** Cardiff and the guards fire at the screaming malice. They deal a combined 24 damage per round to it.
- ♦ **Round Thirteen.** With the monster only one car away, Cardiff and the guards run back toward the end of the train.

THE SUSPECTS.

- ♦ **Luc & Ottavia** stays locked in their suite in Car 18.
- ♦ **Bree** guards Car 18.
- ♦ **Boone** waits on roof between Car 17 and Car 18.
- ♦ **Verzubak** heads for Car 19.
- ♦ **The Grientos** stay in Car 17, arguing over whether to hide or run.
- ♦ **Elanor & Isobel** stay locked in their suite in Car 18.
- ♦ **Mr. Mapple** fights off bandits, gets shot and left for dead, regenerates.
- ♦ **Cardiff** leads train guards to shoot the monster.
- ♦ **Malia** waits in Car 19, trying to keep passengers from fleeing into the swamp.

See the table below to track how many spawn and casualties there are when the PCs finally engage the monster. Make a note of how many casualties there are in this fight; it will affect the party in the encounter Three Milestones (page 40).

Round	Malice Location	# of Spawn	Casualties
1	Car 10	0	0
2	Car 10	2	0
3	Car 11	2	2
4	Car 11	4	4
5	Car 12	4	8
6	Car 12	6	12
7	Car 13	6	18
8	Car 13	8	24
9	Car 14	8	32
10	Car 14	10	40
11	Car 15	10	50
12	Car 15	10	60
13	Car 16	10	70
14	Car 16	10	80
15	Departs	10	80

Tactics.

The screaming malice feeds on intense emotions, and the bandits lured it to this swamp with a ritual and a sacrifice. When it senses the unease of the passengers on the train (due to the sudden braking), it approaches to eat. Its screams acts as a psychic aura to heighten people's emotions, and its spawn wreak havoc inside the train, causing panic and capturing actual flesh (terror is candy, flesh and blood are the veggies).

When the PCs get within its field of view, or if any PCs attack it or its spawn, it is attracted by the rare taste of heroism. The malice spawn break off from killing passengers, and they rush the party—some through the train cars, others along the top. The screaming malice itself closes in and tries to bite and fling whoever is dealing the most damage to it. It does not move adjacent to the railroad, though, since the rigid metal injures it. (The attacks of the railroad guards are not substantial enough to get its attention, since the guards are as frightened as the passengers.)

The bandits try to flee before the party reaches them, but if forced into a fight the riders form a defensive group as they withdraw to their steeds, while their leader Rodinn unleashes illusions to try and buy them time.

Aftermath.

There are few wounded, but likely many are dead. Malia, upon seeing the carnage, withdraws from everyone, shocked because she just expected the bandits to use a monster as a distraction, not to actually kill people. Captured bandits know they had an ally on the train, but only Rodinn knows it was her.

The surviving guards inspect the barricade and realize it's an illusion. Engineer Steeg nervously starts the train moving, and the illusion disappears when the locomotive hits it.

During the rest of the trip to Trekhom, Conductor Xorin makes his way through the train, checking on people and asking if they saw anything that might be useful for the formal investigation into the attack.

Malice Spawn

CR 2

XP 400

N medium aberration

Init +2; Senses blindsight 60 ft.; Perception +1

Defense

AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 11 (+2 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 10 (2d8+6)

Fort +3 Ref +2, Will +4

Immune disease, mind-affecting abilities, poison

Weaknesses frail

Offense

Speed 40 ft.

Melee claw +2 (1d6+2)

Statistics

Str 12, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 11

Base Atk +1; CMB +2; CMD 14

Feats Toughness

Skills Climb +9, Stealth +10

Special Abilities

Frail (Ex) Malice Spawn always count as rolling a 1 when determining hit points from racial HD.

Malice Bandit Rider (8)

CR 1

XP 400 each

Male or female human gunslinger 2

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; Senses Perception +7

Defense

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 21 (2d10+4)

Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +2

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee shortsword +3 (1d6+1/19-20)

Ranged pistol +4 (1d8/x4)

Statistics

Str 13 Dex 15, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 10

Base Atk +2; CMB +3; CMD 15

Feats Gunsmithing, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot

Skills Acrobatics +5, Climb +0, Fly +1, Intimidate +5, Perception +7, Ride +1, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +1, Survival +6, Swim +0

Languages Common

SQ deadeye, deeds, grit, gunslinger's dodge, quick clear

Other Gear pistol, shortsword, studded leather, horse

Rodinn, Malice Bandit Captain

CR 7

XP 3,200

Male human rogue 4 / sorcerer 4

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +7; **Senses** Perception +8**Defense****AC** 13, touch 12, flat-footed 11 (+1 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 shield)**hp** 52 (4d8+4d6+16)**Fort** +4, **Ref** +8, **Will** +4**Defensive Abilities** evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge**Offense****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** +1 dagger+7 (1d4+2/19-20) and +1 dagger+7 (1d4+2/19-20)**Special Attacks** acidic ray (6/day), long limbs, sneak attack +2d6**Sorcerer Spells Known** (CL 4th ; concentration +7)**2nd (4/day)**— *minor image* (DC 15)**1st (7/day)**— *enlarge person*, *hypnotism* (DC 14), *magic missile*, *shield***0 (at will)**— *acid splash*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation***Statistics****Str** 12 **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 20, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 16**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 18**Feats** Dodge, Double Slice, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Rogue Weapon Proficiencies, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse**Skills** Acrobatics +8, Bluff +10, Climb -5, Diplomacy +8, Escape Artist +4, Fly -3, Heal +1, Intimidate +12, Perception +8, Ride -3, Sense Motive +6, Sleight of Hand +4, Stealth +6, Survival +1, Swim -5**Languages** Common**SQ** aberrant, stand up, trapfinding +2**Other Gear** 2 +1 daggers, robes**Screaming Malice**

CR 10

XP 9,600

N Gargantuan aberration

Init +2; **Senses** blindsight 120 ft., low-light vision; Perception +23**Defense****AC** 22, touch 4, flat-footed 22 (-2 Dex, +18 natural, -4 size)**hp** 300 (30d8+180)**Fort** +17 **Ref** +7, **Will** +7**Defensive Abilities** all-around vision, truly gargantuan; **Immune** mind-affecting abilities**Weaknesses** malice spawn, vulnerable to order**Offense****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** 5 head bites +16 (4d6+16)**Space** 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.**Special Attacks** produce spawn**Statistics****Str** 28, **Dex** 6, **Con** 23, **Int** 2, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 5**Base Atk** +11; **CMB** +25; **CMD** 32 (can't be tripped)**Feats** Diehard, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception)**Skills** Perception +23**SQ** many-headed, produce spawn**Special Abilities****All-Around Vision (Ex)** The Screaming Malice can never be flanked. this ability does not affect the heads, which can still be flanked normally.**Malice Spawn (Su)** Whenever a malice spawn is destroyed, the screaming malice takes 10 damage.**Many-Headed (Ex)** The screaming malice has five heads, each of which occupies its own space of 10 ft. When the malice moves it can move its heads to any space within 25 ft. of its body.

The heads are part of the malice, and so share its defenses and hit points. Effects that inflict conditions or force movement can affect a head, but each head tracks its conditions separately. The malice can only make attacks (including opportunity attacks) against creatures adjacent to one of its heads.

On the malice's turn, it gets one move action for its body and one standard action for each head.

Produce Spawn (Su) This ability can only be used when there are 10 or less malice spawn created by the screaming malice. The screaming malice detaches one of its heads in place of making an attack. The area it occupied becomes four new malice spawn. The head regrows at the end of the malice's next turn.

Truly Gargantuan (Ex) The screaming malice has twice the normal hit points for a creature of its level. However, once it is reduced below half-health it flees, as do all its spawn. The malice is immune to conditions and cannot be affected by any sort of forced movement. Its heads do not have this same immunity, however. It takes a -5 penalty to attack rolls against creatures adjacent to its main body.

Vulnerable to Order (Su) The malice beast's flesh withers at the touch of the railroad. If its body or one of its heads starts its turn at ground level adjacent to the train, the screaming malice takes 10 points of damage.



ACT THREE: TURNED TABLES

This act turns the PCs from predator to prey as their targets receive word they're being spied on.

ARMS DEALERS.

Men hand out brochures near the hotel inviting visitors to various craftsmen of fine armaments. It has become a cottage industry in Drakr for weapons makers to collaborate with mages in the creation of new killing tools.

Either by following a brochure or following Verzubak after he toasts, the party might find their way to a shop called *Knigi, Grudi, Bong, i Strely* (Books, Boobs, Bongs, and Booms), which caters to all sorts of marginally legal desires, with a library of controversial books and scrolls, exotic magical pornography, various drugs and paraphernalia, and of course, explosives.

New weapons include the following advanced weapons from *Ultimate Combat* (not normally available):

- + Rifle
- + Shotgun
- + Most magical ammunitions of +2 or less enhancement bonus



LAYOVER IN TREKHOM

Exploration/Social. Montage.

When the train stops in a city of dwarves, it's hard for suspects to blend in, but equally hard for the party to shadow them.

Less than an hour after the attack, the train crosses the border out of the Malice Lands and into Drakr. A steel spire rises five hundred feet above the desolate landscape, guarded by a battalion of soldiers and mages. The train does not stop there, but over the next few hours it hits several small cities. At the conductor's urging, most people do not flee the train. He promises their needs will be better tended once they reach Trekhom.

The train is scheduled to arrive in Trekhom at 6:24 PM; if the party doesn't take a hand in getting the train moving again, it shows up at 6:45, by which time the enclave guards have gotten nervous.

With perfunctory formality, Malia comes through fifteen minutes outside of Trekhom. Still shocked by the morning's attack, she asks everyone to please return to their seats. After all that's happened today, she doesn't want anyone to fall prey to thieves hopping on board in the commotion to nick unattended valuables.

The train approaches Trekhom via a titanic, high bridge that passes over the mouth of a mighty sea. From a distance, you see pollution thicker than in any city you've been before. Huge steel mills churn coal smoke into the air. Gray snow drifts down from the sky, coating every surface in freezing wet grime. The enclave and surrounding railyard lie directly between the city center and the harbor, forcing the whole city to suffer from the smog in the name of efficient trade.

As the train arrives, night has already fallen and the air is thick enough with snow that you can only make out vague shapes of squat buildings, punctuated by massive towers.

Investigation.

When the train pulls up to the station, twenty enclave guards stand at ready, as well as the enclave's tiefling director. Conductor Xorin speaks with the director, and they quickly arrange for the basement of a nearby theater hall to be used as a makeshift morgue. Bereaved passengers have their tickets refunded and their lodgings paid for. Investigators try to question everyone so the railroad can prevent future attacks of this sort.

The train coming from Nalaam has already arrived. When word spreads of the monster in the Malice Lands, many of its passengers change their travel plans until they know it's safe.

Overnight, passengers in coach and second class are asked to take all their belongings off the train because new cars will replace the damaged ones.

This scene is meant to give the party time to catch their breaths. Nothing dangerous happens tonight unless they go looking for trouble.

The Grand Railyard.

The Avery Coast Railroad enclave sits within a crenellated wall, just to the north of a much larger conflux of railroads. Eight different railroads that span Drakr meet in a railyard that fills nearly an entire square mile. Hundreds of rail cars are parked along its tracks, and trains roll through the city at least once an hour.

People are free to come and go from the enclave, but the city does not offer much to the casual tourist. The city has no subrail due to disputes over subterranean property, but small overland rail lines weave between city districts. Older paths underground are also available, cramped for humans but lit with gaslamps and free of gray snow.

Law Enforcement.

Drakr is more prepared for dangerous travelers than the lands to the west. Human and dwarven mages—often armed with painful and borderline immoral magic such as mind control and soul-sucking necromancy—stand ready for people with uncanny combat prowess causing trouble.

Drakr is well-known for its harsh treatment of prisoners. Authorities here are said to prefer seeing people sent north to mining prisons than taking bribes to let them go. If the party gets arrested, they'd need to offer at least 500 gp to be set free.

Rendezvous with Their Ship.

As planned, the party's ship is waiting in the Trekhom harbor, perhaps stocked with supplies. If the party gets into too much trouble here, they can catch a ride and get to Sid Minos before the train does, but they'll miss out on the events in Nalaam.

The Grientos.

Ejeka wants to take her kids some place fun to take their minds off the carnage, but Damata is morbidly drawn to the theater where the bodies of the victims are being stored. People are talking about how a special guest is scheduled to speak tonight at the theater: Vlendam Heid, the dwarf who founded the major philosophical movement of Heid Eschatol.

Damata feels like it is fate that a man who wrote the book on preparing for death would be waiting for him on this trip where he expects to die. He insists on going, and Ejeka decides to go to a park with the kids to let them play in the dirty snow. Damata and Heid's interaction is presented in more detail below.

Elanor & Isobel.

Elanor huffs out of the enclave with Isobel in tow, takes a trolley to an inn at the docks called *Korol Morya* (Sea King), and meets an esteemed dwarf ritualist, **Vankloff Jeanov**. They go to a private basement room, where Vankloff acts as a conduit for long-distance communication.

If the party manages to eavesdrop, they can hear Vankloff speak with three different voices through the conversation—one with a brusque Drakran accent, one a charming Crisillyiri, and one a smarmy Risuri. They ask how the trip is going and express concern at the story of the attack.

Elanor is obsequious, thanking these "august gentlemen" for their "fine taste" and promising to "deliver the goods unmarred—I haven't had to beat her once yet, she is very obedient." She asks for specific instructions, and the Drakran voice responds that she can "simply come to the tower," and she will be welcomed, and, importantly, paid very handsomely for her "fresh, ripe, delightful cargo."

The Crisillyiri voice then asks if she has anything for his "other business interest." Elanor responds that she'll make a list of "prospective fodder for the arena," but warns that the best fighters were traveling first class and even he "can't go around abducting wealthy travelers, you might be killing my clientele."

The conversation is over in less than five minutes. Vankloff gets a payment of 1,100 gold pieces. Afterward they share a drink, and then Elanor and Isobel return to the enclave hotel.

Cardiff.

During the investigation, Cardiff plays down his role in fighting the malice beast. Then he retires to his room in the enclave's fine hotel, changes clothes, exits discreetly, and rents a room in the cheaper hotel. He carries his briefcase hidden inside a dufflebag.

After midnight, Cardiff leaves the hotel and walks to the larger railway. He's scheduled to meet his buyers at Warehouse Six at 7:00 PM. His buyer is a small, fat dwarf with wrinkled face full of stubble, dressed in a Drakran military uniform, named **Ulrik Pevedin**. He's flanked by two human attendants, and a dozen other armed soldiers hide in the warehouse.

Cardiff puts down his dufflebag as he enters the warehouse, then pulls out his briefcase. He sets the briefcase on the table, and opens it. Inside there are many sheets of paper, and the fat dwarf leers over them.

"Ahahaha! These documents will be very valuable on the open market, my spy friend. Thank you ever so much. Danor's military secrets are, ahem, safe in my hands. Please, have a drink with me and tell me how you found these." The dwarf reaches to sift through the documents.

Cardiff closes the briefcase, almost catching the dwarf's fingers. "You can figure that out yourself after you pay me."

The dwarf heaves another briefcase onto the table. Cardiff moves to open it, then pauses and turns it so it opens facing the dwarf. The dwarf laughs, and after it opens without setting off any sort of trap, Cardiff counts the stacks of platinum and gold coins, then inspects a bag of gems, all told worth 17,000 gp. He transfers the money to his dufflebag, leaving the dwarf's briefcase empty.

"You are too paranoid," says the dwarf, "even for this country. I would not kill you without being sure you are prepared for it."

"You can never be too prepared," Cardiff says. "Don't read page eight. It's trapped to explode."

Cardiff walks away with his dufflebag, and the dwarf laughs as he goes. Cardiff heads to the docks and catches a ship out at first light.

Stopping the Exchange.

If the party intervenes, Pevedin's fourteen goons will try to kill them. Cardiff will simply try to escape, either with the documents or with his reward (or both, if possible). Pevedin just cowers. You can use for his guards the stats of the Privateer Officers (page 14), reskinning sabers as maces.

The documents are related to Danor's naval maneuvers, and give highly detailed records of every ship in the navy, its captain, crew, armaments, capabilities, and recent deployments. This would be invaluable in the event of a war with Danor.

Malia.

Malia is enlisted to help carry bodies from the train to the theater-turned-morgue. Afterward she takes a long hot bath and goes to bed early, but has trouble sleeping. Malia really doesn't do much else of interest for the rest of the adventure, unless the PCs prompt some action.

Mister Mapple.

It's possible Mister Mapple was captured by the train guards after the attack, in which case he's taken into custody, but manages to escape shortly before dawn.

If unfettered, Mister Mapple follows the PCs because he's curious about them. He might address them briefly—calling down from a rooftop, ready to flee in an instant—to ask their names and introduce himself. He leaves before long, then goes to spy on Isobel through the window of Elanor's hotel room.

Luc's Crew.

Much like in Orithea, the group works to let Luc and Ottavia head to a lighthouse at the harbor. Due to the sad events of the afternoon, Verzubak has a hard time finding people to gamble with, and Boone has to enlist a man as his drinking buddy, instead of a young lady. The group watches each other's backs, heads to the inn *Korol Morya* (Sea King), and then gets the signal from Verzubak. Ottavia writes a note and has it delivered to Bree.

"Just received sending. Tell others, our mission under surveillance. Suspected Risuri group sailed into Beaumont. Do not confront. Give information to me."

If the party failed the secrecy part of the mission training montage, instead the note reads contains brief descriptions of the party, short enough to fit into the 25-word limit of *sending*.

After seeing Luc off, Bree quietly shadows Boone. She doesn't see him kill his victim, but does find the body. She'll report this to Ottavia, who'll concoct a plan to deal with both the party and Boone, who has become a liability.

Luc and Ottavia meet up with a dwarf who owns all the prisons in northern Drakr, **Ramos Zoltan**. The lantern demonstration occurs without a hitch. If the PCs manage to get a glimpse into the meeting, they can see mock-ups of Trekhom's lighthouse, a few other city lighthouses along the Drakran coast, and the giant spire at the border of Drakr and the Malice Lands.

After leaving the lighthouse, Luc prepares a contingency. Using his family name as leverage, he gets the enclave director to agree to some special repairs for the train. He has a replica of his experiment installed on top of the locomotive, concealed under a sheet of steel as part of the smokestack. He is also given access to the train's interior overnight; he scribes sigils into the hidden backsides of the gas lanterns that light the hallways. In this way, he can activate his lantern to affect the entire train if need be.

DOOMED MEN ARE OFTEN PHILOSOPHICAL

Social. Real-Time.

Damata Griento has to decide how to face his death.

At 8:00 PM, the enclave clock tolls, and **Vlendarm Heid** walks on stage, wearing a heavy brown suit and thick spectacles. The audience is filled with scholars, philosophers, and theologians, but a roped-off section in front reserved for railroad passengers is empty save for Damata. Depending on how the party has treated him, he might ask one or more PCs to come with him.

"People ask me," he starts, "how will the world end? How in the various hells should I know? I am not a prophet. I don't believe you can know what will happen. Yes, mages and priests can see paths and visions, but it only takes one unlikely interaction or chance meeting to change the course of the future.

"I don't say I know how the world will end. But I know that it *will* end. Every fire

burns itself out. Tomorrow morning, look to the sun. Feel how warm it is. One day it must burn out, and without it this world will freeze. Maybe some—"

He stops, then looks down to the front row and adjusts his glasses.

"I prepared a speech," he says. "They hired me and told me the audience would be layfolk. I tried to prepare something simple. I see I have some admirers in the back rows, but up front, it is pretty empty. You survived the attack on the train today?"

Damata nods. Unexpectedly, Heid sits down at the edge of the stage and lets his feet dangle as he addresses Damata (and the PCs, if they're present) directly.

"I have a contract, and I must speak on a level my audience understands. Let us be efficient. I wrote a rather long treatise on how best to prepare for death, and for other endings in life. Today there was a great deal of death on your train. I leave it to you: please ask whatever you want, and perhaps we can learn something from this tragedy."

Damata thinks for a minute, then says, "The people who died today don't have a chance to change anything anymore. I do. I hurt my family, and I can't stand myself now. I want to change things. I saw I could die out of nowhere, so I guess I should make amends while I have the chance."

"I have dealt with this before," Heid says. "Life has many chapters, and if you want the book to end properly, you must choose the path of each chapter well too."

"Oh." Damata slumps. "It's hard, because I think if I try to fix anything, I'll get myself killed."

People in the back of the theater make furious notes.

This sets off an earnest discussion between the burdened, plainspoken Damata and Heid, who is intrigued by Damata's vulnerability. Damata explains his predicament. Heid seldom offers answers, but instead asks questions to guide Damata to figure out what matters to him. Heid's goal is to get Damata to act without fear, because he has come to grips with the possibilities of how this chapter of his life will end.

Final Will.

The PCs are welcome to get involved, but barring their intervention, Damata decides that he is likely to be beholden to the Family if he does not stand up to them. The only possible ending to this situation that he thinks would honor his family and his nation is if he follows the tradition of his ancestors and fights for his territory—in this case his family, his wealth, and his life. He is no fighter himself, but he comes from a family of warchiefs, and so he will rally warriors to him.

Unless somehow the party has completely avoided combat so far, Damata intends to ask the PCs to fight for him against the criminals who seek to make him their slave. He will offer to arm them and pay them in loot, as is the orcish way. If they refuse, he will see that as proof he is not worthy of his family name, and thus the weapons were not his to take. He will instead go to the meeting expecting with no payment, and will kill himself, because death is better than slavery.

The audience is quite excited, and Vlendarm Heid himself asks to have the honor of a drink with Damata.

Recruitment.

Either at the theater or later in the evening, a slightly drunk Damata and Heid find the PCs in their room—waiting until dawn if necessary—and

make Damata's offer. Using the famous philosopher's authority to back him up, Damata proposes that they are all free men, and that anyone who would threaten another man's family to make him into a slave does not deserve to live. Those who would aid such a slaver likewise deserve to die.

When they reach Nalaam, he asks the party to accompany him as his warriors. He'll have to see if he can buy some warpaint in the morning before the train departs, but he's prepared to arm them, though they must return the weapons to his family after the battle. In exchange, he'll grant them a place of honor at his villa in Ber, and will let them keep whatever loot they find after the battle. He knows the Family plans to have a wizard present to price and purchase the weapons, so there should be plenty of cash on hand.

Of course, if the party comes up with another solution (such as taking Cardiff's pay-off and handing it over to the Family), Damata's willing to change his mind. If the party refuses outright, Damata looks to Heid for strength, then nods and departs.

Weapons of the Warchiefs.

The simplest way to handle this is to just treat the items Damata carries as a collection of orcish tribal totems which anyone can wear. These totems only function when fighting for a warchief of the Griento family, and they grant the wearer 15 temporary hit points at the start of combat, and increase the enhancement bonuses of the PCs' weapons by 1 step (from none to +1, or +2 to +3, for instance).

If you want to add some more specificity, the following items might suffice. Whatever form Damata's items take, if the party steals them they will be cursed until they return the items to the Griento family. Whenever a cursed character gets into combat, he feels thick orcish hands grasp his limbs and prevent him from fighting. The cursed character is dazed until the end of his first turn each combat.

- ♦ Three sets of *bracers of armor* +2.
- ♦ Two +1 *returning throwing axes*.
- ♦ Four +1 *shocking daggers*.
- ♦ A set of *gloves of arrow snatching*.
- ♦ One *brooch of shielding*.

UNDER INVESTIGATION

Puzzle/Social. Real-Time.

Luc Jierre's bodyguards try to figure out who's spying on them.

No Longer On Board: Cardiff.

During boarding, people mutter about news that another body was found overnight, ritually disemboweled like the last two. The prevailing theory is that whoever called the monster in the Malice Lands is trying to kill everyone on the train. Passengers are tense.

The train leaves at 7:30 AM. The coach cars are only a quarter full, and they only end up half full by the time the train reaches Nalaam in the evening. Before then, things seem to have mellowed out, and the day goes by without any attacks or monsters.

The situation will depend immensely on how the party has done so far in their reconnaissance. They likely have identified Luc as their target, but they might not know how the others fit into the situation. Or they could have figured out everyone's situation, and just need to lay low and not attract attention.

Now, though, it's the villains' turn to spy on the party. Ottavia passes along a directive to in no way let on that they're suspicious, and not to

take any overt actions. They are just to make a slight effort to tease information out of the party. If the party failed to maintain secrecy in the initial planning, Ottavia knows for sure who the PCs are. Otherwise, you might include some of the following encounters in the lounge car throughout the day.

Creepy Flirtations.

If the party has any female PCs, Boone will spend the morning flattering her shamelessly. If he feels he's got a shot, he suggests they retire to the party's suite while everyone else is eating lunch.

Throughout the day, the party might spot Boone flirting his way through second-class and coach. He only chats up women who look or sound Risuri.

Mysterious Couple at Lunch.

Luc and Ottavia enjoy wine and cheese, conversing by sign language. At one point Luc waves down Malia and stutters out a request. He wants to buy room service lunch for all the other first class passengers—fine meals. A server comes by the party's suite with fine wine and cheese, and does the same for Elanor and the Grientos.

An hour later, Luc goes to talk to the wait staff, asking for details on who ate what. He thinks he can detect a pattern based on how picky or paranoid the eaters were. He repeats the process—with cheaper wine—for the second-class passengers.

Statistical Analysis.

Verzubak's calculations show him who the most likely RHC spies are: they are likely in first class, they are likely Risuri, they are likely traveling under pseudonyms, and they likely have been on the train since Beaumont. If he's spotted the party following him, he's almost certain, but for all he knows, Elanor or Damata might be very clever spies. He craves proof.

His brand of proof is unusual. He walks down the length of the train, rolling dice in a cup and peering at the results. He uses his luck-based magic to measure the combined odds of getting a certain result on the dice with a given probability of each suspect.

Mind if an Old Soldier Expresses Her Thanks?

Bree finds a time when the party is in their suite, and she asks if she can come in and express her thanks for how they helped out against the malice beast. She has some find Alwyr Red, a liquor imported from the far east, and she'd be honored to share it with them and swap war stories. She likes to tell the tale of how she was dismembered.

During the conversation, or if the party is hesitant to let her in, she mentions that she's actually pretty bored on this trip because the man who hired her for bodyguard duty, Caius Bergeron, never showed up. She already had a ticket, though, so she figured she'd ride anyway. She hopes the party's reaction will give them away (and she tries the same gimmick with several other passengers she suspects of having a hand in Caius's fate).

Your Presence Is Requested.

Though Elanor is devoid of empathy, people do hold value for her; for example, they can provide an audience while she gloats. As the train nears Nalaam, Elanor has the staff deliver magical notes she wrote, inviting everyone in first class, and a few suitable folks in second class, to attend the Nalaam Arena's 10:00 show this evening.

NALAAM, THE DECADENT PLAYGROUND

Exploration/Social. Montage.

The party's chief suspects change their pattern amid countless distractions.

The train climbs into the snowy mountains and reaches Nalaam at 5:57 PM The train from Sid Minos doesn't arrive until 6:08.

Fifteen minutes outside of Nalaam, Malia politely reminds you to please return to your seats. More than other cities on the route, Nalaam is renowned for its tricky thieves. She suggests you keep an eye on your personal effects, to make sure no one hops on board in the commotion and nicks your valuables.

Nalaam, a city founded upon a wellspring of magical energy, and controlled by a cabal of powerful wizards, announces its presence with light brighter and more colorful than the sunset. In the shadows of the surrounding mountains, the lights of this infamous den of iniquities hide many crimes and cruelties the rest of the world forbids.

As the train pulls into the enclave, you are dazzled by the gilded, glittering spectacle. Throngs of people ply business and pleasure out of polished marble carves and atop bizarre structures built in the shapes of arches, trees, even dragons. Above it all rises the Grand Casino, a tower of endless games of chance and skill, which generates immense wealth for the archmage lords of the city.

Nalaam, with all its temptations, beckons you.

Tonight several of the side character's plots come to a head. Damata Griento kisses his family good-bye and marches to face a gang of criminals. Meanwhile, Elanor arranges for Mister Mapple to be arrested and thrown into an arena, then sells Isobel into sex slavery.

The people who aren't active are Luc's crew, since they just want to lay low until their trap for the party goes off tomorrow. How dangerous this evening gets depends on how many friends the party has made, and how much they're willing to risk their mission to help strangers who are in trouble. Helping Damata, Isobel, or Andrei von Recklinghausen here can pay dividends in later adventures, but the party can skip them entirely without affecting the core mission.

Fun and Games.

If the party isn't up for heroics, they might play cards, dice, or roulette at the casino, where cheating with magic is forbidden (which just means people have to be clever). They might visit one of the many very creative brothels in this city of mages, or simply shop for spells and magic. Plus there's always the Nalaam Arena, the Street That is Always Downhill, and the only ski resort in the world.

WELLSPRING OF MANA.

The Lords of Nalaam make their fortunes selling mana. Their Grand Casino is suffused with earth mana which leaks—unbeknownst to the public, but knownst to the city lords—from an Ancient sealed portal to Apet, the plane of earth.

The mana takes the form of crystals, silver dust, or even nuggets of liquid gold, but fades quickly if taken beyond the city's valley. Mages are drawn to Nalaam by the promise of being able to build sturdy structures of whatever shape they desire, and to craft weapons and armor of exceptionally strong steel. Danor is trying to get the city to set up a factory to produce steam engines of great quality, but have had little success so far.

Literal Debts to Society.

Nalaam handles crime in a unique fashion. Since gold is king here, the city employs skilled economic theorists and an army of merchant surveyors to determine average values for anything that might be damaged by a crime—windows, carts, sense of security, even human life. When a criminal is caught—and since every city guard has a bell that can alert watchmages of severe threats, few major criminals manage to escape—magistrates determine the value of damages he imposed. He is then responsible for repaying that debt, plus 10 per-cent, in a fashion suited to his talents.

Offenders are branded with an arcane mark until their service is done. The point of this is not punishment, but to recoup losses, so as long as a person is not deemed a serious threat, Nalaam authorities prefer to get value quickly instead of locking people up. Petty criminals might simply be sent to a mine or farm, craftsmen are forced to craft, and violent offenders are sent to the arena as entertainment. The audience can pay to request specific bouts, or the criminals can volunteer in order to get out faster.

Timeline and Course of Events.

Assuming the PCs don't just ignore the NPCs in need of help, the most likely course of events is that the party goes with Damata to his meeting with the Family at 8 PM Afterward they go to the arena at Elanor's invitation (perhaps to keep tabs on Luc and Ottavia), and see Mister Mapple fighting and surviving injury after horrifying injury. If they try to help him, after the final fight he'll climb out of the arena to attack Elanor and the prospective buyers of Isobel, who are watching from a cushy arena suite.

If the party doesn't get involved, Damata dies rather than pay the Family, Mister Mapple is defeated in battle and kept as a curiosity (until the Obscurati acquire him much later), and Isobel lives the rest of her life as a plaything.

The Grientos.

Damata tells his wife he has a business meeting to attend. At 7 PM, Ejeka and the kids head to the casino to watch a show with captive tigers. Damata leaves a letter for his family at the concierge desk, with instructions to deliver it in the morning if he hasn't returned.

If the party gets involved, see Family Stone, below.

Elanor & Isobel, Mister Mapple.

At 7 PM, Elanor has a cadre of lawmages visit her hotel suite. They escort her as she leaves the hotel with Isobel, and when they spot Mister Mapple following them they strike, using stoneshaping magic to trap him until he can be knocked unconscious and shackled. They cart the man off to the arena, and Elanor takes Isobel to meet the buyers.

They go to a tower near the main Nalaam Casino, pass through the guarded entrance, and proceeds to the top floor. To prolong the pleasure of the sale, she invites the three buyers to come watch a show at the arena. She wants them to see what passion Mister Mapple, a random hobo, had for young Elanor, in hopes of spurring the men to bolder bidding.

If the party gets involved, see Hobo Maximum, below.

Luc's Crew.

Since there is no lighthouse here, and the Obscurati haven't managed to get a cell leader into any position of authority, the group has no objective this evening. Verzubak heads to the casino and makes a killing at dice, using magic to feel the flow of luck rather than predict the future or move

the dice like most people try. Boone hits up a brothel, then later murders a female patron of the same brothel, leaving her in a gutter.

Luc and Ottavia leave their hotel briefly to browse an arcane commercial district, where mages sell potions, scrolls, and various reagents. Ottavia, in preparation for a plan the following evening, purchases a scroll that will let her create a detailed illusion. After that, they accept Elanor's invitation to the arena, and arrive shortly before the 10 PM show starts. Bree shadows them during their shopping and also goes to the arena, but has to guard them from afar because she cannot afford a suite.

FAMILY STONE

Action. Tactical.

Sometimes you just need to stand up to a bully. Killing the bully works too.

Damata's meeting with The Family is set for 8 PM. If the party is accompanying him, he helps them arm up beforehand.

His creditors told him to bring payment in the form of magic items to a cave a mile from the railroad enclave in a seedy part of town full of brothels. The cave—right next to a sleazy establishment called *Holes*—houses a forge owned by a priest who collaborates with the family. He launders stolen magic items into untraceable residuum, which can then be used to enchant new items.

Guards at the mouth of the cave escort Damata and any guests in to a foyer/store-front, beyond which a tunnel leads to the forge itself. In the foyer waits a foul-mouthed Family *capodecina*, **Sylvester Fomazelli**, plus ten of his enforcers and the owner of the forge, **Azon the Stoneforger**.

If Damata had brought the items as agreed, their deal would have been concluded, and the Family would not attempt to squeeze blood from a stone. But when Damata shows up without payment, they threaten him, threaten his family, and tell him his children will work the mines outside Nalaam until the day they die. Damata responds with aplomb by telling the party to kill them.

Negotiating with or intimidating Sly is not easy. He's not willing to be disrespected in front of his men, and Damata will demand that his debt be wiped clean before he lets any of them leave. There's not much room for compromise on either side.

Sylvester "Sly" Fomazelli

10 Family Enforcers

Damata Griento

Tactics.

Sly starts by ordering his men to unleash a volley of gunfire against the party while he moves in to slit the throat of an enemy that is still flat-footed. At first he ignores Damata, intending to save him for last, but if he becomes wounded he tries with all his might to kill the half-orc. The enforcers provide cover for Sly, and flee if he goes down.

Azon and his guards don't get involved in the battle. The guards flee deeper into the forge and bar the door. Azon steps through the stone of the wall and follows them. He uses stoneshaping magic to keep the party from raiding his shop.

Aftermath.

Damata prefers to kill all the Family gang, then leave quickly before police arrive. If the Family wins, they kill the party and are thrilled by how much treasure they can loot.

ALL BY HIMSELF?

If the PCs declined to help, Damata spends his last hour adorning himself with orcish war paint, then sets out alone. He confronts the Family members, refuses to pay them, and then when they threaten his wife and children he raises a knife and slits his own throat, preferring death to being beholden to them. His body is never found, and his wife receives his letter the next morning, explaining everything. She and the kids ride in a grief-stricken haze to Sid Minos, where they meet up with a business associate of Damata.

Sylvester "Sly" Fomazelli

CR 6

XP 2,400

Male human rogue (knife master*) 7

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +7; **Senses** Perception +9

* See *Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game: Ultimate Combat*

Defense

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 shield)

hp 39 (7d8+7)

Fort +3, **Ref** +8, **Will** +1

Defensive Abilities blade sense +2, evasion, uncanny dodge

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 human bane dagger+8 (1d4+3/19-20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +4d8/4d4

Statistics

Str 14 **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 13, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 20

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Combat Expertise +/−2, Disengaging Feint*, Improved Feint, Improved Initiative, Rogue Weapon Proficiencies, Step Up, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus: Dagger

Skills Acrobatics +12, Bluff +11, Climb +1, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +11, Escape Artist +12, Fly +2, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (Local) +11, Perception +9, Ride +2, Sense Motive +9, Sleight of Hand +12, Stealth +12, Swim +1, Use Magic Device +8

Languages Common

SQ hidden blade +3

Other Gear +1 human bane dagger, +1 studded leather, buckler

* See *Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game: Ultimate Combat*



Family Enforcer (10)

CR 2

XP 600 each

Male or female human fighter 3

LN Medium humanoid (human)

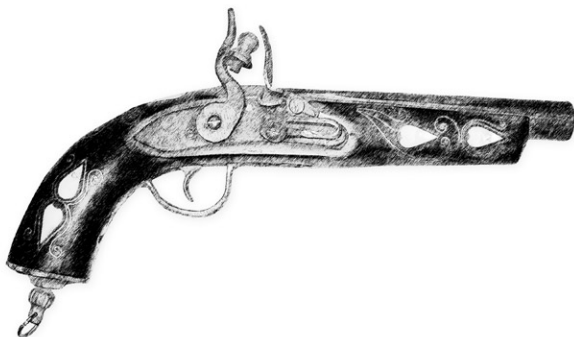
Init +3; **Senses** Perception +2**Defense****AC** 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +3 Dex)**hp** 39 (7d8+7)**Fort** +3, **Ref** +8, **Will** +1**Defensive Abilities** blade sense +2, evasion, uncanny dodge**Offense****Speed** 30 ft.**Ranged** masterwork pistol +3 (1d8/x4) and masterwork pistol +3 (1d8/x4)**Statistics****Str** 15 **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 8, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 10**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 18**Feats** Catch Off-Guard, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Toughness +3, Two-Weapon Fighting**Skills** Climb +1, Escape Artist +2, Fly +2, Intimidate +5, Perception +2, Ride +2, Sense Motive +2, Swim +1**Languages** Common**SQ** armor training 1**Other Gear** chain shirt, 2 masterwork pistols**Damata Griento**

CR 2

XP 600

Male half-orc aristocrat 3 / barbarian 1

CG Medium humanoid (orc)

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +7**Defense****AC** 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor)**hp** 32 (1d12+3d8+8)**Fort** +5, **Ref** +1, **Will** +5**Offense****Speed** 30 ft.**Ranged** masterwork kukri +4 (1d4/18-20)**Statistics****Str** 10 **Dex** 10, **Con** 14, **Int** 15, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 12**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 13**Feats** Diehard, Endurance**Skills** Acrobatics -3, Appraise +8, Climb -3, Diplomacy +7, Escape Artist -3, Fly -3, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (Engineering) +9, Knowledge (Geography) +9, Knowledge (Local) +9, Knowledge (Nobility) +9, Perception +7, Ride -3, Stealth -3, Survival +8, Swim -3**Languages** Common, Dwarven, Elven, Orc**SQ** fast movement, orc ferocity, rage**Other Gear** hide armor, masterwork kukri**HOBO MAXIMUS****Social/Action. Real-Time/Tactical.**

Mister Mapple's identity is revealed as he is forced into a bloodsport arena.

With Luc, Ottavia, Bree, and Elanor in attendance, it might be hard for the PCs to keep away from the arena. This scene puts the party into an uncomfortable situation that tests their willingness to risk their mission in order to stop an unrelated injustice.

Nalaam's coliseum has seating along only three walls, with the western quarter of its circumference open to grant a clear view of a majestic snowy mountain, which gleams in the full moon's light. Stadium seating rises over a hundred feet high, and the crowd is thick this evening. The luxury box suites sit partially-recessed at the lowest level, just forty feet above the arena floor on the eastern edge of the arena.

Elanor and her bidders have taken the central suite. The suite to the right is reserved for the party, while Luc and Ottavia watch from the one to the left. The suites have a rear section recessed into the coliseum structure and walled off for privacy, and a front balcony section with seats that overlook the event. These seats can be seen from the other suites, and only a 10-foot gap separates the balconies. Fine foods, wines, and other luxuries are provided, and elite guards protect each suite, which are accessed by a private hallway in the interior of the building.

The night's events are presided over by **Lord Kulp, Master of the Games**, who directs the arena's staff to prepare various beasts or prisoners to battle in the snow-covered sands. Known as one of the more magnanimous of the city's lords, Kulp feels few qualms letting criminals die in the arena. He has been known in the past to grant mercy to those who seem wrongfully accused, however.

Audience Reactions.

The common folk in the stadium seating love the bloodshed, and between each five-minute bout people rush to bookie booths to shell out coins. If enough people pay, a gladiator can be forced to fight again, or specific monsters might be called out. When famous guests are in the luxury suites, the crowd might appeal to them, cheering their names and the names of their favorite beasts in hopes the most expensive spectacles will be paid for from on high.

Ottavia is excited by the early bouts, but is shocked when people are brought out and start dying. Luc reacts to the carnage with detached curiosity, since he knows he cannot do anything to stop it, so he may as well learn what he can. Ottavia refuses to watch, but stays near Luc to protect him.

Elanor's Show.

Elanor and Isobel arrive accompanied by three others—the brusque Drakran **Nikola the Necromancer**, the charming Crisillyyri **Father Balthazar**, and the smarmy Risuri **Jaime the Weevil**. Isobel is still veiled, and Elanor escorts the young high elf to the balcony, waiting until the show is about to start so she can make her sales pitch. At 10 PM, right as Lord Kulp is beginning his pre-games spiel, mirrored spot-lighting from arcane braziers around the arena focus upon the central luxury suite's balcony. Elanor then instructs Isobel to stand and remove her veils.

Isobel slowly reveals herself a statuesque high elf woman, with short-cropped, ice-blond hair and brilliant azure in her blank eyes. She wears a provocative, intimate outfit. The crowd cheers at the eye candy. Lord Kulp then cuts off the spotlights, annoyed, and he directs the audience's attention down to the imminent bloodsport.

To her bidders, Elanor crows, "Gentlemen, this is the famous high elf maiden, Isobel Travers, raised since birth to appease every desire a man might have! And as you have just witnessed, her value goes far beyond a toy for you virile men. She will make you famous in this city. Powerful men will gnash their teeth with jealousy. Beautiful women will beg for a chance to serve you as she does, I tell you with no bragging. This sort of grandeur is priceless, so I'm sure none of you will mind starting the bidding at, let's say, five hundred thousand gold?"

The wizards glance at each other, seeing who'll move first, but Elanor wags a finger at them.

"Not so fast, you old dogs. Bidding won't start for half an hour. I have one more show for you. And first, why not see how you feel with the merchandise? Balthazar, come down, sit, please. Get comfortable. I'm going to go make myself a drink."

Infamous Spellcasters.

A DC 20 Knowledge (Arcana) check identifies the three mages and their reputations.

Nikola the Necromancer, a gaunt and bald human who stole his fortune by working as an assassin who killed only the wealthy. It is said that he purchases all the bodies of prostitutes who die in Nalaam, and that his private keep in the mountains outside the city is guarded by their zombies.

Father Balthazar, the Clergy's highest priest in Nalaam, who siphons much of the wealth from the church into his own mansion. None move against him because it is said he can actually summon demons to do his bidding.

Jaime the Weevil, a tiny man from Risur who forsook his druidic order and became obsessed with controlling animal pests, particularly bed bugs. He made his fortune both by controlling Nalaam's pests and offering 'protection' to make sure they would not afflict people's homes and businesses.

In a city of slime and corruption, these three are arguably the worst. They are not lords of the city, but they flaunt their power and so have earned the lords' ire. Each is overconfident in his magical power.

Blood in the Snow.

The first ten minutes of the show just has pretty criminals trying to dodge a half-dozen angry bulls. Then a pack of starving wolves are sent in against a dire bear, which wins the fight handily. Then a dozen men are sent out onto the field, among them Mister Mapple. Their shackles are opened from afar by magic, and the bear chases them down as they run to try to get weapons scattered around the floor.

PC INVOLVEMENT?

The party might sit this one out, might attack Elanor and the wizards as soon as they realize what's up, or might try to help Mister Mapple. His "parole" is set at 20,000 gold pieces, a fee no normal man could ever pay off. But if the party pays up, they can get him out of the arena, and sent up to their booth, perhaps to fight Elanor.

Alternately, the party might head into the arena themselves to help Mapple survive his fights. It's key to recall that Lord Kulp would love to see some foreigners kill Elanor and her twisted triumvirate, and if it happens at the arena he can cover for the party so there are no immediate consequences.

Mister Mapple, as soon as he's released from his shackles, tries to climb up the wall out of the arena, but mages around the edge of the wall knock him back with gusts of wind. Three men die, but Mister Mapple saves the last man and kills the bear with a two-handed axe. The crowd is thrilled.

The spotlights turn again to Elanor's booth, and Elanor stands, holding out a handful of gold coins. Lord Kulp asks if she has a request, and she says she wants to know the name of the man who killed the bear. Mapple just curses at her in response, but then Elanor tells Isobel to stand, and Mapple realizes who she is.

Elanor says, "This man was following me and my cute young friend these past three days. He's going to die tonight, but I want to know his name before I pay for his next fight."

Mapple responds, "I guessed what crimes you planned for her, that poor, that beautiful sweet maid. Ask my name? How 'bout I name you first? *Bitch!* No other word would let itself be worn by you. When I am free, no man, woman, or child will recall your name, but remember me they will. I, Bitch, am Andrei von Recklinghausen, and if I have to tear out your damned heart, I swear to free the woman next to you. Send me more beasts! I shall build a ramp and walk out of this pit!"

Elanor, feeling safe just thirty feet above Mister Mapple, sweeps her handful of gold so the crowd can see. "A thousand gold pieces, Lord Kulp. My request?" She pauses, and the crowd shouts various monster names. "Bring out the pyrecat!"

The crowd whoops with delight, and from deep in the bowels of the arena, a deep roar echoes through the stadium. Lord Kulp gestures, and workers scramble, and soon a giant gate opens on the far side of the arena floor. A single fiery eye flickers in the darkness. It roars again, and its mouth lights up with flame as the huge creature strides into view.

The pyrecat stands as tall as an elephant, with all the deadly grace of a tiger despite that it is missing one eye, and that one of its forelegs ends just above the paw, which has been replaced by a rune-inscribed hook almost as big as a man.

Possible Battles.

If the party doesn't get involved, the pyrecat runs down Andrei, formerly known as Mister Mapple. As nimble and strong as he is, he manages to jump off walls and tumble through its legs for almost a minute, nicking it with his axe. It swipes at him a few times, knocks him down, but he pushes his entrails back into his abdomen and keeps fighting.

He leaps onto its back, and it bucks, trying to shake him loose, until finally it's right beneath the party's suite. Andrei raises his axe for a strike against the spine, but the cat immolates itself. Its fur turns to fire, and Andrei screams and jumps away. But he's high enough now that he gets hold of a stone decoration just underneath the party's balcony. He hangs one-handed and bats out the flames, which he seems incapable of regenerating from.

Before he can recover, the huge predator swings its hook claw up and pierces him through the chest. It yanks him down, pins him to the snow, and roars a blast of fire into his face. The crowd roars too, and the pyrecat drags Andrei away, back through the gate to devour. (This *still* doesn't kill Andrei. City mages who noticed his regeneration ability quickly get him away from the cat and help him recuperate, so they can study him.)

Elanor uses Andrei's enthusiasm for Isobel to drive up the bidding. By the end of the evening she sells Isobel to Father Balthazar for 1.5 million gold pieces.

If the party does get involved, the fight can get complex. Isobel takes no actions of her own. She only has 20 hit points, and all her AC is 10.

Andrei von Recklinghausen
 Elanor Yanette
 Nikola the Necromancer
 Father Balthazar
 Jaime the Weevil
 Pyrecat



Terrain.

The luxury suites are just forty feet above the arena, which is an oval roughly two hundred feet across, dotted with massive columns, some cracked and toppled. The coliseum mages don't get involved, at Lord Kulp's direction. Luc and Ottavia run for the exits, while the rest of the crowd can't believe their good fortune to witness such mayhem.

Tactics.

If threatened by the PCs, Elanor at first tries to grab Isobel and drag her away to the hallway, but Lord Kulp controls the stone in the building, and so locks the door (unless the PCs try to enter the suite through the door, which he'll allow).

Nikola shouts to the others, "Pick one. Kill him. I need bodies." Balthazar and Jaime focus their attacks on the same target. Nikola uses *spectral hand* in conjunction with *vampiric touch* to attack a target who

might otherwise be hard to kill due to high AC. Meanwhile Elanor uses her spells to try and distract or debilitate PCs and keep them from harrying the other spellcasters.

If Andrei gets into the luxury suite, he tries to throw Elanor off the balcony into the arena. The pyrecat is not picky with who it attacks.

Aftermath.

If the party is defeated, Lord Kulp intervenes and calls for an end to the fight "for the safety of the audience." Guards carry the party away and arena healers stabilize the PCs. Any survivors from Elanor's group demand they be arrested, but Kulp insists the arena's charter protects their actions. The party will be released once they're conscious, though their train suite might end up with bed bugs.

Should they prevail, Lord Kulp invites the party to his private chambers beneath the arena and thanks them for getting rid of a blight that has steered this city the wrong way for years. If any PC is a Vekeshi Mystic, he briefly recites a common saying of the order in Elvish to see if anyone notices: "The best revenge is to live."

He offers to see Isobel safely to Elfaivar, where her people can help her recuperate. Andrei is suspicious and wants to go with her. It'll be a few hours before she recovers enough from the spells and drugs affecting her in order to actually talk to people. She's never had real freedom, but she wants to get far away from Danor. She says she has heard of Gale in Risur, and might want to meet her.



Andrei von Recklinghausen

CR 7

XP 3,200

N Medium humanoid (living construct*)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +0

* See below

Defense

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +6 natural)

hp 79 (9d10+30); regeneration 5 (acid or fire)

Fort +3 **Ref** +5, **Will** +3

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 slams+13 (1d6+4 plus 1d6 Con drain)

Statistics

Str 18, **Dex** 15, **Con** -, **Int** 10, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 26

Feats Endurance, Improved Initiative, Intimidating Prowess, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (slam)

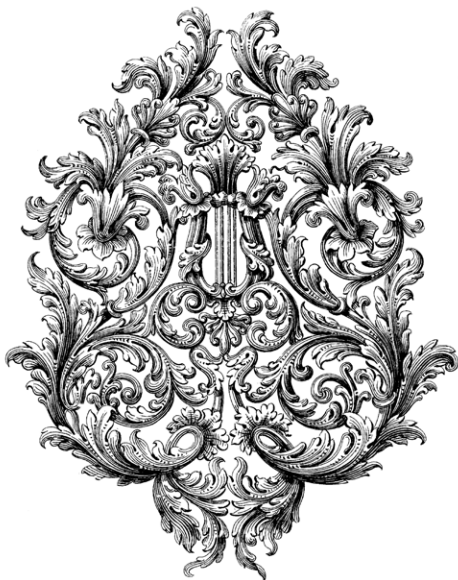
Skills Acrobatics +7, Climb +9, Intimidate +7, Survival +2, Stealth +4

Languages Common, Dwarven

Special Abilities

Living Construct (Ex) Unlike other humanoids, Andrei von Recklinghausen is built up from the body parts of others. Andrei is a unique creature that mimics many traits of a construct, but is still susceptible to mind-affecting spells and abilities.

Draining Touch (Su) Creatures hit by Andrei's slam attack must succeed on a DC 13 Fortitude save or take 1d6 points of Constitution damage. The save DC is Charisma based.



VON WHATLINGHAUSEN?

The party might recognize Andrei's surname and question him about it. He doesn't like to go into details, and instead claims that his father abandoned him, and while he was angry for a while he decided he should use it as an opportunity to become his own man.

But if the party mentions knowing Dr. Wolfgang von Recklinghausen, Andrei is conflicted. He'll feign indifference, but will want to know as much as possible. For the duration of the adventure he'll resist the urge to track down his creator, but eventually curiosity and pride will overtake his better judgment. Andrei will be making an appearance later in the campaign.

Elanor Yanette

CR 3

XP 800

Female human sorcerer 4

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +2

Defense

AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex)

hp 15 (4d6)

Fort +1, **Ref** +4, **Will** +6

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 4th; concentration +7)

2nd (4/day)—*touch of idiocy*

1st (7/day)—*cause fear* (DC 14), *charm person* (DC 14), *color spray* (DC 14), *ventriloquism*

0 (at will)—*dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *light*, *prestidigitation*, *resistance*

Bloodline maestro*

* See *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Ultimate Magic*

Statistics

Str 8 **Dex** 12, **Con** 10, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +1 **CMD** 12

Feats Eschew Materials, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Bluff), Skill Focus (Diplomacy)

Skills Bluff +13, Diplomacy +10, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (History) +3, Knowledge (Local) +3, Knowledge (Nobility) +6, Knowledge (Planes) +4, Sense Motive +6, Spellcraft +7

Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan

SQ beguiling voice, fascinate

Nikolai the Necromancer

CR 5

XP 1,600

Male human wizard 6

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +6; **Senses** Perception +1

Defense

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex)

hp 39 (4d6)

Fort +4, **Ref** +4, **Will** +8

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee masterwork quarterstaff +4 (1d6)

Wizard Spells Known (CL 6th; concentration +9)

3rd—*lesser animate dead*, *dispel magic*, *ray of exhaustion* (DC 16), *vampiric touch*

2nd—*false life*, *ghoul touch* (DC 15), *invisibility*, *scare* (DC 15), *spectral hand*

1st—*chill touch* (DC 14), *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 14)

0 (at will)—*disrupt undead*, *mage hand*, *read magic*, *resistance*

School necromancy

Statistics

Str 10, **Dex** 15, **Con** 14, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +3 **CMD** 15

Feats Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Maximize Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Mastery, Still Spell, Turn Undead

Skills Diplomacy +3, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (Arcana) +9, Knowledge (History) +9, Knowledge (Nature) +9, Knowledge (Planes) +10, Knowledge (Religion) +11, Spellcraft +11, Stealth +7

Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven, Sylvan

SQ bonded item (quarterstaff)

Combat Gear scroll of bestow curse **Other Gear** masterwork quarterstaff

Father Balthazar

CR 5

XP 1,600

Male human cleric 6

LE Medium humanoid (Human)

Init +0; **Senses** Perception +2

Defense

AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 17 (+6 armor, +1 shield)

hp 52 (6d8+24)

Fort +8, **Ref** +2, **Will** +7

Resist fire 10

Offense

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 *vicious sickle* +6 (1d6+2)

Special Attacks touch of evil (5/day)

Cleric Spells Known (CL 6th; concentration +8)

3rd—*cure serious wounds*, *fireball* (DC 15), *summon monster III*

2nd—*cure moderate wounds*, *produce flame*, *spiritual weapon* (x2), *summon monster II*

1st—*cure light wounds*, *doom* (DC 13), *protection from good*, *sanctuary* (DC 13), *shield of faith*

0 (at will)—*bleed*, *create water*, *detect magic*, *resistance*

Domains evil, fire

Statistics

Str 12, **Dex** 10, **Con** 16, **Int** 8, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +5 **CMD** 15

Feats Augment Summoning, Extra Channel, Spell Focus (Conjuration), Toughness

Skills Acrobatics -5, Bluff +6, Climb -4, Escape Artist -5, Fly -5, Knowledge (Planes) +6, Knowledge (Religion) +6, Ride -5, Spellcraft +8, Stealth -5, Swim -4

Languages Common

SQ aura, cleric channel negative energy 3d6 (7/day, DC 15)

Other Gear +1 *vicious sickle*, buckler, masterwork chainmail

Pyrecat

CR 7

XP 3,200

N huge animal (fire)

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; perception +1

Defense

AC 16, touch 9, flat-footed 15 (+1 Dex, +7 natural, -2 size)

hp 76 (8d8+40)

Fort +11, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3

Immune fire

Weakness blind in one eye, vulnerability to cold

Offense

Speed 40 ft.

Melee bite +13 (1d8+9 plus grab), 2 claws +14 (1d6+9)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks breath weapon (30-ft. cone, once every 2d4 rounds, 6d6 fire damage, Reflex DC 19 for half), pounce, rake (2 claws +14, 1d6+9)

Statistics

Str 29, **Dex** 13, **Con** 21, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +15(+19 grapple); **CMD** 26 (30 vs. trip)

Feats Improved Initiative, Run, Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Acrobatics +10, Perception +11, Stealth +6; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Acrobatics, +4 Stealth (+8 in undergrowth)

Special Abilities

Blind in One Eye (Ex) The pyrecat cannot see out of its flaming right eye. It cannot make attacks of opportunity except against targets that either it attacked or that attacked it since the start of its last turn, or targets adjacent to those creatures.

Jaime the Weevil

CR 5

XP 1,600

Male elf druid (blight druid*) 6

NE Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +11

Aura miasma (DC 15)

*See *Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game: Advanced Player's Guide*

Defense

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 40 (6d8+6)

Fort +8, **Ref** +5, **Will** +7

Immune sleep; **Resist** elven immunities

Offense

Speed 35 ft.

Melee +1 *spear*+6 (1d8+2/x3)

Special Attacks wooden fists (5 rounds/day)

Druid Spells Known (CL 6th; concentration +8)

3rd—*contagion* (DC 15), *plant growth*, *vermin shape I**

2nd—*barkskin*, *chill metal* (DC 14), *flaming sphere* (DC 14), *summon swarm* (x2)

1st—*cure light wounds* (x2), *entangle* (DC 13), *faerie fire*, *produce flame*

0 (at will)—*detect poison*, *purify food and drink*, *resistance*, *stabilize*

Domain plant

*See *Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game: Ultimate Magic*

Statistics

Str 12, **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 12, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +5 **CMD** 18

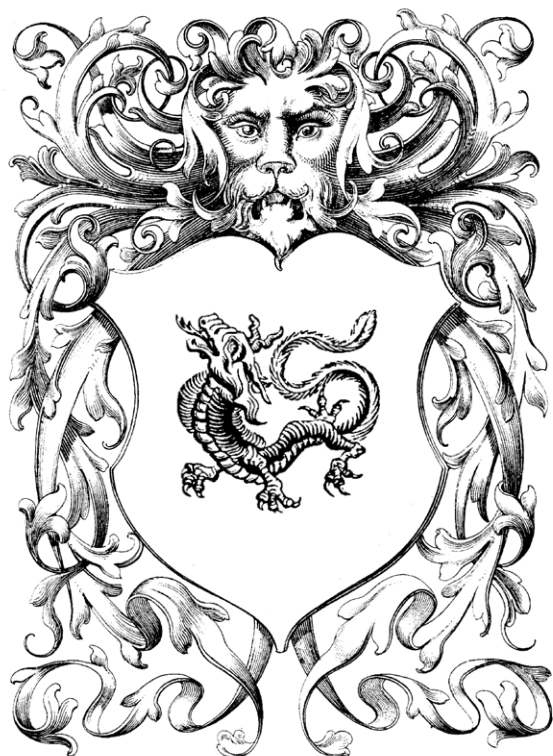
Feats Fleet, Great Fortitude, Stealthy

Skills Acrobatics +4, Diplomacy +0, Escape Artist +9, Knowledge (Geography) +8, Knowledge (Nature) +10, Perception +11, Spellcraft +8, Stealth +9, Survival +11

Languages Common, Druidic, Elven

SQ Bramble Armor (6 rounds/day), Nature Sense, Spontaneous Casting, Vermin Empathy +5, Wild Shape (2/day), Wild Shape, Woodland Stride

Other Gear +1 *spear*, leather armor





ACT FOUR: OFF THE RAILS

In this act, the party's quarry tries to take them out before they reach the gathering of the Obscurati.

BEATING THE PLAYERS

In the first act, the party has to get to the train and figure out the dynamics of how things work. In the second act they learn about the various passengers and tick them off the list of suspects. Now in the third act, they should have little doubt that Luc is their target. Luc, meanwhile, knows he's being watched, and he tries to take out the party.

Our hope is that one of these attempts will actually work, and the party will end up in contact with the demoness Ashima-Shimtu, who provides clues to a key mystery of the campaign and plays a prominent role in later adventures. Meanwhile, the villains will be lulled into a sense of security, so when the party comes to spy on their gathering they won't face overwhelming numbers of guards and look-outs.

Hopefully the players will enjoy their comeback from near death, and not feel their opponents' temporary victory is unfair. And if the party manages to outwit the villains, don't try to force the defeat.

KILL THEM IN THEIR SLEEP?

First, Luc would not kill anyone himself, at least not directly. Second, he doesn't want to risk anyone seeing his crew commit murder. Third, he thinks he's clever, and wants to prove it, so he trusts the lantern trick will kill the party without leaving any signs of foul play. Finally, he doesn't want to risk going near them, in case he or his allies get caught in the lantern's light and end up in Nem as well.



ALL DOWNHILL FROM HERE

Social. Montage.

As the train leaves Nalaam and enters Crisillyir, Luc and company fortify in case of trouble.

No Longer On Board: Elanor, Isobel, Mister Mapple.

The next morning, the train departs at 7:30 AM amid light snowfall, rolling downhill out of the Penance Peaks and into Crisillyir. By mid-morning the snow from the mountains turns to a drizzle of sleet, but the train's run in worse. Malia assures everyone they're in no danger.

If Boone's murders have not been discovered yet, Bree finds an opportunity to slip a note to Luc, which reads, "Boone is a liability. He's been responsible for the murders in each city. Can you add him to the roster of what you're already planning?"

Lantern Light.

Luc's goal is to get the party all in the same enclosed location—preferably their suite, and preferably when they don't have anyone else with them. Then he'll activate the replica of his lantern hidden atop the locomotive, which will pull the party into the deadly plane of Nem.

Luc has marked the top of the party's suite's doorframe with a subtle rune, and if he can think of any inconspicuous way to get items with that rune into the party's possession, he does so. Options include marking coins and arranging for those coins to be included as change when the party buys lunch, or having Bree give coins to the party after the battle in Nalaam, claiming she made money on their fight with Elanor, and she wants to share her winnings. If the party is careless with their belongings, Bree might have accessed their rooms the night before and stitched tiny patches with the rune under collars or cuffs.

If necessary, Luc might mark the threshold of the first class lounge car to catch the party there, or even mark both ends of Car 17, which would also affect the Grientos. He's wary of having to leave his own suite, but if he has to, he'll mark Cars 17, 18, and 19, and try to slip away with Ottavia to the forward cars. He's willing to catch a few innocent bystanders.

If the party has been dutifully following Malia's recommendations to return to their seats fifteen minutes before the train stops, Luc will strike as the train enters Sid Minos. This makes it easier for him to adopt Ottavia's secondary trap if his first trap fails.

If the party hasn't followed a pattern, Luc will use his trap whenever he gets a chance. If the train's getting close to Sid Minos, he might even trigger it if he can just get half the party.

Fall-Back Plans.

If the party won't cooperate and come together, Luc's preferred gambit is to have Bree pass a note to Boone:

"We need to gather them all in the same location. Approach one, say you want to talk to them in private and spy on their behalf. Try to get them into their suite. We have a spell that will knock you all unconscious. You won't be harmed, but we'll be able to kill them before they wake."

With luck, Boone will get the party all into their suite. The note is marked with Luc's rune.



THREE MILESTONES

Action. Tactical.

Luc Jierre activates a replica of his lantern, pulling the party into a ghostly parallel of the train.

The train is scheduled to reach Sid Minos at 5:22 PM. Luc prefers to strike ten minutes before this, just over three miles from the enclave.

Fifteen minutes before the train stops in Sid Minos, Malia makes the rounds, asking you as usual to please return to your seats so you can keep an eye on your personal effects. Though the train has been assaulted by a monster and brigands, so far nothing has been stolen from the Very Important Passengers, and Malia wants to keep it that way. Again, she reminds you, the enclaves are busy, often thick with thieves, and it's easy in the commotion for someone to nick unattended valuables.

She leaves, and you approach down the coast toward Sid Minos, coming in with a good hour of daylight to spare. Light rain obscures your view, but the air is clean, thick with the fresh scent of the sea and only the train's own smoke to ruin it.

The gas-light lamp in your room flickers red, then starts to deepen to purple, and the sound of rain swiftly fades away. Outside, the sky begins to turn black.

When the time is right (likely at 5:12 PM, ten minutes before the train stops in Sid Minos) Luc activates the replica of his lantern. For anyone he's not targeting, the only hint of oddity is that all the gaslight lamps throughout the train flicker red momentarily. But those affected by the

lantern's magic are pulled into the plane of Nem. They see the lamps turn a deep purple, and the sun outside dims to a tiny speck, as if it had suddenly moved far away.

When the lantern activates, each creature in the area must make a DC 22 Will save or be hit by the Lantern. A creature that is hit falls under the lantern's effect for 10 minutes. Normally it would last 5 minutes, but Luc loaded an extra dose of oil into the replica lantern. Doing so will destroy the lantern after this single use.

Creatures hit by the lantern are pulled from their bodies into the plane of Nem, a spirit world on the far side of the Bleak Gate. The world resembles reality but is bereft of occupants and slowly fades away as the disembodied creature wanders away from the spot where it left its body. Even if their body moves, the spot where they entered Nem is an invisible gateway. If they ever stray more than three miles from that gateway, they pass into the afterlife and cannot be resurrected. This is normally not a factor with the lantern because it will not burn long enough, but because the train is moving, time is tight before the party is doomed.

While in Nem the PCs cannot see or be seen by living creatures. They gain the incorporeal trait. If their souls leave the area of the lantern (in this case, they would have to leave the train, because every car is affected by the lantern), they instantly return to the spot where they first entered the plane of Nem. This does not reset the "three mile" travel limit, so simply hopping off the train will not save the party.

If their bodies are moved outside of areas marked by Luc's rune, and if any tiny runes on their person are removed, their souls snap back to their bodies.

Countermeasures.

Those who avoid the lantern's first attack might flee their room when they see their allies fall unconscious. If they can shatter all the gas-light lamps within the car, or if they can get the party out of the area affected by Luc's rune, they can end the encounter early.

If the party—either in the physical world or in Nem—reaches the replica lantern on the locomotive and shatters it before the train travels three miles, they snap back to their bodies. Someone unaffected by the lantern might manage to threaten Luc and force him to end the lantern's effect early. Alternately, a PC might trigger the train's emergency break, or detach the rear cars from the front so they coast to a stop before traveling three miles. If the train is split, the replica lantern's magic quickly fades.

Where the Hell Are We?

PCs who are affected see the world fade to darkness, and those allies who have not yet been affected slowly disappear (then possibly reappear moments later when they *are* affected). The sky seems filled with ash, and the landscape outside looks like it has been abandoned and decayed for centuries.

Any Skyseer immediately knows they have somehow been transported to Nem. Others can guess that they're not in the Bleak Gate, because they've been there before, and this place is not just empty, it's ethereal and unreal. It feels distinctly different.

It's common folklore (Knowledge (Arcana or Nature) DC 10) that the land of the dead lies on the far side of the Bleak Gate, and that ghosts almost never stray more than three miles from where they died. If the party doesn't figure out the danger right away, they notice within 30 seconds that the world is slowly fading away to blackness.

The Ghost Train.

The party is in the "spirit" of the train, identical in form but lit only by purple gas-lamps, and growing ever more dark as time passes. Aside from those also affected by the lantern they see no one else living. However, the presence of fresh souls attracts reapers, which fly in from the distance. Also, as the party explores the train they find faceless spirits called vestiges of tragedy, which linger at the spots where people died recently. For each person who died during the screaming malice attack there is one vestige, most of them concentrated in Cars 10 to 14.

If anyone looks out the windows, they can easily notice a purple glow coming from up ahead. By popping up to the roof, they can tell there's a lantern glowing atop the locomotive.

Murder Train.

If Boone is still on the train, Luc made sure to exile him too, to eliminate a murderer and tie up a loose end.

Ghosts of the four people Boone has killed since boarding the train fade in and out around him, causing him to panic. If he's not with the party, he crosses their path while fleeing. He begs for help even as the ghosts point at him and moan that he murdered them. The ghosts' spirits are trapped in his pistol and cannot cross over to the afterlife until the gun is destroyed, but are harmless, save for the fact that they spoil Boone's secret.

Timeline.

Track the passage of time. The train is traveling at least 20 miles per hour, though it slows down as it nears the enclave. The party has ten minutes (100 rounds) before they are cut off from their bodies forever. If a PC falls off the train he effectively "respawns" in the spirit world wherever he was when he was affected by the lantern.

- ♦ After 5 rounds the dimming of reality is undeniable, so the party should realize they have to act fast.
- ♦ In round 10, if Boone wasn't already with the party he comes running toward them, chased by ghosts of his disemboweled victims.
- ♦ On the 20th round, after the party has had some brief time to talk and figure out what's going on, the first wave of reapers attack.
- ♦ On the 30th round, the world has faded enough so that everything is dim unless the party has their own light sources.
- ♦ On the 40th round, a second wave of reapers attack.
- ♦ On the 50th round, the world fades to darkness. Unless they have light of their own, all they can see is the glow of the lantern ahead and tiny motes of starlight overhead. Even the sun has faded. The only sound is the clickety-clack of the railroad tracks.
- ♦ On the 60th round, a third and final wave of reapers attack.

Alternately, instead of having reapers attack and lights dim by round, you might have this happen based on how close the party gets to the locomotive. Reaper might strike at Car 16, then lights dim at car 13, then more reapers at 10, then darkness at 7.

Monsters.

The train has a number of vestiges based on the victims who've died so far, and they attack when the party draws near if they're inside the train. Waves of reapers fly in, five at a time. And at the locomotive waits a ruin wraith, intelligent enough to know it must protect the lantern in order to ensure the party is trapped.

The party need not fight these spirits, just survive them. The reapers fly in from the front, since they're not fast enough to catch the train, and if the party avoids the cars where people died or runs along their roofs, they can get to the locomotive quickly.

Boone will try to help the party if they help him, but when they get near the front of the train he'll turn on them so they can't reveal his secret. He hopes to kill them, then break the lantern and return to the real world so he can kill Luc.

If anyone else was brought over with the party, they are likely unable to aid in any sort of battle. It might be safest for them to hide in their rooms.

15 Reapers (5 per wave)

Ruin Wraith

0 to 80 Vestiges of Tragedy

Oliver Boone



Terrain.

The ghost train is identical to the real version, minus the living people. Light dims throughout the encounter.

Tactics.

The reapers target whoever has the fewest hit points, and flee after they take any damage, since they're not used to lively folks around here. The vestiges just stand in the train, but attack if anyone comes within 10 feet. The ruin wraith confronts the party when they reach the fuel cars, and it weaves through them, trying to shove people off to force them to start over from the other end of the train.

Boone waits until the party is distracted by some other foes, then guns down a PC point-blank. He makes a break for the front of the train, glancing back at the party with a charming grin on his face. He apologizes for having to strand them here, but he can't let anyone who knows his secret live.

Aftermath.

Destroying the lantern is as simple as breaking any lantern. Once the lantern shuts off, the PCs snap back to their suite. Any damage their spirit-forms suffered remains, but manifests as fatigue and exhaustion rather than physical wounds. Unless Luc had to spring his trap early, the train should almost be into the Sid Minos rail enclave. Except for those grabbed by the lantern's light, no one on the train has any idea someone just tried to murder the party.

If the party fails, you can still salvage the adventure. Instead of having Ottavia trap the party on the Isle of Odiem, they might appear there, trapped in a sort of Limbo, and have to reach the bottom of the tomb in order to return to the land of the living.

Reaper

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

CE Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +8

Defense

AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 11 (+1 deflection, +1 dodge, +2 Dex,)**hp** 6 (1d8+2)**Fort** +2, **Ref** +2, **Will** +2**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +1, incorporeal; **Immune** undead traits

Offense

Speed fly 40 ft (good)**Melee** reaper's scythe +2 (1d6 negative energy)**Special Attacks** spiteful retreat

Statistics

Str -, **Dex** 15, **Con** -, **Int** 5, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 14**Base Atk** +0; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 15 (can't be tripped)**Feats** Dodge**Skills** Fly +6, Perception +8, Stealth +6

Special Abilities

Reaper's Scythe (Su) Attacks made from the Reaper are treated as touch attacks, and deal negative energy damage upon a successful hit.**Spiteful Retreat (Su)** If a reaper is reduced to 0 or less hit points by an attack within reach, it will immediately make one melee attack against the attacker with its scythe before vanishing.

Ruin Wraith

CR 7

XP 3,200

LE Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +17**Aura** unnatural aura (30 ft.), feast of ruin (15 ft.)

Defense

AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 12 (+2 deflection, +3 Dex,)**hp** 52 (8d8+16)**Fort** +4, **Ref** +5, **Will** +9**Defensive Abilities** incorporeal, channel resistance +2

Offense

Speed fly 80 ft (perfect)**Melee** incorporeal touch +10 (1d8 plus energy drain)**Special Attacks** create spawn, energy drain (2 levels, DC ☐6)

Statistics

Str -, **Dex** 16, **Con** -, **Int** 14, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 15**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 21**Skills** Fly +11, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (religion) +13, Perception +17, Stealth +14, Survival +11

Special Abilities

Create Spawn (Su) Any humanoids slain by a ruin wraith become vestiges of tragedy in 1d4 rounds. Such spawn are under the command of the ruin wraith that created them and remain enslaved until its death, at which point they become full-fledged and free-willed undead. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.**Feast of Ruin (Su)** Any enemy that would heal while within the aura does not heal, and the wraith heals the amount the enemy would have.**Unnatural Aura (Su)** Animals, whether wild or domesticated, can sense the unnatural presence of a ruin wraith at a distance of 30 feet. They do not willingly approach nearer than that and panic if forced to do so unless a master succeeds at a DC ☐5 Handle Animal, Ride, or wild empathy check. A panicked animal remains so as long as it is within 30 feet of the ruin wraith.

Vestige of Tragedy

CR 1/3

XP 200 each

CE Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +8**Defense****AC** 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11 (+1 deflection, +2 Dex,)**hp** 5 (1d8+1)**Fort** +1, **Ref** +2, **Will** +2**Defensive Abilities** incorporeal, stand idle; **Immune** undead traits**Offense****Speed** fly 20 ft (poor)**Melee** touch +2 (1d3 negative energy)**Statistics****Str** -, **Dex** 15, **Con** -, **Int** 5, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 12**Base Atk** +0; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 14 (can't be tripped)**Skills** Fly +4, Perception +6, Stealth +4**SQ** hunger for the life**Special Abilities**

Stand Idle (Su) A vestige of tragedy does not take any actions and is immune to damage until a living creature triggers its *hunger for life* ability. In combat situations, roll for initiative as normal but treat all actions of the vestige of tragedy as holding until their *hunger for life* ability triggers.

Hunger for Life (Su) If a living creature comes within 10 ft. of a vestige of tragedy, the creature loses its *stand idle* ability and begins to act and attack as normal.

Olivert Boone

CR 7

XP 3,200

Male tiefling gunslinger (mysterious stranger*) 8

NE Medium outsider (native)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10**Defense****AC** 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +3 Dex,)**hp** 61 (8d10+16)**Fort** +8, **Ref** +9, **Will** +3**Resist** cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5**Offense****Speed** 30 ft.**Ranged** +1 pistol+12/+7 (1d8+1/19-20/x4)**Spell-Like Abilities** darkness (1/day)**Statistics****Str** 10 **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 14, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 14**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 21

Feats Clustered Shots*, Gunsmithing, Improved Critical (Pistol), Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Reload: Pistol, Rapid Shot

Skills Acrobatics +9, Bluff +10, Disguise +5, Escape Artist +10, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (Local) +13, Perception +10, Sense Motive +4, Sleight of Hand +9, Stealth +13

Languages Abyssal, Common, Elven, Infernal

SQ covering shot, dead shot, deadeye, deeds, focused aim, grit, gunslinger initiative, gunslinger's dodge, pistol-whip, startling shot, stranger's fortune (2/day)

Other Gear +1 demonic weapon pistol**, masterwork studded leather* See *Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game: Ultimate Combat*

** See Appendix Three

FOLLOW THAT CARRIAGE!**Action. Real-Time.**

Upon reaching Sid Minos, Ottavia enacts a ruse to lure the party into a death trap.

While the PCs are trapped in Nem, Ottavia uses a scroll she purchased in Nalaam to create an illusory duplicate of Luc (and possibly Bree and Verzubak if she thinks the party knows they're part of her crew). When the train reaches the rail enclave in Sid Minos, and Ottavia realizes that Luc's plan to kill the party has failed, she puts her own into motion.

Luc hides in the bathroom of his suite, with Bree and Verzubak perhaps guarding him, while Ottavia leads the illusions on a mad dash through the enclave to a carriage house that provides taxi service. She tries her best to be conspicuous, picks an impressive-looking carriage with purple banners along its roof, and waits long enough for the party to spot her before getting on board.

Although she *can* speak, she has written a note saying, "Please take us quickly to the harbor, to a boat that will take us to the Isle of Odiem." She hands the note to a man in charge of dispatching carriages, and he finds a carriage for her. She leaves the note with him as a bread crumb in case the party needs help pursuing her.

The Isle of Odiem.

Everyone in Sid Minos knows Odiem—a rocky spur a half mile off the coast marked by a lonely ruined lighthouse—is a damned and cursed place. Ships that sail too close at night are caught in a current of blood that dashes them against shoals, and it is said that the drowned sailors rise and devour any who linger on the island past sunset.

Fewer recall (Knowledge (Religion) DC 17) that the island was converted nearly a thousand years ago into a vault by the Clergy. There they kept the most dangerous items found by their godhands, including creatures possessed by demons, since killing the creature would only unleash the fiend within.

Ottavia and her illusory companions ride a carriage down to the harbor, where she hands another note to the owner of a 20-foot long sailboat, offering to pay a large sum to get her to the island before sunset (at 6:30 PM). The man only agrees because she is a priestess of the Clergy, and claims she comes on official business. When the boat reaches the island she performs a brief augury. If the party is not pursuing she'll tell the boatman to turn back.

If the party is in pursuit, she (and her illusory crew) disembarks. The boatman makes a gesture of blessing and does not look back, though he will return at first light the next morning.

If the party wants to pursue Ottavia, don't make it hard for them. Any other carriage driver would know where they were headed, and even following on foot isn't too terribly difficult. At the harbor, their own ship likely waits and can provide a rowboat. If they don't want to draw attention to their vessel they have to offer at least 500 gp before any sailor will risk the trip so close to dark, or they can buy their own rowboat for 50 gp.

Without Ottavia.

Luc waits half an hour to make sure the party has left the train, then sends Bree out to verify it's safe. Overnight, they stay in the enclave hotel, and Bree shares the room to protect him, since they figure pretending not to know each other is moot now.



Eleni Tsami 2012

Not Falling for It.

If the party doesn't follow, Ottavia returns to the rail enclave and links back up with Luc. They plan during the evening for how to keep the party from learning anything important in Vendricce the following day, and make a contingency to destroy the lantern if it is about to fall into their hands.

When the PCs try to board the train the next morning the rail enclave's tiefling director meets them with a phalanx of guards. He refuses to let them on, claiming there is a problem with their paperwork. He's obviously been ordered to keep them off the train, and if the party decides to fight, the train's staff will flee so no one will be able to drive it. Luc certainly won't ride it if he knows the PCs are on board. The party can stow away, or catch a ride with their ship.

Super-Spies.

Truly excellent spycraft by the party might keep their identities from being discovered by Luc's crew. In this case, neither the Three Milestones nor this one occurs.

The Grientos.

With or without Damata, the Griento family leaves the rail enclave and goes to the home of a portly local businessman, **Cordell Donofrio**. They spend the night and do not return to the train.

INSULA MEMORIARUM

Social/Action. Real-Time/Tactical.

Ottavia rains magic down upon the party as the dead rise from the sea.

The island's surface looks rocky from a distance, but up close there are countless tiny outcroppings of rusted and pitted metal. Powdered rust mingles with gray mud to coat the ground. Once on shore, Ottavia's trail is fairly easy to follow, because everywhere she stepped the mud has been churned to reveal rust red wet footprints. They lead to a tall structure at the southern edge of the island; it was once a lighthouse, but it has rotted out in many places, and parts of the wall have fallen away.

Ottavia heads inside, then laboriously climbs the damaged steps and then the stone wall in order to reach the top level. From there she can look out and watch the party's approach, as well as keep an eye on the descent of the sun. She wants to stall the party for a few minutes once they reach the lighthouse, so she dons her *headband of roaming thoughts* so she can communicate telepathically with them.

When they come within 100 feet, she addresses them.

"I am Ottavia Sacredote, oracle of the Clergy, and my task is to protect the man you pursue. He acts for the betterment of civilization, and he has deemed you a threat. But unlike some in my faith I do not rush to judgment. If you can defend your aggression, do so, and I shall listen. If you cannot, let he who is willing to risk his life to harm my charge be the first to step across the lighthouse threshold."



If the party negotiates, Ottavia has trouble lying because of her headband, so the party can learn of her mission's parameters, namely to protect Luc until he reaches Vendricce, where he'll meet the leaders of the Obscurati. They can also tell that Ottavia is enamored of Luc, and while she recognizes he has a vengeful streak born from being looked down upon most of his life, he has sympathy for those who suffer. Keeping him free from harm is not just her mission; it's personal, driven by a need to give him a chance to prove that her faith in him is not misplaced.

If she becomes convinced the PCs are enemies, or if they try to enter the lighthouse prematurely, she tells them to wait, and uses her *enthrall* spell to try and captivate as many PCs as she can. If it doesn't affect the entire party, she abandons that tactic and attacks; if it does, however, Ottavia gives a sermon on the nature of corruption: how a desire for personal power can lead people to abandon others in need, whether that power is wealth, political clout, or supernatural might. The enthrallment keeps the party from noticing as the sun sets and the dead emerge from the sea. Those affected can take no action to resist, up until the moment the first drowned corpse comes within 30 feet.

Another voice—feminine, sultry, and breathing heavily—whispers into the party's minds as Ottavia speaks. "The priestess's sermon will see her foes dead. Her rivals, visitors to this island, are welcome below, where it is safer." Throughout the ensuing encounter, the voice beckons them to come below the island.

The first two drowned dead who accost the party still retain some semblance of their appearance in life, and can actually groan vague responses to questions; more likely, they will warn the party not to become like them. These are Meoric Shadowleaf, a burned, punctured, and twisted orc wearing glasses and a fancy if battered hat, and Darren Morrissey, heavily bearded and fat, but about the handsomest damned zombie the PCs will ever see.

Ottavia Sacredote

1,000 Drowned Dead of Odiem

The Voice of the Island

Terrain.

Twelve foot high standing stones surround the lighthouse, their ancient wards eroded by sea and rain. Living creatures native to this plane gain a +2 bonus to AC while adjacent to them. The northern cliff is a sixty foot plunge to rocks and crashing waves.

The doors to the lighthouse are weathered bronze, and if barricaded from within it they could hold the horde of undead at bay. When the party arrives, Ottavia has barred them, but characters might find their way over or through the wall so they can open the doors from within.

The walls of the lighthouse rise 30 feet high in the front section. There used to be a second floor accessible by wooden stairs, but they have long-since rotted away. The outside walls are still sturdy, but the roof of the front section is gone. Climbing is fairly easy (Climb DC 10).

The upper levels of the lighthouse tower are missing huge sections of the northeastern wall, and to ascend a character will have to climb around or jump over the gaps. The roof of the fourth floor is missing, and the walls are only waist to chest high, granting Ottavia cover against attacks from below.

Unstable Terrain. Due to the island's curse, whenever a living creature in the lighthouse becomes is reduced below half-health, for the first time in an encounter, the stones beneath their feet buckle. That creature's space becomes difficult terrain, and at the end of its next turn, the space collapses. On the ground level that causes a 20 foot fall into the first chamber of the vault below. On higher floors it can lead to a deadly plunge. A character that falls this way can make a Reflex save (DC 15) to catch himself but be left dangling over the gap.

Tactics.

Ottavia enjoys a strong advantage being in the high ground, and she rains *searing light* spells down as the PCs try to enter the lighthouse. She switches to *sound burst* if they start to climb the lighthouse tower.

The undead arrive five minutes after the party arrives, and can be seen approaching from hundreds of feet away. If Ottavia's *enthrall* attempt succeeds, the horde shambles up and might attack while the party is distracted. Ten of the undead show up around the edges of the map, with another ten every round, all pressing toward the lighthouse. If blocked at the door, they laboriously climb up the walls and try to get inside. The sea below is also full of them, reaching up and moaning, longing to bring the living down beneath the waves with them.

The party might be able to hold them off, but it should be obvious that they have little hope of being able to escape the island. However, the stairs that lead down in the lighthouse offer an avenue of escape.

The voice of the island can aid the party if they get into a real tight spot, but otherwise mostly just calls for them to come to her.

Aftermath.

Ottavia's goal is to protect Luc, which means the party cannot be allowed to leave the island. She'll fight as long as she can, but if captured she is too honorable to betray the party to the dead. Likewise, if the party makes an effort to avoid a fight she might actually ally with them to avoid the horde of the drowned, since she's confident they're stuck here at least until dawn.

ESCAPE OPTIONS.

Aside from heading down to the vault, the party might rain magical attacks down upon the undead at the base of the cliff, then climb down and attempt to swim the mile back to shore. Each round, ten of the undead rise from the sea and attack. Each PC must swim at least 500 feet (making DC 10 Swim checks each round), at which point they get beyond the range of the undead. A heroic fisherman spots them and brings them aboard his boat.

A spell caster might also manage to teleport the party to safety. If they signal their boat from the lighthouse, their crew can get no closer than 100 feet from shore. The crew is then busy fending off the dead, leaving it to the party to close the gap.

Finally, the party might just hole up at the top of the lighthouse tower and push off any undead that tries to climb up. The drowned dead depart a few minutes before sunrise at 7:02 AM, giving the party a chance to rush back to the train before it departs. However, the guards at the enclave will refuse to let them board, so they might have to stow away.

Ottavia Sacredote

CR 7

XP 3,200

Female elf oracle 8*

LG Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +5; **Senses** deaf, low-light vision; Perception +9* See *Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game: Advanced Player's Guide***Defense****AC** 21, touch 15, flat-footed 17 (+6 armor, +3 Dex, +1 deflection, +1 dodge)**hp** 44 (8d8+8)**Fort** +3, **Ref** +5, **Will** +8**Immune** sleep; **Resist** elven immunities**Offense****Speed** 20 ft.**Ranged** +1 *flaming morningstar* +6/+1 (1d8 plus 1d6 fire)**Spell-Like Abilities** commune (1/day)**Oracle Spells Known** (CL 8th ; concentration +11)4th (3/day)—*cure critical wounds*, *legend lore*, *sending*3rd (6/day)—*cure serious wounds*, *locate object*, *magic vestment*, *searing light*2nd (7/day)—*augury*, *cure moderate wounds*, *enthrall* (DC 15), *sound burst* (DC 15), *tongues*1st (7/day)—*command* (DC 14), *cure light wounds*, *entropic shield*, *hide from undead* (DC 14), *identify*, *sanctuary* (DC 14), *shield of faith*0 (at will)—*create water*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *guidance*, *light*, *resistance*, *stabilize***Statistics****Str** 8 **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 15, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 16**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +5 **CMD** 20**Feats** Dodge, Empower Spell, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Still Spell**Skills** Acrobatics +0, Climb -4, Diplomacy +10, Escape Artist +0, Fly +0, Knowledge (Arcana) +13, Knowledge (History) +13, Knowledge (Local) +9, Knowledge (Nature) +9, Knowledge (Nobility) +9, Knowledge (Planes) +13, Knowledge (Religion) +13, Perception +9, Ride +0, Spellcraft +9, Stealth +0, Swim -4**Languages** Celestial, Common, Elven, Sylvan**Other Gear** +1 *flaming morningstar*, +1 *scale mail*, *headband of roaming thoughts**, *ring of protection* +1

* See Appendix Three

Drowned Dead of Odiem (1,000)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

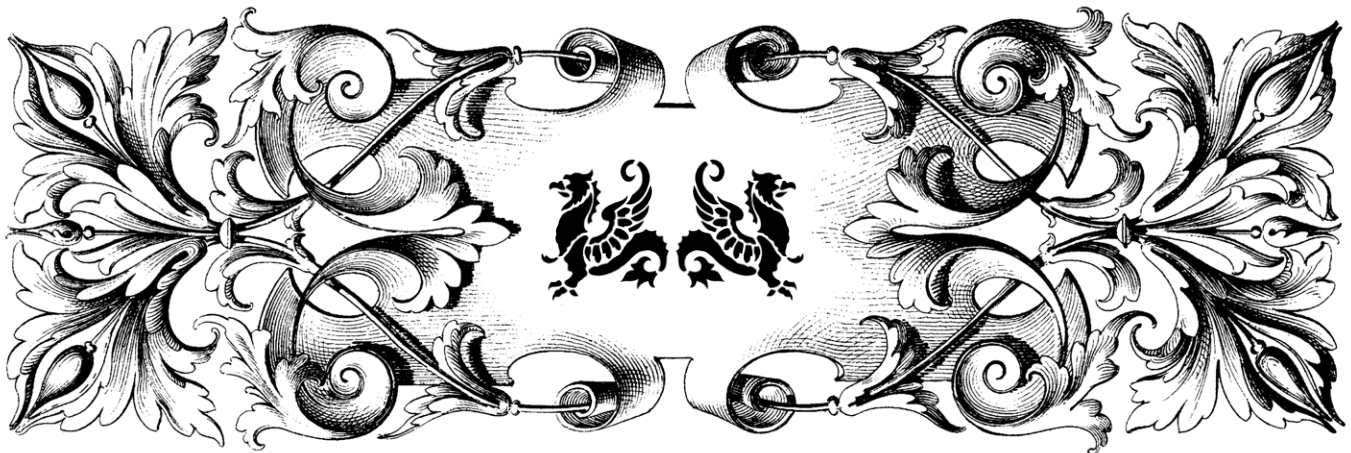
NE Medium undead

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0**Defense****AC** 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12 (+2 natural)**hp** 12 (2d8+3)**Fort** +0, **Ref** +0, **Will** +3**DR** 5/slashing; **Immune** undead traits**Offense****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** slam +4 (1d6+4)**Special Attacks** Grasp of the Sea**Statistics****Str** 17 **Dex** 10, **Con** -, **Int** -, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 14**Feats** Toughness**SQ** relentless as the tide, staggered**Special Abilities****Grasp of Sea (Su)** When grappled by a drowned dead of Odiem, the target of the grapple counts as being submerged, but cannot hold their breath. One round after being grappled, the target must start making saves or begin drowning.**Relentless as the Tide (Su)** Five minutes after a drowned dead is destroyed, it immediately regenerates back to full health. Only freeing the demon Ashima-Shimtu can break the island's curse and allow the dead to lie still.**Staggered (Ex)** Drowned dead of Odiem have poor reflexes and can only perform a single move action or standard action each round. A drowned dead can move up to its speed and attack in the same round as a charge action.**Voice of the Island**

CR ??

XP none

Unknown entity

Special Abilities**Blood-Bound (Ex):** The blood of the ancient demon Ashima-Shimtu has dripped into the sea for centuries, and now she is bound to the island. She is aware vaguely of everything happening on the surface of the island, and can occasionally extend her influence. Though her blood powers the undead, she does not control them.**Damning Word (Su):** Every one of the drowned dead of Odiem is stunned this turn. If they are grabbing any characters, they release them. The Voice of the Island will only use this ability to give the PCs time to escape if they are overwhelmed.

CRYPTA HERETICARUM

Exploration. Montage.

The only safe haven against a horde of undead is a cursed vault.

At the bottom of the stairs lies the entrance to a centuries-old vault. A gallery once provided a place of worship and reflection. Warnings in archaic language cover the walls, but most have been defaced. A pair of bronze doors hang open, their warding sigils scraped or melted off. A makeshift iron door-bar leans against the wall, formed from three swords melted together. Some time in the past few decades, another group got caught on the island and had to barricade themselves down here against the undead.

Beyond the doors, eight chambers are connected by hallways lined with bones of priests who were interred here to help sanctify the island and keep its evil from leaking out. The chambers contain various heresies, horrors, and demon-possessed men and beasts. Parts of the vault have sunk and become flooded, but the passages are navigable. In the center lies the vault's greatest and only remaining prisoner, the ancient demoness Ashima-Shimtu.

The feminine voice from the surface continues to invite the party deeper into the vault, but it never responds to their attempts to communicate, or strays much from the "come to the center of the vault and I will free you" line.

Chamber List.

Though now empty, the chambers once contained a wide variety of evil.

1. Vault Entrance.
2. Heretical Texts.
3. Unholy Arms & Armor.
4. Blasphemous Artwork.
5. Accursed Items.
6. Afflicted Innocents.
7. Damned Souls.
8. Beasts of the Infernal Horde.
9. The Prison of Ashima-Shimtu, Lady of the Forked Tongue, Last of the High Fiends, Seneschal of the Demonocracy, Keeper of the Secret Which Must Not Be Lost.

From chamber seven, a tunnel leads north that ends in a pair of heavy bronze doors: the entrance to chamber nine. The doors have no lock or handle, and powerful magic holds it shut. A handprint has been pressed into the metal, and a ring of sigils surround the handprint. This is a spell (Spellcraft DC 15) to open the door, prepared specifically for the unique wards of this tomb. To use the spell, someone has to place their hand in the handprint. The ritual requires one use of Channel Energy (or does damage equal to a quarter of the character's maximum hit points), and then the doors open.

The chamber beyond is not damaged or defaced like the rest of the vault, but looks fresh and preserved. Polished obsidian forms the ceiling, walls, and floor. The stone glistens and reflects the image of those walking over it. Time, however, has taken some toll, and a central section of the room has collapsed into a sump, twenty feet deep. From the doorway, there is no sign of any defenders, but the room feels foreboding.

If the party wavers, the voice promises them they are almost there.

SINISTRA DIABOLI

Action. Tactical.

An insane heretic godhand seeks to offer up the party to the demon in the center of the vault.

Three centuries ago, one of the godhands of the Clergy (a sort of paladin-monk) grew obsessed with the lore of Ashima-Shimtu. He decided he would pledge himself to the demoness and find a way to free her. He found a way to bypass the door that guarded the central chamber of the vault, but in so doing he triggered a curse that trapped him underground. Worse, he discovered he could not actually free his mistress.

Not that Ashima-Shimtu wanted the crazy man as a minion anyway.

To keep himself alive, the godhand broke the seals holding lesser fiends, and he bound himself to them so he no longer needed to eat. Over the centuries he has killed other tomb robbers, and gathered various cursed items to his 'lair' to help him defend his mistress. Now he hears her whispering to the party, beckoning them closer, and he hopes to kill them as an offering.

Meet Gene.

The godhand, Gene, sits on a small stone outcropping in the middle of the room, facing a 6-foot tall gold mirror. The old, bearded man looks fairly serene, sitting with his eyes closed in his silvery-white robes. He has no reflection in the mirror.

Once the party has gathered, he stands and turns, revealing a grim expression his face. Without a word, he begins to attack.

Gene, Lunatic Godhand

8+ Golden Doppelgangers

Terrain.

Four complete (and one partial) warding circle glow with faint light. Gene has long since released the monsters within. If a creature enters one of these circles, he must succeed an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma check (DC 16) or else be trapped. A trapped creature cannot leave the

EXPLORING.

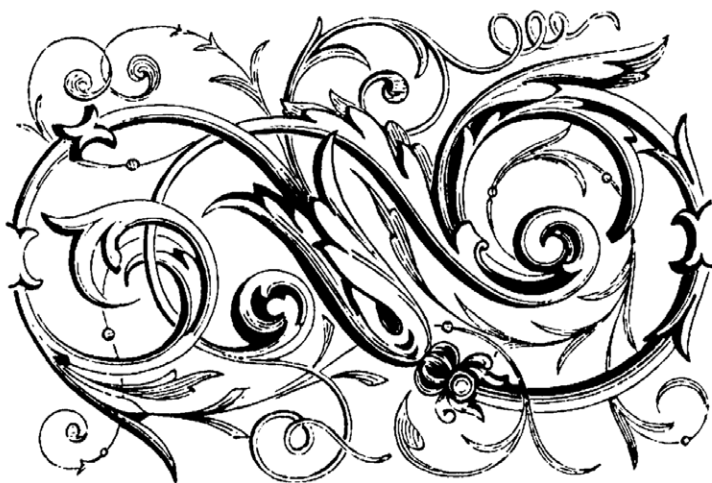
By default we present the vault after it has been cleared out through centuries of tomb-robbing. The cursed denizens have scattered across the world, and the traps have long since been disarmed, destroyed, or have simply decayed.

However, if you want to have a full dungeon crawl, you can add additional traps, monsters, and treasure on the way to the center chamber. Perhaps each chamber has an encounter of a level that matches its number, and unlocking the central chamber requires defeating all eight other encounters and lowering wards.

The vault also makes an ideal place for you to present special items or plot hooks for your players. If any character has ties to the Demonocracy or the Clergy, or if they intend to introduce any sort of prophecy or destiny, stumbling upon clues in an accursed tomb does have some classic cachet.

Each chamber has roughly the same layout as the central chamber, which is the only one presented in detail in the map. A front gallery contains lore for how to fight evil, and cases or warding circles hold monsters or cursed items. Then beyond, a lower level has multiple layers of wards for some prominent evil, like a large monster, a relic that melts flesh, or heretical text that will drive the reader insane.





circle or affect the circle, and can neither attack anyone outside the circle, nor use any sort of magic that goes beyond the circle. A creature can attempt once per round as a free action to break free of the circle. The creature can be released via forced movement, or by damaging the circle.

The pit in the center of the room is filled with rubble and sections of water 10 feet deep.

Cursed Mirrors. Around the chamber Gene has placed golden mirrors, which create evil reflections. They have warped over time, though, so the reflections are feeble and misshapen. Whenever a creature with a soul enters a space within 10 feet of the mirror, a golden doppelganger appears adjacent to that creature. Gene sacrificed his own soul, so he is unaffected.

A given creature can have multiple doppelgangers at once, but there can be no more than 8 at a time. If a mirror is knocked over, however, it no longer functions.

Tactics.

Gene leaps into the fray and tries to shove and maneuver the party near to mirrors so their golden doppelgangers appear. He then begins talking, but only addresses the doppelgangers. He mostly grumbles semi-coherently about how long he's been stuck here without people to talk to, and how his mistress stopped being so nice after he lost his soul.

He also tries to trap people in the warding circles or dump them down into the sump in the middle of the room. If anyone tries to enter Ashima-Shimtu's chamber at the north end, Gene flies into a rage and will not relent until he has removed them.

Aftermath.

When defeated, Gene's fires burn out and he slumps to the ground. He smiles through blood-stained teeth and jovially calls out to Ashima-Shimtu in the northern room, "Mistress, you have visitors!"

Then he collapses, dead.

Gene, Lunatic Godhand

CR 7

XP 3,200

Male human monk 6

LE Medium outsider (augmented humanoid, human, native)

Init +7; **Senses** Darkvision 60 ft., Perception +20

Defense

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18 (+2 armor, +1 Dex, +1 natural +1 dodge)

hp 70 (6d8+36); Fast Healing 5

Fort +10, **Ref** +10, **Will** +9

Defensive Abilities evasion variable resistance; **DR** 10/magic; **Immune** disease, poison, aging

Offense

Speed 40 ft.

Melee unarmed strike +11 (1d8+6) or flurry of blows +11/+11/+6 (1d8+6)

Special Attacks Ki strike

Statistics

Str 18 **Dex** 17, **Con** -, **Int** 10, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 2-

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +10 (+12 when disarming); **CMD** 20 (22 vs. disarming)

Feats Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Lightning Reflexes, Improved Unarmed Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Power Attack, Step Up, Stunning Fist, Toughness, Weapon Focus (Unarmed Strike)

Skills Acrobatics +6, Bluff +13, Climb +7, Escape Artist +6, Fly -3, Heal +7, Intimidate +11, Perception +20, Ride -3, Sense Motive +20, Stealth +5, Swim -2

Languages Common

SQ high jump, ki defense, maneuver training, purity of body, slow fall 30 ft., still mind

Other Gear bracers of armor +2, hands of heaven and hell*

* See Appendix Three

Special Abilities

Demon's Souls (Su): Gene is possessed by various demonic spirits which have given him immortal life. In many respects, and as such, Gene does not possess a Constitution score, but relies on his Charisma score for all Constitution related saves and abilities.

Variable Resistance (Su): Anytime Gene is struck by elemental damage during combat, he gains resist 10 to the triggering damage type until the end of the encounter.

Golden Doppelganger

CR N/A

NE Medium construct

Init (As target); **Senses** (As target)

Defense

AC (As target)

hp 1

Fort (As target), **Ref** (As target), **Will** (As target)

Offense

Speed (As target)

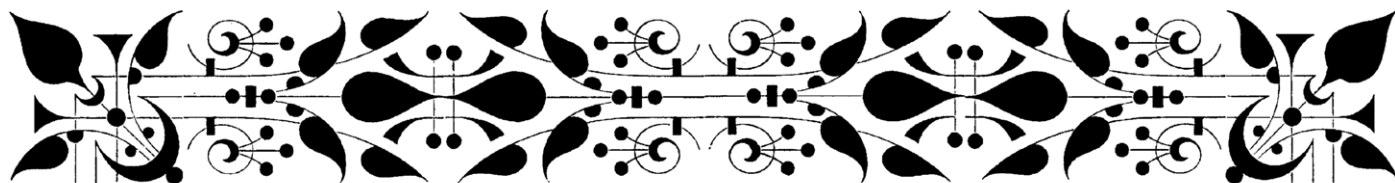
Melee (As target)

Ranged (As target)

Statistics

Str (As target) **Dex** (As target), **Con** (As target), **Int** —, **Wis** (As target), **Cha** (As target)

Base Atk (As target); **CMB** (As target); **CMD** (As target)



ASHIMA-SHIMTU

Social. Real-Time.

Trapped for centuries, this survivor of the Demonocracy can make a deal to aid the party in their mission.

When the party enters the northern chamber after defeating Gene, read or paraphrase the following:

You hear the sea waves crashing from a wide well in the center of the room. Above it, a naked woman, her flesh scaled like a serpent, her face inhuman, hangs suspended. Six hook-tipped chains pierce her legs, her back, and her arms. Another hook that sealed her mouth swings loose, and it flutters in the breeze from her lips.

She raises her head and looks at you. The chains stretch and pull at her skin, and she draws a sharp, wounded breath. When the spasm of pain passes, she speaks.

"When Triegenes, founder of the Clergy, defeated the Demonocracy, most of the fiend rulers were slain. Because their souls could not return to the hellish planes that spawned them, the corruption drained into this world. Ashima-Shimtu, however, bargained for her life, offering to be a prisoner, and in exchange she would provide guidance on how to find and trap the trace essences of the other high fiends.

"The Clergy chained her above this well that leads to the sea, and ringed the wall of the pit with blessings. Now she hangs above a massive font of holy water. The vapor forever stings her, and should she ever wriggle free she will fall and be dissolved. She upheld her end of the bargain for centuries, and learned to meditate and ignore her physical existence so she would not go mad from solitude. Eventually the Clergy captured every fiend's essence it could find, and they locked them into the same vault with Ashima-Shimtu.

"And so the Lady of the Forked Tongue would have been forgotten, if not for the holy war between the high elves and the Clergy.

"Five hundred years ago two people came to the Isle of Odiem and received from Ashima-Shimtu a ritual that could give physical form to a belief. The ritual was used to conjure forth an avatar of the high elf goddess Srasama, and when she was slain the high elf race was nearly annihilated.

"The surviving heads of the Clergy learned that Ashima-Shimtu had been involved, but she refused to give them the secret of the ritual unless they released her. They threatened to kill her, but she knew the temptation to wield such power made her too valuable to kill. And so she remains, the Keeper of the Secret That Must Not Be Lost, waiting for the day the hierarchy of the Clergy releases her.

"Today is not that day. The visitors to her prison could never break her chains. But she sees value in them."

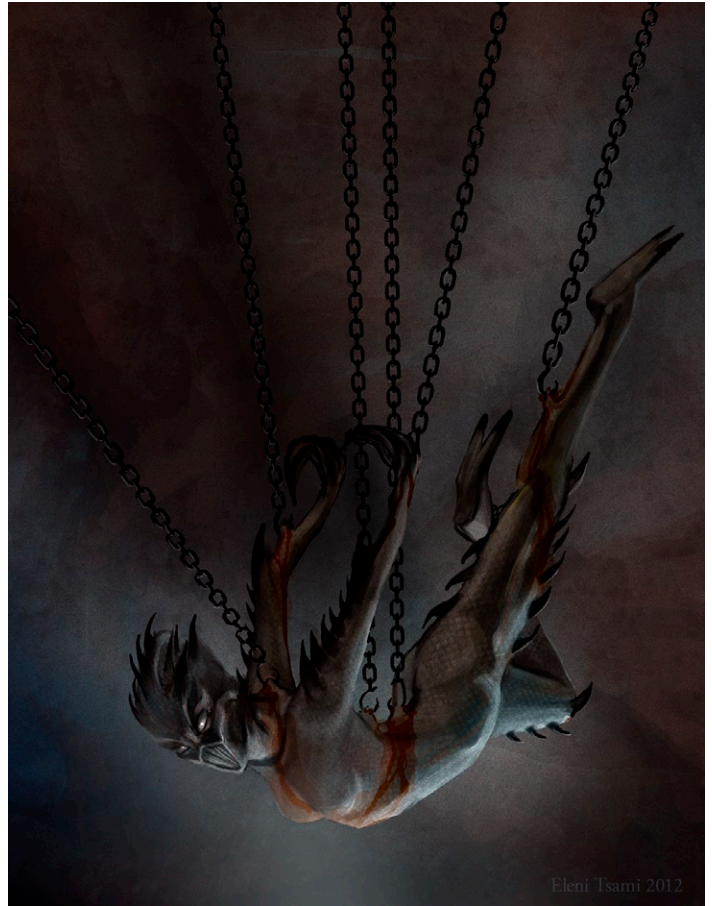
Here Ashima-Shimtu identifies the PCs one by one, showing a mystical awareness of their souls and identities. For instance, she might say, "The killer who masquerades as an arm of the law to forget her sins. The knight who abandons all for the sake of duty, causing suffering in those who would love him. The drunkard druid who has betrayed tradition for the march of progress. The learned arcanist who turned to Vekeshi mysticism to aid her in vengeance."

This gives you an opportunity to develop or resolve inter-party drama, or simply to frame some of the personal journeys of the characters.

Then she makes her offer.

Ashima-Shimtu has meditated, and being the guest of priests this past millennium has given her time to consider matters of morality. She could condemn these intruders to a slow death of starvation, as she has so many times before, but she offers them instead their freedom, since she cannot have such herself.

"This is no devil's bargain, nor a gift that must be repaid by force of infernal



contract. The visitors to her prison desire to leave. They need only step to the lip of this well, speak the name of where they would travel, and dive in. Ashima-Shimtu will see them safely there. More, she will conceal them for a time, so that the divinations of their enemies will think them dead. She thinks this is the least she can do to thank her visitors for removing the unpleasant man who had bothered her."

Then, eerily, the demoness seems to smile with amusement for a moment before lowering her head. The chains themselves seem to relax, and she sighs as the pain subsides.

If the party is wary, Ashima-Shimtu is not much for talking. She never addresses the party directly, but instead speaks as if narrating the scene. If the party declines, she lets them go as they will.

If the party agrees, they can name Vendricce and dive into the pool. Ashima-Shimtu's blood magic carries them through the sea, and they wash ashore near the harbor of Vendricce just before sunrise.

Make a note of any PC that were reduced below half hit points during the fight with Gene. Unless the party takes special effort to clean themselves of blood, when they dive into the pool Ashima-Shimtu's blood magic grants her some slight connection to them, which she will make use of later.

FINAL ORDERS.

Chief Inspector Delft knows the PCs are scheduled to reach Vendricce on the 16th. That morning he has an RHC mage perform up to three *sending* spells to ask them the status of the mission and suggest a course of action. He encourages them to capture Luc if possible, kill him if necessary, and recover the lantern for study. Any additional information is just a bonus.

TERMINUS EAST

Exploration. Real-Time.

A party of Obscurati welcomes Luc as he and his lantern arrive in Vendricce.

The train departs Sid Minos at 7:30 AM. Luc spends the day dejected at the thought that Ottavia is gone, having sacrificed her life to protect him. The train arrives in Vendricce at 5:42 PM.

This is currently the end of the line, and so no other train has come from the other direction. However, track is under construction heading east, with the intent of crossing the Strait of Sjögren into Elfaivar. The first quarter mile of bridge is complete, but beyond that just a skeleton of stone and steel rises from the sea. The track currently runs to the end of the completed bridge section, but a barricade waits at the edge of shore, surrounded by warning signs, to ensure no one accidentally drives a train off the end of the bridge and into the harbor.

Because the party can reach this location so many different ways, we present the actions and resources of the Obscurati group here, and leave it to your players to plan how to accomplish their mission and then escape. Also, we assume the players will realize the train is primed and ready to roll, making it the best possible escape vehicle, since its course will lead to the harbor, where the party's ship awaits.

Private Depot.

When the train arrives in the Vendricce rail enclave, the passengers all leave, then porters go through to make sure no one's fallen asleep and that no luggage gets left behind. Luc, Bree, and Verzubak remain on board.

Then the train does some maneuvers to detach most of the central section, leaving just the locomotive, the fuel car, Luc's first class suite car, and the first class lounge (Cars 1, 2, 18, and 19). This small train pulls up beside a private depot building, stopping at 6:15 PM. Aboard the train are only engineer Steeg, Bree, Verzubak, and Luc (and possibly Ottavia if she never lured the party to the island).

An ambitious tiefling in her late-20s, Lya's brother is Luc, and her uncle is Han Jierre, the Sovereign of Danor. She graduated top of her class from the prestigious academy of war, the *Jierre Sciens d'Arms*, and many students of other war colleges have read her thesis, *Field Study of Melee Effectiveness and Foe Debilitation through Focused Limb Severance Techniques Contrasted with Mainstream Opportunistic Techniques*, which she wrote near the end of the last Yerasol War.

Despite her youth, she was awarded the position of Minister of Outsiders, giving her great leeway to travel and make alliances. For the past three years she has worked with King Aodhan to keep the peace between their two nations, and as they began making plans for a formal alliance, she accepted the king's offer of marriage as a symbolic union.

Secretly, she is also leader of the Obscurati's Golden Cell, tasked with determining how to open the great seal on Axis Island. Lya Jierre should be portrayed as a complex character with competing motivations. Though she gets involved with Risur out of a desire to gain great political power, she does so with no malice. She sees the Obscurati as a chance for a more meaningful and lasting peace, but to reach that goal she must tell ever more elaborate lies and, most likely, have to battle would-be heroes.



At this point the train depot appears empty, but Lya Jierre waits inside for the sun to set, at 6:30 PM. At that point she walks out onto the platform and calls out to her brother. Luc and Bree step off the train onto the platform. (Verzubak remains on board, chatting with engineer Steeg.)

Luc carries his lantern covered with a dark sheet. Lya is dressed for a lavish ball (but still has her sword at her hip), and she gives her brother a boisterous hug.

Luc says that he expected there would be a group here to greet him. Lya says they're here, and she produces a small vial of lantern oil from within her dress. She asks if they were followed, and Bree explains the events of the trip.

As long as the PCs aren't visible and threatening, Lya is unconcerned. She hands Luc the oil and directs him to light the lantern. The lantern glows with blue light, and their surroundings peel away, revealing another train depot, this one gloriously illuminated by candles and chandeliers within while somehow much more deeply dark outside. The lantern has shifted them into the Bleak Gate, and for the next five minutes the two worlds will be coterminous. Everything within 50-feet of the lantern exists in both planes at once.

Bleak Gate Defenses.

Inside the Bleak Gate version of the depot waits Nicodemus the Gnostic, a few tier four members of the conspiracy who work in the Obscurati palace, and a detachment of elite guards who wear capes clasped by golden pins in the shape of an open book. The grounds outside are patrolled by additional guards.

Nicodemus, head the conspiracy, is wearing a different body than the last time the party encountered him (at Macbannin's manor in adventure two, *The Dying Skyseer*). He only has a weak connection to his current host, so he cannot contribute in a fight. However, he is completely fearless despite his frailty, since he cares not one whit if his body dies. The other guests at the depot are Risuri engineer **Lester Guillory**, Danoran astronomer **Dustin Huff**, and twin sisters **Emily and Anna Davis**, political liaisons to the government of Crisillyr who help with the conspiracy's finances. None of them are combatants.

Layout.

Lya has Luc place his lantern on one of the tables in the depot. The effect of the lantern extends out 50-feet from it.

The party is in the real world, but the lantern lets them see and interact with creatures in the Bleak Gate who are in that radius, and vice versa. However, if any of the characters in the Bleak Gate leave the radius of the lantern's effect, they fade out of view from the real world.

North of the private depot lies the grand station, where dozens of spare train cars and locomotives park for service. A low hill separates this scenic depot from the sprawl of those rails. On a hill to the south, the enclave keeps a small barracks of about two hundred soldiers, present in case forces from Elfaivar attack. These facilities also exist in the Bleak Gate, but are empty and inaccessible in any case.

DRIVING THE TRAIN.

If the party plans to escape on the train, a Technologist can start it moving without trouble. Anyone else needs to succeed an Intelligence check (DC 18) to figure out how to operate it, though the party might be able to do that in advance. Due to the lessened weight of this short train, it accelerates by 30 feet per round, to a maximum speed of 800 feet per round.



In the Bleak Gate version, a small corral beside the depot currently holds four carriages and eight horses. After the meet and greet finishes, they'll carry everyone off to the Obscurati palace.

Welcome into the Fold.

The party can see the following events through the depot's windows.

Lya welcomes Luc and Bree into the private depot. She begins to explain the basics of their group while introducing him to the other guests. She explains that some things still have to remain secret for now, but his invention, when scaled up and reproduced as lighthouses and clocktowers, will help them change the world.

Luc stutters as he tries to ask how they're changing things. He is willing to accept almost anything if it will get him respect and authority, but his conversations with Ottavia have him mindful of how people with power tend to abuse it.

Lya admits she was uncertain too at first, but when they get to the palace, Nicodemus will have a chance to explain in more detail. She assures her brother that they're doing this to make things better, and that they are aided by the wisdom of some of the wisest people of the past five centuries.

Nicodemus charmingly cuts her off there, chiding her for saying too much in mixed company. He turns the conversation to Luc and compliments the man's intellect, and his bravery for having made the journey while being spied on by hostiles. He apologizes, and says that there are some logistical issues they have to handle before proper pleasantries can begin.

Nicodemus produces three amulets, similar to the ones the party saw Macbannin's crew using in the witchoil laboratory. He explains that they'll need to be wearing that when the lantern goes out, and it will bring them across the veil into the Bleak Gate, where the *real* party waits. Normally the trip between the two planes is a hugely involved process requiring multiple gates that slowly shift you stage by stage. But with Luc's lantern, the process will be so much more efficient.

Luc, Lya, and Bree put on the amulets, and Nicodemus tells them to mingle. He'll be back in a moment, but he needs to handle some last minute security first. The other Obscurati members come up to gush to Luc, while Nicodemus walks outside. He lights up a cigarette, tells the guards to keep watch, and then scans the night, looking for signs of the party.

A few minutes later, the light from the lantern starts to dim, and the guards move to prepare the carriages. Nicodemus goes back inside, and as the door swings shut behind him the lantern goes dark. The depot is suddenly empty, and the connection to the Bleak Gate is gone.

If the party hasn't acted by now, Luc and the lantern have gone beyond their reach.

Heightened Security.

If the party is not benefiting from Ashima-Shimtu's aid to hide from divinations, and they have not otherwise taken precautions, the Ob have used plenty of magic to make sure they know if anyone's crashing their event. If Ottavia lives, they will have used *sending* to at least discover whether she's alive.

Nicodemus in any event now knows the identities of the party. If he thinks they're coming, he knows they have a knack for avoiding traps, so he prefers to deter them instead of trying to capture or kill them.

Inside the depot, the bookpin guards cover the entrances. Two musketeers wait outside each entrance, and another two stand watch on the platform by the train.

Battle Plan.

The party might try to get help from Malia, who could let them hide aboard the train, and whose scoped rifles would be quite handy in this situation. If the party has watched a lot of heist films, they might manage to turn Verzubak to their side and have him replace Luc's lantern with the (repaired) replica from atop the locomotive before they even get to Vendricce. Or the party might just set fire to the depot and sweep in when people exit.

Until the party comes within 50 feet of the lantern, they are effectively invisible to the guards at the depot, which the party might abuse by attacking from outside the light's radius. If the party approaches from behind the train, the musketeers might not hear them (Stealth DC 16).

The lantern's light cannot be snuffed prematurely without destroying the lantern, which the Obscurati won't do except in dire circumstances. If the party attacks, they have a limited time to get past the guards and accomplish their goal—be it murder, destruction, or abduction.

If the party hasn't figured out the purpose of Luc, Lya, and Bree's amulets, they might get a nasty surprise when they try to drag Luc away and he vanishes at the edge of the lantern's light because the party's in the real world and he's in the Bleak Gate.

A stand-up fight against the depot's whole security force will likely not go their way, but if they sweep in and escape in a hurry, they might be able to survive a few rounds of attacks and then get away so the majority of the guards can't follow. Bree and Lya will remove their amulets and give chase, however.

Lya Jierre

Luc Jierre

Bree Kaldeckis

Verzubak Tantalovich

4 Obscurati Bookpin Guards

8 Obscurati Musketeers

2 Obscurati Manipulators



OBSCURATI FACILITIES IN VENDRICCE.

Though it's unlikely the party will encounter them in this adventure, the Obscurati has a palace on a wooded, hilly stretch of shore ten miles north of the city, and an underwater dock beneath it, accessible by submarine. The stately grounds appear perfectly respectable, but various passages lead to a parallel version in the Bleak Gate, where most of the conspiracy's affairs occur.

The party will return here in Adventure Seven, *Schism*, and even when they're level 15 they won't have enough power on their own for a frontal assault. If the party tries to go now, they'd likely be spotted within a few minutes. Then they'd be run down by trackers on horseback and captured before they could make it back to the city.

Tactics.

Every combatant's main goal is to protect Luc. Bree stays by his side and covers him, while Lya charges any enemies she thinks she can reach, taking off her amulet if she needs to attack PCs who are beyond the lantern's light. The musketeers fire from afar, not daring to close and only using their pistol-whip if absolutely necessary. The bookpin guards form a heavily armored perimeter around Bree and Luc. Nicodemus, while he does not fight, will stroll through the battle, doing his best to look harmless so he can reach the party and learn about them. If injured, he smokes a leaf of Nicodemus cigarette while he dies.

If the party gets away, Lya will definitely pursue. Whether her brother is safe or not, she knows that the party recognizes her, and she can't let them tell King Aodhan his future bride is conspiring against Risur.



RECURRING VILLAINY.

Ideally, as soon as Lya is below half health she'll break off combat. Perhaps she jumps off the train and crashes into a fruit cart, or if she's fighting in the streets a phalanx of two dozen soldiers charge in, and she's able to flee through their ranks. We know players hate it when NPCs escape, but recurring villains are fun.

If the party does manage to capture her, the events of adventure five, *Cauldron-Born* can still occur, because Danor will contact King Aodhan, and the moment the party set foot on Risur, he would order her release for the sake of the peace summit. Until then, she would be amiable as long as they did not kill her brother. In any case, a powerful *geas* forbids her from admitting any of the secrets of the conspiracy to outsiders.

If the party works extra hard and manages to break the *geas*, recall that the campaign can still work even if the heroes figure out the secret early. Lya knows about the seals, the colossus, the lantern, and the plan that involves them, but even then she doesn't know about the various liabilities that the PCs will be able to exploit in paragon tier to take down the conspiracy, nor about the secret history of how Nicodemus and Kasvarina brought about the Great Malice. Right now the party is close to cracking some of these mysteries anyway, so while some of the later twists will have less impact, they'll feel like they've scored a major coup.

Lya Jierre

CR 8

XP 4,800

Female tiefling duelist 3 / fighter 6

LN Medium outsider (native)

Init +11; **Senses** Darkvision 60 ft., Perception +10

Defense

AC 26, touch 19, flat-footed 17 (+7 armor, +8 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 68 (9d10+18)

Fort +8, **Ref** +9, **Will** +4

Defensive Abilities bravery +2, canny defense +3, escape contingency, parry; **Resist** cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +2 rapier+18/+13 (1d6+9/15-20)

Special Attacks precise strike, weapon training (light blades)

Spell-Like Abilities darkness (1/day)

Statistics

Str 12 **Dex** 20, **Con** 14, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 29

Feats Dodge, Improved Critical (Rapier), Improved Initiative, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Vital Strike, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (Rapier), Weapon Specialization (Rapier)

Skills Acrobatics +16, Bluff +12, Climb +0, Diplomacy +7, Escape Artist +8, Fly +4, Knowledge (Nobility) +7, Knowledge (Planes) +7, Perception +10, Perform (Oratory) +12, Ride +4, Sense Motive +10, Stealth +10, Swim +0

Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven, Infernal

SQ armor training 1, enhanced mobility

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds* (x2) **Other Gear** +2 razorburst rapier*, +1 mithral chainmail

* See Appendix Three

Special Abilities

Escape Contingency (Su): If reduced below 20 hit points or incapacitated by any means, Lya triggers a magical contingency, crafted at great expense, and travels to the Bleak Gate.

Luc Jierre

CR 1

XP 400

Male tiefling expert 3

LN Medium outsider (native)

Init +2; **Senses** Darkvision 60 ft., Perception +8

Defense

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex)

hp 12 (3d8)

Fort +1, **Ref** +3, **Will** +5

Resist cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Spell-Like Abilities darkness (1/day)

Statistics

Str 8 **Dex** 14, **Con** 10, **Int** 17, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 13

Feats Skill Focus (Knowledge (Arcana)), Skill Focus (Knowledge (Planes))

Skills Acrobatics +5, Appraise +9, Bluff +2, Craft (Alchemy) +9, Craft (Lanterns) +4, Diplomacy +6, Escape Artist +5, Knowledge (Arcana) +12, Knowledge (Planes) +12, Perception +8, Sense Motive +3, Stealth +4, Use Magic Device +5

Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven, Infernal, Sylvan

Other Gear *the wayfarer's lantern**

* See Appendix Three

Bree CR 6
XP 2,400

Female human fighter 7
NG Medium humanoid (human)
Init +1; **Senses** Perception +6

Defense

AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20 (+6 armor, +4 shield, +1 Dex)
hp 75 (7d10+28)
Fort +10, **Ref** +3, **Will** +3
Defensive Abilities bravery +2

Offense

Speed 30 ft.
Melee masterwork longsword +13/+8 (1d8+4/19-20)
Special Attacks weapon training (light heavy)

Statistics

Str 16 **Dex** 13, **Con** 16, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8
Base Atk +7; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 24
Feats Cleave, Great Cleave, Great Fortitude, Power Attack -2/+4, Shield Focus, Shield Specialization: Heavy Shield, Toughness +7, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus: Longsword
Skills Acrobatics +2, Bluff +2, Climb +1, Escape Artist -1, Fly -1, Intimidate +8, Perception +6, Ride -1
Sense Motive +5, Stealth -1, Swim +1
Languages Common
SQ armor training 2
Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds* **Other Gear** +1 heavy steel shield, butcher's girdle*, masterwork breastplate, masterwork longsword
* See Appendix Three

Verzubak Tantalovich CR 5
XP 1,600

Male dwarf rogue 6
LN Medium humanoid (dwarf)
Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; Perception +9

Defense

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)
hp 46 (6d8+18)
Fort +5, **Ref** +9, **Will** +2
Defensive Abilities defensive training, evasion, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge

Offense

Speed 20 ft.
Melee masterwork dagger+7 (1d4+2/19-20)
Ranged masterwork dagger+5 (1d4+2/19-20)
Special Attacks bleeding attack, sneak attack +3d6

Statistics

Str 14 **Dex** 15, **Con** 16, **Int** 12, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8
Base Atk +4; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 19
Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes
Skills Acrobatics +11, Appraise +8, Diplomacy +4, Disguise +5, Escape Artist +11, Intimidate +4
Knowledge (Dungeoneering) +10, Knowledge (Local) +10, Perception +9, Profession (Gambler) +8, Sleight of Hand +11, Stealth +11, Use Magic Device +4
Languages Common, Dwarven
SQ convincing lie, greed, hardy, hatred, slow and steady, stability, stonecutting, trapfinding +3
Other Gear leather armor, 10 masterwork daggers, lucky dice ki focus*
* See Appendix Three

Obscurati Bookpin Guard (4) CR 3
XP 800 each

Male human fighter 4
LN Medium humanoid (human)
Init -1; **Senses** Perception +4

Defense

AC 21, touch 9, flat-footed 21(+9 armor, +3 shield, -1 Dex)
hp 41 (4d10+12)
Fort +7, **Ref** +0, **Will** +2
Defensive Abilities bravery +1

Offense

Speed 20 ft.
Melee masterwork longsword+7 (1d8+3/19-20)

Statistics

Str 16 **Dex** 8, **Con** 16, **Int** 12, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 10
Base Atk +4; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 19
Feats Cleave, Power Attack, Shield Focus, Shield Specialization (heavy shield), Shield Wall*, Weapon Focus (Longsword)
Skills Acrobatics -6, Bluff +3, Climb -2, Diplomacy +2, Escape Artist -6, Fly -6, Intimidate +7, Perception +4, Ride -6, Sense Motive +5, Stealth -6, Swim -2
Languages Common, Elven
SQ armor training 1
Other Gear masterwork full plate, masterwork longsword, masterwork heavy steel shield

Obscurati Musketeer (8) CR 2
XP 600 each

Male human gunslinger 3
LN Medium humanoid (human)
Init +5; **Senses** Perception +8

Defense

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge)
hp 20 (3d10)
Fort +3, **Ref** +6, **Will** +3

Offense

Speed 20 ft.
Ranged masterwork musket+3 (1d12/x4)

Statistics

Str 8 **Dex** 17, **Con** 10, **Int** 13, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 12
Base Atk +3; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 15
Feats Far Shot, Gunsmithing, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot
Skills Acrobatics +6, Climb +2, Fly +0, Intimidate +7, Perception +8, Ride +0, Survival +8, Swim -4
Languages Common, Elven
SQ deadeye, deeds, grit, gunslinger initiative, gunslinger's dodge, pistol-whip, quick clear, utility shot
Other Gear masterwork musket, masterwork studded leather

ESCAPE THE NOOSE

Action. Tactical.

The party has mere minutes to reach their ship and flee before they're trapped.

Don't think of this scene as a specific encounter, but rather a reminder of the resources you can use to ratchet and release tension during the

adventure's climax. If it seems your players feel successful for simply spying and getting away, or if they defeated everyone at the depot and survived, you can let them reach the harbor and board their ship without extra trouble.

But you want them to feel like they've earned a victory. Use these resources and ideas as needed to bring the party to the edge before they succeed. If they're on the train, it's a five minute ride to the harbor. On foot it's a quarter hour or worse, depending on how stealthy they are.

General City Reaction.

- ♦ At the sound of combat at the train depot, alarm bells ring from the barracks to the south. Dozens of troops begin to scramble out the doors over the next minute. Horns sound an alert across the city, and the military and local city guards arm up and march for the harbor, which is the party's presumed destination. The alarm signals a high level magical threat, and people flee indoors.
- ♦ The city's churches ring golden bells, creating a cacophony that disrupts teleportation magic. It's not enough to stop teleportation, but it forces a Spellcraft check (DC 20) to get such spells to work. Personal short-distance teleportation works normally.
- ♦ Naval crews scramble to blockade the harbor, which the party can see as they approach.

On Foot.

- ♦ Within the city, the PCs see frantic and confused patrols running down the streets, lanterns in hand, stopping any foreigners.
- ♦ A patrol confronts them as they near their destination (the edge of the city, the harbor, or a safe house), and calls for reinforcements.

Train to Harbor.

- ♦ Lya boards the train at the rear and runs along the top. If she can, she gets to the engine and brakes the train, but likely she ends up engaged in a sword duel atop the roof of the fuel car. She might slice off a PC's hand before eventually leaping free when the fight turns against her. Bree might join her.
- ♦ City soldiers mounted on horses gallop alongside the train and fire muskets. Use Obscurati musketeer stats, but be clear these are different troops.
- ♦ As the train nears the harbor, construction workers try to wave for it to stop, and they leap out of the way at the last second as the locomotive plows through a barricade of timbers. Ten seconds later the train flies off the end of the track and crashes into the incomplete bridge beyond. The impact shatters the boiler, which explodes in a cloud of deadly steam and sends a rumble of thunder across the harbor.

Out of the Harbor.

- ♦ The party's ship hoists sail, catching guards at the docks off guard. It sweeps out into the harbor, and the crew mans their posts bravely as bullets and arrows from the docks strike all around them.
- ♦ If the party had to ditch into the water, their ship sails up and crew throw them lines just as naval cutters are drawing near.
- ♦ Two warships have navigated to the mouth of the harbor, and the party's ship has to surge at full speed in order to sail between them before they can angle their guns for a devastating volley.

- ♦ Finally, if the party has still had it too easy, the *Cachalot* rises from the depths to block their path. Caught between two cannon-laden warships and a submarine with only a dozen men, the party's best chance for escape might be to attack and board the *Cachalot*, claim it as their own, and flee beneath the waves.

CONCLUSION

The party returns to Flint and debriefs with Chief Inspector Delft to gauge the success of their mission.

The party probably returns to Flint on the 24th of Winter. Delft meets them in a secluded location and works with them to figure out everything they know. Have the PCs walk through the events of their mission and answer, as best they can, a battery of questions.


Using the Intelligence.

If the party took any prisoners, it will take at least a few days to get any useful information out of them. Luc has the most valuable intel, and if the party also has Ottavia as a prisoner he might even be turned into an asset.

If they recovered the lantern, learning how to use it is fairly easy, but acquiring oil suffused with the right planar energy could be a quest in and of itself. Or the party could just requisition it, and get it in a few months (i.e., it will take until the next adventure begins).

No matter how much information the party has, they don't have the manpower or resources to return to Vendricce right now. The politicians are already balking about the money spent on this mission. Delft is going to need time to get support from people in power, and he thinks the party might want to lay low for a while in case the Ob retaliate.

He will speak to King Aodhan, but even if he convinces the king and gets more resources, the Ob are hard to pin down. They still can only guess what all the Ob's plotting is building toward. However, they do know Lorcan Kell's thieves guild has some connection to them, and so for the next two months the RHC will try to whittle down their power base and look for leads to the Obscurati leadership.

Two months from now, the Ob will be coming to the RHC's doorstep: Lya Jierre is going to be attending a peace summit in the Spring. When she arrives, the party will be ready to capture her and her allies and thwart whatever they are plotting. 

DEBRIEFING QUESTIONS.

- ♦ Who was Caius Bergeron meeting in Vendricce?
- ♦ Who else was attending that meeting?
- ♦ Who from that meeting was also on the train?
- ♦ What allies and accomplices did they have? What possible alliances and connections does this suggest for the Obscurati conspiracy?
- ♦ When did each of those people of interest board the train?
- ♦ What did they do each night when the train was stopped? Provide an answer for each person of interest and each stop—Cherage, Orithea, Trekhom, Nalaam, Sid Minos, Vendricce.
- ♦ Did you notice any patterns, codes, or other identifying traits?
- ♦ What do we know of the conspiracy's goals? How will they accomplish these goals?
- ♦ Do you have any clues who in Risur might be allied with them? What about allies in other countries?
- ♦ Whom do we tell, and where do we go from here?

APPENDIX ONE:

THE AVERY COAST RAILROAD

Rail travel has only been around for a few decades in Danor and even less time in the other nations along the Avery Coast line. The promise of easy trade and travel convinced countries that once viewed Danor as an enemy to let Danoran engineers, businessmen, and even soldiers into their lands. In every town and city along its route, Danor owns small enclaves with housing and dining for long-haul guests. Though most of the employees of these enclaves are locals, each station is run by a very visible tiefling coordinator. Tickets are purchased in Danoran coins (helpfully provided by moneychangers), and this is slowly making international merchants comfortable doing business in Danoran currency.

ROUTE

The trip from Beaumont to Vendricce takes six days, and each evening the train stops at a major city as a waystation. To minimize the risk of rail damage, derailment, and banditry, the train only runs during daylight hours. To traverse the 3,000 miles and keep its schedule, the train reaches speeds as high as 60 miles per hour, unmatched by any other vehicle in the world.

A total of twelve locomotives operate on the railroad at any given time, enough so that each day a train reaches each station going in both directions. Depots between major stops store replacement locomotives and train cars in case of damage, but daily maintenance has kept such failures low. For the three years of its operation the railroad has only had a handful of major delays. Travelers can count on a train coming to their city, headed in either direction, every day, and so the Avery Coast Railroad has earned one of its slogans: "Always on Time."

The other popular slogan, "Taming the Malice," is perhaps the railroad's greater achievement. The Malice Lands lie between Danor and Drakr, in the territory where magic works occasionally but erratically. Creatures mutate readily into monsters and inconstant magical energies conjure bizarre weather. The presence of so much iron in such a regular

construction seems to have a stabilizing effect on the wild magic, and the railroad's crack militia can handle any threat with a pulse.

The railroad has seven major enclaves along its route. Each enclave is roughly 500 miles from the next, and the train stops at a different enclave each night. After twelve days of travel, the train returns to Beaumont where it is taken out of service for a day for thorough cleaning and maintenance.

- ♦ **First Enclave:** Beaumont, on the west coast of Danor.
- ♦ **Second Enclave:** Cherage, the capital of Danor.
- ♦ **Third Enclave:** Orithea, the only stable city in the Malice Lands.
- ♦ **Fourth Enclave:** Trekhom, the capital of Drakr.
- ♦ **Fifth Enclave:** Nalaam, an independent city state run by mages in the mountainous border states between Drakr and Crissilyir.
- ♦ **Sixth Enclave:** Sid Minos, an island on the coast of Crissilyir.
- ♦ **Seventh Enclave:** Vendricce, a forested border-city in Crissilyir.

THE TRAIN

Refer here for names of key train staff and the disposition of security. Key staff include:

- ♦ Engineer Steeg Leon.
- ♦ Conductor Xorin Marchand.
- ♦ Vodyarika Lerkem, head of the train's militia.
- ♦ Grason Wasson, guard between second class and first class.
- ♦ Kov Marik, chef in first class.
- ♦ Doris Gavage, piano player in first class.
- ♦ Malia Baccarin, guard liaison for first- and second-class.
- ♦ 8 miscellaneous attendants who keep the place clean, work as waiters, and respond to minor trouble.
- ♦ 9 miscellaneous railroad guards.

If any staff are injured or killed, they will be replaced the next time the train stops for the night.

Stats for railroad guards are presented on page 61. The militia might shuffle a bit during the day at different stops, and there are too many for everyone to know each other. Overnight, enclave security guards watch the train, and in the mornings the train's militiamen are a bit lax when it comes to checking their work.

The layout of the train the PCs take, from front to back, is as follows:

- ♦ **Car 1—Locomotive:** This is where Engineer Steeg runs the train. Conductor Xorin also stays for the majority of the train's trip. They are usually guarded by two militia members.
- ♦ **Car 2—Fuel Car:** The fuel car carries enough fuel for two days worth of travel, but it is re-filled at each nightly stop. Because Danorans cannot refine firegems themselves, and because the Malice Lands do odd things to the crystallized fire, the train runs on actual coal between Beaumont and Trekhom. From Trekhom

BAD ECONOMICS.

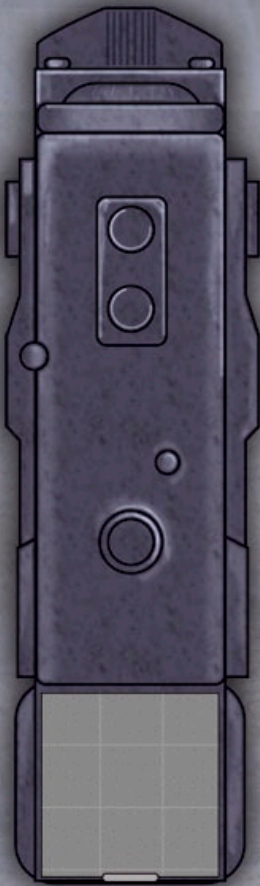
Normally the benefit of rail travel is that it allows easy transportation in directions not serviced by sea lanes or rivers. In the United States, for instance, the Mississippi River was an early boon to trade in its watershed, while the transcontinental railroad ran perpendicular to the river, connecting the east and west ends of the country and starting a massive economic integration.

The Avery Coast Railroad, however, mostly hugs the coastline. Drakr already had its own network of railroads under construction by the time Danor proposed this international route. The only safe waystation in the Malice Lands was Orithea, which is coastal, limiting their options for connections with Drakr. The designers decided that rather than trying to create the most infrastructurally useful railroad, they would make it the most visible. Rather than creating opportunities for new towns to spring up, it runs through major existing cities.

Now that people are becoming comfortable with their presence, Danor is letting the various border states use their own money to hire Danoran experts to build additional branches of the railroad.



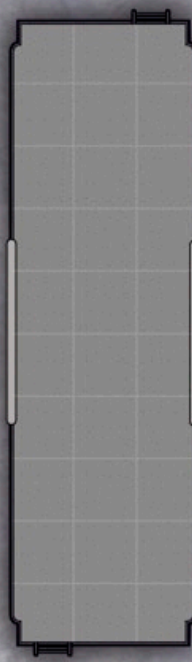
Avery Coast Railroad



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3-9



10-12



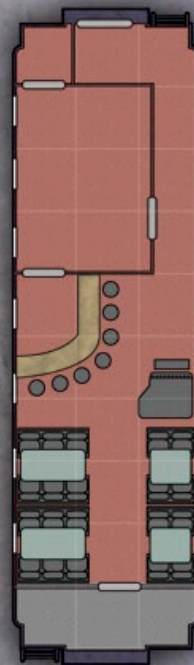
13



14-16



17-18



19

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to Vendricce, the train uses firegems instead, as they are cheaper than coal. A single militia member here helps shovel fuel for the engine.

- ♦ **Cars 3–9—Freight Cars:** There are five freight cars. At each stop, various pieces of freight are loaded and unloaded by teamsters in each town. The frontmost car is loaded with heavy industrial equipment for a steelworks, bound for Vendricce. That car has a contingent of five militia members, who occasionally check on the other freight cars whenever the train stops.

If the PCs check the other cars, their contents vary day by day, but might include quite a bit of preserved food, some expensive Danoran fabrics, some casks of fine Trekhom ale, and several tomes of history and the arcane. Between the Freight Cars and the Common Cars, a militia member named Vodyarika keeps stern watch.

Mister Mapple stows away in different cars each day.

- ♦ **Cars 10–12—Common Cars:** Also known as the “sardine cars,” these cars have seating for 36 people, but are usually crammed above capacity. Each car has two lavatories at the rear.
- ♦ **Car 13—Common Food Car:** A car serving nuts, dried fruits, and jerkies, with six tables set up in it. A militia man and two attendants work here, and a small private room often hosts train staff for brief breaks. The common food car is a frequent destination for families from the common and second class cars, as well as anyone who just needs to stand up and stretch.
- ♦ **Cars 14–16—Second-Class Cars:** These cars have five rooms with seating for six apiece, slightly more spacious leg-room, and minor furniture. Each car has a restroom at front and back. A militia member named Grason stands guard between the second-class cars and the first-class cars.

Bree has a seat in Car 16, Verzubak in Car 15, and Boone in Car 14. Cardiff sits in Car 14.

- ♦ **Cars 17–18—First-Class Personal Cars:** These luxurious cars have two suites, each of which has beds for five people, a small common room, and a private restroom with standing shower.

The party has had one suite rented for them in Car 17. The Grientos have the other suite in Car 17. Luc and Ottavia have one suite in Car 18; Elanor and Isobel have the other.

- ♦ **Car 19—First-Class Lounge:** The “caboose” of the train, the First Class Lounge is a richly-appointed bar. There are plush seats, wide windows, and a piano for entertainment. Portraits of the magnates of the Avery Coast line adorning the walls. A server and chef named Kov staffs the bar here, and cooks most meals. An old woman named Doris performs cheerfully on the piano, but has a good read of the crowd’s mood and is never a bother.

Terrain Elements of the Train.

A few combats may happen on board the train itself. In these combats, there are benches, chairs, pianos, bars, and other bits of furniture the party may interact with.

- ♦ **Taking Cover.** Most of the cover on the train is not large enough to fill an entire five-foot area. However a creature can spend a move action to take cover behind an adjacent object, such as by ducking down behind a bench, leaping behind a bar, or scurrying under the piano. They gain the benefits of cover against ranged attacks coming from the other side of the object.

- ♦ **Travel Between Cars.** To pass between cars one must open a first door, step across a 5-ft. platform with just a knee-high railing, then open a second door to enter the next car. In combat a character would have to spend a move action, and a standard action.

The doors remain open unless someone closes them by hand.

- ♦ **Outside the Train.** Moving along the top of a train car while it is in motion requires an Acrobatics check (DC 10), or else the character falls prone at the start of the movement. A character must make the same check if it takes damage while standing atop the train.

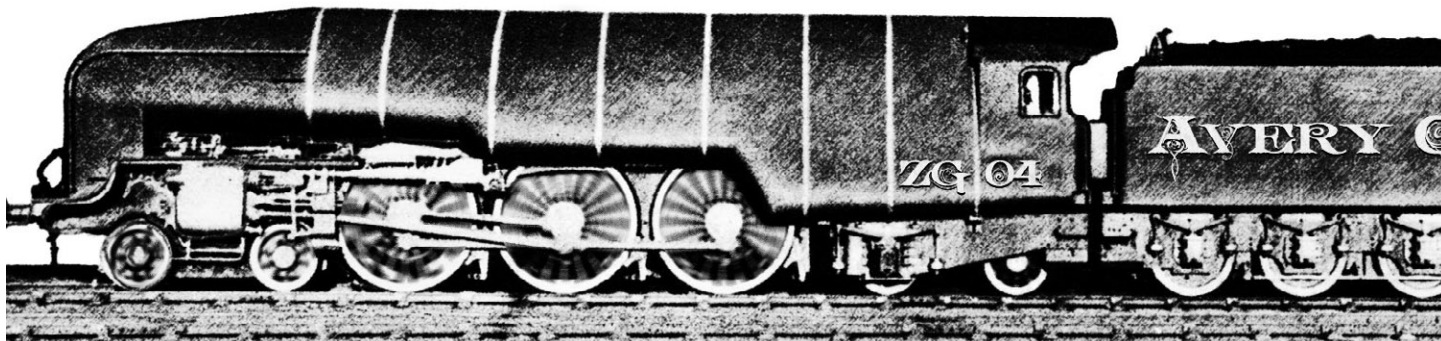
The windows and decorations of the sides of the train provide plenty of handholds. Climbing along the side of the train requires a Climb check (DC 12).

It’s quite safe to sit atop the train’s roof, since a sturdy lip provides a good foot rest. A creature counts as prone, but can use crossbows and firearms without penalty. Militia members typically sit on the roofs while in the Malice Lands, the better to shoot any malice beasts that attempt to attack the train.

- ♦ **Driving the Train.** Normally the train travels at 50 to 60 miles per hour (250 to 300 feet per round), but an operator in the locomotive can safely adjust its speed by 10 feet per round, to a maximum of 800 feet per round. The train can also move backward at a maximum speed of 100 feet per round. If it takes a turn at a speed above 700 feet, the train must make a save or derail.

In an emergency, the train can brake its speed by 100 feet per round, potentially letting it go from cruising speed to a full stop in 6 rounds. Any creature on the train when it first brakes must make a save or fall prone and be pushed forward 5 feet relative to the car it’s in.

A character with the technologist theme can easily understand the machinery of the locomotive. Any other character must make an Intelligence check (DC 18) as a standard action to figure out how to accelerate, decelerate, or brake the train. After a successful check, the character no longer needs to make a check for that action.



FILLER NPCs

The party is likely to talk to a lot of NPCs. If you don't want to tip them off by only having "important" NPCs have names, here's a quick roster of filler folk for the second-class section.

- ♦ **Alexi Mohrbacher.** A Drakran human returning home after selling magical implements to Danorans who want to be able to use magic. It's a solid business because the goods never last more than a few months.
- ♦ **Bethany Cousineau.** A Danoran tiefling on a private errand for her family.
- ♦ **Charon Chevrolet.** Old man taking a vacation from his goat farm to see his grandchildren.
- ♦ **Dan Boyene.** A Danoran traveling ophthalmologist, with a suitcase full of eyeglasses.
- ♦ **Emile Davion.** A lieutenant in the Danoran military traveling with five soldiers who are enrolling in the Woodruff Memorial Martial University in Cherage.
- ♦ **Ford Zugoksy.** A minor Danoran politician going to a fundraiser in Cherage.
- ♦ **Giles Bonhomme.** A nervous musician who constantly holds his trumpet case to his chest.
- ♦ **Herbert Nembillion.** A tall blonde duelist going to Nalaam to fight in the arena.
- ♦ **Jacques Labelle.** A fat sea captain who has to go to Cherage to file an insurance claim.
- ♦ **Kipana Swansdotter.** A college professor from Nalaam who was doing experiments on how magic decays in Danor.
- ♦ **Leroy Flowers.** A man on the run after he murdered his wife.

Railroad Guard

CR 1/3

XP 135 each

Male or female human warrior 1

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; Senses Perception -1

Defense

AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +1 Dex, +1 shield)

hp 12 each (1d10+2);

Fort +3, Ref +1, Will -1

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee longsword +1 (1d8 / 19-20)

Ranged pistol +2 (1d8 / x4)

Statistics

Str 11, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8

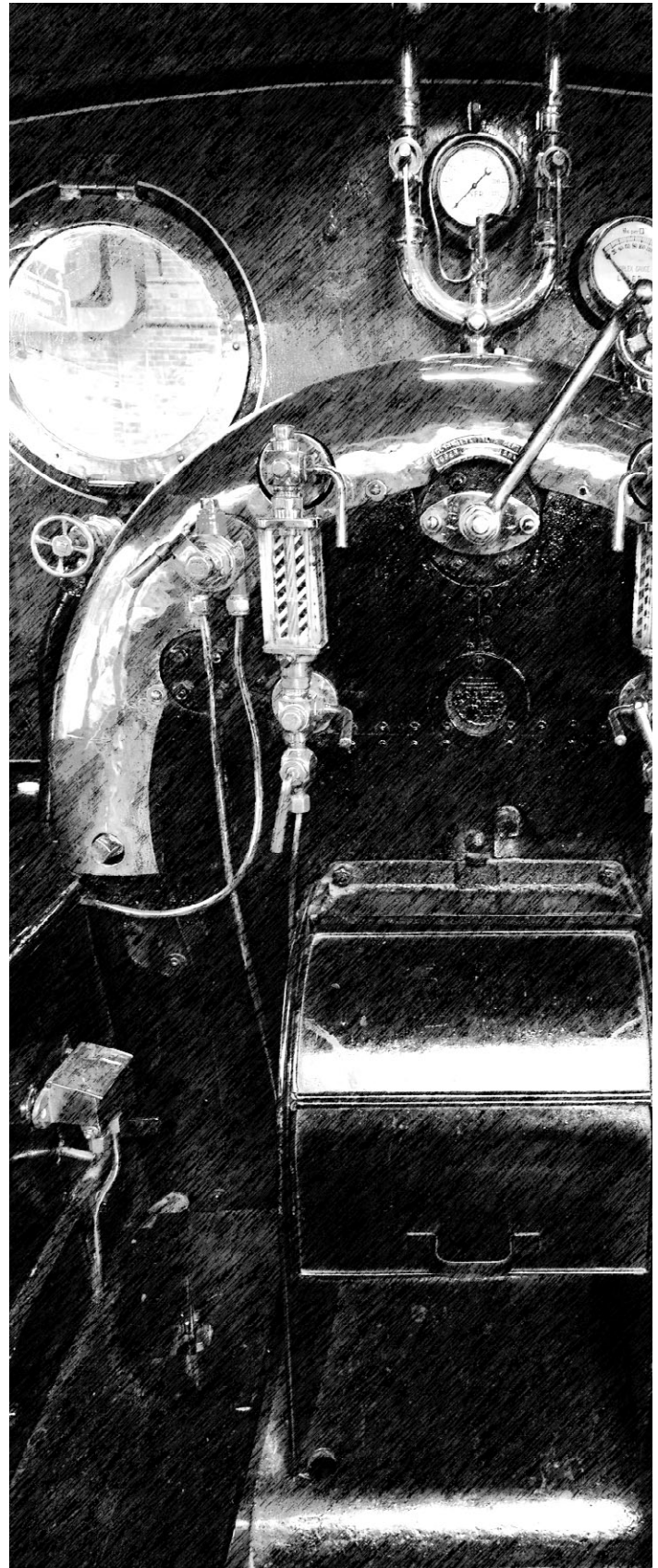
Base Atk +1; CMB +1; CMD 12

Feats Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot

Skills Climb +1, Ride +2, Stealth -1

Languages Common

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*; **Other Gear** chain shirt, buckler, longsword, pistol



APPENDIX TWO: INVESTIGATIONS

Two common actions during this adventure will be following suspects to see where they go, and engaging suspects in innocuous conversation to try to tease out their motives. While you can always handle these situations narratively or with *ad hoc* dice rolls, those who want more structure can use the following skill challenges. Be sure to make reasonable adjustments in reaction to what the PCs are doing.

TAILING A SUSPECT

Variable Level Skill Challenge.

Key Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Knowledge (Local), Perception, Stealth, Sense Motive

Difficulty: Skill DCs are based on the level of the person being tailed. To start, use the “Moderate” DC rating.

When a PC tries to tail a suspect, try to think of the target’s movements in three stages. For instance, in Orithea Elanor might head to the apothecary’s district, shop innocuously for a bit, then head to a shop that sells illegal love potions. In Trekhom, Luc goes to a bar near the enclave, then his guards look for signs of pursuit, and finally he heads to the harbor lighthouse where guards stop anyone who isn’t an approved visitor.

For each stage, narrate what the target is doing, then the PC has to make two checks, one to keep up, the other to stay hidden. Based on the result of the PC’s checks and the target’s plans, narrate the next stage of the pursuit. After the third stage, the target reaches his or her destination, and the PC should be able to witness something noteworthy and important (or simply innocuous if the suspect is not actually up to anything).

If a PC fails a “keep up” check, increase the DC of further “keep up” checks by one step to the ‘Hard’ DC, regardless of what skill is used. This represents the PC falling behind and having trouble seeing where the target is going. A second failed “keep up” check means the PC has lost his target.

Likewise, if the PC fails a “stay hidden” check, increase the DC of further “stay hidden” checks. The target has gotten suspicious and is more on guard. A second failed “stay hidden” check means the target has made the PC. The target’s reaction will vary based on situation and personality—flight, confrontation, attack, calling the guards—but he or she almost certainly won’t let the PC see anything incriminating.

It might help to remind the players that if they think they might fail, it could be smarter to give up and try again when the train reaches another station on the next day, instead of tipping off a potential enemy.

Keeping Up.

In each stage, have the PC make a check, typically Perception. If the target goes through a crowded district, perhaps Knowledge (Local) would be more appropriate. If the target asks the town guards to be on the lookout for the PC, Diplomacy or Bluff might allay the guards’ suspicions. Let the PCs come up with suggestions, but feel free to adjust the DC based on how likely the skill would actually help the situation.

Stay Hidden.

Each stage have the PC make a check, typically Stealth. Climb might let a character stalk along rooftops, if the terrain is appropriate. Bluff

might let a PC blend into the patrons at a coffee shop. Perhaps a character might even hold his breath and hide underwater with a Constitution check when following a target near the docks.

Multiple PCs.

Because there are so many suspects to investigate, the players have to decide whether they want the wider coverage of splitting up, or the easier success (and safety in numbers) of working as a team. If multiple PCs are trailing the same target, each PC makes the checks.

If anyone succeeds the “keep up” check, it counts as a success for the whole team. However, if anyone *fails* the “stay hidden” check, it counts as a failure for the whole team and increases the DC for future checks of that sort. If the team gets a second failure to stay hidden, only those who failed their checks are spotted by the target.

Enemy Team.

Bree, and later Luc Jierre, have back-up covering them when they head out each night. For each bodyguard still active, increase the DC of all the skill checks by 2 (for a maximum of +8 if Bree, Ottavia, Verzubak, and Boone are all on watch).

However, if the PCs have figured out the bodyguards are working together, one or two party members might distract them, so they won’t count toward increasing the DC. This depends on the party being smart and learning the pattern of their enemies, and if done poorly it runs the risk of tipping their enemies off that the PCs are hostile.

INTERROGATING A SUSPECT

Variable Level Skill Challenge.

Key Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Sense Motive

Difficulty: Skill DCs are based on the level of the person being interrogated. To start, use the “Moderate” DC rating.

An interrogation might involve subtly getting a suspect to talk about himself, verbally intimidating or manipulating a prisoner into confessing a secret, or physically punishing a target until he breaks. To get useful information, the PC must establish and maintain a rapport, and then extract information out of the target.

When running an interrogation as a skill challenge, first have the player explain or roleplay how they’ll attempt to establish rapport, and then have them make a check. Then if they succeed they can explain what information they’re trying to extract, and make a check for that.

Rapport.

Rapport reflects the target’s trust of the PC. In a casual conversation, a target might think the PC is just a normal person and have no reason to look for ulterior motives, and after establishing a rapport with the PC he might be willing to share things he wouldn’t with a total stranger. During a harsher interrogation, the PC must make sure that the target’s anger or loathing of his captor does not overwhelm whatever other emotion the interrogator is trying to evoke.

To establish rapport, the PC must make a skill check. If the PC has a genuine connection to the target, he might make a Diplomacy check

to keep the target happy. Bluff works if the target is faking a connection, particularly for seduction. If the target is a mage or scholar, the PC might even use Knowledge (Arcana, History, Nature, or Religion) to make the target think they have much in common, and Knowledge (Local) might work to pose as a fellow criminal. Intimidate also works, but will usually leave the target unfriendly or even openly hostile after the interrogation.

If the PC succeeds his check, he establishes rapport, and he can move on to “extraction.” If he fails the check, the target cannot be coaxed to open up. The PC can try again, but the DC increases to ‘Hard.’ If he fails a second time, the target won’t respond to further attempts unless something changes in his or her relation to the PC (such as if the PC saves the target’s life).

Extraction.

Once the PC has established a rapport, he can make a skill check to extract information from the target. This is almost always a Sense Motive check. On a success, the PC gets the target to reveal something useful. The target might tell a total lie, but the PC is able to see through it and figure out what’s really true.

If the PC fails his check, the target gives up nothing and becomes a little wary. If the PC fails a second time, he loses his rapport with the target, which counts as one failure on a “rapport” check.

Good Cop Bad Cop.

When two or more characters coordinate in an interrogation, each PC can make a check to establish rapport. As long as at least one PC succeeds his check, the whole team establishes rapport. Only if everyone fails does the DC for further attempts increase.

Once the team has established rapport, anyone can actually ask the questions, but they just make one Sense Motive check to extract information, using whosever skill modifier is highest.

In the classic “good cop, bad cop” situation, the pair coordinate to get the target to open up, and then the character with a stronger insight asks the questions. A variant is to have one person physically break a target, and then afterward a different interrogator asks the questions. Or the same mechanics could handle five PCs carousing at a bar, getting a suspect drunk and then encouraging him to brag about his secret mission.



APPENDIX THREE:

MAGIC ITEMS

Amulet of the Impeccable Sky

The side of this amulet that faces outward is just a bland copper disk dotted with silver studs, but on the backside is an eye facing inward, not outward.

Aura faint (illusion)

Slot neck; **Weight** -; **Price** 12,000gp.

Description

This amulet always makes the wearer aware when their Bluff checks and Stealth checks fail to conceal their motives or movements from observers, unless the observer is himself hidden from them. Once per day, the amulet can be used to cast *disguise person* (CL 6th).

Butcher's Girdle

A normal girdle keeps your belly in the shape you want. This does that for your whole body.

Aura moderate (conjunction & necromancy)

Slot belt; **Weight** -; **Price** 50,000gp.

Description

If one of the wearer's limbs becomes severed, they can move and control the limb as if it were still fully functional. Whenever they spend a move action to move, the limb can fly up to their speed (maximum height of 30 feet.), though it must remain within 100 feet of the wearer or else it falls inert. The wearer can use their limb to attack, though if they cannot see their target they suffer a 50% miss chance for being blind.

If the limb shares the same space as the wearer, they can spend a move action to reattach it to their body, restoring full function.

And yes, before they ask they can intentionally sever their own limbs with a blade as a standard action. This does damage to them equal to 25% of their health. A missing leg effectively makes them prone (even if you can stand up, you can't balance well enough to fight at full effectiveness).

Demonic Weapon (weapon property)

Though no visual trait betrays its nature, this weapon is frighteningly warm to your skin. As you touch it, for a moment you feel like your hand is submerged in fresh blood. The sensation passes, but you cannot help but long to feel it again.

Aura moderate (conjunction)

Slot none; **Weight** varies.; **Price** +2 enhancement bonus.

Description

Attacks with this weapon that hit enemies below half-health do an extra 1d6 fire damage per point of enhancement bonus on the weapon.

Curse

When a person first touches the weapon, if it does not have a living wielder it attunes to them. The first time each encounter the wielder attempts to draw or retrieve any item, if they are not already holding the weapon, they draw the weapon instead of whatever they intended to get.

Once per day the wielder must kill a sentient being and smear the weapon with its blood. If they do not, they suffer a cumulative -1 penalty per day to skill and ability checks based on Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma due to the gun whispering into their mind, compelling them to feed it. If this penalty exceeds the wielders Wisdom score, they are driven mad and kill themselves with the weapon.

The weapon cannot be destroyed as long as it has a living wielder. The curse can be removed by the *Remove Curse* spell or greater magic, which requires using the weapon to kill a pregnant she-goat submerged in holy water.

Hands of Heaven and Hell

These arm-length fingerless gloves are infused with the pugilist training of the Clergy's elite godhands, and tainted by the lightning tongue of a demon.

Aura faint (necromancy)

Slot none; **Weight** 1lb.; **Price** 16,000gp.

Description

These +2 brass knuckles are specially ordained by the Clergy. Once per round when the wielder hits a creature with a melee attack with this weapon, they may pummel it or another creature adjacent to them, dealing 1d6 points of electricity damage. Each time the wielder pummels this way, the *hands of heaven and hell* gain one charge counter, which lasts until the end of the encounter.

When the *hands of heaven and hell* have at least six charge counters, the next attack the wielder makes grants the wielder a number of temporary hit points equal to the amount of damage dealt if the attack hits.

Lucky Dice Ki Focus Thoughts

Keep these two six-sided dice in your pocket. They're good luck.

Aura faint (divination)

Slot none; **Weight** 3lbs.; **Price** 15,000gp.

Description

The wielder of these dice adds +1 to their maximum ki pool if they possess the ki pool ability.

When the wielder rolls these dice, they can yield any number they want. Numbers outside the range of 2-to-12 will be quite suspicious.

Special

The player owning these dice picks one d20 they own and only ever use it for attack rolls. Don't let anyone touch this dice but them. Once per session if the selected dice rolls badly, they're allowed to make a "cleansing" re-roll get the bad numbers out. If the owner violates these rules, they must bury the offending die and purchase a new die to replace it.

Razorbust Weapon (weapon property)

Pairing Drakran magic and Danoran science, this weapon's blade is edged with hovering, jagged teeth that glint in the light. Upon activation these teeth saw back and forth in a keening blur, liable to sever something vital.

Aura faint (transmutation)

Slot none; **Weight** varies.; **Price** +1 enhancement bonus.

Description

When the wielder of a *razorbust* weapon damages an enemy that has fewer hit points than double the weapon's enhancement modifier (the GM should inform the player when this is the case), the weapon shrieks as its bladed teeth saw back and forth as a mechanism near the hilt unspools. The target must make a fortitude save (DC = damage dealt by the attack). On a success, the target loses an extremity of its choice—hand, foot, arm, or leg. On a failure, the attacker chooses which extremity the target loses. Creatures without extremities are unaffected.

A severed arm or hand prevents use of anything that they were holding or carrying. A severed foot slows the target. A severed leg renders the target prone.



The Wayfarer's Lantern

The eight-faced cap of this lantern depicts symbols of seven planets and the sun. Eight brass arches beneath contain a light that glows without flame, held contained without glass. As the light touches you, reality seems to shift, as if you're in a whole different world.

Minor Artifact

Aura faint (all schools)

Slot none; **Weight** 5lbs.; **Price** 15,000gp.

Description

The wielder of these dice adds +1 to their maximum ki pool if they possess the ki pool ability.

When the wielder rolls these dice, they can yield any number they want. Numbers outside the range of 2-to-12 will be quite suspicious.

Special

As a move action the bearer can adjust the lantern to shed dim (25 ft. radius) or normal light (50 ft. radius), or to turn off. It is fragile, and has only 10 hit points.

The lantern's greater powers require it be fed special fuel—oil that has been attuned to a particular plane by steeping it in some item attuned to that plane. Typically this is some form of meteorite that has been ground to dust. An ounce of this oil burns for 5 minutes.

Each ounce of oil is effectively a consumable item of level 10, 15, or 20 (costing 200, 1,000, or 5,000 gp). The level, based on how much meteor dust the oil contains, determines the strength of the effect. A given ounce of oil must be attuned to a specific plane.

As a standard action, the wielder can perform the following - They fill the lantern with oil and light it. The lantern either affects everything it illuminates, or only creatures that are specifically targeted. To specifically target a creature the wielder either needs line of sight to it when they light the lantern, or the creature (or its gear or domicile) must be marked with an arcane sigil prior to lighting the lantern. Targeted creatures that leave the area of the lantern's illumination are no longer affected, but they will be affected again if they return to the area.

The lantern's effects extend 50 feet in every direction, ignoring even total cover or concealment. A creature with total cover or concealment gains a +5 bonus to saves to resist the lantern's effects because the light is not actually touching him, but the magic can pass through solid objects.

Choose an effect below appropriate to the oil's planar attunement. Each round targets must make a will save (DC equal to the level of the oil used). A creature that is hit falls under the lantern's effect for 5 minutes. If it later moves beyond the radius of the lantern it is no longer affected, but it will be again as soon as it comes back into the area.

The lantern's effect lasts for the full five minutes. It cannot be snuffed prematurely without shattering and destroying the lantern.

- ♦ **Any.** Within a minute a random encounter occurs as creatures native to the plane are drawn to the lantern. The encounter is up to GM's discretion based on the current party level.
- ♦ **The Dreaming or Bleak Gate.** Those affected are physically transported to the coterminous spot in either the land of the fey or the land of shadows.
- ♦ **Vona.** Affected creatures gain a +10 bonus to Sense Motive and Perception checks. Affected creatures with any sort of vulnerability to positive energy or sunlight take 1d6 positive energy damage at the beginning of their turns.

- ♦ **Jiese.** An affected creature that takes 1d6 points of fire damage per round. Objects catch fire more easily. Alternately, affected creatures become argumentative and hostile. Any creature that remains under the effect for at least a minute becomes dazed (Will save ends). While so dazed, if it ends its turn and has not attacked anything, it must attack or charge the nearest creature. If it succeeds its save against being dazed, it recognizes that its mind is being affected, and is immune from the compulsion for 5 minutes. But if it is still in the radius of the lantern after that time, it can be attacked again.
- ♦ **Avilona.** Howling winds blow across affected creatures. At the beginning of your turn roll 1d8 to determine the wind's direction. Whenever an affected creature ends its turn, it is slid 1d4x5 feet in that direction. Alternately, other types of weather can be called forth, albeit in a limited area.
- ♦ **Av.** Any creature under the lantern's effect for at least a minute becomes *slowed* (save ends). If it fails its save, it falls asleep and has vivid shared dreams. If it succeeds it shakes off the effect and is immune for 5 minutes.
- ♦ **Mavisha.** The flow of water within the area obeys mental command of sentient creatures. An affected creature can as a standard action raise, lower, or part water, or increase a vessel's speed by 10 miles an hour, but it's not fast enough to be used as a weapon. Multiple creatures thinking in opposition can rouse the anger of the water, causing it to manifest as a water elemental of a level equal to the level of the highest level creature in the room.
- ♦ **Urim.** Illuminated stone, crystal, and metal becomes harder. Affected creatures gain DR 5/-.
- ♦ **Apet.** Affected creatures can teleport 50 feet as a move action, but must remain within the radius of the lantern's light.
- ♦ **Nem.** Affected creatures are pulled from their bodies into the plane of Nem, a spirit world on the far side of the Bleak Gate. The world resembles reality but is bereft of occupants and slowly fades away as the disembodied creature wanders away from the spot where it died. Even if their body moves, the spot where they entered Nem is an invisible gateway. If they ever stray more than three miles from that gateway, they pass into the afterlife and cannot be resurrected. This is normally not a factor with the lantern because it will not burn long enough.

While in Nem they cannot see or be seen by living creatures. They gain incorporeal. This power can be useful for scouting environments.

If their souls leave the area of the lantern, they instantly snap back to the spot where they first entered Nem. If their bodies are moved from the lantern's area, their souls snap back into their flesh.

Focused Severance

There goes the hand.

Training

Requirement Characters with the Martial Scientist theme who witness Lya Jierre use this technique and later acquire her martial thesis, *Field Study of Melee Effectiveness and Foe Debilitation through Focused Limb Severance Techniques Contrasted with Mainstream Opportunistic Techniques*, can learn this technique.

If you are wielding a *razorburst* weapon, such as the one Lya Jierre owns, add double its enhancement modifier to your level to determine the HP threshold of this ability.

Description

Whenever you hit a target with a slashing melee weapon and the target has fewer hit points remaining than your level, you can attempt to remove a limb.

The target must make a saving throw (DC = damage dealt). On a success, the target loses an extremity of its choice—hand, foot, arm, or leg. On a failure, the attacker chooses which extremity the target loses. Creatures without extremities are unaffected.

APPENDIX FOUR: DM QUICK REFERENCE

NPC QUICK REFERENCE

Assistant Chief Inspector Stover Delft. Party's boss. Chews tobacco. Cane. Spits. Good-natured.

Brianne "Bree" Kaldeckis. Danoran war vet. Dresses to show off right arm and leg transplants. Honorable. Clever. Loves hearing and telling war stories. Sympathetic to suffering.

Damata Griento. Half-orc businessman. Looking for a friend. Pretends to be normal tourist. Afraid of dying, so overly sensitive and emotional. Panicked concern for family.

Olivert Boone. Tiefling gunslinger and lady's man. Braggart. Jovially puts down people. Demon-possessed revolver demands sacrifices. When amused, claps by slapping chest with one hand.

Verzubak Tantalovich. Dwarven luck mage. Looks perpetually tired. Rolls dice, makes notes about random events in his notebook. Rejects Heid Eschatol focus on the end of life. Observant. Can tell what people care about, so pays a lot of compliments.

Elanor Yanette. Hugely fat enchantress. Sex trafficker. No empathy. Smug. Keeps people around so she can show off wealth and gossip. Reads erotic poetry.

Isobel Travers. Young, beautiful high elf. Raised to have little personality. Beautiful singing voice. Usually drugged or magic-addled. Hums errantly.

"Mister Mapple," Andrei von Recklinghausen. Scruffy, shabbily dressed. Smells of fancy bath soaps and perfume. Amazing acrobat. Lives to experience new pleasure. Romantic heart. Regenerates wounds. Touch drains life force.

Luc Jierre. Tiefling inventor. Stutters. Avoids conversation. Resentful of those in power, but desires power of his own. Frighteningly intelligent. Excellent manners and etiquette.

Ottavia Sacredote. Elf priestess. Geometric tattoos of a Clergy oracle. Deaf. Can talk, but prefers to use sign language. Devoted to ending corruption in the church. Recognizes people's flaws, tries to bring out their nobler sides. Cares for Luc, and is overly protective.

Cardiff Hengehill. Risuri spy. Handsome. Hides through confidence and looking like he belongs, instead of discretion. Suitcase strapped to wrist holds stolen documents of Danoran naval intelligence. Bouts of heroism. Short temper. Grabs people when making a point.

Malia Baccarin. Crisillyir-born, Danor-raised. Rail guard. Contacts with criminals along railroad. Collects newspapers. Skilled at cajoling, goading, seducing. Wants to score big, retire young.

Ashima-Shimtu. Ancient demoness. Chained by Clergy. Scaled skin. Speaks as if narrating events, never in first person. Hints at knowing great secrets, reveals very few.

Minister of Outsiders Lya Jierre. Tiefling martial scientist. Ambitious. Haughty but friendly. Progressive. Wants peace. Arcano-technological vorpal rapier.

Nicodemus the Gnostic. Smokes leaf of Nicodemus. Movie-star charisma. Dominates a room with his presence, but encourages others to talk. Enjoys solitude and posing surprising questions about philosophy. Ghost who travels between bodies.

ROSCOMMON AND KHALUNDURRIN

Roscommon, Schooner.

The schooner is one of the lightest types of vessels used for oceanic voyages. Its nimbleness makes it ideal for blockade-running and surveillance, but if cornered by an actual warship it must rely on the skill-at-arms of its crew, since it cannot mount many weapons.

Roscommon, named after the region in Risur that provided for most of its material, mounts a two-masted square-topsail rig. Her lower deck could accommodate as many as thirty, but she typically sails with fifteen crew and a cook, plus some small elite complement of officers or specialists.

Laid down in 417 A.O.V., when it was nearing completion its designer had a druid deliver a replica to a fey circle near the town of Roscommon. The model ship delighted the local fey queen Medb, and the next morning when the designer returned to work, the ship's figurehead had been replaced by a beautiful faerie woman carved from living wood.

Roscommon, schooner	Level 10 Vehicle
Medium Vehicle	Cost 5,000 gp
<i>A century-old schooner given the favor of Medb, one of the queens of the Unseen Court.</i>	
Hull Integrity 3; Decks 2	Space 5 square by 16 squares
Defense 15	Crew Required 15
Attack Bonus +5	Command Rating by PC
Speed 6	

Traits

► Armaments

Four light cannons each to port and starboard. Each cannon requires one person to operate.

► Rigging

Two masts, 70 ft. high.

The *Roscommon* can turn in place. In tactical combat it must spend 8 squares of movement before it can turn, but it only needs to actually move 4 squares forward. It can use any square in its space as its axis of rotation.

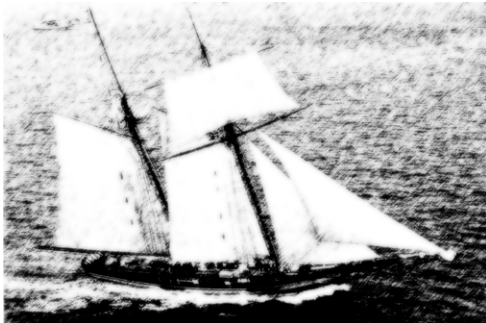
► Runner

In naval combat, if the *Roscommon* has 5 piloting crew, it grants its captain +2 to Command checks during the Distance stage.

Standard Actions

► Fey Step; * Encounter

The captain standing at the head of the ship can spend a standard action to ask the favor of the queen's figurehead. The *Roscommon* and everyone aboard teleports 10 squares to an unoccupied space. It maintains the same heading and speed.



Khalundurrin, Steamship.

The *Khalundurrin* joined the Drakran navy at the tail end of the Fourth Yerasol War. It was captured by Risuri forces when the ship strayed too close to an ongoing naval battle between the Risuri and Danorans. Its captain claimed that he tried to avoid the fight, but his ship had changed course when he wasn't looking, like it wanted to get into combat.

The dwarves of Drakr built the *Khalundurrin* to be a sturdily armored scout ship, capable of patrolling the edge of a naval formation and surviving a few hits if it ran into trouble. Arcanists who examined the ship postulate that some manner of spirit might inhabit its steam engine.

A squat conning tower rises up in the center of the ship, and angled steel plates slope outward toward the water around the maindeck, with shuttered slots for cannons. The lower deck is hot and cramped, but crew sleep easily and speak of dreams filled with bold imagery like something out of a Drakran opera.

Khalundurrin, steamship	Level 10 Vehicle
Medium Vehicle	Cost 5,000 gp
<i>A Drakran-built steamship, sturdy and well-armed, with a bold heart.</i>	
Hull Integrity 3; Decks 2	Space 5 square by 16 squares
Defense 20	Crew Required 5
Attack Bonus +5	Command Rating by PC
Speed 6	

Traits

► Armaments

Four light cannons each to port and starboard. Each cannon requires one person to operate.

► Steam Powered

Carries fuel for 2,000 miles.

In tactical combat, the captain of a steam cutter gets a +5 bonus to his Command Rating to determine initiative.

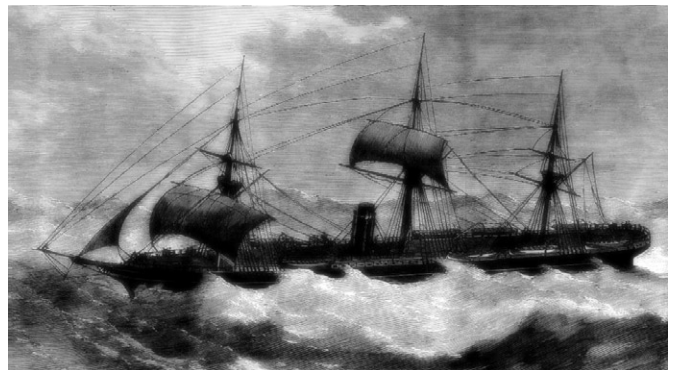
A steamship must spend 4 squares of movement before it can turn.

► Bold Heart

When the *Khalundurrin* is sailing toward a foe, its speed increases by 2 and its captain gains a +2 bonus to Command checks during the Distance stage.

► Ironclad

Creatures on the deck of the *Khalundurrin* have cover against attacks made from outside the ship.



MISSION TIMELINE.

- ♦ **85 Autumn, 500.** Your ship departs Flint. Trip to Beaumont should take 7 days.
- ♦ **1 Winter, 500.** Your ship arrives in Beaumont. Your ship sails for Trekthom.
- ♦ You have a ten day buffer in case of trouble at sea.
- ♦ **11 Winter, 500.** Train departs Beaumont at 7:30 AM.
- ♦ **11 Winter, 500.** Train arrives in Cherage by 6:00 PM.
- ♦ **12 Winter, 500.** Train departs Cherage at 7:30 AM.
- ♦ **12 Winter, 500.** Train arrives in Orithea by 6:15 PM.
- ♦ **13 Winter, 500.** Train departs Orithea at 7:30 AM.
- ♦ **13 Winter, 500.** Train arrives in Trekthom by 6:30 PM. Your ship will be waiting at the harbor.
- ♦ **14 Winter, 500.** Train departs Trekthom at 7:30 AM. Your ship sails for Sid Minos.
- ♦ **14 Winter, 500.** Train arrives in Nalaam by 6:00 PM.
- ♦ **15 Winter, 500.** Train departs Nalaam at 7:30 AM.
- ♦ **15 Winter, 500.** Train arrives in Sid Minos by 5:30 PM. Your ship will be waiting at the harbor.
- ♦ **16 Winter, 500.** Train departs Sid Minos at 7:30 AM.
- ♦ **16 Winter, 500.** Train arrives in Vendricce by 6:00 PM. Your ship will be waiting at the harbor. Trip to Flint should take eight days.



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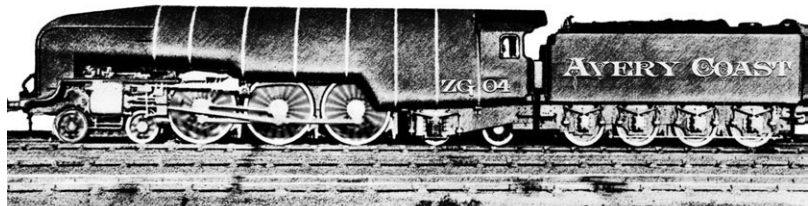
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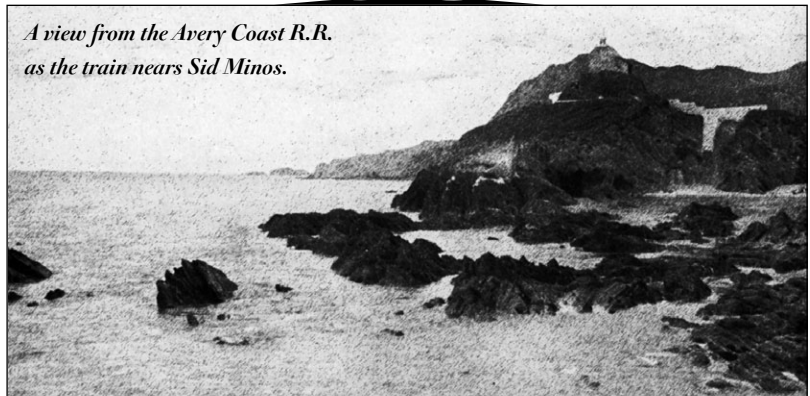
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*A view from the Avery Coast R.R.
as the train nears Sid Minos.*



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