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Introduction

Fall of the Tower is a momentous adventure for the Accursed game line. It represents a turning point in the struggle for the future of Morden, a savage blow struck against either the Witches who have conquered the land or the Order of the Penitent that seeks to save it. This adventure is the product of the successful Kickstarter that helped launch the entire Accursed line to begin with. A special adventure was promised to certain Backers, to be presented at Gen Con 2014, and this is the result.

Overview

The Accursed begin the adventure in medias res, escorting a mysterious stranger back to the Order's headquarters of Massif Helsenn. As they approach the Massif, banes of the Chimera attack the group. During the battle, the stranger reveals herself as Avonlea, the last surviving Seelie Fey. Her powers assist the Accursed in winning the battle, but she informs them that by revealing herself, she has no doubt that the Chimera now knows the fey's location.

Arriving at the Massif, the Accursed meet with the head of the Order—Victor von Drake—and learn that the Chimera's interest in Avonlea is anything but benign. However, there is a way to turn that interest back upon her and launch an assault upon her home, Turrus Atra. A castle long thought impregnable, Turrus Atra relocates somewhere else upon Morden every night at midnight, re-appearing in a seemingly random location at dawn. If the Order can divine a means of predicting where Turrus Atra will appear, they can launch a daring assault on the Chimera's home base and destroy it with alchemical explosives, weakening (or perhaps even slaying) the Witch as well.

Act II of the adventure begins with an enigma—the Accursed must find the location of Turrus Atra's next appearance. In the Massif are a series of libraries and laboratories that the Accursed can use to develop a ritual to discover where Turrus Atra will appear. During this investigation, the Accursed eventually

find out that each Witch has a strong connection to her Accursed. This link could potentially be used to trace back a Mongrel to the Chimera herself. However, such a ritual would require both Witchcraft and alchemy. Further, the ritual inflicts considerable pain and discomfort upon the subject.

Von Drake knows of a Mongrel in a hermitage nearby the Massif—Brother Antonescu. Antonescu intends to remain sequestered from the world, dependent upon the elixir provided by the Order that removes the crippling pain of his curse. However, he has the strongest connection to the Chimera of any other Accursed in the region. The heroes must find a way to convince Antonescu to go along with the plan of using his connection to the Witch in order to find where she will be.

With the ritual discovered and Antonescu convinced, it then is enacted.

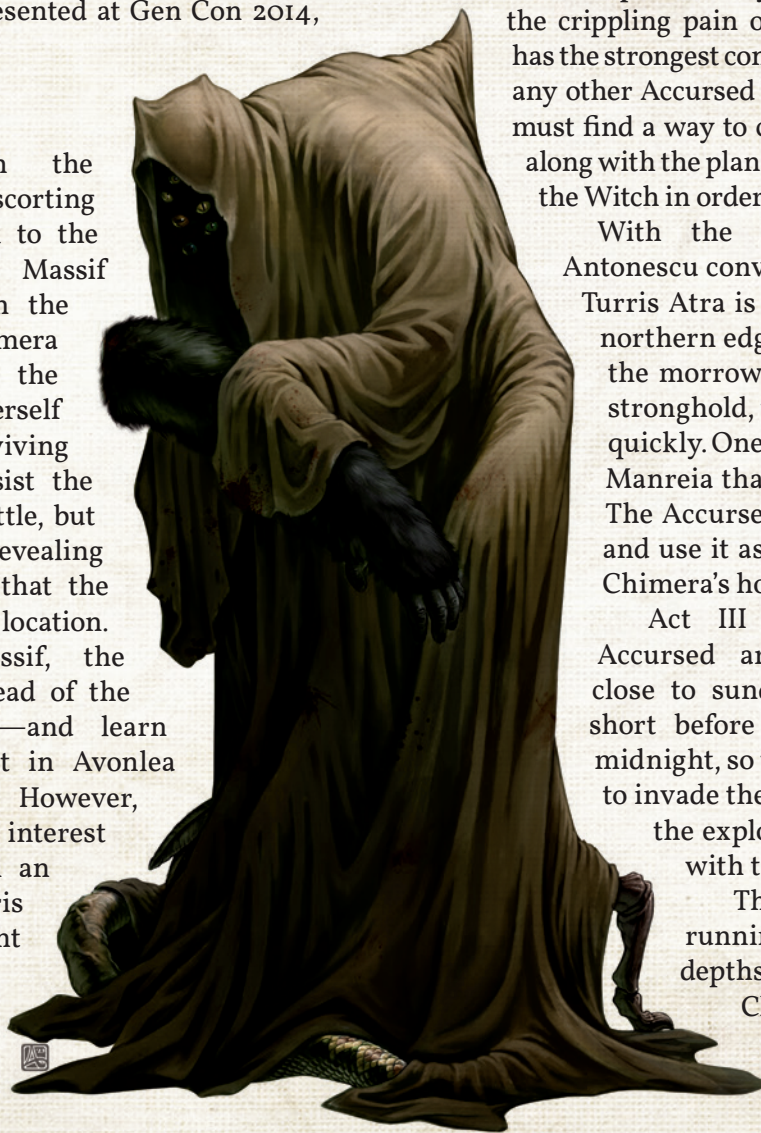
Turrus Atra is fated to appear near the northern edge of the Ash Plains upon the morrow. To reach the Chimera's stronghold, the Accursed must travel quickly. One option is a zeppelin from Manreia that is on a tour of Morden. The Accursed can seize the zeppelin and use it as their conveyance to the Chimera's home.

Act III commences with the Accursed arriving at Turrus Atra close to sundown. Time is running short before the tower vanishes at midnight, so the Accursed must hurry to invade the Chimera's home and set the explosives they have brought with them from the Massif.

The Accursed fight a running battle through the depths of the Tower against the Chimera's minions and eventually encounter the Witch herself.

However, an urgent message is heard just at

the climactic moment—the Chimera's forces have made a strong push against Massif Helsenn, and the home of the Order is in danger of being overrun. Von Drake offers to stay behind and ensure the destruction of Turrus Atra. However, Von Drake is wounded, and the Chimera is still very much alive. The Accursed must choose between making certain of Turrus Atra's destruction, or racing home in order to fight off the attackers seeking to tear down the Massif. Depending upon what the Accursed choose, the adventure ends with one or both towers falling into ruin.



My fellow Penitents,

You are charged with a mission of great importance. There is a woman by the name of Avonlea you must find and escort back to the Massif Helsenn. She is waiting to meet you in the town of Pelion near the Sunken Lands.

Take great care, Accursed. This woman is being hunted with prejudice. The forces of the Witches are searching for her high and low. Do not let her be taken.

Return with Avonlea to the Massif, and you will learn more about her importance.

Victor Von Drake.

Lord Knight-Commander, Order of St. Vitus

From time to time, you catch a glimpse of her blonde hair and sparkling green eyes, but for the most part, she stays quiet and simply trudges along, silently acquiescing to any of your suggestions for her safety.

For several hours now, you have walked along a road winding its way through the dark interior forests of Valkenholm. Light mist surrounds the bases of the trees, and the sounds of wildlife around you seem muffled and distant. It is currently midmorning, although the sun's welcome light is only dimly seen through the boughs above.

At the Game Master's discretion, he can ask for Notice rolls from the Accursed. Anyone who succeeds notices that although Avonlea seems very graceful, she is slightly clumsy on the road, as if unused to this form of travel. Anyone with a raise spots that Avonlea possesses slimly pointed ears, a sign that she is one of the fey. A success with an appropriate Knowledge roll reveals that Avonlea is one of the Seelie Fey, a group that was thought lost in the Bane War. Mummies gain a +2 bonus on the Knowledge roll, given the role that the Seelie Fey played in destroying the Djinn.

Once these checks have been resolved, ask the Accursed to describe how they are escorting Avonlea through the woods. When the group is ready to proceed, paraphrase or read aloud the following:

The mist thickens until it is difficult to see more than twenty feet ahead in any direction. The sounds of the forest around you grow still until silence reigns. Suddenly, bony figures appear between the trees on all sides—a large group of Cauldron Born has you surrounded!

A Revenant may make a check to sense the presence of the Cauldron Born through his Witchmark. Success permits him to draw an additional card for Initiative. On a raise, he counts as having drawn a Joker for the first round. The force attacking the Accursed is a group of skeletal Cauldron Born roughly equal to two for every Wild Card in the Accursed's group, led by one Grave Knight (see *Accursed* page 136). At the Game Master's discretion, additional Grave Knights may be present if the heroes are particularly experienced.

The Zeppelin

The Game Master should reward any successful Notice rolls with a glimpse of a zeppelin gracefully flying overhead roughly four miles to the Northeast. This is the *Don Carlo*, a zeppelin from Manreia taking several nobles of that land on a scenic tour of the northern forests. The presence of the zeppelin becomes more important later in Act II (see page 9).

APPENDIX

Fall of the Tower includes a party of six pre-generated player characters. Each character includes background and roleplay notes, as well as interaction notes for the other PCs. The GM should be aware that one of those characters is intended to be a traitor.

Act I: The Last Faerie

The adventure begins in medias res with the Accursed returning to Massif Helsenn after having located Avonlea. If the group uses the pre-generated Accursed in the Appendix, take a moment to make sure that all the players are familiar with their characters. It is important to note that all of the Accursed are on foot, and no additional reinforcements are expected. Give the player's the Player Handout (below). After they have a moment to review it, the Game Master should describe Avonlea (see page 4) to the Accursed and ask them in general terms what they are doing to escort her back to the Massif. Paraphrase or read aloud the following:

Over the last two days, you travelled to the resistance camp of Pelion to meet with the mysterious Avonlea. She is a tall and graceful woman who keeps herself wrapped in a concealing cloak at all times. Avonlea seems friendly enough, but is unwilling to speak until she returns to the safety of the Massif.



The Cauldron Born are roughly twenty feet away from the Accursed on all sides when the combat begins. The Cauldron Born seem interested in closing in around Avonlea, but have no trouble engaging in combat if one of the Accursed is closer. The battle escalates after the second round (or earlier, at a moment of the Game Master's discretion if the Accursed are doing particularly well). When the escalation occurs, paraphrase or read aloud the following:

From the north, a horrible howling sound can be heard. The howls have a bubbling, wet quality to them that brings to mind squirming, boneless things in the dark. Several creatures bound into view that are part black-furred wolf and part writhing grub. Where the shoulders and head of a wolf should be there is only the upper part of a huge, white-fleshed maggot. These creatures are the source of that howl, and they leap to the attack.

As before, Mongrels may make a Notice check to sense the approaching Maggot Hounds (see *Accursed* page 120) through their Witchmark. Success means that the Mongrel gains an additional card for initiative this round, while a raise means he gains the benefits of a Joker this round. The Accursed should be badly outnumbered at this point. The number of attacking Maggot Hounds should be twice the number of

Accursed (with even more at the Game Master's discretion). The combat should proceed as normal for one more round until the final event occurs.

Avonlea Takes Action

It is up to the Game Master as to exactly when this event should take place. This is a pacing event, and as such, the Game Master should use it to keep the game moving if the battle looks to be in danger of bogging down. Avonlea acts when the situation is dire, but certainly before any of the Accursed are incapacitated. When the time is right, paraphrase or read aloud the following:

At that moment, Avonlea casts back her cloak. She is revealed at last as one of the fey: pointed ears, glowing eyes, and hair like spun gold. She raises her hand towards the oncoming banes and speaks very slowly, but each word resonates like a thunderclap.

"I wish..."

Everything seems to stop, to tremble in anticipation of what comes next.

"I wish that these creatures would forevermore BEGONE!" With the final word, a bright light spirals out from Avonlea, washing through the trees and burning away the mist. Each bane touched by that light shrieks and crumbles to flakes of ash, wiped out in an instant by the powerful fey magic.

Avonlea staggers once the light has cleansed the area, and she turns to the Accursed with an expression composed far more of despair than triumph. "We must hurry," she says, her voice hoarse with effort. "More banes will come, and the Witch now knows where I am without a shadow of a doubt."

Avonlea

A forest spirit, native to Valkenholm, Avonlea is the last known surviving Seelie Fey. She was detained from joining the other Fey during the trap that was laid for the Djinn—she refuses to recount the story out of personal shame. However, she felt the wave of magic that destroyed or transported her peers away from Morden. She now believes that the age of the Seelie may have passed. If she is the last of her kind, she is willing to also pass from this world. However, she is determined to do everything in her power to make certain that the Witches pay for their triumph before she goes.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d8, Notice d6, Subterfuge d6

Cha: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Race: Seelie Fey

Hindrances: Enemy (The Grand Coven), Vulnerability (Iron)

Edges: Arcane Background (Wish Magic), Charismatic, Dodge

Powers: Wish Magic (see sidebar below)

Gear: Cloak, Dagger (Str +d4), Bedroll.

Back to the Massif

After the battle, it takes only a few hours to reach Massif Helsenn. The Massif is the headquarters of the Order of the Penitent. It is also an ancient cathedral of the Enochian Faith and has stood for over a thousand years as a bastion of civilization. It is not just a building; it is a symbol of the Order's determination to succeed and a reminder of Morden's past before the Bane War. When the Accursed reach the Massif, paraphrase or read aloud the following:

Before you rises the Massif Helsenn, an ancient, towering cathedral formed of blackened granite. The Massif is not only the headquarters for the Order of the Penitent, it is also an active center of worship for the Enochian faith. Around the exterior of the cathedral, windows of stained glass depict scenes from Morden's past going back a thousand years. Nearby, a small town has sprung up during the last two decades to serve the needs of the Order as well as the priests. You can hear the ringing of a hammer upon an anvil, the singing of a washerwoman, and the wheedling of a merchant. Several dozen folk who are not affiliated with either the order or the priesthood have come to live and thrive here in the shadow of the Massif.

If desired, the Accursed have time to re-equip or purchase supplies in town. However, shortly after the Accursed arrive, a young priest named Brother Stefan seeks them out. Stefan informs the Accursed that they

Wish Magic

The powers of the Seelie Fey are similar in nature to the witchcraft of the Djinn—both use wishes or bargains as the basis for their potency. As the last of her kind, Avonlea possesses some impressive powers, but she faces a unique problem when using them as well. Any use of her magic alerts the Witches to her location, and drains her ability to use more magic for some time to come. Therefore, she must carefully husband her powers and choose the right moments to use them, lest she foolishly bring the wrath of the Witches down upon her—and those nearby. In Act II, she is saving her magic to use against the defenders at Turris Atra. This is why she does not offer to use her powers to locate the tower—and why she must regretfully refuse if the player characters ask her to do so as well.

should bring Avonlea directly into the Massif to meet with Victor Von Drake (see page 6), the head of the Order of the Penitent. If the Accursed are reluctant to do so, the Game Master should remind them of any Obligation, Heroic, or Loyal Hindrances that they may possess! Avonlea also requests that the Accursed escort her to Von Drake if the Game Master needs another method to guide them Accursed toward the meeting.

The interior of the Cathedral is a bustling hive of activity. Priests scurry to and fro with burdens, books, or supplies. A successful appropriate Knowledge roll indicates that the Massif is in preparations for some kind of siege. The Accursed are shown to a meeting room decorated with old banners and rusting suits of armor from before the Bane War. At the head of a long, dark oak table is Victor Von Drake. It should be noted that any Revenants could sense Von Drake's presence before entering the room through their Witchmark. Once the Accursed arrive, paraphrase or read aloud the following:

Victor Von Drake is a gaunt, tall man clad in dark clothes, a long weathered cloak, and a wide-brimmed hat set low over his features. His flesh has the pallor of a creature long since dead, and his eyes are dark and intent. The fine trceries of a hugely elaborate Witchmark can be seen crawling across his neck and the left side of his face, marking him as a Revenant who has nearly fully embraced the Witches' curse. He looks for Avonlea, and upon seeing her with you, he gives a sharp nod of approval and stands. "I'd like to hear the report of your journey here."

The Accursed then have a chance to recount to Von Drake the conflict with the Cauldron Born and maggot hounds on the road.

Von Drake frowns. "Avonlea was forced to reveal herself, then," he curses, "damn." When he looks up, his face is grim. "Good work bringing her here, my friends. We have much to discuss."

"Today, the Order is endangered by perhaps the greatest threat it has ever faced." He nods towards Avonlea. "The Chimera will stop at nothing to possess the last Seelie Fey, and now she knows that Avonlea has taken shelter here."

Von Drake explains the situation to the Accursed, making certain to stress these important points.

- The Chimera is in a never-ending search for knowledge of life. She experiments upon every creature known in Morden, creating bizarre monsters such as the maggot hounds. The Witch wants Avonlea in order to vivisect and study her.
- Should the Chimera succeed in taking Avonlea, it is possible she could create new and more powerful banes using the Fey's strange powers. It is even possible that she could learn to transform the

Unseelie Fey—so far neutral in the Bane War—into monsters under her control, or even a new form of Accursed altogether.

- The Chimera almost certainly has sent all available banes, mercenaries, and other creatures under her domination to attack Massif Helsenn. The assault is coming soon, although Von Drake cannot be certain exactly when. It is likely that the Accursed have at most two days before the siege begins.

Once the stakes have been explained, paraphrase or read aloud the following:

Von Drake lifts a hand, commanding your attention. "This situation is dire, have no doubt. However, it also gives us a unique opportunity. If the Chimera sends her strength here, she will not have many guardians left to protect her own home. It is possible that we could take this chance to launch an attack directly against the Witches for the first time since the war ended."

The Revenant looks at each of you. "It will be extremely dangerous, but there is a chance we could locate Turrus Atra, the Chimera's home, and destroy it with some of our alchemical explosives."

The Game Master should point out that the Order has never before been able to strike directly against the Witches, due to the large number of monsters and banes defending them. In this one case, the Chimera may have overextended herself in a fatal mistake. If any of the Accursed make a successful Knowledge (Witches) or Knowledge (Witchcraft) roll, their characters know that Turrus Atra is a dark and forbidding fortress that vanishes each night at midnight only to re-appear in a new, random location each dawn. If none of the Accursed have these skills, Von Drake explains this.

In summary, the Von Drake charges the as follows:

- They must find a way to locate where Turrus Atra will appear tomorrow morning at dawn.
- They must reach Turrus Atra before midnight with the alchemical explosives.
- They must infiltrate the Chimera's tower to destroy it from within—the explosives are powerful, but the only way to be certain of the tower's destruction is to detonate them inside as close to the center as possible.

Victor Von Drake

Von Drake is the bold and capable leader of the Order of the Penitent. He is driven to free Morden from the Witches, regardless of the personal cost. He works ceaselessly to try to improve the order, diverting every resource he can and recruiting Accursed and mortals into the Order's service. While he does not make unnecessary sacrifices lightly, he accepts the costs that are necessary for victory.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d10

Skills: Athletics d4, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Tactics) d6, Knowledge (Witches) d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Shooting d6, Taunt d6

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 9 (2)

Witchbreed: Revenant

Hindrances: Heroic, Vow (Order of the Penitent)

Edges: Command, Great Luck, Natural Leader, Quick, Strong Willed

Gear: de Acosta Model IV Rifle (24/48/96, 2d8, AP 1, RoF 1), Fixed bayonet (Str +d6, +1 Parry, +1 Reach), brigandine.

Act II: Finding the Dark Tower

The first step towards destroying Turrus Atra is to locate where it is destined to appear at dawn the next day. The Chimera's home is a formidable fortress, but its main defense is the fact that it is never in the same place for more than one day. Fortunately, Von Drake has some ideas on how the Accursed can locate the tower and the Chimera.

According to scholars of witchcraft, a link exists between each Witch and their creations. In this case, the Chimera's Witchline are Mongrels. Fortunately, there is a Mongrel who lives just outside the Massif, a reclusive alchemist by the name of Brother Antonescu. First, however, the ritual that can trace the link between Mongrel and Chimera must be studied in the Massif's large and well-appointed library.

Researching the Ritual

If necessary, Von Drake suggests that the Accursed begin searching for a means to use witchcraft in order to trace the Chimera's link to her creations. The Massif's central library contains many tomes on the subject, so any appropriate Knowledge or Investigation rolls gain a +2 bonus when used in this manner. In addition, the Game Master should reward creative thinking on the players' behalf—if they come up with an idea of another method of finding answers about the Chimera and the Mongrels, this also adds a bonus (typically +2 to +4) to any rolls. When making Knowledge or Investigation rolls in this manner, the Game Master should assign a difficulty penalty of -4; such a thing has never before been attempted in Morden's history. However, failing the roll does not mean that the Accursed do not discover the information—it only means that more time passes (possibly complicating the battle at Turrus Atra in Act III—see page 10). The fun part of an investigation is in interpreting the information, not in finding it, so the Game Master should ensure that the characters discover the ritual during this section of the adventure.

The following is discovered by the Accursed when they research the connection between the Chimera and the Mongrels:

- The link between the Chimera and her creations is particularly strong.
- Because the link is formed of witchcraft, a ritual using that magic can trace the link to a location.
- Alchemical knowledge can enhance the ritual's accuracy, as can other examples of witchcraft or symbolic links.
- When enacted, the ritual inflicts horrible, crippling pain upon the subject. This part of the ritual simply cannot be changed or altered in any way.
- The Chimera instantly recognizes the link used to track her, although she does not understand the true purpose of the ritual (to locate Turris Atra), given the highly unusual nature of this witchcraft.
- Undergoing this ritual guarantees that the Accursed discover where Turris Atra is fated to appear at dawn the next day.

This is primarily an investigative scene, so the Game Master should encourage the players to describe their character's actions and intentions. It is recommended that the Game Master emphasize the useful and helpful assistance rendered by the priests of the Massif, other Accursed of the Order, and any other friends and allies the characters may have. This helps build up drama for the final choice faced by the Accursed at the end of Act III (see page 12).

Convincing Brother Antonescu

Once the Accursed understand the details of the ritual, they must find a suitable subject. Von Drake informs them that there is only one Mongrel currently in residence at the Massif, an alchemist by the name of Brother Antonescu. This particular alchemist is a bit of a hermit, and he lives in a small combination of cabin and laboratory on a hill by the back of the cathedral.

Antonescu is an accomplished alchemist, and in fact it is he who produces a pain-soothing elixir that has aided many Mongrels who work with the Order. He is a middle-aged man of middling height and weight. He wears a pair of small, rounded glasses perched on the edge of his nose and the robes of an Enochian priest. Like all Mongrels, he has had various animal features, organs, and body parts surgically grafted onto his body. One of his arms ends in a large, unwieldy lobster claw, and the right half of his face has been stitched on from the grey and pebbly flesh of a shark. The eye on that side of his face is also that of the shark's, doll-like and a flat, deep black in color.

When the Accursed go to meet him, paraphrase or read aloud the following:

Behind the main cathedral of the Massif Helsenn there is a green hill. Upon it lies a cabin, a home that has been converted into an alchemical laboratory. Strange pipes jut from seams in the cabin's walls, and steam regularly billows out of a smokestack set at one corner. Copper-sheathed tubs bubble merrily over a fire pit outside the door.

Antonescu answers the door and introduces himself politely. He insists that he is quite busy brewing a new much-needed batch of the soothing elixir for other Mongrels serving the Order, but he invites the Accursed inside if they are reasonably polite. This scene involves a social challenge that requires the Accursed to use the Persuasion Skill (see the *Savage Worlds Core Rulebook*). Antonescu begins the scene as Uncooperative. The following are some points that can shift Antonescu's attitude in one direction or the other:

- The foremost issue on his mind is that the Chimera will know it was him, personally, that aided the Accursed. He is deathly afraid of the Witch and fears her retribution greatly. Even if the Accursed lie or conceal this part of the ritual from him, Antonescu's knowledge of alchemy is enough that he intuitively grasps that the ritual's consequences mean he will become a target.
- The second most important issue for Antonescu is the excruciating pain that the ritual causes. Not even his own elixir helps against this side effect.

Player Character Mongrels

If one of the player character Accursed is also a Mongrel, he or she may wish to volunteer for the ritual. However, the Game Master should point out that the ritual (as discovered when the Accursed study this process in the library) is extremely painful and quite possibly fatal to the recipient. If necessary Von Drake points out that the player characters are bold and strong, making them the best chance for the plan to succeed—but only if they carry it out personally. The player character Mongrel could be of no use to the group if recovering from the ritual. Taking part may actually doom the plan to failure before it even begins.

If one of the player characters insists on taking Antonescu's place, it can be a very dramatic scene. The Game Master is encouraged to have Antonescu show up at the last minute, ashamed for inaction due to his fear, and grateful to the player character for showing him the way. Then Antonescu lays out the arguments above as to why he should be the one in the ritual rather than the player character.

Again, Antonescu is savvy enough to realize the main thrust of this problem even if the Accursed lie or conceal this part of the ritual from him.

- Thirdly, he does not have great confidence in the Accursed's ability to succeed. While he is not philosophically opposed to helping the Accursed fight the Witches (he is part of the Order, after all), in his heart, he does not believe that a face-to-face battle with the Chimera can be won.

The Game Master should carefully consider the heroes' arguments to try to persuade Antonescu to help. If the Accursed fail to address any of the points above (or worse, attempt to conceal them), they suffer a -2 penalty to the Persuasion roll. This penalty stacks if more than one issue is not addressed in a satisfactory manner. Particularly inspired oratory, appeals to Antonescu's innate sense of duty, or any well-spoken reminder that the Massif is going to come under attack no matter what happens should be rewarded with a +2 bonus to the Persuasion roll. Just like the investigation in the previous scene, a failed roll does not indicate that Antonescu refuses. Instead, failing the roll means it takes longer for Antonescu to agree, impacting the events in Act III (see page 10).

Brother Antonescu

The good brother is a sincere and earnest servant of the Enochian faith, but he suffered serious physical and mental scarring during the Bane War. He can no longer deal well with confrontation, and pain is his constant companion. It has reduced him from a once brave and devout servant of the faith to a coward, who cringes in his lab, terrified of human interaction.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Alchemy d8, Fighting d6, Knowledge (Alchemy) d6, Knowledge (Enochian) d6, Notice d6

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 3

Witchbreed: Mongrel

Hindrances: Glass Jaw, Yellow

Edges: Enochian, Fleet Footed, Natural Weapon (Lobster Claw, Str+d4)

The Ritual

Once Antonescu is convinced to help, he accompanies the Accursed to a specially prepared ritual room inside the Massif. There, the Accursed begin the ritual that reveals the future location of Turris Atra. The ritual takes roughly two hours to complete.

The ritual requires a Witchcraft or Alchemy Roll. As above, failing the roll does not mean that they Accursed do not discover the location of the Chimera's fortress. Instead, failure means that the ritual takes more time to complete, complicating the events of Act

III (see page 10). If the Accursed have a white witch or an alchemist amongst their ranks, he or she should make the Witchcraft or Alchemy roll to determine the outcome of the ritual. If there are no player characters with those particular Arcane Backgrounds, Von Drake himself steps in to perform the ritual (he has a D6 in the relevant skill). Due to the difficulty of this unusual ritual, there is a -4 penalty to the roll. However, there are ways that the Accursed can contribute to the ritual's chances of success.

CONTRIBUTING TO THE RITUAL

The Game Master should definitely consider any interesting or creative ideas from the players on how their characters might assist with the ritual to locate Turris Atra. Some ideas might include:

- A Dhampir might donate some of his blood to stand in for a link between himself and the Blood Witch.
- A Golem might create a small representation of herself to be used in the ritual, creating a bond between her own artificial body and the symbol.
- A Vargr might fast in preparation for the ritual, attaining a closer tie with his curse to strengthen the link between Witch and Witchmark.
- A Revenant could focus entirely upon his vow, meditating on the one driving force that kept her free will during the path through the dark cauldron, helping to bolster Antonescu's own resolve.
- A Mummy could use his sarcophagus to act as an anchor or fetters for Antonescu's physical body so that it does not thrash around during the ritual and disturb the painstakingly laid out candles and salt lines.

When the ritual begins, paraphrase or read aloud the following:

Candles flicker in the ritual chamber, glimmering from the strange alchemical fluids used to create a complex circle of symbols around Brother Antonescu. The Mongrel, for his part, looks pale and trembling, but he nods his readiness as the ritual begins.

At first, the changes are subtle—shadows slowly lengthen, the flicker of candle flames in a chill breeze that springs seemingly from nowhere. Then, Antonescu begins to scream. His body goes rigid as tendrils of flickering, pale light—a light that seems somehow hungry—wrap around his body and trail off towards the center of the ritual chamber.

Those tendrils of light coalesce into an image, wavering as if glimpsed beneath the surface of the ocean. That image shows a scene of barren plains, dusted with black ashes. On the horizon, you can glimpse a thickly wooded forest and a lonely mountain peak. Suddenly, a tall, forbidding tower formed of jagged black stone appears in the center of

the image just as the sun crests over the mountain. The battlements and minarets of the fortress curve upwards, almost seeming to reach out graspingly towards the sky. Zigzagging cracks in the stone exterior form windows, emitting a dull, yellowish glow from within.

There is a loud, sickening crack as Antonescu's convulsions cause his back to break in half, and the Mongrel's screaming is abruptly cut off. The image wavers again, violently, and then vanishes. The candles instantly snuff out, plunging the room into deep shadows, and the ritual comes to an end.

Antonescu is beyond healing, a lingering remnant of the ritual's dark power. He lives long enough to thank the Accursed (singling out any who have been especially kind to him) for allowing him to assist and for convincing him to overcome his fear. The Mongrel urges them to destroy the Chimera before he closes his eyes and releases his final breath.

The ritual is complete, and the Accursed have seen where the tower is destined to arrive at dawn the next day. Consulting a map within the Massif allows them to pinpoint the location as the southern edge of the Ash Plains. However, it would take days to reach that location by horseback.

Now How Do We Get There?

The question the Accursed now face entitles this section. Observant players may have noted the solution back in Act I—the Manreian Zeppelin. If none of the players remember this fact—or their characters

What about Avonlea?

The players may be curious about Avonlea's mysterious wish magic as another option of reaching Turrus Atra. If they ask, the fey reluctantly agrees that her magic can transport the Accursed and the alchemical explosives to Turrus Atra in the blink of an eye. However, she believes that using her magic this way is likely a suicidal move—because then, she would have no power left to oppose the dread guardians that the Chimera is certain to have in her seat of power. If the heroes insist on using this faster option, the Game Master should skip ahead to Act III and ignore any further mentions of travelling on the zeppelin. Avonlea's wish magic is essentially a pacing device. If the game is moving too slowly or if time is running out to reach the climax, she can help get the adventure back on track. However, the adventure is likely to be more memorable and action-packed if the *Don Carlo* is used to transport the Accursed to Turrus Atra instead.

failed to not it—the Game Master can ask for Smarts rolls to remind them. Alternatively, Von Drake can bring up the subject if necessary.

Locating the *Don Carlo* is not difficult—any Investigation, Persuasion, or other appropriate Skill Roll gains a +2 bonus. Success indicates that the Accursed discover many folk at the Massif watched it fly overhead towards the East. The zeppelin's likely destination is the prosperous town of Medivita. If the heroes fail the roll, Von Drake can point them towards one of the townsfolk who saw the zeppelin move in Medivita's direction. The zeppelin provides a unique opportunity to reach Turrus Atra before it disappears at midnight. The Accursed now must find the *Don Carlo* and hijack it. Once that is done, they must load it with alchemical explosives and pilot the zeppelin to Turrus Atra before time runs out.

ACQUIRING THE ZEPPELIN

It only takes about an hour afoot to reach the town of Medivita. It is a picturesque place, situated near a tall cliff that provides a breathtaking view of the forest and a sliver of the Sunken Lands to the East. Perched on the edge of the cliff is an expansive and luxuriant villa, the homestead of the town's Mayor. The *Don Carlo* is docked just beyond the villa to a wooden "pier" extending out over the cliff's edge. It is obvious that the pier has been recently constructed to facilitate the *Don Carlo's* visit.

Guards bearing rifles in the colors of Manreia's Warlock Council are present. A pair of soldiers guard the doors to the villa (more to keep the riffraff out than for any other reason), two inside the villa (and they are very bored), and two more aboard the *Don Carlo* keeping watch from its bridge. Inside the villa, a group of twelve Manreian nobles and a tour guide enjoy a display of art and sculpture hosted by Medivita's mayor. This is a sober and calm affair. In fact, it is perhaps too sober, for most of the nobles have become bored with the proceedings thus far and are eager for distraction.

THE HIJACKING

There are any number of methods the Accursed can take control of the *Don Carlo*. They can always engage the guards in combat if they like, or they can try to trick the guards into leaving with a distraction. Alternatively, clever use of powers or skills such as Persuasion can be used to talk their way past the guards and onto the ship. There are also the touring nobles. If they can be offered something more interesting to see or do, the nobles and the guards depart and leave the *Don Carlo* relatively unguarded. A successful Intimidate roll is enough to make the guards back down, and they outright flee if the Intimidate roll gets a raise.

Manreian Guards

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d4, Fighting d6, Intimidation d4, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Streetwise d4, Survival d4

Charisma: 0 **Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 5, **Toughness:** 7 (2)

Gear: Sabers (Str+d6), Daggers (Str+d4), Musket (10/20/40, 2d8, 2 Actions Reload), Brigandine (+2 Armor)

Act III: Assault on Turrís Atra

Once the Accursed have control of *Don Carlo*, they can pilot it back to the Massif to pick up the alchemical explosives they need to destroy Turrís Atra. For any rolls related to piloting the zeppelin, use the piloting character's Agility. It is not complicated to pilot the *Don Carlo* back to the Massif; it is very close by, after all! Therefore, no rolls to pilot the *Don Carlo* need to be made until the trip to Turrís Atra (see below). The Game Master can explain that the Accursed use the trip between Medivita and the Massif to familiarize themselves with the zeppelin's controls.

When the *Don Carlo* returns to the Massif, many Enochian priests and other Accursed are already in motion preparing barrels of alchemical explosives. There are twenty of these explosive barrels in total—it requires a minimum of ten barrels to ensure the destruction of Turrís Atra. Von Drake and Avonlea are waiting below. They send a messenger asking the Accursed to meet with them if they do not come down on their own. If the pre-generated characters are being used in this adventure, this is a prime opportunity for the Game Master to take the player of Aket-ten aside and remind the player that the character's betrayal should happen soon.

The Game Master should also emphasize to the entire group that time is running out. Turrís Atra disappears at midnight, and it takes several hours for the zeppelin to reach its location, even with favorable weather. The trip itself—from Massif Helsenn to the southern Ash Plains—should typically be narrated. Ideally, the description of the trip should increase the tension. The *Don Carlo* is racing the setting sun, and the Accursed all know that if they do not reach Turrís Atra in time, the Chimera's forces will assault the Massif and all will have been for naught.

Ask the character piloting the *Don Carlo* for an Agility roll to determine how well he pilots the zeppelin to its destination. Failing the roll does not mean that they do not get there, only that it takes more time than desired, putting the Accursed dangerously close to the deadline of midnight. Succeeding on the

roll grants all characters the benefit of the Level Headed Edge in the next combat—any character who already has Level Headed or Improved Level Headed instead gains an additional Benny.

When the journey begins, paraphrase or read aloud the following:

The zeppelin glides over the forests of Valkenholm, casting its shadow across the green, leafy boughs several hundred feet below. As the forest thins out at the edge of the Ash Plains, you can easily spot a plume of dust rising in the distance toward the West.

Characters may attempt a Notice roll. Success provides more information: the dust plume is from a large mass of monstrous creatures advancing towards Massif Helsenn. This is the vanguard of the Chimera's banes that have been dispatched to capture Avonlea. With a raise, the character can easily tell that the force approaching Massif Helsenn significantly outnumbers its defenders. This is a sober reminder of the price that the Order has paid for this chance to strike back decisively against the Witches. When the heroes have taken any actions, paraphrase or read aloud the following:

The grim fortress of the Chimera comes into view. This dread tower is your destination, the Witch's home, her laboratory, and her prison where she crafts hideous monsters through cruel and horrific experimentation. Just the sight of this jagged-edged spire makes your eyes ache, as if its very presence is so unnatural that it can inflict harm merely by gazing at it overlong. Noxious yellow light gleams in a vast number of tiny, zigzagging cracks scattered across its surface. Only a moment later, you realize those

Consequences

During Act II, the Accursed had various tasks they needed to perform in order to locate Turrís Atra and acquire the *Don Carlo*. Because of the structure of this adventure, the Accursed proceed to the next step even if these rolls fail. However, there are consequences to failing rolls in this manner—typically, the tasks simply take much longer to perform, reducing the amount of time the Accursed have in order to reach their goal. To represent the increased pressure, each failure from the following list of rolls provides the Game Master with one additional Benny he can use during Act III:

- Researching the ritual.
- Convincing Brother Antonescu to assist.
- Performing the ritual.
- Locating the *Don Carlo*.
- Piloting the zeppelin to Turrís Atra.



seemingly small fractures are, in fact, windows more than large enough to admit passage to the bulkiest amongst your number.

Suddenly, a cloud of swirling, darting black specks lurches into motion from the top of *Turris Atra*, winging its way towards you with strange, jerking motions. In seconds, the cloud is close enough to make out that it is composed of hideous, slimy banes known as slug bats. It is also obvious that the swarm intends to intercept and destroy your zeppelin!

The zeppelin comes under attack from a swarm of slug bats (see *Accursed* page 121). There should be at least two slug bats for each Accursed aboard the *Don Carlo*. This is intended to be a skirmish, not an extended fight. If the slug bats are turning the fight into a grind, Von Drake asks the strongest Accursed to hurl one of the barrels of alchemical explosive into the midst of the swarm and shoots it, detonating the explosive and destroying the banes. Alternatively, the Game Master can suggest this course of action to the Accursed!

A Witch's Downfall

This is the climax of the adventure, so the Game Master is encouraged to make this scene energetic and impactful. First, the Accursed must pilot the zeppelin close enough to disembark the passengers and carry

the barrels of alchemical explosive with them. This requires an Agility roll. If the roll fails, the zeppelin eventually gets into position, but it takes even more time that the Accursed simply cannot spare (see the *Consequences* sidebar). If the roll succeeds, the Accursed get into position in time to get everything offloaded without too much trouble. Succeeding with a raise ensures that the entire group receives an extra Benny.

Once the zeppelin is in position to begin infiltrating the fortress, paraphrase or read aloud the following:

The zeppelin moves alongside one of the larger jagged windows leading inside Turris Atra. Perhaps due to the unusual avenue of your attack—or more likely, because the Chimera has sent nearly every creature under her command to assault Massif Helsenn—you are initially unopposed when you enter. The interior of Turris Atra resembles something organic; grown rather than constructed. The walls are slick with a coral-like texture, and the ceiling and floor have an unpleasantly rounded shape that makes walking awkward. The air is redolent with the smell of decay and a sharp, ozone-like stench. It is also uncomfortably warm inside the tower, and the ceilings glimmer with the unhealthy yellow light that you noticed upon your approach.

The Accursed know that time is short, and the Game Master should ask the players how they wish to organize the unloading of the explosive barrels. Two or three characters could choose to scout ahead to keep from being surprised while the others place the explosives where they can do the most damage. Exploring further into *Turris Atra* reveals that the tower's hallways curl and spiral in towards the center. At this point, the tower resembles a hollow fang, with a large central opening dozens of feet across that allows access to floors both above and below. Misshapen shadows flicker behind the walls, as if the rock-like material conceals living things crawling within it.

The unloading is partly complete when the group is attacked! Paraphrase or read aloud the following:

A deep, thunderous growl rings out like a thunderclap from below. Like the bellow of a wounded lion mingled with the scream of a tortured child, the sound reverberates through the air and is swiftly followed by the sounds of hooves clattering upon stone. Emerging from the darkness of the central shaft, you can see large creatures that resemble a man's torso crudely stitched onto the body of a deer. These centaur-like beings—cenelaphs—are swiftly followed by a huge, hulking presence clad in a long, form-concealing robe. Inside the hood you can see the hateful gleam of seven different kinds of eyes, all twitching and shifting back and forth in an unnatural fashion. What emerges from the hem and sleeves

of the robe can only be described as hideous—long, suckered tentacles, crab-like pincers, and even hairy, exoskeletal limbs like those of some monstrous insect. A wave of fear so powerful it is nearly a physical force washes over you, and you realize that you are facing a manifestation of the Chimera herself.

This is the final battle of the adventure, and it is meant to be a difficult one! The Shard of the Chimera (see page 13) present here is one of the most dangerous opponents in all of Morden, and she is accompanied by a guard of cenelaphs (see page 13). The Game Master should include enough cenelaphs to make the fight dangerous without overwhelming the group. It is recommended that one cenelaph should be present for every two Accursed. If necessary, the fight can be made easier by having the Chimera's shard transform into a horde of scuttling insects and flee when she suffers two or more Wounds. In any case, this battle should be tense, exciting, and packed with cinematic action.

The Final Decision

Once the battle with the Chimera is over, Avonlea approaches the Accursed with a worried expression on her regal face. Paraphrase or read aloud the following:

"I fear Von Drake has let his Revenant's nature gain too strong a grasp on his mind." She murmurs to you. "There's been a message, sent through his Witchmark." She hesitates before continuing. "The force attacking the Massif is much larger than anticipated, and it is likely that the cathedral will fall."

"The explosives here are set, and I can use my magic to transport us back to the Massif—possibly in time to make a difference. However, Von Drake believes we should stay here and ensure the explosives are not tampered with by agents of the Chimera."

The last Seelie Fey gazes at you seriously. "In this case, I am leaving the choice up to you. Should we stay, and make absolutely certain of Turris Atra's destruction? Or should we place our faith in what we've done so far and take a shortcut back to your Order's home and try to stave off the doom that surely approaches there?"

The Accursed are faced with a difficult decision. If they go with Avonlea's suggestion, they can return to Massif Helsenn via her magic and possibly save the cathedral from being torn down by the Chimera's army of monsters. If they remain at Turris Atra, they can instead ensure, without a shadow of a doubt, that the fortress they have worked so hard to find can be absolutely nothing more than rubble once the explosives are detonated.

DECISION 1: TURRIS ATRA IS NO MORE

If the Accursed choose to follow Von Drake's instincts, they are able to place the alchemical explosives in the proper place. Afterward, they return to the *Don Carlo*. It is recommended to the Game Master that this should be an exciting scene, with the Accursed running aboard and taking off just in time to fly out of the immense explosion. Chunks of smoking black rock blasted all around them, arcing into the sky like meteors only to fall to the earth in a rain of tiny debris... leaving behind only a smoking crater. The Chimera is presumed utterly destroyed along with her home.

However, Massif Helsenn is also destroyed by the massive force of banes under the Chimera's control. When the *Don Carlo* returns, they find only the smoldering wreckage of the once-proud cathedral, occupied by thousands of corpses. The Order of the Penitent has been dealt a serious blow by the Chimera even in her final moments.

DECISION 2: RETURN TO THE MASSIF

If the Accursed choose instead to go with Avonlea, she uses her wish magic to transport the *Don Carlo* to the battle raging at Massif Helsenn. The Game Master should take a moment to narratively describe the Accursed and the zeppelin's contribution to the conflict. It is just enough to turn the tide at a crucial point, and the Chimera's army is turned back from the walls before they can breach the cathedral's vulnerable interior. There are significant losses and casualties, of course, but nothing that the Order cannot recover from with time.

However, leaving the job unfinished at Turris Atra has consequences as well. The fortress ends up damaged, but not destroyed—and the Chimera's wrath is now even more clearly focused upon wreaking vengeance upon the Order.

Aftermath

The Accursed have survived the Fall of the Tower. Whatever their decision, they have made a lasting impact on the world of Morden. The Order of the Penitent has a new band of heroes, inspiring countless others throughout the lands to rise up against the Witches. The Game Master is encouraged to give the players receive a brief period to celebrate their accomplishments and discuss the choice that they made. The adventure is over, but the fight against the Witches carries on.

Shard of the Chimera

The Witches rarely take action in person, but when they do, they are immense and terrifying opponents. However, each Witch is also more than simply a physical body; she has great power that only partially resides inside her material form. This state is known as a "Shard." Under many circumstances, a Witch can survive the destruction of her shard given enough time. Witches are not indestructible, merely extremely difficult to kill.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d12, Intimidation d10, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d8, Witchcraft d12

Charisma: 0 **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 11

Edges: Brawny, Block, Combat Reflexes, First Strike, Improved Counter Attack, Improved Frenzy, Improved Level Headed, Quick

Special Abilities

Claws/Bite: Str+d8.

Fear (-2): Anyone seeing the creature must make a Fear test at -2

Magic: The Chimera has unlimited Power Points, knows all Witchcraft spells, and favors the following powers: *armor* (a chitinous shell), *bolt* (a jolt of electricity), *detect/conceal arcana* (witch sight), *quickness* (supernatural reflexes), *stun* (word of power), and *teleport* (dissolves into a horde of scuttling/flying insects).

Size +2: The Chimera stands over 10' tall.



Cenelaphs

Built from the bodies of deer, elk, or other cervidae merged with tortured humans, cenelaphs are the most intelligent of the Chimera's banes, as they still have some access to their human memories and skills. Their twisted expressions and guttural screams are the things of nightmare, especially as they have a unique way of invoking the inner fears of humans.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Subterfuge d8, Taunt d10

Charisma: +2, **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8

Special Abilities

Fleet-Footed: Cenelaphs roll d10s instead of d6s when running.

Low Light Vision: The cenelaph's human eyes have been modified so that they can see clearly through even the darkest forest. They ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.

Natural Weapons: The horns and cloven hooves of the Cenelaph are sharp and deadly, allowing them to gouge and kick for Str + d6 damage with +1 Reach.

Size: +2, the Cenelaph is larger than a deer.

Witchline (Chimera): Banes of the Chimera can be sensed by Mongrel Accursed within 25 feet.

