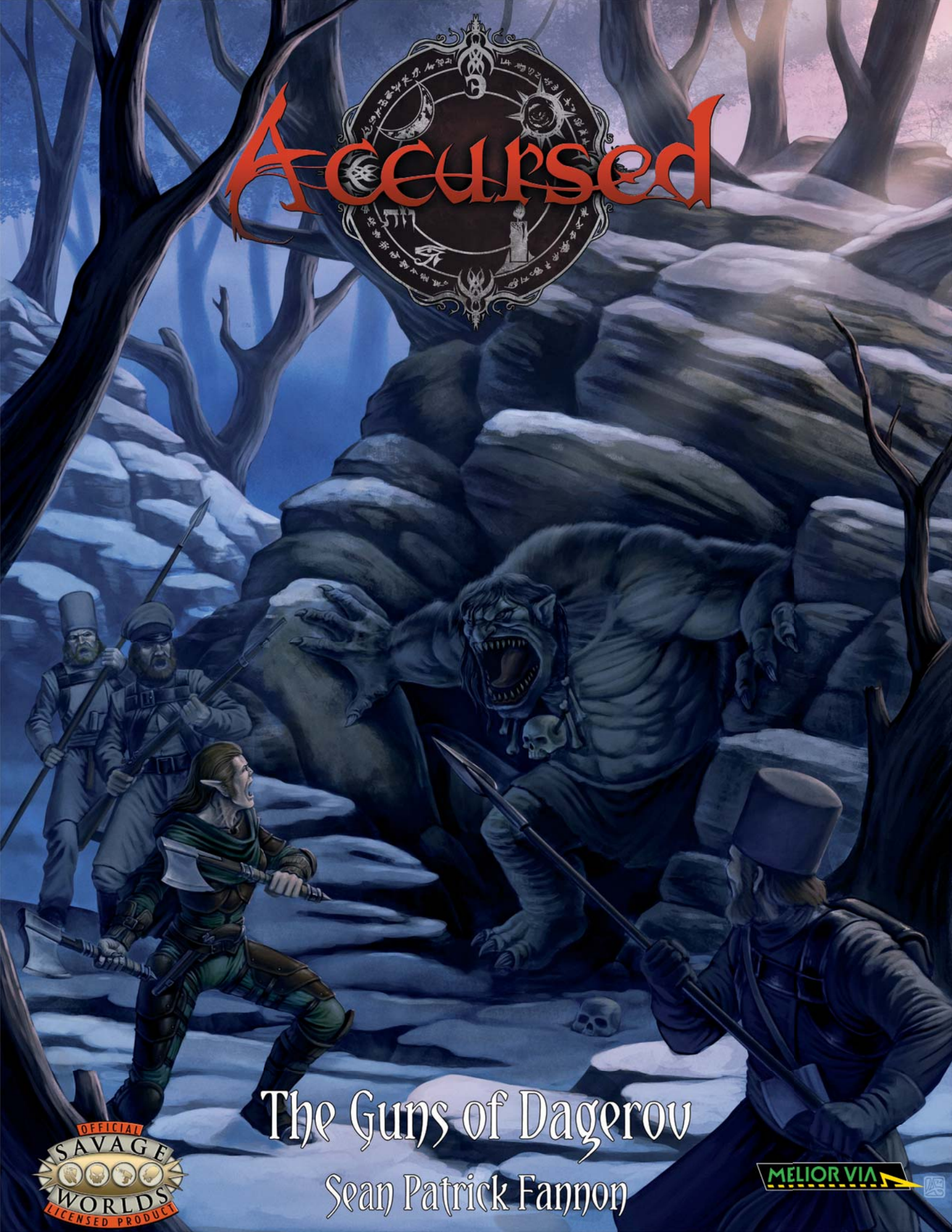


Accursed



The Guns of Dagerou

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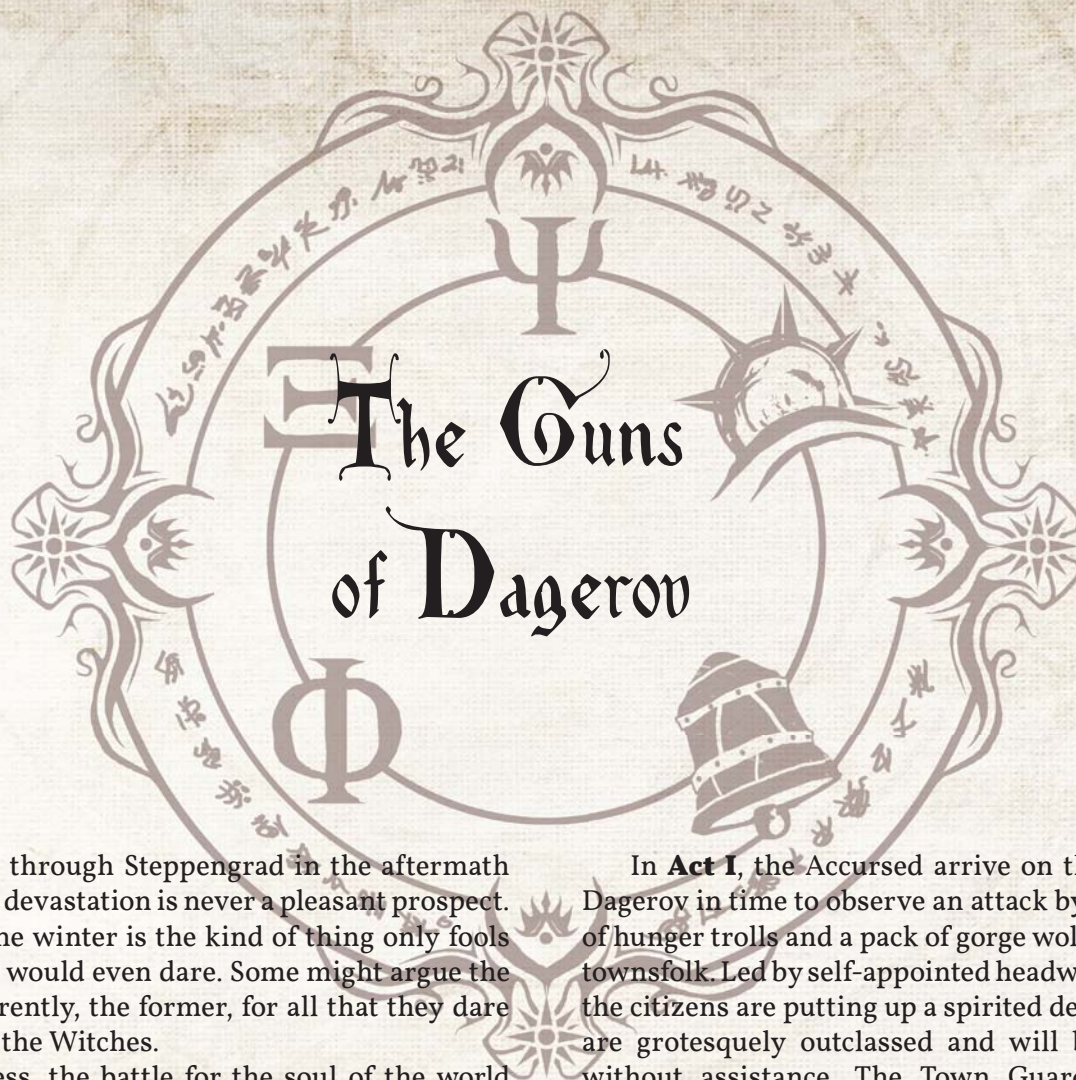


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Marching through Steppengrad in the aftermath of Baba Yaga's devastation is never a pleasant prospect. Doing so in the winter is the kind of thing only fools and Accursed would even dare. Some might argue the latter is, inherently, the former, for all that they dare in the days of the Witches.

Nonetheless, the battle for the soul of the world continues, and to fight the endless monsters of the Grand Coven, man-made monsters capable of belching destruction and death are just what the Order of the Penitent requires if the tide is ever to turn. Of course, convincing those that have such things to give them up for the greater good is much harder than it probably sounded to the leaders of the Order when they came up with this particular mission ...

Adventure Summary

The characters are assumed to be members of the Order of the Penitent, or at least working for it. They have been granted some bartering goods to offer in exchange for ten cannons in the possession of the Boyars (princes of either lineage or wealth) who rule the town of Dagerov and the surrounding farmlands. They encounter stiff opposition in the guise of a town divided along political lines; the Boyars rule with an iron fist, and the peasants are ready to revolt against their greedy overseers. The only thing both sides can agree on is the shared threat of the hunger trolls and the gorge wolves that run with them.

In **Act I**, the Accursed arrive on the outskirts of Dagerov in time to observe an attack by a small group of hunger trolls and a pack of gorge wolves against the townsfolk. Led by self-appointed headwoman, Lyliyah, the citizens are putting up a spirited defense, but they are grotesquely outclassed and will be slaughtered without assistance. The Town Guard arrives—too late—with a couple of cannons, at which point the Accursed discover the rancorous relationship between lords and serfs, as well as the ongoing threat of the banes who live nearby in a fortress-like set of caves.

Act II sees the members of the Order attempting to negotiate for the cannons. The Boyars seem reasonable, ready to “do the right thing.” The price, of course, is dealing with the hunger trolls once and for all, as well as seeing to it that the town gains ample resources and support to rebuild its crops in the wake of the hunger troll devastation. On the other hand, Lyliyah does all she can to convince the Accursed to aid the peasants of Dagerov in their quest to overthrow the cruel Boyars and to leave the cannons for their use in attaining freedom and defending their homes. There is also a possible encounter with Unseelie Fey (who offer a way to improve the food situation for Dagerov), and the potential discovery of a deadly, traitorous enemy in the very midst of the Boyars (one who serves Baba Yaga and wants nothing more than to see the Accursed destroyed by the hunger trolls).

In **Act III**, the Accursed almost certainly bring the cannons to bear against the cavern fortress of the hunger trolls. In the aftermath, they have some hard choices to make about the cannons, their mission, and the people of Dagerov. Depending on what happens in Act II, they may still have that traitor and her allies to deal with.

Adventure Background

The Order of St. Vitus—more well-known as the Order of the Penitent—is attempting to conduct a legitimate war against the forces of the Witches. Up until recently, the war has necessarily been one of guerrilla tactics and resistance maneuvers. However, Victor Von Drake and the other leaders have determined that they must now look towards taking actual ground and facing down the enemy in open warfare if they are to ever free their lands.

Toward this goal, the Order is now gathering resources and military assets in greater numbers, putting together an actual logistics program as well as conducting raids and covert missions against the Witches. The plan is to launch an offensive, hopefully in the spring, to liberate Manreia completely from the grasp of the Warlock who rules it in the name of the Witches Council. If successful, the most technologically advanced region of Morden would be free to leverage its considerable resources and machinery against the enemy once and for all, giving the people their first taste of real hope since the Bane War.

This is the catalyst for the journey the Accursed are undertaking to Dagerov. The merchant princes and old family elders who rule the area (called Boyars among the Gradniki people) were clever enough to hide away ten cannons as Baba Yaga's army swept through the great nation of Steppengrad. They have used their guns very sparingly, thus avoiding the attention of the Witches ... for now. Von Drake fears that, in discovering the existence of these guns himself, it is only a matter of time before his enemies also learn of their existence and sweep in to take them.

He dare not let those guns fall into enemy hands. Rather, he is determined to add them to his growing arsenal, which he intends to use in a full-scale war to take back the homelands of the people of Morden. That greater goal must weigh heavily on the minds of the Accursed as they determine what to do in light of the discoveries they make once arriving in Dagerov.

The Town of Dagerov

The devastation of Steppengrad in the wake of Baba Yaga's sweep through the lands left untold and incalculable damage. Not only was the land smashed by the normal consequences of war as foreign mercenaries callously pillaged and burned their way through the fields and villages; the unspeakable horrors of the Witch's magics and the monstrous banes she set loose in endless waves crashed against the nigh-indomitable will of Mother Steppengrad's people.

Famine and plague of both natural and supernatural origins eliminated entire populations. Every city of Steppengrad fell in ruin and fire as Baba Yaga's forces—despite the trials of a deep winter and the enormous stubborn will of the Gradniki—marched inexorably to the gates of the capital city of Aziyev. In the glow of the flames of that burning city, Baba Yaga claimed a terrible, expensive victory.

Yet not a total victory. With such intense focus on the main settlements and cities of Steppengrad, numerous pockets of civilization managed to go relatively unscathed. Towns like Dagerov, by remaining mostly unnoticed by the servitors of Baba Yaga and others, have held onto both structure and tradition, maintaining the lifestyle of the proud and taciturn Gradniki in these dark days.

Unfortunately, in the power vacuum left behind by the destruction of Steppengrad's central government, each community has fallen under the direct control of whoever had the will and the resources to assert themselves. In many cases, such as in Dagerov, the authorities are usually those who own the most land and the majority of shops in the marketplace. These land barons and merchant princes are collectively known as the Boyars, and while they may do anywhere from an admirable to a barely adequate job of providing for the rest of the people within their influence, the vast majority of them do so almost exclusively for their own benefit.



Dagerov, the Face of Post-War Steppengrad

The Khazaar River that runs from the mountains of the Tarayev Wastes is a key lifeline for many who struggle to keep hearth and home in Mother Steppengrad. Dagerov is nestled in a small valley along its eastern banks, surrounded by very low hills in all directions, just about ten miles south of the Krasibaia Inland Sea. Thanks to the small hills and extensive efforts by all who live there, Dagerov is not generally even known to anyone who does not recall the times prior to the Bane War.

As with all towns in Steppengrad now, Dagerov is small in size and population. Part of that is due to security, and part due to the bitter reality of food supply. The very nature of Baba Yaga's magic tears the life out of much of the land, and her banes further the destruction and famine that so many face. The people of Dagerov have managed to cultivate and maintain a decent amount of farmland, and their connection to the river as well grants them access to additional food. Lately, however, the river is not providing as much as desired; fishing yields far less than it once did, and the fish caught are often rotted or diseased.

Even more recently, the farms are being ravaged by ever-increasing raids from a gang of hunger trolls, accompanied by gorge wolves. These particularly nasty banes of Baba Yaga's consume *everything* they can get their hands and mouths on, and Dagerov is being rapidly starved to death by their depredations. The only thing keeping them from completely consuming everything (and everyone) is the town guard, commanded by Boyar Dmitri Zarsky.

Naturally, the Boyars ensure that everyone knows this, using it as one more of the many points of leverage they have over the peasants who work themselves nearly to death to keep the farms and the town alive. The Boyars all come from the richest and most landed families of the region, and the rest of the population is treated as little better than serfs, or even slaves in some cases.

In the era of independent survival, away from a powerful central government's direct influence, there are those who insist that things can and should change. There is a growing faction of peasants, led by the charismatic Lyliyah and the mysterious Cleric Canton, who are seriously questioning the status quo of Dagerov. This conflict is building to a head, and it is becoming more common in other such communities throughout Steppengrad as the Gradniki begin to challenge traditional matters of authority and self-determination.

Places of Interest

Dagerov is fairly typical of the kinds of communities Gradniki build around themselves. There are numerous sprawling farming estates of varying sizes and quality spread all around the valley between the hills; some are even built solidly into the hillsides, with livestock grazing and stepped gardens and planting fields.

The town itself has additional homes, mostly for the various merchants and many of the Boyars. There is a dockside area, where the river fishing vessels conduct their business; there is a very small amount of river trade through the region, due to the constant threat of rusalka and other waterborne horrors, but there are yet river craft captains brave enough to carry goods and messages up and down the waterways.

Surrounding the town, except for where it meets the river, is a fairly solid wooden wall with six strong towers at strategic points. Another tower/gatehouse combination stands to guard the bridge allowing passage from the west into Dagerov. Each of these seven towers has a cannon on it, as well as a crane installed to enable the cannons to be lowered to the ground as needed.

Within the central part of the town, there are some key locations:

- **The Town Hall.** Though most of the Boyars would dispense with the traditional gatherings and hearings of grievances, Boyar Zarsky maintains the practices of local governance the people have always known. The Town Hall serves also as the barracks for the town guard, who are well-armed for the times and drill regularly. The main steps of the building also serve as a gathering point for crises and whenever someone has a matter of great import to share with the citizens. Three of the ten cannons of Dagerov are held under lock and key in a stone storage building attached to the Hall; most of the town knows they are kept there primarily to ensure the power and security of the people living in Boyar Row.
- **The Enochian Temple.** Battered and weathered, and patched in more than a few places, there is yet a grandness and elegance to the place that few can deny. The architecture reflects the Orthodox influences on the Steppengrad practices of the Enochian faith, and astute observers see the mixture of pure Enochian imagery with that of the ancient spirits (recast as saints in many cases) from the original practices of the Gradniki. A handful of monks and nuns reside here, seeing to the spiritual needs of the town and maintaining the temple. Though there is no high priest currently (the last one died at the hands of a hunger troll a couple of months prior), the people look to the mysterious **Cleric Canton** for spiritual leadership and aid.

- **The Market of Dagerov.** The central marketplace is a chaotic affair, with a compact central area featuring buildings that are centuries old. Sprawling away in every direction are more recent, often ramshackle buildings, sheds, and tents, with alleyways running here and there through the whole of it. On any given day, a third of these places of business are likely closed. Anyone shopping in the Market encounters great scarcity (*Surplus is treated as Common, Uncommon as Scarce, and so on*).
- **Liliyah's Teahouse** lies at the heart of the Market. Though it has no sign, everyone in Dagerov knows the place well. It is festooned with colorful yarn, scarves, and knickknacks everywhere. A dozen samovars are set up throughout the rambling space, with chairs, stools, and deep pillows for seating and taking ease. The people of Dagerov have taken to two primary times for their *zavarka* gatherings—late morning, just prior to lunch, and mid-afternoon around 3 p.m. At these times, Liliyah ensures peace and quiet in

her establishment. At any other time, however, anywhere from a handful to a few dozen people may be found in Liliyah's Teahouse, consuming much more than tea and discussing the state and future of the town. At such times, strangers may find it challenging to get inside unless directly invited.

- **The Blue Goat Tavern.** Though most Dagerovians keep to the Gradniki tradition of drinking in the homes of friends and family, some have taken up the imported habit of visiting the local tavern, the Blue Goat. The proprietor is an old, crippled soldier by the name of **Yegor**; no one knows his last name, and he does not care to share it. The Blue Goat has a limited selection of drinks, though Yegor always has something special set aside for the right occasion or price. He also tries to keep a decent supply of breads, cheeses, and sausages on hand for nibbling, though lately that has been very difficult.



- **The Dagerov Banya.** Dagerovians are deservedly proud of their *banya*; as bathhouses go, it is a very nice one for such a town. Set right on the river, the Dagerov Banya consists of a large entrance hall (which acts as both a dressing chamber and a social hall for after the bathing cycles), an elegantly tiled and decorated bathing pool chamber, and a multi-room steam hall with three full ovens and rudimentary yet effective vents to spread the steam. This latter feature has its upsides and its negative aspects; many Dagerovians see the multiple rooms as a means of further segregating the classes of Dagerov's citizenry, especially when the Boyars and their families dominate the most comfortable of the three rooms. Doors lead out of the two outer steam rooms directly to the river, while those in the third, central room must pass through either of the other two to get to the water. Liliyah is often heard claiming this is "so the Boyars can show their haughty faces to those they rule, should anyone forget otherwise what they look like."
- **Boyar Row** is the name most of Dagerov's citizens call the block of well-built, attractive manor homes that stand on a slight plateau just north of the docks. They are located behind a stone wall with iron spikes along the top; a single, guarded gate blocks entry from the town side.

Hunger Everywhere

Due to the recent blight of hunger trolls and gorge wolves—who are destroying crops, eating everything they can get their hands on, and driving farmers and gatherers away from their food-providing tasks—the vast majority of those living in and around Dagerov are extremely hungry and verging on starvation. Food is rationed very parsimoniously, with the eldest and children getting most of what there is.

Essentially, treat almost everyone the characters come across as suffering a Fatigue Level due to hunger; this applies even to the town guard (except for Sergeant Volkov, who is as selfish as he is cruel). The Boyars of Dagerov are, of course, exempt from this condition, as they keep more than they need even in these hard times. Particularly observant characters may notice that Boyar Dmitri Zarsky seems a bit lean and ashen (he has actually been adhering to the rationing levels he has commanded the town to take).

Notables

A few key folks are written up in full in the *Dramatis Personae* near the end of this adventure. What follows are some other key folks who have notable roles to play in the town of Dagerov:

- **Corporal Andrey Golyubev** serves directly under **Sergeant Volkov** (see *Dramatis Personae*), effectively running the day-to-day management of the town guard. Corporal Golyubev is a decent sort, but he is greatly unhappy by the poor treatment his fellow Dagerovians receive at the hands of the Boyars and, especially, by the cruel and selfish Sergeant. **Liliyah** is hoping to recruit him to the side of the people in overthrowing the Boyars. When not on duty, he is often found either at her Teahouse or in **Yegor's** Blue Goat Tavern. *Treat him as having Mercenary stats, but he is a Wild Card.*
- **Yegor** is the old, retired soldier who owns and runs the Blue Goat. His left leg is lame, and he is missing his left eye and the two smallest fingers on his left hand. Everyone assumes he was crippled during the Bane War, but he refuses to talk about those days. He also refuses to give any name other than "Yegor," and he is not related to anyone else in Dagerov. He is sympathetic to Liliyah's ideals, but he wants nothing more than to serve and drink alcohol and be as comfortable as he can be until his last days finally come. He does know something about the gorge wolves, though; if anyone has cause to ask, or to mention them in his presence, he may reveal that they are particularly susceptible to silver.
- **Danil the Drunk** is one of those regular fixtures found in almost every town of Morden. His long-standing friendship with Yegor (despite their frequent fights over his tab) means he rarely goes long without drink, and he does odd jobs around the town—sweeping, carrying wood, scraping ice off of steps and windows—to keep food in his belly and a bit of coin in pocket. Mostly an affably tolerated town drunk, of late Danil has taken to frequent visits out to the old bower of ash trees and assorted vines out by the abandoned Trutnev estate (which is mostly a burned out ruin now, thanks to a previous battle with hunger trolls). He claims the Fairy Folk have returned, and they give him wonderful things to eat in exchange for repairing the bower and telling them the news of the week. *See The Ash Bower.*

- **Mother Ludmilla** is an ancient woman who sells needlework in the Market. She is completely blind, but has extremely keen hearing. If she discovers that there are capable strangers in the town, she tries to get word to at least one of them that she would greatly appreciate a chance to show her wares. What she really wants to do is warn them about **Boyara Svetlana Zaytesev**; she claims that the Boyara is not what she seems. “She smells of rotted fish, and she speaks with water in her lungs.” *To create more drama, you can have Mother Ludmilla found dead the next day, after one of Svetlana’s spies reveals what she said about the secret rusalka* (see Mother Ludmilla on page 14).
- **Brother Nikita** is one of the monks still with the temple; he is old enough to have known the last priest, Father Igor Ivonov (who died fighting a hunger troll). Brother Nikita is very wary of **Cleric Canton**, fearing he is bringing a subtle and dangerous form of Witchcraft into the temple. He tries to convince the Accursed (once he is certain they are members of the Order and, therefore, accepted by the Enochian Church) that Cleric Canton is dangerous and should be more thoroughly investigated. The other monks and nuns think very highly of Canton and do not share Brother Nikita’s fears at all.
- **Alexei the Mouse** is one of the street orphans of Dagerov, though like most of them, he rarely wants for something to eat or a place to sleep at night. The merchants and families of Dagerov look after the young ones who have landed in the town without families, taking in many to live as their own. Some few, like Alexei, prefer to wander free, relying on those like Liliyah and Yegor to provide a pallet and a bowl of broth at night when the day’s wanderings are over. Alexei is a particularly bright and observant young lad of nine; he has discovered a way through the wall of Boyar Row, and he has also discovered that Boyara Svetlana is more than she appears. He is not sure *what* she is, but he has seen her slide into the water of the river, and knows what she looks like when she does it. For the right price (mainly, doing whatever Liliyah wants), he reveals his special knowledge.

Act I: Hunger Pains

The Accursed arrive on the outskirts of Dagerov in time to observe an attack by a small group of hunger trolls and a pack of gorge wolves against the townsfolk. Led by self-appointed headwoman, Lyliyah, the citizens are putting up a spirited defense, but they are grotesquely outclassed and will be slaughtered without assistance. The Boyars arrive—too late—with a couple of cannons, at which point the Accursed discover the rancorous relationship between lords and serfs, as well as the ongoing threat of the banes who live nearby in a fortress-like set of caves.

Arrival in Dagerov

Crossing the low hills into farmlands surrounding the town of Dagerov, the Accursed can readily see how this place remained relatively unscathed during the Bane Wars. The surrounding hills, though far from impassible, hid the town and its fertile lands from casual view from any marching army or wandering raiders. This condition led to, if not prosperity, a level of self-sufficiency and stability rarely seen in the ravaged lands of Steppengrad.

Sadly, those days seem to have come to an end for Dagerov. In fact, it is a town on the verge of extinction, in great part due to the hunger trolls and gorge wolves who have taken up residence in a network of caverns in the hills most directly to the north of the town. A handful of those creatures are even now attacking a farmstead just north of the town, just as the Penitents arrive to witness the carnage!

The battle is fully engaged around the main farmhouse and the barn of the Khabarov Farm. **Liliyah** has led a handful of townsfolk armed with pitchforks and other farm implements to try and stave off two hunger trolls and a pack of five gorge wolves. Most of the locals are too terrified to actually directly engage the monsters; they are guarding the doorway into the farmhouse in an attempt to protect the children and those not capable of fighting. Liliyah (*see Dramatis Personae, below*) puts up a spirited fight alongside the heroes (*and if things go too badly, Cleric Canton arrives in a round or two to join in, or heal those in desperate need*).

The farm is a relatively simple affair, with a main house of a single story and a two-story barn with a loft. The fields around are relatively rough terrain, if the battle strays that far from the house. The Accursed have the option of either moving to stand alongside the peasants, or to try and approach the monsters from their flank or rear. Particularly sneaky characters might even be able to use stealth by coming around the far side of the barn or using the stalks of taller crops in the field.

Near the end of the battle, a small squad of **Town Guard**, led by the haughty **Sergeant Volkov** and a sheepish **Corporal Golyubev**, arrive hauling two of the culverin cannons behind draft mules. If there are any enemies still standing, Volkov makes a show of setting the cannons up to use against them, but the soldiers do little more than take a couple of potshots at whatever is standing. Worse, they do so even if (alleged) allies are engaged in melee with the monsters. Volkov will not care, but Golyubev demands an end to that and directs at least a couple of guards to join him in actually helping directly against the creatures, if any remain.

Assuming the Accursed aided the fight, Liliyah gives a brief, yet heartfelt thanks to them, promising a lengthier conversation in a moment. She then lays into Sergeant Volkov with extreme vitriol, her knuckles white on the handle of her cutlass and Volkov's men nearly leveling weapons on her.

"This is a mockery, Volkov! You're supposed to be protecting these people, not striding in after to claim the farm over their dead bodies!"

"Miss Liliyah, you will not take that tone with me! Cannons are not mere rifles to tote running into battle; they take time to drag around and set up!"

"Which is why they should remain set up at key points around the town at all times, not locked away like the precious toys of a Boyar's little boy!"

"I've had just about enough of your insults, both to me and to the good people who see to it we all are still alive!"

The conversation will go like this for a short while, with most of the Town Guard looking increasingly ready for a second fight with Liliyah and her followers, at least some of whom look like they would happily oblige. Corporal Golyubev and the rest of the townsfolk and farmers begin looking pleadingly at the newly arrived Accursed, hoping someone in the group will intercede before things get completely out of hand.

That is, unless no one in the group has identified themselves as a member of the Order of the Penitent. If the group is perceived as nothing more than a wandering band of Accursed, their aid in the battle prevents any naked aggression, but suspicion is high towards them nonetheless.

If the player characters do not act to intercede, Liliyah eventually turns to them.

"I do not know you, but it's obvious we of Dagerov may trust in strangers to protect us from the horrors of the Witches more readily than we may trust in our own town guard. What brings you to our not-so-hidden home behind the hills?"



Volkov, however, refuses to allow her to dominate the conversation, especially with what may be a delegation from someone of importance.

"This peasant has no authority here, friends. I am Sergeant Rolan Volkov, second-in-command of the Dagerov Guard and loyal to the ruler of these lands, Boyar Dmitri Zarsky. You will accompany me to the central hall, where we may conduct business in a more civilized fashion."

Liliyah snorts derisively at this. *"There's is precious little that's civilized about you, Sergeant."*

He will give her a murderous look, and particularly observant characters (*Notice -2*) sense that she subtly eases off a bit, apparently noting that she is now in real danger. Even more perceptive Accursed (*Notice -4*) note that Corporal Golyubev's hands are firmly on his weapon, and his eyes very much on the Sergeant. If Cleric Canton is present, characters see him as very laconic and relaxed, but (*Notice -2*) he is going to side with Liliyah if things get ugly.

Particularly persuasive (or perhaps intimidating) characters may intervene in these discussions to bring them to a more rational or at least controlled conclusion; this is the preferred result for these talks, rather than just having the NPCs yell at each other.

When the Dust Settles

At this point, the characters have a choice to make:

- **Go with Sergeant Volkov.** He is the one with the culverin cannons, after all, so this is the most reasonable and efficient choice where their mission is concerned.
- **Go with Liliyah.** She offers them food and tea at her Teahouse; if they take her up on it, Volkov gets ugly and officious in a hurry. However, Corporal Golyubev talks him down (as will the Cleric, if he is there), and the Corporal offers to escort them and make sure they report to the Town Hall within the hour. Volkov accedes, but this puts the player characters very firmly on his bad side.
- **Go on their own into town.** If anyone in the group cares to throw some weight around, they might break away from the whole thing and make their way into Dagerov to find the Boyars and the cannons on their own accord.

Two things should be specifically clear to some or all of the player characters by the time this Act is over:

- **The people of Dagerov are hungry.** Many of them are teetering on the edge of starvation. Only Volkov looks at all healthy among those initially met; in fact, he still has a bit of a paunch in his gut.
- **There is a deep and ugly divide between the Boyars and the peasants.** Liliyah makes numerous comments about how the Boyars are doing nothing to help the people; about how Volkov is their attack dog against the peasants, rather than the guardian he should be against the hunger trolls; and about how the people should decide to stand on their own, rather than give such control to fat, selfish, self-appointed nobility. The fact that even some of the soldiers join in with most in tacit approval of her words should hint at what is to come.

Enemies and Allies

Use the Hunger Troll and Gorge Wolf stats on page 114 of **Accursed**. In this battle, it may be a good idea to not make the gorge wolves Wild Cards.

Liliyah and Cleric Canton are written up in the **Dramatis Personae** section. If you want to have any of the other peasants join in, assume d6s for anything they roll, a Parry of 5, and a Toughness of 5. Their weapons do 1d6 (Strength) +1d4 in damage; no penalties, as they have gotten very used to using them in combat over the last few weeks.

Act II: Deep Divides

The Accursed find themselves in the town of Dagerov, where they discover any number of things as they explore how best to acquire the cannons for the Order. Rather quickly, they sense they are being courted by Liliyah and those who follow her to help change the balance of power in the town. At the same time, the Accursed find the Boyars have their own agenda, which includes taking out the hunger trolls in the nearby caverns once and for all (and, in all likelihood, getting themselves killed by one means or another). Ostensibly, if they play nice with the Boyars, they can walk away with the cannons, as they came to do.

But at what cost, and whose dark agenda do they ultimately serve? That truth may out if they take the time to talk and (more importantly) listen, especially to those who are considered the least among the people. The Boyars are being manipulated by a bane of Baba Yaga's, corrupting the very soul of Dagerov. If the Penitents can uncover the truth about **Boyara Svetlana**, they might be able to draw the town back together without a complete breakdown of the social structure.

Things to Do, People to See

The characters may stick together or split apart, as best suits their style and approach. There are a number of people to talk to, including some with whom there is simply no avoiding a conversation. Particularly focused and or stubborn Accursed may see the meeting with the Chief Boyar, Zarsky, as a simple horse-trade. Others may intend to take the cannons out of Steppengrad regardless of what Zarsky says.

However, either way, it will not be that easy.

At a minimum, the Accursed should find themselves dealing with the following in some order:

BOYAR DMITRI ZARSKY

He is the Chief of the Boyars, the ruler of the town, the commander of the Town Guard, and the man who ultimately controls the fate of the Guns of Dagerov. Despite his firm entrenchment as the master of the ruling class, he is a man dedicated to law and order, and he has no desire to see his town destroyed by the banes who have at long last discovered Dagerov. He is willing to discuss turning over the cannons—for a fair price, of course—in exchange for the service of the Accursed. In particular, he wants the hunger trolls gone, for good. He would also like some more resources for the town and surrounding lands, considering how much has been lost and destroyed.

Most likely, the characters encounter Zarsky in the Town Hall, where he essentially holds court or pours over maps of the area, regularly considering his strategic options for dealing with banes and unruly locals alike. Assuming the Penitents present themselves in a proper and official fashion, he meets with them accordingly to discuss matters. His initial reaction to any request for the cannons is laughter, followed by outrage once he realizes they are serious. This is where some serious negotiation skill will need to be applied; Zarsky is fairly intelligent, and he can be made to recognize both the value in a good relationship with the Order as well as any significant effort to diminish the power of the Witches.

Ultimately, he will see reason—if the right offerings are made:

More portable weapons, such as rifles and ammunition, are of much greater utility against the kinds of threats the Dagerov Town Guard faces. The cannons are meant for large-scale warfare, and Zarsky is well aware that a solid supply of Manreian rifles would be an excellent trade for his cannons. *The characters have three De Acosta Model IV Rifles on hand (with 30 rounds of ammunition), as well as a dozen rifled muskets (with 120 rounds of ammunition). They can promise more, but you may decide if they overcommit or not.*

The food supply of Dagerov has been devastated, and it will take a few seasons to bring the crops back to full capacity again, even if the hunger trolls and other banes are dealt with. *The characters have seed stock and other foodstuffs that mostly serve as examples of what can be shipped in greater quantity, to be delivered mainly by river craft. They have a bit of flexibility here in terms of what can be promised in return for the cannons.*

The greatest source of threat to the town are the hunger trolls and their gorge wolves, located in the caverns deep inside the hill to the south of the town. Two expeditions—one of local conscripts and soldiers, the other of hired mercenaries—have utterly failed, with no survivors from the former. Two mercenaries survived the second expedition, though one had a leg missing and the other ranted like a madman. From what Zarsky could determine after debriefing them, the creatures have entrenched themselves in a warren that is effectively a death trap to anyone entering. *Any agreement that secures cannons must ultimately include dealing with these hunger trolls.*

If the characters have already shown any real allegiance with Liliyah and her crowd, a conversation with Boyar Dmitri Zarsky is going to transpire with a much greater degree of difficulty. He severely warns them against interfering with local matters, and if they show too much cooperation with her, he may outright refuse to deal with them at all.

Regardless of the ultimate outcome of any negotiations, Zarsky refuses to make any immediate decisions. He insists on sleeping on the matter, and consulting with the other Boyars. He does *not* offer them hospitality in Boyar's Row. (*"Your presence may cause ... disturbance there, you understand? I am certain you can find adequate lodgings elsewhere, especially at the temple."*)

BOYARA SVETLANA ZAYTESEV

As soon as she discovers their presence in Dagerov, Svetlana maneuvers to encounter them. However, she goes out of her way to make sure Dmitri Zarsky does not discover this, so she bundles up in less flashy clothing on this particular excursion.

While she uses her *Disguise* spell to conceal her true nature as a rusalka, her agenda requires she appear—in her Boyara guise—to the Penitents as a member of the aristocracy who is apparently sympathetic to the “plight of the people.” Svetlana seeks out whoever she feels has influence with the group, and she is exceedingly polite and congenial in order to get a moment of their time.

Whether she reaches the characters before or after they have their first meeting with Boyar Zarsky, she strongly urges them to meet with Liliyah and listen to the teahouse owner's concerns. If pressed, she admits that she feels the Boyars and the wealthy of Dagerov take too much for granted, and exert entirely too much power without giving back to the people who serve.

In truth, she has been planting such seeds of conflict for a long while, since shortly after she arrived and made a home for herself in Dagerov as a recently-returned child of the Zaytesev family (which she now rules, since her mother died of “natural causes”). She has been rather magnificently careful to indicate quiet support for the rights of the peasants, while convincing her fellow Boyars that she is very much on board with the “proper order of things.” As a servant of Baba Yaga, she is exceedingly content to drive the town towards a violent uprising, and she sees the recent arrival of the Penitents as an extraordinary opportunity to set a spark to the powder keg under the bonfire she has been building.

If she can get the characters talking to Liliyah, she then meets with Dmitri and warns him of their collusion with the troublemaker, thus souring any deals that might be made. Worse, if she manages to get the Accursed to actually side with Liliyah in open resistance, she may well get the war over the town she has been wanting all along! After that, it is a simple matter to get word out to the hunger trolls to strike in full force once the humans are all killing one another.

LILIAH LUSKI

By now, the characters should have a clear view that there is a faction in Dagerov that actively opposes the authority of the Boyars, and that faction is led by Liliyah. So far, she has kept her resistance (mostly) passive, with speeches, demands made in Town Hall before Boyar Zarsky, and demonstrations throughout the region. At the same time, she has stood by every peasant and lowly citizen in need, which has made her highly popular with the people, and a force to be reckoned with for the Boyars.

To her, the arrival of the Penitents represents an incredible opportunity to finally get the help and support needed to change the balance of power. Not knowing why they are here, she courts them avidly to come talk with her, with the agenda of securing their aid in either overthrowing the Boyars, or at least diminishing their power.

The guns of Dagerov represent the ultimate power and authority over the region to her. If she learns of the Accursed's plan to acquire them, she vehemently argues they should turn those guns over to her and her people; they need the cannons to overthrow the Boyars, certainly, but also to defend their homes. Ironically, she is far less reasonable or open to negotiation on the matter, determined that the cannons *must* remain in the town, but under the control of the people—not the Boyars.

Conversation in Liliyah's Teahouse should reveal the following:

- Liliyah is all she seems to be, a passionate fighter for the rights of the people. She actually has no desire to rule in any fashion (her ideas run strongly in the vein of committees with rotating leadership and that sort of thing), but she has a fiery spirit and is naturally charismatic.
- Liliyah has a very soft spot for **Cleric Canton**, believing him to be a kindred spirit sent to her—er, the people of Dagerov—for the sake of freeing the people and fighting off the evil of the Witches.
- There is a core faction of people ready to rise up against the Boyars, but they do not stand a chance with the numbers and the assets they currently possess. More would likely join them if the situation changed significantly, such as having control of the cannons, or having a group of Accursed Penitents on their side.
- Liliyah and her followers currently believe **Boyara Svetlana** is secretly on their side (*none of them suspect who she really is*).

- **Sergeant Volkov** is a vicious, ruthless bastard who has done a number of “very bad things” to people in town. (Game Master's must use their discretion with this. If it is not taboo at the table to present as the act of a self-indulgent pig, Volkov is probably guilty of it.) Only the fact that he is Zarsky's loyal “pet” has kept him alive and out of trouble. If the Accursed investigate further, they come to know he is guilty of the kinds of crimes they would likely kill him for, outright. (*In truth, Boyar Zarsky has considered persecuting Volkov on more than one occasion, but various other Boyars—especially Svetlana—have interceded on the Sergeant's behalf*)
- **Corporal Golyubev** is a good egg, a man from peasant stock who has never forgotten who he is. The followers of Liliyah are relatively certain he would line up at least a third of the Town Guard on their side. Most of them know he carries a torch for the fiery young woman, though apparently she is completely oblivious (or blinded by her adoration of Canton).

The Sandbox Approach

This part of the adventure is particularly open-ended, as it depends a great deal on where the characters want to go first, with whom they wish to talk, and what else they want to do. The Game Master should be familiar with the overall layout of Dagerov, and understand all the key personalities. That means a good reading of the **Notables** section above as well as the **Dramatis Personae** that lies at the end of this scenario.

The real key to running this act is simply to understand all the players of Dagerov, what they want, and what they are likely to say and do to get it. How the characters treat any given person will greatly impact their relationship not only with that individual, but everyone close to him or her. Some GMs may wish to keep some notecards on hand to take notes about what each key person in Dagerov thinks of each character.

For groups who prefer to plow through the non-action parts of a scenario to get to the next action sequence, it may be necessary to hit just the Key Points and move forward. For those who prefer to delve deep into a situation, determine all the factors at work, and really investigate and understand, this act could easily become the basis of multiple sessions.

THE GUNS OF DAGEROV

If any of the characters explore the town specifically searching for the cannons, they readily find a culverin cannon on each of the seven towers that guard Dagerov. The other three are under lock and key in a storage building attached to the Town Hall, guarded by men of the Town Guard. At least half of those guarding the cannons at any time are very loyal to Sergeant Volkov; not surprisingly, those men tend to look better-fed than everyone else.

Other Factors and Figures

If the Accursed are laser-focused on the barest essentials of their mission, they may miss the following. Those interested in fully exploring what they can about Dagerov likely encounter one or more of these locations and plot points.

THE HOLY ENOCHIAN TEMPLE OF DAGEROV

Located west of the Town Hall and north of the Dagerov Banya, the Holy Enochian Temple is a moderately impressive testament to the importance of the Enochian faith in Steppengrad. There are a handful of monks and nuns here, all of whom treat very respectfully with those identified as members of the Order of the Penitent. Brother Nikita is particularly solicitous with them, anxious to express his deep concerns over the “Witchcraft” of Cleric Canton.

Canton arrived in Dagerov shortly after the death of Father Igor Ivonov, apparently stumbling out of the bower of ash trees north of the town. The rest of the faithful of the temple believe Canton’s arrival was a gift of the Creator, giving them a new champion against darkness and terror. Nikita is less than certain; he is, in fact, fearful that Canton is an agent of one of the other Witches, seeking to encroach on the territory Baba Yaga already infects with her unique brand of evil.

Cleric Canton pays little attention to either the fawning adoration of the other temple servants or Nikita’s suspicions. He works hard on repairing broken things, giving instruction to those who seek it from him, wandering the town and seeing to the physical and spiritual needs of its people, and praying. *See his entry in Dramatis Personae for more information about his personality, appearance, and the truth about who and what he really is.*

Canton is willing to talk to the Accursed, though he seems off-balance and ill at ease with them. This is especially true where Revenants, Mongrels, Shades, and Vargr are concerned, and even more so with any Dhampir who reveal their true nature. He is not rude—far from it, he is a quiet, polite man in all things. He simply has a hard time concealing his discomfort, avoiding eye contact and fiddling with the apparent holy symbol of the down-turned sword pendant he wears around his neck.

Time spent among the folks of the temple likely reveals the following:

- **Liliyah** has the ear of the people of Dagerov. If they are given strong enough reason—and hope—they are likely to rise up at her urging against the Boyars. Canton is apparently against this, mostly out of concern for how many will suffer and die in such a conflict.
- **Canton** is possessed of a certain kind of magic, without any doubt. He has healed grievous wounds, cured illnesses, and even displayed a supernatural feat of strength when a young girl was trapped beneath a large beam during a fight with hunger trolls. The monks and nuns speak reverently of the power of his faith, while Nikita whispers of his bringing subtly dark Witchcraft into the holy halls of the Creator. Some speak of the enormous cost of his faith; after healing others, and especially after lifting that beam, he spends days abed to recover.
- The members of the church are sympathetic to Liliyah’s position, but for now withhold their support of her call for rebellion due to the danger they see for too many innocents. As the tales of Volkov’s atrocities grow in severity and frequency, however, they are growing more emboldened, and even Cleric Canton seems to be wavering in his resistance to taking up arms. If they do act, however, Canton knows the people have to take control of the cannons (which he oddly refers to as “boomers”).
- Canton has very dark suspicions about **Boyara Svetlana**. If pressed, he speaks of there being “something passing corrupt” about her, though he admits he is just not sure. “*Something Mother Ludmilla was telling me; I really should get back to her about it ...*”

THE BANYA OF DAGEROV

As with all Gradniki settlements, the banya is a central part of their life. Ostensibly a place where rank and privilege do not matter, the Dagerov Banya belies this concept with its very structure. There are parts of the banya where the peasants dare not go. The Accursed are given a wide berth by everyone; that kind of naked exposure of who and what they are is a bit much for even the most tolerant humans.

Should any of the characters risk taking their ease in the banya, careful listening and/or effective conversation might reveal any number of the pieces of information from above (as the GM sees fit), and the following rumors besides:

- **Mother Ludmilla** keeps asking after the newcomers; she seems anxious for them to come by and see her needlework in the market. She also seems to have a bizarre fixation on **Boyara Svetlana**.
- The hunger trolls mostly attack from the caves to the south of the town, though they tend to range out to the west rather than face the rifles and cannons of the towers.
- The Town Guard is ridiculously slow about ever answering a call for help from anyone outside the town walls. The only ones who are worth half-a-damn are the handful who are friends with and loyal to **Corporal Andrey Golyubev**.
- More than a few townsfolk know of Golyubev's undying love for **Liliyah**, but most believe that is simply never to be. She seems to only have eyes for **Cleric Canton** ... who does not seem to have half-a-clue!
- **Yegor** serves fine vodka at the Blue Goat, and sometimes decent wine when he has it. He is awfully closemouthed about his past.
- Some folks think Yegor and the town drunk, **Danil**, fought together in the Bane Wars. Yegor's wounds are believed to be from gorge wolves; no one is quite sure what happened to poor Danil.
- Boyara Svetlana is the last scion of the Zaytesev family, recently returned after years of being away. If she does not marry and bear a child soon, she will have to adopt or otherwise name someone to carry on her family's affairs and holdings.
- **Boyar Zarsky** is a stern, sour man who is entirely comfortable with traditions and keeping things as they are. He is, however, almost obsessively ethical, and if pressed will act to serve the law and see justice done. Most fear he has simply seen too much horror to willingly look out the windows of the Town Hall more than he must. Though he commands the Town Guard, he has not ridden out with them in over a year.

- Everyone knows the Boyars and their favorites do not adhere to Zarsky's mandated food rations. Some folks, however, believe Dmitri Zarsky himself is a strict adherent.

If any of the characters decide to specifically watch for Boyara Svetlana at the banya, they stand a chance (*Notice opposed by her Subterfuge*) of catching her true form as she slips out of the banya into the river.

THE BLUE GOAT TAVERN

Yegor runs a rough-and-tumble establishment, short on class and long on sit-and-drink-vodka. There is precious little talking here; those who seek conversation tend towards the samovars of their homes and of Liliyah's Teahouse. However, vodka does have a lubricating quality for some, and this is a fine place to find **Danil** in his cups. Anyone actually *buying* booze for Danil pries more than a few bits of interesting (if unreliable) information out of him.

- There are fairies in the ash bower. They give him pretty trinkets, interesting flowers that make him "better than drunk," and take away very bad memories for him. All of this is in exchange for him maintaining and protecting the bower. The characters should come and meet his friends, soon! *"I really think they'd like you folks! They're weird, like you!"*
- *"Sergeant Volkov is a bane, of course! That's why you're really here, right—to put an end to him? I'm pretty sure he's a disguised hunger troll—the fat bastard!"*
- He really likes Boyara Svetlana. She is the only one of the Boyars that treats him with any respect. He does little favors for her all the time. Sometimes she has him take a bundle of ash twigs and set it next to a particular house or farm. He never understands why, but she gives him drinking money to do it. *This is how she identifies targets for the hunger trolls.*
- *"Those cannons are ridiculous to keep here. I used to be an artillery man, you know? All they do is invite another town to invade and take them, or Baba Yaga maybe sends an army here. Or maybe they blow up and spew ghosts all over us, like ..."* He will not continue that train of thought, no matter what. He insists, however, that the cannons should be traded to someone for more practical weapons, and maybe some food.

If asked, other patrons mention that it was Danil who taught members of the Town Guard how to load and fire the cannons, in the days before he fell into deeper alcoholism and despair. Liliyah is hoping she will be able to sober Danil up enough to teach her and the townsfolk how to use them, when the day comes that they finally take the town.

At some point, Danil falls into a crying and screaming fit; Yegor will not let the Penitents bother him anymore after that, instead taking him into a storeroom to sleep it off. Yegor also refuses to answer any questions about Danil, saying only that his friend has seen enough horror for five lifetimes.

If pressed about his history with gorge wolves, Yegor only says, *"Watch your throat, and don't dare fight them without silver."*

MOTHER LUDMILLA

A kindly old babushka who only manages to make a living selling her mediocre needlework due to the kindness of her fellow peasants, Ludmilla is completely blind. She does, however, have particularly keen hearing and a fine sense of smell. She is anxious to talk to the Penitents as soon as she discovers they are in town, and sends after them (via other townsfolk) within a few hours of their arrival. Most folks tell the characters that she is just anxious for new customers and new people to hear her old stories.

If any of the characters do manage to come speak with her, she at first chitchats about her needlework, how fine it is to at long last have new people to talk to, and *"just what brings you to our hidden little town, after all?"*

When she is relatively certain she really has their attention (and more importantly, not the attention of anyone else), Mother Ludmilla grows quieter. *"Please, you must listen. Boyara Svetlana is not what she seems. She smells of rotted fish, and she speaks with water in her lungs. I do not know what manner of creature she is, but she must be using Witchcraft to show you a pleasing face, for she has a terrible soul."*

Mother Ludmilla insists that she simply knows what she knows. She tried to tell **Corporal Golyubev**, who dismissed her words as the rantings of an old blind woman. She has been trying to get a word with **Cleric Canton**, and she is hoping—desperately—that the Penitents take her seriously.

CORPORAL GOLYUBEV

The good Corporal is pretty much everything he seems to be—a decent man in an indecent situation, trying to make the best of it while helping those he can. On more than one occasion, he has come very close to directly disobeying **Sergeant Volkov**, but he always manages to find a way to ride the line between doing his duty and avoiding performing the worst kinds of acts that Volkov is all too happy to do.

Andrey's greatest weakness is his unrequited love for **Liliyah**. He has yet to even express more than subtle cues to her, and Liliyah is not one for subtlety at all. It was bad enough when he discovered she saw him as a wonderful "little brother," but when he began to notice her increasing interest in **Cleric Canton**, his heart began breaking apart by inches. Fortunately for the people of Dagerov, this has made him more determined to be a good man, in hopes that she will see him for the true hero she needs.

If the Penitents decide to talk to him directly (and away from his superiors), Andrey is extremely circumspect about any negative things he might have to say about the Boyars and Sergeant Volkov. The Penitents have to work hard to get him to trust them enough to reveal just how bad a man the Sergeant is, though what he does not say (and how he does not say it) should speak volumes to those observant enough to notice.

Though he does not openly advocate rebellion against the Boyars, it should be pretty clear he stands with Liliyah and those who follow her if it comes to open conflict. He is a good farmer's son who wants to do the right thing, and he really is inspired by the fiery passion for freedom and justice that he sees in the Teahouse owner. The Penitents can turn him into a staunch ally, depending on what they decide to do.

ALEXEI THE MOUSE

He has been trailing and watching the Accursed since they arrived in town (*treat him as having a Subterfuge of d8+2 and a Notice of d8+2*). If confronted, or if he observes that the characters seem likely to support Liliyah in her quest to free the town from the Boyars, he reveals what he knows about **Boyara Svetlana**.

"She is not one of us. She ... changes. When she goes into the water, she is a long, slimy thing. Her hands and feet get all strange, with flaps of skin between the fingers and toes. Her eyes bulge out! She's so ugly, and creepy!"

Those Accursed with *Knowledge (Witchcraft)* may make a standard roll to determine that Alexei is describing a rusalka, which is one of the key banes Baba Yaga uses to torment and control Steppengrad. If they choose to believe Alexei (who does not even know the word "rusalka," so his tale likely rings true), they have a whole new dilemma on their hands. Accusing a community leader of being a bane on the word of a nine-year-old orphan is no easy matter. If they manage to confront her or otherwise find a way to reveal her, see *Svetlana Found Out* below.

Alexei the Mouse has one other useful secret to share. He knows an excellent place along the wall that protects Boyar Row where a small or skinny person can slip through. This might prove useful if anyone cares to break into that area to further investigate Svetlana's residence.

BOYAR ROW

The Penitents are not invited into the walled part of town where the Boyars and wealthiest residents dwell. Instead of Town Guard, there are more intimidating **Mercenaries** guarding both the main gate and the residences within. They are not numerous, but they are very impressive, and loyal to the money and amount of food they receive.

In truth, there is little reason for the Accursed to go into Boyar Row, unless they become aware of **Svetlana Zaytesev's** true nature. In that case, they may well decide to try and break into the area and investigate her home. Their best way into the area is through the hidden hole in the wall that **Alexei the Mouse** knows of; otherwise, they are climbing over the wall (which is 10'-12' high and has metal spikes running along the top) or trying to bribe or bully their way past the mercenaries.

If they go to Svetlana's home during the day, she is almost certainly there, and likely working in her basement on Witchcraft matters. Such an incursion likely results in a direct conflict with her and the four Mercenaries that know of her nature and are loyal. Assuming the characters survive the conflict, see *Svetlana Found Out* below.

At night, she is roaming the lands via the river, wreaking the havoc she is commanded to by Baba Yaga, or else in the caverns of the hunger trolls, meeting with their leader, **Grigori**. Assuming the characters can deal with the four mercenaries and the small household staff, they discover her basement chamber and all the Witchcraft materials and a shrine dedicated to Baba Yaga. This is damning enough evidence to convince **Boyar Zarsky** he has a traitor in his midst, and certainly drives him to action (see *Svetlana Found Out* below).

As for any other Boyars or Boyaras, the vast majority of them are privileged in nature and expectation. They want little or nothing to do with the Accursed, expecting Dmitri Zarsky to handle all interactions and see to their collective interests. Most are of the opinion that Liliyah and her ilk should just be run out of town, cast away for being intolerable ingrates and peasants who do not know their place.

Svetlana Found Out

This is a major plot point that has the potential to effectively resolve the rest of the scenario, depending on how the PCs handle it. If they discover her nature—both **Mother Ludmilla** and **Alexei the Mouse** are the likely hooks to point them at the truth—they almost certainly push a confrontation that (hopefully) leads to her death and the revelation of her role in things with the hunger trolls.

Even if the Penitents do not investigate her home, Zarsky has it searched after the revelation. In doing so, he discovers the necessary evidence that Svetlana is the one who has been orchestrating the hunger troll attacks against the people of Dagerov, as well as ruining the fishing and damaging river trade. This betrayal has a most profound effect on the Chief Boyar, stirring him from his dour complacency and spurring him to decisively act to end the threat.

At this point, the Game Master *can* choose to have events move rapidly toward resolution. The cannons can be brought to bear against the caverns, blowing the entrance to smithereens while the Accursed do battle with those hunger trolls (including their leader, Grigori) and gorge wolves that manage to get out. More on this is presented below in *Against the Trolls*.

Once the town is mobilized against the immediate threat, an energized Zarsky is ready to deal with Liliyah and her followers one way or another. This is a key dramatic moment for the Accursed. Their aid in exposing and dealing with Svetlana gives them exceptional leverage with the Boyars. They can use that to push for reforms and building bridges between the peasants and the ruling class. Cleric Canton enthusiastically recommends and supports this. They can, in fact, go any number of ways with this situation, which could lead to future adventures.

THE ASH BOWER

If the Accursed decide to investigate **Danil the Drunk's** odd claims about the "faerie in the wood," they draw the attention of the Unseelie for whom the bower is a gate into Steppengrad. This particular group has been feeding off the insanity and painful memories of Danil, giving him moments of utter drunken blackouts while they dance to his nightmares-made-manifest in the bower. They have convinced him they are helping him slowly lose the memories; instead, they are intensifying them and making them even worse in his mind. Each time he returns, he feeds those intensified terrors back into the bower, which further nourishes and delights the Unseelie.

If the Accursed figure this out (*clever conversation, possibly using Persuasion or Knowledge of the Fey*), they may decide it needs to stop. To do so requires a bargain, however: the Fey stock-in-trade. The Unseelie agree to leave Danil be for a single price; they know of the characters' efforts to negotiate for the cannons (they keep an eye on their "toy town"), and they know how desperately the people of Dagerov need a supply of food.

The Unseelie offer a bag of magical beans, which they promise will provide a fast-growing bumper crop of pumpkins that will bring true food to the people within a couple of weeks of planting. They are willing to even swear an oath to the truth of this—something anyone with any scholarly knowledge recognizes as serious, in that even Unseelie take their oaths very seriously, as such things have a mystically bonding effect on the Fey.

If pressed as to why they are willing to make such a bargain, they say only that it amuses them to do so. They speak to the need for the people of Dagerov to live, so that they do not lose the joy of watching after their "little toy town." The Accursed get nothing more from them on this.

If the Accursed accept the bargain, the bag of ostensibly magical beans is handed over and the Unseelie disappear back into the shadows of the ash trees. True to their word, they do not appear again to Danil—who wails piteously that he has lost his "faerie friends" to anyone who listens, and he falls into a deep depression.

Petulant Pumpkins

Of course, there is an evil trick to the pumpkins that grow from the beans. In a week after planting, they are small, unripe, and have strange indentations that almost look like jack-o-lantern faces if looked at the right way. In about two weeks, just as they reach a large size and ripened edibility, the pumpkins start to rise up out of the ground, moving themselves with tendrils of vine. Their faces become fully animated, with sharpened teeth and grotesquely long tongues. Laughing with evil glee, they begin attacking the people, grabbing farming implements, chopping people up, and trying to "plant" them. True to their word, though, the pumpkin-headed creatures *are* edible—once they are properly killed.

Their stats are in the *Dramatis Personae*, in case the Accursed wait around long enough to see what happens after the planting.

There is no fight with the Unseelie; they simply disappear, laughing and taunting, into the wood. They come again if Danil calls for them, but do not manifest if anyone else is present and wishes a confrontation. Burning or tearing down the bower will not work either; it grows back anew at dawn the very next day.

At the End of the Day

Before any final meeting to finish negotiating for the cannons with Boyar Zarsky happens, the following things should occur:

- The characters are made *very* aware of **Liliyah's** intention for the cannons to be turned over to the people of Dagerov, enabling them to finally overthrow the Boyars, bring Sergeant Volkov to justice, and live as free people.
- **Boyar Zarsky** is going to need serious concessions to be convinced to let go of the cannons, but the right combination of offerings (including dealing with the hunger trolls) brings it about.
- **Sergeant Volkov** is a very bad, sadistic man who has done a lot of damage in the town.
- **Boyara Svetlana** believes the Penitent should seriously consider supporting Liliyah.
- The Accursed should have no illusions whatsoever about just stealing or taking the cannons, at least not without a serious fight and some major engineering work.

As well, depending on to whom they talked and how observant or involved they were with the rest of Dagerov and her people, the following may also be in play:

- They may be aware of Boyara Svetlana's true nature, that of a Witchcraft-practicing rusalka. They may have, in fact, directly confronted her, putting an end to her evil and revealing her betrayal of the town.
- The odd love triangle involving **Corporal Golyubev**, Liliyah, and **Cleric Canton** has the potential to dramatically affect how everything plays out.
- Golyubev and Canton may well bring additional support to Liliyah if she stands against the Boyars (and the Penitent, for that matter) over the disposition of the cannons.
- There are faerie (Unseelie) connected to the ash bower outside of town. The Accursed may well have a supply of magical beans that provide a significant supply of food in the near term ... if the people of the town dare to plant them.

Act III: Thundering Guns

One way or another, the day has come for a final resolution regarding the Guns of Dagerov. A number of circumstances *may* in play by this point:

RUSALKA UNCOVERED

If **Svetlana** has been uncovered and overcome, this crisis almost certainly leads to at least a temporary period of unity. **Boyar Zarsky** rides out with his Town Guard, calling for the aid of the Accursed and others to wage a battle against the hunger trolls and end their threat once and for all. See *Against the Trolls* below.

JUSTICE FOR SERGEANT VOLKOV

The Penitent have determined to bring Sergeant Volkov to justice, either via Zarsky's office (which becomes a matter of presenting evidence and effective use of the Social Conflict rules) or by means of direct and decidedly bloody confrontation (Volkov will not go down without a fight, and at least a few of his men fight with him). If done without Zarsky's support or involvement, talking him out of reprisals is an even more difficult Social Conflict.

FISHINESS AFOOT

If Boyara Svetlana is still in play, she has informed Zarsky that the Accursed met with **Liliyah** and her ilk. She furthermore has convinced the Chief Boyar of the Penitents' intentions to side with the peasants in an effort to overthrow the Boyars (whether they have or not), which could lead to an all out battle for the town if the characters do not manage to convince Zarsky to calm down. If it comes to blows, Zarsky, most of the Town Guard, and a handful of the Mercenaries move to strike at Liliyah and the Accursed. **Cleric Canton** and a handful of monks and nuns stand with Liliyah, as does **Corporal Golyubev** and a handful of dissident Town Guard. If such a battle comes to pass, Svetlana arranges for **Grigori** to lead the hunger trolls in an all out assault against the town, which should pretty much bring things to a massive climax. See *Against the Trolls* below.

THE PEASANTS ARE REVOLTING

The Penitents *may* decide to just go ahead and lead a revolt against the Boyars, in which case a town battle ensues along the same lines as previously described. Even without Svetlana's direction, Grigori eventually detects the signs of battle and bring his forces into town for a final showdown. See *Against the Trolls* below.

Other combinations and circumstances are possible, which the Game Master needs to manage as they respond naturally from the players' choices. The environment of Dagerov is a complex one, as is any system where people and their individual desires clash with collective impetus. There exists a great deal of potential for both conflict and roleplay in the elements presented.

Against the Trolls

A final conflict with the hunger trolls (led by **Grigori**) and their accompanying gorge wolves is inevitable. The only real variable is where such a battle occurs.

INTO THE CAVERNS

This is the absolute *worst* idea, and should be discouraged as much as possible. There are at least a score of hunger trolls inside, and easily twice as many gorge wolves, firmly entrenched in winding caverns that they have had plenty of time to prepare against assault. Two efforts to get inside and attack them have met with complete disaster; even the amazing capabilities of heroic members of the Order of the Penitent stand little chance of surviving long.

If for some reason the players are determined to try such a thing, any battle map depicting winding caverns and caves that can be readily defended by occupants will do. You should make this *exceedingly difficult* for the Accursed! Most of the hallways are *Dark* or at least *Dim*; while the hunger trolls have no particular special senses, these halls are patrolled by packs of gorge wolves, which ignore all but *Pitch Darkness*.

To emphasize the "home field" advantage, all of the encountered enemies should be Wild Cards. The players should definitely feel like they made a mistake entering the caverns by the end of the first or second encounter, and the GM should hit them with a constant series of attacks in order to emphasize the disadvantage they suffer here. Any final conflict within the caverns involves the hunger troll leader, **Grigori**, and the gorge wolf Alpha known as **Hellbreath**. For a fight on their home turf, Grigori has five Bennies, and Hellbreath has three.

Of course, players have a way of pulling out victories in the most insane circumstances. If they manage such here, this provides a great deal of leverage in any conversations they have with the Boyars afterward.

THE BATTLE FOR DAGEROV

This is another worst-case scenario, where open revolt erupts between **Liliyah**'s followers and those loyal to the Boyars, with the characters firmly involved. The battle lines fall out as described in *Fishiness Afoot* above, and the primary conflict is focused around Liliyah, **Cleric Canton**, and **Corporal Golyubev** on one side, **Boyar Zarsky**, **Sergeant Volkov**, and (if she is still alive) **Boyara Svetlana** on the other.

For cinematic and dramatic effect, assume violence breaks out all over town; the cannon crews in the towers are using the culverin to suppress the uprising nearest their towers, naturally doing terrible damage in the process. Crews move to bring the three remaining guns out of Town Hall to support Zarsky, which spells utter devastation for the peasants unless something is done to intercept them.

The Battle for Dagerov draws out **Grigori** and the rest of the hunger trolls and gorge wolves. They come barging into the town and attack anyone and everyone they can. If **Boyara Svetlana** has thus far escaped detection (or otherwise remains at large), she summons them within the first couple of rounds, after which she dives into the river to escape (and likely plague the characters again one day). If Svetlana has already been overcome, the hunger trolls arrive later, during round 4 (or whenever is the most dramatic moment for them to come crashing into the battle).

The hunger trolls and gorge wolves are routed once Grigori and his pet, **Hellbreath**, are defeated. However, unless the Accursed find some way to negotiate or otherwise bring the battle to a halt, it can really only end with the death or surrender of either Boyar Zarsky or Liliyah. One option will be to convince the two of them they need each other to defend the town against the likes of the hunger trolls and other banes; this is an excellent opportunity for a midst-of-the-battle dramatic moment, should any of the players choose to seize the opportunity. Cleric Canton might even suggest such a stratagem to one of them.

If the two sides do not find a way to work together, consider more than a third of the town's population dead or dying by the end of the battle. If they do work together, only about a tenth of the population becomes casualties, and most of them will recover.

BRING THE CANNONS TO BEAR

The most strategically sound approach to attacking the hunger trolls is to bring out the cannons to the field below the cavern entrance and launch an artillery assault against the entrance. **Liliyah** leads those who are loyal to her along with the Town Guard (led by **Boyar Zarsky**). Her people help defend the cannons against any banes that try to get to them. **Cleric Canton** and his people are on hand mainly to provide first aid to those in need.

This brings some of the hunger trolls and gorge wolves out, but not nearly so many as would be encountered if anyone went inside after them. Depending on the *Knowledge (Battle or Tactics)* roll made at the beginning of the engagement (either by Boyar Zarsky or one of the PCs, if any of them step up to lead and show knowledge enough to warrant it) determines how many foes are faced on the field:

- **Basic Success:** 8 hunger trolls and 12 gorge wolves make it to the field to attack the cannons and those who protect them.
- **Success at -2:** 5 hunger trolls, 8 gorge wolves make it out.
- **Raise:** Only 2 hunger trolls and 4 gorge wolves survive to get to the field.

Once the banes take the field, the cannon crews switch to canister rounds, though they will not be able to fire against foes that are engaged in melee.

If anyone managed to sober Danil up, treat him as having *Knowledge (Artillery)* d8, which can be used in place of *Knowledge (Battle)* and *Shooting* with the cannons.

After the battle on the fields, the townsfolk and Boyars enjoy a rare moment of shared victory. In this moment, the Penitents have an opportunity to forge peace and cooperation—if they seize it.

Decisions, Decisions

Traitors revealed, revolution started or abated, mysterious powers of faith discovered, and banes fought in violent battle ... at the end, it all comes down to the original mission. The Penitent are expected to secure the guns of Dagerov and bring them to the Massif Helsenn in Valkenholm. The conditions of the town, its people, and their leaders will greatly weigh on how this plays out.

Running Wild Card Allies

The usual *Savage Worlds* approach to PCs having Allies in a battle is to hook the players up with one or more Extras to run during the battle. However, in some cases (this being one of them), there are a handful of potential Allies that are deservedly full Wild Cards. With all the “moving parts” you have to keep track of for any major climactic battle at this stage, it is probably a good idea to let the players each run one of the key Wild Cards. Depending upon how things go, the following Wild Cards may be fighting alongside the Penitent: **Liliyah**, **Cleric Canton**, **Boyar Zarsky**, and **Corporal Gloyubev** (who has *Mercenary* stats as posted in *Dramatis Personae*). It is possible **Sergeant Volkov** could end up fighting alongside the Accursed at some point, but he does nothing to directly help them (and might even take a sneaky potshot at one, and certainly at Liliyah, if he can get away with it).

Running a Wild Card ally is much the same as running an Extra; the difference is literally their Bennies and being allowed to roll a Wild Die. Such Allies still act on the same Action Card as the character of the player who is running them.

Even though a player may be handling such a character for the basics of combat, Game Masters should feel free to interfere and override a decision if it goes directly against the nature of the character. For example, neither the Corporal nor the Cleric willingly do anything to endanger Liliyah. It is a good idea to impress some basic motivations for each controlled Wild Card upon the player managing them.

A TOWN UNITED

If the strife between the Boyars and the people is abated considerably (most likely due to their coming together in battle to save Dagerov), the basic negotiations should be tough, but relatively painless. For the right combination of food and weapons, the people of Dagerov will allow most or all of their cannons to be contributed to the cause of the Penitents.

A TOWN ON THE EDGE

If matters remain unsettled between Liliyah and Boyar Zarsky, she vehemently opposes allowing even one cannon to leave the town. She goes so far as organizing a protest to physically block the bridge to prevent any guns from leaving, and arranges to have the cranes damaged so that the guns cannot be taken down from the towers (at least not without superhuman efforts).

Essentially, the Accursed in this situation are faced with three choices:

- Work to diplomatically bridge the gap between the Boyars and Liliyah. This is another *Social Conflict* challenge, though plenty of lead-up roleplaying and other efforts should impact the degree of difficulty.
- The Penitents may simply decide to suppress the revolutionaries, working with the Boyars to enforce the law, establish order, and ensure they get the cannons they came for. This approach likely results in at least some violence, and a lot of bad feelings with some decent people with long memories.
- On the other hand, the Accursed *may* decide to side with Liliyah and the peasants of Dagerov, effectively joining their revolution and aiding in the overthrow of the Boyars. This, too, has some rather extreme consequences eventually. The nobility of Steppengrad, such as they are, will not easily forget that agents of the Order of the Penitent actively overthrew a legitimate town government in order to obtain what they wanted.

There are many variant outcomes the characters may strive for at this stage, including taking only some of the cannons, or leaving the cannons in the hands of Liliyah to take control of the town while they just walk away. Kingmakers, peacekeepers, or just a bunch of people trying to do a job—the Accursed must decide what kind of situation they wish to leave behind as they depart Dagerov.

Rewards and Consequences

When the characters leave Dagerov—whether as heroes, villains, or something less certain—they should feel as though they have truly been through a panoply of emotions and experiences. Between order and chaos, law and freedom, love and hatred, and all else possible, they stood and determined the course of things for an entire town.

The aftermath should absolutely involve one or more of the Penitent giving a full account to their superiors about what happened. Naturally, this will need to include why they have less than all of the cannons, should it be that they decided to not take them all. If they took none, the characters will be called to task over the reasons why. If they make a convincing argument for the safety and security of the people of the region, reprisals may be minor, with the admonition that they should have brought back at least *some* of the damned guns!

As well, any deals they made that have long-term repercussions for the Order will need to be outlined and discussed. Quartermasters will scream bloody murder over any promises of other weapons and ammunition being committed to non-essential areas. The number of cannons delivered could mitigate the screaming.

If the Accursed do the bare minimum they can get away with to “grab the guns and go,” the scenario is really only worth 2 Experience Points for them.

If they make significantly poor choices, or step into enough trouble to find themselves engaged in a couple of extra conflicts, the scenario is worth 3 XPs.

Should the Penitent go out of their way to resolve all that they can, creating peace as much as possible and dealing with threats both short and long-term, they can wind up with 4 XPs, or even 5 if there are at least three sessions needed to handle it all. As well, leaving on good terms with the people of Dagerov means their effective Resource Dice are temporarily increased by one type if ever they return there.

Returning with at least five of the guns of Dagerov keeps the group in decent standing with the Order. Returning with all ten (or plans to attain them over a period of time) grants a permanent upgrade of each Accursed’s Resource Die or a single piece of Gear the GM deems appropriate to the character.



Dramatis Personae

The following are the write-ups for everyone the Accursed are likely to encounter in a fashion that may lead to violence.



BOYARA SVETLANA ZAYTESEV

Svetlana had no idea that her mother would be so terribly right about the dangers of wandering away from her home. She was not gone more than three months, trading “favors” for passage up and down the river, before she was captured by warlocks in service to Baba Yaga.

Now she is a rusalka, one of the terrors of the waterways. More clever and ambitious than most, even in her transformed state, she has taken up the practice of Witchcraft in order to ensure her ability to not only recapture the life she lost but make more of it besides. One of the first spells she mastered was the ability to disguise herself, which she has used to great efficacy to claim her place among the Boyars of her riverside home of Dagerov.

Seeing to the early death of her parents was child’s play, thus securing her title and access to the family fortune. She has greatly enjoyed the perks of her position, but her ties to the Old Grandmother are stronger due to her adoption of Witchcraft. Soon she must see to the utter destruction of her home at the hands of hunger trolls and gorge wolves. The arrival of the Penitent steps up the timetable considerably.

She would rather not, but ... what can one do, when the Old Grandmother commands it? Besides, she has the magic. She can be anyone she wants, so long as they live along the river.

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

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Knowledge (Politics) d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d10, Streetwise d6, Subterfuge d10, Witchcraft d10

Charisma: +2, **Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 6, **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Greedy (Major), Obligation (Major, Baba Yaga)

Edges: Arcane Background (Witchcraft), Attractive (*when Disguised*), Extraction, Quick

Powers: Bolt, Circle of Thorns, Disguise, Slumber

Power Points: 20

Gear: Dagger (Str+d4, Coated in Lethal poison)

Special Abilities

Aquatic: Pace 8.

Immunity (Cold): Rusalka are immune to the effects of cold.

Low Light Vision: She ignores penalties for Dim and Dark lighting, and can see in all but pitch blackness or magical darkness.

Siren Song: Anyone hearing the cloying melody of her song must make a Spirit check opposed by Svetlana's Spirit. She gains control of their actions if she wins, though acts of suicide or homicide grant new Spirit checks to resist.

Talons: Str+d6

Weakness (Silver): Rusalka suffer double damage from silver weapons.

Witchline (Baba Yaga): Banes of Baba Yaga can be sensed by Vargr Accursed within 25 feet. However, Svetlana has been gifted with a special charm that grants a permanent *Illusion* effect that works against a Vargr's Witchline detection. If ever a Vargr comes within 25 feet of her, the Vargr rolls their Spirit versus a d12+1 (the roll used in crafting the charm).

BOYAR DMITRI ZARSKY

It would be easy to dismiss the Chief Boyar of Dagerov as nothing more than another heartless aristocrat who sees value only in what lines his pocket or fills his belly. Such attributions are not only uncharitable, they are incorrect. Dmitri Zarsky is a stridently ethical man, if devoutly unsentimental. He honestly believes in the laws that govern his people, convinced it is only through maintaining the traditions and structure of the region that he can keep his town and its people alive.

Sadly, time and depression have taken a toll on Zarsky's psyche. He has a kind of battle fatigue, having watched too many people he knows die either from violence or starvation. He remains in his chambers within the Town Hall (his home in Boyar Row is mostly abandoned, kept up barely by a couple of cousins), drinking heavily while looking over reports of all kinds when he is not holding court for the people to bring their concerns and needs to him.

Zarsky will fight to protect the sovereignty of the Boyars, because he believes that is the correct action, founded on tradition and law. He is mostly blind to the excesses of his fellows, who understand him well enough to say what he needs to hear and pretend at caring as much as he does. No one manipulates Dmitri Zarsky so well as Boyara Svetlana and Sergeant Volkov; they say exactly the right things to keep him firmly convinced of their loyalties and their well-meaning actions.

Never mind that one is a magically disguised bane and the other a decadent, self-serving pig of a man who brings the concept of abusing authority to a new level. The rest of the Boyars could not care less, letting Zarsky play at managing the town while they beat and coerce the work and resources they need out of the peasants.

What of his open court, where the people are allowed to bring grievances? Sergeant Volkov long ago started taking considerable bribes to ensure that no one with any real issues ever got in front of Boyar Zarsky. This began the good Sergeant's reign of terror over Dagerov, with total complicity from the other Boyars.

If anyone manages to wake Zarsky out of his cocoon of complacency and depression, he will rise as a very angry bear of a man; one who is prepared to actually fight for his town. However, he will not just roll over to the idea of any kind of revolution. Angry and unruly peasants must be put down for the sake of order, as has always been the way. It will require some very fast and convincing negotiating to get him to see a bigger, more complex picture.

Dmitri Zarsky is truly a bear of a man. He is showing signs of gauntness in his cheeks (due to restricting himself to the same ration levels he has declared for the rest of the population), but he cuts an impressive figure in full battle regalia. This is true despite a severe limp from an old war wound.

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

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Investigation d6, Knowledge (Tactics) d8, Knowledge (Politics) d6, Notice d6, Riding d6, Shooting d10

Charisma: +2, **Pace:** 4, **Parry:** 7, **Toughness:** 10 (3)

Hindrances: Lame (-2 Pace, Run d4), Vow (Major: Uphold the Law), Vengeful (Minor)

Edges: Brawny, Charismatic, Combat Reflexes, Command, First Strike, Hard to Kill, Inspire, Level Headed, Officer of the Alliance, Steady Hands, Take the Hit, Wealthy

Gear: Silver Scimitar (Str+d8), Two Gradniki Hand Cannons (8/16/32, 2d6, -1 Shooting), Nykoryuk Gun (Cone Template, 2d8+2, -1 Shooting), Reinforced Great Coat (+3 Armor)

MERCENARIES

Professional soldiers with considerably greater skill, the mercenaries hired by various Boyars for their personal estates and interests are decidedly unconcerned with the people of Dagerov. Unless directly attacked or ordered to interfere, they avoid any conflict around them—including hunger trolls and gorge wolves eating the peasants two blocks away. Note: use these stats for **Corporal Golyubev**, who is a Wild Card.

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

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d10, Healing d4, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Subterfuge d6, Survival d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8 (1); **Toughness:** 10 (4)

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Extraction, First Strike, Take the Hit

Gear: Long Sword (Str+d8), Spear (Str+d6, Reach 1, Parry +1, 2-Hands), Rifled Musket (15/30/60, 2d6, AP 2, 3 Actions reload), Reinforced Great Coat (+3 Armor)



SERGEANT ROLAN VOLKOV

Volkov is the second-in-command of the Dagerov Town Guard. He earned his post due to his unwavering loyalty to Boyar Zarsky and his capacity for efficiency and dedication. He is also the most evil being in Dagerov (and that is saying something, considering there is a rusalka living there as well).

Volkov began with taking bribes from various Boyars to selectively over-enforce some laws while ignoring others. He gained a great deal of their support and patronage by restricting who gained audience with the increasingly withdrawn and depressed Boyar Zarsky. Though Zarsky represents the law of Dagerov, Sergeant Volkov is the law of Dagerov. As the power of his position fills his head, he descends into greater corruption and depravity; there is little that a man with his position can do that he has not done. He has “disappeared” enough people that no one pushes him too hard, no matter what he takes, coerces, or does.

He is, in fact, one of the key catalysts for Liliyah's efforts. The only reason he has not gone ahead and taken her down is that he wishes to do so in a way that protects his position while thoroughly degrading and destroying her. He has plans for her ... yes, *such* plans.

Rolan Volkov is a fat, hard man. Though slow, he is still quite capable in a fight, and he commands the loyalty of quite a few of the Town Guard (mostly by sharing his ill-gained spoils with them). Fancying himself a great warrior of old, he wears a steel breastplate and wields an archaic battle axe, though he also has a whip for more authoritarian activities.

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

Skills: Athletics d4, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d8+2, Knowledge (Politics) d4, Notice d6, Riding d4, Shooting d8, Streetwise d8, Subterfuge d6, Taunt d8+2

Charisma: -2, **Pace:** 5, **Parry:** 6, **Toughness:** 10 (3)

Hindrances: Obese (-1 Pace, Run d4), Mean, Vengeful (Major)

Edges: Brawler, Bruiser, Combat Reflexes, Dirty Fighter, Strong Willed, Sweep, Wealthy

Gear: Battle Axe (Str+d8), Whip (Str+d4, -1 Parry), Gradniki Hand Cannon (8/16/32, 2d6, -1 Shooting), Steel Breastplate (+3 Armor), Leather Bracers and Leggings (+1 Armor)



LILIAH LUSKI

Young, strong, fiery, and beautiful, most folks in the area will tell newcomers that Liliyah is the “Heart of Dagerov.” A heart most of the Boyars would gladly cut out and leave bleeding in the streets, were it not for the fact this would turn her into a martyr and a catalyst for open, violent rebellion.

Liliyah's parents worked themselves to death in the fields of Dagerov, always staunchly loyal to the Old Ways and their lords and masters. She will have none of that for herself, nor will she stand for it for her neighbors and friends. Liliyah spends much of the day working at different farms or the mill, helping so that others get breaks and a little peace. The rest of her time (some say she seems to never sleep) is spent giving comfort and rest to those who visit her teahouse, or working out new ways to resist the Boyars ... and, ultimately, to see that Sergeant Volkov pays for his crimes.

She never speaks of it, but many are convinced that Volkov wronged her profoundly. Two men who went to confront the Sergeant about this were never seen again, and the issue eats at the society of Dagerov.

Liliyah's sole focus upon the arrival of the Accursed is to convince them to help her and the people of Dagerov once and for all end the rule of the Boyars and turn Dagerov's destiny over to the town's people. She wants freedom for all, and she has some rather advanced ideas about a political framework that sound interesting in theory and utterly impractical in execution.

The young woman is also apparently fearless, and has clearly learned to fight from someone. Though she is not particularly religious (something that vaguely bothers most of her neighbors), she is extremely fond of Cleric Canton. Those attuned to such things would say the woman is in love with the mysterious priest.

Liliyah Luski is a lean, athletic woman of great grace and strength. She wears practical clothing, but refuses to give up her femininity just to prove she is strong enough to compete with any man. She has long, flowing black hair and dark brown eyes.

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

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d8, Guts d8, Healing d6, Intimidation d6+2, Knowledge (Politics) d4, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Repair d4, Shooting d4, Streetwise d6, Subterfuge d4, Survival d6, Taunt d8+2, Throwing d6, Tracking d4

Charisma: +4, **Pace:** 8, **Parry:** 7 (1), **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Hindrances: Heroic, Loyal, Stubborn

Edges: Attractive, Brave, Brawler, Charismatic, Command, Dirty Fighter, Fleet-Footed, Improvisational Fighter, Inspire, Quick, Relentless, Strong Willed,

Gear: Spear (Str+d6, Reach 1, Parry +1, 2-Hands), Throwing Axe (3/6/12, Str+d6), Leathers (+1 Armor)

CLERIC CANTON

They say the man called Cleric Canton arrived one day a few months ago, bloodied and confused, having somehow wandered in from the bower of ash trees to the north. The very same bower that Danil the Drunk visits so frequently, claiming there are “faeries” within.

Those who found him took him straight to the Enochian Temple, where the monks and nuns tended to his wounds. Though young, he was a man possessed of firm resolve and quiet authority, and the Enochian faithful saw his arrival as a gift from the Creator in the wake of losing the former Enochian priest, Father Igor Ivonov, to one of the early hunger troll attacks.

Canton apparently claimed to follow something called “the Light,” and some of those who found him recall hearing him call out once or twice to an unknown entity named “Arkanawn.” If pressed, he says only that he was apparently called through the dark forest to bring what healing and comfort he can to a world where Darkness has surely claimed victory. See *Canton’s Truth* below for more.

Cleric Canton does not *wish* to lead the Enochians, but they fall so readily to his suggestions and ideas that he is, by default, the new High Priest. Only Brother Nikita challenges his authority, which he welcomes gladly. To everyone’s confusion—especially Nikita’s—Canton has named the cantankerous monk the “Senior Deacon” of the temple. No one actually knows what that means, but it apparently involves Nikita managing the day-to-day operations of the temple while Canton continues to minister to the people where he can and tries to understand more of this place that he does not know.

Canton wears archaic armor and wields a fine silvery sword that represents the holy symbol around his neck. Blue and silver are the colors of his symbol and his tabard, the latter quite torn and tattered. The symbol is a down-turned sword, stylized, and he explains it represents “the peaceful strength of the Light.” He is a sandy-blond haired man with blue eyes and a short-cropped Vandyke cut beard.

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

Skills: Faith d10, Fighting d8, Guts d8, Healing d6+2, Knowledge (Administration) d8+2, Knowledge (Cosmology)* d8+2, Knowledge (Magic)* d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Repair d4, Riding d4, Survival d4

Charisma: +2, **Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 8 (2), **Toughness:** 10 (3)

Hindrances: Heroic, Cautious, Clueless (variant; -2 for any checks regarding knowledge of Morden)

Edges: Arcane Background (Faith, see *Canton’s Truth*), Charismatic, Healer, Scholar

Powers: *Boost Trait**, *Healing*

Power Points: n/a (see *Canton’s Truth*)

Gear: Long Sword (Str+d8, counts as silver), Plate & Chain Mail (+3 Armor), Large Shield (+2 Parry, +2 Armor vs Ranged Damage), Apothecary Kit

CANTON’S TRUTH

The idea that someone could invoke actual mystical powers from the strength of their faith is alien to the residents of Morden. Enochians have no history of such practices; their monotheistic religion has always been based on simply believing in the rightness of the Creator and his tenets, and living life according to the Three Virtues. If a particularly capable and effective member of the Enochian faith rises up at a moment of crisis, they are revered for their strength of character and the inner power that comes from their faith ... but there are no expectations of anything truly supernatural emanating from them.

Travellers from other realms who might otherwise be accustomed to a spiritual connection to their deities and beliefs usually discover a shocking new reality in Morden. The power of the Witches is such that only the soul-threatening powers of Witchcraft work here, at least as expected. For someone truly determined to maintain their faith in the face of overwhelming denial of it by the reigning powers, it is *possible* to call forth miracles. They simply must do so from their very spirit, as the flows of power from the realms of their deities and spiritual wells are shut off in Morden.

This is the reality that Canton discovered after his accidental Translation from the realm of *Shaintar* to that of the *Accursed* world of Morden. A priest of the Church of Light, he had only recently transferred from the administrative duties of the Clerics into the more active Priesthood; he had not even gone through his full commencement ceremony, which is why he still calls himself a Cleric. Accompanying a group of other Paladins and Priests on his first outing beyond the walls of Archanaya—the city-state of the Church—he encountered strange phenomena related to something called the *Godstrike Tempest*, which had apparently opened rifts in the Veil that separates Shaintar from other realms. He strayed too far from the core group, searching for answers, and found himself in the ash bower outside of Dagerov.

It has taken him quite a while to figure out how, but the initial Gifts Canton mastered have returned to him, after a fashion. Use the *No Power Points* Setting Rules from *Savage Worlds Deluxe*, with the following additional modifications:

- **No Bennies** may be spent when rolling anything to do with Faith.

- After rolling to invoke a miracle, Canton must make an immediate Vigor check at the same penalties as the Faith check. On a raise, he is fine. With a success, he suffers a Fatigue, and with a failure, he suffers two Fatigue. If his Vigor die rolls a 1, he is Incapacitated by Fatigue and will die without care.
- (*)Note that Canton's Knowledge about Cosmology and Magic come from his studies while in Shaintar. He suffers a -2 (loses his *Scholar* bonus) when examining matters of Cosmology or Magic in Morden. As well, note that he only has the capacity to use *Boost Trait*, not the normally attached *Lower Trait* part of the Power.

TOWN GUARD

These are the Dagerov locals (and the occasional wanderer with some fighting spirit who decides to settle down in the area) serving under the Boyars to protect the town. Ostensibly, they serve the people. Folks like Corporal Golyubev and his friends work to fulfill that role as best they can. Most of the Guard serve the direct interests of the Boyars.

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

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)

PETULANT PUMPKINS

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities

Thorny Stems/Slicing Leaves: Str+d6.

Long Tendrils: +1 Reach.

Construct: Petulant Pumpkins are synthetic beings. They add +2 to recover from being Shaken, do not suffer additional damage from called shots, never suffer Wound Modifiers, and do not suffer from disease or poison.

Plant: Immune to Fear and Tests of Will.

Weakness (Cold Iron): Petulant Pumpkins are a creation of the Fey. They suffer +4 damage from weapons made from cold iron.

The Banes

For the hunger trolls and gorge wolves, use the stats in *Accursed*, starting on page 114. For most of the encounters, especially where there are a lot of them, Game Masters should consider treating them as Extras. For smaller groups, or any fights in the actual caverns, most or all encountered banes should be Wild Cards.



GRIGORI THE HUNGER TROLL BOSS

Grigori is one of those rare hunger trolls who is both intelligent enough and brutal enough to bring a large group of his brethren to heel and organize them into something akin to a controlled force. Of course, all he really has to do is make sure they get food—constantly. So far, his gang of beasts has managed to clear out every scrap of food south and southwest of their position; they have not wiped Dagerov utterly off the face of the map purely because the rusalka, Svetlana, has so far forbidden it.

Grigori is still trying to decide whether or not to just eat her and hope Old Grandmother does not find out. Use the hunger troll write up for Grigori, but make these substitutions.

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

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d12, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Battle) d4, Survival d6

Pace: 9; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 13

As well, consider him Size 5, which makes him Large (+2 to be hit by smaller beings). He is also *Fleet-Footed* and has the Combat Edges *Improved Frenzy* and *First Strike*.



HELLBREATH THE ALPHA GORGE WOLF

Hellbreath is the name the few survivors who have ever encountered him gave this horrific pinnacle of his species. Cleverer than most, and certainly more vicious by far, Hellbreath is the Alpha of the gorge wolf pack that serves Grigori.

Use the gorge wolf stats, but make the following substitutions.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Tracking d10

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 11

Note that he does *not* have the (A) designator next to his Smarts. Hellbreath is not a genius, certainly, but he has a higher level of awareness than his fellow beasts. He can understand Grigori quite well, following orders too complex for most animals.

Hellbreath is also Size 3. While he is subject to the Blood Frenzy as all other gorge wolves, he chooses to attack foes over friends so long as any enemies exist.

Player Handout

My fellow Penitents,

The war for our homes continues. Some of our battles are glorious and deadly affairs. Most victories, however, derive from the tireless efforts to secure the resources we need to fight, and the support of those who hate us to face those who all must hate.

I must ask you to take on what might be deemed a tedious matter, but rest assured it is a mission of vital import to the Order and our plans. I dare not spell out the specifics here, but I urge you to act with determination in this matter. Your mission will help spell the difference between mere raids and skirmishes and a concerted effort to engage in a war of rebellion against the invading foes of Morden.

Within the vast lands of Steppengrad lies a town called Dagerov. The Boyars who own the lands have maintained a set of ten cannons, kept out of the hands of the Grand Coven's forces. Take the assets we have sent with you and negotiate for the cannons, bringing them back to Massif Helsenn in Valkenholm before the spring thaw. Whatever you must do to get those cannons, short of harming the populace of course, is acceptable in the eyes of the Order. The merchant princes may not see things in as enlightened a fashion, of course, determining their own needs greater than that of the whole of Morden.

You must help them understand the greater good.

-Victor Von Drake, Lord Knight-Commander, Order of St. Vitus