

THE RUINED CITY

BOOK 1 OF THE RUINED MAN CAMPAIGN



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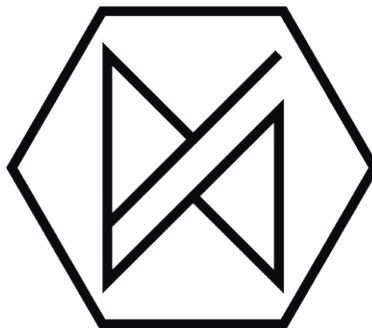
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Horror and Dismay in the Westlands!

~Barry Jansen van Rensburg

From the West Lands district just inside the bounds of the Great City Array, comes a bleak account of a tragic affair. Murder most foul, a phrase often used, but this author has never seen a more foul deed committed than what transpired on the streets of West Lands in the dark hours of the night ere yesterday. For those of a sensitive disposition, the Herald pleads you to read no further.

Late last night, when all good and reasonable men had long since returned to their beds, the Alderman of the West Lands district was taking his last moonlight stroll through his district. What occurred next cannot be determined as there were no witnesses. Speaking to the residents in nearby houses, all that this author has been able to determine is that Alderman Samuel Witters was seen walking down Lodewyk Lane. Somewhere along his walk, he left the sight of those few watching. A short time later there was a blinding flash of light that was seen across the neighbouring streets. When a few brave residents ventured forth to investigate, they found the Alderman deceased.

If it were merely that simple, this author could sleep well tonight, but alas it is not. The residents who found the Alderman saw a sight so grisly it will surely haunt them for the rest of their lives. The Alderman was not just deceased, he was mutilated beyond all human reasoning. The Alderman was found pinned spread-eagled against the wall of the local general store, but there were no nails or spikes used to hold up the poor man. Instead he was pinned to the wall with his own bones. The bones of his lower legs and arms were removed and pushed through his flesh and the wall behind him.

This scene of horror did not end here, dear readers. As if pinning a man to a wall by his own bones were not enough, Alderman Witters' eyes, ears, nose, and tongue had been cut out. Where they are now, none can say, but the poor man will spend the life after this without his senses. To finish this macabre display of villainy, the Alderman's entrails were removed from his body and was used to construct a crude array at his feet. Perhaps most devious and dastardly was the Air rune painted above the Alderman's head. What could this possibly mean?

The Chief constable of the West Lands district has thus far been adamant that there will be no official comment at this, citing the horrific nature of the crime and political popularity of the victim. Understandable, perhaps, but

it is the Herald's opinion that the good people of Middelburg deserve to know the truth, the whole truth, and nothing less. To that end, this author had managed to spend a paltry few minutes with a constable willing to divulge some information. To protect this brave man from the iron fist of the constabulary, his identity shall be a closely guarded secret.

What the constable was able to relate to this author did not inspire confidence. To put it as briefly as possible, the constabulary knows as little of this crime as the Herald does, maybe even less. The investigations done by the constables in the short span of time since the murder occurred has not turned up anything worth mentioning. However, it may be in what the constables did not find that holds the answer to this abominable conundrum.

The constables have spent their time speaking to any and all living nearby that could have been of help. Not a single person saw what happened to the Alderman, but this we knew already. What was more curious is that no person saw anyone coming or going into the street where the murder and desecration occurred. There were also no footprints, bloody or otherwise, leading to or from the scene other than those of the constables. No resident nearby heard any sound of a door or window opening or breaking that could have indicated that a mad murderer forced his way into an innocent's house. To all knowledge, the murderer simply appeared, killed the Alderman, desecrated his corpse and then vanished without the slightest trace.

The constables also have very few avenues of interest at this time. With so little information about the crime itself, how could anyone begin to piece together who the criminal might be. There is, of course, the obvious solution: those that had grievances with the Alderman, but he was a politician and like all politicians his enemies, potential or real, came from all walks of life. It would be nearly impossible to track down the killer amongst this vague and myriad group.

In contrast, this author has another suspicion. The way the body was desecrated speaks almost of a ritual, a sacrament. It is in this author's humble opinion, gained through many years of experience, that the murderer of Alderman Witters is a religious minded fellow. A zealot is the murderer we must seek, but a zealot of which religion? Surely the civilised folk of the Progenitorist or Prodigalist faiths could not be behind this and even if one of their flocks were so debased, nothing of the nature of crimes points to either the Heavenly Mother, Father, or

Bür. Even the Neoists, truth be told, seem to be innocent in all of this.

The Completists, on the other hand, who can trust them? Strange, queer people are they with an unnatural, and inhuman some say, faith. Could they have done this perhaps in retaliation for being secluded in the Docks District? Like a disease, their faith always wants to multiply and spread and we must put a stop to that. Could this be vengeance? Maybe, but there is another faith who has grievances of equal weight with us: the Eilanni, those old pagans claiming to be the true Alfresians. Perchance it was them, trying to strike first in a war of terror to take back the island from their so-called usurpers.

These are valid options and the constabulary would do well to investigate these religions. We can never be too careful with such deviants in our midst. However, there is one avenue that is still left untraveled in this narrative of horror, one suspect not yet interrogated: the Cultists. Oh yes, not just any cultists, but the Cultists, or as they enjoy calling themselves: The Seekers. These wretched offshoots of the Runists have always been a plague on our city, spreading their miserable gospel to the poorest among us and encouraging uprisings and revolutions. All to find this unborn god of theirs.

This author specifically asked the constable during the interview about the Starchild Cult and, while he admitted they could find no evidence tying the Cult to the crime thus far, the "uniqueness," as the constable put it, of the crime scene does match the level of insanity seen among the Cultists. He also divulged to this author that there has been an increase in the amount of petty crimes and vandalism done by the Cult in the poorer areas of the city. The mark of the Starchild have been seen painted and daubed on many a wall in Oldtown and the surrounding Districts, making the constabulary wary of another riot in Oldtown.

Could it have been a zealot in the Cult, driven by their aberrant dogma, that murdered the Alderman? Could this be one piece of their puzzle to find their unborn god? Only time will tell, but if this is indeed the Cult's doing, then who knows how many murders they could have planned for us upstanding citizens? Are we to live in fear for the rest of our days? This author thinks not, dear reader, as this author has complete faith in the Middelburg Constabulary as you should.

INTRODUCTION



Welcome ladies and gentlemen to the glorious Grand City of Middelburg, a veritable hive of scum and saints, heroism and villainy. A city of walls, runes, and gold, Middelburg is where everyone that is anyone comes to make their fortune. Anything can happen in Middelburg and everything under the sun is sold somewhere on these streets. Whatever you can imagine, you can find it here.

This book, and the three that follow it, will take you through the city, its districts, and its streets, to show you everything you need to know Middelburg better than your own hometown. Each chapter will concentrate on a handful of districts that will also be the focus of that chapter's mission so that you can journey through the districts as you read about them.

But this is no mere book about Middelburg, it is a campaign, and campaigns mean trouble. The question, however, is what is this trouble that is stirring in Middelburg? Who is the villain and what does he want? It is a mystery and like all mysteries, it is up to you to discover the clues, piece together the story, uncover the villain, and stop him. Do that and you might just save a million lives.

THE BOOK STRUCTURE

This book is divided into four chapters, each chapter telling a part of the story. Each chapter is split between the Middelburg section and the Mission section. The Middelburg section will focus on a few of the city's districts, providing information and lore on the district and some points of interest within them. The Mission section will, as the name suggests, focus on the game that you will be playing. This is where your story will be told.

The trouble in Middelburg is a horrific one, a gruesome one, a terrifying one. The layout of the book reflects this. The sections of the book are coloured either bone or blood. This will tell you what parts are for the GMs only and what parts are for everyone. The Middelburg sections of each chapter are coloured light-bone and the Mission sections are coloured blood-red. Players, make sure to avoid reading the blood-red coloured Mission sections, otherwise you will spoil the story for yourself. Don't worry, each Mission section is prefaced by a page with just the title of the mission so you'll know when you hit it. Use the contents page to just skip to the next city section.



Other than blood and bone, there are also the gold coloured sections, these are the rules and other meta sections of the book that look much the same as in the Runed Age corebook. This campaign book does not contain the full rules for the Runed Age (those can be found in the Runed Age corebook), but the campaign does have some unique mechanics that you should know about. The gold coloured sections will also contain all the arrays that are used in the missions by the NPCs, so GMs and players can both use these as a reference when they are brought up in the missions.

THE RUINED MECHANICS

A nightmare stalks Middelburg, and the people fear for their lives, or at least they will be very soon. If you are not one of the wealthy and powerful elite in Middelburg, the city can be a tough place to live at the best of times. This campaign will show you the worst of times, when the city will tear itself apart from the inside out.

There are two main mechanics unique to this campaign. The first is the Mission Social Penalty. As time goes by during the campaign, life will get tough in the city. People will get more paranoid, more fearful, more aggressive, and generally more unpleasant as the world seems to unravel around them. To simulate this, there will be a -3 penalty per mission to all Social Skill Checks starting at the second mission. During the first mission, everything will be fine, but by the end of this book in the fourth mission there will already be a -9 penalty on all Social Skill Checks by the PCs. Social interaction is the first thing to go during times of crises and the players had better prepare for this.

The second unique mechanic to this campaign is the Random Encounter Table. It's almost like the one found in the corebook, but much darker and more dangerous. During the PCs' travels through Middelburg, they will see a lot of things and encounter a lot of people. Some good, some not so good. As time passes in the

campaign and the horror of the events sink into the psyche of the city, the PCs will encounter more and more terrible things on the streets of Middelburg.

Every time PCs travel from one area to another (that is a significant distance away, not just to the neighbours), the GM will roll on the Random Encounters Table to see what or who they encounter. In the beginning the PCs will have a 50/50 chance of encountering nothing untoward whatsoever, but luck will not be on their side. Starting at the second mission, there will be a +4 Modifier added to the Random Encounter Roll each mission. The higher the result will, of course, mean the more dangerous the encounter.

By the end of this book, just walking the streets of Middelburg will be a dangerous adventure all on its own and trying to haggle or weasel your way out of, or into, a situation will become quite difficult. Plan accordingly. Life in the city will get quite difficult and your moral centre will be tested. There will come times when you will have to choose the lesser evil just to survive.

GM'S INTRODUCTION



PLAYERS, YOU SHOULD SKIP THIS PART. THIS THE BLOOD COLOURED SECTIONS YOU SHOULD AVOID. THIS SECTION IS FOR GMS ONLY. YOU DON'T WANT TO SPOIL THE PLOT FOR YOURSELVES.

GMs, the most valuable piece of advice to give you is to read this book thoroughly before starting your games. At the bare minimum, you should read each mission before playing it with your group so you have a good understanding of how it should go. There are a lot of moving parts to each mission, and there is no one way to complete them, so your players may go completely off the rails to get the job done. The more you understand the missions and their characters and events, the better you will be able to adapt to your players' actions.

Also, don't underestimate the value of the bone coloured Middelburg sections. They will cover all the important places that the PCs will visit in the missions, thus providing you with extra information about the places as well some extra trivia that you can use to make the experience more immersive for the players.

There are two stories running concurrently in

this campaign: the story the PCs will experience as the players play through; and the meta-story, the "true" story of what is happening in Middelburg. Part of that meta-story is the deterioration of Middelburg as the campaign progresses, how social interactions become more difficult and traveling the streets become more dangerous. Throughout the campaign there are also several events that impact Middelburg quite strongly. At the end of this book, for example, the city's government initiates a curfew that will make any successive missions in Middelburg far more difficult.

Those things, however, are not the heart of the meta-story. That belongs to the villain. Every story and campaign must have a villain, and this campaign's villain is a shadowy monster that stalks the city. Who, or even what, he is will remain a complete mystery to the players and even to you as GM. His identity will be revealed in the final book in this campaign, so even if players read every book and mission, they still won't know who or what the villain is and what his intentions may be.

That is not to say you, or your players, will be kept entirely in the dark. The newspaper articles at the beginning and end of

every book do provide information on the villain through the reactions of the citizens. Most importantly, however, are the clues that are found in every mission. These clues will be part of the PCs' stories and as such they may only pick up on them in hindsight, but that is the plan.

The PCs story intersects with the meta-story at every twist and turn. They are not part of the meta-story, at least not yet, but they always find themselves at the right place at the right time (or wrong place at the wrong time depending on your point of view) for them to find these clues about the villain. These clues will be about his origins, his motives, his whereabouts, and his plans. Every mission will have one clue, but you won't need to play through all the missions to discover exactly who and what the villain is. Astute players and GMs could already figure most of it out by the end of this book.

However, as GM you will need to know a little bit more about the true story of the campaign than the players. In a tabletop RPG, the players can do nearly anything they want, go where they want, speak to anyone in any way they want. This means that no campaign or story is 100% full proof. This is where the GM comes in to help get players back to the story. For this reason, we can tell you a little bit more than what the players will know.

The villain of this campaign doesn't have a name, as such, but the people of Middelburg will eventually call him the Ruined Man, and so that is what he will be referred to in the GM notes throughout this campaign. For reasons not even he knows (because he has little in the way of sanity) he has decided to make a list of people he needs to kill. Just before this campaign starts for the players, he has checked that list twice and has started killing.

Just as the players will need to look hard to discover any clues about who and what the Ruined Man is, he is also a mystery to the people of Middelburg. No one has seen his face and lived. Those that have caught the barest glimpse has described a man swaddled in rags and a

patched cloak so that no skin is visible. From his posture and frame he looks disfigured. That is all anyone has seen of him.


The people will start calling him the Ruined Man because of one simple reason: the utter debauchery and horror of his killings. He does not merely kill someone. He will desecrate their bodies, cut off and keep pieces, disembowel them, carve arrays on them and leave them unrecognisable as humans. He does have a signature though: at each of his killings he leaves a rune painted in his victim's blood. This rune isn't part of an array, it is how he counts. Each successive murder has the next rune in alphabetical order.

STRUCTURE OF THE CAMPAIGN

There will be thirteen missions in total, spread across four books. The missions will be spread out across two years of in-universe time. This means that sometimes a month or so can pass in-universe between missions.

During these breaks, we encourage you to run other missions for your players. These can serve to wrap up any loose ends from the missions, to allow some recovery from the missions, to let the players chase up any leads from clues found in the missions, but also to disguise which missions come from the campaign books. As the mystery of who and what Ruined Man is central to the campaign, by running your own missions in between the campaign ones, the players will have to pay extra attention to what is going on.

Another good way to pass the time in between campaign missions is through the Downtime mechanics found in the *Runed Age* corebook. This will give the players the most direct sense that time has passed, and it will keep them focused on the Ruined Man missions. If you just want to play a strict Ruined Man campaign, then this would be the best option.



The players may also feel that they have deciphered enough clues in order to track down the Ruined Man and end his reign of terror on the city. Allow them to do this. The Ruined Man will only stand to fight the PCs in the final mission of the campaign in Book 4, but that doesn't mean they can't take on faux Ruined Men, defeat them and think they saved the day. When they next see evidence of his crimes, the tensions will only increase.

A good faux Ruined Man to use for cases such as this is the Ruined Child encounter found at the back of this book in the Encounter Rolls, because that's exactly what a Ruined Child is. The players can also encounter the Ruined Child through normal gameplay and encountering them in other missions will make it seem as if there are several Ruined Men.

CHARACTER DEATH

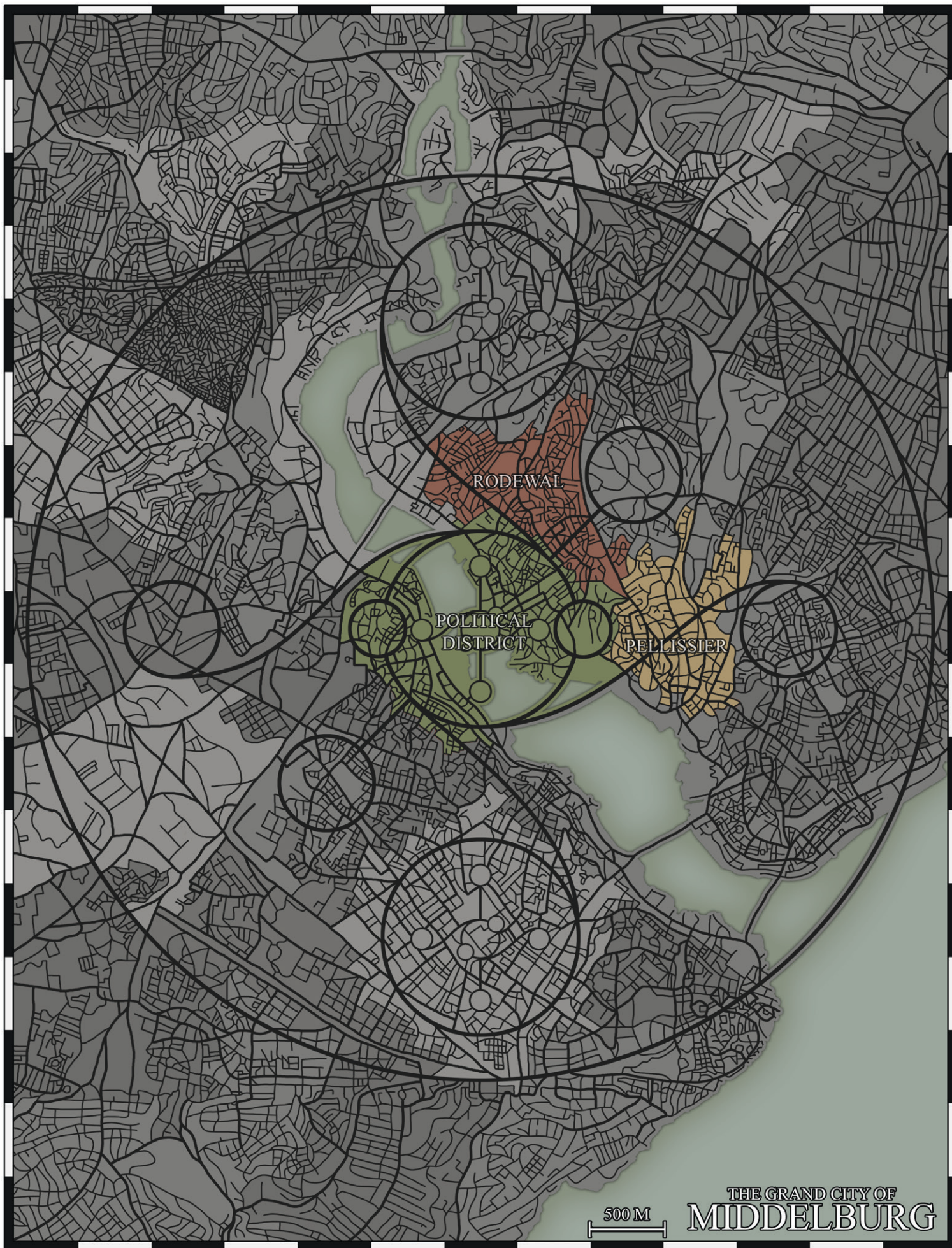
Middelburg is a dangerous city to live in at the best of times, and the Ruined Age is quite lethal at any time. This campaign will stretch both to their limits. Don't be afraid of the players losing their characters. It will undoubtedly happen several times throughout the campaign. The missions are structured in a way that the core events of one mission do not affect the next. This means that players can lose characters or swap out characters between missions without a break in the story.

Even if the players fail a mission, it will not prevent them from continuing on. You don't have to replay a mission that has been failed. Carrying on to the next one will not negatively affect the players' experience of the meta-story.

But more than anything, remember to have fun!

CHAPTER 1

I have seen the rise
of the dread moon



POLITICAL DISTRICT

CITY HALL

CITY HALL

SEALION KNIGHTS
CHAPTER HOUSE

HIGH COURT

SENATE
HOUSE

EMBASY ENCLAVE

INLAND AFFAIRS

TRIARCH TEMPLE

THE ARCHDUKE'S
ARSEHOLE INN

170 M



POLITICAL DISTRICT



The oldest part of Middelburg, although the Oldtowners would love to have that accolade, the Political District has had many names in the past couple of millennia (most recently the Palace District) but the modern philosophy of pragmatism has coined the practical, if boring, name of Political District.

With more than two thousand years of history, it should come as no surprise that there are many legends and myths that surround the district and nearly every building and street in it. From ghosts and hauntings to saints and miracles and even rumours of surviving remnants of inhuman populations living in the sewers beneath the streets. Everyone has a story to tell about the Political District.

Historians, as is their wont, take a far more somber and serious view of the Political District and its origins. They say that the Political District is indeed the oldest in the city and that there are mentions in the history books of a small town on the banks of the Tenne River where the Political District is today. Although various books have given this ancient village a variety of names, the most often used name is Bedin, and what a curious place Bedin was.

The archaeologists say there were actually three Bedins. The first was barely a village and

more of a homestead at the river's edge and came from a time before the Great Migration reached Alfresia. The native islanders built their hovels and huts with reeds and hard packed clay, living a meager existence of fishing and subsistence farming. It was a dull and dreary life and the only point of interest the archaeologists found among the remains was the remains of one of the oldest shrines in Jytoh: a shrine to the Black Hart, the horned god of the native Alfresian faith that still clings to existence today. A short, hard life worshipping the god of the underworld, perhaps more fitting to the Political District than these ancients could ever know.

The second Bedin came on the heels of the Great Migrations when the Fresian tribes conquered the island less than a century before the Great War. Seeing the advantageous location of Bedin, they took it for themselves and built it up into something more respectable. Reeds and clay were replaced with wood, stone, and thatch. At last, a true village was born, although it didn't last long. Before the Black Hart shrine faded from living memory, the Inhumans attacked and plunged the world into a century long war.

The third and final Bedin was born out of this War. When the



divine and holy Būr (or a group of skilled craftsmen if the skeptics are to be believed) created the Great City Array, it was focussed on Bedin. As small as it was, Bedin was the most populous settlement inside the City Array, but the great array covered many a farm and homestead in the surrounding countryside and the available land soon became a refuge for the Alfresians fleeing from the Inhuman onslaught.

After the War ended, the City Array became a symbol for the reconstruction of humanity and Bedin became the heart of this. Over the coming centuries the name Bedin was forgotten, replaced by Middelburg, but the manors and castles and palaces of the chiefs and lords and kings were always built in old Bedin.

While it may have more myths and legends and histories than any other district, the Political District is also the most vulnerable district in Middelburg. This is because the heart of the district is built on gargantuan bridges over the Tenne River. The entire Senate House and its attendant buildings sits on these gargantuan bridges in the centre of the Tenne River. Not

only this, but the Tenne river neatly bisects the district, allowing easy entry in the island's most important areas for any would-be invaders and conquerors.

This vulnerability has never gone unnoticed by the rulers of Middelburg. This is why in olden times the Lion Knight Chapter House (who later became the Sea Lion Knights) was constructed as part of the Palace. Since they became a scholarly order, a vast store of virgin orichalcum has been kept on hand in the District so that, at a moment's notice, the river and entire District can be sealed off. Even the sewers around the District have been constructed to carry the waters of the Tenne River downstream in such an event.

The Middelburgians have not stopped there. An entire fleet of the navy is dedicated to the defense of Middelburg and the Political District in particular. Naval ships patrol up and down the river while marines stand guard at every bridge. The Political District is not only the heart of Middelburg but of the whole Alfresia, if it falls, the entire nation may fall.

The District is not only home to the Senate




WORKING FOR THE LAW

Alfresia has always encouraged vigilantism. It eased the work of the constabulary, gave a sense of power to the population and encouraged distrust in the criminal underworld, there is no honour among thieves after all. Of all the different types of vigilantism, the one that brings the greatest glory is of course bounty hunting. Whether it is a criminal suspect that needs to be brought in for questioning, or an escaped convict wanted dead or alive, the courts and constabularies regularly post wanted signs for bounty hunters to look at.

Playing a bounty hunter is as simple as playing a criminal in the Runed Age. You can use the adventure generator at the back of the Runed Age corebook to roll for the main characters, plots and motivations as normal, but the PCs employers will always be law enforcement and the motive for the bounty will be enforcement of the law.

Bounty hunting is all about the money. Therefore, instead of gaining 1 EXP for a successful mission as per normal, gain instead one Wealth Skill Level for successful bounty hunt. Successful bounties will also allow the PCs to gain contacts in the law enforcement, so it would come in handy down the track when you need a useful ally. It could be the most important skill in bounty hunting.



House and City Hall and their attendant buildings, but also to the embassies of each foreign nation that has dealings with Alfresia. Diplomats and ambassadors from across the globe walk the streets of the Political District and they bring promises of wealth, power, and security to Alfresia. Protecting these foreign politicians safeguards the future of Alfresia.

With all the politicians and diplomats and ambassadors come a culture that is rarely seen outside the Political District. While Nieuton may have its wealthy arrogance, Temple Park its pomposity, and the League District is cosmopolitan capitalism, the Political District appears to blend all of these into one utterly unsubtle display of power. Here, the streets themselves seem to say, is where decisions are made that affect the lives of millions. The people who walk these streets echo this sentiment.

The people of the Political District are a strange lot. It is said once you step into the District, you put on a mask that you only remove once you leave, and never have truer words been spoken. The people who work in the District come from all over the city, but once here they walk and talk with such a purpose one might be forgiven for thinking that the lowliest clerk is a senator. Everything here is done with an extra sense of grandiosity and pomposity, from the protestors in front of the City Hall proclaiming a new revolution every other day, to the Triarch Temple where the priests act like the very gods they evangelize, to the Senate Chamber where the senators act and perform as if Alfresia truly was the entire world.

With such grandiosity, there is little space for the little people. One would have to look high and low to find a beggar or homeless person in the District. The constables move them on to other areas so visiting diplomats and dignitaries do not think Middelburg is a poor town. Similarly, any shop or store that is seen to not be as successful as they ought to be is removed and the owners sent packing to poorer areas so that newer and richer entrepreneurs can put on a pretty face for visitors. It may be harsh, it may be

cruel, but trade is Alfresia's bread and butter and its lifeline and so Middelburg must perform for its trading partners.

Whether it is abroad or local, foreign or domestic, at the end of the day every important judgement and decision in the political sphere of Alfresia is decided in this District. The Merchant League may proclaim they hold true power on the island, but the will of the people is made manifest in the Political District. It is a force that turned back the mad king and his fires and it is a force that will lead Alfresia to ever greater heights, for good or ill.

SENATE HOUSE

Of all the myths surrounding the Political District, the most endearing and enduring legend, however, is that of the Political District's, and thus Middelburg's, founding.

In the old throne room in the heart of the Senate House that was the old Archduke's palace there is a bare patch of land that is said to have never been built over, but is carefully tended by gardeners into the most lovely of flowerbeds. This circular flower bed, scarcely 1 metre in diameter, sits at the very centre of the Palace and thus at the very centre of the entire city. On this small patch of soil, so the legend says, Bür himself drew the great City Array across the surrounding lands using his divine powers and so gave hope to the old Fresians living here, hope of an end to the Great War and hope of a better future.

Whether Bür did indeed create the City Array, only he could say, no one today knows the truth. Clearly the locals believe it, just as they believe that it was on that very same flower bed that Bür first arrived from the heavens, but every city and town on the eastern coast of Jytoh believes it was their own town that Bür came to first. The fact that the revered flower bed sits on top of the great bridges spanning the Tenne River has not dissuaded any of the

locals believing in this myth, nor the priests and rulers from spreading the myth as far and as often as they can.

Scholars say it is because of this myth that each ruler of Middelburg has made his home on the bridges spanning the Tenne River rather than the firmer, more secure land along the river. There is a more practical reason as well says the more military and political minded: the centrum of the City Array. Politically, there is no better location for a ruler to be. To be anywhere else is to say that you are not the most important man in the city. The symbolism is unmistakable. In the militaristic sense, whoever controls the centrum controls whatever the City Array can produce.

The Senate House, as it stands today, looks nothing like the strongholds of millennia ago, but it also looks utterly different from the castles and palaces of a few centuries ago. The Senate House has been built, torn down, and rebuilt so many times that there is little record of what it looked like through the ages. When Alfresia became an Archduchy of the Kingdom of Fresland, the Archdukes stopped the cycle of rebuilding the palace and instead built on it and around until it became more of a conglomeration and a complex than a palace. When the Archdukes could no longer build outwards, they built upwards, creating a veritable city inside the Political District.

When the old Archduke dissolved the aristocracy in his youth and created the senate, the palace was remodeled for the final time. It was perhaps divine providence that the Senate Hall that sits before the throne room that marked the last remodeling done on the palace as it was the senate itself that marked the end of the Archduchy. While over the past century much work has been done on the Senate House in efforts to modernise it with climate control features, elevating and transporting platforms, no new sections have been added to the structure.


While the structure has remained the same, the interior of the palace has been thoroughly repurposed into the republican ideals of the new

Alfresia. Lavish apartments for foreign nobles have become offices, majestic ballrooms have become conference halls, and even the old throne of Alfresia has been turned into a shrine to the gods. The splendour of the old palace remains in the Senate House but none of the majesty that once filled its halls. That has been replaced with the dreaded monotony of bureaucracy.

The Senate House as it stands today can be roughly divided into four sections. The most important is the Senate Hall and its accompanying offices after which the gargantuan palace is named. The next most valued section is the Secretariat Towers, occupying the eight towers of the palace with its masses of offices and file storage chambers. Each Secretariat Tower is headed by a Secretary of State and is charged with overseeing a different department of the government. The eight secretariats are: Foreign Affairs; Security and Justice; Trade and Economy; Defence; Education; Culture and History; Runic Affairs. The ninth secretariat is the office of Inland Affairs but that is not part of the Senate House proper, rather it has been given its own building owing to its unique importance.

The other two sections of the Senate House has less to do with the government itself and more to do with ensuring the government runs at all. The so called Workers sections, occupying most of the below ground levels, are where the low level employees and labourers work to keep the high and mighty in the upper levels oblivious to the fact that it takes a veritable army of workers to keep the Senate House in its immaculate conditions. Cleaners, caterers, office clerks, errand boys, repairmen, energy workers, all go unnoticed but are understatedly invaluable.

The last section is called the Presidential Suites. Here are the apartments not only for the current president and his family but also for all prior presidents still alive. Presidents and their families are not required to vacate their apartments when they leave office, their apartments remain theirs for their entire lives. The reason for this extravagant privilege is the hope that previous presidents will be able



to share their wisdom with the new arrival. Including the current president, there are five presidents living in the Presidential Suites, so there is a high expectation on the government to perform with the knowledge and wisdom of five presidents guiding it.

INLAND AFFAIRS

The Ninth Secretariat, more colloquially referred to as the Secret Secretariat or the Abyssal Secretariat, has garnered a particular dark reputation over the past century that some would argue is thoroughly deserved.

Ostensibly, the purpose of the Secretariat of Inland Affairs is to document everything there is to know about Alfresia, from censuses to crop outputs to the number of university graduates per year. They do this with such a great efficiency that most of the towering buildings of the Inland Affairs consist only of file cabinets detailing everything there is to know about Alfresia. There are rumours that there is a file on every man and woman in Alfresia and that no file is ever thrown away, merely moved to the labyrinthine basement levels none are sure even exists.

It is this mystery that surrounds the Inland Affairs that has been responsible for its less than flattering reputation. The records they keep are supposed to be used by the Eight Secretariats to better govern the republic, but more and more it has come to light that the Inland Affairs have used the records to target undesirable individuals that could pose a threat to the government's control of the island. It is not uncommon for men and women too outspoken about the government to go missing in the dead of night, the few witnesses telling only of a group of black clad constables escorting the victims into an armoured carriage.

The truth that is hidden from the citizens of Alfresia is that the Secretariat of Inland Affairs is the dark twin to the Alfresian Intelligence Services. Both were born of King Markus VI's Inquisition. While the Alfresian Intelligence

Services have carried that heritage openly, Inland Affairs have hidden it in order to better carry out their work. The duties of the old Inquisition have been split between the two departments: the AIS is responsible for protecting Alfresia from external threats and Inland Affairs is responsible for protecting the nation from internal threats and that is where their immense libraries of information come into play.

By rebelling against the mad king, the newly formed Republic of Alfresia opened the door to further rebellions. After all, if it was done once who is to say it wouldn't happen again? This is the real reason behind the information gathering of the Inland Affairs. Inland Affairs does nothing to prevent protests and displays of disapproval of the government, these must be allowed so that the public can believe their voice matters, but outright sedition or conspiracies thereof must be nipped in the bud before they are allowed to fester.

SEA LION KNIGHTS CHAPTER HOUSE

The Most Noble Order of the Knights of the Sea Lion were once called the Royal Fresian Order of the Knights of the Lion of Alfresia. They were merely a chapter of the Lion Knights and not an order unto themselves. But this was centuries ago during the end of the Five Kingdoms period, when the King of the Fresians bowed to the Heavenly Emperor of Man.

Since the earliest days of the first Empire of Man, the emperor kept order in his lands through the Imperial Legions, stationing them within every sizable town and city. The Legions have only ever been loyal to the Imperial Throne and so the emperor kept them close to his vassals. Should any of his governors, viceroys, dukes or counts have delusions of grandeur, their rebellions, and their lives, would be over before it had a chance to become a threat to the empire. Even today

with the Imperial Throne at its weakest point in history, the princes and nobles of the empire are hesitant to start an outright revolt because of the Imperial Legions at their doors.

King Hendrik of the Five Kingdoms of Fresia knew this when the Heavenly Emperor stood before him and demanded fealty. King Hendrik knew his people would be prisoners in their own land, watched over by the Legions, so he made one request of the emperor: that he be allowed to create an order of knights loyal only to the Fresian crown, and thus to the emperor, to command the Legion in Fresia. The emperor agreed, wishing to bring a quick end to a costly war.

And so the Order of the Lion was created. The knights would forsake any title, be loyal only to the crown, and command the Legionnaires in Fresia. For their troubles they would be given immense privileges. Less than a decade later there were hundreds of Lion Knights across Fresia. Less than a generation there were thousands. When the Kingdom of Fresland broke away from the empire, the king had his own personal army at his beck and call. They became to the Fresland king what the Legions were to the emperor, a force to keep his people in check.

As time went on, the Order evolved. In modern Wesfresland they have remained the Order of the Lion, but in Alfresia during the days of the archduchy it became a marine force, and later a scholarly order, called the Order of the Sea Lion; in Hallei it became a hospitaller order, and separated from the Order of the Lion completely, called the Order of the Hunted Stag; and in Ossensee the order lost its martial traditions and become little more than an aristocratic title called the Order of the Dandelion.

The Sea Lion Chapter House tells this story of the Order's evolution. It was originally built as a fortress for the Lion Knights to keep an eye on the ruler of Middelburg and the imposing facade of the fortress have been carefully preserved over the centuries. With high walls

and redoubts, permanently carved arrays, and plenty of emplacements for cannons, the fortress was a symbol of the force and power the King of the Fresians could unleash at a moment's notice. The inside of the fortress was spartan as befit a knightly order. All it contained was barracks, armouries, store rooms, gaol cells, and great open halls that could be used for dining or reception purposes.

The Chapter House as it stands today could not be more different than the old fortress. While a small armoury has been maintained, the rest of the fortress has been given over to the scholarly nature of the modern Sea Lion Knights. Barracks have been transformed into comfortable apartments and studies, the great halls into the second largest library in Middelburg, its gaols into vaults for securing the most valuable of books and scrolls. It even has classrooms and lecture halls that the Sea Lion Knights use for conferences where they and scholars from across Jytoh can come together and share their knowledge.

That is not to say that the Sea Lion Knights have completely forgotten their martial tradition. They still have three martial duties to perform. The first and most important is the guarding of the entrances to the Senate House; the second is guarding the Chapter House; and the third is providing ceremonial guards for certain public and religious festivals such as the equinox festival. Because of this they have kept the training yard in the fortress and regularly invite officers from the Alfresian army to train the Knights so they keep at least some semblance of a martial order.

CITY HALL

The dissolution of the aristocracy by the old Archduke left him with a dilemma. Previously, the dukes and graves governed their respective parts of Alfresia with minimal input from the Archduke, leaving him to govern the great city of Middelburg himself. With the rest of the

IT'S NOT WHAT YOU KNOW

MEMBERS ONLY

If the Political District teaches you one thing, let that be that it is impossible to work your way to the top all by yourself. You need other people, to blackmail, bribe and manipulate; to trade, barter and pass information. In short, it doesn't matter what side of the law you live on, you will need contacts if you are to succeed in Middelburg.

While you start off every new character with Contact Points to spend in creating a few starter-Contacts, eventually you'll find that you need more than what they can give. After all, every new day presents a new challenge, and your old Contacts may not be able to help. So get out there and start building those networks. Remember that, with GM's consent, you can turn any friendly(ish) NPC into a new Contact that you can use later on. So it's up to you to build that reputation, get your name out there, and make powerful friends.

For you GMs, remember that every organisation needs something to do, and in the corrupt city of Middelburg, this usually means something illegal. If one or more of your players start to show some interest in a specific organisation, begin tailoring your missions and adventures to include this specific organisation. The best way is to start subtle, perhaps by having them as victims or third parties to the adventure and mission, so your players can get their introductions before letting this organisation give the players missions.

aristocracy gone, however, the Archduke had to govern Alfresia himself. He could not rule the nation and Middelburg both, but would not allow the city to fall completely under the control of anyone else.

At that time Middelburg contained a fifth of Alfresia's population. Should one man control it and decide to turn against the Archduke there would be little he could do to stop it, especially if the Great City Array was also used against him. Therefore the Archduke created a mayor for each district of Middelburg and constructed the City Council Hall where these mayors could meet and govern the city as a collective. The Archduke trusted that each mayor's ambitions would prevent them from working together against him.

He was right. Every mayor on the council wanted to be king and none would help another to succeed. However, as with so many things in the Political Sphere of Alfresia, this all changed with the War of Independence. When the island turned against Markus 'the Incendiary', the rebel senate needed a united Middelburg, knowing that Middelburg was the lynchpin of

the Alfresian defence. Thus the office of Grand Mayor was created and the previous mayors have been relegated to aldermen of their respective districts.

Today, Grand Mayor Lukas Smit is the second most powerful man in Alfresia. Some argue he may even be more powerful than President de Klerk, as the President needs to answer to the senate, but the Grand Mayor controls the council of aldermen. The records at Inland Affairs shows that more than a millions people live and work in Middelburg and these records do not cover the transients, those undocumented in Oldtown, or the tens of thousands of foreign visitors. The citizens of Middelburg account for more than a quarter of Alfresia's population and all of these bow to the whims of the Grand Mayor.

The City Hall is the private fortress of the Grand Mayor. The work done on it since the days of the Archduchy is nearly the opposite of that done on the Senate House. Where the Senate House was turned from a majestic palace into a bureaucratic office, the City

Hall has been turned from the original administrative building, intended only for the public work of the mayors, into a palace dedicated to the ambitions of the successive Grand Mayors.

Less than two thirds of the City Hall as it stands today is dedicated to the running of the city. The rest is the expensive, palatial manor of the Grand Mayor, rivalling the Presidential Suites of the Senate House. It must be said that those parts of the City Hall not given over to the greed and corruption of the Grand Mayors have performed well in the service of the city. Styling themselves after the secretariats of the senate, the eight Council Departments strive to outdo one another in the eyes of the Grand Mayor and his council in order to secure better funding. Whatever corruption and back alley deals occur seldom get out of hand as it is in the Department Heads best interest to inform on their colleagues and whatever they miss, the Inland Affairs are sure to discover.

One department of the council that differs from the secretariats is the Department of League Relations. The Merchant League is a powerful force in the city, bringing in nearly as much money in trade as the government does. Because of this, they require special treatment, special privileges to ensure this influx of money continues. Each trade family has a liaison in the department to advocate their agendas in the City Hall and it does seem that more often than not the League businesses prosper more than the independent operators.

HIGH COURT

The office of Supreme Judge of Alfresia was a hereditary title of the Archdukes that the last Archduke refused to give up when he dissolved the aristocracy. The final arbiter of law in the nation was too lucrative and far too powerful a position to surrender to any other man.


Since Alfresia's independence, the Supreme Judge of Alfresia has become as powerful and

wealthy a position as the Archduke thought. The Supreme Judge is now counted among the six most powerful persons in Alfresia, colloquially known as the six Princes of Middelburg. The other five are the President, Field Marshal of the Military, the Matriarch and Patriarch together of the Progenitorist faith, the High Priest of the Eternal Prodigalists and the four Patriarchs of the Fresian Merchant League as one. These six persons and institutions control the legislative, judicial, economical, and military branches of the government as well as the two dominant religions.

With such a high position, the Supreme Judge does not hear just any case. The petty crimes and everyday violent offenders are seen to in the lesser courts spread out across Middelburg and the rest of Alfresia; these lesser courts are usually connected to the constabularies. The cases heard in the High Court are ones deemed "politically significant" by local and national governments. Sedition, treason, political corruption, assassinations of high profile figures, these are the cases heard, the cases that the government want to be seen to be taking seriously.

"Public Justice" has always been the motto of the High Court. and transparency had always been crucial to its operations. Justice done behind closed doors is fertile ground for conspiracy theories about dictatorial governments, and it does not take long for talk of conspiracies in dimly lit taverns to become talk of rebellion. The Archduke knew this well as does the modern democratic government. This is merely one reason why the operations carried out by the Inland Affairs are kept secret. It is not hypocrisy if no one finds out, after all.

The High Court was built to perfectly compliment the Supreme Judge's philosophy of public justice. Built as an enormous theatre, the semicircle of tiered seating (complete with boxes for the rich and powerful) can accommodate well over a thousand spectators. In the centre is, of course, the stage where the accused, the witnesses and the attorneys perform as if this was



an opera. Across the stage from the seating is the towering bench behind which the Supreme Judge sits, watching over the performance like a hawk.

Surrounding the High Courtroom is the infrastructure required to support it. Kilometres of hallways connect office upon office for the attorneys, prosecutors, and clerks needed to run the most powerful court in Alfresia. The Supreme Judge's office is more like an apartment suite, containing everything necessary to keep the Judge at ease and focussed on his work. The High Court also sports its own gaol below ground to hold anyone awaiting trial or sentencing, as well as a small constabulary to guard it and the High Court itself.

EMBASSY ENCLAVE

A fairly recent development, the Enclave came into being with the republic itself. As a vessel of Fresland, the Archduchy had no need to liaise with foreign nations. Fresland did an excellent job at that, and should the need arise in Alfresia then the diplomats and ambassadors could always stay in the Archduke's palace. It was all a wonderfully simple arrangement, but then Alfresia became a republic and had to fend for itself. And so the embassy enclave was built.

Built over an old castle that was destroyed during Markus VI's invasion of Middelburg was built for the express purpose of bettering relations with foreign nations. To achieve this, each nation was given their own embassy in the enclave and these were grouped together by culture to avoid any cultural insensitivities. This has the desired effect of making each nation feel valued by Alfresia and connecting the foreign visitors in Middelburg to their homeland. The greater communication between the visitors in Middelburg, their embassies, and their home nations increased the amount of trade done in Alfresia immensely, filling the island's empty coffers after the hard won War of Independence.

It wasn't only the Alfresian government involved in creating the Enclave, the Merchant

League offered to pay for much of the construction work and even sent their best architects to design the Enclave, without ever asking for anything in return. It was never assumed that the League did this out of the goodness of their hearts, but the Alfresian government simply did not have the money to construct the Enclave. While the League never technically saw a return on the money they invested in the Enclave, they got something much better: contacts.

Each nation having its own private embassy may be advantageous for the foreigners in the city, it is of even greater use to the League. The great trade families can send liaisons to any embassy they wish and broker and trade as they wish without being disturbed or spied on. The Alfresian government can't do anything about these brokered deals as the Merchant League is legally a sovereign nation which is negotiating with another sovereign nation. All they can do is hope that a fraction of the inhuman amounts of money traded back and forth will find its way into Alfresian pocketbooks.

TRIARCH TEMPLE

The Triarch Temple is the most important temple in Middelburg, and thus Alfresia, but not because of how old it is, or how rich it is, who the priests are, or even who built it, but because of where it is. It is certainly not the oldest Temple in Middelburg, nor by far the wealthiest and it was an old forgotten king that ordered its construction; it is not even the only temple where more than one faith gathers, but none of that matters. What matters is that the Triarch Temple is the only temple in the Political District.

The influence that the Triarch Temple has gained from its location is not to be understated. The most powerful politicians in Middelburg attend the services there and the temple has gained more patrons over the years from those who wish to be seen as both devout and philanthropic

than it can handle. The priests say they have put this money to good use in the temple, but as the priests of the temple always leave far richer than when they arrived, and the renovations to the temple are few and far between, it is a complete mystery where this patronage has gone.

That is not to say the temple is a complete hovel. While it may not match the splendour of the Eternal Temple or High Cathedral, it is a marvel of architecture. The temple is a single, vast circular chamber with a domed roof pierced with an oculus. On four sides of the temple are semicircular side chambers, open to the temple, complete with their own domed rooves and interspersed between these are the four entrances to the temple. Three of these side chambers are chapels, one devoted to each of the Mother, Father and to Bür. The fourth chamber is the sacristy.

The inside of the temple is lavishly decorated in gold, silver, copper and as many coloured variations of orichalcum as one can imagine. Ostensibly religious in design, the childish extravagance of the decorations speak only of the political show of power and influence of the temple. The centrepiece of the temple's architecture are the runic pillars interspersed between the marble pillars holding up the domed roof. An array on the ceiling creates glowing water which then falls towards an array on the floor which disintegrates the water on contact, giving the illusion of light filled watery pillars holding up the heavy dome. The energy needed to keep the arrays powered was once done by the boiler down in the catacombs beneath the temple, but with the advent of the Lightning rune, the energy is taken straight from the power grid and stored in vast runic batteries in the catacombs.

The sermons and homilies are similarly as lavish and impractical as the temple and are little more than political propaganda draped in religious overtones. This stems from when the temple was created, back in the early days of the Heavenly Empire of Man. The forgotten king

of the island, or at least this part of the island saw the Emperor's triarch and, as so many other kings have done since Emperor Oberon, created his own triarch to show that the gods favoured him. So he created the Temple for them to live in. However, as time passed the Patriarch and Matriarch of the Progenitorists and the High Priest of Bür migrated to other temples, leaving the Triarch Temple empty of a triarch but in need of priests. Thus came the politically minded priests, hoping to gain influence and power by serving so close to the kings and dukes and archdukes.

You can run as far in this life as you want, sooner or late god's scythe will find you.

~Bishop Giorgio Zeni

Below the temple are the Ouentyd Catacombs, the last resting place of many of the greatest men and women to ever lived on the island. The place of greatest honour in the catacombs are the Water Tombs, so named because of the windows carved into the tomb walls that look out over the Tenne river. The last four Archdukes and their entire families are interred here but if not for the perseverance of the priests, the last remnants of the Archduchy of Alfresia may have been destroyed. The local bureaucrats had wanted to construct a new sewer through the catacombs as it was "the most sensible use of the land", but the priests would not be moved and as the land below the Triarch Temple belongs to the faith, a political standoff ensued. For almost three years the bureaucrats and priests argued back and forth until finally they reached a compromise: the bureaucrats could have their sewer beneath the Temple as long as it did not disturb the catacombs. Thus a sewer was built as close to the catacombs as could be without ever touching them. The spite of the bureaucrats could be heard in the sound of rushing water echoing through the catacombs.



THE ARCHDUKE'S ARSEHOLE INN

The most famous inn in Middelburg, or so they say, but the Arsehole could not have moved further from its origins had it tried. What began as an insult and challenge to the authority of the day has become a stylish, upmarket tavern catering to the rich and political elite.

The Arsehole was opened a few centuries ago just after the death of the first Archduke of Alfresia. The Archduke only had two sons and unbeknownst to one of them, the Archduke had a favourite son. The not-quite-so-loved second born son soon discovered who the apple of his father's eye was when the last will and testament was read after the Archduke's death. The second born son knew he would not inherit the Archduchy, that was his elder brother's birthright and he had come to terms with that, but his father had many a duchy and noble holding in Alfresia and on the continent and he had thought he would get something. He could not have been more wrong. His father left him absolutely nothing. The first born son inherited it all.

With not a penny to his name and owning only the clothes upon his back, the second born son left the palace with his family in tow. The news spread quickly and he became the laughing stock of the eastern coast of Jytoh. The second born son finally found work for him and his wife in the kitchen of a slightly run down inn not far from the palace. Years passed until he had finally saved up enough money to purchase the inn from the kind old man who gave him his first and only job. He named this tavern in honour of his brother and dear departed father.

Thus the Archduke's Arsehole was opened. Another scandal erupted across Fresia, but the second born son had endured one scandal, he could endure another. This time the scandal brought more customers through the inn's doors than he could manage, so he had little to complain about. His brother, however, had become the laughing stock now, but there was

little he could do. He could not imprison his brother, nor could he close the inn. He would look cowardly and it would only fuel the scandal.

So the Arsehole continued on down the years, attracting the rebellious and immature at heart. When the mad King Markus VI started enacting the harsh and cruel taxation on Alfresia, it was in the Archduke's Arsehole that the senators and commanders and merchants began their plan for Independence. It is said that the constitution for the new Confederate Republic of Alfresia was drafted in this very inn.

But the rebels of the war became the politicians of the peacetime and still they came to the Arsehole and so the Arsehole changed to accommodate its new type of clientele. Gone were the scoundrels, the troublemakers and the rebels, replaced with politicians and bourgeois merchants. The inn has changed to match it. The finest local ales, the richest imported Valion wines, venison from the empire, the menu of the Arsehole has come to resemble a boutique restaurant.

The Archduke's Arsehole has a tremendous history and rich traditions that will ensure it continues operating for the foreseeable future, but the spirit that created it has long since passed, replaced by cold capitalism and vain pride.

RODEWAL

◆ *THREE POINT BARBER*

◆ CARSTEN VAN DAM
MEMORIAL PARK

◆ *HALF STREET INN*

OTTO'S APOTHECARY ◆

SHRINE OF THE TRUE
FRESIAN FAITH ◆

CONSTABULARY ◆

120 M



RODEWAL



Nestled between Temple Park and the Military and Political District, Rodewal is one of the few so called “landlocked” districts. Landlocked not in the traditional sense but because most Middelburgians see these districts as travel routes rather than the destination of their travels.

Rodewal has always played an important role in Middelburg’s history, if only in a quiet and understated manner. History knows of no revolutions that began here, no famous political assassinations, no kings or prophets were born here and no inventions were created here to change the world. What has occurred in Rodewal, and what will most likely continue for centuries, is the unnoticed support that the important districts of Middelburg need in order to keep the city running.

Rodewal has always been a predominantly residential district, providing homes for those who worked in the surrounding districts. This was more pronounced in the distant past when the entire population of Middelburg fit inside the arrayed districts. There are of course stores and businesses in Rodewal, nowhere in Middelburg is free from trade, but these stores and businesses are geared towards the residents and passersby rather than to the all consuming dream of wealth. You will find many a small tavern and

inn, restaurant and food stall, and the ever present general store in Rodewal.

Rodewal may not have everything you desire, but it has enough for the small day to day needs. This has almost become a motto for the people in Rodewal. Family, friends and the community is very important in this small district. Most here know their neighbours quite well and are more than happy to lend a helping hand to those in need. This strong sense of community, however, comes at a cost. The people here are friendly, but only to the “right” people.

The Rodewallians are very protective of their small piece of Middelburg. The surrounding districts are ever wishing to encroach on Rodewallian soil, for bureaucratic purposes such as taxation or voting blocs. The Rodewallians have fought tooth and nail to keep Rodewal exactly as it is and to their credit the size of Rodewal has remained unchanged for well over a century. This conservatism has also led Rodewal to be one of the least friendly districts to foreigners as the people see immigrants as changing the face of Rodewal. The Rodewallians have an unending challenge to keep Rodewal unchanging.

In a sense, the

Rodewallians are a microcosm of the larger rural Alfresia: friendly, patient, kind, generous but fiercely loyal, protective and insular. While the rest of Alfresia may change, the Rodewallians are holding dear to the traditionalist Alfresian values.

OTTO'S APOTHECARY

pothecaries in Middelburg are, strangely enough, few and far between. Otto's Apothecary is one of the precious few that can be found outside of the hospitals, hospices, and the university. This is because the art of the apothecary, as with the other fields of medicine, have long been associated with religious institutions. This became especially apparent after the founding of the Progenitorist Sororal Hospitaller Orders whose mission it was, and still is, to tend to the sick, the weak, and the dying.

As the Hospitallers Orders grew and more Orders sprang from these and the restriction on tending only to the faithful fell into disuse, the notion that the art of healing fell under the Heavenly Mother's, and thus all women's, domain became entrenched in the minds of eastern Jytoh. As such it has been rare to find a male surgeon, physician, or apothecary outside the Neoist lands. Only recently with the spread of more unorthodox and liberal interpretation of the dominant Prodigalist faith in Alfresia has more men stepped up to the task, albeit with trepidation of being seen as effeminate.

Otto van Heuwel is therefore an utter rarity in Middelburg, but despite the traditional shortcomings, he has done well for himself. Situated almost exactly halfway between the great Mother's Hospital and Father's Hospital, Otto's apothecary is well suited to taking care of the basic needs of Rodewal and the districts surrounding it. Otto doesn't get much business from those in other parts of Middelburg, but that is the way he likes it. Otto cares greatly for his fellow Rodewallians. He's come to learn the names and histories of all his customers in order

to better serve his community.

This kindness has paid off and his customers have responded with a kindness of their own. Very few now leave to visit the hospitals in the north and south of Middelburg, preferring Otto's potions and remedies for their aches and pains. Otto's business has grown so much that he has had to hire an assistant, a young woman named Lydia, to help with the store. He has also made a contract with the local chapter of the Order of the Eastern Dawn to have a sister come in once a week to care for his customers in a way an apothecary can't but a trained physician can.


Otto's entrepreneurial spirit has even caught the attention of the University of Middelburg and the Heisenstein trade family. The university is keenly interested in the natural philosophy of healing not bound by dogma and ritualism and are in regular communication with Otto in regards to the recipes of his potions and concoctions and their effects on his customers. The Heisenstein family on the hand are in talks with Otto about starting an apothecary's guild in the city under the control of the Matriarch and under the stewardship of Otto. Thus far Otto has been reluctant to take the Heisenstein up on her offer, the thought of all that responsibility, bureaucracy and especially publicity is enough to make his legs shake.

He much prefers his small store and helping the local people that took years of hard work to befriend.

HALF STREET INN

Situated halfway between the Political and Military Districts, and on the main road that connects these two, the inn does quite a brisk business. The Half Street Inn is something of an exception in Rodewal. There is no community spirit here, there is no kindness, there is only the cold ruthlessness of capitalism.

The inn is owned directly by Patriarch Karl of the van Rosedaal trade family, although you will never see nor hear any sign of that in the



inn. The “owner” that most of its clients will interact with is merely a proxy in the employ of the trade family, pretending to be the owner to give that “family friendly” atmosphere. In fact, nearly everything in the inn has been carefully arranged and planned to look like the opposite of what they are: disposable tools to bring in more money for the trade family.

There used to be a family friendly, community loving inn here that catered as best it could to its clients and customers and made sure they left happier than when it arrived. Its owners were godsfearing people, as kind and polite as can be, never afraid of losing a bit of profit if it meant helping someone in need. In short, it was the perfect little inn. But that was fifty years ago, before trade families took an interest in it, before the laughably called “Inn War of ‘51” happened.

In 1951 AGW, a member of the Hugenberg trade family, liaisoning at the Political District had to meet with a contact in the Military District. Both were quite busy and couldn’t take the time to go all the way to each other’s district, so they decided to meet at this quaint little inn on the halfway point. This nameless and forgotten Hugenberg had the great idea of purchasing the inn for its prime real estate and immediately made an offer to the owner, who promptly and unequivocally refused.

Embarrassed and frustrated, the Hugenberg went straight to his Patriarch and told him of the matter. The Patriarch agreed with his relative’s assessment and made an even greater offer to the inn’s owner who again refused. The Patriarch threatened and intimidated and blustered but the inn’s owner simply would not budge.

By this time the other three major trade families heard about this and they denied each other the privilege of owning the inn, they all made offers, each grander than the last. The inn’s owner could have purchased an entire nation with the money offered but refused. Each also threatened and intimidated the owner but it had little effect. So the trade families turned to less legal means. The most important part of a property is its deed and with it the trade families

could simply kick the old owners out, so off they sent their footmen to collect it.

It took two whole years to get the deed. This was not because the owner hid it somewhere or was zealously defending it or any such business, it was because not only did each trade family have to steal the deed, they also had to prevent the other families from stealing it. Dozens, scores, perhaps even hundreds of footmen died over the two years. The trade families became obsessed with owning this inn, so much so that prices and profits across Middelburg fell because they only cared about the inn.

Finally a victor emerged and the Inn War of ‘51 was over. The van Rosedaal’s had the deed and the inn was theirs. After forcefully removing the previous owners, they set to work to create the perfect inn for their needs. In less than forty years they had gained back all the money they had spent to acquire the inn and it still continues to make them money today.

THREE POINT BARBER

“For All Your Grooming and Dentistry Needs” reads the sign in the window and the Three Point Barber promises exactly and only that. Stuck between the Military District, Temple Park, and Ooston, the Three Point’s idea of grooming can become quite a varied and intricate subject.

Hairdressing and grooming is seen as something of a luxury in Middelburg, albeit a luxury more than a few partake in. It is fairly easy to determine the social standing of a man by the amount of work that has been put into his hair and beard. The poor consign themselves to either a full beard or clean shaven while the rich and powerful strut around with magnificently waxed moustaches and all manner of stylish beards.

The Three Point’s location in Rodewal means it has little to do with the hair and beards of the very rich, some of whom have their own personal barber, or the very poor who rarely travel so far into Rodewal.

What Frederik Kapper has is the slowly burgeoning middle class of Middelburg who fashion themselves after the wealthy, the nearby military officers who desire something more stylish than what the army barbers provide, and the clergy from the nearby Temple Park whose preferences range from tidy to neat.

However, Kapper's expertise with scissors and razor is not the only thing the Three Point sells. Sooner or later, everyone needs a tooth pulled and a barber is just the place to do so. Any customers with medicinal needs for their aching teeth are sent to Otto's apothecary, with whom Kapper has an ongoing arrangement with, but any physical work that needs doing is left to Kapper and his two sons who has followed in his footsteps.

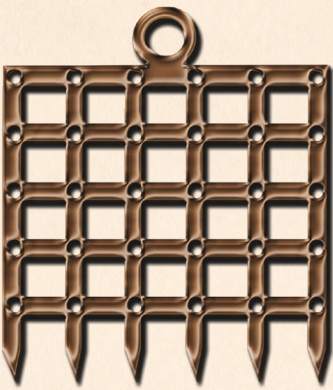
A barbershop is more than just a place to pull teeth and trim hair. A barbershop is a place where men can gather, sit a while and have the ear of men in similar positions. A barbershop is as much a forum as any tavern and public house and a barber as willing a listener as any barkeep.

Much like a tavern, a barbershop gives a man time to relax, step out from the world for a while, be pampered and speak to a man who has heard it all before, a man who can be a soundboard for their troubles or an advisor to help them on their paths.

Frederik Kapper has had a lifetime of experience that he uses in his day to day work, having grown up in the barbershop that has been in his family for generations. The Three Point was first opened by his great-grandfather and every generation since has worked in it. With his sons poised to take over after him, the Three Point seems to be in excellent hands to provide the people Rodewal with the temporary escape from life that everyone craves.

CARSTEN VAN DAM MEMORIAL PARK

Open space is a rarity in Middelburg and open space with pristine lawns, decorative gardens, man made pools and a scattering of trees is




BECOMING THE LAW

Being a constable is not easy, but being on the right side of the law can be its own reward. Playing as a constable can be much the same as being a criminal in the streets of Middelburg. Both types find themselves in dangerous situations, not knowing where the bullets and blades are coming from, hoping to survive the night only to do it again. A key difference in playing a constable is that, more often than not, you will be doing investigations rather than committing crimes.

Setting up an investigation is fairly simple for the GM. Roll an adventure using the adventure generator in the back of the Runed Age Corebook. Use this to construct the aftermath of the crime that the players will have to investigate. If you want to make it simple, have the criminals be paid employees of the Employer roll on the adventure generator. Imagine you have run a group of players through that adventure and then put some clues in the investigation for your constable PCs to follow.

For the players: as constables, you will automatically get a Contact inside the Constabulary on top of what you get from character creation. This will make your lives much, much easier. It comes at a price, however. Being a constable means following the law and the Lord Constable takes a dimmer view of constables breaking the law than criminals. If you try to break the law, make sure no one finds out or you'll quickly become a bounty to be hunted.



a doubly rare sight. Middelburg's trees are its towering buildings, stretching story after story into the sky. Its streams and rivers are its kilometres upon kilometres of roads and streets, ferrying the ants that crawl across its surface to its destination. In this stone and concrete forest, the van Dam Memorial Park is a surprising and refreshing sight.

After the dust had settled on the War of Independence the people turned their eyes towards rebuilding what was lost. This was no easy task as The Incendiary left only destruction in his wake. Rodewal was not as badly damaged as other districts such as Nieuton, but the damage it did receive carried with it a unique story.

Carsten van Dam wasn't a war hero. He wasn't a politician, a noble, an explorer, or a soldier. In short, he wasn't anything special. In his death, however, he became something much more than any of those. He became a symbol, a lesson taught in fire and blood. And for that, the people of Rodewal immortalised him in one of the few green spaces in Middelburg.

Eight months into the War of Independence the mad king Markus VI was winning by a large margin. Most of Alfresia was taken and only small pockets of resistance remained, the greatest of which was Middelburg. Middelburg was a living hell. The constant bombardments against the walls required so much energy to repair that the stores of orichalcum were depleted in three months and the people paid for it in blood. The constabulary and military fought as much against their own people as the mad king's forces with riots springing up nearly everyday.

The price of freedom had become almost too great. The people of Middelburg needed peace to recover, if only for a few days. Someone had to meet with the mad king to organise a truce. No one volunteered. Markus VI's reputation with traitors was too well known. Of all the generals, the senators, the rich men and the war heroes, not one was willing to meet with The Incendiary. Hope faded until a dockworker, overhearing the rebel leaders' conversations, decided that enough

was enough and simply walked out of the city towards the loyalist camps.

They say he made it to the king and gave the king the city's terms. They say he never did much else again. The next the city saw of van Dam, he was soaring over the city's walls, a fiery comet chained to four cannonballs, and when he crashed into the ground, the arrays on the cannonballs activated and destroyed every stone structure within fifty metres. When the dust cleared, they found a charred corpse in the middle of the crater and carved into his chest were the words "death to each and every traitor".

The Middelburgians knew then that there would be no surrender, no retreat and no quarter. It was either victory or death. Knowing this, they fought harder than ever before, they stood united and helped each other to stand against the tyrant king. They won the war because of van Dam's death. He may not have done anything important in life, he may not have amounted to very much, but at the end of the day he gave his countrymen the courage they needed to fight, to win, and to live.

There is no statue of van Dam in his memorial park, rather in the exact centre of the park stands a sweet-lemon tree in his honour. It was said to be his favourite fruit and the fruit from this tree was declared by the Grand Mayor of its day to be free to any all who wanted it. Something freely given in Middelburg is more rare than any park and tree and stream, and it makes this sweet-lemon tree the most valued and respected tombstone in all of Middelburg.

SHRINE OF THE TRUE FRESIAN FAITH

Long before the eastern Dayitic tribes known as the Fresians came to the island that would later be known as Alfresia, a different tribe of humans lived here. What they called themselves, we don't know, but we know the Fresians called

them the Eilanni. They have long since disappeared from the world, displaced and intermarried with the Fresians, and their histories have gone with them.

A mostly illiterate people, the Eilanni kept their histories and culture and religion in songs and poems and stories to tell the next generation. The few writings they left behind, carved into great menhirs across the island provide more questions than answers. They were indeed a mysterious people, but over long centuries many scholars have attempted to decipher who these people were, tracing oral histories back as far as they could, asking in the most remote villages, hoping to find some last living vestige of the Eilanni.

What these scholars have left us today is a jumbled mess of hearsay and speculation. However, the points that most scholars agreed on were the Eilanni's religion. Through their various sources, the mentions of the Eilanni religion remained mostly the same and it has been these scholarly collections which has kept the ancient religion alive, albeit with but a handful of adherents.

The Eilanni faith is a curious one. It is not as polytheistic as other native faiths in the region such as the Mergamin in the north are, but rather follow the duality of Progenitorism. Whether this was originally the case or if Progenitorism influenced the Eilanni, none can say. The Eilanni believe in a Mother and Father like Progenitorism, but they don't believe these gods are almighty, rather that they are merely powerful beings.

Their Father, called the Black Hart is depicted as a black stag or a man with hooves and antlers as black as night. He is the hunter; he is death. The Mother is the Blue Rose, depicted as a feminine figure made of water and roses. This is similar to the Mergamin idea of the land as father and ocean as mother, as is expected between such nearby native cultures, but where the Megamin believe in many different elemental gods, the Eilanni believe in only the two.


They do believe in spirits, the children of the Black Hart and Blue Rose that are called Gius. These are not spirits that exist as ghosts or phantoms in the night, rather the Gius can't survive without a host. These Gius possess the living, be it animals, Inhumans or humans. It is said that the mentally ill are "touched" by the Gius.

When Alfresia gained independence, there was naturally a wave nationalism that spread across the nation. The Alfresians were desperate to differentiate themselves from the other Fresians, to be seen as a unique people with a unique culture after so long under the yoke of another nation. Riding on this wave of nationalism was a resurgence of the Eilanni religion, now called the True Fresian Faith. Progenitorism and Prodigalism were forced upon the Alfresians, the Eilanni faithful said, only the True Fresian Faith is truly at home in Alfresia. To be Alfresian is to follow the True Fresian Faith.

Their rhetoric worked, if only for a while. People flocked the Eilanni preachers, at best out of a sense of nationalism and a wish to reconnect with their ancestors, and at worst out of a sense of contrarianism and to bite their thumb at what they saw as oppressive institutions. This resurgence of the True Fresian Faith did not last long. Within a few decades, the number of adherents dwindled to a mere handful. The faith is stronger in rural areas than in Middelburg, but it will never rival the two dominant religions.

The Progenitorists and Prodigallists have not been kind to the Eilanni. The Shrine of the True Fresian Faith sits on the border of Temple Park, though it didn't always. It was constructed shortly after the war when there was a great demand for one, and was built in Temple Park. The two main religions did not take this lying down. They petitioned the Grand Mayor to redraw the district lines to exclude the Shrine. Petty? Very, but it did send a message about who had the real power in Middelburg.

The Shrine itself is an oddity in religious architecture. There are no circles to be found because no arrays were used in its architecture.



To harken back to the earliest days of the Eilanni, this square structure was built entirely by manual labour. It was a tremendous achievement in this day and age and was a community effort, an example of the Eilanni philosophy: “friends, family, and community”.

CONSTABULARY

The Rodewal Constabulary Office is the model example of the Middelburg Constabulary Force and for very good reason: it is the closest constabulary office to the Senate House. It is surprising to know that there is no constabulary office in the Political District, but there are more than enough armed forces in the district to keep order. There is a small constabulary contingent in the High Court, Inland Affairs agents in the Senate House and military personnel of the Second Fleet on the river.

Even with all armed forces in the Political District, there is still a need for a proper constabulary office should the worst occur. It is for this reason that the Rodewal constabulary office is on the border with the Political District so that any response would be swift, although it has been many long years since their assistance was required. They mostly now concern themselves with policing the quiet district of Rodewal.

The office building complex was constructed along the same floor plans as most constabulary offices in Middelburg. There are six main areas to the complex: the Main Office where the business and bureaucracy of the constabulary is done; the Dormitory where the constables on duty sleep; the Armoury where all the weapons, armour, ammunition and tools of the trade are kept; the Gaol where criminals awaiting trial or sentencing are held; the Court where the trials and sentences are held; and the Stables where the horses, carriages and other forms of transport for the constables are kept.

The Rodewal constabulary office is not the largest in the city owing the relatively quiet

district, but as per regulations they keep a roster of constables at the office day and night. These constables will alternate between patrolling the district and remaining at the office for bureaucracy, gaol guard duty or training. When on patrol, constables are careful to never patrol alone. Rodewal might be one of the safer districts in the city, but it's still Middelburg and no sane man takes unnecessary risks and lives to tell about it.

The equipment of a Middelburg constable is practical, reliable and most importantly cheap. A simple bronze cuirass and open faced helm is the only armour they have, but underneath the cuirass they wear a thick quilted gambeson with matching breeches. Gloves and boots of toughened leather complete the wardrobe. It may seem as if the constables are somewhat underdressed to face the infamously dangerous streets of Middelburg, but every part of their armour and clothing is covered with the Middelburg Standard array, encasing them in an invisible suit of armour.

The constables' weapons are similarly practical and cheap, and less lethal in recent times after reforms by the government. For close quarters they carry a bronzed wooden billy club that can break bones with a mere flick of the wrist. For ranged encounters, they have a wide barrelled pistol that fires very large rounds. The Constable's Friend array has been inscribed on both the ammunition and the billy club with the intention of shocking any perpetrator into submission rather than killing them, but the truth is that a billy club and a pistol ball can kill without the help of the array. The lip service paid to public safety has however made the public more accepting of the constabulary.

PELLISSIER

DE BLAUW BREWERY ♦

♦ ALANA'S DRAPERY

♦ GODFREY'S GREENGROCER

♦ MIDDELBURG HERALD

FIRE BRIGADE ♦

♦ WYNAND'S WOODWORKS

120 M



PELLISSIER



A district with much in common with Rodewal, Pellissier also serves to support the greater, more important districts in Middelburg. The key difference is where Rodewal serves mostly as a residential district, Pellissier serves in a more practical and commercial capacity.

Situated next to the Docks, Pellissier is in the prime position to have first choice of the products that flows into Middelburg and is the first to get its own products out into the Docks to be shipped overseas. This is where most of the money to be made in Pellissier comes from: the export and import business. That is not to say that there is nothing for the locals here, quite the contrary, but most of the goods here have a certain exotic flavour that have come to characterise the district.

Pellissier's transformation from just another residential district to its current state grew with the size of the Docks district. As more goods started being shipped inland, more enterprising individuals took it upon themselves to make their own few coins on this seemingly unending supply of wealth. The Merchant League capitalised on this, sinking their teeth into the businesses in Pellissier and opening up trade routes for the goods the businesses produce.

The move to a more international tone in the

district came about through the interest of the Embassy Enclave in the nearby Political District. While the rich ambassadors have always brought along their cooks and tailors and whatnot, there was an unspoken desire in the Enclave to see more of their cultures in the streets and markets of Middelburg. What the Alfresian government and the League saw was the money that could be made rather than the sentiment they could inspire and lowered importing taxes, giving businesses an incentive to import these desired luxuries.

One might think that the nationalistic sentiments of the Alfresians would look down upon such a venture, but the store owners in Pellissier have taken the goods and culture they import and made it Alfresian. With the guiding hand of the League, the stores and businesses have blended the foreign and the familiar into something the Middelburgians can digest and enjoy. The upper class now enjoy fashions and food dishes inspired by cultures from across Jytah and even from other continents.

Other nations have also benefited from the endeavours in Pellissier and the other districts which have followed in its steps. Just as the wealthy Middelburgians enjoy

the finer aspects of foreign cultures, those cultures such as the Caels, Tolians, Romantics and even the Westerners pay obscenely well for products created here in Middelburg.

DE BLAUW BREWERY

Founded in 1492 AGW by the Prodigalist Monks of the Order of Eight, the brewery crafts the finest ales in Fresia, or so it is said. The brewery was once the site of the first Prodigalist monastery in Alfresia, when the religion was still small and any land gained from the dominant Progenitorist faith was a boon from the gods.

The Order of Eight was founded along with the monastery by the eighth son of an eighth son of an eighth son. St. Olivier's great-grandfather was an emperor, but after the inheritance was given out, St. Olivier's grandfather, the first eighth son, was merely a duke. St. Olivier's father received even less. There was little to give an eighth son when all you have is a duchy and thus he became only a baron. There was nothing left for St. Olivier. He was the descendent of an

emperor and an aristocrat, but any freemen who owned a house was in truth, wealthier than him.

So he turned to religion. He found god. Eight is a holy number in most religions and St. Olivier believed his pedigree was a message from god, a sign of what he had to do with his life. With what little wealth and influence he had he traveled to Middelburg and, with the blessing of the then Duke of Middelburg and High Priest of Alfresia, he founded a small monastery and holy order to tend to the community. It's mission was simple: ensure that there would always be food and water for those that needed it. While it has moved away from its original site in Middelburg and into the smaller towns and villages, the Order of Eight had always made sure that no one went to bed hungry or thirsty.

The Order of Eight was a mendicant order, depending entirely on charity for its livelihood. However, the cost of feeding so many became too great a burden to bear and the monastery was on the verge of closing when one young, unruly monk had a brilliant idea. St. Jaco was accustomed to the taverns and public houses of Middelburg, gluttony was his sin, and he saw that there were very little Alfresian beers to purchase.




MAKING AN HONEST-ISH LIVING

You don't always have to live the life of a criminal in Middelburg. There are more legitimate and, somewhat, safe ways of making money. They say Middelburg is where any dream can come true and the Merchant League does a good job at ensuring businesses thrive. If you want to own your very own business and work towards making it the best in Middelburg, you certainly can.

As a GM, this will be a very different type of game than simply being a criminal. Now, the characters have to take care of something.

Something that will make them vulnerable. However, the players won't just be staying in the shop all the time, selling their wares. Middelburg is a dangerous place, and competition between business can be lethal. You can use the adventure generator in the *Runed Age Corebook* to create missions for or against the PCs' business. Just modify the rolls as appropriate and you can have NPCs wanting to undermine the PCs or vice versa.

Having a business of your own is also an excellent way to use the Downtime subsystem in the corebook. Now that you have a steady source of employment, you never have to go looking for work. Also, your GM can give you extra Bonus Rerolls to your Skill Check at the end to pay the Bill based on how well he believes your business has done during Downtime.



Most were expensive foreign beers, he told the disproving abbot, and if the monks would brew cheaper beers than the imported ones, their financial troubles would be over.

Thus a small brewery was built at the back of the monastery and St. Jaco was placed in charge. In hindsight it was perhaps not the best idea to put a drunk in charge of a brewery, but their beers sold better than they could hope for and soon they could not keep up with demand. The brewery expanded and a name was given to it, based on the blue colour of the monks' robes. Over the centuries, the brewery grew ever larger, and monks ever wealthier, building monasteries (and breweries) across Fresian lands.

Eventually the monastery was given over entirely to the brewery and lay men brought in to help run it. The business and religious parts of the Order of Eight were separated and monks returned to tending to the needy.

De Blauw brewery is a different animal to what it once was. It now ships a variety of ales and stouts across Jytoh, infused with a dizzying assortment of flavours. Its secret is the natural spring discovered underneath the monastery that gives a unique flavour to its beers that runically created water simply cannot replicate. It is this attention to detail and willingness to work hard that has earned De Blauw the title of Alfresia's best brewery.

ALANA'S DRAPERY

"The first and last word in women's fashion" has proudly been Alana Dupont's motto since she bought the storefront with her meagre savings, and with the help of Matriarch Heisenstein she is making good on her word.

A Nacitanian immigrant, the young Ms. Dupont came to Alfresia with big dreams and a small pocketbook. Middelburg styles itself where anyone can do anything and become anyone. Alana counted on this, in fact she bet her whole life on this. If a beggar can become president then surely her own dreams of designing the

clothes of kings and queens can come true.

In Nacitania, Alana was nothing more than a servant, at the bottom of the social order. She had no genealogy, no pedigree, her surname didn't even come from her father. Dupont is merely the Vallion word for "from the bridge", given to her by her mistress, the Lady Angélique, to distinguish her from another servant named Alana. There was no future for her in Nacitania, but neither could she simply leave.

Alana was an indentured servant in Lady Angélique's manor and had been since she was very young. Her father was in great debt to the baroness and Alana was not allowed to leave the baroness' service by law until the debt was paid off. The spiteful baroness made sure this would never happen by increasing the interest on the debt, enjoying the free labour she got from Alana, especially the dresses.

Alana had been making dresses for the baroness and her noble friends since she can remember, first as her father's little helper in his tailor's workshop and then as the baroness' servant. She loved what she did, but she hated who she did it for. A chance encounter with Lady Rita, the then Patriarch Heisenstein's lovely and oh-so-young second bride, changed all of that. Having seen the baroness' beautiful dress, Lady Rita asked after the tailor and after they met, Alana begged Lady Rita to take her away from the evil baroness.

Lady Rita agreed and said she would take Alana to Middelburg where Alana can make any dress she wanted for anyone she liked, on one condition: half of all the money she would ever make would belong to Lady Rita. Alana agreed at once, having half of all her money to herself was better than none. A few nights later she was spirited away from Nacitania by Heisenstein footmen and she was ready to begin her new life.

Life in Middelburg wasn't easy at first, her "store" was nothing more than a small room in which to work, and live, with a window front through which to do business. Her clients were as poor

and meagre as she was, and the dresses she made were not as beautiful as in her dreams. Over the years all of this changed, slowly and surely, as her business grew. The quality of her work spoke for itself and soon she could afford a proper store to entertain richer clients. As Alana's clients neared the upper class the Lady Rita, now Dowager-Matriarch of the Heisenstein family, directed her powerful and influential friends to Alana's Drapery and Alana got one step closer to fulfilling her dreams.

Alana's store has grown so large now that she could afford several seamstresses and apprentices. She no longer measures and fits the majority of her clients, or even makes the dresses. That she leaves to her workers. Alana still designs the clothes, but her hands and needles are only reserved for the best of customers. When she is not in her store, hunched over a desk designing a new dress, she can be in the manor or palace of a rich client, or more likely down at the docks, haggling with passing merchants for only the finest fabrics for her store, demanding a departing cog to take one more of her dresses to the ends of the globe.

The stout, cynical, commanding owner of a drapery is a far cry from the shy, naïve girl who came ashore all those decades ago. She has sacrificed a lot to get where she is, but as the store's motto says, Alana's Drapery truly is the first and last word in women's fashion. Whatever you may need, if you have the coin, and the figure, Alana's Drapery is there to help.

GODFREY'S GREENGROCER

Meat is a common commodity in Alfresia. With the Flesh rune and the various Animal runes, it is easy enough to keep yourself fed on a steady diet of meat. Fruits and vegetables, however, are much harder to come by as they can't simply be created by the arrays. They have become an essential luxury in Middelburg, especially now that the scholars and physicians say a plentiful supply of fruit and vegetables will keep you free

of disease.


When it comes to fruits and vegetables Alfresia is a nation of wheat and wine. While this is fantastic for the beer, bread, and wine makers, it does leave the nation lacking in proper fruits and vegetables. There are, of course, many small gardens that grow these for personal use, as is quite popular in the rural regions, but to feed the hungry colossus that is Middelburg, Alfresia needs to look overseas for its supply, especially to their bitter rival.

Wesfresland has often been called the "breadbasket of Fresia" and for a very good reason. It's soil is some of the richest and most fertile in all of Jytoh and is the very cause of the millennia long tension between Fresia and the Heavenly Empire of Man. Losing the old kingdom of Fresland was a severe blow to the imperial coffers and the Empire has been trying to gain back the land ever since. Despite the often bloody rivalry between Alfresia and Wesfresland, neither nation is stubborn enough to spurn each other's wealth. Alfresia has money, Wesfresland has produce. It is simple economics.

With the age of exploration and colonisation upon the world, simple turnips and cabbages have long since stopped satisfying the elite of Alfresia. Food and spices are being brought from across the world to be dined on in Middelburg and the appetites of the wealthy have only grown. If it is exotic and out of the ordinary then it will surely fetch a healthy price in Alfresia.

It is not only the rich that have enjoyed the new wealth of produce the traders bring to Middelburg. Godfrey FitzPatrick, the enterprising Gael, has made it his business to sell fruits and vegetables to the masses, washed or not. Not the most exciting of dreams, but not everyone can be president. There is a lot of money flowing through Middelburg and it has been trickling down the classes for long enough that even the dockworkers have been seen dining on eggplants and olives.

Godfrey is part of the Grocers Guild of Alfresia, owned by the van Rosedaal family, and



through the Guild gains much support for his greengrocer's in Pellissier. The Guild gains him contacts overseas with merchants and vessels that can ensure a steady supply of produce to his store. The variety of his produce changes with the seasons, but it takes a rare occasion for Godfrey's to be empty.

Greengrocing requires a special talent with the arrays. The quality of the produce degrades with each passing day and if you can lengthen the time the fruits and vegetables are at their best, then you can make all the more money. Therefore, most of the cost of running Godfrey's goes to generating the energy for the arrays across the store that Sustains fruits and vegetables and also Slows down their time to a snail's pace, meaning that a piece of fruit which should only last a week can stay perfectly fine for a month if not more.

MIDDELBURG HERALD

"Tomorrow's news today!" "The news that you want to read!" "Bringing you the most important news in the city!" The Herald is full of mottos and slogans, anything to get the people of Middelburg to buy the newspaper.

The Herald had an intriguing history that still affects it dramatically to this very day. The office and title of Middelburg Herald harkens back to old dukes and kings of Middelburg. The Herald was responsible for all official proclamations of the ruler of Middelburg and was in command of every town crier in and around the city. The Herald was the voice of Middelburg's ruler and ensured that whatever the ruler said was heard by every citizen in the land.

When the art of heraldry began spreading across Jytoh, the role of the Herald changed. As well as being the mouthpiece of Middelburg, the Herald had now become a diplomat, needing to know each noble's coat of arms in Alfresia and beyond. The coat of arms of the noble families changed over time and this necessitated that the Herald be kept up to date on all the news of the

nobles, local and abroad, so that the records were properly kept. It was here that the Herald, as it stands today, had its origins.

When Alfresia became an Archduchy, the Middelburg Herald was placed in charge of all heralds on the island, allowing one unified message to be heard by the island's people and having a unified organisation to collect the news. Eventually the Herald outgrew its original mission and became more interested in spreading all news it could find rather than only the Archduke's propaganda, and it soon forgot all about the business of heraldry.

Rather than becoming enraged, the Archduke saw this as an opportunity. An independent organisation that made its money by collecting information could find any information that the governmental agencies missed, and with a big enough bribe it could still be an effective propaganda tool without the public being any wiser. To this end, the Archduke created the Office of Chancellor to be his mouthpiece and the Office of Marshal of Arms to deal with the matters of heraldry. The Middelburg Herald became independent, in name at least if not in function, and began its history of journalism.

Today the Middelburg Herald is the largest news outlet in Alfresia and has a near monopoly in Middelburg. Whatever news the people of Middelburg do not get through their own acquaintances or the government reaches them through the Herald. It has done much since its inception to remain the sole provider of news in Middelburg. Most publishers rarely last a year before some bribe, threat or blackmail forces them to close. The Herald has become as great an employer of footmen as the Merchant League while maintaining its independence from the great trade families.

The Herald's greatest trouble however does not come from potential rivals, but rather from the public itself. Literacy is a rare skill among the lower classes in Middelburg and the Herald has done much to raise the literacy rate in the city although the

success of these attempts leaves much to be desired. The Herald has thus fallen back on the old tried and true tradition of the town crier. In many of the poorer areas you will find the Herald Readers, willing to read the newspaper to anyone willing to pay for the privilege.

FIRE BRIGADE

Middelburg's relationship with fire is a tumultuous one. Before the discovery of the Lightning rune, fire was the most common method of powering arrays and is still widely used for this very purpose. On the other hand, the memories of the fires that nearly destroyed the city a century ago is still fresh in the psyche of Middelburg. The mad king's ghost casts a long shadow.

The Fire Brigade of Middelburg is thus viewed with a mixture of admiration and unease. The members of the fire brigade are the rightful heroes that stop the fires that frighten so many in Middelburg, yet when one of their carriages speeds past, all that sees it knows that somewhere in the city a building, a home, or a workplace is even now being consumed by the flames. They know that perhaps at that moment some poor soul is dying in the most excruciating way possible. The fire brigade may be heroes, but they are a reminder of the worst days in the city's history.

The fire brigade is an old institution, having its origins in the old volunteer town militia before being folded into the emerging constabulary. After much squabbling over funding and resources, the Fire Brigade of Middelburg was founded as its own entity with its Fire Marshal to the Chief Constable. The fire brigade has always worked closely with the constabulary and this may have been the sole reason why the institution survived the War of Independence.


Before Markus VI set foot in Middelburg during the war, he sent ahead his infiltrators.

They had but one mission, to kill any member of the fire brigade they could find. Markus VI's favourite weapon was fire and he wanted all obstacles to his use of fire eliminated. His infiltrators were successful, for a while at least, and scores of Middelburg's firefighters died before the constabulary ordered permanent bodyguards for the remaining firefighters. It were these survivors who quenched the infernos plaguing Middelburg during and after the war. Were it not for their bravery, there would have been little left of Middelburg to call home.

The fire brigade have learned hard lessons about fighting fires and over the years they have created the most ingenious inventions to assist them in their duties. Their most common tool is the "Flooder", a small metallic sphere (usually little more than one centimetre in diameter) that transmutes heat into water if fire is present. The Flooders are thrown in by the handful into every room the firefighters enter to stop any fire spreading so that they can control it. If the firefighters are unable to enter the building itself then it is not unusual for them to shoot the flooders into the building with blunderbusses.

The rest of their tools follow on the same theme: using the fire's power against it. From small disks, called "Holders", which they throw into rooms that produces a containment larger than most rooms that exclude fire, to a large tarp, called "the Fort", which is staked up above the building, sometimes using other buildings as support, which creates walled containment field around the building that prevents fire spreading to other buildings. Even the arrays on their clothing use the heat from the fire to cool the air around the firefighters to protect them from the heat.

Their most dramatic weapon is called "the Dambuster" and is their last resort. If a building is engulfed in fire too quickly and it is certain that it will spread to other buildings before the fire brigade has a chance to deploy the Fort and their Flooders then a cannon is brought forth. The cannonball it will fire has an array that has been precharged with an ugly amount of



energy. It's sole purpose is to create water once it senses fire and not to stop until it's energy is spent. Within a few seconds the Dambuster cannonball can create enough water to fill a good part of the Tenne River. The force of the water created by the Dambusters almost always destroys the interior of any building they are shot into, but if the Dambusters are needed, then it longer becomes about the building but about all those around it.

WYNAND'S WOODWORKS

Wynand's Woodworks are proof of the power of the arrays in their capability to make life and work easy for humans. Old Wynand has turned the science of the runes into an art form in his wooden sculptures, carving and his carpentry.

The Woodworks is a large open floor building, more akin to a warehouse than a workshop, although the customers and the clients never set foot in there. It is here where the magic happens. The Woodworks is littered with work tables and workspaces for the multitude of carpenters and artists that Wynand employs. The Woodworks operate solely by commission and so each artist and carpenter is assigned a specific project to work on at their personal workspace.

The Woodworks does not only contain the workspaces of the carpenters and artists. Against one wall are samples of nearly every type of wood known to man. The Wood rune works by creating wood of the same type as whatever wood is closest to the array. This means that all the wood that is used in the Woodworks is created on site, easing the time and expenses incurred by old Wynand.

The creation of the wood is not the only use of arrays in the Woodworks. Old Wynand made sure his Woodworks was one of the first to be hooked up to the new copper lines carrying electricity from the city's Lightning arrays. Now each work table has cables connected to the power grid, carrying the energy to sockets made to fit a variety of arrays. The most common of

these creates a containment field that excludes wood but only if wood is present. The effect is that wherever the array points, it disintegrates wood, acting as a very efficient carving tool.

The artists have many such arrays at their command to push, pull and transform the wood in any way their imaginations wish. Some of the younger carpenters and artists have never even picked up a traditional woodworking tool, using only the arrays. Old Wynand encourages this forward thinking in his workers as long as it doesn't impact the quality of the work. His dedication to quality has earned the Woodworks the reputation of the best woodworking store in the city. It is because of this reputation that old Wynand can afford to work only on commission as the demand outstrips what his workers can supply.

His reputation has garnered him many international clients. Old Wynand personally carved the vanity dresser for the daughter of the Gaelish Duke of Cernmur. All across Fresian lands and even beyond you can find works from Wynand's Woodworks. The Vallions are especially interested in the human sculptures produced by his artists. His Merchant aleague connections do their very best to get clients from even further afield.

Old Wynand in his younger days refused all offers from the Merchant League and for years they courted him with even greater and greater offers. It was only in recent years, now that Wynand has grown old, that he has formed a partnership with the van Windburg family, but on his own terms. Old Wynand and the Third Duke has had many a late evening discussion over Gallathian whiskey and they have become better friends than business partners. The Third Duke ensures that the Woodworks always has the best carpenters and artists and is protected from thugs and gangs, and in return Old Wynand gives a share of his profits to the Third Duke and gives first consideration to van Windburg clients.

MISSION 1

The Case of the Saintly Finger Bones

SYNOPSIS

This is the first chapter in the story of the Ruined Man and as such it is perhaps the most important mission of the lot. The mission that the PCs are given will be a simple one, but it (like the missions that will follow) are not the true story that is being told, but is rather the backdrop for the true story. The simplicity of the mission will also serve to showcase the mechanics unique to the Ruined Man campaign so that the players can become familiar with them before the missions become more difficult.

As this is the first mission, it will also have the most blatant clue in order to show the players that there is something menacing afoot in Middelburg so that they are drawn into the story of the campaign and begin to look for more clues in the later missions themselves.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE MISSION PROPER IS AS FOLLOWS:

The PCs have been told, through their contacts, that there is a lucrative job that needs doing that requires their skill sets. They are told to meet in the barroom of an inn in the Political District and wait for the handler of the job. The handler is considerably late and is looking quite anxious. He tells the PCs that there is a sacred relic of St. Lambert on display in the nearby Triarch Temple and it will be the centrepiece of the equinox celebrations in a week's time. The handler wants the relic, but no one must ever know the circumstances of the theft. When the PCs have finished all their preparations and attempt to steal the relic they will find that no matter the amount of effort they have put into the secrecy and stealth of the mission, the world will find out. This is because as they lay hands on the relic, the followers of the Starchild, known as the Seekers, will burst into the Temple and attempt to take it for themselves. A battle or chase will ensue as the climax of the mission.

THE META-STORY IS AS FOLLOWS:

The true story is that the Ruined Man has begun his killings. While his motives are known only to himself, he had seemingly spared a Seeker who interrupted one of his murders when the Seeker believed him to be the avatar and Prophet of the Starchild. Neither confirming nor denying the Seeker's allegations, the Ruined Man had simply whispered "Not yet, not you" before vanishing into the night. The Seeker believed his Prophet had told him he is not worthy, not yet, and went back to his cult to spread his new gospel. The Cult of the Starchild now seeks ways of becoming worthy in the eyes of their Prophet. Ways such as stealing a valuable religious relic like the skeletal hand of St. Lambert of Wintersdam.

OVERVIEW

SCENE 1: THE BRIEF:

- Meet with a van Rosedaal handler in Archduke's Arsehole Inn.
- The PCs' mission is to steal St. Lambert's skeletal hand from the Triarch Temple.
- The van Rosedaal family seeks to humiliate the van Windburg family who owns the relic.
- The PCs have a week to complete the mission and the only requirement is that it is done in total secret.

SCENE 2: THE LEGWORK:

- Three areas of interest in the Triarch Temple:
 - » The Bell Tower and Rectory:
 - Bell Tower provides entry onto the Temple roof.
 - Rectory provides potential disguises.
 - » The Catacombs:
 - Allows entry into Temple from below ground.
 - » The Temple Proper:
 - Contains the relic as well as the majority of the NPCs.

SCENE 3: THE MISSION:

- Main opposition will be two Sea Lion Knights guarding the relic.
- Number of other NPCs in the Temple will depend on the time of day

SCENE 4: THE COMPLICATION:

- » As soon as PCs get close to the relic, hostile Seekers will appear to steal Relic.
- » The Seekers are the Clue for this mission.

SCENE 5: THE DEBRIEF:

- Takes place in the van Rosedaal compound
- » If the PCs succeed, they will be allowed in.
- » If the PCs fail, they will not be allowed in.

SCENE 1: THE BRIEF

This scene takes place in the Archduke's Arsehole Inn. It is, arguably, the most famous inn in the city and its barroom is frequented by many politicians, both foreign and domestic. While the owners have attempted to keep up the appearance of a poor, rebellious and anti-authoritarian establishment but it has become little more than cliché window dressing. This is a respectable establishment with respectable clientele and the PCs will be expected to behave as such.

It is fairly late in the afternoon and the barroom has started to fill up with businessmen finishing their day at work and the noise level has risen considerably and continuously since the PCs arrived. The contact they are supposed to be meeting here is very, very late.

NARRATE OR PARAPHRASE THE FOLLOWING AS APPROPRIATE:

It is nearly dusk and your second pint glass sits empty on the table in front of you as you check

your pocket watch for the umpteenth time. Your contact was very specific: "Five o'clock at the Archduke's Arsehole Inn, back booth on the southwest side". The smoky air, dark timber and darker ale confirms that, yes, this is the Archduke's Arsehole, and as you look through the small window at the bell tower of the Triarch Temple peeking over the buildings, you are sure you are sitting at the correct booth. Yet it is past six o'clock and still no sign of the handler.

As the tired looking barmaid sets down your third pint of dark house ale, the door of the inn opens and a well-to-do man strides in, stops, takes stock of the room, looks pointedly in your direction and walks over to your booth. Even by the respectable standards of the Political District, this man looks overdressed. Black velvets and silk, soft tanned leather and gold threads, this gentleman seems more at home in Nieuton or the League District than in this inn. Your suspicions are confirmed when he sits down across from you and you spy the emblem of the van Rosedaal Trade Family on his breast pocket.

"My apologies, ladies/gentlemen, for my tardiness," he says, "my previous... 'appointment'... lasted longer than expected." He definitely seems rattled about something, but he presses on. "Let us get right to it then, shall we?" he says. "My employer has something quite straightforward for you to do." He motions over to the Temple bell tower through the window, "In the Triarch Temple rests the skeletal hand of St. Lambert, to be used in the equinox celebration one week from today. My employer requests that you steal the hand and bring it back to the van Rosedaal compound.

"However!" He pauses. "No one is to know how the hand has been taken. By all accounts it must look like an act of the gods. The van Rosedaal family will disavow any knowledge of your actions should the matter come to light and will offer you no protection. Secrecy is of paramount importance. I cannot stress that enough."

He looks at his pocket watch and says: "I do not have much more time to spend with you, but

if you have any questions, I will answer them to the best of my ability.”

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE HANDLER:

- The handler will not provide his name.
- Because of the sensitive nature of the mission, the van Rosedaal family will only pay once they are in possession of the skeletal hand.
 - » If the players wish to use any of their skills to haggle, deceive or intimidate, etc the handler to receive part of the payment in advance, the Difficulty Modifier for such a test will be -20. The handler has only been given a quarter of the total payment and as such this is all he will be able to provide. This will give the players a +15 Difficulty Modifier on all Wealth Skill Checks for this mission.
- The skeletal hand of St. Lambert belongs to the van Windburg trade family. They have loaned the hand to the Triarch Temple to be used as the centrepiece of the upcoming equinox celebrations.
- If the hand is missing, the van Windburg family will be severely humiliated and lose influence and prestige.
- Because of the rivalry between the leading trade families of the Merchant League, this is exactly what the van Rosedaal family wants. But, if the van Rosedaal or another known party is implicated then the attention and humiliation would be shifted to them, which is why the need for secrecy is so important.
- If the players ask about a specific time to steal the hand of St. Lambert, the handler will say that as long as it is taken before the celebration then the van Rosedaal family will be satisfied, but the nearer to the celebration the better as there would be no chance to replace it with a different relic.
- Any question asked about how the PCs

should go about doing the mission will be met with a curt response of: “I dare say that is why we are paying you. If you need me to tell you how to complete the task, it seems I have come to the wrong people.”

- Any vague questions about the mission or any for general advice will result in the following:
 - » *Narrate or paraphrase:* The handler furrows his brows in thought before a look of shock crosses his face. “Good heavens, I nearly forgot. My apologies, it has been a dreadfully long day. My employers have procured this for your use.” He retrieves a folded piece of paper from his jacket and unfolds it on the table. “This is the floor plan of the Triarch Temple. I am sure they will be of some use.”
 - » If the players’ questions’ does not result in the preceding event, the handler will “remember” about the floor plans before he takes his leave.

Once all the questions have been answered, or if the players are asking too many irrelevant or inane questions, the handler will look at his pocket-watch and say: “My apologies ladies/gentlemen, but it seems my time here is at an end. There are... matters... I must attend to. Good evening.” And with that, he will take his leave from the inn, get into his waiting carriage and make his way to the van Rosedaal compound in the League District.

From here on out it is all up to players to complete this mission. They will receive no further assistance from the van Rosedaal family, but that doesn’t mean they can’t look for help elsewhere. If this scene has carried on for a long time, it may well be a good idea to go over the key points of information with the players so they don’t forget something vital that their PCs would have remembered.

SCENE 2: THE LEGWORK

This scene could either be the shortest scene of the mission, or the longest. Such is the way with Legwork scenes. This is because the legwork the PCs do before attempting the mission itself is entirely up to the players and so it is quite difficult to plan for as you won't know what their plans are before they come up with them. Some player groups are more gung-ho and headstrong and will head straight for the Temple to steal the hand without a second's hesitation, while other groups will spend days working out every second and centimetre of the plan in meticulous detail.

Below are a few areas of interest specific to this mission that the players may, or may not, go to for information. The players may want a lot more than this however, especially in terms of whatever equipment they feel necessary, so you may need to improvise as to where, when and how they achieve this. Remember that the Legwork scene is merely the preparation for the mission and while it may take longer than the mission, it should not overshadow the mission.

This is also the first opportunity for the Travel Encounter Roll to allow the players to get familiar with the mechanic. Whenever the PCs travel from one area or district to the next, roll on the Travel Encounter Table to determine what or who they run into. This applies whenever the PCs travel in any Scene. What they encounter on their travels will become much more dangerous and difficult as the campaign goes on, so if they players get used to it, they will know to prepare for it (much like one would do when they see their city is becoming a more dangerous place to travel in).

THE TRIARCH TEMPLE

Arguably the most likely place the PCs will visit to get information and may well be the very place where the Legwork scene ends if they simply decide to grab the relic and run. If this should happen, proceed straight to Scene 3. All the


NPCs' skills and equipment can be found at the end of the chapter.

As the floor plans show, the Triarch Temple complex is split between three buildings: the temple proper, the bell tower and rectory. The temple proper is always open to those seeking the comfort of the gods and while the bell tower is technically open to the public, it is frowned upon to enter without permission. The rectory, on the other hand, is off limits to all without prior appointment. While the Patriarch and Matriarch of the Progenitorists and the High Priest of the Prodigalists do not live here, the priests that do are highly respected among the political elite of Middelburg for their ceremonial roles. Similarly, the sacristy in the temple proper is also off limits without the supervision of a priest as it is here where the vestments and accoutrements used in the temple services are kept and where the stairs to the catacombs are.

THE TEMPLE PROPER

St. Lambert's hand is, however, not in the rectory, nor the bell tower, nor the catacombs or even in the sacristy. It is in the exact centre, the centrum, of the Temple on a marble pedestal, resting underneath a glass dome (the dome has a small glass handle on top so it can be picked up), on a black velvet cushion which itself rests on a golden platter. It is kept there day and night, on full display so that all who would pay their respects may come and do so. Pilgrims come daily to pray to St. Lambert, hoping he will look kindly on their troubles and grant them good fortune.

The glass dome can't protect the hand overly much, it is only ordinary glass, and fine glass at that, and it doesn't have any arrays on it. It does, however, pose an insidious threat to the players' plans. Visible light can pass through, but the glass is still a solid object which means that any array can't target anything inside it without going through it first. Remember that any effects of an array begins at the array itself before moving outwards (at light speed of course). This means



that any containment field you create that targets the hand won't be able to penetrate the glass dome because the glass is a solid object.

While the hand is one full display, it is not without protection. Two knights of the Most Noble Order of the Knights of the Sea Lion stand watch over the hand at all times. A secular order, they are neutral in the rivalry between Progenitorists and Prodigalists. Every six hours, two knights will walk from their chapter house to the Temple to relieve the current guards. The Sea Lion knights are a mostly ceremonial order and have not seen battle since the War of Independence.

The times at which the Temple is most crowded is during the four daily services: the Dawn service for Bür, the Noon service for the Father, the combined Dusk service and the Midnight service for the Mother. At other times there is only a trickling of pilgrims and visitors to the Temple with barely any at night. As the week progresses and the equinox gets closer, more and more visitors and pilgrims will be at the temple with many expected to spend the last night in candlelit vigil. Other than the pilgrims and knights, the only people expected to be in the Temple are the three resident priests and their six associates who come in for the services to aid the priests in their duties and then to clean the temple after each service.

There are a total of ten points of entry and exit into the temple proper: four doors at ground level, four shuttered windows at the base of the domed roof, the oculus at the peak of the dome and the stairway to the catacombs. This, of course, clearly excludes player made entrances into the Temple via the arrays.

Of interest is the lighting in the temple. There are no candles or torches; all lightning is done through arrays that are powered by a runic generator in the catacombs beneath the temple.

THE BELL TOWER AND RECTORY

The bell tower is half again as tall as the temple proper, but apart from the bell in the top chamber, it is utterly empty except for a helical staircase along the side of the tower and the windows that follow it. The bell chamber is open to the elements with only eight thick columns supporting its steeple. The bell is made from bronze and weighs approx half a tonne. It is set in a cast iron mechanism and has a thick hemp rope.

The rectory is a simple but richly furnished building. It has only six rooms: a bedroom for each priest, a privy, a kitchen, and combined sitting/dining room. The priests are meant to live simple, ascetic lives but their ancient ceremonial roles have left them with rich benefactors and patrons who pay generously for religious praise in public. The rectory is full of old and exotic books and art as well as finely made vestments for the most important of ceremonies. The PCs will find much to pocket here, but the priests will surely find out soon enough that a thief has been through here.

THE CATACOMBS

Beneath the entire temple complex lies the Ouentyd Catacombs, an ancient place for ancient souls. In sculpted caverns and carved shrines the bodies of the old kings, archdukes and dukes of Alfresia are buried and often forgotten. The catacombs have always been relegated only to the aristocracy, and this unwritten law was not overturned when Alfresia became a republic, much to the chagrin of the politicians, as this was a law of church, not state.

As a result, the last corpse interred in the catacombs was that of the last Archduke of Alfresia. With no nobles in Alfresia any longer, there are precious few descendants to come visit the dead and the catacombs have become a cold and empty underworld. The priests

also no longer speak of the catacombs unless asked so they do not wish to be seen “approving” of the old aristocracy.

Many Middelburgundians have thus grown up without ever hearing of the catacombs while many the older generations have forgotten it ever existed.

While the history of the catacombs may well not be the first thought on the PCs’ minds, the subterranean world holds other prizes as well. The Water Tombs, as their name implies, are built overlooking the Tenne River, with windows carved into the walls that could provide access into the Temple. Similarly, a sewer runs perilously close to the catacombs, and it would take only one runic array to break through from the sewer into the catacombs.

There is no lighting in the catacombs, so any lights the PCs require will have to be brought in. The catacomb can be a confusing maze for the uninitiated with many rooms as well as the tombs that line the passageways. Some rooms are self explanatory in the remains they hold (such as priests in the Mother’s, Father’s and Būr’s Rooms; Imperial nobility in the Imperial Room; and the power generator for the temple in the Power Room), but others are less obvious. The Falcon room holds the remains of the kings and dukes of Southern Alfresia, the Room of the Faithful Brothers holds the priestly siblings of nobility, the Crown Shrine is a small chapel to the kings of the Past and the Hart Room is the most ancient room, holding remains of the Eilanni.

Note that there are no signs on any of these rooms, so without a successful Logic Skill Check, the players will not know which room they are in.

OTHER INFORMATION THAT CAN BE OBTAINED WITHIN AND AROUND THE TRIARCH TEMPLE:

- St. Lambert was a fisherman from Wintersdam who lived nearly four centuries ago.
- Was beatified upon his death because of his greatest miracle: stopping a seismic

sea wave from destroying Wintersdam due to the Sigiltongue.


- The Sigiltongue is the ability to speak the language of the runes, the language of creation, and so do not need to draw arrays to create their effects. Only a handful of people throughout history have been said to have the Sigiltongue.
- The church services are every six hours beginning at midnight.
- The rotations for the Sea Lion Knights are also every six hours, three hours after each service.
- The Knights on duty are replaced at their station by the next pair of Knights so that the relic is never left unattended.
- The Knights walk from the Chapter House to the Triarch Temple to replace the Knights on duty.
- This year, it is the honour of the Knights from the University of Middelburg’s biology department to guard the relic.
- The sewer running next to the catacombs empties into the Tenne river.
- There is a manhole entering into the sewer in the street immediately west of the Triarch Temple complex.
- The doors to the Temple are always open, they are never closed.

This information can be gained either by speaking with the NPCs in the Temple or by investigation. Remember that some information will be harder to get from NPCs than others. The Knights, for instance, will be very hesitant to tell inquiring strangers about the details of their shift changes. Add Difficulty Modifiers as appropriate.

SCENE 3: THE MISSION

Once the group has decided it is time to enact their plans to steal St. Lambert’s hand (whether it is because they have finished all their planning, or because they decided to just rush in and grab it), the time has come to do the actual mission.

If they are attempting to take the hand by



stealth then as GM your goal is to handle the perceptions of the NPCs, if the group intends to rush in then it will devolve into combat and you will need to handle the NPCs' side of things. Whichever route they take, remember that it should not be a case of Player vs. GM. It is not a competition between GM and player to see who wins. Have the NPCs act in a way that is both realistic and drives the narrative forward. While you may know the PCs plans and intentions, the NPCs do not.

The layout of the Triarch Temple and the NPCs within it are outlined in Scene 2. As the composition of who is in the Temple when the PCs decide to steal the hand depends entirely on when the PCs enact their plans. They may do so during a temple service, or between the services; at night or during the day; when they first get the job, or the night before the equinox. Because of that, below will be some notes regarding the behaviour of the NPCs that you will be able to use in any circumstance.

The skills and equipment for the NPCs can be found at the end of the chapter.

SEA LION KNIGHTS

- The Knights stand on the east and west side of the relic, facing north, one metre from the relic. This is their ceremonial position.
- The Knights have become philosophers, scholars and professors over the years. They have never seen war and while they are practiced with their longswords, they will have never used it for its intended purpose.
- If the PCs start doing anything suspicious, the Knights will brusquely tell them to stop. If the PCs do not stop their suspicious behaviour and there is not a priest in the Temple, the Knights will tell a priest assistant or a pilgrim to call the priests.
- If the PCs try to touch the relic or any part of the marble pedestal or glass

dome, the Knights will try to get in between them to stop it.

- The Knights are not soldiers. They will use their diplomacy to bluff and intimidate the PCs into leaving the Temple if the PCs get rowdy.
- The Knights will only draw their swords for combat as a last resort.
- The Knights will flee combat if they believe they will die. Their reputation and careers are at stake, they won't flee for just anything.
- If they do flee, they will attempt to take the relic with them to salvage their reputation.
- They will flee directly to their Chapter House.
- The colours of the knights are blue, white, gold and green.

THE PRIESTS

- Except for special or unusual circumstances, the priests are only in the Temple for the services. One priest each for the Dawn, Noon and Midnight services; and all three for the Dusk service.
- Each service lasts approximately one hour and the priests will be in the Temple for the half hour before and after the service to aid in setting up what is required and to meet and greet with the attendees.
- The priests will otherwise be in the rectory.
- If a priest is in the Temple when the PCs do something alarming, the priest will attempt to diffuse the situation peacefully, but if the priest sees that can't work then the priest will tell whatever NPC is closest to call for the constabulary.
- If no priest is in the Temple and they are sent for, they will first come to the Temple to ascertain exactly what is going on

before behaving as noted above.

- The priests, while ostensibly pious, have no wish to die and will flee at once when they believe their lives are in danger. They will then seek to call the constabulary.

THE PRIEST ASSISTANTS

- The assistants are priests in training at other temples or honourable parishioners who spend some of their time aiding the priests of the Triarch Temple in their duties.
- Like the priests, the assistants are rarely found in the church outside the services.
- They will however take turns at various times of the day and week to ensure the temple proper, rectory, bell tower and catacombs are swept and kept clean.
- The first instinct for the assistants would be to turn to the priests (if they are in the temple) or Knights (if the priests are not in the temple) for guidance should the PCs do anything unusual or alarming.
- The assistants will not directly interfere in the PCs business at all.
- The assistants will flee once combat begins or blood has been shed.

PILGRIMS, VISITORS AND ATTENDEES

- Civilians come to the Temple either out of curiosity, to build a political reputation of piety, or out of genuine spiritual need.
- In between the services, they keep their heads down and pray, or try and look like they are.
- During services, they are focussed on the presiding priest and sing, chant and speak holy scripture as is required.
- They see both priests and Knights as figures of authority and will communicate any instances of suspicious behaviour on the part of the

PCs to them.

- They will take any order (barring that which will put their lives in direct harm) from the Knights and the priests. Any contradictory orders means they will only follow the priests' orders.
- They are merely ordinary civilians and will flee like ordinary civilians when faced with combat and bloodshed.
- However, zealots are more likely to be found in a temple than anywhere else, so for each civilian in the temple at the time of combat or bloodshed (or even if they simply see the PCs taking the relic) roll a d100. If the result is under 5 then the civilian will try and defend the relic but will flee if they are about to die.

If any NPC escapes the Temple to call the constabulary, taking into account the time it will take to find them and having the constables ready themselves and charge in by horse, it will take the constables at least 30 minutes to get to the Temple. This should be more than enough time to conclude the combat, but if the PCs linger long enough they will be in hot water with the law.

Because secrecy in stealing the relic is of such an importance, if the PCs are discovered in their attempt to steal the hand, the players may simply decide to initiate combat immediately in the mindset of "in for a penny, in for a pound". Thus, be ready that all hell may suddenly break loose even if the players are doing their best to be stealthy, all because of one poor dice roll.

If the PCs ever lay a hand on St. Lambert's skeletal hand, its glass dome or even the marble pedestal (or does something that would put it in their hands), this is when the Seekers will suddenly burst into the room. If, for any reason, the PCs decide to flee because of the wounds they were dealt in combat or because they were discovered before taking the hand, have them run into the Seekers on their way out.

SCENE 4: THE COMPLICATION

This is the most important scene in the chapter, so... well... don't mess it up. This is where the players will get their first clue that there is something horrifically wrong in the city of Middelburg, that things are about to get a lot worse, and that maybe they should do something about it.

The Seekers of the Starchild should run into the PCs no matter what happens. The normal route that the Seekers will take is to take a boat on the river to the entrance to the sewer running next to the catacombs, break into the sewer, move along it until they get to the closest point of the catacombs, use an array to make an entrance into the catacombs and make their way into the temple via the sacristy. The number of Seekers will be twice the numbers of PCs.

As stated above, if the PCs are for any reason not in between the relic and where the Seekers come out of the sacristy, change where the Seekers are coming from. If the PCs are fleeing through one of the doors, have the Seekers come in through that door. If the PCs are escaping through the roof, have the Seekers come across the grounds.

There is always the chance that the PCs come in through the catacombs and have someone standing watch into the catacombs. If that happens, have the Seekers come in through the doors. It is not the end of the world if the Seekers have to chase the PCs to get the relic, a chase scene is always a good thing, but for the PCs to gain the clue, they must do battle with the Seekers.

The Seekers are utter zealots and will do whatever is necessary to get the relic. If they have to kill people, they will. If they have to hold someone ransom, they will. If they have to burn the Temple and everyone in it to the ground, they will. They will never flee from combat, no matter how seriously they are wounded. They must either be killed or subdued for them to stop.

Throughout the combat the Seekers will be shouting at whoever they are fighting, hoping to subdue their opponents with their words as much as their blades and pistols. What they will be shouting is up to your discretion, but make it related to the clue. For example, have the Seekers at various times shout "For the Prophet!", "The Prophet demands the hand!", "Surrender to the might of the Prophet!", "Blood for the dark Prophet!", and "Surrender the hand to the Prophet and be spared!". This should hopefully pique the players interests and get them curious as to who the Prophet is.

Once the Seekers enter the Temple, there will only be three groups of armed persons there: the PCs, the Seekers and the Sea Lion Knights. The Seekers will clearly go after whoever is in possession of the relic, but the Knights will go after the group which seems to be the biggest threat. This will be the Seekers at the beginning but if their numbers are whittled down and the PCs become too "enjoyably aggressive" in their battle with the Seekers, the Knights may decide to do battle with the PCs instead.

If the constables manage to show up, they will side with whomever the Knights are siding with. The constables will use any force necessary to bring anyone they deem a perpetrator to justice. This includes lethal force. If the PCs surrender they will merely be arrested.

THE CLUE

The most, most important part of the mission.

The clue will come into two forms: a piece of paper one of the Seekers carries, and the information that the Seekers can verbally provide. The information in either case will be the same, but it is possible the PCs may kill the Seekers instead of questioning them, thus making the piece of paper important. There is always the chance that the PCs could kill all the Seekers and not look through their pockets, missing both forms of clues. If that is the case,

have any NPC available look through the Seekers bodies and tell the PCs they found something. If worse should come to worse and the PCs kill all the Seekers, do not look through their pockets and there is no NPC nearby or the PCs ignore the NPCs, then it is unfortunately the PCs' bad luck for their unknowingly bad decisions.

The piece of paper one of the Seekers carry is the orders given to them by one of the leaders of their cell. If the one of the Seekers are able to speak then there is no real need for the written orders, unless the PCs don't ask the right questions, that is. The Seekers are not afraid or recalcitrant to speak, however, quite the opposite in fact. They want to have the city know about their joyous news.

INFORMATION GAINED FROM THE SEEKERS:

- The Starchild is close to his birth in this world, close to crossing the veil and uplifting humanity into a new age of wonder.
- He has sent his prophet to Middelburg to pave his way and prepare the people for his coming.
- The people of Middelburg are not yet ready. There are too few that are searching for him. Too few Seekers.
- The prophet has already started cleansing the city of its filth, and will continue to do so.
- The prophet demands blood and sacrifice.
- The streets will run red with blood as the Prophet exterminates the weak and unready.
- The Seekers have failed at preparing the city for the Starchild and his prophet.
- The Seekers must rectify this and prove themselves worthy in the eyes of the prophet.
- St. Lambert the Sigiltongue was a prophet of the Starchild that the people also did not listen to.

- The power in his hand may aid the prophet in his duties.
- Appeasing the prophet is all that matters now.

The key points of the Ruined Man story to get across to the players is that there is someone powerful enough that the Starchild Cult has suddenly been centred around him. The players should also catch onto the fact that he has been "cleansing" the city of its "filth" and that he will continue to do so, and combined with the newspaper at the beginning of the book, may imply a connection to the recent high profile murder.

The Seekers will not be able to tell the PCs anything about the appearance of the Ruined Man, nor anything about his activities or motives. None of the Seekers here have met or seen him, and they have not been told of his appearance or motives.

After any Seekers that were able to have told the PCs the information, they will wait for the opportune moment before attempting to once again take the relic. If that is impossible, they will attempt to escape. If that is impossible, they will wait out the mission as calmly as can be with the patience of the righteous.

SCENE 5: THE DEBRIEF

This scene can conclude in as many and varied ways as there are ways of skinning a cat.

IF ALL THE PCs DIED:

Tell them how the Seekers managed to steal the relic and disappear back into the catacombs. If you want to throw them a bone, you can tell how the Seekers brought the relic to a large hooded figure who accepts it in a dismissive fashion and mutters again "Not yet, not you" before disappearing into the nearest shadow.

FOR THOSE PCs THAT WERE ARRESTED:

They will be taken to the constabulary gaols, stripped down naked and thrown into the cells where they will in all likelihood be forgotten. The constables have more than enough proof of the criminality of the PCs and the PCs were told the van Rosedaal family will disavow any knowledge of them. At the very least, they will be in gaol for the remainder of the campaign. Time for the players to make new characters.

IF THE PCs SURVIVED BOTH DEATH AND GAOL:

If the PCs managed to survive but did not take the relic, they will receive no payment from the van Rosedaal family. They will not be allowed into the van Rosedaal compound in the League District and the family will act as if they do not know the PCs. They may well know this will be the case and not even attempt to go back to the family. A wise decision.

If they managed to survive but destroyed the relic and managed to convince the family that it is indeed destroyed they will receive a quarter of the payment. If they haggled in Scene 1 for a quarter of the payment, then will get another quarter. They did ensure that the relic is missing, but they were discovered after all. The blame for the relic's disappearance can no longer be blamed on the van Windburgs.

If they managed to survive and successfully brought the relic back to the van Rosedaal family, they will receive half payment. If they haggled in Scene 1 for a quarter of the payment, they will receive another half. They did bring the relic as requested, yes, but they were discovered. The blame for the relic's disappearance can no longer be blamed on the van Windburgs. The van Rosedaal can however recoup some of the losses by selling the relic on the black market, after some time had passed of course.

THE AFTERMATH:

As long as some of the PCs survive, and manage to avoid the constabulary, they know they will have to lay low for a fair while. The fiasco at the Temple was in the heart of the Political District, a stone's throw away from the Senate House, in the arguably most ancient and revered Temple in the city. Matters will be investigated, reports will be filed, witnesses will be questioned, every stone will be overturned if not to find the criminals responsible, at least to look like they are. The Seekers will get most of the blame, but any NPC that saw what happened will be able to say others were involved.

Because of this, you can have an adventure or mission before you start on Chapter 2. This could easily be a mission where the PCs are on the run from the constabulary or perhaps a mission from the van Rosedaal family where the PCs can try and make up to the family what they lost in this mission. A revenge mission against the Seekers will also drive home the point that it is because of the Starchild cult that the PCs failed their mission and also draw them closer on the road to the Ruined Man. At the very least, you could generate a mission using the Mission Generator at the back of the *Runed Age* corebook.

If the PCs really want to lay low, then Downtime is exactly what they need. Let them go back to their jobs, their family and friends, and act like good upstanding citizens until the next mission comes along.

In the city of Middelburg, it will be roughly a month that will pass before the start of Chapter 2 and by letting the players experience that time difference in a game environment could make them more focussed on what lies ahead in Chapter 2 rather than what happened here in Chapter 1.

NON-PLAYABLE CHARACTERS

CIVILIANS

Athletics	35	Intuition	35
Broad-Craft	35	Investigate	35
Burglary	35	Logic	35
Constitution	35	Luck	35
Deceive	35	Might	35
Diplomacy	35	Perception	35
Drive	35	Shoot	35
Fight	35	Stealth	35
Fine-Craft	35	Wealth	35
Intimidate	35	Will	35

RUNIC ARRAYS

- In their day to day business, not everyone will be wearing defensive and offensive arrays.
- For Defensive arrays: roll a d100, if below 50 then the person is wearing the Middelburg Standard on their Arms, Legs and Torso Hit Locations.
- For Offensive arrays: if they are carrying weapons, roll a d100, if below 50 choose any offensive array from the Array Section at the back of the book.

EQUIPMENT

- Miscellaneous articles.
- For weapons: roll a d100, if below 25 then the person is armed with a sword and pistol.

VAN ROSEDAAL HANDLER

Athletics	30	Intuition	50
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	30
Burglary	30	Logic	40
Constitution	30	Luck	30
Deceive	50	Might	30
Diplomacy	60	Perception	40
Drive	30	Shoot	30
Fight	30	Stealth	30
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	50
Intimidate	50	Will	30

RUNIC ARRAYS

- Middelburg Standard Defensive array on all Hit Locations.
- Peace of Mind Offensive array on Push Dagger.
- Blood Drinker Offensive array on Smallsword.
- Manstopper Offensive array on Pistol rounds.

EQUIPMENT

- Steel Smallsword.
- Steel Push Dagger.
- Steel and wood Pistol with lead rounds.
- Only wearing standard clothing, including a hat.

TRIARCH TEMPLE PRIESTS AND ASSISTANTS

Athletics	30	Intuition	55
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	30
Burglary	30	Logic	50
Constitution	30	Luck	45
Deceive	30	Might	30
Diplomacy	60	Perception	45
Drive	30	Shoot	30
Fight	30	Stealth	30
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	50
Intimidate	30	Will	60

SPECIALISATIONS

- Logic Specialisation:
 - » Prodigalism/Progenitorism - Skill Level 80.

RUNIC ARRAYS

- None.

EQUIPMENT

- No weapons or armour.

SEA LION KNIGHTS

Athletics	40	Intuition	40
Broad-Craft	35	Investigate	40
Burglary	30	Logic	50
Constitution	30	Luck	50
Deceive	30	Might	30
Diplomacy	35	Perception	40
Drive	30	Shoot	30
Fight	40	Stealth	30
Fine-Craft	35	Wealth	35
Intimidate	30	Will	35

SPECIALISATIONS

- Logic Specialisation:
 - » Biology - Skill Level 80

RUNIC ARRAYS

- Middelburg Standard Defensive array on all Hit Locations.
- Bloodhound Offensive array on Longsword.

EQUIPMENT

- Steel Longsword (Heavy melee weapon)
- Steel Plate Armour (Strong Armour) covering all Hit Locations.
- Cloth tabard of the Sea Lion Knight coat of arms.

CONSTABLES

Athletics	40	Intuition	30
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	50
Burglary	40	Logic	30
Constitution	40	Luck	30
Deceive	30	Might	40
Diplomacy	30	Perception	40
Drive	50	Shoot	50
Fight	40	Stealth	30
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	30
Intimidate	50	Will	40

RUNIC ARRAYS

- Middelburg Standard Defensive array on Cuirass, Helm and Quilted Jacket.
- Constable's Friend Offensive array on Pistol rounds and Billy Club.

EQUIPMENT

- Bronze Cuirass and Open Faced Helm (Strong Armour) covering Torso and Head Hit Locations.
- Quilted Jacket (Soft Armour) covering Torso, Arms and Legs Hit Locations.
- Bronze Billy Club (Medium melee weapon).
- Steel and Wood Pistol with lead rounds (Medium ranged weapon).

SEEKERS OF THE STARCHILD

Athletics	40	Intuition	20
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	35
Burglary	40	Logic	35
Constitution	40	Luck	40
Deceive	30	Might	40
Diplomacy	30	Perception	30
Drive	30	Shoot	40
Fight	50	Stealth	40
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	10
Intimidate	50	Will	80

RUNIC ARRAYS

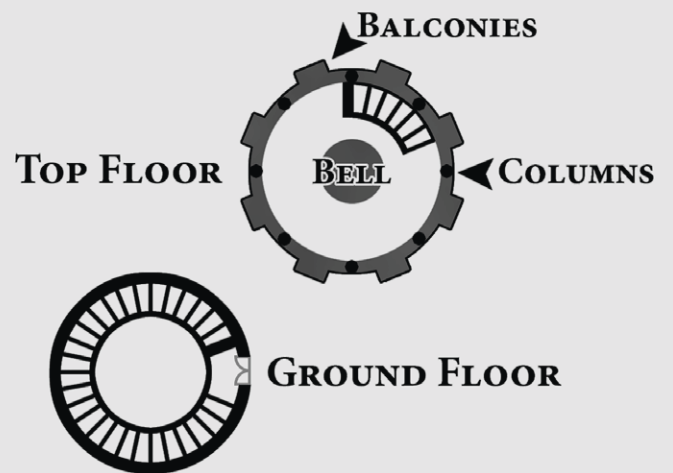
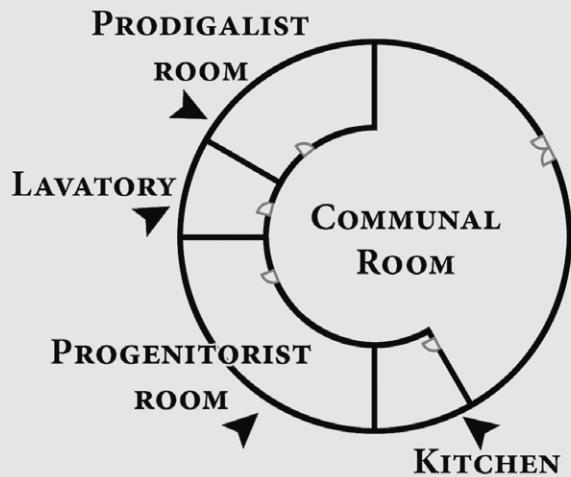
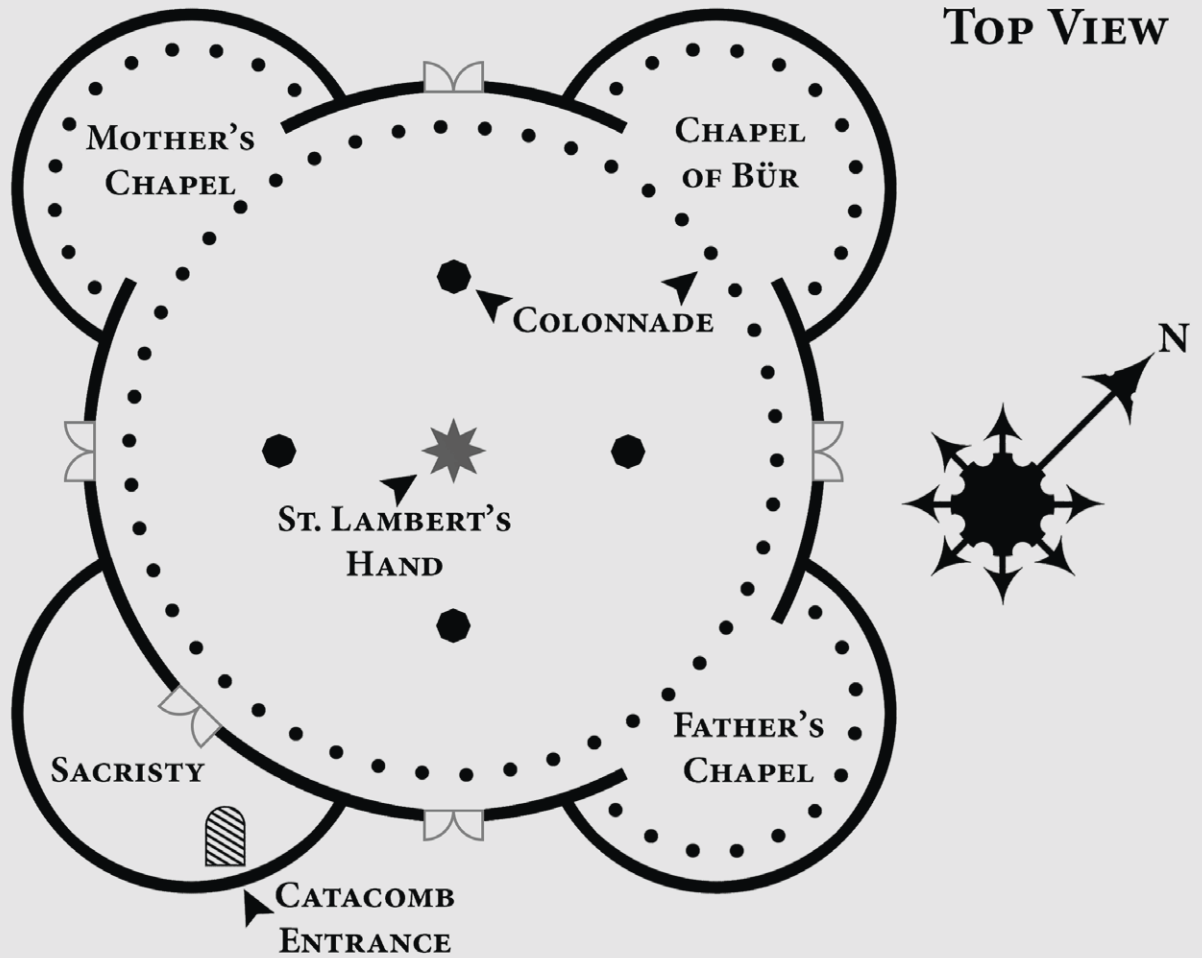
- The Prophet's Blood Defensive array on all Hit Locations.
- Manstopper Offensive array on Pistol rounds.
- Blood Drinker Offensive array on Melee weapons.

EQUIPMENT

- Variety of Steel one handed Melee Weapons.
 - » Ranging from swords to daggers to maces to axes.
- Steel and Wood Pistols with lead rounds (Medium ranged weapon).
- Simple clothing that covers all Hit Locations.

THE TRIARCH TEMPLE

TOP VIEW



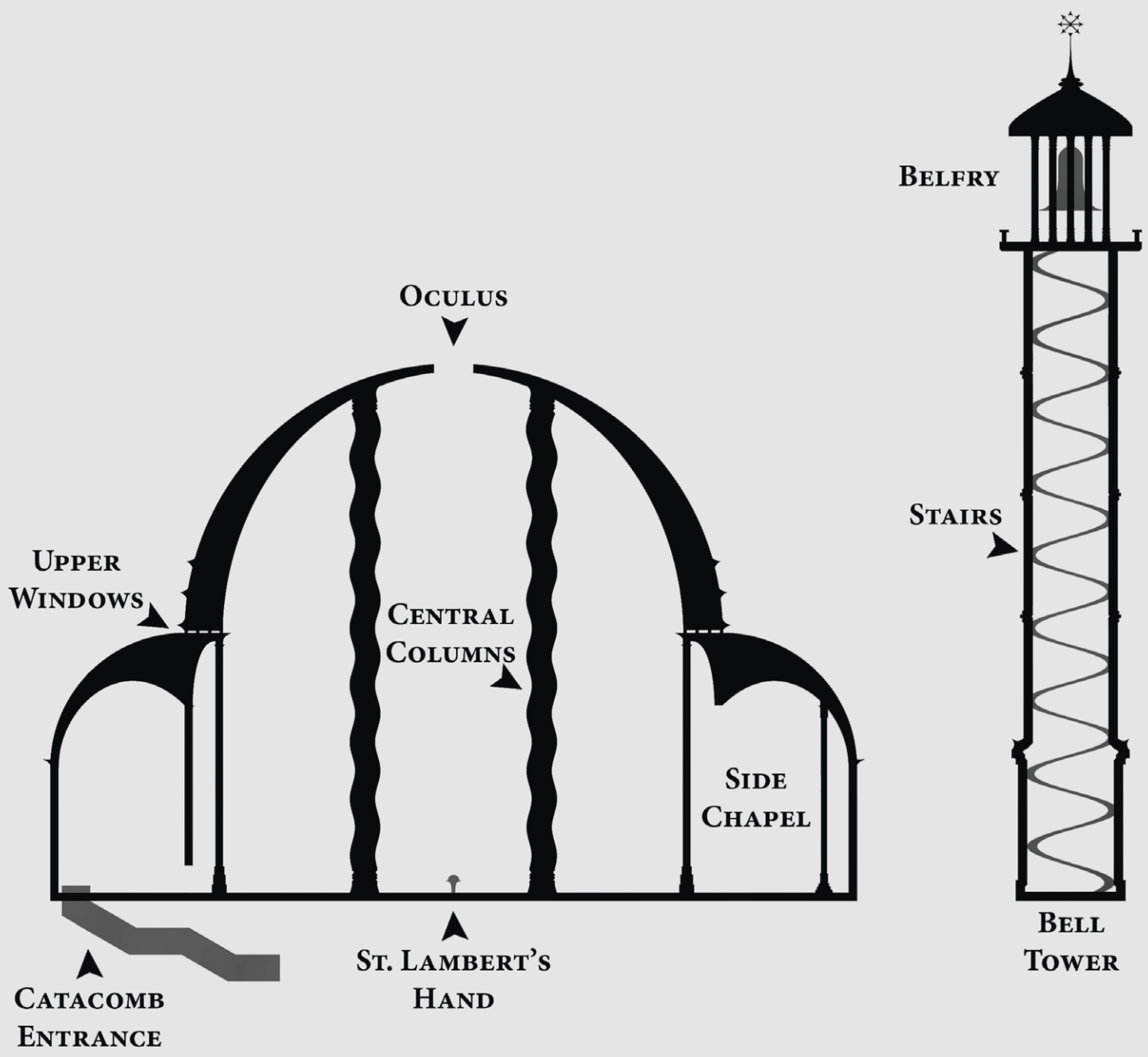
RECTORY

BELL TOWER

6 M

THE TRIARCH TEMPLE

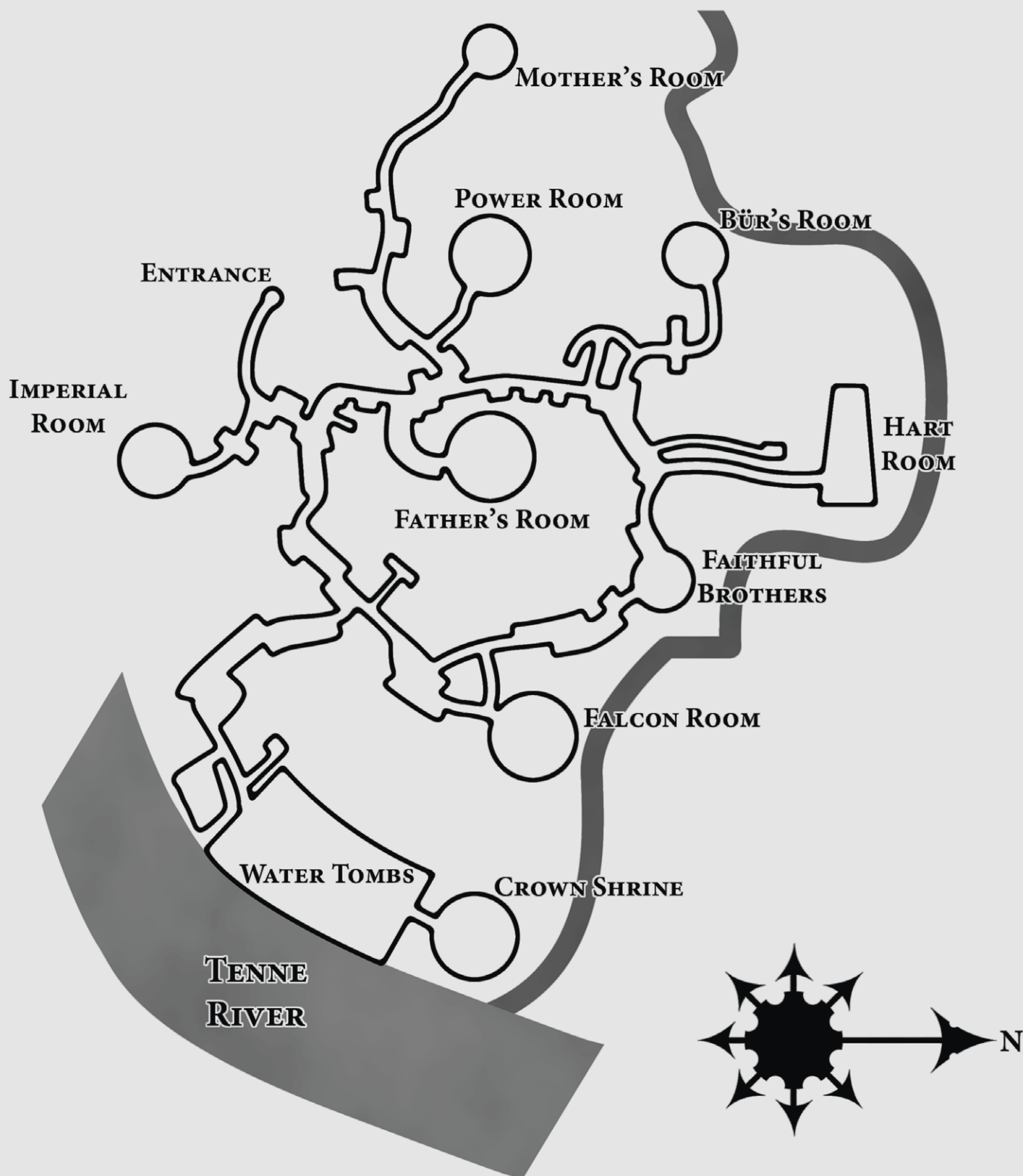
SIDE VIEW



7 M

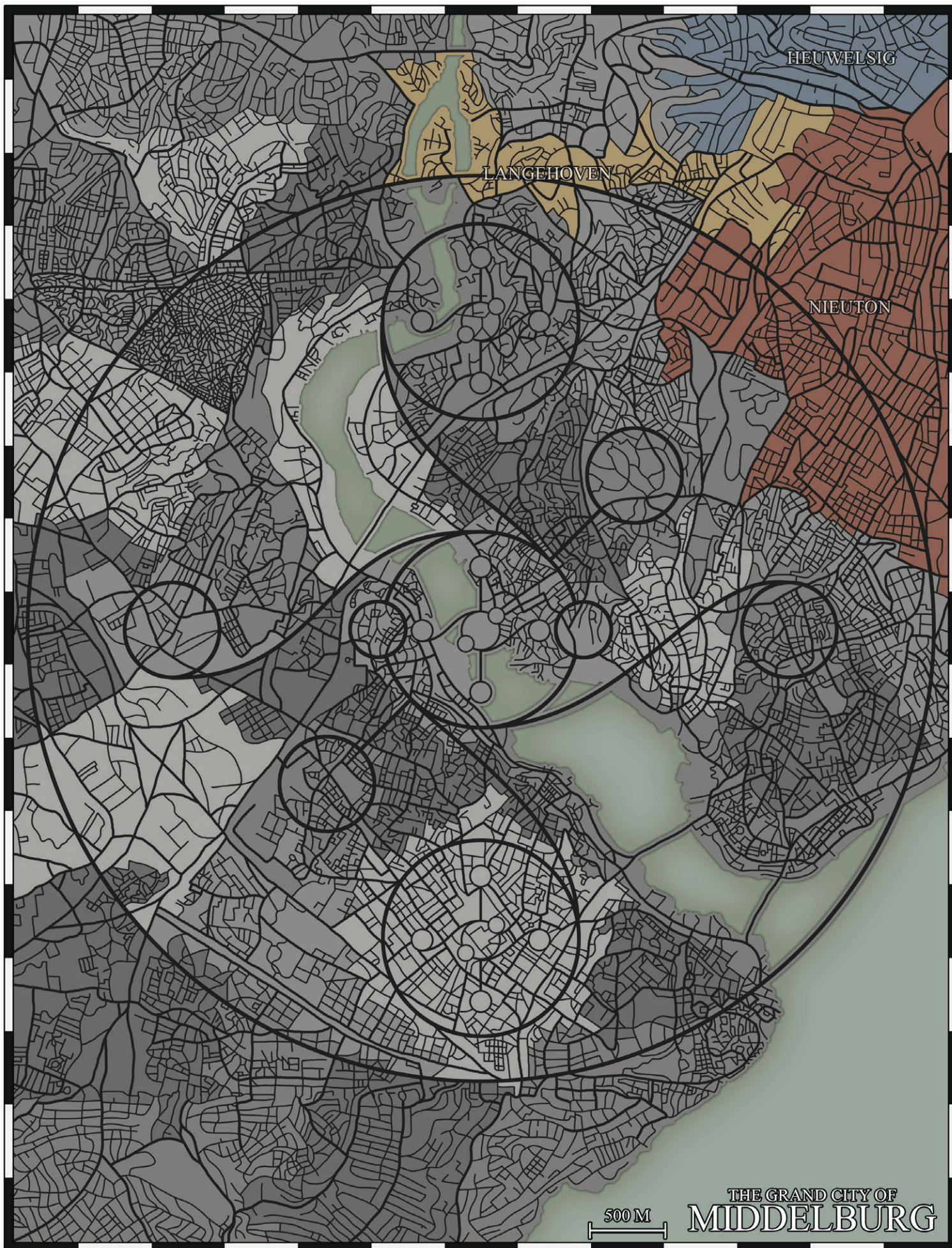
THE TRIARCH TEMPLE

OUENTYD CATACOMBS



CHAPTER 2

I have seen the
impending schism



NIEUTON

◆
*THE NACITANIAN
CALLHOUSE*

◆ *ST. SJAAK'S GARDENS*

◆ *PIERE'S PERFUMES*

◆ *BLACK PENY
COFFEE HOUSE*

◆ *ALL SAINTS BEERHALL*

◆ *DIRK'S DELICATESSEN*

220 M

NIEUTON



A city in its own right, Nieuton is the very best of Middelburg, but at its heart lies the very worst Middelburg.

Nieuton is a success story born in tragedy. It rose from the ashes of the mad king's fire to dominate the landscape of the city and with each successive war, riot, and attempted revolution, Nieuton expanded. It has grown to be the largest and richest district in the great city, but with the smallest population, showing just how important money can be in Middelburg.

Before the War of Independence, Nieuton did not exist and the districts that were in its place were little more than rubble and ash after the Incendiary king left Middelburg. The Northwest of Middelburg was one of the fiercest battlegrounds during the War and by the end of it nothing was left standing. It is said that it was here that Markus VI heard the news of the Heavenly Empire's attack on western Fresland. During the royalists' retreat, the mad king ordered the city burned to the ground. Nieuton took the brunt of the mad king's wrath. Dig deeper than a metre anywhere in Nieuton and you will find the ash that is the last remnants of the buildings and lives that were there before.

The cost of rebuilding the city after the war was enormous. It was too great for the new

government to bear. Compromises had to be made. The first and largest was granting the newly formed Fresian Merchant League to claim sovereign land in Middelburg and selected other areas in Alfresia. Selling off land that valiant Alfresians fought, bled and died over was not the most popular decision the first president of Alfresia had to make, but it filled the coffers, if ever so slightly.

The other compromise was far more insidious and one the public never knew about until it was far too late to rectify, and by then most ceased to care. The compromise filled the government's remaining coffers and allowed the nation to compete with the older stronger nations mere years after the War. The Alfresian people and the other nations thought the money flowing into the government coffers came merely from the Merchant League, but the truth is that the compromise the government made was to reinstate the aristocracy.

The last Archduke of Alfresia was a brilliant man, able to play the people of Middelburg, the king of Fresland, and the diplomats of foreign nations like fiddles. His political acumen was exceeded only by his ambition. Before he ever took the reins of the archduchy from

his ailing grandfather, he knew that the aristocracy of Alfresia hampered every action taken by the Archduke. Alfresia's ruler was one in name only. Thus, when he became Archduke at the young age of twenty two he waited little more than a year before dismantling the aristocracy, becoming sole ruler of all the island.

The nobles hated him and it seemed that Alfresia would descend into civil war, but the people loved him for it and without them the nobles could do little. They seethed and simmered and complained to the king, but Archduke reigned supreme on the island and overnight they became commoners, albeit incredibly rich commoners. They never forgave the Archduke and many a ex-noble hanged for the various attempts on his life. Many nobles even covertly assisted king Markus VI, hoping their loyalty would be rewarded with the titles they lost.

It was not to be, but their patience paid off after the War when the government came searching for money. A conglomerate of nobles negotiated with the government for several months, wishing their titles to be reinstated

in full and refusing to part with the littlest bit of their wealth if the government refused. Eventually a compromise was reached. The aristocracy would not be reinstated, a republic cannot have an aristocracy, but the nobles would be allowed to claim land as their own as it once were: freeheld land, no property tax to be paid and the only laws applicable on their land would be of their own making.

The nobles accepted the offer that would make them aristocracy in all but name. They were given the land destroyed by the Incendiary king to develop and they did so with great glee. The finest architects from across the world were brought in to design the district from the ground up. Large properties ringed with beautiful hedging and surrounded by wide boulevards gives Nieuton the air of an imperial retreat and the view of Middelburg from the hill that Nieuton sits on gives the feeling that the Nieutonians are "above the rest", a feeling the Nieutonians believe they richly deserve.

Nieuton today is a city in itself, providing every luxury the aristocrats could dream of. Any of their more banal and mundane needs are of course catered to by the armies of servants each




THE RICH MAN'S BURDEN

Playing a man on the streets and sticking it to the man can be a ball of fun and then some, but sometimes it can be just as fun being on the other side. They say money can't buy happiness, but crying in a mansion is much more comfortable than in a shack. Playing as a group of rich bourgeoisie puts an entirely different spin on the game.

Playing a rich person living in Nieuton comes with perks, the mansion being top among them, but to own it you have to be rich. If your players want to start a campaign as rich folk, have their Wealth Skill Levels at 60 minimum and give them a Wealth Skill Specialisation: Manor at 80. As well as providing a base of operations, the Manor Specialisation will allow players to acquire the accoutrements that the high life requires: coaches, horses, servants, all the things that a manor should have.

The motivation for criminal scum is easy: survive, make money, repeat. As a rich man, life is much more safe and you have all the money you could want. Your PCs will need different motivations. Are they rich vigilantes, or bored dilettantes wanting some excitement? Are they well funded extremists or working at some economical espionage? Being rich gives you more options to choose from, so choose wisely.



mansion and manor in Nieuton staff. Where these servants find what their masters require is of no concern to the aristocrats; all they know is that the servants must travel further afield than Nieuton, something the Nieutonians rarely do. Nieuton was created just for them, and if it is not for business or vacation, the aristocrats find very little reason to leave their paradise.

Outsiders in Nieuton are a delicate matter. As per the old agreement between the aristocrats and the government, the Nieutonians are only lords of their own property. Once they step foot out of their lavish manor grounds they are, legally speaking, as plebeian as the next fellow. "The land may belong to the nobles, but the streets are the city's" is often quoted by the Grand Mayors when one or another Nieutonians grumbles about the peasants on the streets.

It falls to the constables to ensure the aristocrats are kept happy. They too know that the long arm of the law is quite short in Nieuton and a complaint by a Nieutonians can destroy any constable's career, so they do their very best to keep the vagabonds off the street. The "Old Guard" is a common nickname for the Nieuton constabulary as it seems they serve the aristocrats more than they do the city, but they do not mind this as it means every outsider in Nieuton knows that there is little mercy to be found in this artificial paradise.

THE NACITANIAN CALL HOUSE

The only business in Nieuton that women avoid and men pretend does not exist. The Nacitanian Call House fills a need that no other business in Nieuton can. In fact, many "upstanding" members of the Nieuton community have made it their business to prevent any more business like the Nacitanian opening in Nieuton. All to protect the moral fibre of the community, of course. Any talk that these upstanding community leaders are frequent guests of the Nacitanian is downright slander.

Like a dirty family secret, everyone in Middelburg has heard of the Nacitanian and the services it provides, but no one speaks of it in polite company. While such business is expected in the less wealthy and respected districts of Middelburg, especially the nightmare that is Oldtown, Nieuton is supposed to be above this sort of affairs. The Nieutonians claim often and loudly that they are the best of the city, in body, blood, mind, and soul, yet the existence of the Nacitanian is proof that there is still humanity to be found in Nieuton.

That is not to say that the Nacitanian is as banal as those establishments found elsewhere in Middelburg. It is as luxurious, opulent, and extravagant as any other establishment found in Nieuton, at least on the surface. If you did not know what occurred behind the closed doors of the Nacitanian, you would not be remiss to think it was nothing more than an upscale inn or boarding lodge. The Nacitanian prides itself in this simple deception as it knows the services it provides is a discreet, personal and, at times, an embarrassing affair.

Contrary to its name the Nacitanian has nothing to do with Nacitania. The closest it has ever come to that nation is employing a few Nacitanian ladies and the outrageous Vallion accents the managers put on as part of the performance of the establishment. The Nacitanian was so named to give an air of sophistication to the establishment that the Alfresian or the Delkan perhaps could not.

The Nacitanian has an interesting history in that it is the only building not utterly destroyed by the mad king. As luck had it, the owner of that old house also survived and when the aristocrats started buying up every square metre in Nieuton, they found that this half destroyed building still legally belonged to its shell shocked owner. None of the threats, bribes or blackmail attempts by the aristocrats over the years changed this fact.

The owner, however, had become a pariah, a blemish on the perfect tapestry of Nieuton. To say

he was loathed is an understatement. He suffered great emotional stress and was close to ending his life when, during a trip to a certain establishment on the docks, an idea came to him. The Nieutonians may hate him, but he'll have them pay for that privilege. He will fleece them for every penny he can get and so he changed himself and his home completely for this endeavour.

Soon the news went out that he had died and a wealthy Nacitanian had taken over his home and was renovating it to open a new inn for "transient renters". The business initially had mixed reviews, but the owner was a frequent visitor to establishments such as these and he knew exactly what men wanted and soon he could not keep track of all the money coming in.

The Nacitanian is now the most prestigious establishment of its sort in Middelburg, and some say the whole of Fresia, and it brings in the most beautiful and talented employees for its clients. Not every man can afford to visit the Nacitanian, and some men can afford little else after they have been here, but as the owner was fond of saying all those years ago: "You will never find more willing whores with finer arses than here at the Nacitanian whorehouse."

ST. SJAAK'S GARDENS

St. Sjaak is the patron saint of the nobility and that is the be all and end all of what is needed to be known about the gardens. The aristocrats wanted gardens for their new "city of the future" and needed a reason for such a waste of land at a time when most of Middelburg was homeless and so decided to dedicate it after a saint. The gardens are a personification of the people of Nieuton: pretty and classy but without reason or purpose and made for utterly selfish and spiteful reasons.

After the short but intense war with Duke Lukas thirty years ago, the people of Nieuton gained a conscience, if only for a short while. Once again, Nieuton had beared the brunt of

the enemy attack and while Duke Lukas was kinder to it than King Markus, the aristocrats had much to rebuild. For nearly seventy years the aristocrats were untouchable on their hill, but then a true noble came and showed them the error of their arrogant ways.

To say that the aristocrats were in shock is an understatement. Not since the old Archduke dismantled the aristocracy did the Nieutonians feel as emasculated as when the duke of Zeerijk showed them as much mercy as he did the rest of Middelburg's citizens. The Nieutonians believed that the duke would spare them. They believed that he would see the nobility in them and quarter would be given.


They had forgotten that they were only aristocrats in Middelburg. To the outside world they were merely rich peasants. This moment of self-awareness after the war led to a moment of solidarity with the rest of Middelburg. It was one of the few times in history when they opened their coffers to the people of Middelburg to help with the rebuild without asking for anything in return.

Character is not dreamt or imagined. It is forged with fire, blood and sweat.

~Prince Heinrich Thorald of Lodewaria

St. Sjaak became a symbol of this movement during these few short years when every man in Middelburg was equal, before the aristocrats restored the status quo and everything went back to how it was. Duke Lukas still lives after all and the aristocrats are not true nobles. Rather than rail against the heavens for this perceived slight, the Nieutonians used St. Sjaak as a symbol of mercy for the less fortunate than they in Middelburg.

His gardens became triage centres and temporary housing. Kilometres of fabric were shipped in to create a city of tents in the gardens and the aristocrats' served the people of Middelburg the type of food of which those people could only have dreamt. It was a joyous time by all accounts. With the aid of



the Nieutonians the rebuild happened quickly, efficiently and without serious troubles. There were no riots as it was the aristocrats who ensured everyone had more than enough to satisfy them.

But that was thirty years ago and you will find no trace of what happened in St. Sjaak's gardens. His golden statue now looks over gardens as clean and immaculate as they ever were. It's ponds, pathways, hedges and flowerbeds are tended by an army of gardeners to make sure it is always looking its best. The sterility of the gardens are as enchanting to the Nieutonians as it is off-putting to the rest of Middelburg. The personification of Nieuton.

PIERRE'S PERFUMES

The Master of Scents. A self proclaimed title, but one no one has yet called him to task for. None, it seems, can match the gargantuan nose of Pierre de la Fontaine.

No one's quite sure where Monsieur Pierre comes from, not even his Heisenstein overseers. It's always Monsieur Pierre, never Monsieur de la Fontaine, that is for Monsieur Pierre's father. Who his father was is just one of many mysteries surrounding Monsieur Pierre. Monsieur Pierre had no records, none at all, until he arrived in Middelburg one day fifteen years ago. How he came to Middelburg, no one knows. He had no travel papers and no ship or train had a record of him.

His story by all accounts begins a brisk autumn morning when he simply walked into the office of the then Patriarch of the Heisenstein family and started speaking as if he had been expected. Again, none can say how he managed to make it into the Heisenstein compounds and through all the guards and servants without being spotted, but there he was, respectably dressed with an overly large suitcase, in the Patriarch's office.

Before the guards had time to respond to the Patriarch's calls, Monsieur Pierre had opened his

enormous suitcase and revealed scores of bottles with "the scents of the world" as he called them. Each bottle was labeled with a nation or area of the known world and he invited the Patriarch to try each scent as he explained in gratuitous detail the making of each. When the guards arrived, instead of removing Monsieur Pierre, the Patriarch had them bring his wife (the future Matriarch) to give her opinion on this mysterious scent peddler.

It was the soon-to-be Matriarch's decision that led to where Monsieur Pierre is now. She had an opportunity to exploit the vanity of the upper class ladies in Middelburg, especially since the previous perfumer, controlled by the van Rosedaal family, passed away the previous year. She bought his old store and set Monsieur Pierre up there and not once since then has she regretted choosing this mysterious man.

Pierre's Perfumes is a two story building. The top floor is given over to Monsieur Pierre's apartment while the bottom floor is split into two parts. The front is the store where customers can browse Monsieur Pierre's selection of fragrances with suitably vague and unrelated names such as "Hlynerm Fields" and "Boandian Spring". The rear of the bottom floor is Monsieur Pierre's workshop where he designs the ravishing scents that Nieuton craves. None are allowed in there, not even the Matriarch. Monsieur Pierre prefers his privacy.

Privacy is paramount to Monsieur Pierre. None of his neighbours know the slightest thing about him and he never speaks of his personal life to his customers and clients. No one has ever seen him exit or enter his store yet he is frequently seen at the docks discussing shipments of reagents for his perfumes. The Alfresian Intelligence Service have taken a keen interest in Monsieur Pierre, believing him to be a spy for Valkryk, but not even they can track his movements. It seems Monsieur Pierre can appear and disappear wherever and whenever he chooses, a curious talent for a perfumer.

BLACK PENNY COFFEE HOUSE

Of all the spoils brought back from the expansion and colonisation of the southern continent, none have gained so much public praise as the humble coffee bean. Used for untold centuries by the natives of the southern continent in their cooking, it wasn't until the bean reached Bythikan shores that it became roasted, ground up and served as a hot beverage, milk and honey optional.

Coffee has become the great equaliser in Middelburg, beloved and drunk as much by the very poor as the very rich, albeit in different ways. The rich prefer it with a heaping of cream and as much honey as they can take, perhaps even flavoured with spices such as cinnamon from the Westerners or nutmeg from Uttosia. The poor, though, drink it black, bitter, and as strong as can be. They want the caffeine for their daily work, but it must be said they enjoy the taste. The working Alfresian man drinks as much coffee as he does beer, and that says more than it should.

The Black Penny Coffee House ostensibly caters to all tastes but its location and the prices of its products means that the vast majority of its clientele tend to be from the more affluent side of society. The Black Penny has wholeheartedly embraced this and has changed its menu to match the eclectic tastes of its wealthy patrons. As the whims of its patrons change, so does its menu. It has often been joked that the Black Penny has become a confectionary store rather than a coffee house with all the extra ingredients added into their beverages.

There is, however, actually still on the menu, but for the regular patrons of the Black Penny it has become a mark of the have-nots who visit the coffee house. The main reason for visiting the Black Penny, at least for the wealthy, is to sample the newest concoction on the menu and have with it a pastry, or a slice of warm cake or pie. Those who do not know of the Black Penny, that

is those clearly from outside of Nieuton and the upper class social circles, are often bewildered by the plethora of choices given them. As they desperately seek for a beverage that does actually contain coffee, most simply give up and ask for it, revealing themselves to the gaggle of giggling aristocrats and bourgeois merchants.

Even with the elitist atmosphere in the Black Penny, it has garnered a loyal following among the common men of Middelburg. Each mansion and manor in Nieuton has a host of servants to tend to it and many of these do not live in Nieuton themselves. They must travel in and out each day, either by carriage or by tram, and should they opt for the latter option they will inevitably find themselves at the Black Penny.

The Black Penny is built right next to the Nieuton tram station, which was the train station only two years earlier, and a significant amount of its trade comes from travelers. Not only do the Nieutonians' servants travel in and out of the district every day, but so do the aristocrats themselves and many do find themselves on the tram as it is the quickest way around town. For the servants, who can resist a mug of coffee before what is sure to be a harrowing day dealing with privileged, over demanding rich folk; and for the rich, who can resist a brand new, delectable beverage to perk up before what is sure to be a harrowing day dealing with merchants, politicians, and peasants who belong in a school room, a prison, or rather both.

ALL SAINTS' BEERHALL

They call Alfresia the "Island of Wine" and while wine is drunk by the barrel, the Alfresians' true love is beer. Whether it is a hearty stout, a fine ale or a crisp lager, if it has been brewed from some form of grain, an Alfresian is likely to drink it, and what better way is there to become exceedingly intoxicated on the gods' own nectar than surrounded by your fellow countrymen.

The beerhall is a typical Dayitic concept and the Fresians inherited it through their shared



THE BARREL INN

THE BARE NECESSITIES

Eating and drinking, and what follows afterwards, is not addressed in the rules of the *Runed Age Corebook* as they do not serve to move the narrative along in most cases. That, however, doesn't mean they can't, just that when you are infiltrating a military barracks or hiding from irate League footmen, what you had, or did not have, for breakfast is not the pressing of matters.

If, as GM, you want to add some more realism to the campaign, bodily requirements such as eating, drinking and sleeping will add a new dimension to your games. It will also make it much more difficult for them, so if you think your players are having it easy, then this is a good time to test just how good they are.

Rather than track every meal and every glass of liquid the PCs drink and every hour of sleep, you can track them per day for food and sleep and per half day for water. For every day that the PCs do not get a good meal and a decent sleep, and every half day the PCs go without drinking something, put a -5 Necessity Penalty (that stacks with itself) on all their physical skills unless they pass a Constitution Skill Check.

In order to prevent a PC with a high Constitution Skill Level surviving easily weeks without water, whenever a PC rolls a Constitution Skill Check to avoid gaining a Necessity Penalty, treat that PC's Constitution Skill Level as if it had gained all the penalties it would have through failed Constitution Skill Checks.

cultural history. Where the rest of the continent is content with its taverns and public houses, the Dayitics and Fresians find no greater joy than an evening in a beerhall. Of course, there are many a tavern and public house in Alfresia, but no town or city is complete without a beerhall, and in a city the size of Middelburg, there are quite a few beerhalls to keep its citizens happy.

The All Saints Beerhall is so named because it was at one stage in its life the warehouse of a local Progenitorist abbey and, of course, they stored the beers they made there. As time passed, the warehouse became a meeting place between priests and abbots of both the Prodigalist and Progenitorist faiths. It was a place where they could meet in relative secrecy, enjoy a pint together and speak as equals, without having to worry about the conflicts between their faiths. Today at the entrance to the beerhall the words "pints up, robes down" are etched, and speaks of those early times when the priests and abbots could meet and leave politics and religion at the door.

Centuries later the warehouse and its abbey

closed in Middelburg and relocated to the mountains in eastern Alfresia. The rise of De Blauw Brewery made the Progenitorist abbey unprofitable, so with much sadness, and a bit of resentment, the abbey left for greener pastures. The remaining priests and abbots of Middelburg were now left with an empty warehouse and no beer, hardly the meeting place they wanted. Rather than have the warehouse go to waste, the Progenitorist exarch of Middelburg had it turned into the beerhall it is today.

The priests and abbots' secret drinking place may have been lost, but that didn't mean they had to go without it all together, only now they had to share it with the public, but that was a sacrifice they were willing to make. The name of All Saints was chosen to honour the fact that the beerhall was open to everyone and all faiths were welcome. The beerhall still belonged to the Progenitorist faith, but since it opened it has never been a Progenitorist "institution" as such. There has always been a long standing unwritten rule that politics and religion are not to be

discussed inside the beerhall.

Today the beerhall is one of the precious few areas of equality in Nieuton.

Everyone is welcome here and the Progenitorist exarch makes sure to keep the prices of the majority of the beers affordable to all who come in. As such, it is not overly frequented by the aristocrats in Nieuton, who see it as an unruly mess in sore need of cleaning up. For the rest of Middelburg, however, it is an enjoyable evening out with friends and countrymen, and at the end of the day, isn't that what life is all about?

DIRK'S DELICATESSEN

Creating fresh meat is exceedingly easy thanks to the arrays. Not only can you specify what sort of meat you want, but it will always be tender, there will be no skin or bone to remove, and you can produce as much as you want. One would think then that there would not be a need for a butcher or delicatessen in Middelburg. One would be wrong.

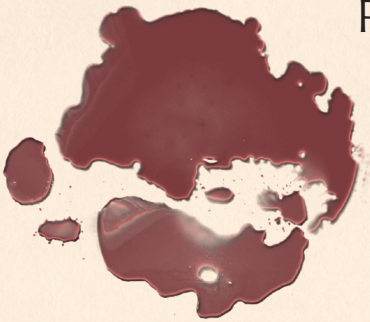
While meat is easy to produce, creating meat

from the arrays is so very pedestrian. Natural meat, "organic" meat as it is called, is far more flavourful than artificial meat and thus there has always been a demand for it. However, organic meat is a luxury in Middelburg and if you are looking for anything other than beef, venison, or pork then that luxury is nearly unaffordable. Dirk and his delicatessen specialise in these luxuries, only affordable to the wealthy elite of Middelburg.

Dirk's Delicatessen began its life as Frederik's Butchery, started by Dirk's late father. Frederik's Butchery was a simple affair, it sourced freshly killed livestock from the farms surrounding Middelburg, and sometimes further afield in Alfresia for special orders, and then butchered them, selling the meat to the Nieutonians. Over time Frederik began making his own sausages and blood puddings, stuffing them with a variety of herbs and meats and so the first embers of the delicatessen stirred.

Frederik's prepared meat products started selling better than the fresh organic meat he had on offer. His sausages, puddings, paté and bologna slowly began to garner a following of

REST AND RECOVERY




The Runed Age is a lethal enough system on the best of days without the horror and chaos of Middelburg waiting around every corner. One wrong move, one unlucky touch of fate and your character will end up in a hospice if they're fortunate, or a shallow grave if they're not.

As a wise man said: your body is a temple, treat it as such. Carry some form of first aid on you, it is no sin to come prepared. Bandages with Stop-Blood arrays are common in the city, make use of them. Remember that your Significant and Grievous Wound Slots only refresh once they have been attended to medically. While you won't be able to refresh a Grievous Wound Slot in the same session you gained it, the quicker you get on the road to recovery, the quicker you can get in the game.

Another wise man once said: you cannot win the war tomorrow if you die today. There is no shame in running from a fight. You can always come back to win again, or lay low long enough for the heat to fade. Remember that your dreams mean nothing if you are just another number in Middelburg's sad murder statistics.

If all else fails, there are people that can help. There are hospitals and hospices across Middelburg that can tend to your wounds and injuries, and businesses such as Otto's Apothecary that can supply medicine and medical tools to help.



connoisseurs and these became a highlight of Nieutonians high teas. Frederik found himself becoming less of a butcher and more of a chef and business owner. He spent so much time preparing the delicacies and meeting with traders at the docks to order even more exotic meats, to meet the ever increasing demands of his clients, that he never got time to butcher.

Frederik never took this well. He was a simple man, enjoying simple pleasures and his life was becoming far too complex. His son, also named Frederik but preferring Dirk, took to the world of business like a duck to water. He was never a man to work with his hands, much to his father's disappointment, but running a business, meeting with clients, doing the books, those were things he could excel at.

Eventually Dirk took over the business and Frederik once again became the butcher he always wanted to be. The delicatessen, as it was now called, flourished under Dirk's direction. While his father's preparations were still the star product of the store, Dirk sourced products from every port on the continent. Dirk's Delicatessen became the go to source for foreign luxury products. Dirk specialises now, not in what can be found in Middelburg, but what can't be

The new direction of the delicatessen has brought in swathes of new customers. The Nieutonians enjoy the exotic and ethnic food presented to them while foreign diplomats and merchants adore seeing food from their home nations. The delicatessen's reputation as the "foreign food store" may be an embarrassment to old Frederik but Dirk knows that Middelburg appreciates the business far more now than when it was simply a butchery.

LANGEHOVEN

NORTHERN COACHES

TRAM MECHANIC
STATION

BERT'S
PAPER STORE

THE FATHER'S
HOSPITAL

CATHEDRAL OF
OUR HEAVENLY FATHER

240 M



LANGEHOVEN



“The Gateway to the North” it was once called, when Langehoven was still a small town at the edge of the Great City Array. Over the centuries as the city of Middelburg swallowed up the small town and Langehoven became a mere district, the name persisted. In modern times Middelburg has expanded at a tremendous rate and the Great City Array now contains less than half the city. The thought of Langehoven as “the north” seems a bit disingenuous today, but it is an idea ingrained in the culture of Middelburg and one likely to remain.

As with all small towns Langehoven got its name because of a very mundane reason. In this case it was not so much where it was, such as Middelburg, Rosedaal or Windburg, but what went on in the early small village: namely, horse breeding. Langehoven was once a farm that bred horses for the nobles of Middelburg. The strongest warhorses and finest palfreys could be found on this farm. The owner of the farm, his name lost to time, became quite wealthy and his farm grew into a small village and later a town.

Langehoven’s golden days lasted as long as the fields to its north lasted. As long as the fields stayed empty there were always room to breed and raise more horses. In time the farmers of Langehoven became nobility themselves

and soon enough most of the lands north of Middelburg belonged to the horse lords. They were a breed apart and from the very start there were tensions between them and the nobility of Middelburg as there always is between the rural and urban nobility.

In every nation in the world, the most powerful and important nobles rule the cities while the lesser nobles are relegated to the rural countryside. This was no different in Alfresia. The dukes and graves of the island looked down on the minor horse breeding nobility to the north of Middelburg, even though they bought the symbol of their nobility from the horse lords. Since ancient times the quality of a horse said more about a man than the clothes on his back or the orichalcum in his vault. Farmers made due with mules and pack horses and the common man never rode one in his life. It was the nobles who owned horses and the finer the horse, the more powerful the noble.

At the end of the day all the best horses came from Langehoven and the nobles resented that these jumped up peasants controlled that status symbol. The horse lords would have the last laugh however as their wealth made them attractive marriage prospects. The

old Archduke of Alfresia himself was descended from the horse lords on his mother's side, and Patriarch of the van Windburg trade family is especially proud of his horse breeding ancestors.

Langehoven's golden age was bound to end as Middelburg continued its never ending expansion. As the years crawled by, more and more of the fields north of Middelburg was swallowed by buildings of every stripe. Farms and homesteads became villages which joined together and became towns and sooner or later the great city of Middelburg swallowed them all. With no more land on which to breed horses, the horse lords moved on to greener pastures, and took their wealth and horses with them.

Langehoven today is a different beast to the old town of the horse lords. Where it was once the north of Middelburg it now sits nearly in the exact centre of the city and the politics that comes with being the heart of Middelburg was as fierce as it was unexpected. The Political District claims being the heart of Middelburg due to its history and controlling the centrum of the Grand City Array; the League District claims being

the heart, metaphorically, of Middelburg as it controls the trade in the city; Nieuton claims that the measurements the city used to determine the boundaries of Middelburg is incorrect and it is the true the centre.

While the rest of Middelburg debates and argues, the people of Langehoven barely care. They are a practical people and Middelburg has heaped much work on the centre of its city. The heritage of the horse lords are still evident, but technology has changed how people move around. Langehoven is the centre of transport in the city. All the trams come to rest here and the major arterial routes in the city pass through here as does the river. The workshops to produce the trams, trains, and carriages of Middelburg are also situated here. Whatever is moved in, around, or through the city eventually passes through Langehoven.

It may not be the heritage the horse lords would have preferred to leave behind, but they can take solace in the fact that the men of Langehoven still charge a good fortune for the privilege of moving around the land.

THE DELIVERY BOY



While it may not be the oldest profession, being paid to take something from place to another certainly ranks among the top ten. If you take a look around, it seems as if half the world spends their time and money just taking something from one place to another. And after all, who doesn't like a fetch quest?

At first glance, you may think that the life of a delivery boy will only have two types of missions: bring that here and take this there. However, there is as much variety in the world of delivery as there are in the life of a criminal. You can be the local ambulance, the coach transporting prisoners, an armoured carriage taking the very important rich folk to and from their destinations being bodyguards along the way, or even taking stacks of money and orichalcum to and from banks and businesses. As an intercity coach, you will also be able to get out of Middelburg and into the wilds of Alfresia.

No delivery is easy and that is where the action is. Not only do you have to protect your cargo (persons or objects), but you might have to fight your way into just picking it up and another battle could await you when you go to deliver your cargo. Delivering can be a very dangerous and exciting profession.



TRAM MECHANIC STATION

“Creating and Supporting the Future!” is the proud motto of the Tram Mechanics Union and it is fair to say they are a truly proud bunch. It was these mechanics that created the first electric tramcars in the world and the ones to lay the first electric tramcar lines in the world. The Tram Mechanics see themselves as the pioneers and innovators of the modern world.

The electric tramcar is one of the newest inventions of the world. It is scarce more than a year old and has already undergone several major overhauls to create the tramcars that currently run in Middelburg. The tramcar is hailed as the first mode of transportation created specifically to use only electricity. When the Lightning rune was discovered two years ago, many tried using it on existing trains and ships as a power source, retrofitting the vessels to accommodate the new power source, but the tramcar was built from the ground up with the Lightning rune in mind.

The Tram Mechanics Union also deserves a special mention for the fact that they are not controlled by the Merchant League, a rarity in Middelburg for an organisation so large. They are in fact, controlled by the Alfresian government under the Lightning Contract signed two years ago. When the Lightning rune was discovered the government knew it had to capitalise on it to secure and safeguard Alfresia before other nations surpassed them in technological advancement. Thus they signed the Lightning Contract with the Merchant League that stipulated that the government would lease technology based off the Lightning rune from the inventors of the Merchant League.

The first, and still the most important of these, was the Lightning Engine that could propel any vessel using only electricity. The government took this and formed the Tram Mechanics Union out of the now obsolete Train Mechanics Union and ordered them to create new trains. The result was the tramcar: faster, smaller, more efficient; everything the government wanted and more. The Lightning

Engine would go on to propel ships, trains and airships and all of these new machines would build on the lessons learnt at the Tram Mechanic Station in Langehoven.

The Tram Mechanic Station could not have been built in a better location. Built from the old Railway House, the Mechanic Station sits at, or near enough as makes no difference, to the centre of Middelburg and over the years all the tramcar lines, and the railways before them, have been built to ensure any tramcar can make its way to the Mechanic Station for maintenance, repair, and housing. Any new tramcar lines that are planned and built as Middelburg expands ensures that these lines connect to those already existing to continue the efficiency of the Mechanic Station.

The Tram Mechanic Station also contains on its grounds the Interchange Wheel, a gift from the old train Railway House. The Wheel allows the tramcars that run on the Great City Array to the station's south to be moved over on the tramcar lines that run on the Secondary City Arrays to the station's north. Other than allowing the tramcars to be alternated between the various lines, this has the added effect of allowing passengers to take one tramcar from the very south of Middelburg to the very north. There are plans of constructing more Interchange Wheels so that the “Interchange Tramcar” runs more than twice a day.

NORTHERN COACHES

It has always been Northern Coaches' claim that they have everything you need for travelling outside of Middelburg and from its inception it has made good on that promise. Northern Coaches is one of Middelburg success stories of how someone can go from rags to riches by the sweat of his own brow.

Pieter Riusman, true to his name, came from the highlands in the west of Alfresia near the Riusdyr reservation park. His family

had for generations lived near the ogres' lands and some even jest that there is ogre blood in those highlanders. Looking at Pieter's large, hirsute frame one can be forgiven for believing in old wives tales. Pieter, however, had had enough of the ogres and living near them and decided to strike out for Middelburg in hopes of finding greener pastures.

Pieter had barely left his small town when he struck trouble. There were no dedicated coach services from the western highlands to Middelburg. The only coaches he could hire would travel merely from one town to the next. He would have had to hire more than a dozen coaches to reach Middelburg and by then he wouldn't have any money left at all. He could have taken the train, but that was a dangerous route across the highlands and Pieter didn't trust those mechanical monsters at all.

So he stopped at the first town he found and put his dreams of Middelburg on hold. He saw a need of the people, a hole in the market, a niche to be filled. He was a godsfearing man who wanted to do what is best for his fellow man, but he would be a liar if he said he didn't see an opportunity to make money. With the last of his money he bought a coach and two mules and offered to take people wherever they wanted, no matter the distance. When he had no customers, he slept in the coach and fed his mules on the grass by road. He became a nomad, but it did him well.

Eventually he made enough to settle down and bought property at the edge of Middelburg and from which to operate out of and hired men to drive his new coaches. His business did well, but not well enough as he saw most who traveled out of Middelburg already made plans for their transportation well before they reached the edge of the city. If he wanted more customers he would have to go to them rather than expect them to come to him. So a decade and a half ago he bought sprawling property he dubbed Northern Coaches.

While his main business is still hiring out coaches to those wishing to travel around


Middelburg and to other towns and cities, he now offers a few speciality services. Coming from the western highlands, Pieter knows the difficult terrain and how troublesome it can be for coaches to traverse it. Thus he offers his own custom designed coaches for those who wish to travel off the beaten track. He has also recently purchased a few small yachts that can swiftly take passengers to any port, beach, or cove on the island.

If you need to travel where ferry or train can't reach, Northern Coaches definitely can.

BERT'S PAPER STORE

Albert Kloeten, or Bert to his friends, was once upon a time the Professor of Literature at the University of Edelheim in Wesfresland. He was a highly respected scholar, giving talks on poetry and prose across Jytoh. His colleagues often jested that he has read every book in existence and, to his credit, he could tell you the plot of any work of fiction you could name. There was nothing Bert did not know about the literary world and it was widely believed he would live out his life as the preeminent literary scholar in the world. Until one day when he simply vanished without a trace.

It was a crisp winter's morning, as old Bert tells it, and he had just woken up with a not so pleasant hangover from a night celebrating the publishing of his latest book. With his head feeling as if a dozen tiny gnomes were drilling into it, he stumbled out onto his balcony for some fresh air. It was a terrible mistake as the light of the sun was brighter than the eyes of a god and the drilling gnomes multiplied by the second. Through pain and slitted eyes, however, he saw a sight that would stay with him for the rest of his life: the morning fog lay thick on the land, covering everything in sight but the tops of the university buildings. It looked to him as if he was at sea, a grey, thick, stormy sea and the university buildings were the ships that could sail him to safety.



Metaphorically, the significance of this image was astounding although he only realised this days later. What went through his mind as he perceived this eerie, ethereal scene was but one word: paper. It was as if Bür himself whispered in his ear: the world needed more paper. It all seemed so rational and logical at the time. Of course the world needed more paper, what could be more self evident? Why, though, was no one doing anything about it? Surely the rest of the world must also know this. Yet, the world didn't and so it was up to the one man who did see to correct this mistake.

Thus, in his hungover fugue he packed a suitcase and left, knowing not where to go but feeling his purpose intensify with each step. Months passed and eventually his feet led him to a small printing press in the district of Langehoven in Middelburg. It was owned by a timeworn old woman named Margaretha, although she wouldn't answer to anything other than Oma Greetje, and the business had definitely seen better days. The machines were starting to rust and customers rarely darkened the doorstep, but Bert knew this was it. Here he would find his purpose.

He offered Oma Greetje a hefty sum for the business, a sum she could comfortably retire with, but she would have none of it. This was her father's printing press, she said, and even if her children had no desire to take over this business she would not hand it over to some middle aged, pudgy, pretentious nob from Wesfresland. She clearly did not know who Professor Kloeten was, but Bert took a liking to this stubborn, cantankerous old woman and offered instead to work for her, no payment necessary.

Oma Greetje was understandably suspicious but she did need all the help she could get. So began Bert's career in papermaking and printing and the business did better than it ever did. Soon enough, the machines were clean and oiled, the paper fresh and crisp and customers started returning. Oma Greetje and Bert got along like an old married couple, constantly bickering and arguing but holding a deep respect for

each other. When the angels came for her, Oma Greetje bequeathed the business to Bert, trusting no one else with its running.

The paper store as it stands today may not be the largest producer of paper or ink in Middelburg, but few can deny that it is the best. The quality of the various different types of paper and ink Bert makes is of such high quality that the Hugenberg family uses nothing else. Bert also still prints a small number of books by commission, usually from faculty members of the Middelburg University and aspiring writers wishing to get their work out into the world. He is a strict perfectionist, but more often than not he takes on the manuscripts of those rejected by other printing presses, knowing how hard it can be to publish a book.

It may be a far cry from his lecture halls at the University of Edelheim, but Bert seems quite happy making paper, ink, and books here in Middelburg. His customers enjoy his easy manner and any children brought in love the many stories he tells, and the community respects his decision to not change the name of the business from Margaretha's Paper Store even though most talk of it only as Bert's.

THE FATHER'S HOSPITAL

The Father's Hospital is masculine in name only as, like all Progenitorist hospitals, it is mainly staffed by women: sisters of the Sororal Hospitaller Orders, priestesses of the faith, and lay sisters attending to the needs of their countrymen. The overseers, largely absent from the everyday running of the hospital, are men so as to give proper veneration to the Heavenly Father.

Before Middelburg became the colossus it is today there was no need for more than one hospital the size of the two current Progenitorist hospitals. The Hospital of Our Heavenly Progenitors was located in the district of Green Oaks where it tended to the sick and

ill of the growing city. Their location was favourable as it was close to the centre of the city and this meant that all those who were sick could reach the priestesses of the Mother.

However they quickly ran into serious difficulties they were not certain they could overcome. The first of which directly created all their other problems. The priestesses and nuns have always been charged with only tending to the faithful and before the rise of Prodigalist cult, this was a fairly simply task. As the Prodigalists gained recognition and their numbers trebled by the day, the nation quickly became divided between the two religions. The people could not understand why the priestesses would heal them all and public opinion turned against the faith

The Matriarch of Alfresia had no choice but to admit any and all to the hospital, but this only created another problem. As the city grew, more and more people came to the hospital seeking the healing grace of the Mother, far more than what the hospital could accommodate and that itself created the faith's third problem. The hospital housed a temple to the Mother that had become quite popular with the people. A new hospital would mean another temple to the Mother. The balance between the Mother and Father, between the masculine and feminine would shift too far to one side.

It was politics, pure and simple. A new temple to the Mother that would undoubtedly become popular would overshadow the Father, but a hospital could not be staffed by men, it was against Progenitorist dogma. It was eventually settled that the new hospital would be dedicated to the Father and governed by men but staffed by women, a compromise everyone could accept. What the priests of the Father could not accept, however, was that any new hospital and temple to the Father would be second in standing to the current hospital which would be dedicated to the mother. More politics. It took weeks of closed door deliberations between the Patriarch and Matriarch to decide that the current hospital would be abandoned and two new hospitals

would be built.


The Father's hospital in the north of Middelburg represented the land while the Mother's in the south represented the ocean. It was old cultural symbolism dating back to the old Eilanni faith. It was comfortable, it felt natural, and it served to draw people away from the Eilanni faith. However, as the city grew to its current size, the Father's hospital no longer sits at the north of Middelburg. It's location in the centre has brought a lot of politics to the Progenitorist clergy discussions. The priestesses and sisters want it moved but brothers and priests refuse. The priestesses and sisters then want another hospital and temple but the priests and brothers are adamant that they too should be given one as well.

Politics and religion have always been good bedfellows and if the Progenitorist faith is any indication, this is not likely to change any time soon.

CATHEDRAL OF OUR HEAVENLY FATHER

The brother in all respects to the Father's Hospital. Built concurrently with the hospital, the cathedral was built with the intention of separating the Progenitorist faith's healing arts and their religious ministries. As the faith allowed anyone to come to the hospital for treatment, the Patriarch and Matriarch decided to be beneficent and allow the patients to be treated without being harangued by the Progenitorist clergy.

The twin cathedrals of the Mother and Father are similar in many respects, but identical in only one: both cathedrals are run by members of only one sex and only allow persons of that sex to enter. The Father's cathedral, predictably enough, is run by male priests and monks and only men are allowed to enter. The cathedral is given over utterly to the worship of the Father in all his aspects and is one of the largest temples of the



Father in Jytoh.

The Father and Mother are complete opposites in every respect and so the messages in the homilies given in the Father's Cathedral is as different to those given in the Mother's Cathedral as night is from day. This has led to people saying there are, in fact, two Progenitorist faiths in Middelburg, a rumour the Patriarch and Matriarch both hope to extinguish and yet secretly foster. There has always been competition between the masculine and feminine side of the faith, but neither side has triumphed as neither side wishes to triumph. The competition between the aspects of the Father and Mother are encouraged as it is seen as the natural course of life.

The Father and Mother together represent all the eight Heavenly virtues and eight Hellish sins, in opposite to one another so that each represents four of each sin and virtue. Of the Heavenly virtues, the Father represents Chastity, Temperance, Diligence, and Kindness. Of the Hellish sins, the Father represents Obstinacy, Greed, Wrath, and Pride. While they are called virtues and sins, unlike in the Neoist and Prodigalist faiths, they are not seen as wholly good and evil. The Progenitorists speak of "natural necessity", that both virtues and sins are required to create a whole, but each should be had in moderation.

The priests of the Father's Cathedral thus preaches that there is a time and a place for the masculine sins of Wrath, Greed, Obstinacy and Pride. Where other religions preach against sin, the Progenitorist believes a human without sin has no humanity. Wrath is acceptable when it is righteous; Greed is acceptable when it pushes us to greater heights; obstinacy is acceptable when it stops us giving up; and Pride is acceptable when it drives us to perfection.

That is not to say the priests forget about the four virtues. Chastity, Kindness, Temperance and Diligence are seen by the faith as the embodiment of the "holy man". This ideal has become ingrained in the culture of eastern Jytoh, so much so that they have been called the

"pursuit of man", those elements a man must strive for in his life. Every chivalric order has these four virtues at their core.

The virtues and sins work to temper each other. You cannot have one without the other, or your life will be unbalanced. Unfettered virtue is what the priests preach against, that which separates us from becoming automatons. Unfettered sin is what the priests preach against, that which separates us from humans and Inhumans.

HEUWELSIG

SCHOEMAN'S STABLES ♦

DEFIANT STAND ♦

JACQUES' JEWELLERY ♦

ALDERMAN'S OFFICE ♦

160 M



HEUWELSIG



They say that a man is judged by the company he keeps, and this is true as well for the districts of Middelburg. Very few districts are looked upon by themselves, as they are only really divisions on a map, and instead people look at areas of the city as a whole. The “eastern hills”, the “seaside districts”, the “north”, the “League” area, etc. Thus, being near Nieuton is almost as good as being in it. Ooston, just to the west, certainly benefits from this, and Heuwelsig does as well.

Sitting on the northern slope of the hill that is Nieuton, Heuwelsig can be said to be in Nieuton’s shadow in more than just the literal sense. The district was as destroyed as its wealthier neighbour during the War of Independence, and so was built from the ground up in all the modern ways that Nieuton was. However, it is always better to be on top of the hill, than simply halfway up, and so the richest, most well connected of bourgeoisie became kings of the hill, and the less fortunate (relatively speaking) had to make do with Heuwelsig and Ooston.

To everyone else in the city, there is barely a difference between Heuwelsig and Nieuton; they are just different flavours of bourgeoisie, and whether one is upper class or upper-middle class means very little to the average person in the city just trying to have enough money at

the end of the day to feed himself. To the folk of Heuwelsig, however, it means everything. Living in Nieuton is not just a status symbol, it is a dream, a goal, an aspiration. Being in Nieuton means connections to everyone who is anyone: politicians, foreign nobility, military generals, and most importantly the scions of the Merchant League.

Being in Heuwelsig, on the other hand, means being connected to others just like yourself, artisans, scholars, professionals, and small-business owners. One’s first thought may be that this is not altogether different from Ooston, and at face value this is correct; but the truth is in the intention. Ooston is proud to be Ooston. They are free from control of the League, and enjoy being who they are. Should an Oostonian make it to Nieuton, it is seen as making space for someone new to join the Ooston family. For many in Heuwelsig, there is no pride to live in the shadow of Nieuton; and when asked many do not even say they live in Heuwelsig, preferring to say they make their home on the “northern slope of Nieuton”. Anything to fit in with the well-to-do.

Do they eventually make it to the top of the hill? Some do, of course. Ambition is a powerful drug.



For most, however, living in Heuwelsig is like being one of many crabs in a bucket: each one desperately trying to climb out, and pulling others down in order to get to the top. And yet, at the end of the day, no crab makes it out, as they are far too busy pulling each other down.

As cut-throat as life is here, there are a few who are content simply to be. It seems the further away from Nieuton you are in the district, the less of a pull it has on you. For others, just the fact that they have made it this far is an accomplishment in itself, and there is no reason to move any further up that hill. There are many artisans and shopkeepers who are more than content living in Heuwelsig, and there is a strong sense of community here, but before anyone mistakes them for Ooston, there is one key difference: the Merchant League.

Unlike Ooston, the League made sure that the crafters and sellers in Heuwelsig did not escape their reach, and every store and workshop you visit in the district sports a guild emblem of a Trade Family. The League made a mistake once, it will not do so again.

JACQUES' JEWELLERY

A long time ago, gold was the metal of kings and diamonds were the stones of emperors. Now, though, even the poor unfortunates of Oldtown can afford a golden necklace studded with diamonds if they save up for maybe a week or two. When Bür gave us the runes, he did not just make life better and easier for us, he also made a lot of the world entirely worthless. When you can simply create as much gold and silver as you want, what worth do they have? When any clever chap can create a tonne of carbon and compress it into a diamond with the runes, how expensive could it really be?

These once precious metals as well as diamonds now see themselves used in mundane, day-to-day functions. Anything requiring reflectiveness is easily coated in silver, and

anything that needs to stand the test of time (from pipes to locks to hinges) is now a golden alloy. Even diamonds have become pedestrian, with most artisans' tools and drills now having diamonds in them for the cleanest and sharpest cuts.

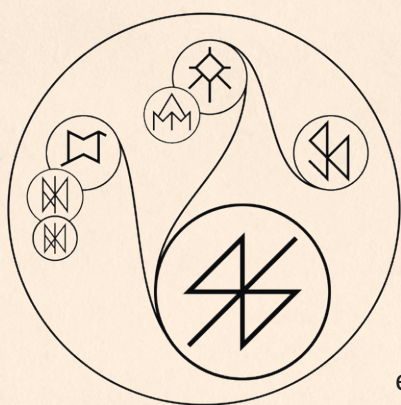
Thus while the kings and emperors of millennia ago wore golden, diamond studded crowns, the ones of this day and age would not be caught dead with them.

There is one material, however, that the runic arrays cannot create and which in fact can power them: orichalcum. They say that it is as rare in the ground as natural gold is, and so you need to seek far and wide to find an ore-rich vein. As you can only use orichalcum once to power a runic array, the truth is that "virgin" orichalcum has become the most rare material in the world. Coupled with its runic-powering properties, it has also become the most valuable thing known to man; more valuable by far, some say, than any human life.

"Dyed" orichalcum, having been used to power a runic array, and taken on the colour of the centrum-rune is much more common, and has become the fashion de jour of jewellers. There are as many colours of dyd orichalcum as in the rainbow, and many jewellers will alloy the orichalcum with other metals, to bring out a certain shade or tint in the metal, creating their own unique palette with which to create their jewellery and make their name.

Jacques has a very unique shade of red that took him years to perfect, called Maiden's Blush, and you will find none like it in the city. Described as the colour of a "virgin's cheeks as she sees her sweetheart", Maiden's Blush helped to establish Jacques as a serious and professional jeweller, in the business as much for the art as for the money. It drew customers, particularly Nieutonians, to his workshop and commissions has been steady ever since.

Jacque does not only use orichalcum in his creations, but seeks out those precious stones that will enhance the colours he creates in the



ACCEPTABLE COLLATERAL DAMAGE

The runes and arrays are amazing things, wonderfully deadly things, and they can be used to attack more than one person at a time. Many arrays are designed to do exactly this as often it is the quickest and most efficient way to end a fight.

Attacking multiple targets comes in two forms. The first is the traditional area of effect attack where it is the array itself which attacks the targets, for example: a Create-Large-Fire array that engulfs several people at once. When this happens, use the Rune Skill of whoever drew the array for the Combat Skill Check versus any person within the area of effect. Some arrays, like a Contain-Exclude-Human array are instantly lethal and as GM you will have to use your own judgement as to the outcome.

The second way to attack multiple targets is through the after effects of attacking one target. The Walking Bomb array here is a perfect example. In such a case, use either the Combat Skill (if the array was on a blade or bullet) or the Fine-Craft Skill (if it was used as a trap) versus any secondary targets. For arrays like the Walking Bomb, which cause explosions, give a +5 bonus to the targets' defence rolls for every five metres they are away from the origin of the effect.

metals. While the runes cannot make emerald, sapphire, or others, the runes can help to retrieve them from the ground. Mining with runic arrays has taken the back-breaking task from miners, and turned them from labourers to engineers. Whole mountains worth of ground and soil can be moved at a moment's notice, revealing the ores beneath; and this has helped Jacque to acquire the stones he needs. With a palette of orichalcum on one side, and a palette of stones on the other, there is not painting of metal and stone that he cannot create.

DEFIANT STAND

During the War of Independence a century ago, Middelburg was not saved because of the bravery and courage of its defenders, or because of the military genius and tactics of its generals. No, Middelburg was saved, and Alfresia gained its independence, because the Heavenly Empire of Man decided to use the civil war to attack the western border of Fresland. When news reached Middelburg that imperial legions were marching into Fresland, the mad king Markus VI the

Incendiary left the island to deal with them.

When the Incendiary died in the conflagration that killed the emperor and his imperial retinue, Fresland gave up on trying to keep Alfresia and renamed itself the Kingdom of Wesfresland. The deer that was Alfresia was saved because the wolves that would hunt it instead chose to attack each other.

This does not mean it was a happy ending, however. When Markus VI heard of the imperial invasion, he decided that one last attack was warranted on Middelburg, one so strong and crippling that it would take the city and give him enough time to meet the emperor in battle. When the attack stalled, he decided on a different plan: burn the city to the ground. If he could not have Middelburg, then no one would. As he left the island, the remaining royalist forces began immolating the city.

Everything outside the Grand Array of the city was brought to ruin, with no structure standing taller than a man's hip, and the districts that would eventually become Nieuton was utterly destroyed. When the royalists

broke through the grand walls, the Alfresians thought all was lost, and it all would have been if not for the last few remaining soldiers in the city.

Petrus de Wet, field-lieutenant and the nearest thing to a commanding officer within earshot, knew that even the few remaining royalists in the city outnumbered, outgunned, and out-armoured the Alfresians. A head-on confrontation would simply throw more bodies onto the pyre. Instead, de Wet believed that vengeance was in order. On the side of the hill overlooking the city, and screened from any direct attack, was the royalist camp that had been the bane of the city for the past few years. If the royalists were going to burn his home to the ground, de Wet would return the favour.

In the middle of night, lit up by the fires of the city, de Wet and twenty good men crept through the ruins of the western part of the city and out into the ruined wasteland surrounding it. The royalists were far too busy delighting in their rampage to care much about anyone wandering out (other than to take pot-shots at them for bets and laughter), and de Wet's men made it up the hill of the future Nieuton with relative ease.

Slaughter them all, let the gods sort them out.
~King Andoni Oriol of Valeron

With the element of surprise on their side, de Wet and his men took out the camp's guards with no casualties on their side, and then started destroying everything in sight. By the time the royalists in the city discovered what had happened, their camp was in a worse state than the city, but it had had the intended effect. The royalists began retreating.

De Wet had more than enough time to prepare for them, and his twenty men took dozens of royalists each with them to their graves. It took three days for the few remaining forces in the city to find them, as they had to deal with the fire and carnage in the city first, but when they arrived at the royalist camp, there was

not a single man left alive on either side of the battle.


De Wet and his men gave up their lives for their city, and to commemorate these brave heroes, the Defiant Light was created on the site where they gave everything for Middeburg. Twenty one runic arrays arranged in concentric spirals were inlaid in golden alloys into granite, and for the rest of eternity they would shoot beams of purest white light into the sky. These pillars of light are visible from the whole city on a clear night so that no one would ever forget what it took to stop Middelburg from burning to the ground.

ALDERMAN'S OFFICE

The Aldermen of Middelburg are a relic of another time. In olden times they were used just as they are now in the hamlets, villages, and small towns across Alfresia. They were the representative of the community, used predominantly when in talks with neighbouring villages or when settling disputes inside the community. For many of the present hamlets and villages, there is no real need or desire for an office of the mayor, as things run along just fine as they are, so the Alderman is the next best thing when the need arises.

This is how it went for most of the parts of Middelburg that used to be their own small hamlets and villages, before the city eventually enveloped them. For a time, as the city engulfed village after village in its ever-expanding presence, the office of Alderman was suspended, as the nobles who ruled over the various parts of the great city imposed their autocratic rule directly on the people beneath them. It was a simple choice for the cityfolk, do as you are told, or suffer the consequences. In fact, it was no choice at all really.

It was no surprise then that the people of Middelburg rejoiced when the last Archduke of the island dissolved the entire aristocracy and placed a senate in their stead to rule the nation.



A constitutional monarchy for the people, by the people, empowered by all who lived here. Fine words, but there was a gargantuan problem that could not be overlooked: Middelburg. It had a fifth of the island's population, and the Archduke would be mad to hand this over to a single mayor as he had done for the other cities and towns of the nation.

"Give a man Middelburg, and you give him the island," the last Duke of Windburg told the Archduke, and the old man took this to heart. He would rule this island and no one else. Thus he dissolved the city of Middelburg just as he did the aristocracy. Of course, no walls were torn down, and no people were forcibly removed, but on paper the city was no more. New maps were drawn up, the districts were organised and created, and each district became its own unique town ruled by its own mayor. Each mayor was elected by his own people, and the Archduke believed this would keep them busy at least if it could not keep them honest.

Collectively the many mayors formed a council and coordinated and managed the now-nonexisting city as a whole, and for a time it seemed to work. Then came the War of Independence, and the city of Middelburg was reformed as the Grand City of Middelburg, and with a Grand City came a Grand Mayor. For a very short time, many in the Grand City held their breath, as they did not know if the newly appointed Grand Mayor would do away with the council and rule the Grand City all by himself. A recurring joke in the weeks after independence was to call him the King of Middelburg, to echo the old kings that ruled centuries ago before the island united.

Whether through political pressure or a lack of humour, the Grand Mayor reinstituted the council, but forbade the use of the term "mayor". There would only be one mayor in Middelburg, and that was the Grand Mayor. Instead they would be called Aldermen, like the rest of the island. It was supposed to be a political show of force, to let them know that he ran the city, but it was an empty gesture.

Soon the council made it law that many of the powers the old mayors had would be retained by the Aldermen, meaning there was quite little for the Grand Mayor to do other than to coordinate the various districts into some sense of harmony. In the century that followed, the Grand Mayor clawed back some power for his office, but the Aldermen are still the de facto rulers of their respective districts, elected by their communities to govern the districts. They are both senator, mayor, intercessor, counselor, and mediator. For some districts, they are the next thing to the divine, while for other districts they are merely another corrupt politician.

SCHOEMAN'S STABLES

They say the age of horses is over, and for people like Simon Schoeman, that would be a damn shame, and not only because it would put him out of business. The horse and its rider is a symbol of freedom, self-reliance, majesty and masculinity. To lose that would, in Simon's view, make the world a sterile place. You may see more of the world on a train or airship, and far more conveniently too, but what about the spirit of adventure, what about seeking out our own path in the wilderness, what about the enduring struggle of man against the wild?

To say that Schoeman has a cynical and bitter outlook on the world would be obvious, but he has lived long enough to see the world change around him far quicker than he, or the world itself to be frank, could keep up and not every change has been for the betterment of mankind he believes.

When Schoeman was a child, his father found work as a cobbler with the Merchant League and this meant the long move to Middelburg all the way from Edenburg in the far south-east of Alfresia. It was a time of momentous change for Schoeman, as it was his first time to ride in, or even see, a train; and the size of Middelburg blew him away.

The whole of Edenburg could fit within a single district of the Grand City and still have room to spare, thus seeing the unending sprawl of the metropolis was a grand adventure for the young boy. This wide-eyed excitement would soon fade, however.

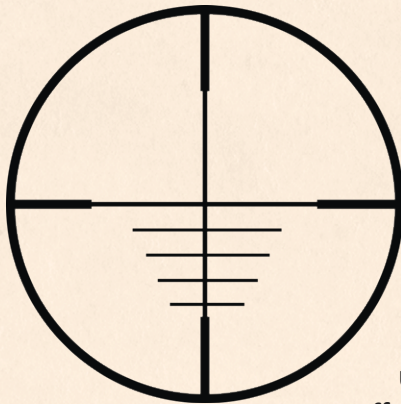
There is a lot to do in Middelburg, far too much, some would say, but what it does not have is freedom. The Grand City is close, cramped, and crowded, even outside the Grand Array where Schoeman's family stayed. Schoeman was used to the wide open fields of the south, being able to run, play and go on adventures with his friends and to see what was on the other side of whatever hill they could see. When standing in one of the many wheat fields of the south, far from any building, you could feel like it was just you and the world and nothing else in between.

It is not like this in Middelburg, and the excitement of seeing all the new stores, buildings, and strange looking people soon turned to claustrophobia and anti-socialness. As soon as he could, he found ways to leave the city. First was

as a seaman on a merchant vessel, but Schoeman was built to have two feet on the ground, and seasickness got the better of him. His second job was in the engine of a train, keeping it stoked and fired for the long journey to the southern end of the island. Schoeman loved this, as he could see his old homeland again, but he soon found an even better line of work.

The world might be advancing rapidly, but there are still some places that a train could not go, and for that there was always the good old coach, and this would become Schoeman's career. He drove the long line coaches from Middelburg through the mountains around the city and to the towns and villages where the trains did not go. He delivered messages, carried goods, and had passengers who could not afford the trains. When the rich and powerful wanted a spot of hunting in the hills and mountains around the Grand City, Schoeman would be their guide, and there was nothing better than a journey through the wilds on a horse.

No good deed ever goes unpunished,




PROJECTILE RUNES

In most cases, you will use the arrays to aid and enhance already existing technology. These can be offensive arrays on weapons, defensive arrays on armour, clothing and shields, arrays on lights and carriages and so forth. The arrays, can however, be powerful weapons in their own right. A well placed array as a trap can save you from the risk and lethality of combat for, as they say, discretion is the better of valour. However, simply holding up an array and using it as a ranged weapon can sometimes be more effective than any pistol or musket.

Such arrays can be anything from a Create-Push-Fire/Iron/Wood to simulate a musket to the always lethal Contain-Exclude-Human array. When using arrays in this manner, treat them as regular ranged weapons for the purposes of combat Skill Checks. This means they will require a Shoot Skill Check and the damage they cause will depend on how well the attacker rolled. The GM can always add extra modifiers unto this roll for the specifics of the array, such as the Area of Effect bonus for those arrays that can cause damage to a large area.

Since arrays are capable of achieving many, many things, GMs will have to adjust and adapt to the circumstances of each array and perhaps add additional effects beyond simple damage when resolving Combat Skill Checks involving arrays used as ranged weapons.



however, and Schoeman was simply too good at his job. The League-owned stables he operated out of was doing very well on account of his work, and the van Windburg family soon installed him as its manager. It was now his responsibility to ensure that the other drivers and guides did as well as him, and it was a challenge that he enjoyed at first. The longer time went on, however, the less he got out of the city, as he was bogged down in paperwork and training. He was a fantastic driver and an excellent guide, and it cost him the freedom he so dearly wanted.

Schoeman is not a big believer in irony, but he is a perfectionist, and he makes sure that any coach, guide, or horse hired from his stables is the best anyone will find in the city. He has also created a small library of journey books and survival guides for the lands around the Grand City. At first this was only for the men who work for him, but it soon became popular with his customers, and now he prints as much as he can afford. In this way, as he puts it, if he cannot experience the wilds anymore, he will see to it that others experience it just as well as he ever did.

MISSION 2

The Case of the Missing Senator

SYNOPSIS

This mission is a more overtly action oriented mission than in Chapter 1. While in Chapter 1 the twist to the mission came as a complete surprise to the PCs, ruining all their best laid plans, the PCs will be able to discover the twist to this mission, allowing them to plan for it. The intent of the first mission was to show the players that, no matter how well they plan, fate can always ruin their plans and render them powerless. The intent of this mission is to give that power back to players, to show them that how much work they put into the mission is how great a reward they will earn.

The clue that the players may uncover is not one about the Ruined Man as he is currently, but rather it will show a little bit of background to his story. It is a much more subtle clue that the players may overlook as merely being part of the mission, but for those players with keen ears and good memories, this will be a vitally important clue once they uncover more clues in future missions. It will help piece the puzzle together.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE MISSION PROPER IS AS FOLLOWS:

The PCs have been told, through their contacts, that a handler has reached out to the PCs through some of their various contacts and have told them that they have been personally requested to complete a job for the Hugenberg Trade Family of the Fresian Merchant League. The PCs meet the handler in the Black Penny coffee house in Nieuton only to have the handler take them into a private back room where the Patriarch of the Hugenberg family, Burgrave Nelson Hugenberg himself is there to personally give the job to the PCs. A very unusual event. The Patriarch tells the PCs that he wants a senator dead and to bring a briefcase the senator keeps on him to the Patriarch. The problem is that the senator is about to be moved to a safehouse by the constabulary, and if the PCs don't discover where that is, they may lose the opportunity to complete their mission.

THE META-STORY IS AS FOLLOWS:

The Ruined Man is still doing the dastardly deeds he is quickly becoming infamous for. But it is not enough to know what your enemy is doing, you need to know who he is to defeat them. This clue is one small stone in the road that led to the Ruined Man as he is today. Alone, the clue does not provide much in the way of usable information and may, hopefully, lead the PCs chasing a red herring. But, once the PCs find more background clues about the Ruined Man, this clue will suddenly explain a lot about what makes the Ruined Man the monster he is.

The clue in this mission is a briefcase that contains a series of documents that prove, beyond all reasonable doubt, that ten years ago the Hugenberg trade family kidnapped people, usually the homeless and destitute, off the street and used them in some form of nefarious experiment. These poor souls were never heard from again. Their bodies were never found, but with the arrays, it is easy to make a body disappear. What the experiments were, the documents can't say, but the witness testimony paints a picture of a macabre abattoir where the flesh were stripped off the subjects bones so that "something" could be done to the bones and organs before the flesh was reattached, all while the subjects remained alive and conscious.

What does this have to do with the Ruined Man? Well, who could say at such an early time in the story, but it does show that the road to the Ruined Man was definitely not paved with good intentions, but paved with the blood and screams of innocents.

OVERVIEW

SCENE 1: THE BRIEF:

- Meet with the Patriarch of the Hugenberg family in the backroom of the Black Penny Coffee House.
- The PCs mission is to kill Senator van der Hout and retrieve a briefcase he has

on him. No motive for this job is given.

- » The Senator knows someone is after him and has law enforcement bodyguards.

SCENE 2: THE LEGWORK:

- » Three areas of interest:
 - » The Senator's estate.
 - Divided between central manor and outbuildings.
 - Contains the Senator, servants and law enforcement bodyguards.
 - Senator and bodyguards will move between manor and outbuildings during the day.
 - » The meeting with law enforcement contact.
 - What sort of contact the PCs meet and quality of information provided will depend on players' Contacts.
 - **Potential information:**
 - Identity and number of the Senator's bodyguards.
 - The Senator's escape plan and escape route.
 - Location of the Senator's safehouse.
 - Each potential contact will require a price.
 - » The Safehouse
 - Operated by law enforcement.
 - A small apartment above an informant's store in Langehoven.
 - Senator will be moved here after escape.

SCENE 3: THE MISSION:

- » As soon as the PCs are spotted by any NPC, the Senator and his bodyguards will attempt to escape the estate.
- » During the escape from the estate and on the road, some bodyguards will remain behind to delay and defeat the PCs.
- » End goal for the Senator and

bodyguards is the safehouse.

- » The clue for this mission is inside the Senator's briefcase. It explains the motive for this mission.

SCENE 4: THE DEBRIEF:


- » Takes place in the Patriarch's office of the Hugenberg compound.
 - » If the PCs succeeded, they will be allowed in and rewarded.
 - » If the PCs either killed the Senator or retrieved the documents but not both, they will be allowed in but not paid.

SCENE 1: THE BRIEF

This scene takes place in the Black Penny coffee house between 7am and 8am, during the breakfast rush. The timing is intentional as the chatter and noise of a packed coffee house will serve to hide whatever illicit dealings the PCs and their employer will discuss. The Black Penny sits next to the outer array tram track and thus it will be overflowing with customers (of the rich and refined sort, it is Nieuton after all) eager to have their morning caffeine before starting the day fleecing the poor of their money.

There is another, more ulterior, perhaps more paranoid, reason for meeting in a packed coffee house. That is because the PCs are not here to meet the handler, but rather Patriarch Nelson Hugenberg himself, and the Patriarch did not reach his fine old age by taking unnecessary risks. With all the eyes and ears in the coffee house, there is almost no way the PCs will be able to kill the Patriarch and not be identified or even killed themselves by the patrons.

There are two key things to instill in the players in this scene: respect and manners. The Patriarchs (and Matriarch) of the trade families never meet the footmen that they "employ" for their illegal activities. It is just not done. The Patriarchs are like kings while footmen are the lowest of the peasants. In this case it is even worse as the Patriarch Hugenberg is also a landed noble in Wesfresland, a Burgrave (equivalent



to a Count or Earl) which means it is really the aristocracy that your peasant PCs will be dealing with. Patriarch Hugenberg is a harsh man and your PCs should know to tread carefully.

NARRATE OR PARAPHRASE THE FOLLOWING AS APPROPRIATE:

The sun has barely risen and already you find yourself getting off the tram in Nieuton in front of the Black Penny coffee house. At least the handler chose the best meeting place for such an early time. You could do with the caffeine. In your line of work, you are more used to finding a bed this time of day than a handler, but it sounds like it could be a lot of money and you have debts to pay.

You open the door of the Black Penny and a barrage of sounds and aromas attacks your senses. The dark, bitter smell of coffee is overpowering but there are other scents hiding beneath its surface (tobacco, whiskey, bacon, burnt bread, cologne) creating a veritable bouquet of comfort and home. The sounds of coffee boiling, grease cooking and bread toasting is nearly drowned out by the sounds of gossip and chatter, laughing and giggling, chairs scraping and cutlery clinking. It is a circus in here, but at least a more genteel circus than the bars and taverns you are used to.

You edge your way around tables and between chairs, hoping to spot anyone who could be your handler, but everyone here is dressed in a similar fashion: the fashion of the rich. You are fairly certain any individual piece of clothing you can spot in this coffee house would cost more than what you are about to make in this job.

You hope to whichever god you pray to that your handler is not late. It has been a month since the catastrophe that was the Triarch Temple, but a late handler still sets your nerves on end. As you move further into the sprawling coffee house, you see that today at least you are in luck. Standing in front of a closed door is a rugged looking man in a worn brown jacket. He has the look of an old soldier. His appearance alone would have tipped you off in this wealthy

and fashionable establishment, but it is the emblem of a sanguine stag's head with the golden antlers on his upper right arm that confirms it. The emblem of the Hugenberg Trade Family. This must be your handler.

There is a flicker of recognition on his face as your eyes meet, but before you could say your "good morning" or even try and shake his hand, he opens the door behind him and motions for you to go through, never saying a word. You cannot see much of the room within, but you can see the edge of a table and some chairs. The handler continues to motion you in, staying silent all the while. [Note: Should the PCs not go through the door or want answers first, have the handler continue to say nothing. If things get heated, have a voice from inside the room say "Enough! Come in here, you juvenile cretins!"]

As you walk into the back room the door shuts quietly behind you. It doesn't lock, which you take as a good sign, all things considered. An elderly gentleman sits on the other side of the table in what you first think is a military uniform, but at a second glance realise is only clothing styled to resemble a uniform. Another old soldier? He doesn't stand when you enter. He is used to others standing for him. He also does not bid you to sit.

"I am the Patriarch Hugenberg," he says tersely. Well that explains his appearance and demeanour. He continues: "I have an assignment for you of the utmost importance to my house, my family, and to me personally. I would not be here otherwise." He is correct, Patriarchs never meet footmen. You worry that perhaps you are in over your head.

He continues speaking as if you are not even there: "The senator from the southern canton of Jakobsdal has become a thorn in my side. You will kill him. He is also always carrying a briefcase on him. You will bring it to me. I do not care what you have to do to see this done, but you will see this done. Mr. Smit will provide you with whatever information you require."

And with that, he stands and walks out, without ever glancing back at you. The door opens before he reaches it, and he leaves. The man you initially supposed was your handler steps inside, closes and locks the door and sits in the chair the Patriarch just vacated.

In a tone as terse as his Patriarch, Mr. Smit simply asks: "What do you need to know?"

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY MR. SMIT:


- Yes, his name is actually Mr. Smit. No, he doesn't have a first name.
- Mr. Smit was not given any money with which to haggle.
- The name of the Senator is Dietrich van der Hout. Mr. Smit will provide the players with his address.
- Mr. Smit does not know why the Patriarch wants van der Hout murdered. He will pointedly say: "I do not make it my business to pry into the Patriarch's affairs."
- There is a leak in the Hugenberg trade family. The senator got information that the Patriarch wants him dead and has taken a "leave of absence due to illness" from his senatorial duties.
- Mr. Smit believes that van der Hout may have some governmental protection at his house. He can't verify if these agents are from Inland Affairs, the Alfresian Intelligence Service or the constables.
- The PCs are given free rein in how they wish to complete the mission. As long as van der Hout is dead and they bring the briefcase and its contents back to the Hugenbergs.
- There is only one condition, but it goes without saying: the Hugenbergs can't be directly tied to the murder and theft. They can deflect indirect allegations, but direct allegations would be too hard a scandal to conceal.
- Any questions as to how the mission

should be completed will be met with a terse reply: "The family requested each of you personally because of your talents. Were we wrong to presume you know what you are doing?"

- If there are any vague questions or requests for advice, Mr. Smit will tell them that after checking out the house, they may wish to find a friendly law enforcement agent (or a Contact with information on law enforcement) and see exactly who is guarding van der Hout and how. He will tell them that would be how he would go about completing this mission.
 - » If Mr. Smit has not said this by the end of the questions, he will tell this to the players as a free bit of advice. He wants the mission to succeed as much as they do.

Once all the questions have been answered, or if the players are asking too many irrelevant or inane questions, or asking the same questions over and over, Mr. Smit will stand and say "You have what you need. Do not disappoint the Patriarch. Men who do rarely live long enough to see the errors of their ways" and walk to the door. He will unlock it, leave and close it behind him. He won't lock it. When the players leave, they will find him sitting in the coffee house enjoying a cup of coffee, some bacon, eggs, toast and black pudding while waiting for the tram to arrive before he leaves for the League District. If the players want to keep talking to him he will only say "It is not wise for us to be seen talking. It would be best for you to take your leave. Now" and then he will remain silent and finish his breakfast and coffee.

From here on out it is all up to players to complete this mission. It is fairly straightforward, but hopefully the players have learned from the last mission how easily plans can go wrong. They will clearly not receive any further assistance from Mr. Smit or the Hugenberg family, but that doesn't mean they can't look for help elsewhere. Mr. Smit has already given them one lead to follow.



If this scene has carried on for a long time, it may well be a good idea to go over the key points of information with the players so they don't forget something vital that their PCs would have remembered.

SCENE 2: THE LEGWORK

As always, there is the risk and chance that the players may immediately go in for the kill, doubly so if they believe that there will be another twist to this mission like in Chapter 1. Should that happen, go directly to Scene 3.

There are three main areas that will be explored in this section. The first is Senator Dietrich van der Hout's house which the PCs will most definitely visit. The second is an encounter with a NPC from one of the law enforcement agencies that the PCs can use to gain more information on van der Hout's security and hopefully discover the route he will take to his safehouse. This will be less of an "area description" and more of an "event description" that can be added onto any area where the PCs decide to meet the agent. The third is the safe house where van der Hout will be taken, if the players are clever enough to discover its location before it is too late.

The PCs will most likely require additional equipment depending on how they decide to assassinate van der Hout. This could range from weapons and armour, breaking and entering gear, or a couple of good horses and a carriage if they expect a good chase. There are more than enough stores in Middelburg where you can let the PCs find what they need. Just remember that everything in Nieuton will cost at least 1.5 times more than anywhere else in the city. This will mean a harsher Difficulty Modifier for all Wealth Skill Checks in Nieuton.

Remember that with a new Chapter comes an increase to both the Modifier when rolling for Travel Encounters and the penalties for any social Skill Checks. It will become progressively

harder to live in Middelburg as time marches on and it might pay to remind your players of that if they become too at ease in the city. It does no one good to get to the mission with a broken leg, or worse.

SENATOR DIETRICH VAN DER HOUT'S RESIDENCE

Dietrich van der Hout doesn't as much own a house as he does a mansion, perhaps even a palace. The estate covers almost a hectare of land, almost as much as one of the Trade Families' infamous compounds in the League District, but where the league compounds are colossal works of architecture filling up every available space of land possible, the Houten Estate consists of a scattering of small rondavel buildings around a central manor in the style of the southern Alfresian farms.

Each of the smaller buildings serves the purpose that would normally be regular rooms inside a mansion. There are of course the requisite servants quarters, gardening shed and stables that have their own buildings but there are also rondavels that serve as a reading room, an entertainment room, a small tavern, an indoor garden, and an "outdoor" bath. How could a son of poor farmers afford such a luxurious estate in the most expensive district in Middelburg? Well, corruption pays. It pays very handsomely.

Van der Hout has the briefcase with the incriminating documents with him at all times of the day. It is entirely possible, if the PCs are stealthy enough for them to steal it in this scene. Once they open it, go to Scene 4.

ESTATE GROUNDS

The estate is bordered on three sides by the streets of Middelburg, although the people who go by the house would never be able to tell what transpires inside. The senator enjoys his privacy and has had hedges put around the entire border of his property. Reaching almost two metres high, the Vallion shrubs

with their pretty white little flowers is as much a display of wealth as it is of privacy and security.

Beyond the tall hedges you will find (if you are one of the precious few invited to the estate) well manicured lawns and nary a flower in sight. What you will find, however, is small hedge shrubs cut into geometric shapes interspersed with succulents from Bythika. It is all very tidy, very neat, but also very sterile and very lazy. It speaks of a man who does not care for the beauty of life as much as he cares for the opinions of others. Geometric gardens and succulents are inoffensive and easy to maintain. You would never have to trouble yourself with the allergies of others, nor worry whether the scents might be off putting, or whether a guest does not like the gardens' colours. Bland and uninspiring are the two words that best describe van der Hout's botanical preferences.

This theme carries on over to the pathways and buildings themselves. All designed so as to be superficially pretty but utterly inoffensive and easy to maintain. The pathways are paved with slate bricks with each one carved with an array to make the stones glow comfortably at night. All the pathways that connect the rondavels to the manor are positioned so as to give the appearance of an array, with the rondavels taking the place of the loci and the manor the centrum. A smart man would have capitalised on this design and completed the intent, creating an array inside the property like the Trade Families do in their compounds. Van der Hout did not.

Style without substance. Bland and uninspiring. Inoffensive and false. Says as much about the man as it does the estate.

THE RONDAVELS

Built in the styles of the southern cantons, complete with stone walls, thatched conical rooves and small round windows, the resemblance to the quaint round southern house begins and ends with the rondavels' exterior facades. Inside they are as resplendent and luxurious as an imperial palace with rich dark


woods, rare leathers all trimmed in precious metals.

There are eight rondavels, three dedicated to the servants, two for van der Hout's personnel and three for the entertainment of his guests.

The servants quarters, gardening shed and stable are the most pedestrian of the rondavels but even here van der Hout had them richly decorated in the event that a guest would wish to visit "the plebeians". The stable is the largest of the rondavels and houses 4 horses, a four seater carriage and a two seater cabriolet. Two horses are already bridled and the carriage seems ready for departure (sans horses of course). The shed contains tools and parts necessary not only for the maintenance of the grounds but also the carriages, rondavels, and manor. Here are all manner of equipment that the PCs may find useful. The servants quarters are the second largest rondavel and has three bedrooms for the six servants, a kitchen, bathroom, and combined dining/sitting room. Of interest to the PCs here would be keys to every rondavel and room in the estate.

The Reading House as it is called is van der Hout's own personal sanctuary. Only his butler has the key and is only allowed inside for less than an hour to clean the rondavel. Inside there is but a desk and chair, bookcases groaning under the weight of hundreds of books (most procured through illicit means), a liquor cabinet, and a comfortably worn leather armchair. It is here that van der Hout spends most of his time: reading a book, drinking Gallathian whiskey and smoking Uttosian tobacco. Even now when he is fearing for his life he can't seem to resist this one vice.

The Bath House, named and styled inside after the old great Rimien bath houses, is the other vice of the senator. Perhaps it is his farming background that has made van der Hout so obsessed with cleanliness, or perhaps his desire to be seen as part of the gentry that had him commission such a grand bath house. There are three baths of varying temperature and size in the rondavel as well as a curtained off changing



area to preserve dignity. The temperatures of the baths are controlled by arrays set into the floor of the baths themselves with switches on the wall of the rondavel.

The Solar and Buttery (the entertainment room and tavern respectively) are explicitly for guests and are almost never used if van der Hout is alone. They are both single room buildings like the other small rondavels and the central difference between them is the volume of liquor they contain. The Buttery contains bottle upon bottle of the finest spirits, wines and beers van der Hout can lay his hands on as well as leather armchairs. The Solar contains less liquor but more chairs and side tables and is for all practical purposes a glorified sitting room. It is here where van der Hout prefers to do his business with his guests. He is wary of letting anyone inside the manor (even though he prefers his Reading House to the manor) unless they are staying the night.

The Garden House is perhaps van der Hout's greatest achievement in vanity as he cares absolutely nothing for it. Filled inside with potted plants of the most exotic variety along with birdcages with even more exotic birds, van der Hout only ever opens the Garden House if a guest expresses an interest in botany or ornithology. Otherwise he leaves it to the groundskeeper who has a love of tending flowers.

THE MANOR

The manor house is divided both horizontally and vertically by the rotunda situated in the centre of the house. The rotunda, which houses the stairs to the second story, divides the house between the bedrooms on the second story and the service rooms on the ground story, and on the ground story between the utility rooms in the north and the recreation rooms in the south.

Nearly half the second story is taken up by the grand master suite that is almost a house all by itself. Containing a huge bedroom, walk in wardrobes, a personal bathroom and lavatory, a great office/study and a large open deck, van der Hout rarely has use for the rest of the house,

preferring at times to even take his meals in the suite, especially when he is busy with his paperwork.

The bulk of the rest of the second story comprises four other bedrooms, each with walk-in wardrobes and ensuite lavatories, that have been termed by van der Hout and the servants as the "Apartments". The Apartments are the guest rooms that van der Hout "generously" leases to important visitors to Middelburg, offering up his home lest they be forced to stay in some public inn or hostel.

For the duration of this mission, the escorts will be sleeping in the Apartments. There will be a watch rotation among the escorts where one escort will be awake for three hours before waking the next escort. If there are only two escorts, then the watch shifts will be six hours each.

Apart from the Master Suite and the Apartments, the second story contains only a storage room with access to the loft for further storage space.

The rooms of the north half of the ground story are what van der Hout has termed the Utility rooms. This includes a Meeting Room where van der Hout meets with business guests of such an import he can't simply meet with them in the Solar Rondavel, or that he allows his guests to use when they meet with business partners so that he or his servants may overhear useful information that could be used later; an impressively large Kitchen, with an attached pantry, for merely one cook; two Dining rooms, one indoors and used for formal events and an outdoor dining room on the covered porch for a more informal setting; and a Storage room housing the furniture, cutlery, crockery and all else that is needed for the ballroom.

The rooms in the southern half of the ground story are the Recreation rooms as so called by the senator. The largest of the four rooms is the Ballroom, and while not the largest ballroom in Middelburg by any means, the senator has

on very rare occasions thrown quite the memorable party in it. The eastern wall of the ballroom can be folded to open it up to the grounds to increase the space available for the party guests. The smallest of the Recreation rooms is the Foyer and serves the only purpose of letting people into the house, or at times sitting on of the comfortable chairs there to await the senator. The other two rooms are the Parlour and the Cabinet. Both rooms are used nearly exclusively by the senator's guests, the Cabinet to relax in and the Parlour to meet with their own guests in a more informal fashion.

When the senator does not have guests staying in the manor, he barely ever enters the Recreation rooms and the only rooms he does enter of the Utility rooms are the Dining rooms, and that is only when he wants to make the effort.

THE NPCs

During the day, the six servants will not be in the servants quarters. The groundskeeper will be gardening and thus on the grounds of the estate, the stableman will be in the stable, and the other four servants (the butler, the cook and two cleaning women) will be in the manor doing their duties. The cleaning women will also be moving between the house and rondavels to clean as well. The servants have not been told what is going on, but they are not stupid. They know the escorts are law enforcement and can guess that either van der Hout is under house arrest or he is in danger.

Van der Hout will be found in the Reading House mostly or the Bath House during the day, except during meal times, and only moving into the manor when the sun has set. At night he will be in the Master Suite doing paperwork in his Office and moving to the Master Bedroom between 9pm and 10pm to sleep. Van der Hout is a natural coward, though his pride is greater than his fear. He will never let any of his servants or the escorts see his fear.

There are twice as many escorts as PCs who will spread themselves out equally between the


manor and the rondavels, only occasionally taking a "stroll" through the estate grounds. If there are only two escorts they will be in the rondavels closest to where van der Hout is (but not in the same rondavel) and will move with him into the manor during meal times and at night. The escorts know that Hugenberg is after van der Hout, so they are on constant look out for any would be assassins.

If the PCs are stealthy enough they will be able to overhear the servants and escorts gossiping with each other should there be more than one in an area. Except for their current situation, the NPCs will gossip about the recent spree of gruesome murders that has been happening in Middelburg for the past few months. They don't know he is called the Ruined Man but they will mention that only the wealthy and powerful have been murdered and will take some satisfaction in this, as only servants can, but will become more somber when they say how all the victims died in a horrific manner, some flayed, some dismembered, some burnt alive. They will also remark that they have heard that near each victim a rune was drawn in blood. Not an array, just a rune.

If at any time during the PCs visit to the estate the PCs are spotted by any NPC, go directly to Scene 3 as the senator will then attempt to escape.

THE MEETING WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT

The meeting with the law enforcement agent may not happen as it relies entirely on the PCs initiating contact. While Mr. Smit has given them a very obvious clue that they should do this, the players still may not. The information that the law enforcement agent can provide is the location of the safe house, the route that van der Hout and his escort will take to get there and who is guarding him. One can see that this information is crucial to the mission. If the players decide not to, or forget to, get in touch with a law enforcement agent then have the map



of the route to the safehouse be accidentally left behind as van der Hout flees to the safehouse. The map does not have the safe house's exact location, but it does end on the street of the safe house, allowing the PCs to investigate further.

There are only two real ways for the PCs to get into contact with a law enforcement agent. The first is if they are lucky enough to already have a Contact in law enforcement, gained from their character generation or through prior game sessions. The second method is by going through one of their other Contacts. If any PC has a contact they use to get information, and they go to them, then have this Contact reach out to a law enforcement official who will in turn get in touch with the PCs.

How, when, where and with whom the meeting with the law enforcement agent takes place is entirely up to the actions and decisions of the players.

WHEN

There are, broadly speaking, two different times when the PCs can speak to the law about information for this mission. That is before or after van der Hout flees to the safe house. If the senator has already fled before the PCs have had a chance to talk with their law enforcement contact then there will be a much greater urgency for the PCs as they can assume van der Hout's escort knows about them.

If van der Hout and his escort have fled his manor without the PCs giving chase, or if they fail in their pursuit, then you don't need to give the PCs the map of the route he will take to the safe house. By the time they have acquired the map and planned an ambush or chase, he will have almost definitely already arrived at the safe house.

If van der Hout fled to his safehouse because of actions taken by the PCs, i.e.: he and his escort are aware of the PCs and thus fled out of haste rather than the pre-planned route, then the law enforcement agent will have heard about it through his own contacts. This means that

the encounter can be a more direct exchange of information (no doubt as the PCs would be in a hurry in this situation) than before.

If the PCs visit their law enforcement contact before the senator flees to his safehouse then the contact can provide them with the map, but as the senator has not yet fled, he will have heard very little of the operation and thus the information that the PCs can obtain from him will be harder to come by and the PCs will have to ask the right questions to get the answers they need. If the PCs visit the contact after they have been to van der Hout's estate, then they can provide some helpful information like what the escorts on the estate are wearing and are armed with that will allow the contact to tell them more information.

WHERE

Where the meeting will take place is as much decided by the PCs as by you the GM or this book. The PCs may decide on a specific place to meet the contact, or a specific "type" of place, such as "a dark alleyway" or "crowded tavern". If this is the case, allow the PCs their choice of location, however vague it may be as long as it is not too obviously a trap by the PCs or in a place where the contact would be in danger. For example, putting the meeting place at the senator's estate would be a very bad idea. If the PCs request for a meeting place are sufficiently vague, keep it in Nieuton so the PCs wouldn't have to travel across the city for one meeting.

If it is the law enforcement contact that is setting the meeting place, then put it in the All Saint's beerhall on the border between Temple Park and Nieuton. It is a large establishment, able to comfortably seat more than a hundred people in its barrel vaulted hall. There are also no secret back rooms like in the Black Penny so it promises safety for both the PCs and the contact.

True to its name, the beer hall is purely one gargantuan hall that serves beer. It is a single, rectangular hall with tables and chairs making up three quarters of the hall and

the other quarter taken up by a small mountain of beer barrels and enough mugs to build a tower to the heavens. There is only a small separate storehouse with more beer barrels to cater to the clientele's needs, but that is it. It is the perfect spot to hide in plain sight, especially during dusk when it is filled to the brim with eager customers, and this is when the contact will tell the PCs to meet them.

WHO

What sort of law enforcement agent the PCs meet with is entirely up to whether the PCs already have a contact in law enforcement or how good their other Contact's Aptitude Skill Roll is. If the PCs already have contact in law enforcement then simply use that. It will make the mission a little more personal and bring a sense of continuity to the campaign.

For any Contact's Aptitude Skill Check, even if the players fail, the PCs will still be able to meet with a contact although the information gained will be considerably less..

If the best result is above the Contact's Aptitude Skill Level, then the best their contacts can come up with is Amelia McMillan, a Gallathian clerk at the Nieuton Constabulary. She often acts as an informant for the criminal underworld to make up for the poor salary she receives as a clerk. Because of this, she does not come cheap. The PCs will need to pass a -20 Wealth Skill Check to pay for her services (add together all the PCs' or just those who want to contribute, Wealth Skill Levels before asking one player to roll). If they can't afford her, she will ask who they are working for and why as payment. If the PCs choose to lie, then they will need to roll their Deceive Skill against her Intuition Skill. If she detects they are lying or they refuse to answer, she will immediately leave.

Amelia does not have the map of the route to the safe house nor does she know where the safe house is. She does, however, know three intersections that the route will take, choose any three and show the PCs this on the Nieuton map

found in this chapter before the Mission section. All she can tell them about the safe house is that it is in Langehoven, east of Bert's paper store. She does not know who is guarding van der Hout, nor their numbers, nor what they are equipped with.

If the best result for the Contact's Aptitude Skill Check is 25 or below, their contacts have put them in touch with Edwin Klerken, a Wesfresian agent for the Inland Affairs. Dry and dreary, Klerken deals strictly in information. Like Amelia he will ask the whos, the whys and wheres of the mission and will use his Intuition Skill check against the PCs' Deceive Skill should they choose to lie. Likewise, if he detects they are lying or they refuse to answer, he will immediately leave.

Klerken knows that there are twice as many men guarding the senator as there are PCs. He does not know who they are, but they aren't from Inland Affairs. He does not know their equipment. He suspects Intelligence operatives. He does not have a map of the route but he knows five intersections on the route. He does not know the exact location of the safe house but he knows it is on Matjies Street.

If the best result for the Contact's Aptitude Skill Check is between 25-50, their contacts have put them in touch with Andries Pretorius, an Alfresian operative for the Intelligence Service. The PCs Contacts didn't get in touch with him, he got in touch with the contacts. He knows about the documents the senator is carrying and he wants to know what they contain. That is his payment, he wants the PCs to bring him the documents so he can make copies of them before they take it to the Patriarch. If they refuse, he leaves.

He doesn't know anything about the route, but knows the location of the safe house and he also knows that there are twice as many escorts guarding the senator as there are PCs. He doesn't know their equipment but he does know they are posing as noble guests and wouldn't be openly



armed and most likely are not armoured.

If the best result for the Contact's Aptitude Skill Check is greater than 50, their contacts have put them in touch with Gerrit Britz, Sergeant Constable for the League District and in the pocket of the Merchant League. In truth he is a good friend of Johan van Strauss, handler for the van Rosedaal family and tells him all the secrets he learns from the other families. What he wants for payment are the documents van der Hout carries. Not copies, the actual documents. He does not want Patriarch Hugenberg to have them. If they refuse, he walks. He will tell them that if they decide to double cross him, he will arrest them.

Britz has all the information they need. He has the map as well as the location of the safe house. He knows that there are twice as many escorts as PCs and that they are constables. They are unarmoured but are equipped with the standard constable pistol and billy club. They are posing as foreign nobility staying at the senator's estate to discuss trading opportunities with the southern cantons.

If the PCs have existing Contacts within law enforcement, these Contacts can take the place of the NPCs above. If the PCs' Contact in the constabulary or military then they will act like Amelia; if the Contact is in Internal Affairs, they will act like Edwin; if they are an intelligence operative or spy, they will act like Andries; and if they work for the League they will act like Britz.

It is important to note that none of the contacts will be able to tell the PCs when van der Hout will be leaving with his escort to the safe house. Britz alone will be able to tell the PCs that this has been left up to the escorts themselves to determine the opportune time.

The Skills and Equipment for all the potential contacts can be found at the end of the chapter.

THE SAFE HOUSE

An utterly nondescript two room apartment, the safe house occupies the second story above a

cobbler's in eastern Langehoven. The Cobbler's, as it is called by the constables, is one of dozens of safe houses in and around Middelburg and it was only chosen for this occasion because it was the most familiar to the constables serving as van der Hout's escort, and have helped them on several occasions. The cobbler's store on the first floor is run by a contact of the constables who is paid generously for his services and, more importantly, his secrecy.

The safe house only has two rooms, a bathroom with only a bath and toilet and a combined kitchen/sitting/dining/bedroom. It has windows overlooking the street but the balcony has been removed to prevent easy access onto the second story from the street. It is the only second story apartment on the whole street that has no balcony, a clue to the PCs searching for the safe house.

The safe house is accessible through the staircase at the back of the cobbler's below. There is also a back entrance to the store that allows the escorts and van der Hout to enter the safe house without being noticed. The cobbler will also close up shop as soon as the senator arrives (assuming the senator arrives before dusk when the store would close anyway). The store will remain closed and any potential customers will be told it is because the cobbler has suddenly taken ill. If the PCs ask the other residents or store owners of the area if anything unusual happened recently, they would comment on this.

When the senator arrives, he and the escorts will enter through the back door. The cobbler will then close the store and go upstairs to watch over the senator. Half of the escorts will continue on with the carriage to leave a false trail. That means there will only be as many escorts remaining as there are PCs. These escorts will divide their numbers evenly between guarding the safe house apartment, standing watch outside the back entrance of the cobbler's and inconspicuously patrolling the street. If there are only two escorts, have them stand watch at the back door and patrol. If there is only

one escort, have him patrol the street.

If the cobbler is not present, all escorts barring one (if more than two) will investigate the safehouse to ensure it is safe for the senator to enter. The last escort will guard the senator outside the cobblers. If the safehouse is safe, then all proceeds as planned. If the PCs ambush the senator and escorts (or attempt to impersonate the cobbler), the escorts will attempt to overwhelm the PCs. If they see they are about to lose, they will retreat to the nearest constabulary.

SCENE 3: THE MISSION

How this scene plays out depends entirely on what the players did in Scene 2. There is no Complication Scene in this mission as the complication is part of the mission, and that is that van der Hout will flee to the safe house as soon as the PCs go in for the kill.

If the PCs get their hands on the briefcase with the incriminating documents and open it, go to Scene 4.

The skills and equipment for all the NPCs can be found at the end of the chapter.

THE IMPROMPTU ESCAPE

If the PCs are spotted by an NPC during their first scouting trip to the senator's estate the senator will flee. The escorts have a plan for when they should depart, but if they believe the senator's life is at risk they will extract the senator that instant with all haste. Of course, the NPCs won't teleport themselves to the carriage and escape, the NPC who first notices the PCs will have to raise the alarm and then the senator must be moved from wherever he may be to the waiting carriage. This means that there is more than enough time for the PCs to kill the senator before he manages to escape.

NPC REACTIONS AND BEHAVIOUR:

SERVANTS

- The constable escorts have explicitly told the servants to report any sightings of unauthorised people in the estate. This is to be done with all possible haste.
- The servants know they will be fired should they do anything wrong and so will follow these instructions to the letter.
- Once the escorts have been alerted, the female servants (the cook and cleaning women) will try to reach the servants quarters and lock themselves in. They will stay as far away from combat as possible.
- The groundskeeper and stableman are more than old enough to have fought in the war three decades ago and are proud and prickly men. Because of the current situation they both carry a small pistol each and won't hesitate to defend their home and lord.
- The butler's first and only concern is the valuables in the manor and will defend these with his life. He will let the escorts concern themselves with the senator. He will also tell the PCs that he will leave them be if they leave the valuables of manor alone.

ESCORTS

- The escorts' first and only concern is the senator. Their careers and reputations rely on getting van der Hout to the safe house unharmed.
- Once they are alerted to the presence of an intruder, half of the escorts will take the senator to the stables, put him inside the carriage and attach the harnesses of the two horses to the carriage and wait for as long as possible for the other half of the escorts to catch up.
 - » If the stableman is nearby, he will come help with the carriage and horses.

- The other half of the escorts will attempt to stall the PCs so that the first escorts have time to get the senator out of danger and the carriage ready. It will be a fighting retreat to the stables.
- Once the carriage is ready, the escorts will get into/unto it and it will speed off to the safehouse on its planned route.

DIETRICH VAN DER HOUT

- If he knows about the intruders he will run directly to the escorts.
- If the escorts come to him instead, he will follow all of their orders.
- He is most concerned about the briefcase with the incriminating documents and won't leave unless they are with him.
- Once he is in the carriage, he will keep his head down so that he is not visible from outside.
- If all the escorts are dead or subdued, he will attempt to run away.
- If there is no chance of escape, he will beg for his life. He will freely give the briefcase if he believes it will save his life.

A shootout in Nieuton is sure to draw attention and the constables will be coming, but it will take some time. After half an hour, roll a d100 for every minute the PCs spend on the estate. A result of 50 or less means that the constables arrived by horseback, equal in number to the PCs.

THE PLANNED ESCAPE

If the PCs scout the estate first and then decide to come back a second time to perform the assassination, the senator will “coincidentally” be leaving for the safe house as they arrive. If the PCs attempt to infiltrate the estate on their first visit, ignore the points below.

The key point here is to have the carriage leave only when the PCs are close enough so the timing adds to the drama but also gives them the chance of following it.

If the PCs intend to come to the front entrance, as soon as they reach the gate, it will open and the carriage will move out at a reasonable pace so as to not draw attention.

If the PCs come through the hedges, they will find no NPCs on the estate (the servants have been put on leave for the duration of the senator's stay at the safe house) and once they are within sight of the front gate, the carriage will leave.

If the party splits up and the PCs each enter the estate at different points, the carriage will leave once the first PC gets in sight of the front gate. If the PCs manage to get in the way of the carriage or prevent its escape in any manner, half the escorts will get off the carriage to do battle with the PCs and remove any obstacle that is blocking the carriage. They will attempt to then get back on the carriage, but if they feel the PCs pose too great an imminent danger to the senator, they will stay and fight.

THE CHASE

The escorts prepared a route to take to the safe house (as shown on the map) that has enough turns and backtracking that anyone they see following them is not doing so by coincidence. Regardless of whether the senator's escape was planned or impromptu, the escorts will follow the route at first, although if the escape was impromptu or the PCs give chase the escorts will obviously follow the route at a much greater speed.

If the PCs manage to follow the carriage for three consecutive turns on the route, and the full complement of escorts are on the carriage, then half the escorts will get off the carriage to stall the PCs. If only half the escorts were on the carriage when they escaped the estate (or because half the escorts got off the carriage to stall the PCs, then they will abandon the route once they see the PCs are following them for three consecutive turns and the escorts will take the quickest, shortest route to the safe house with all due haste.

If the PCs decide to

follow the carriage surreptitiously, have whichever PC that is driving a carriage or riding a horse roll an Opposed Skill

Check using their Drive Skill and the escorts' Perception Skill. If the PCs decide to just charge at the senator's carriage, hoping to end the chase quickly, have whichever PC that is driving a carriage or riding a horse roll an Opposed Skill Check using their Drive Skill and the escorts' Drive Skill. If the PCs do manage to catch up to the carriage before it gets to the safe house, and the full complement of escorts are on the carriage, half the escorts will get off the carriage to fight the PCs to slow them down.

THE SAFE HOUSE

Scene 2 describes the behaviour of the NPCs if and when they arrive at the safe house. Below will assume that the escorts have spotted the PCs and the action is about to begin. The safe house is the last stand for the escorts. They will not run from the safe house, they will hole up and wait for the constables to arrive should any combat happen. After the first shot is fired, it will take roughly thirty minutes for the constables to arrive.

If the escorts outside the apartment spots the PCs first then they will alert the escorts inside who will put the senator and the cobbler inside the bedroom. The escorts will divide themselves as equally as they can between inside the apartment, inside the store (including the backroom) and outside. The escorts will gradually fall back towards the apartment to consolidate their numbers. Whenever an escort gains 1 Grievous Wound or 3 Significant, they will fall back one position (From outside to the store to the apartment). This is all an attempt to wait out the time for the constable.

Should all the escorts and the cobbler be killed or subdued, van der Hout will surrender, hoping his charming demeanour and promises of cash will sway the PCs.

SCENE 4: THE DEBRIEF

THE CLUE

The Clue can be revealed in any Scene. There is always a possibility that the players don't open the briefcase, but curiosity is a powerful drive and the briefcase isn't locked so there is nothing stopping the PCs from looking inside.

The briefcase doesn't contain one or even a set of documents that simply and coherently show the crimes committed by the Hugenberg trade family, but rather it is a eclectic collection of letters, receipts, scraps of paper, witness statements, handwritten notes and telegrams that, together, weave a very convincing tale. Convincing enough, at least, for the Hugenbergs to want to have it suppressed and the constabulary to take such a keen interest in it.

Van der Hout did not compile these, an anonymous source dropped it off at his office and, for once, he had the moral fibre to do something about it.

INFORMATION THAT CAN BE GAINED FROM THE DOCUMENTS:

- Nearly 6 years ago, footmen contracted by the Hugenberg family kidnapped various people (almost always homeless or poor) off the streets. This lasted for a period of 5 months.
- These people were taken to an underground facility in the League District. The exact location is unknown.
- Witness statements indicate that these people were used as subjects in gruesome medical experiments.
- Some experiments involved seeing how long an array could keep a human alive and conscious while parts of the subject were removed until only the head remained.
- Other experiments involved seeing if a human could survive (with aid of arrays) having their flesh stripped from their

bones and reattached.

- Some experiments involved seeing the effects of arrays carved into the bones and tattooed on the organs of a living human.
- A few experiments involved seeing if animal bones and tissue could be implanted into a human body to make the body immune to arrays.
- Some of these experiments were successful, most were not. The overall implication was that even if the body survived, adult humans' minds are already too developed to survive the process unscathed.
- All of the human test subjects were runically disposed of, leaving no trace.

The Hugenbergs do not know how much information is in the briefcase. They are assuming the worst, but it is always better to be prepared. While the players don't know this, they can remove some parts of the various documents and no one would be the wiser.

THE CONCLUSION

There are many ways this chapter can end, especially concerning which law enforcement contact they met with in Scene 2, if they met one at all.

IF ALL THE PCs DIED

If all the PCs died, in any scene, tell them how a hooded figure in a tattered brown cloak steps over their bodies and moves towards the senator. This hooded figure appears to merely point at any person in his way and they disappear as if they never existed, leaving behind all their clothes and belongings that they were carrying. After he does this, he stretches out his hand to the briefcase and a gout fire is released from inside his sleeve, destroying the documents. Then he simply walks away.

FOR THOSE PCs WHO ARE ARRESTED

They will be taken to the constabulary gaols, stripped down naked and thrown into the cells where they will in all likelihood be forgotten. The constables have more than enough proof of the criminality of the PCs and the PCs know the Hugenberg family will disavow any knowledge of them. At the very least, they will be in gaol for the remainder of the campaign. Unless the players want to attempt a gaol-break, it's time for new characters.

IF THE PCs KILLED THE SENATOR AND RETRIEVED THE DOCUMENTS

The best case scenario. The guards at the Hugenberg compound in the League District have been told to be on the lookout for the PCs and will let them in once they arrive. They will be taken directly to the Patriarch's office (through the back of the compound, though, got to keep up appearances) and will meet privately with the Patriarch. The Patriarch will ask them to hand over the documents. Should they refuse, he will calmly tell them that they will never leave the compound alive. Should they continue to refuse, have five Hugenberg guards (use constable stats) come into the room and initiate combat.

If the PCs hand over the briefcase, the Patriarch will ask if the PCs looked at the documents or if some documents have been removed. If the PCs had in either case and wish to lie, it will be an Opposed Skill Check between their Deceive Skill and the Patriarch's Intuition Skill. Regardless of whether they lie or tell the truth or if the Patriarch discovers their lie, he won't mention they are lying and won't do anything else either.

If for any reason the PCs had retrieved the documents but did not bring it to the Patriarch they will once again have to pass an Opposed Skill Check between their Deceive Skill and the Patriarch's Intuition Skill. If the Patriarch knows they are lying, he will not say so. In either case, he will refuse the PCs their payment as they did not bring the documents.

A -40 Social Skill Check will be required for him to change his mind. They had failed him and thus are not deserving of payment. Guards will be called.

The Patriarch will not answer any question related to the details contained in the documents and it will take a -40 Social Skill Check will be required for him to change his mind.

Once all business is concluded, the PCs will be paid if they succeeded or not paid if they failed and escorted out. The payment will be equal to a +50 bonus to Wealth Skill Checks during their next mission or Downtime (whichever comes first).

IF THE PCs EITHER KILL THE SENATOR OR RETRIEVE THE DOCUMENTS

The scene will play out much the same as if the PCs succeeded, however they will only be paid equal to a +10 bonus to Wealth Skill Checks as they did not complete all objectives. Refer to the above for specifics.

IF THE PCs RETRIEVED THE DOCUMENTS FOR PRETORIUS

The agents at the Alfresian Intelligence Services have been told to expect the PCs, they will be shown in (publicly or not if the PCs prefer privacy) to Pretorius office. He will be very pleasant and congratulate the PCs on their success and ask for the documents. He will ask if anything is missing. If the PCs took anything and they lie, they will have to pass an Opposed Skill Check between their Deceive Skill and Pretorius's Intuition Skill. If Pretorius discovers they are lying he will call in four guards (use constable stats and equipment) and have them searched. If they don't have the missing pieces on them, the four guards will try and arrest the PCs. If everything goes smoothly, Pretorius will ask them to wait an hour while a scribe makes copies and then he will return them in perfect condition.

If everything goes smoothly, Pretorius will become a Contact for the PCs at Influence Level 10 and Aptitude Level 50.

IF THE PCs RETRIEVED THE DOCUMENTS FOR BRITZ

Britz will meet them back in the same place they first met. Like the rest he will ask if any of the documents are missing. As per the rest, if anything is missing and the PCs lie they will have to pass an Opposed Skill Check between their Deceive Skill and Britz's Intuition Skill. If Britz discovers they are lying, he will not react. He will merely thank them for their business and leave for the van Rosedaal compound.

AFTERMATH

Whether those PCs who survived and managed to stay out of gaol will have a good month ahead of them rest entirely on their actions in this chapter. If they had lied to anyone (or failed the Patriarch), and their lie was discovered, that person will hold a grudge and you can design missions around how these aggrieved parties take their revenge.

On the other hand, if they were successful in their mission to the Patriarch, and were honest to those they met (or their lies at least weren't discovered) then these persons would look more favourably on the PCs and could offer them more missions and perks in the future. If any of the PCs had been interested in joining any organisation they encountered on this mission, this would be a good place to start as they have already made a good first impression.

If the PCs had looked at the documents before returning it to the Patriarch, and the Patriarch discovers this fact, then the Patriarch will file this information away for later use. If the PCs ever attempt to use the information in any way then the Patriarch will find out and will make sure the PCs pay. If they have not used the information from the documents for at least a month, the Hugenberg Family will see them as trustworthy and will be inclined to offer them more missions.

NON-PLAYABLE CHARACTERS

CIVILIANS/SAFE HOUSE COBBLER

Athletics	35	Intuition	35
Broad-Craft	35	Investigate	35
Burglary	35	Logic	35
Constitution	35	Luck	35
Deceive	35	Might	35
Diplomacy	35	Perception	35
Drive	35	Shoot	35
Fight	35	Stealth	35
Fine-Craft	35	Wealth	35
Intimidate	35	Will	35

RUNIC ARRAYS

- In their day to day business, not everyone will be wearing defensive and offensive arrays.
- For Defensive arrays: roll a d100, if below 50 then the person is wearing the Middelburg Standard on their Arms, Legs and Torso Hit Locations.
- For Offensive arrays: if they are carrying weapons, roll a d100, if below 50 choose any offensive array from the Array Section at the back of the book. .

EQUIPMENT

- Miscellaneous articles.
- For weapons: roll a d100, if below 25 then the person is armed with a sword and pistol.
- Safe house cobbler has a Steel and Wood Pistol with arrayed lead bullets (Medium ranged weapon).

CONSTABLES

Athletics	40	Intuition	30
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	50
Burglary	40	Logic	30
Constitution	40	Luck	30
Deceive	30	Might	40
Diplomacy	30	Perception	40
Drive	50	Shoot	50
Fight	40	Stealth	30
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	30
Intimidate	50	Will	40

RUNIC ARRAYS

- Middelburg Standard Defensive array on Cuirass, Helm and Quilted Jacket.
- Constable's Friend Offensive array on Pistol rounds and Billy Club.

EQUIPMENT

- Bronze Cuirass and Open Faced Helm (Strong Armour) covering Torso and Head Hit Locations.
- Quilted Jacket (Soft Armour) covering Torso, Arms and Legs Hit Locations.
- Bronze Billy Club (Medium melee weapon).
- Steel and Wood Pistol with lead rounds (Medium ranged weapon).

BURGRAVE PATRIARCH NELSON ALEXANDER HORATIO MAXIMILIAN VALERIUS HUGENBERG II

EXALTED NPC

Athletics	15	Intuition	45
Broad-Craft	40	Investigate	35
Burglary	25	Logic	55
Constitution	25	Luck	35
Deceive	45	Might	20
Diplomacy	50	Perception	20
Drive	35	Shoot	30
Fight	30	Stealth	30
Fine-Craft	40	Wealth	65
Intimidate	60	Will	70

SPECIALISATIONS:

- Intuition specialisation:
 - » Face reader - Skill Level 60.
- Diplomacy specialisation:
 - » Forceful Orator - Skill Level 70.
- Fight Specialisation:
 - » Light swords - Skill Level 45.
- Shoot Specialisation:
 - » Hold out pistol - Skill Level 50.
- Wealth Specialisation:
 - » Hugenberg Trade Family - Skill Level 200.
 - » Burgrave of Witstroom - Skill Level 150.

RUNIC ARRAYS

- Middelburg Standard Offensive array on all Hit Locations.
- Walking Bomb Offensive array on Push Dagger.
- God's Razor Offensive array on Smallsword.

EQUIPMENT

- Simple clothing covering all Hit Locations.
- Bronze Cuirass (Strong Armour) hidden under a jacket. Covers Torso Hit Location.
- Steel Smallsword (Medium melee Weapon).
- Bronze Push Dagger (Light melee weapon).
- Hold-out pistol with lead rounds (Light ranged weapon).

MR. SMIT

EXALTED NPC

Athletics	40	Intuition	45
Broad-Craft	35	Investigate	30
Burglary	30	Logic	30
Constitution	50	Luck	25
Deceive	15	Might	45
Diplomacy	20	Perception	40
Drive	30	Shoot	40
Fight	50	Stealth	35
Fine-Craft	35	Wealth	30
Intimidate	40	Will	60

SPECIALISATIONS:

- › Fight specialisation:
 - » Pugilism - Skill Level 65.
- › Shoot specialisation:
 - » Pistols: - Skill Level 55.

RUNIC ARRAYS

- › Middelburg Standard Defensive array on Torso, Arms and Legs Hit Locations.
- › Blood Drinker Offensive array on Pistol rounds.
- › Furnace Fist Offensive array on Knuckledusters.

EQUIPMENT

- » Simple clothing on Torso, Arms and Legs Hit Locations.
- » Steel and Wood Pistol with Lead rounds (Medium ranged weapon).
- » Two Brass Knuckledusters (Light melee weapons).

SENATOR DIETRICH VAN DER HOUT

Athletics	30	Intuition	40
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	30
Burglary	30	Logic	40
Constitution	30	Luck	30
Deceive	80	Might	30
Diplomacy	60	Perception	40
Drive	30	Shoot	30
Fight	50	Stealth	30
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	50
Intimidate	40	Will	30

SPECIALISATIONS:

- › Wealth specialisation:
 - » Incriminating evidence - Skill Level 70.

RUNIC ARRAYS

- › Middelburg Standard Defensive array on Torso, Legs and Arms Hit Locations.

EQUIPMENT

- › Simple clothing on Torso, Legs and Arms Hit Locations.
- › No weapons or armour.

AMELIA MCMILLAN

Athletics	30	Intuition	40
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	30
Burglary	30	Logic	40
Constitution	30	Luck	30
Deceive	50	Might	30
Diplomacy	50	Perception	40
Drive	30	Shoot	30
Fight	30	Stealth	30
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	40
Intimidate	40	Will	30

RUNIC ARRAYS

- › Middelburg Standard Defensive array on Torso, Legs and Arms Hit Locations.
- › Peace of Mind Offensive array on Pistol rounds and Stiletto.

EQUIPMENT

- › Simple clothing on Torso, Legs and Arms Hit Locations.
- › Hold Out Steel Pistol with bronze rounds (Light ranged weapon).
- › Steel Stiletto (Light melee weapon).

EDWIN KLERKEN

Athletics	30	Intuition	40
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	50
Burglary	30	Logic	40
Constitution	30	Luck	30
Deceive	40	Might	30
Diplomacy	50	Perception	40
Drive	30	Shoot	30
Fight	30	Stealth	40
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	40
Intimidate	40	Will	40

RUNIC ARRAYS

- › Middelburg Standard Defensive array on all Hit Locations.

EQUIPMENT

- › Simple clothing on all Hit Locations.

ANDRIES PRETORIUS

Athletics	40	Intuition	45
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	40
Burglary	50	Logic	50
Constitution	30	Luck	30
Deceive	55	Might	40
Diplomacy	40	Perception	50
Drive	30	Shoot	40
Fight	40	Stealth	50
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	50
Intimidate	35	Will	30

RUNIC ARRAYS

- Middelburg Standard Defensive array on Torso, Legs and Arms Hit Locations.
- Smoke Bomb Utility array Steel Spheres.

EQUIPMENT

- Simple clothing on Torso, Legs and Arms Hit Locations.
- 3cm diameter Steel Spheres.

GERRIT BRITZ

Athletics	40	Intuition	40
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	55
Burglary	45	Logic	30
Constitution	40	Luck	30
Deceive	55	Might	40
Diplomacy	30	Perception	45
Drive	50	Shoot	50
Fight	45	Stealth	35
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	40
Intimidate	35	Will	25

RUNIC ARRAYS

- Middelburg Standard Defensive array on Cuirass, Helm and Quilted Jacket.
- Constable's Friend Offensive array on Pistol rounds and Billy Club.

EQUIPMENT

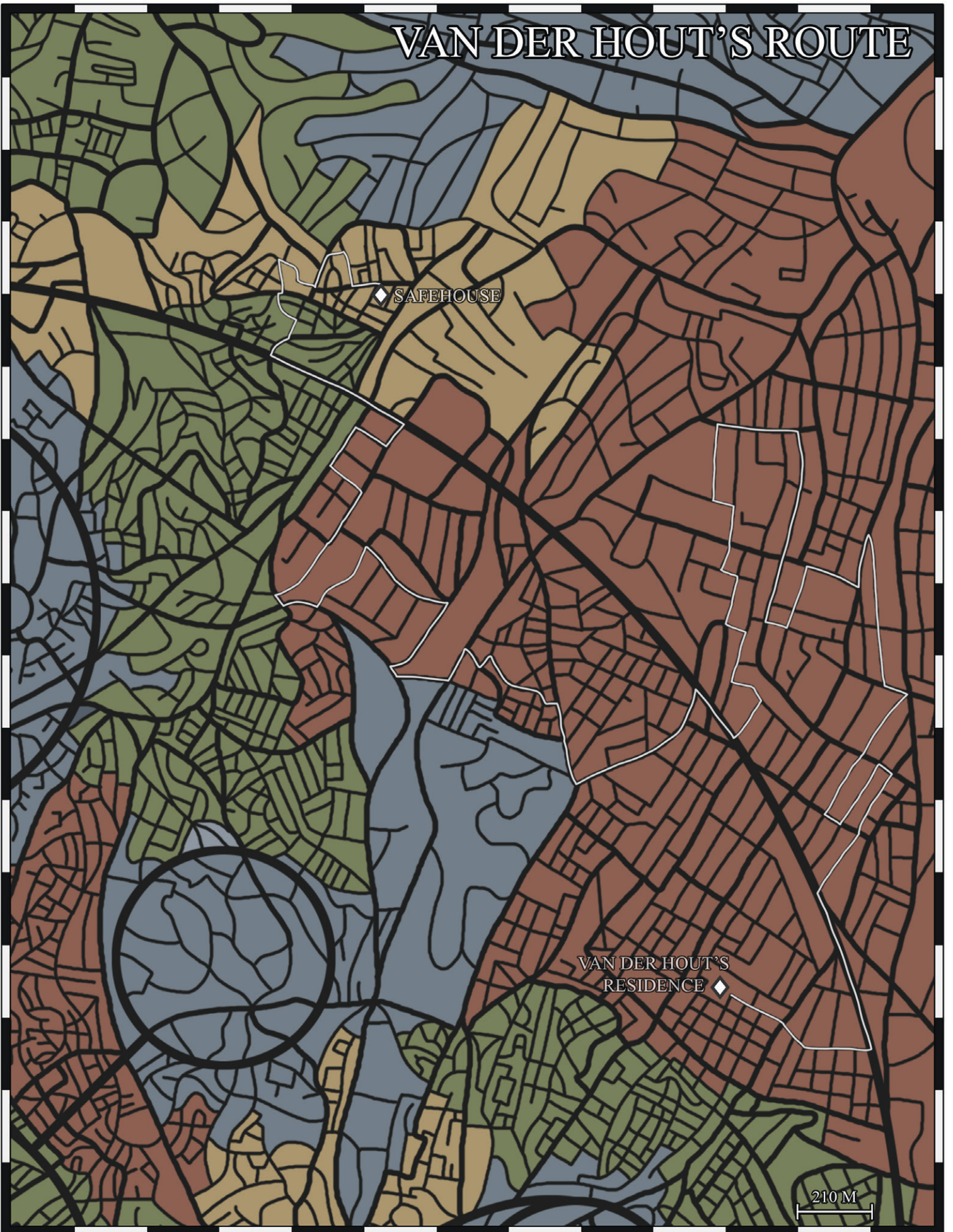
- Bronze Cuirass and Open Faced Helm (Strong Armour) covering Torso and Head Hit Locations.
- Quilted Jacket (Soft Armour) covering Torso, Arms and Legs Hit Locations.
- Bronze Billy Club (Medium melee weapon).
- Steel and Wood Pistol with lead rounds (Medium ranged weapon).

VAN DER HOUT'S ROUTE

◆ SAFEHOUSE

VAN DER HOUT'S
RESIDENCE ◆

210 M



VAN DER HOUT ESTATE

GARDENING
SHED

ROADS

STABLE

GARDEN

CARRIAGE
WAY

ENTRANCE

MANOR

SERVANTS
QUARTERS

READING
ROOM

SOLAR

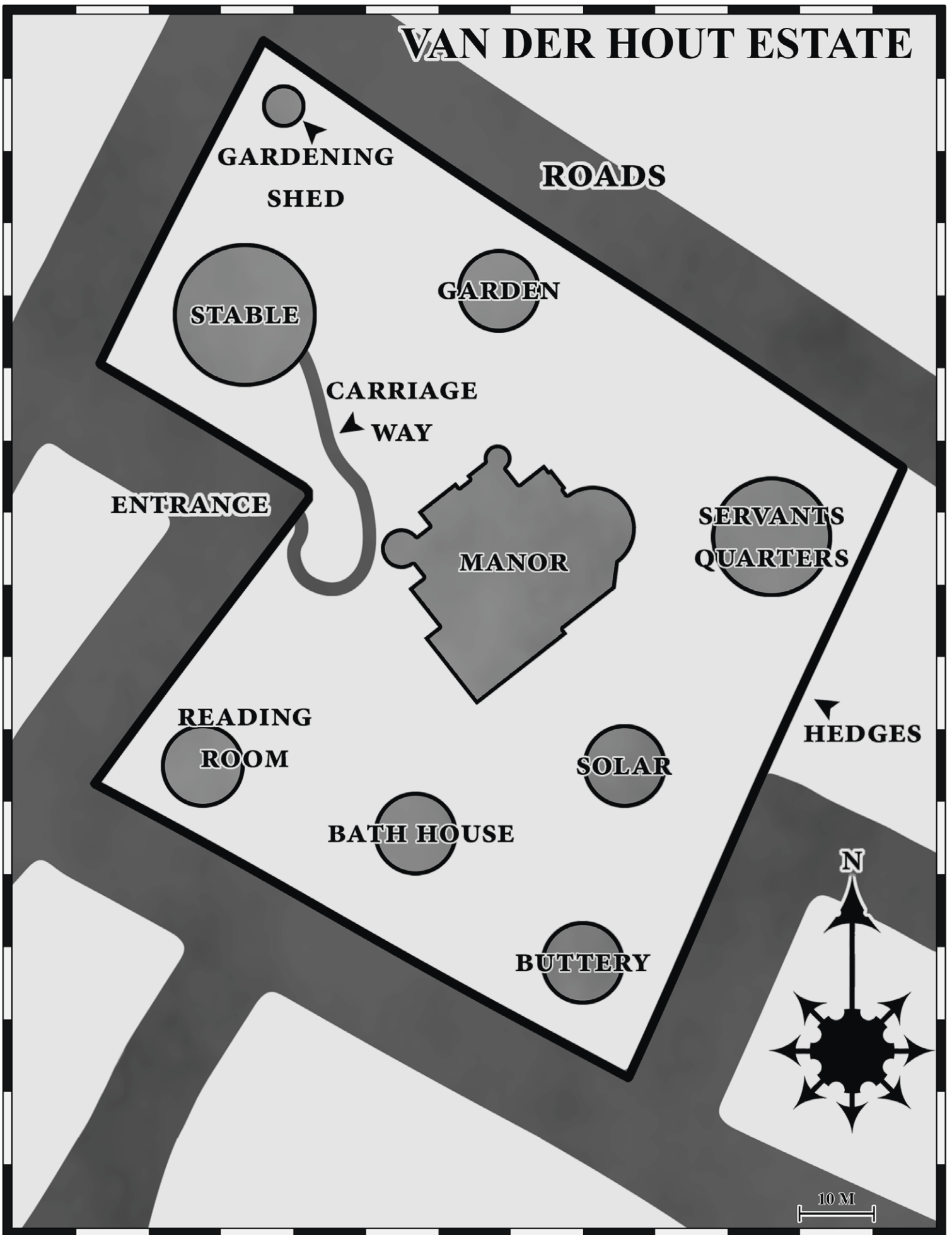
HEDGES

BATH HOUSE

BUTTERY

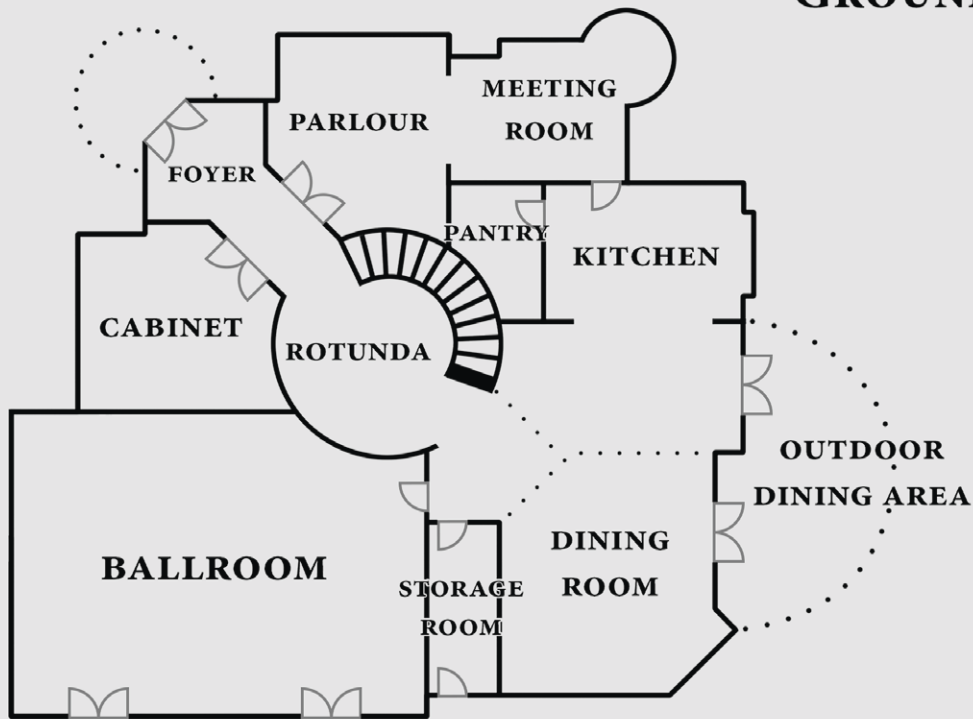
N

10 M

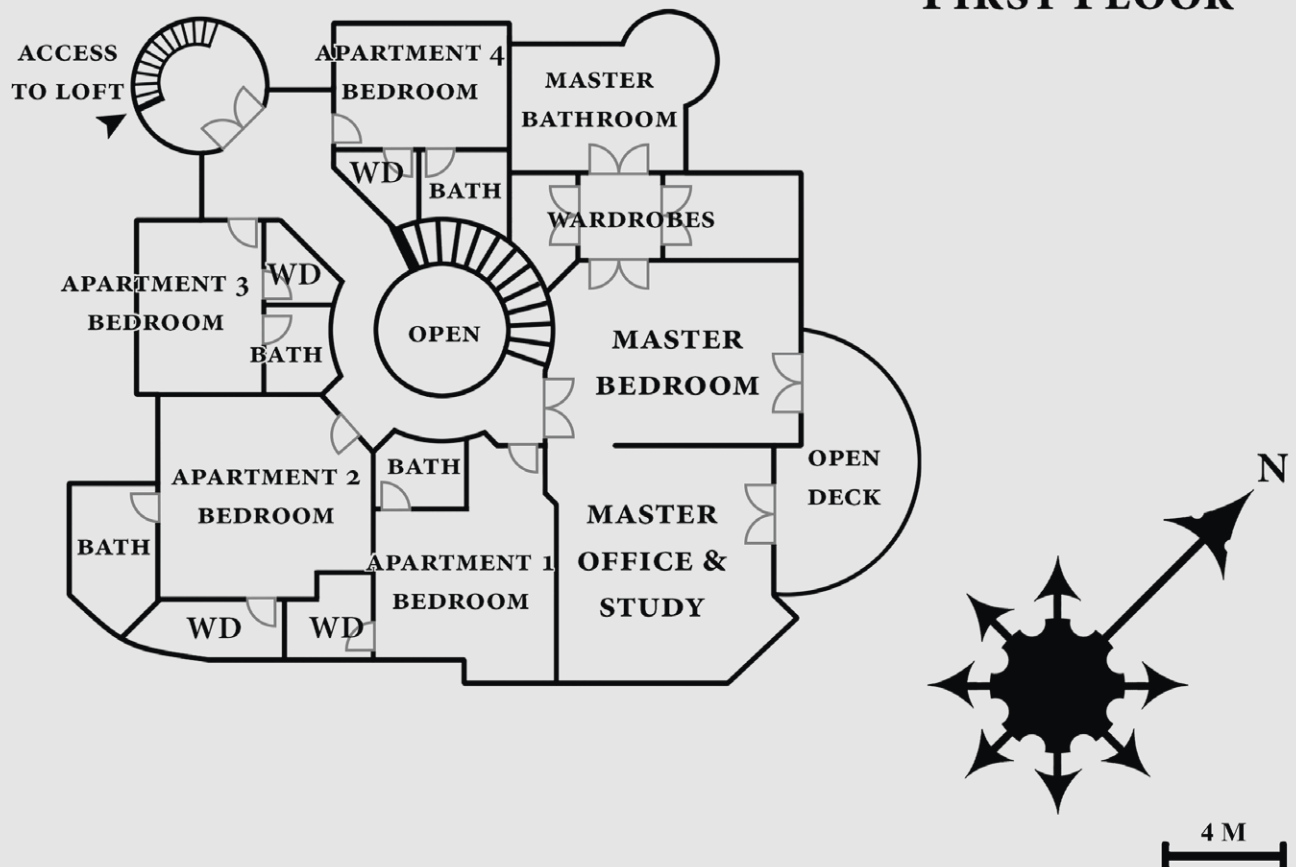


VAN DER HOUT MANOR

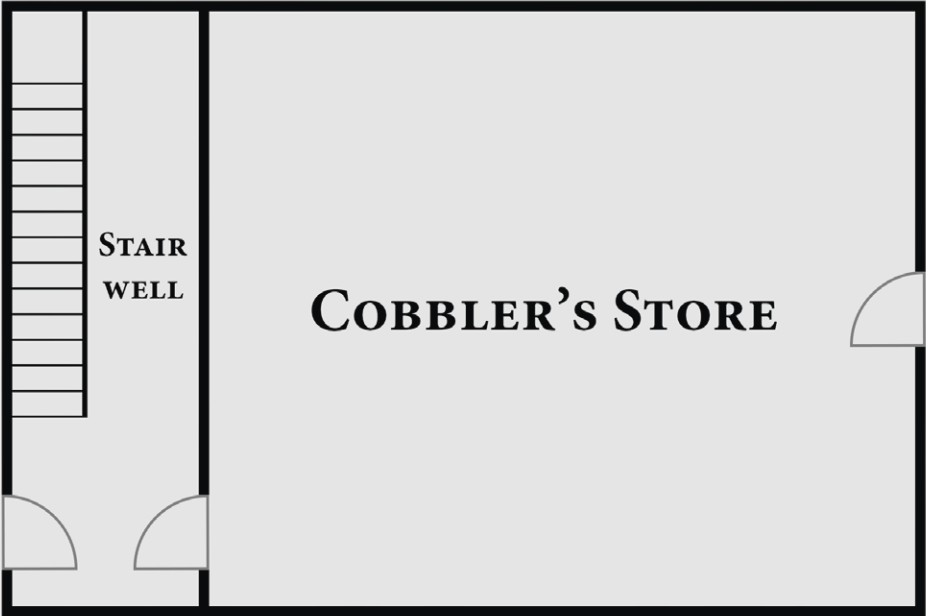
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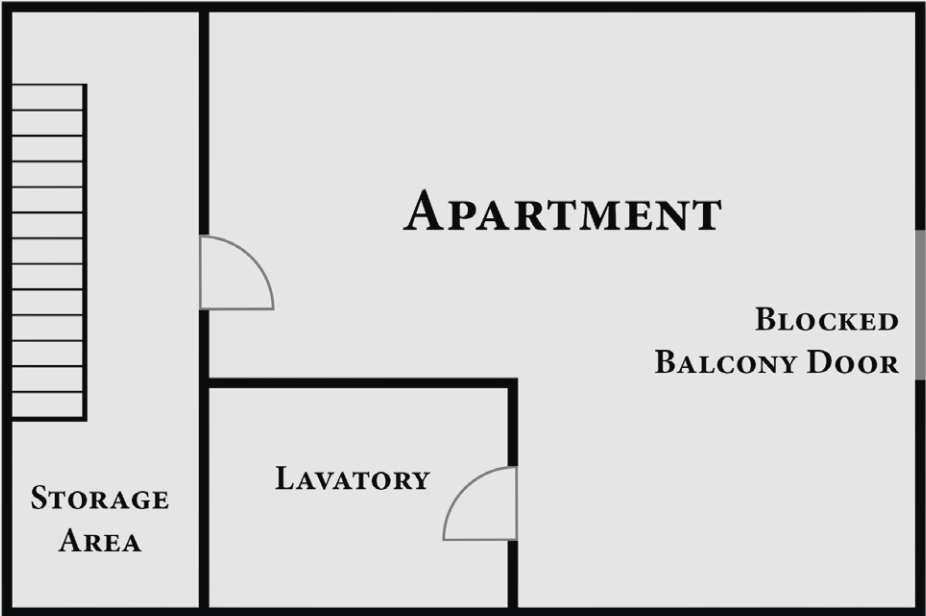
FIRST FLOOR



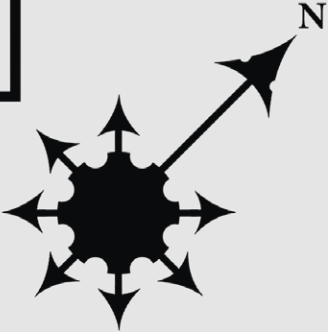
COBBLER'S SAFEHOUSE



GROUND FLOOR



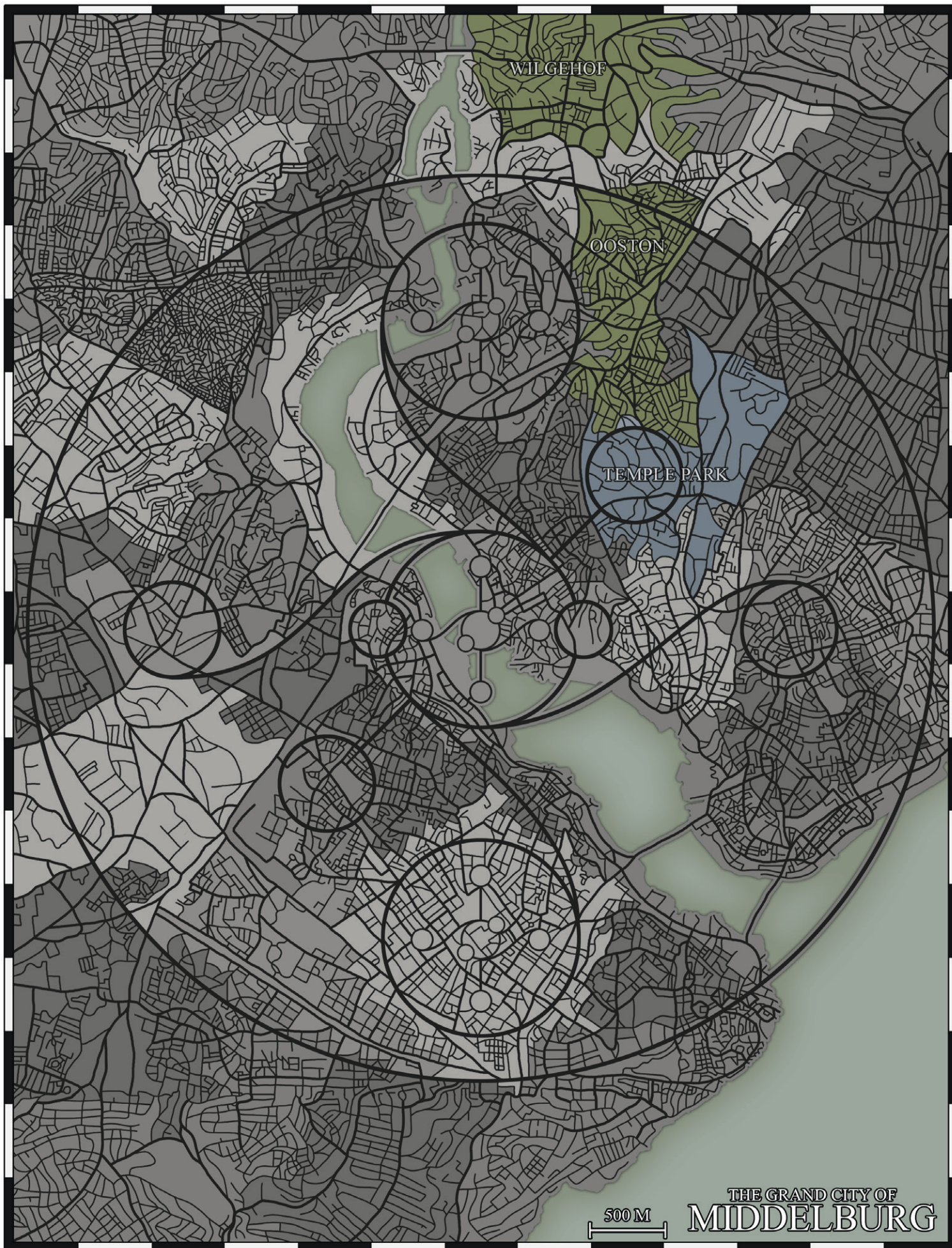
FIRST FLOOR



1.5 M

CHAPTER 3

I have seen cities
swallowed by the depths
as the heavens bled fire



WILGEHOF

OOSTON

TEMPLE PARK

500 M

THE GRAND CITY OF
MIDDELBURG

TEMPLE PARK

◆ PRODIGALIST
ETERNAL TEMPLE

◆ MERGAMIN CHAPEL

◆ PROGENITORIST
HIGH CATHEDRAL

◆ BYTHIKAN
ETERNAL SHRINE

160 M



TEMPLE PARK



The charitable call it the spiritual heart of Middelburg and thus Alfresia. The cynical call it priceless real estate wasted on temples, graveyards, and cemeteries. As with most things in life, the truth lies somewhere in the middle. There can be no question that the most important spiritual matters of the nation are decided here, but these decisions are few and far between. Mostly, Temple Park is empty parks and regular temples, opulent they may be, guarded jealously by the Triarchs from any would-be investors.

The Temple Park today may be a place for celebrating the wonders of life, but it started by celebrating the joys of death. In the old days when petty kings still ruled Middelburg and its surroundings, the locus where Temple Park now sits and the lands to the northeast was controlled directly by those kings, both for its strategic value as a locus in the Great City Array and as their personal hunting grounds. Back then the city was still a small thing, and the kings' hunting grounds sat at the edge of town.

The kings' hunting grounds could not have been more different from the Temple Park. The hunting grounds were heavily wooded and difficult terrain even for the best of trampers. The only sure footed route into the hunting grounds

were the Great City Array itself. While the "roads" of the Array today seem commonplace, in olden days they were a testament to man's triumph over nature. They were smooth, flat, level, perfect in stark contrast to nature's chaos.

As Bür purportedly did with the Great City Array, Middelburg too brought order to nature's chaos. As the years slipped by, more and more of the wooded northeast was levelled, smoothed over, and built on. The kings' hunting grounds were sacrosanct, but it was slowly being encircled by civilisation. The prey animals no longer came as the hunters at the new edges of Middelburg killed them off. The kings' hunting grounds were soon empty of anything larger than a hare and people started calling it the Ghost Woods.

The Ghost Woods would eventually live up to its name when the jaws of Middelburg shut around it. The dukes now in control of Middelburg purchased other land for hunting and instead used it to honour their dead. It wasn't for the most important of the royal family, their final resting place was the catacombs beneath the Political District, but for extended family members and nobles of other counties and duchies of Alfresia.

The Ghost Woods, or the Hallowed Woods as the



dukes tried in vain to name it, was soon littered with some of the most important corpses in Alfresia. As more nobles were buried there, more and more of the woods were torn down to make space for the ever growing cemeteries. The Ghost Woods became the Ghost Lands, much to the displeasure of the dukes, and soon precious little of the wooded wilderness of old remained. By this time the area looked very much like it does today, except for one crucial difference: other than mausoleums there were no buildings in sight, but that was soon to change.

It seemed that nearly every noble, aristocrat and man of wealth in Alfresia were buried in the Ghost Lands and this proved to be a problem for the security of the Great City Array's locus there. With all the noble families clamouring for more land to bury their dead, more land to build ever greater mausoleums, more land for their shrines, it became apparent to the dukes of Middelburg that they might soon lose control of the locus if these nobles kept purchasing land.

One particular duke then had a clever plan: simply give the entire locus to someone who would never part with it, something that would still exist in a thousand years. The duke looked high and low for this mysterious entity until finally he found religion. What better organisation to give it to than the faith? The faiths will still exist in a thousand or even ten thousand years. No king or emperor had ever destroyed a religion, after all, even the Eilanni faith still survived. The faiths and their leaders have also always jealously guarded any treasure they found, they never give up something as valuable as the locus of the Great City Array to anyone else. It was perfect.

The question then became: to which of the two faiths should the duke give the locus? The Progenitorists or the Prodigalists? The Progenitorist faith was older, more entrenched in the culture and had strong support across northern Jytah, but the Prodigalist faith was vibrant and grew larger every year. The faiths were in balance on the island, but that could


change at any moment. The prudent choice turned out to be the correct one in hindsight. The duke gave the lands to the Triarchs of Fresland, who at that time controlled the two faiths of Alfresia from their seat in Edelheim in modern Wesfresland.

The unending competition between the two religions meant that none of the Triarchs was willing to give up any land to outsiders lest their share, and thus power, of the locus was lessened. When Alfresia gained its own Triarchs, they assumed control of the newly named Temple Park and continued governing as if it was their own personal kingdom. In fact, by the old treaties signed between the faiths and the duke which still hold true today, the land is utterly under the control of the Triarchs, meaning that Alfresian law does not technically apply in Temple Park. The Triarchs graciously allow the constables to conduct their business in Temple Park and there have been precious few occasions that resulted in this legal technicality being brought to light. It is, however something that should always kept in mind, as the faiths' laws are sometimes quite different from Alfresia's own and most times much harsher.

PROGENITORIST HIGH CATHEDRAL

The culmination of the faith's work in Alfresia. The celebration of the faithfuls' love of their god. The consummation of the Triarchs attainment of the Temple Park locus. From the very beginning, the High Cathedral was intended to be the greatest achievement in the name of the Heavenly Progenitors that Jytah has ever seen. Whether the Cathedral meets that high expectation has been heavily, and sometimes quite angrily, debated by theologians, but it must be said that the Cathedral is a splendour to behold.

It was built well after the twin cathedrals dedicated the Mother and Father in south and north of Middelburg respectively, and



it was meant to unite the two branches of Progenitorism into a single, united whole as it used to be. The twin cathedrals have for so long been preaching different messages to different audiences, focussing on different gods that the faith was in danger of splitting in two, at least in Alfresia. There was considerable pressure from the Patriarchs, Matriarchs and Exarchs from outside of Alfresia to solve this issue and in the end a conclave was arranged.

The dignitaries met on the lands newly granted by the duke of Middelburg, erected tents and marquees and settled down to discuss what turned out to be a long and drawn out argument. The gods are opposites in every respect, and generations of preaching this have turned the Alfresian priests, monks, nuns, priestesses, abbots and mothers into opposites of each other just like their gods. None could see eye to eye with their opposite-sex counterparts on matter theological, political or even civil. Tribalism ruled the hearts and minds of the clergy.

Days dragged by, weeks melded into each other as the debates, the arguments, the screaming matches and outright brawls continued. Neither side would give in, neither side would compromise. It would take a Tolian from the very crown of the world to force the Alfresians into action. Patriarch Spyros Raptis of Thracetolia was not the kindest of men, or the gentlest of men, or even the most patient of men. He was a perfectionist that brooked no insult, and by the time he had converged to preside over the debates, he had had enough of this southern foolishness.

One day when the Patriarch and Matriarch of Alfresia were having their latest spat, Spyros stood up and unceremoniously upended a tankard of wine on both of them. After this he loudly proclaimed that if they did not stop their childish squabbling and stopped this impending schism then the rest of the Progenitorist nations would label them heretics and they would forever shun them. The other dignitaries looked sheepishly at each other for being dragged into this ultimatum but none dared stand

against Spyros. The leaders of the Alfresian Progenitorists looked as if to argue with the old Patriarch but one glare from him quieted them quickly enough and they reluctantly agreed.

To cement this forced accord, Spyros, quite outside his jurisdiction, ordered the Alfresians to build a temple to unite the men and women of the faith. It would be an undertaking that would bring them together in hearts, minds, and bodies. Furthermore, it would be built without the use of runic arrays to force these children to give their blood, sweat and tears for their gods. The Alfresian Patriarch and Matriarch pleaded with the other dignitaries that Spyros had no right to force these terms upon them, but by now the dignitaries were enjoying the performance and as long as Spyros' gaze was directed at the Alfresians, it was not directed at them.

Thus began the decade long construction and never once did Spyros leave. He was the guard dog that kept the sheep in line. Every clergy man and woman, from the lowest monk and nun to Patriarch and Matriarch, were forced to help build it. The people loved them for it. Thousands of the faithful joined in to help and construction became a labour of love and reconciliation. Generations of mistrust and competition faded away, replaced by a desire to reconnect, to learn, and to understand one another.

Feasts were held amid the half constructed cathedral, couples were married amid roofless chapels and lives of the departed were celebrated amid piles of lumber and stone. By the end of the decade, the Patriarch and Matriarch were transformed. They came to Spyros and apologised for their actions. They begged his blessing and asked him to stay as rector of the Exarch of Alfresia. He refused them, gently, but there was a smile on his lips for the first time in decades. That night, as the last stone was placed, Spyros died quietly in contrast to the life he led. The gods wished him to remain after all.

Spyros Raptis now sits on an elevated throne in the cathedral behind the seats of the Patriarch and Matriarch, his body

transmuted into gold that would last forever. St. Spyros Raptis the Unyielding is the patron saint of the High Cathedral and his imposing gaze watches all who enters, forcing them to think on all their wrongdoings.

PRODIGALIST ETERNAL TEMPLE

The Prodigalist Eternal Temple was the largest structure created solely by runic arrays in Alfresia and is a contender for the world title. It was a marvel of runic engineering when it was created and still stands as one of the wonders of man. The work that went into designing the Eternal Temple spawned a whole new philosophy in runic architecture and is still taught today in the Middelburg University. It is only fitting for a temple dedicated to Bür the Runegiver

While thousands were involved in its creation, the arrays that created the temple were designed by only one man: the reigning archbishop of the time, Archbishop Casper van

Aalsburg. When the Prodigalist High Priest of Fresland heard of the Progenitorists plans, or rather squabbles, to construct their own temple in Temple Park, he instructed his archbishop in Alfresia to begin organising the construction of a Prodigalist temple to rival anything the Progenitorists could dream up.

As with many other holy men before him, Archbishop Casper prayed to his god upon hearing the enormity of the task before him. It is said he was in seclusion for eight days and eight nights, neither eating or drinking, kneeling steadfast in prayer the entire time. When he finally emerged from his isolation, carried by Runic Knights, he spoke of a vision from Bür himself. Bür, so Casper said, showed him the Eternal Temple in his prayers and told Casper exactly how to create it.

None of the priests and bishops understood all of what the archbishop described, his design for the temple unorthodox to say the least, but they followed his instructions to the letter. While the Progenitorists argued and fought, Casper designed his arrays. While the Progenitorists




ON A MISSION FROM GOD

The knight in shining armour, the paladin, the warrior-monk, the soldier of a holy order. Songs are written about men such as these and their deeds become the legends of tomorrow. Playing a knight of a holy order, whether Prodigalist or Progenitorist can be immensely satisfying but it comes with a host of responsibilities.

Whatever religion you choose and whatever order or chapter of knights you choose, or make up, playing as a holy knight comes with a set of advantages, both mechanical and narrative. On the mechanics side you will get Contacts within your Order, but the narrative advantages are much greater. To start off, you will be able to find a bed, a warm meal, and maybe even sanctuary, at any temple or monastery/nunnery of your faith. You will have a home base, your chapter house, you can return to when things get tough and to train and make contacts. You will also get a nice suit of armour, a well honed blade and the respect of any upstanding citizen.

However, you pledged your life to the faith and now comes the time to do your duty. Even more than the military, you must obey orders, you do not question your commanders or your bishop; they speak the words of the gods. You must also follow your faith's teaching or suffer punishment in this life and damnation in the next. Worse yet is your brothers and superiors, not all of them will be sinless. Do you do something about it and risk your career, or do you keep quiet and risk your immortal soul.



painstakingly built their cathedral, Casper designed his arrays. At last, when it seemed the Progenitorists were close to completing their cathedral, Casper called his priests and bishops and showed them his work.

The Eternal Temple was to be a giant sphere, half above ground, half below. In the centre would be a platform level with the ground outside, the floor, but it could be rotated at any angle so that any array drawn on it could be pointed in any direction. Why this strange design? None but the archbishop and Bür knew the answer, and Casper never told anyone. All he would say is that there would come a time when it would be needed to save Bür's children. Whatever the clergy may have thought of the design, one thing was true. The design was finished, it was time to truly begin.

As Casper designed the arrays to create the Temple, his priests and bishops spread news across Alfresia that the greatest temple to Bür was soon to be built and they must stand ready to aid their Archbishop. When the day finally arrived, the Prodigalists came in their thousands. As the arrays were carved into the soil, the Prodigalists all spilt blood to power it. To create the massive half dome below ground, eight prisoners from local gaols were brought in. Four men, four women, each a representation of the eight Hellish sins. They were sacrificed on the array and as their blood drained from their bodies, the first half of the temple was completed.

The last structural part of the temple to be completed was the half dome to stand above ground and serve as the roof. For this, eight volunteers from the Prodigalist faithful were brought in. Four men, four women, each purged of sin and each a representation of the eight Heavenly virtues. They were sacrificed on the array and as their life fled their bodies and ascended to the heavens, the temple was completed.

There is some debate which of the Prodigalist or Progenitorist temples were finished first, but none can argue with the efficiency, if sometimes zealously brutal, on the side of the Prodigalists.

It took less than a month to create a sphere a hundred metres in diameter with complex machinery inside its walls and no tool was ever used to carve a stone, measure a plank, or level a line. Bür gave humanity the arrays and humanity used it to create the greatest monument to Bür the world had ever seen.

BYTHIKAN AUGUST SHRINE

When the Prodigalist faith split into the Northern and Southern faiths, or the Eternal and August faiths respectively, the result was... underwhelming to say the least. From the parties involved, there were thoughts of great wars, civil unrest, brother turning against brother, and cities burning. However, when the next day came, the sun still rose, the farmers still tilled their fields, the men still drank and the women still sang, and life continued on as normal. Oh there were a few wars, of course, but these were empty, political shows of force that ended in dull truces and dreary peace treaties.

This was not at all what the Bythikan Theocrat expected when he split the faith, but it was to his credit that no innocent blood was shed during the Prodigalist Schism. The reason for the Schism, as with so many other matters in life, was purely political. The Bythikan Theocracy, the successor to the Bythikan Empire, combined the role of Emperor and High Priest, making the Theocrat the supreme ruler over all the Bythikan people in matters both physical and spiritual. As generations passed, the Theocrats' influences expanded to those Prodigalist faithful in the neighbouring Vinean and Old Imperial nations.

Many Prodigalists, even those who opposed Bythika, found comfort in the August branch of Prodigalism with its single High Priest and thus a single message, a single dogma, in all its temples. This was a sense of unity that appealed to many. It is so unlike the northern Eternal branch of Prodigalism which preached

individuality, where each nation's High Priest is allowed to do whatever he wishes with his nation's religious dogma.

No Eternal temple is quite like the other and many faithful turned away from this to the August branch.

However, not enough faithful turned to the Theocrat for their spiritual needs, not enough for his tastes and ambitions. Thus he sent out his proclamation that all Prodigalists must bow to him or forever be turned away from the light and grace of Bür. Many Eternal priests were tempted as most Prodigalists were already of the August persuasion. They would have succumbed if not for the High Priest of the Empire of Man who refused. He did not do so on his own, as the Emperor of Man stood beside him and raised him to a prince. If it was good for the Empire of Man, it was good for the rest of the northerners.

Alfresia has always prescribed to Eternal Prodigalism so when the faith split it was not overly concerning. It took many years for the small minority of August Prodigalists to become a political force and by then the great Eternal Temple had been built and the Eternal Prodigalists had cemented their claim to Alfresia. The August Prelate of Alfresia was a shrewd politician and would not let his flock go unnoticed.

Temple Park was promised to the Triarch, one of which was the High Priest of the Alfresian Prodigalists. However, no law ever stated the High Priest had absolute control of the faithful, nor did the law speak of the difference in Prodigalist denominations. Technicalities, clearly, as the spirit of the law was understood, but the August Prelate argued his case with a fervour that few could mock. While the Eternal Archbishop argued against an August temple in the Park, at the end of the day the August Prelate won his land, but the Archbishop ensured it wasn't as large as his own land.

Thus the August Bythikan Shrine came to be. While the Bythikan Theocracy became an Empire once again, the office of Theocrat still exists even though it is separate from the


Emperor. The Theocrat does not consider the August population of Alfresia large enough to constitute its own diocese and thus it is controlled by a prelate, not a bishop. Along with a prelate comes a shrine, not a temple as only a diocese is allowed a temple. Nomenclature aside, the Bythikan Shrine in Temple Park is equal to any Eternal temple on the island even if it presents a strong aesthetic contrast. All August Shrines and Temples are built in the Bythikan style, meaning the Shrine in Temple Park is not something one can easily miss.

MERGAMIN CHAPEL

The Throne of the Elements for the Children of the Sea. The term "Mergamin Chapel" is not one used by the Mergamin themselves, but rather an Alfresian-friendly term the people of Middelburg use. "Throne of the Elements" is a bit too strange and exotic to be used in reference to a temple, so the Mergamin have had to become accustomed to worshipping in a chapel if only doing so in name.

The Mergamin are ever cautious about their appearance to the Alfresians and do much to be seen as friendly and hospitable to the heathens they live with. They have learned much from the Eilanni faith and their failed efforts at converting the Prodigalist and Progenitorist people, especially from the Eilanni's often aggressive political rhetoric that have left them with more enemies than friends. The Mergamin, on the other hand, have elected to work with the Triarchy in establishing their small Throne, presenting themselves as the least of threats. It has worked well for them as, unlike the Eilanni, they have secured a place in Temple Park. It was a political victory that cannot be understated.

The Mergamin are perhaps the most successful of the pagan faiths of Jytoh. They were the first pagan faith to turn their various oral traditions into a unified book of scripture that all their priests preached from. They were the first to formalise and organise a priest case



with a definite hierarchy and that created dogma and rituals for their people to follow. In short, the Mergamin turned their pagan faith into a true organised religion. It saved their faith from becoming consumed by Prodigalism and though it is in the minority in their Valion homeland and in Alfresia, the Mergamin faith shows no signs of dying out.

A reason for this may be the because of their admittedly outlandish beliefs. The Mergamin believe that the four elements of nature have gods that rule each element; a goddess of fire, a goddess of water, a god of soil, and a god of air. The goddess of water is the most important in their pantheon and is the Mother of All as the Mergamin believe the world consisted only of water in the beginning. That is why they are called Mergamin, Children of the Sea. The Father of All is the god of air, for the sky was the twin to the sea and was with the Mother in the Great Beginning.

Sea and Sky gave birth to Soil and Fire and the Mergamin worship them as much as their Mother and Father for as water and air is required for humans to live, it is fire and stone which has allowed humans to thrive and dominate. But the Mergamin do not stop there with their strange beliefs. They believe every smallest bit of the elements, be it a handful of soil or a candle's flame holds a child of the gods and the godlings can be brought to reality with enough faith. Be it the gnomes of the underworld, the salamanders of the flame, the undine maids of the sea or the angelic sylphs of the air, the Mergamin believe that these godlings can answer prayers, give guidance, and grant gifts.

It is this otherness that the Mergamin have used to ingratiate themselves into the Middelburg religious arena. They have shown that their beliefs do not clash with the human-focused beliefs of the two dominant religions in Alfresia and thus would not convert their faithful. The Triarchy has accepted this at face value but have kept an eye on the Mergamin. It is true that barely any Prodigalist and Progenitorist

have converted, those of other faiths and those who have no faith have often been swayed by the fanciful and mystical nature of the Mergamin.

OOSTON

◆ SADDLER

TOBACCONIST ◆

◆ *PETITE PATISSERIE*

◆ *THE FRIENDLY FLORIST*

THE HUNSTMAN ◆
OUTFITTERS

◆ *THE ORIENTAL*
TEA HOUSE

200 M



OOSTON



The old home of old money and the new home of new money. Before Nieuton, Ooston was the nesting ground for the aristocrats and when they moved out, hungry young entrepreneurs moved in, hoping to make their own fortunes and pick up the mantles the aristocrats left behind. The new inhabitants of Ooston have made good money off the people of Middelburg, but they have been met with mixed views; the upper classes think of them as little more than upstarts while the lower classes look at them with barely concealed bitterness and envy.

When the aristocrats left Ooston for greener pastures, many were so eager for their pseudo-fiefdoms that they left their homes and houses to servants or the government to sell. Hearing of this, small businessmen raced in and bought up as much property as they could afford, sometimes forming conglomerates to be able to purchase land. Soon, Ooston was becoming the centre of the burgeoning middle class of Middelburg.

Along with the entrepreneurs came their businesses. They didn't have the old money of the aristocrats to live off and neither were they so poor to work for others. These men were business owners and they found the perfect place to set up shop. Ooston rests between the Military

District, Nieuton, Temple Park, and Langehoven. Four very different districts with four very different sorts of customers. Any business owner of some skill would find a niche for his business here and this had led Ooston to develop quite an eclectic look.

Ambitious and innovative are two apt words to describe the Oostonian business owners, but a much better word would be "independent". There's only one thing they value more than money and that is their freedom. If they had wished to court the Merchant League and its various guilds, they could have kept their businesses in any part of the city, but then they would be under the thumbs of the Patriarchs. Instead they chose to be as far away from the League while remaining within the Great City Array. It was symbolic, but in the world of politics symbols have great power.

The League didn't let this go easily and still try to bribe, threaten and blackmail the Oostonian business owners into becoming a part of their guilds. The League abhors profit that doesn't land in their pockets. In response to this, the Oostonians have started their own independent guild: the Free Entrepreneurs Guild of Ooston. It doesn't have the power of the

League by any means, but it has ensured that Ooston remains in the hands of the Oostonians. The League, however, has made sure that the Oostonian Guild has not grown outside of their district. The Guild is held captive in its own district but that suits it just fine as it sees Ooston as the only district in Middelburg that has true freedom.

Because of the rivalry between the Guild and the League and the variety of stores and shops in the district, Ooston has acquired the nickname of “the Little League District”, a moniker that impressed neither the Guild nor the League. It rings true however, as Ooston is one of the major trading hubs in Middelburg and the sheer breadth of goods available means that few people have reason to shop elsewhere. Those who live north of the Great City Array rarely travel to League District because of this, being stopped on the way by the hawkers and sellers of Ooston. This has made tensions between the Guild and League only worsen and speaks of Ooston’s darker side.

Mercantile espionage sounds mysterious and romantic until you realise this is the main trade

of the League footmen. Theft, burglary, mugging, kidnapping, arson, destruction of property, murder, all in the name of profit. The League has been at this for over a century and the wealthier Ooston becomes, the more these things occur there. Nearly as much crime is committed in Ooston as in Oldtown, although you will never hear of it. Neither the Guild nor the League can afford the constabulary looking too closely at their underhanded dealings and so evidence is rarely found. Once night falls, however, there are more scoundrels than civilians walking the streets of Ooston, employed by both the Guild and the League, looking to make quick money off their employers’ ceaseless rivalry.

DE WIT’S SADDLER

Saddles are one of those objects in life which most rarely pay attention to. They simply are. No one knows where they come from or who makes them, but whenever you see a riding horse or a stable you will find saddles to spare. In the rural areas you will find folks more knowledgeable


FROM THUG TO DON



Just because you are a criminal, that doesn’t mean you have to keep working for others. After all, what’s better than being a criminal? The man giving the orders to the criminals. You want an organisation, a legacy, a way to make good money. Sure, you can go legit and open a business, but that means bowing to the Merchant League, and you want to stop working for them. You want to be better than them. You want to rule the underworld.

As GM, this is probably the hardest type of game to run. There will be no employers, no one to give missions. Everything will come from the players and what they want to do, so this might be best suited for experienced gamers. As they will be in charge of what they want to do to whom, it will be up to you to make sure that opposition is the best it can be, narratively speaking. Of course, you can also roll for complications to the job they are doing on the Adventure Generator in the *Runed Age Corebook*.

As players, this style of play will give you the most freedom as you can do anything to anyone, so don’t be paralysed with all the options available. Remember your goal: become a leader in the criminal underworld. There will be steps to finish to get there, so focus on those. You’ll need some steady source of income; you’ll need contacts throughout the city; you’ll need to “take care” of the competition; and you’ll need your own footmen. There’s lots to do, so get busy.



about this sort of business, but the streets are crowded and the buildings are clustered. There is precious little space for the average citizen to keep horses and as such a saddler in Middelburg deals mostly with the government, the military, or other businesses.

De Wit's Saddler in Ooston has the honour of being the only saddler in the Great City Array that produces its own leather. A dubious honour, some might say as the smell of a tannery has often been compared to an open sewer. This may be true for the more traditional tanneries, but De Wit's has perfected what they call "Runic Tanning".

Over the past century that the saddler has been operating, the successive owners have worked hard at blending the art and science of tanning with the arrays to create new technologies where each step of the tanning process is regulated by the arrays, every chemical required is produced by the arrays and all waste products from the liming and tanning processes are destroyed by the arrays. You can now walk past the tannery building of the saddler's complex and never once smell what is going on inside. It had taken many years to perfect this, but De Wit's neighbours are overjoyed that it finally arrived.

The saddler has even gone one step further than merely producing the chemical for tanning on site. For the best leathers, the raw skins and hides must be in the best of conditions before being tanned. Rather than risk the products being carted all the way from farms through the massive city, the saddlers once again use the arrays to produce the animals needed for the skins and hides. This way, they can control exactly how much stock they have and ensure they never run out of leather to use. Only rarely do they bring in hides from outside, almost always on request by a wealthy customer who demands specific leathers for their goods.

The customers who come calling on De Wit's are, for the most part, those that can afford to buy in bulk. The military is their largest client and De Wit's supply saddles for

most of the Alfresian cavalry divisions. The fact that one saddler got this contract rather than the Merchant League speaks of the quality efficiency that De Wit's can produce their saddles. Other than the military, De Wit's supply trading businesses and coach houses as well as governmental stables. The infrequent individual customers come from Nieuton as the aristocrats are some of the few that has the land and resources to keep horses in Middelburg.

While saddles are the bread and butter of De Wit's, they do produce other leather goods as well. With their tannery working around the year, there is a lot of leather and rawhide on the premises and many tailors and cobblers purchase these as is to use in their own businesses. The most purchased products other than saddles, however, is De Wit's range of bags, packs and sacks. Other than the obvious saddle bags and coach bags to go with their saddles, De Wit's produces a range of bags for everyday use. These can range from bags large enough to climb into, to pouches that can be attached to a belt or baldric. De Wit's has also started producing, in limited numbers, fine leather coats and cloaks that offer protection from the elements while staying fashionable in a rugged way.

TOBACCONIST

Not all intoxication needs to come from the bottom of a bottle. There are many ways to addle and affect the mind, and the Ooston Tobacconist specialises in all of them. It may have an unimaginative name but its products sell themselves. With trade bringing money into Middelburg by the boatload, the middle classes have income to spend on items not purely for their own survival in the metropolis. The tobacconist gambles on this fact; the better that Middelburg does, the more people will look for ways to become intoxicated.

True to its name, the flagship product of the Ooston Tobacconist is tobacco in all its many forms.

The history of tobacco is a curious one. It originates from the far western continent but found its way to Alfresia by way of Uttosia in the east. The Neoist lands on the east of the Ridgeback mountains have used tobacco for many centuries, acquired through trade with the west, but never did they share it with "heathen" nations because of its use in their religious rituals. It were the Uttosians and their trade route to Alfresia across the Scheie Ocean that finally brought tobacco to eastern Jytoh.

Tobacco has been used in eastern Jytoh for less than two centuries but the people have already become experts at its use. There are few areas in Jytoh where it is farmed and businesses preferring to import it from the other continents. This has led to a rise in nationalism against tobacco and its use, but the addictive quality of the plant has stopped most from ceasing to use it; no nation has sought to actively ban it, although in some conservative nations there are heavy tariffs on the sale of tobacco.

Tobacco comes in many forms but the most often used is the cured, dried, and ground up leaves of the plant used for smoking. How you prefer to smoke it is up to you but the Tobacconist ensures you buy it from them. It has many varieties of leaves, and can be cured, dried, and cut in dozens of ways for those who prefer the eastern pipe or western hookah and it rolls its own cigars for the working man who doesn't have time for a quiet sit down.

If you have neither the time nor the inclination to smoke it (and why should you with all the scholars complaining about the adverse effect on your health) then the Tobacconist suggests the wet leaves. Perfect for those rich enough who can afford to want to lose weight and without the lung problems, chewing tobacco is both delicious and nutritious. Just make sure not to actually swallow it, the Tobacconist takes no responsibility for digestion problems.

All of the tobacco products sold here is produced by the Tobacconist and is a point of pride for the owners. While many ready-to-use tobacco products are imported, the Ooston


Tobacconist only imports the raw leaves and cures, dries and sustains them using the arrays. It is not just tobacco that has this treatment, all the products are made on site.

One of these, and second best seller, is the sativa plant from the Neoist Westerners. Before tobacco, this was the chiefly smoked plant in eastern Jytoh although the effects of it on the mind meant it was never enjoyed in large quantities by the masses. The Tobacconist has tried to change this by providing it in several different forms from the leaves itself to resin made from the plant. It also sells packages that blend tobacco and sativa leaves for a less intense effect.

For the thrill seekers, the Tobacconist has dried mushrooms obtained from the Gitics in the south. During the age of the Gitic Hordes, the fierce barbarians used these to lose control and enter berserker rages that made them nigh unstoppable in battle. In modern times men with more money than sense, which often is very little to begin with, uses these to escape reality. The Gitic Mushrooms are but one psychedelic the Tobacconist offers and many grow increasingly wary of its tendency to market these to the youth and poor, afraid of what will happen to a generation whose minds are addled beyond repair.

It is no surprise then that many greatly dislike the Ooston Tobacconist. All faiths preach against it and its products, and aldermen and community leaders give impassioned speeches against anyone stepping foot in there. Unfortunately the products sell themselves and the Tobacconist is rarely empty of customers. There is also talk that the owners, whom none can ever seem to find, is protected from on high.

Proof, they say, is that the Merchant League has never once tried to work against the Tobacconist. They have never seemed to have scruples before, yet they themselves do not often traffic in mind altering products, other than alcohol, so why does it seem they are taking the moral high road? The more paranoid speculate that the Tobacconist is actually in secret owned



by the League and they are intentionally flooding the city with mind altering substances to lower any resistance against them as they slowly take over the city.

PETITE PATISSERIE

From Valkryk with love. No one knows desserts better than the Valions and one Valion decided to share his people's love with the Alfresians. Barnabé Forestier came to Alfresia with a dream, an old recipe book and little else. Because of this he was too poor to set up in Nieuton, a sore point for Nieutonians today, but the businessmen of Ooston was happy to snatch up a promising new entrepreneur before the League found him and so Petite Patisserie was born.

Like all people, the Alfresians have a sweet tooth. A cake here, a pastry there, none can say the Alfresians do not know how to cook. However, when it comes to the art of cooking, no culture can hold a candle to the Romantics. Cooking is in their blood and when it comes to desserts, the Valions' blood is sugar and honey. The best maître pâtissiers come from Valkryk and Nacitania, it is in fact a point of pride across Jytoh for a bakery, tavern or noble household to employ such a master pastry chef as they always attract customers.

One of these maître pâtissiers is Barnabé Forestier, a man with a mysterious past. Precious little is known about him before he arrived in Middelburg, but the businessmen who invested in him cared as little about his past as there was to know about it. All they cared about was a certificate, etched in gold, that proved Barnabé graduated from the prestigious Culinary School of the Royal University of Valkryk. This alone could have allowed Barnabé to work in any kitchen he could dream of, working for kings and emperors had he wanted. The businessmen were suspicious, of course, but Barnabé's travel documents proved real and they counted their blessings that such a prize would fall into their laps.

The Entrepreneurs Guild gave Barnabé everything he wanted to begin his own patisserie. No price was too great to keep the master chef in Ooston. Barnabé was thankful for their assistance and soon began impressing Middelburg with his culinary skills. Few but the very rich had seen the cakes and pastries he set out in his store. Within a month he had hired apprentices just to keep up with the demand. It was a dream come true, or so he thought.

All the assistance Barnabé had gotten from the Guild came with conditions. Barnabé was far too valuable to simply let him out in the world by himself. He alone drew more customers from outside Ooston than any other business. The Guild was very interested in the customers he drew from Nieuton, as the more time they spent in Ooston, the more money they spent in Ooston. Their investment needed to be protected. Guild guards would surreptitiously follow Barnabé as he went about his day, ever watchful of dangers other, and he himself, posed. His patisserie had become a gilded cage.

The Guild's fears were not without cause. In the decade that Petite Patisserie has been open, there have been nearly two dozen kidnapping attempts. The Guild clearly suspects the League to be behind this and for good reason. The Heisenstein and van Rosedaal trade families make a large part of their money from food establishments and the patisserie was a threat to their profits. They wouldn't kill poor Barnabé, even they would not destroy such a valuable man, but they would do anything they can to get him to work for him.

Bribes, threats, blackmail letters, all have found their way to Barnabé over the years and Barnabé would be a fool not to have been tempted, if only to stop this shadow war at the very least. The Guild has lately intercepted all his mail, coming and going, to ensure temptation does not lead to action. Compared to the League, the Guild is a minnow in a very large pond. They need every advantage they can get and they have no qualms about keeping

Barnabé a prisoner in order to achieve that.

These days Barnabé leads a sheltered, quiet life, stuck in a kitchen working for his masters. A well paid slave is still a slave, but at least he can say he is doing the one thing he loves and where it comes to his cakes and pastries, he is the master of his fate. That much the Guild has allowed him: to choose what he makes and how he makes it. A small concession, but one he'll gladly take. Not everyone can say they make the best desserts in Middelburg.

THE FRIENDLY FLORIST

Runic scholars often remark that there is a large disparity between the amount of runes dedicated to plants and those dedicated to animals. It seems that, when it comes to living things, the arrays were designed with creatures in mind, not plants. What is fortunate, however, is that the three runes devoted to plants are as vague in their purview as can be. It is with these three runes that the Friendly Florist is capable of growing and selling the most beautiful flowers in the city.

A florist is perhaps one of the most difficult professions in an urban environment. Flowers are the epitome of what a luxury good is and oftentimes those with the money to buy them in any large quantity have the money to grow their own. It is a fine balance to strike in obtaining a customer base, especially when the flowers a florist can sell is determined by the seasons. Much like grocers and other businesses that sell plant products in one form or another, the Friendly Florist has found a way around this last problem.

As any scholar will tell you, when a plant blooms is not strictly determined by the seasons. The seasons are merely the symptoms of the cause. What truly dictates when a plant flowers is temperature, humidity and the most important factor: light. As luck would have it, all of these factors can be regulated by the runes and arrays, and that is precisely what the Friendly Florist


does.

The shop of the Friendly Florist may seem quite small, but it is the least of the operation. Most of the Florist actually exists below ground. In cavernous halls are a multitude of plants surrounded by a plethora of arrays that controls the temperature, humidity and temperature of each species of flower. Each hall can be made to replicate conditions of winter, spring, summer and autumn, precisely as the florist wishes. The seasons no longer affect what the Friendly Florist can, or cannot, sell. Each sort of flower is available throughout the year.

The climate control arrays of the Friendly Florist are quite ingenious. Controlled by intricate clocks that measure both time and date, each hall is set to a different season of the year. As the days and weeks pass, the clockwork machinery will modify the arrays to change the climate of each hall per the master clock's time and date. As far as the plants are concerned, day follows night and season follows season as naturally in the world above.

It is not only the climate that is controlled by the clockwork arrays. The water and nutrients that the plants need to survive are also most automated. Any farmer will be quick to say that blood and bone make excellent fertilisers and so the Florist uses the Blood rune to feed his flowers, as morbid as that may be; and the Water rune keeps each flower as hydrated as needs be. All this clockwork machinery cost a hefty fortune, but to succeed in Middelburg, sacrifices must be made.

The most ingenious use of the arrays in the cavernous halls is the use of the Time arrays. Most often the customers who spend the most money are the ones who desire plants not currently in stock. How correct a customer is always depends on how much money they have, thus when a rich one wants a specific plant for their two dozen bouquets, it is unwise to tell them no. It is for this reason that the Friendly Florist uses Time arrays to speed up the growth and flowering of plants so that any flower could be ready for sale within a day. Many flowers are



kept in stasis by the Stop rune, stopped in time just before they flower so that there is always a reserve stock on hand.

One would expect that the energy needed for all these arrays would be enormous, and one would be right for thinking so. Before the advent of the Lightning rune and the power stations in the city that gave power to nearly all the buildings, the Florist had to do with a gargantuan boiler underneath the flowering halls that could charge the arrays. Day and night it ran, and an apprentice would be there at all times to make sure it kept running. It was terrible and filthy work, so Florist could not be happier for the clean new energy in the city.

The Friendly Florist may not be the most ambitious or powerful shop in Middelburg, but in its own way it is at the forefront of runic advances in botany. The gardeners of the Senate House, Embassy Enclave and many a manor in Nieuton have come to inspect the clockwork machinery to see what they can learn. The most innovative technology is often where one least expects it.

THE HUNTSMAN OUTFITTERS

Like all state militaries, the Alfresian military is equipped with the best matériel that the least amount of money can afford. Military contracts are given over the lowest bidders, thus while the military's technology does advance over the years, it is slow to do so. More so, private individuals can often sport much better arms and armour and newer technology. The Huntsman Outfitters aim to provide exactly such superior arms, armour, and technology.

Wherever a military complex of any size is located, there will always be businesses selling excess military supplies to the public. This is precisely how the Huntsman began nearly a century ago. Kurt von Strohm was a retired officer of the Heavenly Empire's Legions and was

searching for a quiet place to spend his golden years. Middelburg may not be quiet, but it was agreeable to von Strohm who enjoyed the hustle and bustle of the city.

Naturally he was drawn to the newly finished Military District, but as a private citizen he was not allowed to use or even purchase any matériel. Having spent nearly his whole life in the military, von Strohm was unaccustomed not having an army pistol and sword at his side. Of course he could have bought civilian grade weapons elsewhere, but a true Legionnaire is above such things. He was a stubborn man filled with a sense that he was meant for important things, so he did the one thing he thought was most logical: open a military surplus store.

In the wake of the War of Independence there were thousands of arms and armour to spare and as an old military officer, von Strohm knew exactly what sort of man to go see about getting his hands on these. Soon enough, von Strohm was selling military gear to the very people who had used them a few years earlier as part of the citizen militia. One would have thought that the people of Middelburg would have been bitter about this, but many had wanted a tangible reminder of what they went through and were happy that von Strohm could help them.

This was the Huntsman's business for its early years, buying up the surplus matériel and selling them to civilians. It was only after von Strohm passed that the business gained a change in direction. In his will, von Strohm left the business to a fellow officer and old friend of his from the Legion. Hubert Gruber was quite a different man than von Strohm, born in a different generation and joining the Legion under duress from his father.

When Gruber took over the Huntsman, he was glad to leave the military and could not see spending the rest of his life selling their surplus, but neither could he spit on the memory of his old friend and mentor. He continued selling matériel but also started

selling civilian weaponry and equipment geared towards hunting. Gruber was an avid hunter and he felt the new direction appropriate to the name of the business itself. The Huntsman fared well under his direction, gaining new customers while retaining the old.

Gruber came from old money in the Empire and knew what would interest the aristocrats in Nieuton. It were these wealthy customers that eventually gave the Huntsman its current direction. The rich and powerful desire nothing but the very best that money can afford. To keep up these demands, the Huntsman had to acquire the very best in arms and armour and therein was the problem. The very best in matériel was controlled by the Merchant League, especially the Hugenberg and van Windburg families, and the Huntsman could not compete with them.

It took another owner of the Huntsman to solve this problem. Hans Geering was yet another officer of the Legion and inherited the Huntsman from Gruber in what would become the tradition of the store. Like Gruber, Geering was a timid man that was pushed into the Legion by his family and was greatly relieved when an aged Gruber contacted him to take over the business.

Geering knew that the best solution was always the easiest, so rather than try and compete with the Merchant League Geering decided to work for them. The rest of Ooston's businessmen were furious about this and did much to try and dissuade him, so much so that in the end he did not work for the League but with them. Entering into a contract with the van Windburg family for first access to weapons and equipment, Geering was to give first priority to the family's mercenary company the "Golden Talons". This compromise suited both Geering and Ooston's Guild.

Today the Huntsman does brisk business with hunters, militiamen, outdoorsmen and weapon enthusiasts. It may not be the best weapons dealer in the city, that title is disputed between the van Rosedaal and van Windburg families, but the Huntsman has the claim of


being an independent store (nominally at least) owned and operated by the best of the Legion. Its current owner is a Rimien officer from the Legion's Auxiliary Corps named Alberto Bertorelli. Bertorelli is a charismatic, if aggravating, man who has done wonders for the image of the Huntsman and has promised big things for its future. It remains to be seen if he can accomplish them, but for now it seems the Huntsman is in good hands.

THE ORIENTAL TEAHOUSE

Tea. Hot leaf juice from across the ocean. Or at least that's the perception of the beverage in most of Alfresia, a perception the Gaelish Oriental Uttosian Company is attempting to change. The Uttosians have been brewing tea for longer than their Khaganate has existed. When the Gaelish stole away their strip of land from the easterners, they were introduced to tea and since then it has captivated their culture as nothing else ever has. Now the Gaels wish to share this marvel they found with the rest of Jytoh, and what better place to start than the centre of trade on the continent.

The Oriental Company's reasons are not entirely charitable. As much as they believe civilisation can be found at the bottom of a teacup, the Company knows that the more Jytohans consume tea, the more profit the Company will make with its imports. Thus far they have had limited success. The other Caelish nations have taken to the drink, albeit slowly, but the rest of the continent prefer their coffee instead. Tea is far too foreign a drink for the continent, it seems. Still the Company presses on.

More trade flows through Middelburg than any other city on the east coast of Jytoh. If the Company can successfully introduce tea to the city, they will also introduce it to every visitor that passes through the city. These visitors can then take the story of tea back to their home nations and, theoretically, it should increase the demand for tea. To this end the Oriental



Company reached out to the Merchant League, the gatekeepers of trade in Middelburg. Rather than work against the League, the Company would rather take the loss in profits in the city if it means creating markets elsewhere.

The League was cautious about this, but as the Company would do most of the heavy lifting in this partnership, the League agreed. However, the League wanted to keep this partnership at arms length in case the dreadful failure could backfire on them. So rather than put the establishment in regions known to be League territory, the League purchased land in Ooston under assumed names and put up shop there. Should there be any nationalistic or anti-immigrant sentiments against the Uttosian drink, Ooston would the wrath, not the League.

It never came to that, fortunately. The reception the Oriental Teahouse received was ambivalence at worst and acceptance as best. The Alfresians adore their coffee and very little of them has given it up for tea, but the Teahouse has a small but steady following among the Jytohans and a loyal following from the Uttosians in the city. The credit for the Teahouse's small successes was quickly stolen by Ooston's Guild, hoping to draw in foreign investment, and the League was willing to let them take it. In this partnership the League is only interested in the profit that can be made.

Quite recently the Teahouse has branched out its services and serves as the go-to store for Uttosian food and drink. More of a tavern than a teahouse, strictly speaking, the change has served to bring in more customers who are curious about the exotic food and drink from across the sea. The novelty and otherness of the food allows the Teahouse to stand out from the crowd. And if the customers purchase tea along with their meals, so much the better. The initiative from the company seems to be doing well enough that a couple of smaller teahouses has opened across the great city.

Unlike the League, the Alfresian government does not sit well with the Teahouse in their city. The Khaganate is a great player in the realm of

international politics and a force to be reckoned with. From the moment the Teahouse opened, more and more Uttosian ships sailed into Middelburg's harbour, carrying crates meant only for the Teahouse. What they contain is a mystery, as each opened crate revealed nothing of suspicion (suspicious in and of itself), but whenever a Uttosian diplomat visits the Teahouse, shipments are soon to follow.

The Alfresian government is not certain whether the Teahouse is being used by Uttosia's intelligence services or by their criminal underworld, all they know is that more money flows through that business than has any right to. Even the League has become interested in this, as they see any made in the business as rightfully theirs, but they too can't find any hint of crime or corruption. Only the Gaelish Oriental Uttosian Company seems apathetic to what transpires there, unless it has to do with tea, and that makes both the League and the government uncomfortable.

WILGEHOF

◆ PIETER'S POTTERY

◆ THE VOID

◆ AIRSHIP TERMINAL

◆ AIRSHIP DRYDOCK

160 M



WILGEHOF



Unless you live in Nieuton where everyone is either fabulous, wealthy, or fabulously wealthy, then there is a distinct difference in living outside of the Grand Array of Middelburg and living inside it. In reality, the only difference is where on the map you are, but there is a historical and cultural significance to living inside the Grand Array. This is where Middelburg began, where all its rich and varied history took place. It is the real Middelburg. Outside the Grand Array are the newer districts and areas that were either their own villages and towns swallowed up by the Grand City, or were extensions of it as it continues growing. It is the new Middelburg, and thus not as real as the old Middelburg.

Some people will take any excuse to feel superior to their fellow man, and a clean line drawn on a map is as an objective measure of this as they will ever find. The people of Wilgehof used to feel this superiority for as long as the district has existed. Now, however, they could not be more happier to be outside the Grand Array.

Many districts are defined by one building within them, or a thematic assortment of businesses. The League District has the Merchant League, Universitas has the university, Temple Park has the most temples, the Docks has... well... the docks. For the past year, and most

likely for the foreseeable future, Wilgehof has become defined by its airship terminal. Where it was once one of the most sparsely populated areas in the city (still crowded by any other city's definition), it is now filled to the brim with folk who want to make the most out of the unending queue of airships that fill the sky above the district.

There are, of course, mixed feelings about the airship terminal. Before its construction, Wilgehof was an unremarkable place, with the only thing of note within it being the Void, that strange and mysterious black sphere. However boring it was, Wilgehof was peaceful. There was no reason for people to come here and cause trouble, and thus the people here lived in relative peace.

That has now been changed forever. Wilgehof has become the second Docks district. More and more airships are built around Jytoh every day, and sooner or later they will find themselves in the air above Wilgehof, picking up and delivering goods to the great trading centre of Middelburg. With all this trade has come many a man looking for, and finding, work. Entire warehouses have sprung up, seemingly overnight, with men working day and night to keep

the trade flowing. An unending line of coaches ferry goods to and from the rest of the city, and now there is even talk of creating a railroad into the district to better ship all of the goods here.

Wilgehof has been forever changed, but while many people grumble and moan about it, all in all most cannot complain. With all this trade and work, a lot of money has also flowed into the district. Very little will reach the common man, but every bit counts. Unemployment in the district has fallen, new apartments and houses have been built to accommodate the new army of workers, and the League and other benefactors have taken to cleaning up the district to impress the foreigners now flying into the city.

Wilgehof has never looked so industrious, so professional, and so tidy in all its life. With the state of the district, and a few extra guilders in their pockets, many citizens of Wilgehof can excuse how crowded and loud the district has become. They can overlook the changes brought to Wilgehof by outsiders, and on occasion will turn a blind eye to the rising crime rate. Wilgehof will never be the same again, and all that its citizens can hope for is that the rapid changes will be for the better when the dust settles.

AIRSHIP TERMINAL

Functional, dependable, practical airships took the world by storm after the discovery of the Lightning rune; but that was two years ago, and as with all new technologies it has now become passe. From a miracle that lifted us to the heavens on invisible wings, to simply another form of transport, and a very convenient one at that.

An airship can go where coaches, ships, and trains cannot; and is the quickest mode of transport there is in Alfresia, even if it comes at a steep price. Regardless of this cost, the well-to-do of the nation have decided that the speed and luxury of an airship is the way of the future, and thus not a day goes past without an airship flying

over Middelburg.

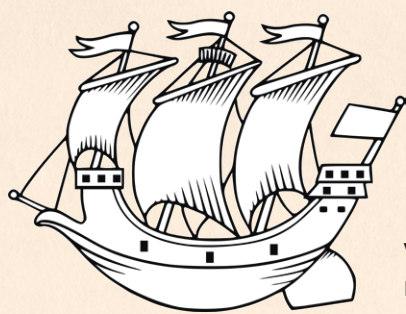
This demand for air travel initially led to no small amount of chaos in the city, as airships of all sizes simply settled where they wished and wherever was nearest to their destination. More than one building was damaged by an incoming airship, and several unfortunate souls were flattened by a descending ship. The city's government needed a response, and the Merchant League were all too eager to show them their plans.

Control where the airships must land and take-off, and you control where the people must go. This means you control where they must wait, and thus where they will spend their money. It should come as no surprise then that the Docks, the Middelburg Train Station are surrounded by stores and eateries controlled by the Merchant League, and they knew that airships would be the next opportunity.

Thus, they bought several large plots in Wilgehof, as it is a sparsely populated area, compared to the rest of Middelburg at least. Here they hired architects, masons, and runewrights to create new docks, but one focussed on the sky. By combining the best of the train and tram stations with the Docks, they created a terminal where the airships never actually have the land. The airships remain floating in the sky, held aloft by runic arrays, and the people are runically moved up towards them.

They created a vertical dock-system, but this was not a flaw in the design, or a restriction imposed by the cramped and crowded city. No, the League wanted this, as it means that wherever you go in the city, you will see the waiting airships hanging in the sky over Wilgehof. Even if the ships do not carry League insignia, they act as floating advertisements of their services, enticing people to use them, and therefore to come to the Terminal and spend their money while they wait.

While this was all done out of greed, it should be said that the League built a world-class terminal. A power relay station was built inside



MOBILE HOMES

Downtime in the Runed Age is a crucial part of gameplay. Not only does it give you time to recover from any wounds you picked up in a mission, but it gives you time to work on some certain skills of your character that you want to improve on, it lets you explore some more relaxed roleplay you may not get inside of a mission, and it lets you try out other characters, as you can “park” a character in Downtime while you play another.

For the “Live” section of Downtime, your home doesn’t need to be a stationary dwelling. Alfresia is, of course, an island; and Middelburg has extensive docks. You can always live on board a ship, and this can give you the freedom to explore the rest of Alfresia if you want to get away from the Grand City’s hectic atmosphere for a bit. A ship is more expensive to maintain than a house, though, so if you have one, you will get an additional -30 Modifier to your Lifestyle Modifier for paying the bill at end of Downtime. It’s a huge penalty, but remember that a ship is not meant to house just one person. You’re whole party can live aboard and share the cost of maintenance between you all.

Then there is the airship, of course. Who doesn’t want to be an airship-pirate? It is the ultimate in freedom. You can go wherever the wind takes you and be where and when you want to be. It’s also excruciatingly expensive to have and maintain one, and will cost you a -60 Modifier to your Lifestyle Modifier for paying the bill at end of Downtime. But it’s worth it.

of it, meaning that as each ship comes to dock, it can connect copper cables to the terminal to recharge its runic-banks without an airman ever having to set foot off the ship. Runic arrays, built into rotatable machines based off newly developed cannons can also be aimed at the ships to move cargo to and from them, creating a mesmerising scene and peak traffic of crates and boxes floating gently all around the terminal.

The very latest in runic engineering was used to create the terminal, and the League spared no expense in drawing runewrights from across Jytoh to complete it. The result bested all expectations, and other cities in Alfresia, and on the mainland, are now busy building their own vertical Terminals, meaning that airship travel will soon become the mainstay of the world.

AIRSHIP DRYDOCK

An airship is precisely what it sounds like: a ship that moves through the air. As such, the overwhelming majority of airships look almost

exactly like ocean going ships from the outside; the main difference being that they contain array-banks filled with runic electricity that power the various runic arrays around the ship that keep it aloft. It is the wind through the sails that still propel the ships forward, and the crews clambering across them which dictate the speed of the airship.

The most egregious change one might see would be that the rudder has been replaced with another sail to steer the ship, but on many airships, especially those retrofitted directly from sailing ships, they have not even gone this far. Many simply use the runes to steer the ship, which has given the ships the ability to smoothly transition from sea to sky at any moment. For the cities and towns without airdocks or terminals, this is far more of a necessity than a convenience.

All of this has resulted in the same men that build and repair ships being able to build and repair airships. With no need to train men in a new trade, the city’s government and the League

drafted a horde of shipbuilders and dock-workers from the Docks to Wilgehof to work on the convoys of airships suddenly streaming into the city. Many men looking for more money do work at both locations, being an airship-worker at day and a dock-worker at night. This convenience of work is the main reason why airships have yet to move away from the traditional boat design, despite the protests of engineers and scholars.

The Wilgehof Drydock is where the magic of flight happens. Here is where the new generations of airships are designed and built, and where those airships who cannot be repaired in flight at the terminal are sent to be worked on. It is a strange sight to many to see a field full of ships in various stages of being built so far from the ocean, although the locals have grown quite fond of the Drydock and the many employment opportunities it provides.

While the majority of ships built here look the same as the sea going vessels at the Docks, the thing that sets them apart is also the most important part of the Drydock: the array-banks. An array-bank is a large wooden chest (how large depends on how much electricity is needed) within which is a rod holding many copper disks. Each disk is inscribed with an array to receive Lightning, such as from a power relay station, and then expel it when necessary. Other arrays on disks can then be slotted into the array-bank to either runically send that lightning to other arrays, or to receive a copper cable to carry the electricity onwards.

It goes without saying then that the array-banks require far more skill and technical knowledge to construct than the ship it houses, and the League has done well to recruit rune-wrights, smiths and carpenters dedicated to building and maintaining these so that their airships never falter or run out of electricity.

And while the ships' designs look like they will remain stuck in tradition, at least for the time being, the construction of the array-banks has seen a veritable explosion in innovation over the past two years. Everything is being done to

squeeze the last drop of electricity out of them, and as much as can be done is put to work to have them house as much lightning as possible, without them becoming the size of a building. The conundrum at the moment for scholars is to find a way to slow down the release of the lightning to a more measured pace, as much as the electricity fed into airships is wasted as they runic arrays release them all at once.


The "lightning race" to create a perfect array-bank will be a long and gruelling one, but they say whomever wins it will have unlimited power in the palm of his hands.

THE VOID

The Mystery of Middelburg. Nothing is known about the Void, for the Void is in fact nothing. It is the ultimate nothing, and nothing could be more mysterious than that. Every attempt at obtaining more information about the Void has failed. We know as much now about it as we did when it first appeared, and we know next to nothing. The implications, however, are staggering.

The Void is centuries old, and some say is more Alfresian than we are. It appeared on the exact same day that the old Kingdom of Fresland finally united to throw off the shackles of the Heavenly Empire of Man. It was not there the previous day, but when folk woke up the next day, it was. Why then, on that precise date, on that auspicious occasion? Noone knows, none can say, it is a mystery. All we know is that absolutely nothing about it has changed since that very day.

As best as we know, the Void is a sphere exactly one metre in diameter floating exactly one metre above the ground. It seems to serve only one purpose, and has only one function: to absorb everything it can. It is perfectly pitch black, as it consumes all light; and nothing that enters it ever comes back out. It is as ravenous as a starving lion, and will devour any part of anything that is put inside of it, regardless of



what it is made of, and will chew through any alloy no matter how strong.

And that is all we can say of the Void with a hundred percent assurity. Everything else is merely supposition and speculation. Where did it come from? Who made it? How indeed was it made? Over the centuries, these questions have driven many a man mad, and have caused many more to lose their limbs attempting to find out what was inside the Void. We cannot answer these questions directly, but what we can do is say what the Void is not.

We know the Void was not created via the runes, at least not how we understand them to be. There is no runic array anywhere near the Void to sustain it, and scholars have encased the Void entirely to see if it will break the connection between it and any faraway runic array. There was no response. As the Void consumes anything, even alloys and mixed materials, we know that the runes cannot have caused this either; unless there are runes that no mortal knows of.

Runes are the most perfect of all the gods' creations, separated by laws and rules from the worst.

~Niketas Colonomos, Tolian philosopher

The Void also displays strangely odd behaviours. Most prominently is the fact that it bends light, if ever so slightly. The amount of force required to pull light in a certain direction is significant, more so than pulling other materials, and yet the Void only creates a minimal force when pulling anything else towards it. There is only a slight tug in its direction when you approach within a hand's breadth of it, and if you push an object part way in, a man's strength is more than sufficient to pull the remaining part of it out.

Most odd is that, regardless of how much it devours, the Void never grows. It is as large now as it was when first measured. One scholar even fed it enough stone to cover the whole district one meter deep in rubble, yet it did nothing. If

it destroyed the material, where did the energy to do so come from? If it merely transported the material elsewhere, then to where? Someone surely must have noticed a literal mountain of stone appearing from thin air. Yet no reports have ever made its way back to Middelburg about this.

And so the Void sits as it ever has, gently tugging on the air and light around it, sitting quite amicably where it always has, content to remain idle and eat what it can, much like a happy infant. And as the city has grown and spread across the land, it simply grew around the Void, which now sits in its own little square, with a chest-high wall surrounding it so no one accidentally bumps into it.

The people have become so used to it, that many no longer think it strange or perplexing. It has simply become a fact of life. An object that is part of the landscape of the city. Many even use it to dispose of rubbish, excrement, and anything else people no longer need; turning the most mysterious of things in the city into one of the most mundane.

Scholars doubt that we will ever know what the Void truly is, however they hope that if that day does come, whomever built it will not know of all the things we have put inside it over the centuries, and that they will not return these things to us.

PIETER'S POTTERY

Pottery is a lot like baking, and not only because both require an oven. In order to make the best product, both pottery and baking needs good quality ingredients, a creator that knows when to follow a recipe but also when to follow his intuition, and both need to be baked at just the right temperature and right time for it to come out looking perfect. As with baking, if anything in this delicate pottery process goes wrong, you will end up with a product fit only for the rubbish heap.

Luckily for the enterprising potters of Middelburg and beyond, the runic arrays have standardised much of the pottery process, ensuring that much of the guess work has been taken out of the equation; although it was a long process of trial and error to get to this point.

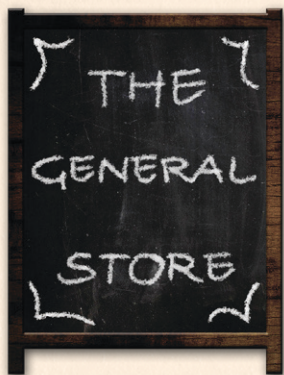
It all starts with the ingredients, and knowing what sort of clay to use for which item you want to craft, what soils and metals you need to mix into the clay to get the right colour, and what kind will give you the strength your pot, vase, plate or bowl might need. This is where the use of runic arrays is felt the most. By using simple Create-Stone runic arrays with pure clay samples as the base, Pieter can create as much clay, soil and stone of whatever type he needs. And with as much water as he could want, he can shape that clay to his liking.

Getting the right clay is the tricky part. Not all clay was made equal, and potters know that even a gram of the right type of clay can mean another potter making goods as well as they

can. You may not think of potters having secret recipes, using coded language and scripts, and hiding soil samples in locked vaults; but many do just that. Pieter does everything he can to hide the clay samples he uses, sometimes quite literally with the help of a bank-vault, and the recipes he has for mixing the clay, soils, minerals and metals is written in journals only he knows the locations of, in code only he can decipher. Most of his apprentices do not even know how he makes the clay he gives them, and he likes it that way.

Next comes the turning and shaping of the clay, and here the runes help out by creating the force to move the turntables, and inscribed onto tools that can push, pull and disintegrate clay just as the potter needs. The runes cannot turn anyone into a potter, but they can certainly help a potter become a better one. This is the part of the process where an artist's skill and intuition comes into play, and why Pieter has so many apprentices year in and year out.

Once the clay has been shaped, the glazes




FOREWARNED IS FOREARMED

In almost all cases, missions and adventures, between finding out what the objective is and completing it, you will have time to find out what you have to do, whom you have to do it to, where you have to do it, and how you will do it. This is the time to take a step back, think of your battle plan, and get the equipment necessary to get the job done.

The runes and arrays can do a lot, quite a lot, and it seems what they can't do, pistols and blades can, but don't underestimate a good piece of mundane equipment. A rock and a rope has saved many a life and wearing a disguise can dramatically reduce the amounts of fights you get in. If you are more runically inclined, remember that the arrays work best when combined with technology.

Whatever you need, no matter how strange, you'll find it somewhere in Middelburg. The more pedestrian of things can be found in most districts such as Rodewal and Pellisier, while Ooston is more dedicated to business. In the Docks and the poor areas like Oldtown you will find your illicit goods and if you can't find anything anywhere else, the Great Bazaar in the League District will have it.

Most times you will only get one time to finish a mission, so you have to make it perfect. Take all the equipment you can, you might never know what could come in handy. Rather have something and not need it, than not have it and need it.



applied, the art created; well then it is time to dry the items and bake them. The last step in the process, and as with the first, this has been almost solely left to the runic arrays. Across the many centuries, the potters have discovered exactly how to build the most efficient drying rooms and precisely what arrays to use in order to dry their goods as quickly as possible, yet with as much care as possible. Pieter's drying rooms work in stages, slowly bringing the humidity of the rooms down until you reach the last one, which feels like the centre of a desert. It only takes a few hours to move a pot from the first to the last room, and this means that Pieter's apprentices can keep honing their craft, and keep practicing their art around the clock.

The baking process ceased being an art over a century ago. It has moved even beyond natural philosophy and become purely mathematical. The Mekadians have long since figured out how to use the runes to get their plates and bowls to just the right temperature to bake them through, and how to cool them down at just the right speed to prevent any cracks. You follow their steps, and any man can do it. That is precisely why Pieter does not do it; he hires staff to do that for him. What was once the most crucial part of pottery has become the most mundane, that even the master potters now give the task to their lowliest of apprentices, or perhaps even their maids to do.

MISSION 3

The Case of the
Ironically Innocent Priest

SYNOPSIS

This mission takes one and a half months after the second mission and it marks the three month anniversary of the Ruined Man's first murder. Since then he has killed nearly two dozen people but the press, the politicians, and wealthy only care about the eight rich and wealthy people he has killed, the last of which was only four days prior to this mission and serves as the catalyst for this mission.

This will be the first mission that directly ties into the meta-story of the Ruined Man as this mission is a consequence of his latest murder. That much the players will know from Scene 1. What they won't know is that the clue for this mission will be the most valuable clue in the entire campaign to putting a stop to the Ruined Man.

This mission can be said to be a combination of the first two missions. It once again takes place at a temple to steal something, albeit the Eternal Temple this time and not the Triarch Temple, and again the twist to this mission will not have a separate scene. The twist will, in fact, can be known as soon as Scene 2 when the PCs first go to the Temple. If the players have learnt anything from the last two missions, they will be rightly paranoid that the rug will be ripped out from underneath them as soon as they go to pounce and they should rightly be paranoid in this campaign, but luckily for them, there are no tricks in this mission.

Get in, do the job, get out.

That simple.

Hopefully.

Cross your fingers.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE MISSION PROPER IS AS FOLLOWS:

Four days ago the Ruined Man killed the Patriarch of a minor Trade Family of the Merchant League, loyal to the van Windburg family, and this caused a local gang to attempt

to take over their holdings. The van Windburg family sent in their mercenary force, the Golden Talons, to show the local gang who rules the roost. Unfortunately, by some miracle, the son of the duke that waged war on Alfresia thirty years ago was at the wrong place at the wrong time and was caught in the crossfire between the Talons and the local gang. If the duke finds out it was the Merchant League that did this, he could declare war again. The job for the PCs is to kidnap the priest at the Eternal Temple so they can lay the blame on him, as he has previously been implicated in pedophilia. Unfortunately for the PCs, there has been some hauntings at the Eternal Temple: ungodly cries and bloody footprints. The Archbishop has called in the Runic Knights to help secure the Temple against these malevolent spirits.

THE META-STORY IS AS FOLLOWS:

The Ruined Man is enjoying his grisly work, as is his wont, but his work grows ever more difficult. The more he does his work, the more the city becomes aware of him. The more the city becomes aware of him, the more careful and paranoid the citizens become. The more careful and paranoid the citizens become, the harder it is for the Ruined Man to travel unseen. Even with the help of the unwanted Seekers, he is finding it harder to track the people on his list. So for now he waits where he won't be found, in the lair he created for himself, the one place where the voices are not as loud. Coincidentally, one of the entrances that can lead to his lair is found near the Eternal Temple.

OVERVIEW

SCENE 1: THE BRIEF:

- Meet with Captain Alfons of the Golden Talons in The Oriental House.
- The PCs mission is to kidnap the Revered Jeremias, a Prodigalist Priest from the Eternal Temple.
- The Talons want to blame the death of a noble child on

him to avert war.

- The mission must be done tonight as the constables are investigating the murder.

SCENE 2: THE LEGWORK:

- One area of interest: The Eternal Temple.
 - » Grounds are completely clear of buildings or trees.
 - » Temple is divided into two. Half of it is above ground, half below.
 - » Ground floor is shaped like an array, with eight circular rooms like loci.
 - » All NPCs will be in the temple for the duration of the mission.
 - » Lower half of the Temple is connected to the sewers, providing a second entrance.
- The Clue is that the Runic Knights have been called in to deal with a “haunting”.

SCENE 3: THE MISSION:

- NPCs include Revered Jeremias; four other clerics and 2.5xPC numbers of Runic Knights (rounded up).
- Runic Knights will be the only NPCs awake and active during the night.

SCENE 4: THE DEBRIEF:

- Takes place in the van Windburg compound.
 - » The PCs will deal only with servants, not the Patriarch.
 - » As long as they brought the priest back, alive or dead, they will be rewarded.
 - » If the PCs fail to bring the priest back to the compound then war is looming and the League District is walled off for the remainder of the campaign.

SCENE 1: THE BRIEF

This scene takes place in The Oriental Tea House, an establishment that is part of the initiative by the Alfresian Merchant League and Gaelish

Oriental Uttosian Company to popularise the Uttosian leaf infused beverage on the east coast of Jytoh. As a fairly recent establishment it has aimed for a more personal and intimate experience than traditional Alfresian watering holes. There are no free standing tables and chairs, only booths, separated by one and a half metre tall screens.


When the PCs arrive, it will be just after nine o'clock in the evening, just after the dinner rush. The weak eastern wine served here at night has not yet caught on among the alcoholic Alfresians and the only people the PCs will find at The Oriental this time of night is a handful of Uttosian diplomats and merchants longing for a taste of home.

This mission is also the first where the Ruined Man will be called so by name in the mission, so even for those PCs and/or players unaware of what is going on, they will now. The name drop will come in the form of the opening narration where the PCs will be reading a Middelburg Herald newspaper. This is from the same newspaper publication as that found at the start and end of this book, so if the players have not yet read the first newspaper article, this would be the perfect time to have them read that one.

A key take home message for the players in this scene is that everyone is quite definitely now becoming paranoid, becoming less friendly and far more on edge. The Ruined Man is not giving up his unholy mission and the hope that the killing spree would have passed soon has crumbled. By this mission, there will already be a -6 penalty to all Social Skill Checks and a +8 bonus to the Encounter Rolls, meaning the PCs will have to start being very careful.

NARRATE OR PARAPHRASE THE FOLLOWING AS APPROPRIATE:

The past couple of months have taught you that it is always better to be a little bit earlier to any job opportunity than you rightfully should be, because then it does not matter how horrific the job will be, you at least have time for a beverage



and a few minutes of quiet. You contemplate your newfound philosophy over a cup of oriental tea as you peruse your surroundings. The Oriental Tea House is hardly a common meeting place for those in your line of work and especially not this late at night when you are sharing the Tea House with only a few foreign Uttosian diplomats.

Your mood isn't brightened when you open a copy of today's Middelburg Herald newspaper.

Depressing news. It has been like this for three months now, ever since the brutal murders began. The Middelburg Herald has had enough, it seemed, of calling the murderer "the perpetrator of the recent brutal murders" and have given him a moniker: The Ruined Man. Eloquent perhaps, if uninspired. The Herald says it is because of the depravity of the killings, but you believe it is perhaps a pun on the runes the Ruined Man leaves at each killing, painted in the victim's blood.

This Ruined Man had gone above and beyond his normal cruelty you see as you read further, and you shudder that you can think of such cruelty as "normal", but times are not what they were. The murder four nights ago was that of Patriarch Gabriël Kruger, leader of one of the lesser trade families in the Merchant League. If the newspaper could be believed, Kruger died several hours after he was killed. The constables found him still... well... alive is perhaps not the best word. He was dismembered while still alive and each body part was put on arrays to sustain them, keeping them alive. The blood seeping from the limbs kept the arrays working. It seemed he was conscious throughout the whole ordeal.

Your morbid reading is interrupted when your handler for this job sits down. Unkempt, unclean, and with a face only a mother could love; you don't have high hopes for tonight. What he says does not make you feel any better in the slightest.

"Evening, sirs/madams," he says. He sounds like a soldier. "My name is Captain Alfons Aarden of the Golden Talons." Definitely a soldier.

"I must apologise to you, sirs/madams, on all accounts here tonight. Not only for this... unusual... meeting locale or the time of the evening, but for the job I have for you. It is my fault you have to do this." The captain seems positively contrite. "I need you to kidnap a priest for me. Well, the Patriarch, the Third Duke, needs you to kidnap a priest, a specific priest in fact, the Revered Jeremias of the Eternal Temple. A child has died and we need to place the blame on someone. No one will think twice about blaming a pedophillic priest. I wish I could help you, I do, but I have been recalled back to Windburg and if I don't leave immediately I will miss my ship.

"So if you have any questions to ask, please do so now, none of us have much time."

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY CAPTAIN ALFONS AARDEN:

- The Golden Talons is the mercenary company of the van Windburg family. They are hired out to anyone with the money to pay for them, but also used for personal van Windburg matters.
- "The Third Duke" is the nickname of Patriarch Petrus van Windburg. No one outside the family remembers why he is called that.
- The murder of Patriarch Gabriël Kruger left his family with no direct heir and while they were squabbling for power, a local gang decided to take control of one of their warehouses.
- As they are allied to the van Windburg family, the Third Duke sent the Golden Talons, led by Captain Alfons Aarden, to sort it out while the Kruger family gained back its strength.
- The confrontation between the Talons and the gang resulted in a firefight.
- Unfortunately, the son of Duke Lukas of Zeerijk (the Wesfresian duke who declared war on Alfresia thirty years ago and gave the island a good run for its money) and

his chaperones were walking past at that exact moment.

- They thought someone had come to kill the child and started firing back. Both the gang and the Talons thought the chaperones were on the opposing side and fired back at them. They never saw the child.
- All the chaperones were killed as well the child. He was ripped in half by a Manstopper round.
- Aarden doesn't know the child's name.
- All of this happened this morning.
- If the Duke finds out it was the Merchant League that killed his only son and heir, then he will declare war on the League, and thus Alfresia. But if it was a priest, then he can only do so much against the faith before even his own people will stop following him.
- The Revered Jeremias is a resident priest at the Eternal Temple in Temple Park.
- He has been accused several times of pedophilia but no court has yet convicted him.
- He has been relegated to the Eternal Temple so that the Archbishop can keep an eye on him.
- He has to be kidnapped tonight. The constables are, for once, doing their job and looking very hard to find the killers. Time can't be wasted on this.
- Captain Alfons would prefer that they kidnap him in secret, so as to spin a better story, but as long as they take him, the van Windburg family can deflect blame.
- Any questions as to how the mission should be completed will be met with this wry reply: "Wait until he is asleep, I suppose."
- Any questions about money upfront, or any haggling, or if the PCs have finished asking questions will have Captain Alfons tell them he has the first half of the money for them. It is his own money as this is his job for them (equal

to +15 to Wealth Skill Checks). It is all the money he has to spare. He also gives them a letter (not sealed) and tells them to give that to the van Windburg family when they deliver the priest.

- » The letter asks the Third Duke to give the PCs the other half of the money after they have delivered the priest and take it out of Captain Alfons' earnings. It also tells the Third Duke what has happened (in as vague terms as possible should the note be intercepted) and tells him to blame it on the priest.
- » If the PCs ask if the note will actually get them the money, Captain Alfons will say that the Third Duke will honour the captain's word.

Once all the questions have been asked or answered or if they PCs are taking too long, the captain will look at his old beaten pocket watch and say: "I am sorry, sirs/madams, but if I do not leave now, I will not make the ship in time." He will come to shake hands with each of the PCs and then say: "I dearly hope you succeed tonight, and not for my sake, but for all Alfresia's sake. Do our country proud, sirs/madams. Tonight, you can avert a war."

And with that, Captain Alfons Aarden will stride purposefully out of the tea house, get on his horse and race to the docks. It is now up to the PCs to stop war coming to Middelburg once again. If the PCs are feeling particularly unpatriotic or apathetic and couldn't care less whether a war breaks out, head straight to Scene 4 and see the Aftermath of their decision.

If this scene has carried on for a long time, it may well be a good idea to go over the key points of information with the players so they don't forget something vital that their PCs would have remembered.

SCENE 2: THE LEGWORK

This mission's Scene 2 could be the shortest in this book as, like in Chapter 1, there is little preparation that needs doing. When the PCs reach the Eternal Temple and had a look around, they will most likely move in to kidnap the Revered Jeremias at the first opportunity. This is much more likely than in previous chapters as there is an implied time limit to the mission, it should be completed this night.

The PCs may want a variety of equipment that they feel will help them kidnap the priest, the most likely of which is a carriage or some other form of transport to hide the priest in while they carry him to the van Windburg compound. Whatever they may ask for, remember it is already late at night and so they will find it more difficult to acquire what they need. They may have to travel further for it and travelling is quickly becoming a dangerous thing in Middelburg. It would not be out of the question to suggest to the players that they might as well steal what they need, it could just be safer than travelling across the city in the middle of the night.

THE ETERNAL TEMPLE OF THE MOST BLESSED RUNEGIVER AND HIS PRODIGAL CHILDREN

The Eternal Temple is the preeminent Prodigalist temple in Alfresia. The Alfresian High Priest is a nomadic title that demands the High Priest continually travel to visit all the Prodigalist temples and the faithful in Alfresia. Thus the Eternal Temple is the home of the Archbishop of Alfresia, a much older title from when the High Priest of the old kingdom of Fresland still governed the faithful of Alfresia.

While mainstream Prodigalism does accept Bür's Heavenly Progenitors as gods and do worship them as such, the politics between Prodigalism and Progenitorism in Alfresia has

meant that the Eternal Temple has focussed much more on the Son than the Father and Mother. Both Prodigalism and Progenitorism vie for the influence and power in the Alfresian political circles to enact the changes that would benefit them and the believers of their respective faiths, thus neither faith wishes to appear too similar to the other, believing their differences will bring them greater power. This is more pronounced in Prodigalism as they control only one seat in the Triarchy, while the Progenitorists control two.

An enormous structure, the Temple is built as much to glorify the runes and arrays as they glorify Bür. The Temple is circular, as most temples of the dominant three faiths are, but the Eternal Temple is distinct in that it doesn't have a domed roof per se, it is a dome, at least from what one can see when looking at it above ground. A hundred metres across and fifty metres high, the Eternal Temple seems a perfect hemisphere, but it is in fact a perfect sphere. Half of it rests below the surface. Another unique architectural aspect of the Temple is that none of the walls inside the Temple reach the ceiling. This is because the floor, which sits at ground level, is able to turn on its centre axis to face in any direction. This is done through machinery which is set into the three metre thick outer walls. This is also the reason why the undercroft is empty as it is a perfect mirror image of the floor above in regards to the walls.

There are eight inner rooms in the Temple, although privacy is not an option without a ceiling. These are the Archbishop's Residence, the Rectory, the Sacristy, the Mother's Shrine, the Father's Shrine, the Sanctuary, the Narthex and the Oak Room. The Centrum of the Temple, so called because the floor plans intentionally resemble a runic array, is entirely open and there are no hallways or passages in the Temple. If the PCs are not careful, they will be easily spotted. However, all the doors of the eight Loci point to the Centrum which can give the PCs some maneuverability in knowing where the NPCs will have to come from.

The western Locus, and the only one with two doorways, is the Narthex or foyer. An offshoot of the old Tolian word for penitence, the Narthex is a tradition kept over from when the Prodigalists were merely a sect of Progenitorism. The only passageway into the Temple is at the western end (which is always kept open), and so any worshipper must pass through the Narthex to attend the service. The penitents and those not judged worthy of attending the service proper would not be allowed passed the Narthex, having their own service at the small shrine in the foyer. While that rule has long been abolished among the Northern Prodigalists, such traditions are hard to break.

At the eastern end lies the Sanctuary Locus. Not a room as such, it has no walls but is rather raised one metre above the main floor. It is here where the priests preside over the services and ceremonies of the Temple and it can rotate so that each of its eight altars can face the congregation. The eight altars (used for different feast days and types of services) are more valuable than anything the PCs would have seen thus far in their lives. While the relics and treasures of the Temple are kept in the Sacristy, the altars themselves are covered in used orichalchum (each altar having different colored orichalchum) and also virgin orichalchum. These would be difficult to remove from the altars, but if the PCs can do so, they will be very wealthy people.


On either side of the Sanctuary is the Archbishop's Residence (in the north) and the Sacristy (in the south). As with other temples, the Sacristy stores everything that is needed for the services and ceremonies of the church including the relics, treasures and other valuables that the PCs may wish to steal along with more mundane items like the vestments and chairs. The Archbishop's Residence is divided into only a Bedroom, Lavatory and an Open Room which serves as kitchen, dining room, sitting room, and study. There is one thing of note, and that is the large built in wardrobe in the Open Room and

this contains the levers and knobs to control the rotation of the Temple floor. How it works and is operated is far beyond the scope of this mission and no lever or knob will respond to the PCs' touch, except for one labeled Undercroft which will open a trapdoor inside the wardrobe (not underneath where the person operating the lever is) and has a ladder that allows entry into the upside down world beneath the Temple floor.

The Northern and Southern Loci are the Shrines to the Mother and Father respectively. The divinity of the Heavenly Progenitors are dogma of mainstream Prodigalism, but in the Eternal Temple, direct worship to them have been relegated to these shrines in order to differentiate Prodigalism and Progenitorism. Each shrine is identical in architecture, but not adornment. Each shrine contains fixed pews, a lectern and an altar. A screened off partition at the rear of each shrine serves as their sacristy where the vestments and holy objects for each shrine can be found.

The Loci on either side of the Narthex are the Rectory (in the south) and the Oak Room (in the north). The Oak Room is an empty room, save for one basin, paneled in rich dark oak, where the congregation can meet after service to exchange pleasantries. Wedding receptions and other functions not strictly religious are also held in there, but during the time that this mission takes place, the Oak Room has been given to the Runic Knights to be used as their barracks. Bedrolls and military equipment is all the PCs will find here; the Runic Knights live a spartan life.

The Rectory is the residence for the four resident priests. It has four Bedrooms, a Lavatory, and a Communal Room that serves as kitchen/study/dining/sitting room. The Revered Jeremias' room is the northernmost one. There will not be much for the PCs to steal in the Rectory. While "Revered Priest of the Eternal Temple" is as vaunted a title as a priest could hope for, the Archbishop is a strict man who believes that excess is a sin and enforces that sentiment on his presiding priests.



Note that there are no other entries into the Temple other than the western door at ground level. There are no windows nor an oculus or any other opening in the dome. All lighting inside is done by arrays and candles.

THE TEMPLE GROUNDS

For such a grand temple, the grounds are very spartan. There are no external buildings other than four light towers that are connected to the Temple Dome by bridges. These serve no purpose other than decorative. The towers also do not have any stairs leading to the top, there is only a first story where an array is carved that Sends energy to the array at the top of the tower which produces light when night falls.

On top of the light arrays on each tower is a clockwork machine with eight coloured lenses, one for each colour of the rainbow and white. At twenty minute intervals, a new lens would move over the light array, changing the colour of the light produced. The four towers do not produce the same colour of light at the same time, but each tower is “two steps” behind the following tower. Each tower does, however, follow the same sequence of colours.

What the Temple grounds lack in buildings or even trees it makes up for in elegant geometrical water displays. The black of the dome absorbs a lot of heat during the day (the builder of the Temple knew a potent source of energy when he saw one) and so created hundreds of arrays across the dome that all just created water at a sedate pace, and carved small channels into the dome to funnel the water to the ground. These small channels are almost indistinguishable from the great relief sculptures on the dome when viewed at a distance and in many instances these channels form part of the relief sculptures. The sound of the flowing water is said to be like the whispers of a thousand saints and is quite meditative.

When these channels find their way to the ground, they continue along the land, forming geometric patterns (mostly resembling runic arrays) before they enter small sewer grates and

join the sewers beneath the city. These small canals also function to carry water from the surrounding streets into the sewers as well, a small service of the temple. The sewers move around the submerged portion of the Temple with great care, if one accidentally burst too close to the Temple wall then the entire Undercroft would flood.

You can have the PCs do an Intuition Skill Check when coming across the canals and grates, and if they pass you can inform them that the water will flow in the sewers under the Temple Grounds. A small help for a difficult mission.

THE SEWERS

It is entirely possible that the players will want to use the sewers to get into the Temple unseen once they learn of them. There are no reliable maps for the sewers as they are changed every few years to the whims of new city councilmen and the contractors tasked with their maintenance. Digging sewers is an incredibly simple task with the runes (the reason perhaps why the PCs would want to use the sewers) and the maintenance contractors rarely document any changes they make to the layout. No sewer is within five metres of the Temple's underground walls and this is something the PCs would easily be able to discover.

Because of this, there is no map provided for the sewers. If the PCs decide to venture forth into the deep, have them walk blindly through all the twists and turns and forking tunnels. There are also multiple levels of sewers as they have been built and rebuilt on top of each other over the years. You could use Perception and Investigate Skill Checks to test the navigation skills of the PCs. Eventually, or rather hopefully, they will find their way close to the Temple walls. After three successful Investigate Skill Checks, have them enter a tunnel that seems to be much newer than the rest and have it enter directly into the Undercroft of the Temple. Clearly this tunnel is not supposed to be here, but it is a part of the Clue.

By going into the sewers, the PCs will be guaranteed to discover the Clue and in much greater detail than by eavesdropping on the NPCs in the Temple. As they discover the Clue in the sewers, have the clues lead them both to and away from the Temple, showing that the Ruined Man has been moving all around the Temple. Never have the clues lead to any specific point.

OTHER INFORMATION THAT CAN BE OBTAINED WITHIN AND AROUND THE ETERNAL TEMPLE:


- The Revered Jeremias is a priest from the town of Tweespruit, up the Tenne River from Middelburg.
- In Tweespruit there were several accusations made against him of pedophillia and molestation. None could be proven in court, but the Archbishop moved him to a temple in Middelburg.
- The allegations followed him and more were added at his new Temple, so the Archbishop moved him to the Eternal Temple a few weeks ago so that he could keep an eye on Jeremias to ensure nothing happens again.
- The Twist to this mission is that the Runic Knights have, unexpectedly, taken up residence in the Eternal Temple, keeping their quarters in the Oak Room.
- The Runic Knights have been there for the past four days and thus it is possible that the PCs could have heard about it.
 - » A successful Logic or Intuition Skill Check will reveal this to the PCs. Difficulty is up to your discretion based on the knowledge the PCs would have.
- All groundskeeping staff and cleaning servants have been dismissed for the time being.
- Temple services have also been suspended for the time being, except the weekly service which is in two days.
- The reason for all this is The Clue, which the PCs will be able to glean via

eavesdropping on NPC conversations and by experiences in and around the Temple.

THE CLUE

The reason that the Runic Knights have been called into the Eternal Temple, the reason that the daily services have been suspended and the reason that groundskeepers and cleaning staff have been dismissed is because there has been hauntings at the Temple. Frightful spirits and phantoms have descended on the Temple to torment the souls of the living. Shrieks and howls can be heard at all times of the day, but especially at night, echoing through the Temple and coming up through the land on the Temple grounds. "The dead have been disturbed", they say. Trails of blood and bloody footprints have been found on the Temple grounds and had once even turned the canals red. The worst, however, are the bits and parts of carcasses that have been found in and around the Temple. Most of the time these have been from small animals such as rats, cats and dogs, but once the Archbishop found half a human skull on the doorstep to the Temple. With the climate of the city as it is, the Archbishop will take no chances that these otherworldly creatures are connected to the murders and have called in the Runic Knights to protect the Temple.

The truth of the matter is that there are no phantoms or spirits or even spectres tormenting the poor priests and parishioners. The truth is far worse. It is simply the Ruined Man. He has made his home somewhere below the city near the Eternal Temple. The plentiful entrances on the Temple grounds added to the dozens of renovations that have been done on the sewers have made the world below the Temple a veritable rat's nest where one can easily get lost in. A perfect fit for the insane Ruined Man. He has carved his own little lair somewhere in the sewers using the runes and is fairly confident he will never be found. He has even made new passages and sewers so that he will always find his way. Some of these passages have gone



through the Temple walls into the Undercroft which has slowly been filling with water (only four and a half metres deep thus far).

The screams and howls the priests hear are the incoherent and insane ramblings of the Ruined Man and his howls of anguish. The trails of blood and bloody footprints are him on his way back from yet another successful kill and the carcasses that are left over are those kills. Most times he only hunts for food and there are precious little animals in Middelburg that are not rats, cats and dogs, but at other times he brings trophies back from his kills but in his madness forgets about them and drops them on his journey back to his lair.

The PCs can gain this clue by a few different means but it will be readily apparent once they are in the Temple. Most likely, the PCs' first encounter with the clue won't be in the sewers, but on the grounds on the Temple. While it is a dark night, between the everpresent glow of the city's lights, and the four towers' lights surrounding the temple, there is enough light to navigate the grounds. As such, you can have the players roll Perception +0 Skill Checks at various times to determine if they see the bloody footprints, bloody trails or carcasses found around the grounds. If the players roll under a 10 when determining if they can see a carcass, have the body part be from a human. If the Check is successful, an Investigate +10 Skill Check will lead the players to the grates leading down to the sewers.

If the PCs venture into the sewers they will experience the clues at a much higher intensity. They will hear the howls and screams echo throughout the sewers, although even successful Investigate Skill Checks will only lead them to dead ends. They will find more blood trails, footprints, and carcasses down in the sewers, seemingly thrown about at random..

Inside the Temple itself, the screams and howls will be muted and ephemeral as they echo through the sewers into the cavernous temple, sounding exactly like the spirits the priests believe them to be. The PCs will also be able to

eavesdrop on the NPCs discussing the spirits and blood trails and carcasses found on the temple grounds.

SCENE 3: THE MISSION

After the PCs arrive at the Temple, there will be no twists or surprises to throw a spanner in the works. It is just between the PCs and the NPCs that are already there to decide how the night turns out. As the Temple has already been described, below are descriptions of the NPCs and their behaviours.

The skills and equipment for the NPCs can be found at the end of the Chapter.

ARCHBISHOP SHEA HUGHES

- A Gael, Archbishop Hughes has been in Alfresia for three decades. He accepted the post of Archbishop after the previous one died in the war with Duke Lukas of Zeerijk.
- He is not popular with the older generations of clergy and parishioners as they remember how Alfresian bishops and priests were passed over in favour of this foreigner.
- A quietly devout man, Hughes does not believe in overt and grand displays of faith.
- Quiet and seen as withdrawn, Hughes is quite the orator when the mood strikes him and his homilies and sermons are well liked and often remembered.
- Harsh and strict with his priests and servants, and sometimes parishioners, Hughes sees far too much sin in the world that can be prevented with only a good few virtues. Because of this, he lives a conservative life. There is nothing of excess in his life.
- If he sees or hears anything suspicious at night or day that is not the howling and shrieking of phantoms that he is used

to, he will report it to the Runic Knights but will also investigate it himself. He is the lord of the manor, as it were.

- He will first try and talk with any intruder in an attempt to calm the situation. He can be persuaded to give the Revered Jeremias to the PCs, but it will require the PCs to succeed on a fair few difficult Social Skill Checks.
- He has no combat experience or weapons but he will defend the Temple if he must.

ATTENDANT PRIESTS

- Other than Jeremias there are three attendant priests: Revered Johannes, Revered Jakobus and Revered Gerhardus.
- Other than being human and all the sins that entails, they are good men who serve their gods in the best ways that they can.
- In services they would assist the Archbishop or preside over the two Progenitor Shrines.
- As services have been suspended, they have been given the duty of cleaning the Temple. This is how the PCs will find them if they attempt to kidnap Jeremias during the day.
- At night, they are fast asleep after they have seen to the Archbishop.
- If they see or hear anything suspicious other than the ghostly howls and shrieks, they will report it to the Runic Knights.
- They are nonviolent men but they will defend themselves if attacked.

THE REVERED JEREMIAS

- A very arrogant man who has been accused so often but never punished that he believes he is above the law.
- He is as ambitious as he is arrogant and is using his posting at the Eternal Temple to pave his way to becoming

Archbishop.

- Because of this, he takes every opportunity to talk with the Runic Knights, hoping to learn anything he can to use to his advantage, and attempt to ingratiate himself with the Knight Commander.
- If the PCs wait out the night and attempt to kidnap him in the day, they will find him spending most of his time conversing with the knights.
- If the PCs attempt to kidnap him during the night, he will be asleep for most of the night, but when nature calls and he must get up, he will take the time for a chat with the closest knight before returning to bed. This will happen twice during the night.
- He is not a very active man, and was quite a large man, but has lost weight under the watchful eyes of the Archbishop. He is still, however, overweight and unfit.
- He will use his social skills to overcome potentially violent problems. If he sees or hears the PCs, he will not alert the Runic Knights (unless he believes his life is in danger), wanting to be the hero himself.

THE KNIGHTS OF THE ETERNAL RUNES

- The numbers of Runic Knights are two and a half times the PC numbers, rounded up.
- At any time, only half the knights will be on duty.
- Shift changes occur every six hours: at 3 and 9 o'clock.
- During the day the knights who are not on duty will be in the Oak Room, cleaning and checking their equipment, eating, resting, chatting and meditating. At night they will be sleeping.
- The knights that are on duty will be patrolling the inside of the Temple. They will spread themselves out evenly and walk along the dome wall and along the



edge of the centrum.

- As the shift change occurs, the knights who are about to go on duty will move outside the Temple and do one circuit of the grounds to ensure nothing has happened to it before going to rest.
- Since they have been here, the knights have grown used to the otherworldly sounds that haunt the Temple and no longer investigate each case. They will however investigate anything that does not sound like the phantoms.
- When they investigate, they will do so in pairs, making sure to always leave at least one pair on patrol so no one sneaks past them. If they do not have the numbers for this, then their safety is more important.
- The knights are sworn to protect the Prodigalist faith and all her believers and if the PCs are successful in kidnapping Jeremias, they will not stop in their pursuit of the PCs until the Knights have lost the trail.
- The colours of the knights are red and purple, trimmed in white and gold.
- The Knights on duty all wear full plate armour over their entire body (all Hit Locations), which counts as Strong Armour. This means that every action that includes agility (such as fighting, dodging, running) will incur a -15 penalty to that Skill Check.

There is of course a rare chance that the PCs will walk brazenly into the Temple, state their intentions honestly and simply ask the Archbishop if they could have the Revered Jeremias. After all, once they hear of his alleged pedophillic past they may assume, and rightly so, that there is no love lost between him and the Archbishop.

This is a very risky plan as they will have to pass quite difficult Social Skill Checks (Skill and Difficulty Modifier based on the situation and context) for him to even consider it. It is possible, but remember that the Archbishop has a holy

duty of care to his priests. He is sworn to protect him, but if he hears the full story of the child's death, he will have to weigh the life of one man against the whole nation.

Should any Runic Knight or priest be harmed in the Temple, there is very little chance the Archbishop will ever agree to let the Revered Jeremias go. If a knight or priest is killed, he may not even consider it, nor will he be keen to even listen to the PCs.

One aspect of this mission that is different to the prior missions is that the constables will not be alerted by gun fire if it is inside the Temple. The Temple is incredibly well sound proofed and noise barely escapes, even though the western door is open. Outside the Temple, as long as the PCs are in Temple Park, constables will take more than an hour to arrive. Temple Park is little more than Temples, shrines, parks and graveyards. It has no constabulary on hand.

While Captain Alfons did tell the PCs that the priest must be kidnapped tonight, they may still wish to wait for a better or different time, or the PCs may have kidnapped the priest but they decide to wait out the time until the pursuit dies down. If the sun has risen and they have not yet brought the priest to the van Windburg compound, roll a d100. If 10 or below, the constables have found the witness they need to pin the blame on the trade family. If they have not completed the mission by noon, the constables find the witness on a roll of 30 or less. If still not done by dusk, then on a roll of 70 or less the constables have found their man. If the priest hasn't been brought to the van Windburg compound by midnight the day after Captain Alfons gives the PCs the mission, then the constables have most definitely found the true culprit.

SCENE 4: THE DEBRIEF

This mission can go either extremely well for both Alfresia and the PCs or absolutely dismal for both.

IF ALL THE PCs DIED

Once the last PC died, if they are still at the Temple, tell the players how the howling and shrieking has ceased and has transformed in manic laughter that seems to come from the very bowels of hell itself. Proceed then directly to the mission failure section of the aftermath.

FOR THOSE PCs THAT WERE ARRESTED:

They will be taken to the constabulary gaols, stripped down naked and thrown into the cells where they will in all likelihood be forgotten. The constables have more than enough proof of the criminality of the PCs and the PCs should know that as this is a Golden Talons mission, the van Windburg family will in all honesty not have any knowledge of them and the Golden Talons will disavow any knowledge of them. At the very least, they will be in gaol for the remainder of the campaign. This will count as a mission failure for the aftermath.

IF THE PCs SUCCEEDED IN DELIVERING THE PRIEST TO THE VAN WINDBURG COMPOUND

The PCs will be allowed inside the compound, no questions asked as soon as they show the letter to the guards on duty. Once inside, they will be safe. If they have been chased by either the constables or the Runic Knights, as soon as they are inside the compound, the van Windburg family will protect them.

They will not be allowed inside the mansion itself but will be told to wait outside in the compound. A servant will take their letter to the Patriarch and he will send another letter down with the other half of the payment (another +15

to Wealth Skill Checks) along with orders to the servants to bring the priest to him. The letter will be from the Third Duke himself, thanking the PCs for helping out Captain Alfons and for preventing another war in Alfresia. The payment and orders will remain the same even if the priest is dead. The thank you letter will also not be sent.

If the PCs were in imminent danger before being let into the compound, the Patriarch will allow them to rest in the servants' quarters until the heat has died down. If the priest was dead on arrival or nearly so, however, the PCs will be turned away immediately after receiving payment.

AFTERMATH

IF THE MISSION FAILED FOR ANY REASON

This can include the PCs refusing to do the mission, dying while attempting to do the mission, waiting too long to do the mission, or being too late in bringing the priest back to the van Windburg compound.

If the mission fails, the constables find a witness that identified the Golden Talon symbol on the men that killed the duke's son. This leads their investigation, predictably, to the van Windburg family, finding enough clues on the way that when Duke Lukas hears about this, he is convinced the Merchant League assassinated his son. Political relations between Alfresia and the duchy of Zeerijk grow hostile and both sides are preparing for war. The king of Wesfresland and the president of Alfresia attempts to smooth things over, but they are merely delaying the inevitable.

The array upon which the League District sits is activated for the first time in three decades and the Merchant League wall themselves in. Only those on bona fide business with the League are allowed in, and travel papers are meticulously checked. Prices all over Middelburg soar, as the League focus only on themselves. The League



will not pull the walls down for the remainder of the campaign.

On top of any other modifier, a -25 penalty is placed on any Wealth Skill Check the PCs attempt to do for the rest of the campaign. This is a permanent penalty.

IF THE MISSION WAS A SUCCESS

The PCs have averted war. They should be heroes, but their names will never be known to the average citizen. At least they are in the Third Duke's good books. They should relax, have a pint and think all about how great it is that they aren't currently at war.

It's not all fun and games, though. The Runic Knights will have their vengeance. The PCs will have to tread carefully not to be found as not even the Merchant League will get in the way of the Prodigalist faith over a few footmen.

The Archbishop, if he survived, will also put out his contacts to find the PCs. This is not for vengeance or any nefarious purpose, but for reconciliation and redemption. Hughes is not stupid. He knows what Jeremias is, he just can't do anything about it. He is a firm believer in innocent until proven guilty. He will shed no tear for Jeremias but he wishes to offer the PCs a job or two so they can work off the damage they caused to the Temple, the Runic Knights and the priests' morale.

This would be an excellent time for a side mission to close off this sort of loose ends. An Archbishop as a contact will never be a disadvantage, and not having to look over your shoulder for Runic Knights is a prize all on its own. On the other hand, you could have the Runic Knights make an appearance in the next mission during an Encounter Roll. Have (1x the PC numbers) Runic Knights finally track them down.

NON-PLAYABLE CHARACTERS

CONSTABLES

Athletics	40	Intuition	30
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	50
Burglary	40	Logic	30
Constitution	40	Luck	30
Deceive	30	Might	40
Diplomacy	30	Perception	40
Drive	50	Shoot	50
Fight	40	Stealth	30
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	30
Intimidate	50	Will	40

RUNIC ARRAYS

- › Middelburg Standard Defensive array on Cuirass, Helm and Quilted Jacket.
- › Constable's Friend Offensive array on Pistol rounds and Billy Club.

EQUIPMENT

- › Bronze Cuirass and Open Faced Helm (Strong Armour) covering Torso and Head Hit Locations.
- › Quilted Jacket (Soft Armour) covering Torso, Arms and Legs Hit Locations.
- › Bronze Billy Club (Medium melee weapon).
- › Steel and Wood Pistol with lead rounds (Medium ranged weapon).

ATTENDANT PRIESTS

Athletics	30	Intuition	50
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	40
Burglary	30	Logic	40
Constitution	30	Luck	40
Deceive	30	Might	30
Diplomacy	50	Perception	40
Drive	30	Shoot	30
Fight	30	Stealth	30
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	40
Intimidate	40	Will	50

RUNIC ARRAYS

- › Middelburg Standard Defensive array on all Hit Locations.

EQUIPMENT

- › Simple clothing on all Hit Locations.

KNIGHTS OF THE ETERNAL RUNES

Athletics	50	Intuition	30
Broad-Craft	35	Investigate	30
Burglary	10	Logic	30
Constitution	55	Luck	65
Deceive	10	Might	50
Diplomacy	30	Perception	50
Drive	40	Shoot	40
Fight	50	Stealth	10
Fine-Craft	35	Wealth	10
Intimidate	40	Will	50

SPECIALISATIONS:

- › Fight specialisation:
 - » Arming Sword and Parrying Dagger-Skill Level 80.
- › Logic specialisation:
 - » Prodigalism - Skill Level 65.

RUNIC ARRAYS

- › Middelburg Standard Defensive array on all Hit Locations, and on Bronze Shield.
- › Bloodhound Offensive array on Arming Sword.

EQUIPMENT

- › Steel Plate Armour (Strong Armour) on all Hit Locations.
- › Steel Arming Sword (Medium melee weapon).
- › Bronze Parrying Dagger (Light melee weapon).

ARCHBISHOP SHAE HUGHES

EXALTED NPC

Athletics	20	Intuition	50
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	40
Burglary	15	Logic	50
Constitution	20	Luck	60
Deceive	15	Might	20
Diplomacy	60	Perception	40
Drive	25	Shoot	25
Fight	35	Stealth	15
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	40
Intimidate	30	Will	70

SPECIALISATIONS:

- › Logic specialisation:
 - » Prodigalism - Skill Level 95.
- › Intimidate specialisation:
 - » The Wrath of Bür - Skill Level 75.

RUNIC ARRAYS

- › Middelburg Standard Defensive array on all Hit Locations.

EQUIPMENT

- › Simple clothing on all Hit Locations.

REVERED JEREMIAS

Athletics	20	Intuition	50
Broad-Craft	15	Investigate	40
Burglary	50	Logic	50
Constitution	25	Luck	40
Deceive	40	Might	20
Diplomacy	55	Perception	40
Drive	30	Shoot	20
Fight	20	Stealth	40
Fine-Craft	15	Wealth	40
Intimidate	35	Will	30

SPECIALISATIONS:

- › Deceive specialisation:
 - » Building trust - Skill Level 80.
- › Intimidate specialisation:
 - » Damned in the afterlife - Skill Level 70.

RUNIC ARRAYS

- › Middelburg Standard Defensive array on all Hit Locations.

EQUIPMENT

- › Simple clothing on all Hit Locations.

CAPTAIN ALFONS AARDEN

EXALTED NPC

Athletics	40	Intuition	30
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	30
Burglary	25	Logic	45
Constitution	40	Luck	50
Deceive	20	Might	40
Diplomacy	35	Perception	45
Drive	40	Shoot	40
Fight	50	Stealth	40
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	5
Intimidate	40	Will	40

RUNIC ARRAYS

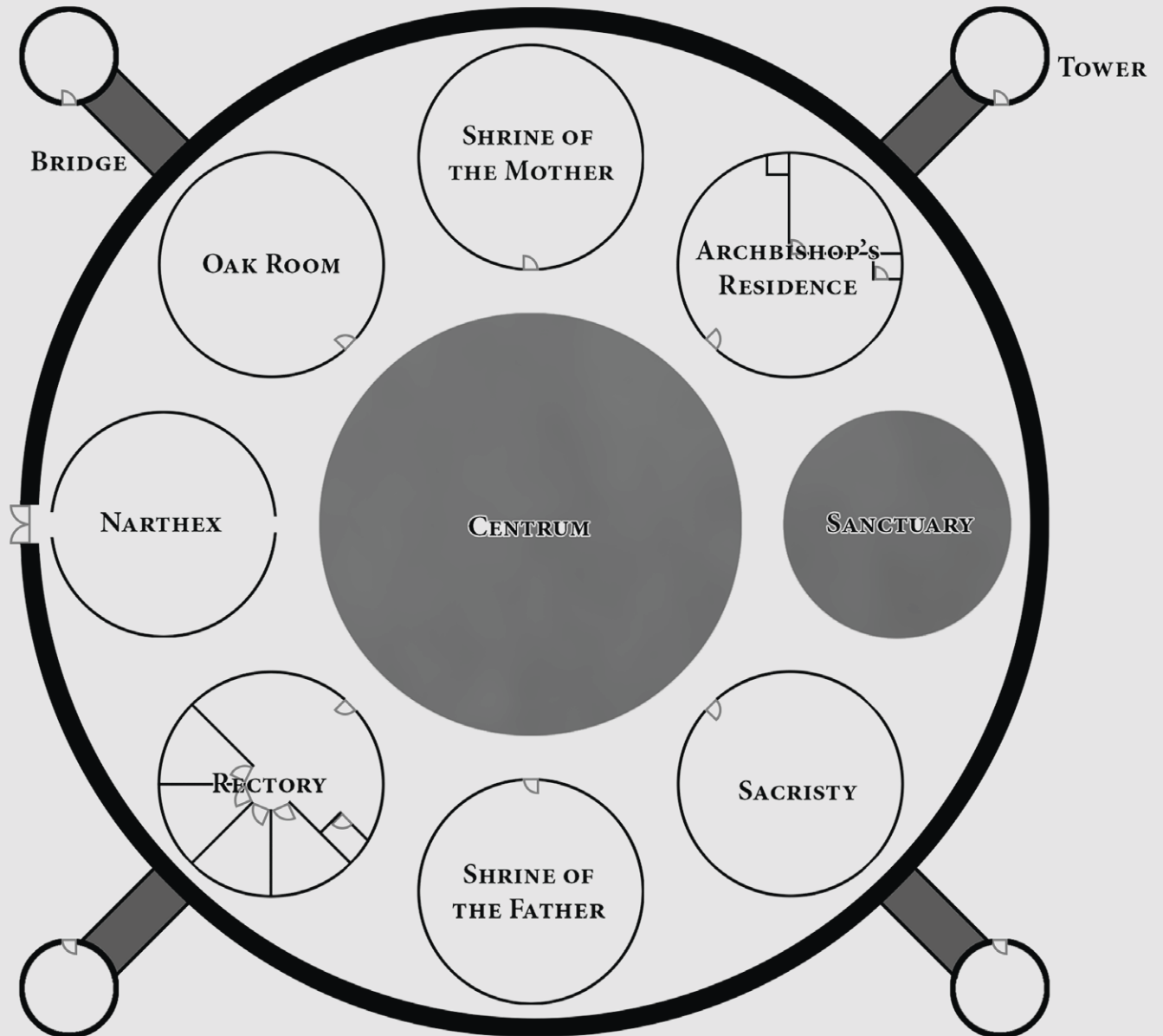
- › Middelburg Standard Defensive array on Torso, Arms, and Legs Hit Locations.
- › Constable's Friend Offensive array on Steel Small Sword.
- › Manstopper Offensive array on Pistol rounds.

EQUIPMENT

- › Bronze Cuirass (Strong Armour) on Torso Hit Location.
- › Simple clothing on Torso, Arms and Legs Hit Locations.
- › Steel Small Sword (Medium melee weapon).
- › Steel and Wood Pistol with lead rounds (Medium ranged weapon).

THE ETERNAL TEMPLE

TOP VIEW

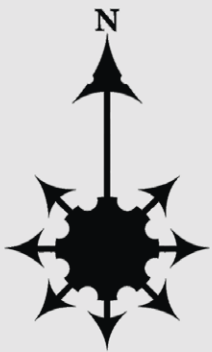
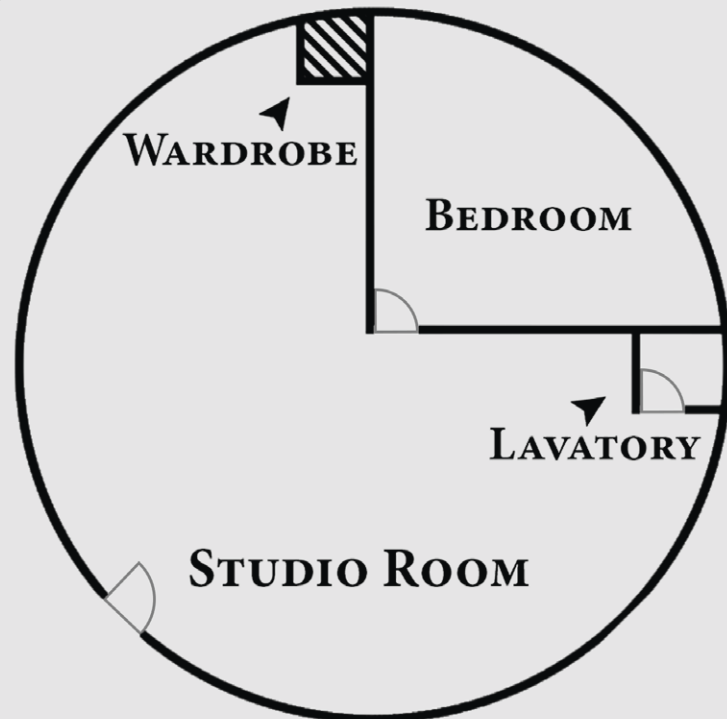
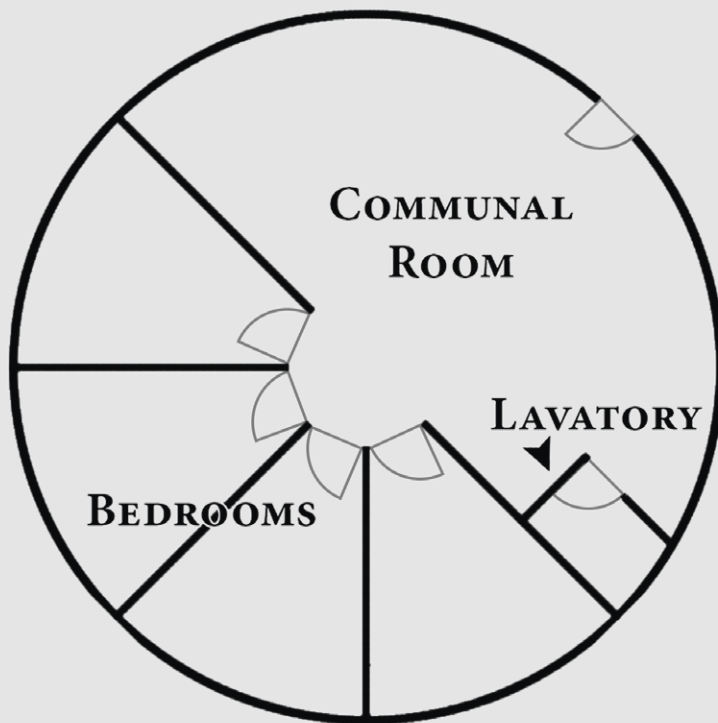


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THE ETERNAL TEMPLE

CLERGY APARTMENTS

RECTORY

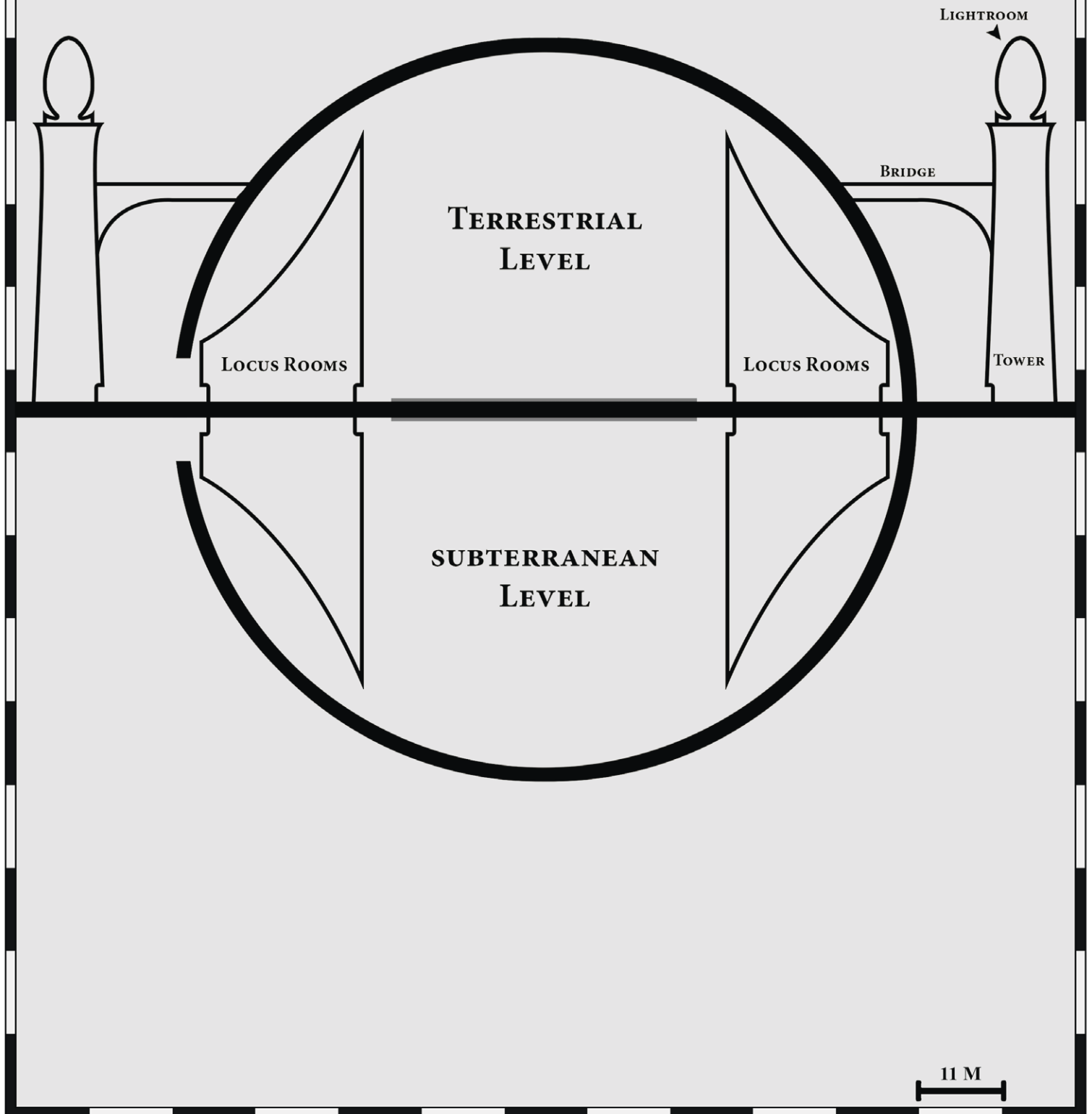


ARCHBISHOP'S RESIDENCE

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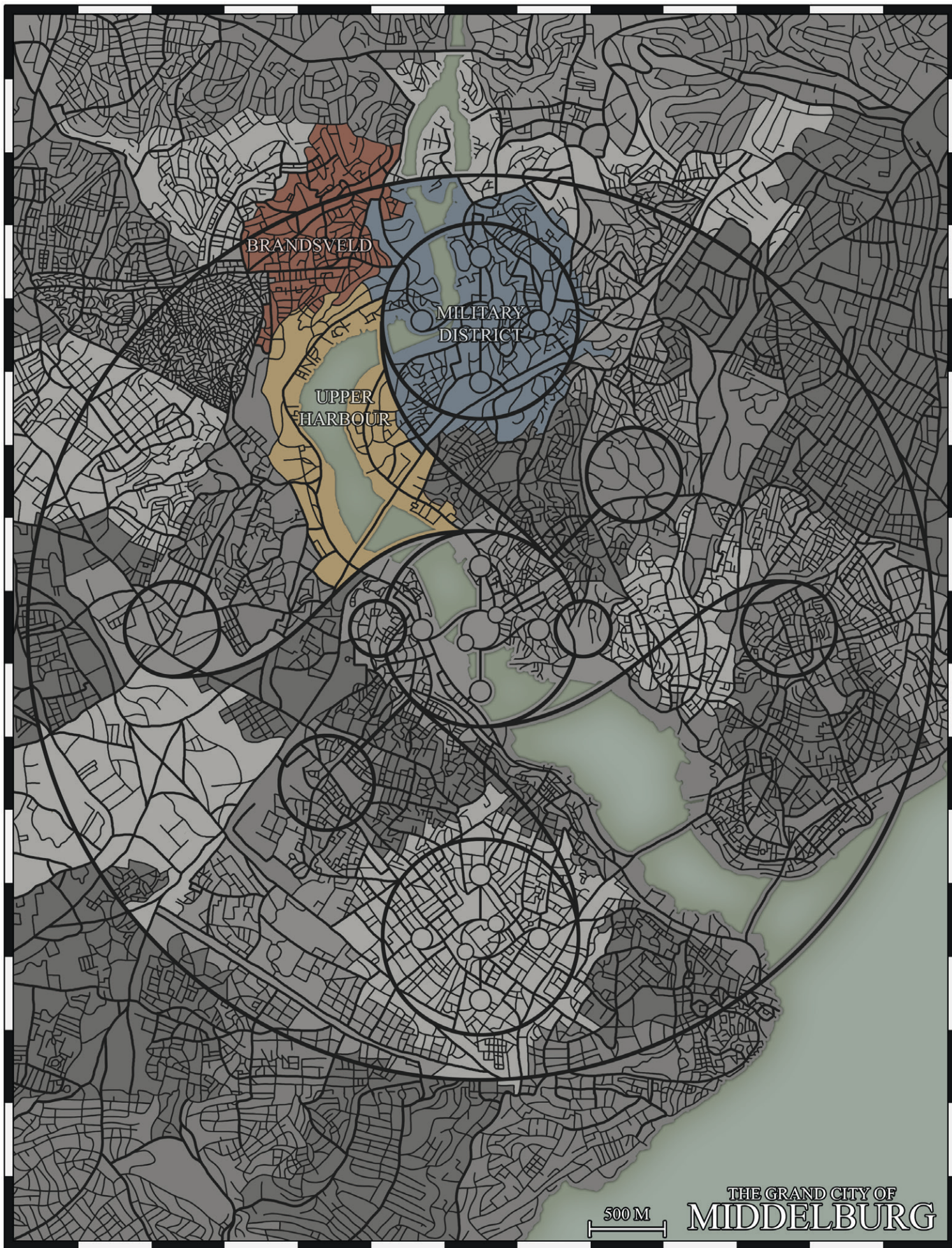
THE ETERNAL TEMPLE

SIDE VIEW



CHAPTER 4

I have seen those dark
times here today



BRANDSVELD

MILITARY
DISTRICT

UPPER
HARBOUR

500 M

THE GRAND CITY OF
MIDDELBURG

MILITARY DISTRICT



MILITARY DISTRICT



The mind, heart, and soul of the Alfresian military is located in this district. Decisions that are made here send thousands to their deaths. Orders sent from here launch hundreds of warships. The fates of untold lives and even Alfresia as a whole are discussed, dissected, and decided upon here. The whole of the Alfresian military is directed from this small enclave and as such it is the most fortified piece of real estate on the island.

As grand as the Military District has become, where it sits in Middelburg is a quite recent acquisition. For most of its existence, it existed in what is today the League District, a much more practical area. The League District is the closest grand locus to the ocean and thus better suited to command and direct naval forces while also serving as the first line of defence against an attack from the sea. For over a millennium, the old Military District carried out this duty with distinction, but Markus Vi changed this like he did with so much else of modern Alfresia.

“Hold Middelburg and you hold Alfresia.” Every ruler, warlord, and conqueror knew this from the moment Bür came down from the heavens and created the Grand City Array. Middelburg has always been the most important city in Alfresia even before the nation was ever

united, and since it was, it's been the capital. One can conquer the rest of the island, but without taking Middelburg, it would be an empty win. Middelburg alone is worth more than the rest of the island combined, even though the rest of Alfresia would patriotically deny this. As with those that came before him, Markus VI: the Incendiary, knew this.

When he came to Alfresia, he came with flame and sword to put down the rebellion. More than three quarters of his forces were sent to Middelburg. The rest was split between the other towns and cities, not to conquer them, but merely to prevent aid from being sent to Middelburg. The War of Independence would be won or lost in this metropolis, and the mad king did everything he could to ensure victory.

He never wanted a siege, and the fact that the war became a three year siege speaks more of the heroism and valiance of the rebels than of the mad king's eventual defeat. Markus VI was a consummate military commander and adapted quickly to everything the rebels threw at him. Slowly but surely, he made his way further into Middelburg over the three years and if not for Emperor Kibrian's attack on western Fresland, the Incendiary may well have made it to the Palace.

Of all the objectives and goals of the royal forces in Middelburg, none were more important than the old Military District. The king's plan was to capture the district and use it as a forward base in the continuing war, but it was not meant to be. The fiercest and costliest battle in the entire war was fought here, and in the end, the royal forces were pushed back, as was the Incendiary's wont. He burned what he couldn't have. In their retreat back to the docks, the royal forces utterly destroyed the Military District. It would not be the last time he razed part of the city as Nieuton would feel his spite before the war was over.

When the war was finished and all was said and done, major changes had to be made to Middleburg. To pay for the costs, the now razed Military District was sold to the newly formed Merchant League. Its position close to the docks would be invaluable for the Patriarchs as it was to the generals and admirals of old. The new Military District was thus moved to the north of the Grand City Array to what was once called the Inquisition's District.

The Inquisition's District was exactly that: home to the Grand Inquisitor and his inquisition. The Inquisition had near absolute control over the policing of Alfresia. It controlled both the intelligence forces and the constabulary. It was the king's iron fist and the first governmental organisation that was dismantled. The inquisition became the Alfresian Constabulary Corps, the Office of Inland Affairs, and the Intelligence Services to make sure such power was never in the hands of one man again, and the District was given over to the military.

As well as symbolically replacing the dreaded inquisition with the heroic military, the northern Grand Locus proved to be a much superior position for the military command. Sitting near at the centre of the great Middelburg metropolis it could now more easily direct and respond to the military presences in and around Middelburg. Its position also made it one of the most difficult districts in the city to attack.

The leaders of the military had learned


the painful lessons of the war. If the Military District was to protect the city in the future, it had to ensure it could never fall again. It took the greatest architects to turn the district into the greatest fortress on the island. Twenty metre high walls surround the district, topped with scores of high calibre cannons and hundreds of emplacements for armed defenders. The roofs of the buildings closest to the walls have permanent mortar emplacements and selected buildings have secret caches of ammunition to supply all the artillery on the walls.

Other than artillery, the district also boasts the constabulary headquarters and military academy meaning it is the most well policed district in the city. All the entrances into the district are also guarded by the military ensuring no overtly suspicious people make it into the district. As the faith had absolute control over Temple Park and the Merchant League has absolute control over the League District, the military controls the Military District meaning justice is always swiftly carried out.

The fortress at the heart of Middelburg is as safe and secure as any district, town or city can be and for good reason: if Middelburg ever falls or is close to falling again, it is from here that the war, the resistance or the rebellion must continue.

ALFRESIAN INTELLIGENCE SERVICES

The last vestige of the dreaded Royal Inquisition, or at least that is what the public has been led to believe. The truth that has been hidden, as so many things are when it comes to the legacy of the Inquisition, is that the Alfresian Intelligence Services, or AIS for short, is merely one of the Inquisition's offspring and the only one to be so openly. As the AIS is mandated not to operate on Alfresian soil, the hope was that proclaiming its Inquisition heritage would drive the attention away from the Constabulary and Inland Affairs.



Many believe the Royal Inquisition of Fresland was created by the mad king Markus VI, and to be fair he is a deservedly easy target for all things nefarious, but Markus VI was simply the first ruler to use the Inquisition openly. The Inquisition was founded in 1758AGW when Fresland gained its independence from the Empire with only one directive: to root out any rebels, traitors, and seditionists. Fresland's independence was untested; the nation could not afford one rebel's actions to force it back under the emperor's heel.

For more than two centuries the Inquisition did their job admirably without anyone the wiser about their existence, but they were a small operation as stealth demanded and they could not be everywhere at once. This was not good enough for Markus VI, whose dream of a Fresian Empire demanded absolute submission from his people. The Inquisition stepped out into the light of day and grew to an unimaginable size. Where it once controlled the upper echelons of the Constabulary and Home Affairs offices, it now did so publicly, absorbing these institutions like a cancer.

Overnight the Inquisition became the most powerful force in Fresland, greater even than the military and the nobility, and at its head sat the Lord Inquisitor who answered only to Markus VI. Below the Lord Inquisitor were the eight Grand Inquisitors, each given a piece of Fresland to rule over. The nobles, so accustomed to having ultimate authority over their realms, chafed at this, but speaking out against the Inquisition was tantamount to sedition and that was a crime punishable by death.

When the War of Independence ended with Markus VI and Emperor Kibrian's fiery deaths, both Wesfresland and Alfresia dismantled their respective Inquisitions, but both knew the value of a secret policing and intelligence force and so both kept a lasting remnant. In Alfresia this became the AIS, open about its heritage; and in Wesfresland they kept secret what became of the Inquisition but many suspect it formed part of the Foreign Office.

The AIS today seeks to prevent war reaching Alfresian soil. Wars happen, of course, but rather it happens somewhere else. The spies of the AIS do everything they can to undermine rival and enemy nations while keeping an eye on allies. While they are nominally part of the Alfresian Military, unlike soldiers, these men and women work in the shadows, hoping to remain unnoticed. They know that should they be caught committing espionage by foreign nations it will not only mean their deaths, but it could spell war for Alfresia.

The AIS is forbidden to operate inside Alfresia, that is Inland Affairs' work, but when foreign targets the AIS is tracking come to Alfresia, they have found a loophole in this law: the Merchant League. The League is legally its own sovereign nation and all who directly work for it hold nominal foreign citizenships. This means that the footmen that the League employs for its own illicit needs are foreign nationals that the AIS can call upon to work within Alfresia.

It suits the AIS just fine to employ criminals as they can deny any involvement should the matter come to light. The criminals also don't mind as they know that working for the AIS means they can call in a favour in the future.

GOLDEN TALONS BARRACKS

Of the four leading trade families in the Fresian Merchant League, only two have standing armies. The Hugenberg family can call upon the lesser-nobility and levies of the Burgraviate as the Patriarch is their liege; and the van Windburg family has the Golden Talons, their own professional mercenary company. Of course the Heisenstein and van Rosedaal families have their untold footmen to do their dirty deeds and their many guards for all their compounds, manors, and facilities, but they cannot call forces on the scale of the Hugenberg and van Windburg families.

While the Hugenberg's ability to call their army is somewhat hampered by noble treaties, alliances, politics, and levy laws; the Patriarch of the van Windburg family has absolute control over the Golden Talons. The Patriarch is their general and where he orders them, they follow without question. This has led to the Talons becoming the unofficial vanguard of the Merchant League military, at least that's the word on the street.

The Merchant League has only ever officially been involved in two wars: the Alfresian War of Independence and the Alfresian-Zeerijk War. In both times, the Merchant League has acted in support of Alfresia. The League had never been solely involved in any war and thus their military organisation is more for political presentation than actual use. The Golden Talons have therefore spent most of their existence as a mercenary company, bringing in money and renown for the family.

While the history of the Talons as a private mercenary company stretches back only until the dissolution of the aristocracy, their name goes back centuries. Hundreds of years ago, the Duke of Windburg established a chivalric order named the Noble Order of the Golden Talons who, in the spirit of the Fresian Lion Knights, would command the Imperial Legionnaires in Windburg. Over time the Talons became its own fighting force and nobility was no longer a requirement for membership. The Talons became the elite military unit of southern Alfresia.

When the archduke dissolved the aristocracy, the ex-duke Willem van Windburg, known as the Last Duke, refused to let the pride of his family go. Most of his income was also lost with his duchy and many suspect that is why he reorganised the Talons into a mercenary company, selling their services to the highest bidder. It was tough at first as most of the Talons refused to become mercenaries, believing it little better than prostitution. The image, the quality, and the culture of the Talons suffered as the most honourable men left, replaced with thugs and ruffians hoping to make quick money.

The Talons never recovered from this; they never returned to the noble, chivalric order of old, but over time they became the quintessential military force. They became disciplined, focussed, well trained, and loyal. What more can a commander ask? Yes, most were murderers, rapists, and thieves, but the Talons is a second chance most will never get. What helped foster this culture was a tradition that went back to the Talons' founding, namely that all sons of the Dukes of Windburg (or Patriarchs of van Windburg now) must serve their time in Golden Talons. They begin as a lowly private and work their way up through the ranks if they are worthy, and if they survive, gain the respect and loyalty of the company.

This worked marvellously and when the Talons' greatest trial came during the War of Independence, the men offered to work for free to save the Patriarch's homeland. They fought bravely and fiercely, even those not born in Alfresia, so brave and fierce that when the war was over, the Field Marshal of the Alfresian Military did not hesitate to provide the Talons barracks in the new Military District. Many politicians and bourgeois merchants lobbied against this, but the soldiers that fought alongside the Talons in the war were happy to see their brothers with them.

The upper echelons of the military also had an ulterior motive for keeping the Talons close, a motive still being used today. As a mercenary company, the Talons can do much that a state military can't, and a reputable company such as the Talons are more confidential about their clients' privacy than any priest or physician. As such the Alfresian military has over the last century hired the Golden Talons for many tasks that some may claim were not entirely legal or ethical. Other times the military give the tasks that would result in too great a loss of military lives to the Talons, knowing that the price is well worth the lack of public unrest and criticism against them should it be soldiers dying instead of foreign mercenaries.

The Talons gladly accept as the military will



TALONS OF GOLD

They are the preeminent mercenary company in Alfresia, and maybe the whole eastern coast of Jytoh, and they answer to one man: The Third Duke, the Patriarch of the van Windburg trade family. Better equipped than the military, and some argue better trained, the Golden Talons make good on this investment by being hired out to the highest bidder.

As a Golden Talon you will be part of a proud organisation that will outfit you with the best weapons and armour you could want with the best arrays. You'll also get access to the Barracks in the Military District to rest, recover and hide if need be. To top it off you'll get Contacts within the Golden Talons to use in your missions. All of this will cost you though.

The life of a Talon is one of violence. If someone wants something stolen, someone shanked, or a building burned down, they get some footmen to do it. People only call on the Golden Talons if they expect a lot of violence. So you can expect to guard VIPs in fear of their lives, kill some other heavily guarded VIP or even a whole organisation, extract someone or something during a battle or defend an object of great value with your very lives.

always be a returning customer, even if many Talons won't return. It is the Patriarch's job to make sure they do and he spends a good portion of the money the Talons make on equipment and training to ensure the Talons are always prepared for any situation a client may put them in.

NAVY HEADQUARTERS

It is the age of exploration and Alfresia is an island, two clear reasons why Alfresia's military is heavily focused on its navy. The nation's most honoured heroes are its marines and the most memorable military names are those of the ships of its fleets. Since Alfresia was first unified, this was the case and there is no indication that there will ever be a time that the navy does not reign supreme.

It is Alfresia itself which lends itself to the military's naval focus. As an island, all imports and exports, indeed all travel to and from the island is done by sea. The open water is a dangerous realm. Even without the natural causes that can sink ships, pirates and privateers have always been fond of targeting lone vessels at sea. The ocean is Alfresia's life blood and from the very start of the nation, each ship that left

the island was armed and ready to survive the journey to the mainland.

The navy could not always have protected every ship leaving the island, nor could the marines, past or present, be aboard every ship, but even the earliest kings and rulers of Alfresia knew that the sea between Alfresia and the continent was the most vital to the nation. For as long as there has been a navy, there has been warships patrolling the sea and Alfresian warriors on the most important merchant vessels.

It is not only Alfresia's trade that is so heavily impacted by the sea, but its very security. Any army wishing to conquer Alfresia must do so from the ocean and while the ocean itself has sunk many enemy warships, most of Alfresia's wars have been won or lost on the sea. Even when an army lands on Alfresian soil it is the ships that win wars. Because the island is a thin strip of land, it is quicker for an army to board a fleet and sail to their destination than march overland.

As the centuries moved on and the various levies of the nobility evolved into a true professional army, the navy could afford to patrol

nearly all the trade routes and keep the nation's waters safe. With the centralisation of the military under one government, it needed a central leadership to direct the massive operation it had become. Middelburg was the natural choice for this leadership's base of operations and a whole fleet was given over to protecting the city and the headquarters.

When the headquarters was rebuilt after the War of Independence, the navy was again reorganised to reflect the modern times. No longer would the army and navy fight separately and be dependent on one another. The army was given command of the transport ships needed to ferry its soldiers while the navy were given marine soldiers that could board ships and carry the fight to the beaches. The rank of High Admiral was also created by the Field Marshal to command the navy.

While the navy as it stands today is commanded ultimately by one man, the fleets and its ships are spread across the island. The various fleets and squadrons are given a great deal of autonomy, none more so than the famous Dawnguard, and so navy headquarters serve a more bureaucratic purpose. Its main purpose is to ensure that each of the pseudo-independent parts of the navy do not interfere with each other and that they work seamlessly together.

The headquarters have often been called the Beehive for the buzz of activity inside. Like worker bees, messengers seem to fly in and out of the headquarters, carrying messages to and from the various admirals and captains of the navy. The High Admiral is well aware of the idiom "forewarned is forearmed" and intends to know exactly what each of his ships are doing. The main hall of the headquarters has a gargantuan map of the island and its surrounding waters on its hard wooden floor and each vessel in Alfresian waters has a small wooden boat to signify its position and allegiance. Through this the admiralty can keep track of the entire naval sphere of the nation.


RAFÄEL ACADEMY

The Rafäel Academy is the most prestigious military officer school in Alfresia, technically speaking. This is because it is the only military officer school in Alfresia. Whether through commission or promotion, every officer in the Alfresian military must go through the school in order to command men. As the saying goes "The enlisted are born to follow, the officers are made to lead" and so it falls to the Academy to build the next generation of leadership for the military.

When the Military District was relocated to its present area a century ago it was not only a chance to rebuild the Academy, but the Military itself. It was a new modern age and that required a modern military. Even with the aristocracy gone, the governors in their place had near supreme control over the soldiers in their cantons. The national military was more a federation of the various canton militaries overseen by the Marshal than a united whole. This had to change.

For change to happen, it had to have come from the top down. Enlisted men are drilled to follow orders, it does not matter where these come from. It were the officers that were to lead the military in the present and the Academy would show them the way. The military was restructured and centralised into one cohesive unit completely controlled by the Marshal. The branches, the navy and army, would be controlled by the High Admiral and Grand General respectively and they would answer only to the Marshal.

It was to be the Academy's purpose to teach the officers of the new Republic Military how to operate alongside one another and to coordinate with officers across the nation. The insular armies of the past could no longer be tolerated. The naval units at the southern city of Windburg had to be able to coordinate with their counterparts in Rosedaal in the far north and with the army stationed in Wintersdam if needed be. This could not be left up to the bureaucratic governors or the nation would surely fall.



It is not only coordination and cooperation that the Academy teaches. As well as being a military leader, an officer must be a gentleman; he must be cultured and he must be respectful. A modern military officer is not some wild warrior or boorish knight from ages past, after all. It is not only a strong arm and charisma that win battles, it is the officer's mind that truly turns the tide of any fight. An incompetent officer means an incompetent unit and that is precisely why the Academy also teach all officers the natural philosophies.

From biology to chemistry to mathematics to logic, an officer must master them all. The academy regularly approaches the professors of the Middelburg University to come and present lectures to the cadet officers. It is the Academy's hope that a good education will expand the officers' minds and allow them to think quicker and more critically when in dire situations. The courses in natural philosophies are not required for enlisted men raised to officers through promotions. Unlike officers who bought their commissions, and thus come from wealthy families, the promoted officers are assumed to not have the required education background to understand the philosophical topics discussed.

What is required for all, however, are the lessons on tactics and strategy. Without these, all armies would be useless. From troop deployments to battle formations, from unit organisation to combat tactics, an officer at the Raphaël Academy is taught all things necessary to ensure any battle can be won. As they say, unfortunately, no plan survives contact with the enemy and one of the biggest lessons the Academy drills into its officers' heads is improvisation and initiative, how to think on one's feet.

For the past century, this new philosophy in military organisation and training has served the nation well, but it has only ever been duly tested once, during the Alfresian-Zeerijk War. Alfresia has never fought an offensive war or even on another nation's soil. Only the future can tell if the Academy is truly a success.

ARMY HEADQUARTERS

The army truly is the unsung heroes of Alfresia. The seamen and marines may cut fine figures on their warships, but soldiers have no warships to protect them, only their strength and wit. The navy may be the first to engage the enemy, but it is the army that fights the protracted battles, weathers the worst sieges, and decides the war. As the soldiers say it: "The fish may look pretty, but prettiness never won a war."

The restructuring of the military necessitated a revisiting of the role of the army. Before the War of Independence, each canton's army force was organised at the whim of the governor and their generals. There was no unifying structure, no semblance of organisation at a national level. What was common in one canton may be rare in another. Some cantons relied almost exclusively on their cavalry while others had only masses of unsupported infantry.

After the restructuring, the army was divided into five branches: infantry, cavalry, artillery, support, and the Jägers. The support branch incorporated all the bureaucracy of the army as well any physicians and surgeons; the artillery involved all the engineers that governed the cannons, mortars, and other siege equipment; the infantry and cavalry formed the bulk of the army, those soldiers that fought on foot and on horse respectively. The Jägers were a new invention, blatantly taken from the Heavenly Empire of Man, whose purpose was to build army units that could fight in unorthodox ways and act autonomously.

This restructuring was the single greatest change to have happened to the army and the higher up the ranks you were, the more it affected you. Life went on much the same for the enlisted men, they fought and trained much as they did before, but for the colonels and generals, this meant relearning much of what they knew. Before, the Army Headquarters acted in a supervisory capacity, maintaining communication between the

various cantons' army forces; now it had to command them.

With all orders coming from one base, the army worked more smoothly than imagined, although it took some time for the various units to learn how to work together now that branches of the army were separated. The transition was much quicker, however, than the navy's transition. When the army was segregated into the various cantons, communicating to one command structure was a simple effort with so little land to be covered. The Navy, however, had to communicate over a much larger area.

There is a second reason why the army suffered through the transition so quickly. When the War was over and all the militiamen who took up muskets and swords to defend their nation returned home, it became quite apparent that the army was smaller than once imagined. When the army was restructured, this became all too clear. For most of its history, Alfresia relied on militias and raised levies to bolster the forces of any professional army, but in the modern age that was simply not done anymore.

The army is, in truth, actually smaller than the navy. The navy makes up the bulk of the Alfresian military, especially due to its marine divisions that are stationed at all naval forts and thus act as soldiers during peacetime. This was a tough pill to swallow for the army generals, especially when they discovered that it was the restructuring that made this so. The Marshal saw that to operate effectively, the navy and its marines must have the support the army does and so gave to them a large portion of the army's artillery and support units. The army had to sacrifice so that the Navy could become greater.

The army may have declined in importance and size in recent years, but it has more than made up for it in experience and training. The Grand General is well aware that should another war come to Alfresian shores, it will take time to organise militias and the army will have to hold off any invader until that can be done. With the size of the army, that will be a difficult task at the best of times. Because of this, no expense has

been spared (although the politicians have made that difficult) in equipping the soldiers with the very best and latest military technology and training on how to use it.


THE ARMOURY WEAPONSMITH

A soldier is nothing without his arms and his armour and to create the best soldiers, they need the best equipment. That is where the uncreatively named Armoury comes in. A joint venture by the Alfresian Military and the Fresian Merchant League, the Armoury aims to provide the very best in weaponry to the officers of the military.

While the vast majority of weapons and armour used by the military is purchased at the cheapest possible cost, the leaders in the military knew that officers required something a little special and the higher up the ranks the officer was, the more special it should be. It does not matter what path in life one chooses to walk, wealth will always be a symbol of power and status. The military is no different. The enlisted may walk around with simple swords of steel with worn leather grips, but nothing less than the finest orichalcum plated hilts with fine veal leather is good enough for the top brass.

The Armoury is one of the few ventures where the four ruling trade families of the Merchant League decided to put their eternal rivalry to one side. As with most noble and wealthy houses, the four trade families have a long standing tradition of sending their sons off to the military. These wealthy sons always come home as decorated officers, invariably of quite a high rank, and these sons need military equipment that matches their new status.

The high ranking military officers wholeheartedly agreed with this last sentiment, knowing full well that any idea the Merchant League supports always turns out well for those nearby. The Field Marshal himself began talks



with the Patriarchs to establish a weaponsmith in the Military District. Contracts were made, deals were hammered out, papers were signed, but it was all for show. The admirals, the generals, and the trade families were all on the same page and all wanted bright, shiny new toys to show how important they were.

They say more money has been spent on the Armoury over the half century it has existed than has been spent on the rest of the Military District combined. To create the best weapons and armour, one needs the best smiths and they do not come cheaply. The Merchant League hunted for them across Jytoh and promised each a small fortune if only they should come to Middelburg. The money spent has been well worth it, as each blade, each pistol, each plate of armour is as much a work of art as it is a feat of engineering.

It is not only the smiths that has cost so much, but the materials as well. There is no gold or silver used here, as pretty as they may be, for they can be created by the arrays and are thus worthless. No, the metal of choice is pearlescent orichalcum. Orichalcum takes on a colour after it has been used on an array, the colour dependent on the centrum, and so there are nearly as many different coloured varieties of used orichalcum as there are runes. The weapons and armour produced here can oftentimes be a riot of colours, but it is said the more colours that are used, the more expensive the item and thus the more wealthy the client.

Used orichalcum is one thing, virgin orichalcum is quite another. Orichalcum can only be used once to power an array and it is no surprise then that unused, virgin orichalcum is the most rare metal in the world. So of course it is used at the Armoury to decorate weapons and armour. The Field Marshal himself had a sword made here whose hilt is pure, virgin orichalcum. He could buy any farm in Alfresia with just that, perhaps three if he can haggle. Virgin orichalcum is used only for commissioned works and only after payment has been made. It is far too valuable to be wasted.

Orichalcum is valuable yes, but you can't

make a sword just out of that. Other materials are needed as well, the more expensive the better. Leather is commonly used for the grips of sword hilts and for straps of armour plates. At the Armoury, the sheer breadth of selection can take one's breath away. Soft veal leather from the highlands of Staandeland, bespeckled fowl leather from the southern tip of Bythika, tough ice bear leather from the frozen tundras of the Tolian lands, the more exotic the better. If leather alone is not enough to suffice, there are multitude of dyes crafted from the rarest flowers for one's perusal.

Nothing but the best is good enough for the Armoury. Officers dream of one day achieving a high enough rank to be able to afford these and the wealthy merchants dream of one day having enough clout to purchase a blade without seeming a cowardly braggart.

THE GRUMPY BEAR TAVERN

The official unofficial officer's club in the Military District. The Grumpy Bear has a long history with the Military District and the tavern serves as a sort of short lived escape for the officers from their military life. It is not too far from the military headquarters or barracks so as to prove too costly in time and effort to go to, but yet it is not the official officer's club where their every action is watched, weighed and recorded. That is not to say the Bear is open only to officers, far from it, but officers do make up the vast majority of its clientele.

When the rest of the Military District relocated to where it is presently, the tavern moved along with it. It is strange to think that a tavern would go through all this effort when it is far more reasonable to stay where it was and enjoy a new type of clientele. But the Bear was made for officers and the owner at the time would rather have been shot than not have soldiers in his tavern all day. This is not

to say he was pleased about the move, quite the contrary, he was one of the few opponents to moving the Military District. That is the reason why the Grumpy Bear is no longer called the Jolly Bear Tavern.

Many non-military customers who walk into the Grumpy Bear think that the tavern is decorated in garish displays of insecure masculinity. While mistaken, there is a very good reason for why they may think so. That is because the Grumpy Bear is indeed poorly decorated with various items one would associate with masculinity. The key difference is that the decorations of the Grumpy Bear were not as much chosen as they were gifted to the owners.

Having such a close relationship with the military over the centuries will mean that many a lasting memory was forged in the tavern. Over the years hundreds of officers have come here to celebrate births and deaths, promotions and discharges, victories and defeats, marriages and divorces. The Bear and its owners have become near and dear to the hearts of many soldiers, marines and seamen, and they have shown this appreciation by gifting to the tavern what items and objects that were important to their lives.

The procession of time can be seen in the tavern with these gifts that now line the walls, floors, ceilings, and tables. There are suits of armour that went out of style centuries ago, gifted by long dead knights, standing next to sabres and scabbards from officers who gave their lives in the recent Alfresia-Zeerijk war. Tapestries from the southern continent, brought back by colonial marines, hang next to battered shields from the Gitic Horde invasion. Some of the earliest known firearms sit next to finger bones from the greatest heroes in Fresia.

With all of these displays, the Bear is as much a museum as a tavern and with such history in the building there comes a certain attitude from the customers who frequent the Bear. What civilians and newcomers mistake as overblown machismo is in actuality a sense of territorial reverence. The Bear has been shaped as much by the officers who frequent it as it has

been by its succession of owners. The Bear is the nearest thing to a military temple in the city and the officers are very protective of it and what it means to them.


The officers see the owners of the Bear, Jan “the Major” du Preez being the latest, as a part of their families, and help them whenever they can, no matter the cost. Other than being a gracious host and careful curator, the owners have always lent an ear and a shoulder for those officers with heavy hearts. As the Bear is the military’s temple, the owners are its priests, divorced from the military and always taking what they hear to their graves. Every owner has had military experience and so can relate to the very best and the very worst the officers can tell them. The Grumpy Bear has the military flowing through its timbers and in its stones and there is little in the world or in the heavens that can hope to change that.

CONSTABULARY HEADQUARTERS

The seat of the Lord Constable and the only government institution in the new Military District to have remained unchanged since the days of the Archduke. While the Lord Constable is no longer a lord in the true sense, he rules the constables of Alfresia with an iron fist. The current Lord Constable, Valentijn de Jager, sees the constabulary as his own personal kingdom, beholden only to him, their king.

The constables of today are a far cry from their ancient predecessors. No longer are they simply town guards and common militias, the constables of today are trained and equipped as well as the military they resemble. There is a stark difference between the military and constabulary, however, as where the military see other nations as their enemies, the constabulary too often see their fellow country men as theirs.

This is a mindset that has become particularly entrenched in the constabulary



during the “reign” of Lord de Jager. There is a saying that power corrupts and the more power one has the more corrupt they become. This is why the heads of so many noble organisations are fat, rich, and totally in the pocket of other fat, rich, powerful people. This was the same with the Lord Constables and the largest bribes always came from the Merchant League. Because of this the constables frequently looked the other way when it was a League footman caught in a criminal act.

That all stopped fourteen years ago when de Jager became Lord Constable. They say the man is incorruptible and that may well be true. De Jager is a zealot. He sees the world only in blacks and whites, rights and wrongs. There are no shades of grey, no middle grounds, for de Jager. There is only the law and a man's worth is measured by which side of the law he stands. De Jager is a devout Prodigalist and it is from his faith that he finds his zealotry. He has no interest in money or pleasures of the flesh. His only concern is the afterlife and his place beside Bür, a place he believes one can only obtain by abiding the law.

An incorruptible Lord Constable who cares only for the law should have been the greatest relief to the people of Middelburg they ever had. They would soon find out that hope is the first step on the road to disappointment. To de Jager, all crimes are equal in sin to the eyes of Bür. Once a person commits a crime, he is forever a criminal and can never be reformed. Since de Jager became Lord Constable, the constabulary has only become harsher in the execution of their duties.

It is unsurprising to hear then that the constabulary are not the most popular of folk in Middelburg and de Jager the least popular of them all. Even constables despise the man as he is harsher on them than he is on the public. A constable must obey the law in order to enforce it, de Jager believes. A good sentiment, but like all things de Jager does, it has become twisted. Any constable that breaks any laws, no matter how insignificant, is stripped of his position

and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Many a constable sits in gaol because of a late tax payment.

De Jager might rule the constabulary like a king, but like all kings, he has advisors that hide some truths from him. His zealotry nearly destroyed the constabulary as many constables ended up in gaol for minor infractions and others were too frightened to perform their duties lest they end up like their comrades. Something had to be done to temper his zealotry so the constables can perform their duties. Thus, his chiefs and clerks hid certain things from him, like bribes and blackmails from certain fat, rich, powerful people and he continued on with his crusade.

The constabulary is without a doubt a far better organisation under the command of de Jager and his unending quest for justice has put many criminals deservedly behind bars, but they have become a paramilitary force in the city. Many powerful and influential people are becoming nervous and dreads the day when he turns his attention on them. De Jager has the power to turn the city into a warzone should he so choose, and if he believes the city too corrupt to save, he might well do so.

UPPER HARBOUR



200 M

UPPER HARBOUR



The “Second Docks”, the “Poor man’s Docks”, the “Landlubber’s Docks”. It seems that no matter what happens in Upper Harbour, what great achievements may be found here, the district will always be compared to the Docks District, a comparison it will simply never win. That, however, is the nature of such things. Both districts have many similar features: both are “transitional” districts between land and sea; both function in a capacity to receive, hold, store and then move goods on to other districts; and both contain an immense assortment and variety of businesses in them.

To continue the comparison with the Docks District, Upper Harbour was inevitably caused by the evolution of the city. Humans naturally congregate near water and when the city started expanding there were a few spots from which it grew, of these, the greatest was The Tenne River. Upper Harbour’s early history was dominated by homes and small stores. It looked like any other town and village in the nation.

Eventually the city grew so large that it could afford to separate its various neighbourhoods and areas into districts, many of which were dedicated to one pursuit. Upper Harbour was one of these and for a long time it served the same purpose as the docks: shipping goods

and people to and from the water. The only difference was in the execution. The Docks handled shipping going to and coming in from other parts of the island and the world; it was the connection between the city and the wider world. Upper Harbour on the other hand dealt with shipping up and down the river, connecting Middelburg, the villages and towns, upriver, and the businesses in Middelburg with the docks.

They say that, given enough time, water can bring down any cliff or mountain. It is ironic then that it was the land that triumphed over the water and changed everything that had made Upper Harbour into what it was. Most folk do not travel via water in order to reach their destination. Self-evident, perhaps, but what was not apparent at the time was that the city would only spend money on upgrading the transport infrastructure of the land. It was an understandable and logical decision that did wonders for the city, but it left Upper Harbour without a purpose.

The city’s first great project was crafting arrays on every cobblestone on the major roads of Middelburg that formed the Great City Array. These were simple arrays that pushed animals, wood, and steel a centimetre above the



ground. These arrays provided a cushion for anything travelling on it, a suspension that made travel smoother, easier, and quicker. The project was gargantuan and took many years to complete, but once it was done it spelled the end for Upper Harbour.

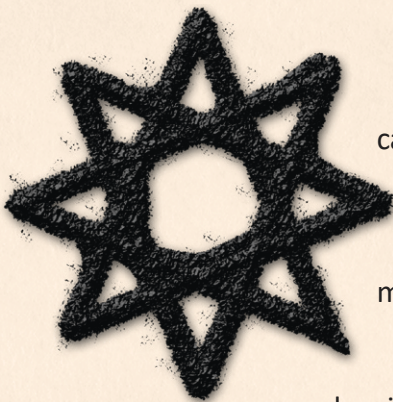
Once the work on the Great City Array was completed, every merchant and noble took advantage of it and soon new types of carts, carriages, and caravans were designed to take advantage of it. It was now possible to move goods faster by land than by sea. Slowly but surely the work in Upper Harbour dried up. It had one salvation, however, shipping goods upriver. That hope was soon dashed as a new method of transporting large quantities of goods were invented: the train.

There was nothing much left for Upper Harbour to do. Progresses ever marched forward had made it obsolete. Most of its businesses moved to the Docks, their only respite, and for a brief time Upper Harbour became a residential area once again. This was until another self-evident idea made itself known: water was not

only good for sailing on, it could also be used for a variety of trades. It came as a late revelation to the people of Middelburg who were so used to creating water through the arrays that they had completely forgotten there was a river full of it bisecting the city.

While it is always preferable to use artificially created water, it does cost energy to create while the water in the river is free, plus the force and pressure exerted by the river was enough to power arrays. This meant that the folks did not need to collect the water at all, they simply put send arrays in the river to runically transport the water where it was needed, killing two birds with one stone.

Upper Harbour became the district of breweries, taverns, and mills. All sorts of businesses that needed water for their trades moved here and the area became known as the “working man’s area”. It developed a culture of self-determination, self-direction, and freedom. Many a protest and a riot began in Upper Harbour as the lower classes who worked for a living struggled against the rich upper classes.




THE CULT OF GOOD INTENTIONS

The Cult of the Starchild and its member, the Seekers, were once called the most sincere and devout of all the faithful in all the religions of the world. Who actively seeks their god with more passion and fervour than the Seekers. As the years went on, however, the kindly disposition towards the Seekers changed as more and more of their criminal actions came to light. Now, with their recent association with the horrors in Middelburg, they are actively disliked.

Playing as a group of Seekers can be quite difficult when most people will refuse to do business with you if they found out who you really were, and the constables are likely to arrest you on sight just on basic principle.

The Seekers, however, know about this and have taken steps to ensure their survival. To go with your within the Starchild Cult there will be a network of safehouses in every district of the city. If you are ever in trouble, simply pass a seek out your Seeker Contact and you’ll find a hole to crawl into that is safe, secure, secret and well stocked.

As a Seeker you have one purpose in life: to find the unborn Starchild by any means possible. Your fellow Seekers will be able to direct you to avenues of research and exploration, but there is a more current matter at hand. The Seekers as a whole believe the horror stalking the city is the Starchild Incarnate. Do whatever you can do to find him. Do whatever it takes to please him. As far as you are concerned, this is your god and the city should bow at his feet.



That culture still remains in part, but over time the working men became business owners and got more than enough money in their pocket to put their feet up. Rioting is tiresome work, having others make money for you is easy.

With money once again streaming into Upper Harbour, it diversified and today there is no central direction which it has taken. There is a little bit of everything for everyone. Upper Harbour has become a hodgepodge of society and is remarkable for the fact it is so unremarkable. With its finger in so many pies, it is a very plain and average district, standing out perhaps in one area: businesses and organisations who cannot find a suitable home elsewhere, gravitate here.

A district of cut-offs and cast-offs, a plain and unremarkable district that is seldom thought of, Upper Harbour trudges along as it always had and as it always will.

SEEKER'S RESPITE

Part temple, part tavern, part hospice, part half-way house. The Respite seems to be everything and nothing all at once, quite fitting when one thinks of the Starchild Cult's philosophies. The Respite was built for the Seekers by the Seekers to accommodate them for anything they might need, and its name means more to the Seekers than any outsider will ever know.

The Seekers are a strange lot and the Starchild Cult is stranger still. There are precious few of them in the world and there are even fewer outsiders that like them. To be a Seeker is to walk a lonely path in life, it is to walk in the shadows of the world, the wilderness of society. The prize the Seekers seek is worth all this, or so they say, but even for them a friendly face, a comforting smile, and an understanding ear is needed in this cruel world.

There are more than enough reasons to dislike the Seekers, and for some are not even their fault. As with most reasons to dislike something, the greatest is always ignorance.

Man hates what he does not understand and few men truly understand the philosophies of the Starchild Cult. In all fairness, the Seekers are a secretive lot, having learnt how men treat them and rarely do they share their philosophies with the world anymore.

The simplest explanation for the Seekers faith is that they believe the world is nothing more than the dream of a god that is yet to be born. It is this unborn god, the Starchild, that they Seek. They believe that the Starchild has only once broken through the Veil into our world, two millennia ago as the mythic Bür, and this brief event was only to give us the runes so that we may hasten the Starchild's awakening. The Seekers believe that if we find the perfect runes and create the perfect array, the Starchild will awaken and bring us with it into a new world.

To understand why they believe this fantastical story is to understand religion itself. A line can be drawn straight from the Starchild Cult to the earliest forms of Neoism brought from across the Ridgeback mountains. Neoism mixed with the eastern pagan religions and spawned Progenitorism. When Bür appeared and gave humanity the runes, a cult formed around him and merged with Progenitorism to form Prodigalism. As natural philosophy advanced, the sceptics took the runic philosophy from Prodigalism and formed the Cult of Runism. At the end of line, zealots and self proclaimed prophets took parts of Runism and formed the Starchild Cult.

It is a long and intricate history and it is precisely because of this that the strange story of the Starchild emerged. It is that story, brief and fantastical, that is all most know about the Seekers and is more than enough for them to pass the cult off as a group of mentally ill zealots at best, and dangerous degenerates at worst. What has formed the deepest seed of hatred can squarely be laid at the feet of the Seekers.

It must first be said that the majority of the Seekers are upstanding citizens who have slightly unorthodox

beliefs, but it is a cult and all cults have a tendency to attract the worst of folk.

There is an underbelly to the Starchild Cult who believe that there must be a method to creating runes, even though none has ever been found, or a way to cross the Veil, though none can say how, or even a way to communicate with their unborn god, and not through prayer. These absolute fanatics believe that anything is permitted in their quest to achieve these unattainable goals.

These fanatics have committed nearly every crime imaginable in nearly every nation in the world and still their god slumbers. When people hear of a Seeker in their town or district, they rightfully fear for their loved ones and possessions and this has made the life of the law-abiding Seeker a misery. That is why the Respite exists, to give Seekers a respite from the world at large, to provide them with what they need to escape from the world, if only for a short while. It isn't much, but it is theirs.

THE UNAFFILIATED GUILD OF RUNE SCRIBES

If there is a guild in Alfresia, there is an almost certain chance that it will belong to the Fresian Merchant League. If there is any organisation dedicated to study of the runes array most anywhere in Jytoh, there is an almost certain chance it is either controlled by Runists or heavily influenced by them. For a guild of Rune Scribes to exist in Middelburg that is completely independent from either organisation is thus as rare as hen's teeth.

The surprise of such a situation in this case is not due to the League's proclivity for absorbing or destroying any competition. Their contracts with the Runists and their own rune scribes are more than enough for them to dominate the market. The issue in this case is the Runists themselves. When their entire religion, code of beliefs and method of income all boils down to the study of the runes and arrays, it should not


come as too much of a shock when they try and crush any opposition.

The Runists, much like the Seekers, believe that the world is an illusion. Where the Runists differ is that they believe this illusion we call reality is an effect of some grand universal array. Everything in the universe is simply a group of runes in loci strung together. The Runists also "seek" the perfect set of runes for the perfect array but they don't believe it will create a god, they believe it will allow them access behind the Veil, to "see" the universal array and be able to change reality at whim. In short, where the Seekers want to create a god, the Runists want to become gods.

The Runists believe there are a few people in history which have already succeeded in this quest, to varying degrees, and they call them Sigiltongues because all stories and legends about these say they can speak the language of the runes and alter reality without the need for arrays. The first Sigiltongue was, of course, Bür who granted humanity the knowledge of the runes and arrays. They seek to emulate what the legends say about the Runegiver and see what he had done as proof of what they can become.

As a whole, it would not be unfair to call the Runists the best rune scribes in the world. Their very faith demands that they be. Even those Runists in occupations unrelated to rune scribing are often called upon for their expertise just for being a Runist. Any man can draw an array, but it takes skill, experience and knowledge to use the arrays to their fullest potential. Nearly all of the faith's income, for their monasteries and meeting houses come from this same expertise and they do whatever they can to control the knowledge of the arrays. It is their power and they guard it well.

That is why the Unaffiliated Guild of Rune Scribes is such a threat. These are men and women who do not want their skills, their experience, their knowledge to be controlled by others, especially not the Runists. The Guild includes members of all faiths who are as passionate as the Runists about the runes and



believe they deserve a fair chance at work in Middelburg.

The Guild House is half tavern, half library. It is a place for the meeting of the minds where the guild members can share research and new array designs in a comfortable environment with their peers. The Guild does not have the support that the Runists have and thus their members are their most valuable resource. Almost half of the books in their library have been written by members, to ensure that all the knowledge of the guild gets passed down to future generations.

Being an underdog does have its drawbacks and the Guild has to work doubly hard to even come within reaching distance of the Runists. This had led to some Guild members soliciting “extra help”. Desperate men do desperate things. Sometimes it is a book no one will sell them, or a competitor that needs to be waylaid, other times it’s research that needs to be “retrieved”. The Guild is an equal opportunity employer when it comes to hiring footmen to do its criminal deeds, for as long as it gets done then the Guild is one step closer to reaching parity with the Runists.

ISA’S IRONMONGER

Iron is strong and hard, that much is true, but it is brittle and can easily be broken if one knows how. Steel, on the other hand, is resilient and flexible, but it is an alloy of iron and carbon and the arrays can only create pure iron. It is for this reason that there is still a need for an ironmonger in Middelburg, someone who can smelt metals and create alloys for the smiths and tradesmen in the city.

Ninety one and a quarter percent is the magic number, the tipping point where an array can no longer recognise something as pure. Anything less than this number is unrecognisable by an array and therefore, in the eyes of many, absolutely useless. Humans are by nature lazy and anything that can’t be achieved by the arrays is most times not worth doing. A lot of things simply will never be done, will never be invented,

never be discovered, because they will either not work with the arrays or because the arrays provide an easier solution.

There is an exception to this, as with all rules, and it is to do with protection from the runes and arrays. A breastplate that is less than ninety one and quarter percent pure, then no array on weapons or ammunition will be able to target it. Steel would not suffice, as though it is an alloy between iron and carbon (and sometimes a few other choice ingredients) the carbon content is never more than two percent, and the other alloying elements almost never total more than five percent. All of this means that while the arrays can’t create steel, they can affect it.

Bronze is another story. Before the runes were given to humanity, bronze was slowly but surely being replaced with iron. After iron turned to steel, and steel to alloyed steel, bronze still remained and did so largely unchanged. The composition of archaic bronze was quite variable but modern bronze is normally eighty eight percent copper and twelve percent tin, more than enough to make it invisible to the arrays. Bronze may not be as strong as alloyed steel, but it is more than strong enough to hold up to the damages of combat, especially when it is augmented by the arrays itself.

This is the type of work that Isa deals with in her ironmonger’s. Her most purchased product is the various varieties of steel alloys she produces, with differing amounts of carbon, copper, and zinc to produce different effects in the finished steel. True to its name, there are mountains of iron on the shop floors, ready to be smelted and turned into alloys with the help of the arrays. The steel shipped from Isa’s will be used by weapon and armour smiths to create equipment for the army, the navy, and the League or shipped to construction sites to be used to bolster buildings.

Steel might be Isa’s most purchased product, but her most valuable is her rune-proof alloys and for the obvious reasons. Of these, standard bronze is the most common and shipments by the tonne are

sent to the armourers of the military and constabulary. The most valuable of all the rune-proofed alloys are her speciality alloys, made only by commission.

For the immensely wealthy, neither steel nor bronze is good enough to show off their vast wealth. They need something more. Dressed in silvers, golds and perhaps even used orichalcum alloys, these aristocrats and bourgeoisie are walking art pieces. Isa is no armourer, but she does make the metals used. These ornamental alloys are not as strong as steel or bronze, but they do offer some means of protection. The most famous bearers of an ornamental alloy in recent history were the Emperor Kibrian and his silvered steel armour who died, valiantly they say, in the explosion a century ago that took both him and the mad king Markus VI in his red-gold and bronze plate.

POWER RELAY STATION

There are not a lot of things scholars can all agree on. In fact, academia and philosophy is built on the premises of skepticism and debate. There is, however, one singular fact all scholars agree on and it is that the Lightning rune has been the most revolutionary discovery since Būr gave humanity the knowledge of the runes and arrays. It is not a statement to be taken lightly and the Runist monk who discovered the Lightning rune has wisely kept his head down to avoid any spectacles.

The Lightning rune has many applications, some for combat, some for construction, some even medicinal, but the reason the scholars gave for the Lightning rune's august title is its capacity to transmit energy quickly, efficiently, and without the need of arrays. The power of electricity to be conducted along materials, especially copper, has allowed society to use this electricity to power other arrays without the need of complicated Send and Receive arrays or uncertain If-Then array statements.

Storing energy in arrays for later use has

always been done, thanks due to the If-Then statement that allows this power to be stored until a trigger activates the array. It is how nearly all firearms operate as well as many explosive arrays. The problem has always been in transmitting energy from one array to another, especially if they are not in immediate vicinity of each other.

In the past, this was done via Send and Receive arrays but it was rarely done as the Receive array must be powered itself in order to receive, thus reducing any potential energy gained. As it had to be powered, one must know when something is being sent in order to power it. This meant that spontaneous or continuous sending was near impossible. Transmitting energy runically was simply not feasible. That was until the Lightning rune was discovered.

Electricity can travel along conductive materials from one place to another without the need of arrays. This means that an array can be connected to said conductive material and use the electricity for its energy source. Arrays can now be powered with free energy, or close enough to free as makes no difference. To use this free energy, a network of conductive copper wires had to be constructed throughout Middelburg and linked to homes and businesses so that people can take advantage of this.

That is where the Power Relay Station comes into play. One of a handful across Middelburg, the relay station creates power in two different forms for the public. The first is the most straightforward, using fire and sunlight to power arrays to only create electricity. These arrays are then linked to the electrical network through copper wires and anyone who is connected to this network can then benefit from it.

The second form is the newly invented battery arrays. Stacks of metal plates held together one on top of each other, these are submerged in boiling water to store energy inside them. These arrays are linked to each other with Send and Receive runes and also If-Then statements that will trigger a slow cascade of electricity if copper is present.

REMEDIAL RUNOLOGY



Arrays are wonderful things, that allow humans to do what was once thought only possible for gods and sorcerers. They have invaded every facet of our lives and we are all grateful for Būr's gift. Unfortunately, they can sometimes be a bit tricky and getting onto paper what is in your mind can be a difficult endeavour. Fear not, however, as you are not alone.

Just as you, and your PCs, can use the runes and arrays to do whatever you want, so can the rest of humanity in Middelburg and the wider world of the Runed Age. If you are ever in a bind when it comes to the arrays, when you just can't figure out how to do what you want, then simply stop by any organisation or institution that specialises in the runes. They can help you, for a price of course. The University of Middelburg is the obvious answer, as is the Monastery of the Eternal Runes, but the Unaffiliated Guild of Rune Scribes do their best to help all who come. If you have contacts in the League, constabulary, military or a merchant guild then you already know where you can go for help.

Asking an NPC for help with the arrays is asking your GM for help with the arrays, so GMs this will make your life a tad more difficult. You will have to know the ins and outs of runology. The rules of the runes and arrays can be found in the Runed Age Corebook and there are plenty of resources online that can help you. The more you know about the runes and arrays, the better you can help your players and the quicker you all can get back to the mission at hand.

These battery arrays, as large as wine barrels, can then be hooked up to electrical networks not yet connected to a power station or sold to individuals to use privately if they are not connected to the network or for use in emergency situations.

The power stations are clearly very dangerous places to work and more than a few men die each year due to electrocution. Their deaths have not been in vain, as many physicians, scholars, and engineers have taken a keen interest in electricity's effects on the human body and how to protect oneself from them. This interest from academics has meant that the power relay stations, at less than two years old, is one of the fastest growing and most advanced industries in the nation.

BRANDSVELD

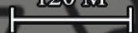
◆ THOMAS, RICHARD & HAROLD'S

◆ SWART DONDER PUBLIC HOUSE

◆ HOOPBRON HOSPITAL

◆ CONSTABULARY

120 M



BRANDSVELD



Some districts are defined by where in the Grand City they are, and others are defined by what they contain. Some, however, are defined by the districts they border, and Brandsveld is most certainly one of these.

Right between the Military District and Oldtown, Brandsveld often looks like it is stuck between a rock and a hard place. For many of its inhabitants, the district feels like it has become a buffer state between the heavily policed and regulated area to its east, and the utter lawless zone to its west. Even if this was not the original intention, both the people of Oldtown and the Military District are happy that there is a no-man's land in between them.

Unfortunately for the people of Brandsveld, this has left them without much of a district culture. If they are not catering to the needs of the Military District, then they are trying their level best to avoid the worst ravages of Oldtown. Even for most people of the Grand City, if you would ask them to point to Brandsveld on a map of Middelburg, they would be hard pressed to find the district. And for those that do eventually find it, the most that they could say about it is merely, again, that it is between two more famous districts.

One may think then, that without a unique

identity, and clearly nothing extravagant happening in the district, that life would be fairly dull and boring. The reality is much different, and it will reveal why Brandsveld is the second most armed district, right after the Military District.

If one were to divide Brandsveld in half north to south, the western half of it would look like a town in an almost permanent state of war-readiness. As the constables either cannot, or will not, stop the hooligans coming in from Oldtown, it is up to the men of Brandsveld to protect their district. In other districts, it is not uncommon to see a man walking with a pistol and smallsword, or rapier, as is his right. In the western half of Brandsveld, on the other hand, most men do not leave the house without at least two pistols, a musket, a pair of daggers. A breastplate when night approaches is also not out of the ordinary. The crime is not nearly as atrocious as in Oldtown, but enough spills out into the surrounding districts for the people there to take extra caution.

In the eastern half of Brandsveld, the men come armed for a different reason. The Military District, large though it may be, is far too small to house the entirety of the



army, the navy, and the newly minted air-navy that operates out of Middelburg. Take into account all the armouries, stables, warehouses and training fields, and there simply is not enough space in there. Thus, many of the junior officers make their home in the neighbouring districts, and for that Brandsveld has become a gathering spot for these wayward officers.

To see the military trooping up and down the streets of Brandsveld is fairly common, and at least for the eastern half of the district, it has meant a sense of security for its people. That security has come at a price, however, and the military who do make their home here treat Brandsveld as just an extension of the Military District. They are not afraid to police the area just as they would in the military compounds, and martial law is as real here as any rules put out by the civilian government. For some people here, these officers and their troops are little more than ruffians in uniforms, badgering and bullying the people of Brandsveld. However, when they see what the western half of the district looks like, they know they have it better, if only a little.

THOMAS, RICHARD & HARROLD'S

Thomas, Richard & Harrold's is a respectable institution. It is a refined, polished, and dignified business. After all, to be anything else would be to invite suspicion and attention; and that is the last thing that TR&H wants. Thus it provides the rich and powerful in Middelburg with the most competent and proficient footmen, butlers and manservants that the city has to offer. For all your household and servile requirements, TR&H is here is help and support.

This is all, of course, merely a front, even if it is a convincing one. TR&H really does offer excellent butler and footman services across the Grand City and beyond, and it has done so for decades with very few complaints. The front is

so convincing because, in a sense, it is actually true. Other than being a good secondary source of income, this front's believability hides TR&H's true nature from even the most prying of eyes.

TR&H is, in fact, the most sophisticated criminal guild in the city. Rather than simply being a social club calling itself a guild, TR&H takes its self-proclaimed status of guild incredibly seriously. The creators of the establishment were merchants scorned by the Merchant League, and found themselves turning to crime to make ends meet. Rather than give up their sensibilities to join the city's underworld, these merchants brought their mercantile skills to their new line of work.

These merchants, now calling themselves Thomas, Richard, and Harold to avoid anyone finding out who they really were, began acting as middlemen for the criminal footmen of the city. They would go to potential employers on their behalf, put footmen in contact with anyone needing some skullduggery, and would even put together teams of footmen for jobs that were too large and lucrative for one man to handle. At the end of the day, they would take a small cut of whatever the footmen were making.

All this was done in back-streets and cramped alleyways, but as the money started rolling in, the three enterprising criminal dealers decided that they needed to put down roots. Thus TR&H was established, but that soon presented its own problems. They could not simply operate as honestly as they had when they were wandering the alleyways, as the constables would close them the day after they opened. So what were they to do?

Their clients became their solution. The criminal mercenaries of the city have been called footmen for decades before TR&H was established, as it is a simple and effective disguise for these mercenaries to meet with their employers, and to infiltrate their targets' residences. TR&H capitalised on this traditional title, by making their establishment a guild of footmen (the real and reputable sort). The criminal footmen could then come and go as



CRIMINAL PROFESSIONALITY



Contrary to popular belief, most footmen in Middelburg are not full-time professionals. Being a criminal mercenary for hire is something most do around their normal lives. They are cobblers, smiths, wheelwrights and others who take on a bit of extra work in order to make ends meet. Even at the best of times, Middelburg is an expensive city to live in, and a few extra guilders in the pocket goes a long way.

However, you'll see in the Downtime section in the Runed

Age corebook that you can actually be a footman in your time off from doing missions.

There are those brave, or foolish, few who do take on this life full time and dedicate their lives to being a professional criminal for hire. It's a dangerous life, but with high risk comes high reward. Being known as a competent and trustworthy footman will mean you can expect handlers to often come calling about a new job; and all the goods you can loot and burgle on the way is just a bonus.

If this line of work appeals to you, make sure your Contacts are handlers that can provide information and new missions for the party. Start working your way up in the League, get a foot in the door to start climbing that ladder.

It won't be all fun and games, however, as your GM will be able to throw far more complications your way. Being a full time criminal means that you will eventually start leaving a trail, one that the constables will soon find. You can't just hide in a normal job, with a normal life if someone starts asking questions, so your GM will be able to find quite a lot to play around with to make your criminal life a bit more interesting. Think of this as furthering your career, since there is no such thing as bad publicity, and your handlers will want to know you can handle yourself when the law comes knocking.

they please, blending in with the honest ones and none would be the wiser.

This dual-business ended up becoming Thomas, Richard and Harold's best success, as they could recruit new criminal mercenaries from the honest footmen who came through their doors, as well as teach the mercenaries how to act and behave like real footmen, thereby increasing their value to TR&H's bourgeois clientele. The best of both worlds, where one hand feeds the other.

Of course, there has been some trouble throughout the years, with word leaking out about what TR&H's true purpose is, but the establishment has literal dozens of criminal footmen to call upon, and anyone who spread word about the criminal element of TR&H never lived long enough to regret it.

SWART DONDER PUB

Wherever there is money to be made, the government will want to tax it. Regardless if you live in a monarchy, republic, or even a theocracy, the government will always want a part of your hard earnings. Nowhere is this more true in Middelburg, where the Alfresian government struggles to enforce its taxes on the Merchant League's businesses in the city. One of the most heated battles in this economic struggle is the taxation on producing and selling alcohol.

The Swart Donder public house has managed to stay clear of this battle by not technically producing and selling alcohol. Of course, it does actually produce its own alcohol and solely sells what it produces, and everyone knows

it, but with all the legal technicalities that have sprung up in the somewhat-cold war between the League District and Senate house, there is a strict definition of what is and what is not considered alcohol.

That definition stops at 140 proof, or 70% of a drink being pure alcohol. Anything about this is simply considered cleaning liquids. When the creator of the Swart Donder discovered this little legal loophole 20 years ago, he knew where he could make a tidy profit, and so he sold what he had and put all his money into building the public house and the distillery at its back. Now the weakest spirit the Swart Donder makes is 142 proof, just to make sure it cannot be taxed as drinking alcohol.

Of course, it is not quite as easy as just that. Making it is one thing, but selling it is another. The government tried to force its taxes on the Swart Donder by saying it is clearly stating it sells alcohol, so the public house must now display in large signs both inside and outside the building that whatever liquids are bought within it is not fit for human consumption. What is more is

that the barkeep is not allowed to water down the drink at all; it must be sold at 140 proof minimum, or the frustrated tax collectors that so frequently darkens its doorstep will be more than happy to say the public house is selling drinkable spirits. Nothing stops the patrons from watering it down, however, as they are freely allowed to do whatever they wish with whatever liquids they legally purchased.

While the establishment started off as being a fairly easy way to make money, the owner of the Swart Donder quickly found the brewing lifestyle to his liking. At first, he made the cheapest, dirtiest alcohol he could, anything to just make a few guilders; but now he has developed a deep appreciation of his craft. Even though the drink is too strong for most, he puts more effort and care into creating it than anything else he ever attempted. His white-lightning liquor is now pride and joy, and he has even found a trading ship willing to export it to the mainland.

Everyone knows that the Swart Donder is simply trying to avoid paying its taxes, but over the two decades that it has existed, it has already

AS ABOVE, SO BELOW




Wherever you go, there will always be some people who would try and help you and some who would want to hinder you. It could be for any multitude of reasons: the clothes you wear, the colour of your skin, what hangs (or does not) between your legs, what city and nation you hail from, what organisation you are affiliated with and sometimes even what type of ale you prefer.

However, there is one thing that will influence people's perspective of you more than anything else: religion. It crosses the boundaries of race, colour, creed, culture and sex. Knowing when to wear your religion on your sleeve and when to keep quiet can get you far in life. Many a priest, bishop and monk is willing to overlook the crimes of the faithful in their times of need and can give you shelter when you require it most.

Of course, not all religions are created equally. Alfresia is a Prodigalist nation first and a Progenitorist nation second. Runists are tolerated for their scholarly work, and the Eilanni for their nationalism, but woe betide the rest. Seekers, Completists and Neoists are looked down upon and often actively discriminated against. This means their communities are more tightly knit but they often have to hide their religion among the heathen majority.

Always remember: be careful to whom you confide your beliefs in, it can be used against you.



become something of a traditional establishment in the city. Everyone knows of the Swart Donder and the absurdly high proof alcohol it creates, and for many a young man, going to the Swart Donder and surviving a night's drinking is something of a right-of-passage.

For many others, merely seeing a fellow countryman thumbing his nose up at the government and getting away with it is more than enough to advocate for the public house's continued existence. After all, what is Alfresia if not a nation founded on the ideals of liberty and freedom. With all the politicians, League patricians, and bourgeoisie in the city acting as if they own the citizens of the island, a little petty rebellion is a welcome sight to many.

CONSTABULARY

Not a single soul in Middelburg would argue with you if you said that Oldtown has the highest level of criminality in the entire city. It is more than just common knowledge; it is a fact of life. Oldtown is a hive of gangsters, criminals, ne'er-do-wells and many worse things still; and the city's government has plainly just given up on it.

The city has tried and tried across the centuries to reform Oldtown, but no matter what attempt is made, a few years later it will just go back to the cesspool it has always been. A century and a half ago, the city even built a fortified castle in the centre of Oldtown, manned by the most courageous constables and soldiers. It stood for all of seven months, before the city lost all contact with it. Some time later when they dared to venture into Oldtown to investigate, they found no sign of the castle or the men that guarded it. Oldtown had reclaimed its land, and life there continued on as normal.

So the city instead decided to leave well enough alone and let Oldtown govern itself. Middelburg's government would just ensure that the crime and criminals inside Oldtown stay in the district, and do not spill out into the rest of the city. There was a plan once to runically wall

in the entire district, but word leaked out and the implications of creating a literal prison-district led to the burghers of the city protesting until the Grand Mayor backed down.

So if the city could not go in there without bloodshed, and it could not lock all the moral degenerates in there, the only solution was to put boots on the ground around Oldtown. This would mean that when, not if, the criminals ventured out of the district, they could be reigned in before they caused too much havoc. Short of secretly poisoning the entirety of Oldtown, an initiative seriously considered, this was the best solution the Grand Mayor's office could think of.

And thus the constabulary in Brandsveld was built. Just as with every other district bordering Oldtown, this one is more of a fortress than the actual forts around Middelburg. The Grand Mayor's architects learned a valuable lesson from the original constabulary built inside Oldtown, and made sure to use every trick in the book to protect this fort and its constables. Made of a variety of mixed materials and alloys, no standard array can breach the walls, and with the clever design of foreign military forts, the constables inside have a near 360 degree visibility around it to shoot anyone coming close.

The constables of Brandsveld constabulary are similarly over-armed and over-armoured. No pistol and billy-club for these gentlemen. Instead, sabres and muskets that shoot lethal runic rounds are standard issue, while they are armoured as if going to war, with full plate armour and thick, strong shields. The fort also boasts cannons, mortars and grapeshot for the inevitable moment when Oldtown decides to take the constables' fort.

This ring of forts around Oldtown has had the effect the Grand Mayor wanted, but to say that it has made life easier for the burghers is another story. Sure, the gangs from Oldtown do not run riot outside their district, but their crime has little diminished. These constables so close to Oldtown has

learned much from the gangs and have become almost as corrupt. Many gangs pay off the constables to look the other way so that they can venture out of the district unmolested to do their dirty deeds.

There will always be the idealists, the artists, the poets who dream of a bright future of moonshine and roses, but as long as evil remains in the hearts of men, that future will be less than a shadow of a whisper.

~Natan Hawkestone, Alfresian Senator

At the same time, many constables have grown tired of the dangerous work and the little pay, and have taken to extorting the poor residents of Oldtown for protection money. With no other governmental force inside the district, the constables know that they can do what they want there, and as long as their comrades keep their mouths shut, then they can all walk away wealthier men. Oldtown has a dark effect on the human soul, and not even the constables are immune.

HOOPBRON HOSPITAL

They say that Oldtown is filled to the brim with moral reprobates and degenerates, but that is not wholly true. Yes, most of the criminals (of the violent kind at least) make their home here, but Oldtown is also the home of the poor and unfortunate masses. Those driven here by poor fortune, or who through no fault of their own was born here in this cesspool. The majority of Oldtowners are just trying to survive each day as best as they can, while avoiding the troubles of their district.

And what trouble there is. If it does not come from the gangsters or constables extorting everyone of what little they have, or the utter lack of support from the government who has given up on the district, then it is their own neighbours who have become as suspicious and paranoid as they are, each who want to protect what they


have remaining and not giving the smallest bit to help one another.

Not everyone has completely given up on these poor souls, however, and one small light in the darkness for them is the Hoopbron Hospital. Built by the Archdukes of old when Alfresia was still part of Fresland, Hoopbron was little more than a large warehouse, filled with beds where those too poor to afford anything better can rest, recuperate and hopefully recover. It was also built outside of Oldtown, with the good foresight to protect it from the vicious gangs in the district who would eagerly take over any symbol of authority. The occasional Sororal Sister would come to tend to the sick and injured, but most of the time the Hospital was filled with just the ill, their families (if they had any who could come) and the washerwomen who do their level best to keep the Hospital clean and tidy.

Precious little has changed since then. The sick and injured still make their way to the hospital, hoping for some relief from their maladies, and they lie and wait for the day when the Sororal Sisters will come in with their salves, potions, and creams. The washerwomen still clean the cavernous room and the soiled sheets, and every so often an official stops by to do the paperwork in silence and then leave as quickly as he arrived. It still remains more a hospice for the dying than a place of healing. Perhaps the only significant change is where the funding for Hoopbron has come from.

When the Archdukes still ruled the land, the money for Hoopbron came not only from the Archduke's personal coffers, but also from the many nobles of the island. Their paltry donations were enough to keep the hospital ticking over, and it served them well in the eyes of the Archdukes and the prominent clergy as they were seen as "giving back to the people". It was a small expense that most of the nobles could easily overlook for the benefits it brought them.

When the island became a republic, the government had no real intention to keep funding Hoopbron in the absence of the Archduke and the nobility. Of course, it was



important for them to be seen to care for the least fortunate, but it was so far down their list of things to do, that they never seemed to get around to it. Somehow, the hospital carried on without the government's help, and still does to this very day.

That is because of the old nobles, now the old-bourgeoisie of Middelburg, never stopped funding the hospital. Even the Merchant League has a dedicated, if miniscule, budget allocated to funding Hoopbron. For many it had become a tradition, much like tithing to the temples, and they simply never stopped. Hoopbron is eternally grateful for the few guilders that trickle in, and would never dare to ask for more, in fear that the bourgeoisie would realise where their money had gone, and change their mind.

The people of Oldtown could not care less where the money for Hoopbron's lease, its washerwomen and the Sororal Sister's ointments come from, even if they had known. The hospital may not mean much to the rest of the city, but to those who need it most, it is an oasis of peace and helpfulness in the desert that is this metropolis.

MISSION 4

The Case of the Ungallant Admiral

SYNOPSIS

Seven weeks have passed since the incident at the Eternal Temple. Almost two months, and this means it has been nearly four and a half months since the assignment at the Triarch Temple and little more than five months since the Ruined Man murdered his first victim.

This is the final mission of this book, so of course it will be a little more special, a little more unusual, and a little more personal than previous missions.

Something a little more memorable.

The unusual part of this mission is that the PCs aren't hired to do the job themselves, but rather to assist another team in doing their job. The PCs will try and distract the guards around an admiral so that the other team can kill him. A change of pace, really, and something that perhaps may be a bit easier, or less lethal at the very least, for the PCs. There will also be some familiar faces popping up that should make the PCs think twice before killing anyone. The twist to this mission, like the last, will be known as soon as the PCs start their legwork, giving them the time to prepare for it.

What is so special about this mission is that the players has a chance to get their first real look at the Ruined Man. In the last mission they stumbled into the meta-story by coming near his lair (or at least an opening to his lair), but this time they will walk right into his next target. The Ruined Man will kill the admiral and if the PCs are close enough, they will see it in action.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE MISSION PROPER IS AS FOLLOWS:

Word has reached the PCs through some of their various contacts that a handler has a very simple job for them to do that will pay very well. The PCs meet the handler in the Grumpy Bear Tavern where he tells them that the Heisenstein family has asked them to assist another team of footmen in assassinating an admiral. The

PCs will be responsible for distracting the guard detail protecting the admiral so that the other team can kill him. That's all they need to do. What they will discover, however, is that someone close to them is part of the guard detail. If they are successful, they may also be treated to a spectacular sight: the Ruined Man will kill the admiral before the other team has the chance. If the PCs are in the right spot at the right time, they may get a quick look at him.

THE META-STORY IS AS FOLLOWS:

The Ruined Man has grown frustrated, and with frustration comes anger, hate, and madness. The Ruined Man has not killed anyone of import, anyone on his list, in two months. The last was Patriarch Kruger. The elite of Middelburg are overjoyed at this. The constables have hanged half a dozen men since then, believing each to be the Ruined man and have written off the murders of irrelevant persons as copy cats, but these are in fact merely the Ruined Man lashing out in his frustration.

His targets have grown wary and wise, some even realising the connection between the murders and themselves. They are now guarded around the clock and even though the elite of Middelburg believe the crisis to be over, the city is ever watchful. Because of this it has been nearly impossible for the Ruined Man to get close enough to his prey to strike without being seen. Luckily, the gods have answered his prayers and the PCs are about to make life a little easier for him.

OVERVIEW

SCENE 1: THE BRIEF:

- Meet with a Heisenstein handler in the Grumpy Bear Tavern.
- The PCs mission is to distract the bodyguards of an admiral long enough for a second team to kill him.

- The Golden Talons are the bodyguards.
- The PCs have a week to accomplish the mission but they must not kill the admiral themselves.

SCENE 2: THE LEGWORK:

- Four areas of interest:
 - » The Grumpy Bear.
 - Where the PCs will be after Scene 1
 - Admiral will arrive soon after Scene 1 ends.
- Nearly all NPCs in the tavern are armed.
 - » The admiral's residence.
 - Only the admiral and the Talons will be at the residence.
 - Two story apartment with small grounds.
 - » The admiral travel routes.
 - Map of routes provided to PCs by handler.
 - Set routes that the Admiral does not vary from, except in case of emergencies.
 - » The Senate House and Navy Headquarters.
 - The second team will not kill the admiral in either of these locations.
 - The twist to this mission is that Alfons Aarden from Chapter 3 is part of the bodyguards as well as someone from the PCs past.
 - » Part of the clue can be gained by talking to Aarden.

SCENE 3: THE MISSION:

- Site of the mission is dependent on the players.
- When the bodyguards are distracted, the Ruined Man will appear and kill the admiral before vanishing.

SCENE 4: THE DEBRIEF:

- Takes place in the Heisenstein compound or the Grumpy Bear Tavern.
 - » The PCs will deal only with their handler.
 - » Even though the Ruined Man killed the admiral, the PCs will receive their reward as long they distracted the bodyguards.

SCENE 1: THE BRIEF

This scene takes place in the Grumpy Bear tavern, the favourite watering hole for the officers of Alfresia's military. The owner knows his clientele well and the inside of the tavern has been made to look like the epitome of masculinity. Animal heads on the walls, pelts on the floor, suits of armour standing at attention, battle standards and weapons hanging on all the walls. The atmosphere is pure testosterone, and with every man inside armed you would do well not insult anyone. Tavern brawls are infrequent, but when they do occur they are frighteningly short.

The meeting for the handler is set for 11 o'clock in the morning and the PCs will be a tad early so the tavern won't be very crowded when they get here, but it will start to fill up as lunch time approaches.

Contrary to previous missions, the handler here will have all the information the PCs need to carry out the mission, so the legwork they will need to do is only if they require anything extra. The time frame for the mission will also be long enough so that the PCs will have more than enough time for anything they need. The key part of the brief is for the players to feel very relaxed about this mission.

NARRATE OR PARAPHRASE THE FOLLOWING AS APPROPRIATE:

“There is no good news anymore,” you think as you read today’s Herald. Two days ago a Completist dock worker was hanged for being the Ruined Man and only last night a prostitute in Naval Hill was found strung up the rafters of a building by her feet. There was no rope found, the murderer used her own flayed skin. As customary, she was kept alive with an array underneath her and a rune was drawn in her blood on the wall behind her. “Copy cats”, the Herald calls them. You can only hope. This mad man has been terrorising Middelburg for five months. It has to end some time.

Your melancholic reverie is broken when your handler swaggers into the tavern. You can only assume him to be your handler as he looks nothing like any of the regulars in the tavern. Scruffy, unshaven, he even seems to be drunk.

“Top o’ the mornin’ to you, me bonny wee lads/lasses,” he says to you. Not drunk then, just Ullachtian.

“This all O’ you?” He asks, sitting down across from you and then continuing on without waiting for an answer. “Ah, nevermind, we do not need that many o’ you this time.

“Me name is Doyle, Doyle O’Driscoll and you will be pleased to hear that what I got in store for you is the simplest job you will ‘ave all week, perhaps all month. You see, you do not need to do the job yourself, we got other lads for that. They are busy sorting that out. You just need to help them. See, simple. I could even do it meself, but then, what am I paying you for?

“What the lads are gonna do,” he quiets down to a whisper, “is kill an admiral.” He nods, sagely. “Poor prick pissed off the Matriarch. He will not be doing that again. But he is an admiral, he is never alone. We got good word saying he got himself a group of bodyguards, so what you are going to do, you are going to distract them long enough for the other lads to get in, kill the sorry bastard and get out again. Simple. You will

not even have to fire off a shot. And better yet, the lads already got you all the information you need. You should be paying us for this job, me thinks.

“But enough jibber-jabber, ask me what you need, because I need to be out of here. The admiral will be here in less than an hour.”

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY DOYLE O’DRISCOLL:

- O’Driscoll works for the Heisenstein trade family and this job is a special request of the Matriarch.
- The target is Admiral Wendel Autenburg of the 2nd Fleet, sometimes called the Home Fleet or the Sitting Fleet as its main responsibility is guarding the waters around Middelburg.
- O’Driscoll won’t say why the Matriarch wants the admiral dead. It will take a -20 Social Skill Check for him to only say that the Matriarch has a personal vendetta against the admiral; and a -40 Social Skill Check for him to say that the Matriarch is a woman scorned and the admiral will just have to pay for his ungallant behaviour.
- O’Driscoll won’t say, at all, who the team is that is going to kill the admiral. It is important that the teams don’t know who each other are in case they get arrested and interrogated. It is safer for everyone involved.
- The admiral is on a self imposed house arrest because he believes someone wants to kill him. If the PCs say or insinuate that it is clearly O’Driscoll then he will say:
 - » “Not us, me bonny chaps/lasses. The old codger makes enemies wherever he goes. It is not just us who wants him dead.”
 - » The admiral has also gotten himself bodyguards. He

has (1.5xPC numbers, round up) Golden Talons guarding him. O'Driscoll will say:


- "They are a good bunch O' boys, so try not to kill them. The Matriarch does not want the Third Duke breathing down her neck about this."
- » O'Driscoll doesn't know the identities of the Talons, but he will say it is not important to distracting them.
- The admiral doesn't just stay at home all day, however. He has work to do. He visits three places: The Senate House once per week to meet with the Politicians; the Navy Headquarters twice per week; and the Grumpy Bear Tavern for lunch every day at noon.
- The admiral is a punctual man and is in bed by ten o'clock in the evening and is up again at six o'clock.
- He has servants, but has dismissed the servants for the time being, mindful of the perceived threat. It will just be him and the Talons in the house.
- O'Driscoll provides the PCs with a map of the routes that the admiral will take as well as a floor plan of his house. O'Driscoll will say that the team to assassinate the admiral will not do so at the Senate House or the Navy Headquarters, too much exposure. They can take him on his way to or from any of those places however.
- » If the PCs don't ask about a map, or any vague request for help, O'Driscoll will give them the maps just before leaving.
- Because someone else might be after him, there is a time limit to the assassination, but it is one week since they don't believe the other threat is very credible. But they also can't take any chances.

- There will be no need for the PCs to signal the other team when they have distracted the Talons. The other team will be keeping an eye on the PCs and will jump in when necessary. O'Driscoll will say:
- "So if you see someone following you around, do not worry about it. It is probably just the other lads. Well... Hopefully."
- The PCs need to keep the Golden Talons distracted for ten minutes, to give the other team enough time to assassinate the admiral. During that time, the Golden Talons must not be able to reach the admiral and stop the other team.
- O'Driscoll will warn the PCs not to kill the admiral themselves. The Matriarch wants the admiral killed in a very specific fashion and the other team has prepared for that. The PCs can't know in what way for the same reason they can't know who the other team is.
- O'Driscoll brought haggling money. A -10 Social Skill Check will get the PCs a quarter of the money in advance (+10 to Wealth Skill Checks for the session) and a -20 Social Skill Check will get the PCs half of the money in advance (+20 to Wealth Skill Checks for the session).

Once all the questions have been asked or answered or if the PCs are taking too long, O'Driscoll will take out a shiny brass pocket watch, look at it and say: "Well me cheery faced lads/lasses, it is time for me to be off. We do not want the soon-to-be late admiral seeing me, now do we. And remember now, me bright eyed children, distract the guards, don't touch the admiral. Cheeri-O!" And with a wave, O'Driscoll will swagger out of the Grumpy Bear.

It is now up to the PCs, but they have been given every advantage they can get. It should be a walk in the park.

If this scene has carried on for a long time, it



may well be a good idea to go over the key points of information with the players so they don't forget something vital that their PCs would have remembered.

SCENE 2: THE LEGWORK

The length of this scene depends on whether the players decide to do any legwork at all. They have the map of Autenburg's travel routes, they have the layout of his house, they have his schedule and they don't actually have to do anything to him. As far as they could be concerned, they could head straight to the admiral and set off a few firecrackers and call it a day.

But it can't be too easy for the PCs or it won't be much of a mission. That is where the twist to the mission comes in. Whether they wait out the time until the admiral comes to the Grumpy Bear or they go to him, as soon as they get within sight of him they will know the twist, and if they aren't careful then the twist might spot them.

Floor plans and detailed descriptions will not be provided for the Senate House or the Navy Headquarters as O'Driscoll's other team will not attempt to assassinate the admiral there. If the PCs did not listen and distract the guards then, well it is on their heads and they now have to try again while knowing the Talons know of them. The Ruined Man will also not strike at the admiral in the Senate House or Navy Headquarters. He is insane, not stupid.

THE GOLDEN TALONS

The true target of this mission, as far as the PCs should care. The admiral is not their concern.

The Golden Talons are a mercenary force owned by the van Windburg family who hire them out to the highest bidder, almost no questions asked. The Alfresian military contracts the Talons out on a regular basis as any casualties do not affect the military and there is some degree of separation that the military can use for

plausible deniability. The Talons' reputation are what keeps the van Windburg coffers full and the Third Duke accepts nothing less than perfection from the Talons. They are an elite military unit that shouldn't be underestimated.

The Golden Talon soldiers guarding the admiral are not armed and armoured as they would normally be in a combat situation, but are rather attempting to look as non-threatening as they can. Plainclothes and hidden weapons are what the PCs can expect. The Talons are with the admiral around the clock, there is never a minute where he is left alone. At least one Talon is always with him.

O'Driscoll told the PCs that there are (1.5xPC numbers, round up) of Golden Talons. That is not a lie, strictly speaking, as that is what his sources told him. The truth, however, is that a new member of the Talons joined the guard detail last night to gain some more experience. The identity of this new Talon is the twist to this mission, well half the twist. The other half is that the Talon team is led by Sergeant Alfons Aarden. Yes, that Alfons from Mission 3. He is back from van Windburg and has been demoted to sergeant because of what occurred on the last mission. If any of the PCs survived the third mission, then Aarden will recognise them, making the mission that much harder.

The new Talon's identity is up to you as the GM. That is because the new Talon is someone with a personal relationship to the PCs. The key point here is "personal". The new Talon can't simply be someone they met only once or someone they don't care about. It has to be someone where they will have to seriously and honestly consider whether they could even think of shooting this person.

There are a few ways to accomplish this. The best case scenario would be to use an NPC (not a named NPC in this book) that they have met in the players' gaming sessions that have turned into a regular occurrence. An NPC the entire group has grown fond

of, someone they even regularly seek out to help or are always overjoyed to run into on the street.

Sometimes, however, this can't happen. PCs die, NPCs die, people double cross and backstab other people and the streets of Middelburg are not conducive to long lasting friendships. If the players have not grown attached to an NPC there is still another means of bringing in an NPC with a "personal relationship" into the story. That is by using the PCs' backstories. If the PCs share backstories in any capacity, then this will go so much smoother as you can pick an NPC from the backstory that is important to all PCs. If, however, the PCs have separate backstories, pick an NPC from any of their backstories that will have the greatest emotional reaction from one of the PCs. As long as one PCs doesn't want to kill the new Talon, that PC will then also surely try and prevent the other PCs from killing the new Talon. A family member would be a good choice here.

There are some character aspects that you should look out for when picking the new Talon so that it is as believable as possible. A love of money, or a need of money is the biggest concern as this can soothe any concerns of the PCs as to why their loved one suddenly joined a mercenary company. A love or interest in combat, war, or the military will also do the same. If at all possible, make sure the new Talon had a good moral sense, a good set of ethics. An honourable person, in short. This is because the PCs shouldn't just be able to use their relationship with the new Talon to accomplish the mission. The new Talon is an obstacle, not a gift.

The purpose of including Aarden and the new Talon is to add a layer of difficulty to an otherwise seemingly easy mission. If any of the PCs in this mission are the same as those in Chapter 3 then Aarden will of course recognise them, and the new Talon will clearly recognise whomever is their closest relation. This means that the PCs will have to keep their distance, and be stealthy so that these two don't alert the

admiral that something is afoot.

The first time that either Aarden or the new Talon spots the PCs they will make contact, thinking that this is merely a coincidence. The PCs will have to beat Aarden and the new Talon's Intuition Skill to keep them from informing the admiral that the PCs are in on the plot to kill him. However, by talking with them, the PCs will uncover the Clue.


THE GRUMPY BEAR TAVERN

The tavern where the players currently are. The admiral is scheduled to arrive here by noon for his lunch, as O'Driscoll told the PCs. O'Driscoll met with the PCs at eleven o'clock, so the PCs don't have long to wait for the admiral. If the PCs wait, they will have their first look at both the admiral and the twist. There will be no need to roll any Perception Skill Checks to spot the admiral or his guards, the fact that Aarden and the new Talon is there should be obvious. If the PCs want to hide, then have an Opposed Skill Check between the PCs' Stealth Skills and the Talons' Perception Skills.

The Grumpy Bear tavern is a two story building in the shape of an "L". Both stories of the "foot" of the "L" are for the owners themselves. The bottom story is the kitchen and buttery that provides the food and drink for the tavern while the top floor is their personal apartment. The owner's apartment only has a bedroom, lavatory, and sitting room. They are not the most extravagant of people and take their meals in the Dining Hall with everyone else.

The staff (the cook and waitresses) the owners employ do not live on the premises so there is no need for their accommodation. The owner, Jan "the Major" du Preez mans the bar himself while his wife, Sandra du Preez works in the kitchen with the other cook.

The rest of the Grumpy Bear is given over to the Dining Hall on the first floor and the rooms to let are on the second floor. The Dining Hall has no fixed furniture, but is rather filled with



chairs and small tables that the customers can rearrange as they see fit. The rooms to let on the second floor consist only of a bedroom and ensuite lavatory.

There are several entrances into the Grumpy Bear: The first is the main entrance on the long side of the “L”; secondly there are two entrances leading to the covered patio at the back of the tavern; and there is a back entrance to the kitchen where the owners get their morning deliveries. The staircase to the second floor is on the opposite side of the bar in the Dining Hall and is the only access to the second floor.

As with other dining establishments, the Grumpy Bear’s busiest times are during breakfast, lunch, and dinner. The rest of the day, it is fairly quiet. Not empty, but quiet. The tavern is renowned for its food rather than drinking atmosphere and so men getting off work or duty go to public houses or beer halls to get drunk. That is not to say drunks won’t be found here in the evenings, but the Major doesn’t take too kindly to bar fights and neither do his clientele, mostly military men, who are often more armed than constables. The Major himself keeps a loaded rifle and pistol under the bar along with his trusty old cutlass if and when someone gets truly unruly.

ADMIRAL WENDEL AUTENBURG’S RESIDENCE

For a man of his station, the admiral can afford a luxurious mansion in Nieuton. Many of his fellow admirals and generals certainly do. The admiral, however, has chosen a simple and small residence in the Military District. The admiral has spent his entire adult life, more than forty years, in the military and the prospect of not living near the military is a frightening thought for him. As he has neither a wife nor children, the admiral has chosen a small two bedroom house in which to live out his golden years. The admiral is by no means a spartan or frugal man, it is simply that he prefers his luxuries small, easily hidden from the public eye, and preferably

edible or drinkable.

The admiral’s residence is a two story house with only nine rooms. The ground story contains the Kitchen, Dining Room, Cabinet, a Storage Room, and Lavatory. Attached to the Kitchen and Dining Room on the front of the house is the Conservatory. The second story has two Bedrooms with en suite lavatories and a Study. One bedroom is the Master Bedroom for the admiral himself, while the second bedroom is the seldom used Guest Bedroom. Attached to the Master Bedroom and on top of the Conservatory is the Deck where the admiral sometimes prefers to sit and read in the afternoon light.

There is nothing special about any of the rooms that deserve particular attention. They are decorated and furnished in the very stereotypical style of a lifelong bachelor, meaning the items in the house have been chosen for their practicality and comfort rather than style. It is by no means a show house and anyone that has any interest in interior design would be terribly disappointed in the admiral.

What is special about the house is its use of electricity. The government was the first to use the new Lightning rune to control the climate of a building and because of his high rank, the admiral enjoys this privilege immensely. In every room there are three switches. One is for the light and is self explanatory, the others are for humidity and temperature. With these two switches, the admiral can make any room as comfortable as he can wish. Rain, hail, sleet, snow or heatwave no longer concerns him. Inside his home it is always mild and cool. The electricity needed for all this comes from a bank of arrays (measuring one metre by fifty centimetres) in the Storage Room that Receives the electricity from a relay station in the Military District. There are a couple of levers on the array bank. One is to turn the electricity on and off and the second is to release the array bank from its holding so that it can be removed.

The Golden Talons have

been given the Guest Bedroom to use while they guard the admiral. At night they will sleep in four hour shifts, half sleeping on the bed and floor of the Guest Bedroom while the other half divide themselves between patrolling the grounds of the house and patrolling the inside of the house. During the day when the admiral is at home, the Talons will ensure he is never left alone. There will always be at least one Talon, preferably two, at his side while the rest patrol as per the night time routine.

There are three entrances into the house, other than breaking a window. The first is the front door through the Foyer and the second is the backdoor through the Storage Room. The third entrance is the door to the Master Bedroom on the second story Deck. The second story entrance is not meant to be accessible from the ground and so there isn't a ladder leading down from the deck. There also isn't a lock on the door, but instead a latch on the inside.

The grounds of the residence are as simple as the house itself. Well tended lawns make up most of the grounds with pretty and delicate flower beds immediately surrounding the house itself and low hedging plants creating a fence around the property. Next to the house is a small stable for the four horses (two of which are currently leased) and a covered area under which the carriage is parked.

AUTENBURG'S TRAVEL ROUTES

While the admiral may be in fear for his life, he does have duties and priorities in his life that he must attend to. First and foremost among these is his work at the Navy Headquarters as Master of the Second Fleet. It is his responsibility to ensure the safety of the waters surrounding Middelburg. He will spend four hours at the Navy Headquarters twice weekly. You can decide which days these are and whether he spends those four hours before or after his lunch. He will always go to his residence before and after the


Navy Headquarters to change in and out of his uniform.

His second priority is his weekly meeting with the politicians at the Senate House to report on the latest developments regarding the naval defense of Middelburg. Alfresia has been at peace for nearly three decades and so these weekly reports rarely provide the politicians with anything original. Very little changes from week to week in peacetime. As a result, these one hour meetings have turned in ten minute meetings and fifty minutes of drinking, smoking, and general conversation between old friends. You can decide on which day of the week the admiral will go to the Senate house as long as it is not on the same day as when he goes to the Navy Headquarters. As with the Navy Headquarters, the admiral will travel from his residence to the Senate House and then return.

The routes themselves were chosen specifically by the admiral and which he follows religiously. The admiral has a streak of obsessive compulsions and this is one of them. The routes he laid out are the quickest and shortest routes between the four places he has confined himself to. The admiral never deviates from the set routes, regardless of the objections by the Golden Talons. Aarden has so far gotten the admiral to agree that, should the Talons believe there is an imminent threat to the admiral, they will deviate from the route in order to get him to safety.

The roads that the admiral uses are broad, open, public roads and he will travel them during the day. This means that there will be a multitude of other people on the roads. Horses, carriages, other technological marvels of travel and of course hordes of people on foot. Middelburg is a crowded city and it can be to the PCs' help or hindrance that it is easily possible to get lost in the crowds. On one hand, it will be harder for the Golden Talons to spot the PCs, but on the other hand, the crowds can get in the way of the PCs and slow them down, allowing the carriage to escape.

The admiral does not travel on foot. This



is not only because of the threat against his life but also because he is an admiral, and there are certain expectations of such a noble position. Riding in a carriage is one of them. He travels in a closed carriage with room enough inside for four. The driver's pew can seat two, and the bench on the top rear of the carriage can seat another two. The Talons will ensure that there are always two Talons inside with the admiral and then spread themselves out where there is space. If there are more than seven Talons, the rest will accompany the carriage on horseback.

The carriage itself is made of wood and steel and is pulled by four horses. It has runic arrays which protect it against all known metals, woods and fire. There is an array at the rear which can be activated to, briefly, propel the carriage forward at great speed. If the horses are in any way incapable of pulling the carriage, the Talons will cut them free of the carriage and activate the array.

The admiral's route takes him in and out of the Military District on his way to and from the Senate House. This is important as the Military District is completely walled off, having barred gates (kept open during peacetime) at every road leading into the district. At each of these gates are soldiers keeping watch for any suspicious activity and persons. The soldiers on duty should have no reason to suspect the PCs unless the PCs are overtly, and significantly, armed or armoured or if they go through the same gate multiple times a day.

If the soldiers have cause to suspect the PCs, and PCs failed any Social Skill Checks to overcome this problem, then the soldiers will send a runner to the constables to ask for assistance while they keep an eye on the PCs. The soldiers won't chase after the PCs, they don't leave their posts, but they will inform the other gates' soldiers of the PCs.

THE SENATE HOUSE AND NAVY HEADQUARTERS

If the players attempt to follow the admiral into either the Senate House or the Navy Headquarters, remind them that O'Driscoll told them that the other team will not assassinate the admiral if he is on the grounds of the Navy Headquarters or the Senate House.

Both areas are immense building complexes with several stories above ground and as many below ground. If you don't know what you're looking for, it is quite easy to get lost in there. At any one time there will be hundreds if not thousands of people inside each building and these will be the staff, any guards on duty, and visitors. It is not impossible to sneak in and out of them, but it is incredibly difficult, especially the areas where the admiral will be heading.

In the Navy Headquarters, the admiral will be in his office on one of the top floors, surrounded by other admirals, captains, and commanders as well as the security needed to protect these men. In the Senate House, the admiral will be meeting with the senators in charge of the defense of Middelburg in one of the receiving rooms above the Senate Hall, an area off limits to the general public. Both of these areas are difficult to reach without the correct connections, the correct authorisation, and the silver tongue needed to bypass any suspicious guards.

Of course, it is not just the security of each building that the PCs have to worry about if they try and infiltrate. They will also have to worry about Aarden and the new Talon, who know who the PCs are and may have already seen them. If they spot the PCs in such a highly secure area, there is precious little the PCs will be able to say that will not make the Talons suspicious. Aarden, as the leader of the Talon squad, will be with the admiral in his office or in his meetings with the senators. The rest of the Talons will take positions on any available door and patrolling

hallways surrounding the room.

There is always the slim chance that the PCs can get to the admiral and kill him, for whatever reason. If they can do this without anyone being the wiser, then they could reasonably exit the building in the same manner as they came in. If they were seen, they are now in one of the two most secure buildings in Middelburg with scores of heavily armed men with no concern for basic human rights. If they do manage to escape, move to the Aftermath section of Scene 4 to see how O'Driscoll handles the news. If they manage to kill the admiral here, the Ruined Man will also not be making his appearance.

Remember that neither O'Driscoll's other team or the Ruined Man will make a move on the admiral if the PCs distract the Golden Talons while they are on the grounds of the Navy Headquarters or Senate House.

THE CLUE

The Clue in this mission comes in two parts. The most obvious part is that the Ruined Man will kill the admiral (if the PCs don't do it themselves, that is), but that is part of the mission. The clue that will tell the PCs more about the Ruined Man will be found by talking to Aarden, the new Talon or by overhearing the Golden Talons' gossiping.


As all men whose work entails them standing around for long periods of time not doing very much, the Golden Talons will gossip and chat and converse when they think the admiral is not paying attention or when they are out of earshot. They have been told the reason why they are guarding the admiral, but some things have not added up and the admiral is far too vague and evasive on the details. The Golden Talons are far too professional to question and interrogate the admiral to find the truth, but that does not stop them from talking and speculating about it.

Aarden and the new Talon will also have this sense of professionalism and will not spill

the admiral's secrets at the first provocation by the PCs. The PCs will have to pass a series of Diplomacy Skill Checks (difficulty is up to your discretion) in order to hear the full story.

INFORMATION GAINED FROM THE GOLDEN TALONS:

- The admiral told the Talons the following:
 - » A threat has been made against the admiral's life. The admiral finds this threat quite credible.
 - » The threat comes from an inmate who escaped from St. Isabella's asylum.
 - » The inmate escaped from the asylum approximately five months ago.
 - » The inmate has been described as being of average height and build and middling complexion.
- Through their contacts and own resources, the Talons have discovered the following:
 - » There is no connection between the admiral and the asylum.
 - » The asylum has no records of an escaped inmate from five months ago.
 - » The constabulary is unaware of this supposed threat.
 - » Only the admiral's most trusted confidants at the Navy Headquarters are aware of the threat. The rest believe he is taking an extended sick leave.
 - » The Talons have found no evidence of the threat (no letters, no witnesses, etc).
 - » The admiral has sent letters to a few other individuals, warning them of the escaped patient. The Talons presume they are also involved.
 - » The Talons have a suspicion that this could be to do with the gruesome



murders, due to the date that the supposed inmate escaped, and because the admiral doesn't want anyone else to know about it.

With all the information the Talons have collected, they can reasonably assume the admiral is lying about the threat. However, they don't know if he is only lying about the origin of the threat or if there is a threat at all. Whatever the case may be, they have to prepare for the worse and at the very least, they are being paid handsomely for indulging the admiral. That is not to say there isn't some resentment against the admiral for keeping valuable information from the Talons, especially on Aarden's part, just that the Talon's professionalism and paycheck is more than enough to cover this.

SCENE 3: THE MISSION

The PCs' mission is simple and straightforward: distract the Golden Talons so that O'Driscoll's other team can assassinate the admiral.

There are a thousand and one ways the PCs can accomplish this, thus this scene could resolve a thousand and one different ways. The PCs have the opportunity to distract the Talons in the admiral's Residence, the Grumpy Bear, or along the three routes the admiral travels on. As there are so many different ways the PCs can complete the mission, below will be the behaviours of how the NPCs in each location will react to the PCs.

The skills and equipment for the NPCs can be found at the end of the Chapter.

THE GOLDEN TALONS

- It is important to note that this is a legal and legitimate assignment for the Golden Talons. They aren't doing anything wrong and have no reason to hide who or what they are.
- The Talons' first priority is the safety of the admiral. Their careers and reputation

rely upon it.

- Because of their reputation, they will not blindly fire into crowds or start anything that will later cost them dearly. They will also not flee. They will, however, perform a fighting retreat if they think they will die. They will then reform at a better position and plan a counter attack.
- If they believe the admiral's life is at stake, they will not try and secure him where he is, instead they will take him to the nearest fortified building. This may be the Navy Headquarters or Senate House or any constabulary or other military building.
- Should they run, a third of the Talons will stay behind to deal with the threat, while the other two thirds escape with the admiral. Should they then encounter another threat while on the run, half the remaining Talons will stay behind to deal with the new threat.
- The Talons will only obey orders by Sergeant Aarden, no one else. Not even the admiral. Aarden, however, will obey the admiral's orders unless he thinks it will get all his men killed.
- Should Aarden be rendered incapable, another Talon will take command, and so on. The new Talon is at the bottom of this hierarchy.
- If and when the Admiral is dead by the hands of the Ruined Man, the Talons will stop combat and try to talk to the PCs about what just happened. They already failed their mission, so no point in dying as well. If the PCs continue with combat, so will the Talons, but their first instinct would be to diffuse the situation. If the PCs flee, the Talons will let them go and await the authorities.

ADMIRAL WENDEL AUTENBURG

- The admiral is not a coward nor is he unaccustomed to combat.
- His requirement of a team of bodyguards is not an indictment against his bravery, but rather a testament to the seriousness of the threat.
- The admiral is armed at all times but is more accustomed to commanding troops than fighting himself.
- The admiral will only engage the PCs in combat if they target him specifically or if he thinks the Talons are losing the fight.
- The admiral will only flee if all the Talons have been rendered incapable of protecting him.

THE GRUMPY BEAR TAVERN PATRONS

- The Grumpy Bear attracts military men of all shapes and sizes, but there will not just be military men present when the PCs are there. Wives, children, friends of soldiers will be there as well as patrons from outside the Military District.
- Should anything happen in the tavern, half of all the patrons will be soldiers and you can use the Soldier Template for them. The soldiers will attack in defense of the tavern and its owners, but if it is made known that an admiral of the fleet is being attacked, they will defend him as best they can.
- The other half of the patrons will be civilians and you can use the Civilian Template for them. At the first sign of combat, the civilians will seek cover and then move towards the exits. If they have to move out of cover to reach the exit, they will only do so if they think nobody's watching.
- The owner, Jan du Preez will attack anyone he sees as the instigator in the

conflict. He will defend the tavern with his life. His wife, Sandra, will head to cover with the other civilians.

- Any civilian which escapes will contact the authorities and they will arrive anytime after fifteen minutes.

CIVILIANS ON THE STREETS OF MIDDELBURG

- These are merely people trying to live their lives as best they can in these turbulent times.
- At the first sign of combat, every civilian will run away from where the combat starts and seek cover.
- A few will attempt to contact the authorities and they will arrive anytime after fifteen minutes.
- As many men in Middelburg are armed, you can choose any amount of civilians to be armed and willing to fight back against anyone in combat. The number of civilians who do this should not exceed the PC numbers.

SENATE HOUSE AND NAVY HEADQUARTERS STAFF AND VISITORS

- Both of these areas are heavily guarded with men not afraid to use lethal force. The situation in the city has come to the point where the rich and powerful (like the men who work in these buildings) won't take any chance with their lives.
- Use the Soldier Template for the guards in the Navy Headquarters and the Constable Template for the guards in the Senate House.
- The guards will be for all intents and purposes never ending, there are scores of guards inside each building and by the time the PCs have cleared them all, if they are so lucky, reinforcements will have been called.

- Any civilians will run for cover away from the PCs as fast as they can. They know that any attack in such a building could easily lead to a hostage situation and they don't want to be the unlucky party chosen for such an occasion.

THE CONSTABLES

- Any NPC that flees from the PCs to call the authorities will find the constables only inside the Constabulary Headquarters in the Military District, and these would mainly just be administrators. Any other constables will be outside. The general policing force in the Military District are the Provosts.
- Use the Soldier Template for the Provosts and the Constable Template for the constables.
- In the Military District, the Provosts can take as little as fifteen minutes to arrive at a scene they are called to.
- Outside the Military District, the constables will take at least thirty minutes to arrive at a scene they are called to.
- In either case, the authorities will attempt to arrest the PCs but will use lethal force if necessary.
- Should either of the authorities arrest the PCs, the result will be the same: go to the Aftermath section of Scene 4.

If and when the PCs have distracted the Golden Talons (or initiated combat), the Ruined Man will appear. While O'Driscoll told the PCs that the Talons must be distracted for at least ten minutes, as soon as they are at least five metres away from the admiral and not looking in his direction, then the Ruined Man will appear.

Whether it is at night or during the day, the Ruined Man will seem to appear in a blinding flash of light immediately behind the admiral. The Ruined Man will then place one hand on the admiral's neck, the other on his shoulder. The

Ruined Man will then whisper a short sentence to the admiral and then will forcefully rip the admiral's head off his body. The Ruined Man and the admiral's head will then disappear again in another blinding flash of light.

If the PCs manage to get a shot off at the Ruined Man then do the normal Opposed Combat Skill Check for a stationary target, but tell the PCs only that they can see no damage being done (even if the PCs used an array that by all right should have killed him, eg: a Contain-Exclude-Human array). If any PC scored a hit against the Ruined Man, he will look directly at that PC and say "Not yet, not you."

Remember not to call the Ruined Man by this name. As this is the first time the PCs will have seen him, they will not know who he is. They can reasonably, and rightly, assume it is the Ruined Man, but let the players make that connection.

INFORMATION THE PCs CAN GAIN FROM THE RUINED MAN ENCOUNTER:

- The Ruined Man is covered in a hooded coat that covers his entire body.
- This coat is tattered and repaired so much it seems that is by now several dozen different pieces of clothing.
- The PCs will not be able to see into the Ruined Man's coat or hood to see his face, but they will see the shining, glowing pin-pricks of his eyes..
- The PCs will see parts of the Ruined Man's hands when he is holding the admiral.
- His hands are covered in bandages and scraps of cloth, but what is visible is deathly pale and appears to be covered in bony growths.
- The PCs will also be able to make out that his hands are completely covered in runic array tattoos but they are too small to make out any detail.
- The PCs will not hear what the Ruined Man whispers to the

admiral.

➤ If the Ruined Man speaks to the PCs, his voice is harsh and strained as if his vocal chords are badly damaged. His voice is also in the mid to high pitches because of this.

SCENE 4: THE DEBRIEF

As long as the PCs distracted the Golden Talons they should feel confident that the demise of the admiral was not their fault. O'Driscoll certainly won't hold it against them.

IF ALL THE PCs DIED BEFORE THE ADMIRAL IS KILLED

The result will be the same as if the PCs successfully distracted the Golden Talons. If the PCs died in the presence of the Talons, tell the players how the Talons are distracted enough by their deaths that they take their eyes off the admiral long enough for the Ruined Man to make his appearance. If the PCs died away from the Talons, tell the players how O'Driscoll's other team tried to assassinate the admiral anyway but got stuck in combat with the Talons, giving the Ruined Man the opportunity to kill the admiral.

IF ALL THE PCs DIED AFTER THE ADMIRAL IS KILLED

If it was the Ruined Man that killed the admiral, then he has already made his appearance. Simply tell the players how the Talons tensely await the constables and how both parties are visibly disturbed by what happened. If the PCs killed the admiral, tell the players how the Ruined Man, at some point in the near future when there are no witnesses, comes to the admiral's corpse and removes his head and disappears.

FOR THOSE PCs THAT WERE ARRESTED:

They will be taken to the constabulary or provosts gaols, stripped down naked and thrown

into the cells where they will in all likelihood be forgotten. The constables have more than enough proof of the criminality of the PCs and the PCs should know the Heisenstein family will disavow any knowledge of them. At the very least, they will be in gaol for the remainder of the campaign.

IF THE PCs SURVIVED, STAYED OUT OF GAOL, BUT KILLED THE ADMIRAL


If and when the PCs try to find O'Driscoll at the Grumpy Bear or the Heisenstein compound in the League District, they will receive a cold welcome. O'Driscoll specifically told them not to kill the admiral and they did, this constitutes a failure of the mission. Failure means they will not be paid. It will take a -40 Social Skill Check for the PCs to be given half the payment (minus anything they received before the mission started) and a -60 Social Skill Check to receive full payment.

IF THE PCs SURVIVED, STAYED OUT OF GAOL AND SUCCEEDED IN THEIR MISSION

All is successful, on the PCs end, and O'Driscoll will welcome them back with open arms. News will have traveled quickly and he would have heard about the encounter with the Ruined Man. O'Driscoll will not only provide full payment to the PCs, recognising that it is not the PCs fault, but will also give the PCs a safe house in which to hide away from both the Ruined Man and the constables who would be looking for them. If the PCs accept, O'Driscoll will accompany them in order to find out more about the Ruined Man.

AFTERMATH

Whether the PCs killed the admiral or the Ruined Man, the constabulary will be looking for the PCs. At the very least the Golden Talons will have told the constables and provosts about the PCs involvement in the admiral's death and



the constables and provosts will either want to put the PCs behind bars if they killed the admiral or want to know as much about the encounter with the Ruined Man to better understand this madman wreaking havoc in Middelburg.

This can lead to a couple of good follow up missions where the constables and provosts are either hunting down the PCs for killing the one man responsible for the naval defense of Middelburg, or working with the PCs to uncover more clues about the Ruined Man. If one or more of the PCs has any ambitions about joining or working with the constables, the provosts, or the military in general, this can be a good start in building connections, contacts, and a reputation.

Similarly, if one or more of the PCs wants to build up a reputation with the Heisenstein family, they will have more than a good chance to do so when they are in the safe house with O'Driscoll (if they succeeded in their mission). The Matriarch of the Heisenstein family is an aloof and cold woman, some would say, and it will be hard to win her favour, but her handlers, like O'Driscoll, are easy enough to get along with and will have more than enough assignments to keep the PCs busy.

As long as the admiral was killed, no matter how that was accomplished, the government will enact a curfew on Middelburg effective immediately. Admiral Wendel Autenburg wasn't just any admiral. He was in command of the second fleet and thus in command of the naval defense of Middelburg. With him dead, there is a gap in the defense until a new admiral is selected, brought up to speed, and given time to get accustomed to his new role. Middelburg is vulnerable (more so if the PCs failed the third mission).

The curfew will be lifted in the next book, but until that happens no one is allowed out at night unless they have proof that they are on official business from either the government or the Merchant League. The curfew lasts from dusk to dawn and anyone not on bona fide business will be summarily arrested. When designing any follow up missions, it would be a good idea

to have them take place at night to show the characters the difference between the crowded, bustling city during the day and the empty, quiet city at night.

NON-PLAYABLE CHARACTERS

CONSTABLES

Athletics	40	Intuition	30
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	50
Burglary	40	Logic	30
Constitution	40	Luck	30
Deceive	30	Might	40
Diplomacy	30	Perception	40
Drive	50	Shoot	50
Fight	40	Stealth	30
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	30
Intimidate	50	Will	40

RUNIC ARRAYS

- Middelburg Standard Defensive array on Cuirass, Helm and Quilted Jacket.
- Constable's Friend Offensive array on Pistol rounds and Billy Club.

EQUIPMENT

- Bronze Cuirass and Open Faced Helm (Strong Armour) covering Torso and Head Hit Locations.
- Quilted Jacket (Soft Armour) covering Torso, Arms and Legs Hit Locations.
- Bronze Billy Club (Medium melee weapon).
- Steel and Wood Pistol with lead rounds (Medium ranged weapon).

PATRONS OF THE GRUMPY BEAR

Athletics	50	Intuition	30
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	30
Burglary	30	Logic	30
Constitution	40	Luck	30
Deceive	30	Might	50
Diplomacy	30	Perception	40
Drive	40	Shoot	40
Fight	50	Stealth	30
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	30
Intimidate	40	Will	50

RUNIC ARRAYS

- Middelburg Standard Defensive arrays on all Hit Locations.
- Manstopper Offensive array on Pistol/Musket rounds.
- Quicksilver Mettle Offensive array on Steel Sword and Steel Dagger.

EQUIPMENT

- Steel Cuirass and Open Faced Helm (Strong Armour) covering Torso and Head Hit Locations.
- Quilted Jacket (Soft Armour) covering Torso, Arms and Legs Hit Locations.
- Variety of Steel Swords and Steel Daggers dependent on rank and division (Medium and Light melee weapons).
- Steel and Wood Pistols and Muskets (Medium ranged weapons).
- Officers will only have Pistols, enlisted men will have both.

CIVILIANS

Athletics	35	Intuition	35
Broad-Craft	35	Investigate	35
Burglary	35	Logic	35
Constitution	35	Luck	35
Deceive	35	Might	35
Diplomacy	35	Perception	35
Drive	35	Shoot	35
Fight	35	Stealth	35
Fine-Craft	35	Wealth	35
Intimidate	35	Will	35

RUNIC ARRAYS

- In their day to day business, not everyone will be wearing defensive and offensive arrays.
- For Defensive arrays: roll a d100, if below 50 then the person is wearing the Middelburg Standard on their Arms, Legs and Torso Hit Locations.
- For Offensive arrays: if they are carrying weapons, roll a d100, if below 50 choose any offensive array from the Array Section at the back of the book. .

EQUIPMENT

- Miscellaneous articles.
- For weapons: roll a d100, if below 25 then the person is armed with a sword and pistol.

GOLDEN TALONS

Athletics	50	Intuition	30
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	30
Burglary	35	Logic	25
Constitution	40	Luck	30
Deceive	35	Might	50
Diplomacy	35	Perception	40
Drive	40	Shoot	40
Fight	50	Stealth	40
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	40
Intimidate	40	Will	30

RUNIC ARRAYS

- Middelburg Standard Defensive array on Torso, Arms, and Legs Hit Locations.
- Constable's Friend Offensive array on Steel Small Sword.
- Manstopper Offensive array on Pistol rounds.

EQUIPMENT

- Bronze Cuirass (Strong Armour) on Torso Hit Location.
- Simple clothing on Torso, Arms and Legs Hit Locations.
- Steel Smallsword (Medium melee weapon).
- Steel and Wood Pistol with lead rounds(Medium ranged weapon).

ADMIRAL WENDEL AUTENBURG

Athletics	30	Intuition	30
Broad-Craft	20	Investigate	30
Burglary	10	Logic	30
Constitution	20	Luck	30
Deceive	15	Might	25
Diplomacy	30	Perception	40
Drive	20	Shoot	30
Fight	40	Stealth	10
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	60
Intimidate	55	Will	70

RUNIC ARRAYS

- Middelburg Standard Defensive arrays on all Hit Locations.
- Manstopper Offensive array on Pistol rounds.
- Quicksilver Mettle Offensive array on Steel Dress Sword and Steel Dagger.

EQUIPMENT

- Steel Cuirass and Open Faced Helm (Strong Armour) covering Torso and Head Hit Locations.
- Quilted Jacket (Soft Armour) covering Torso, Arms and Legs Hit Locations.
- Steel Dress Sword (Medium melee weapon).
- Steel and Wood Pistol with lead rounds (Medium ranged weapon).

DOYLE O'DRISCOLL

EXALTED NPC

Athletics	30	Intuition	40
Broad-Craft	40	Investigate	30
Burglary	40	Logic	30
Constitution	30	Luck	30
Deceive	50	Might	30
Diplomacy	50	Perception	30
Drive	30	Shoot	30
Fight	30	Stealth	40
Fine-Craft	40	Wealth	40
Intimidate	40	Will	30

RUNIC ARRAYS

- Middelburg Standard Defensive arrays on all Hit Locations.
- Peace of Mind Offensive array on Push Dagger.
- Terminator Offensive array on Pistol rounds.

EQUIPMENT

- Simple clothing on all Hit Locations.
- Steel Push Dagger (Light melee weapon).
- Steel and Wood Pistol with iron rounds (Medium ranged weapon).

SERGEANT ALFONS AARDEN

EXALTED NPC

Athletics	40	Intuition	30
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	30
Burglary	25	Logic	45
Constitution	40	Luck	50
Deceive	20	Might	40
Diplomacy	35	Perception	45
Drive	40	Shoot	40
Fight	50	Stealth	40
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	30
Intimidate	40	Will	40

RUNIC ARRAYS

- Middelburg Standard Defensive array on Torso, Arms, and Legs Hit Locations.
- Constable's Friend Offensive array on Steel Small Sword.
- Manstopper Offensive array on Pistol rounds.

EQUIPMENT

- Bronze Cuirass (Strong Armour) on Torso Hit Location.
- Simple clothing on Torso, Arms and Legs Hit Locations.
- Steel Smallsword (Medium melee weapon).
- Steel and Wood Pistol with lead rounds (Medium ranged weapon).

NEW TALON

SKILLS

- It is recommended to go through the character creation process for the new Talon in order to give a unique flavour the character a unique flavour.
- Otherwise, simply use the Golden Talon Skillset.

RUNIC ARRAYS

- The new Talon will have been given all the arrays that the Golden Talons use.
- You can give the new Talon any other array that will make the character more unique or fit in better with the history the new Talon shares with the PCs.

EQUIPMENT

- The new Talon will have been given all the equipment that the Golden Talons use.
- You can give the new Talon any other equipment that will make the character more unique or fit in better with the history the new Talon shares with the PCs.

RUINED MAN

Athletics	???	Intuition	???
Broad-Craft	???	Investigate	???
Burglary	???	Logic	???
Constitution	???	Luck	???
Deceive	???	Might	???
Diplomacy	???	Perception	???
Drive	???	Shoot	???
Fight	???	Stealth	???
Fine-Craft	???	Wealth	???
Intimidate	???	Will	???

RUNIC ARRAYS

- It is not known what arrays the Ruined Man is using.
- All that is known as they are exceedingly powerful.

EQUIPMENT

- The only thing the Ruined Man is ever seen wearing is his tattered coat. In fact, that is all they see of the Ruined Man. No one has yet seen what he looks like.

AUTENBURG'S ROUTES

NAVY HEADQUARTERS

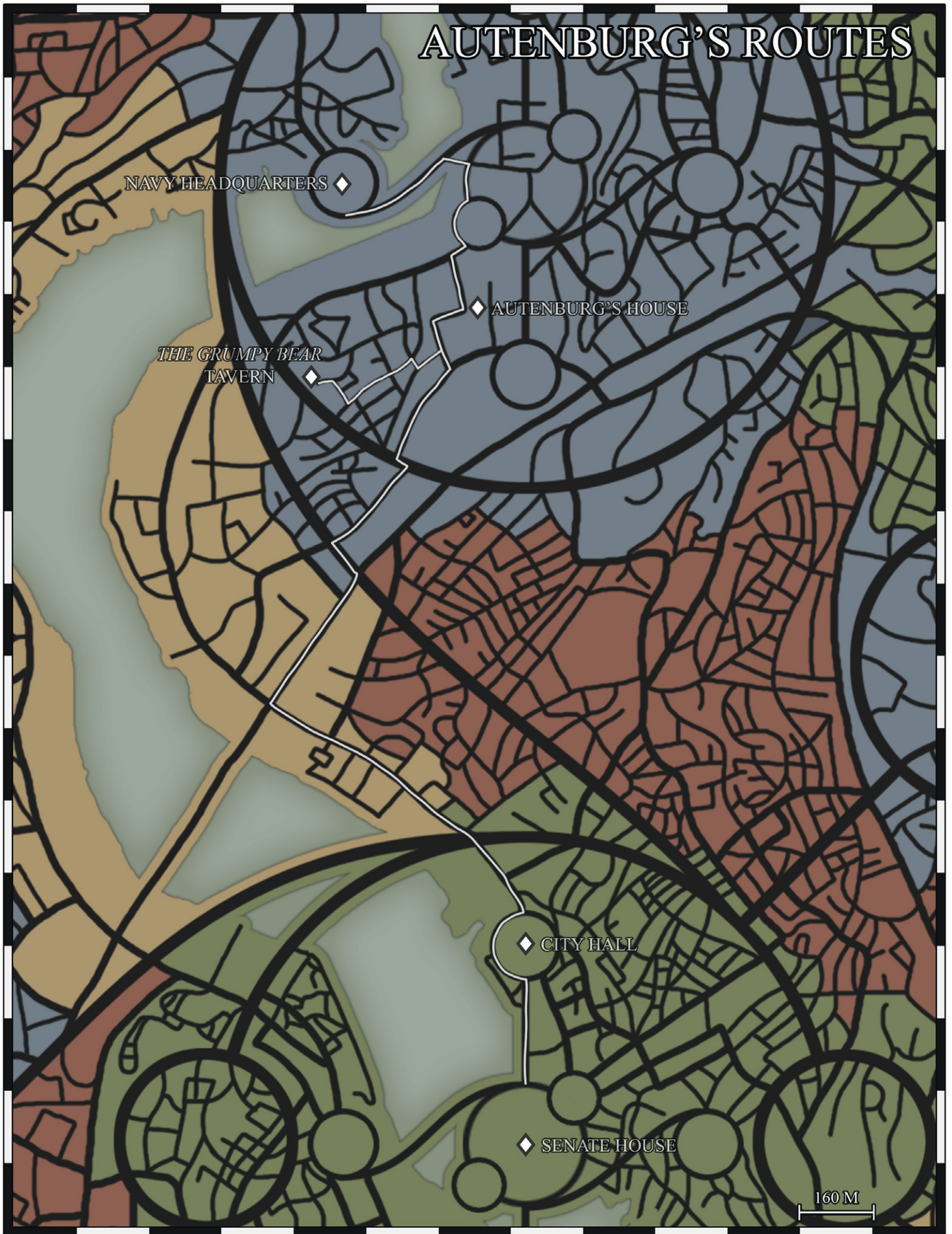
THE GRUMPY BEAR
TAVERN

AUTENBURG'S HOUSE

CITY HALL

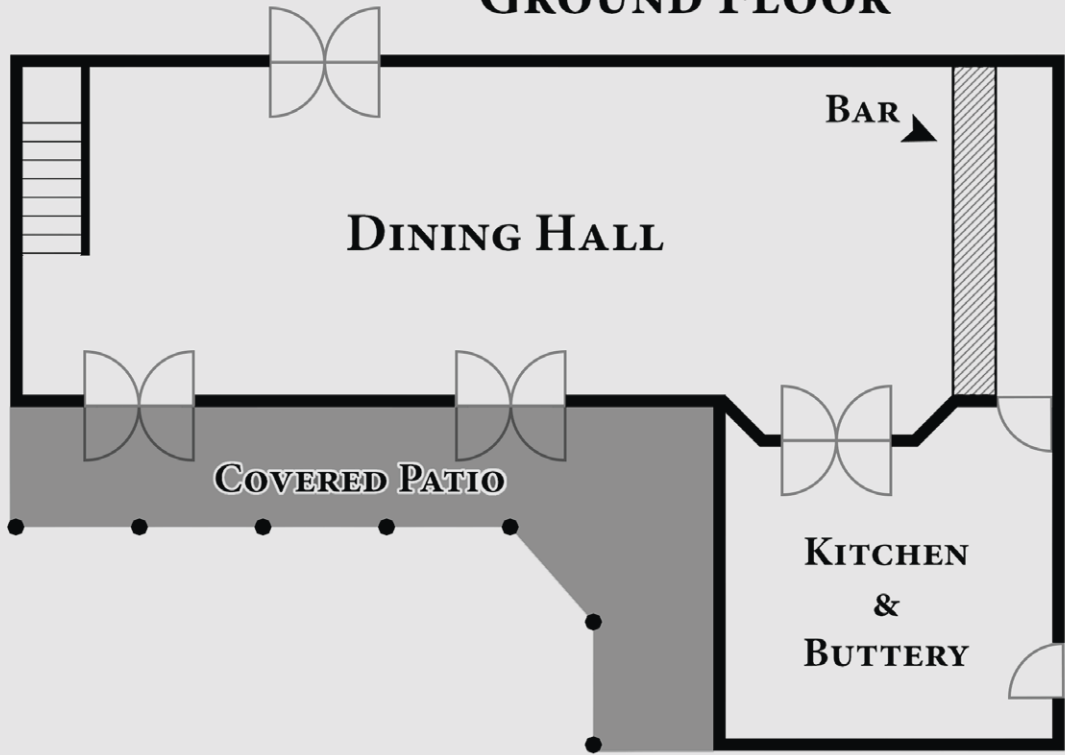
SENATE HOUSE

160 M

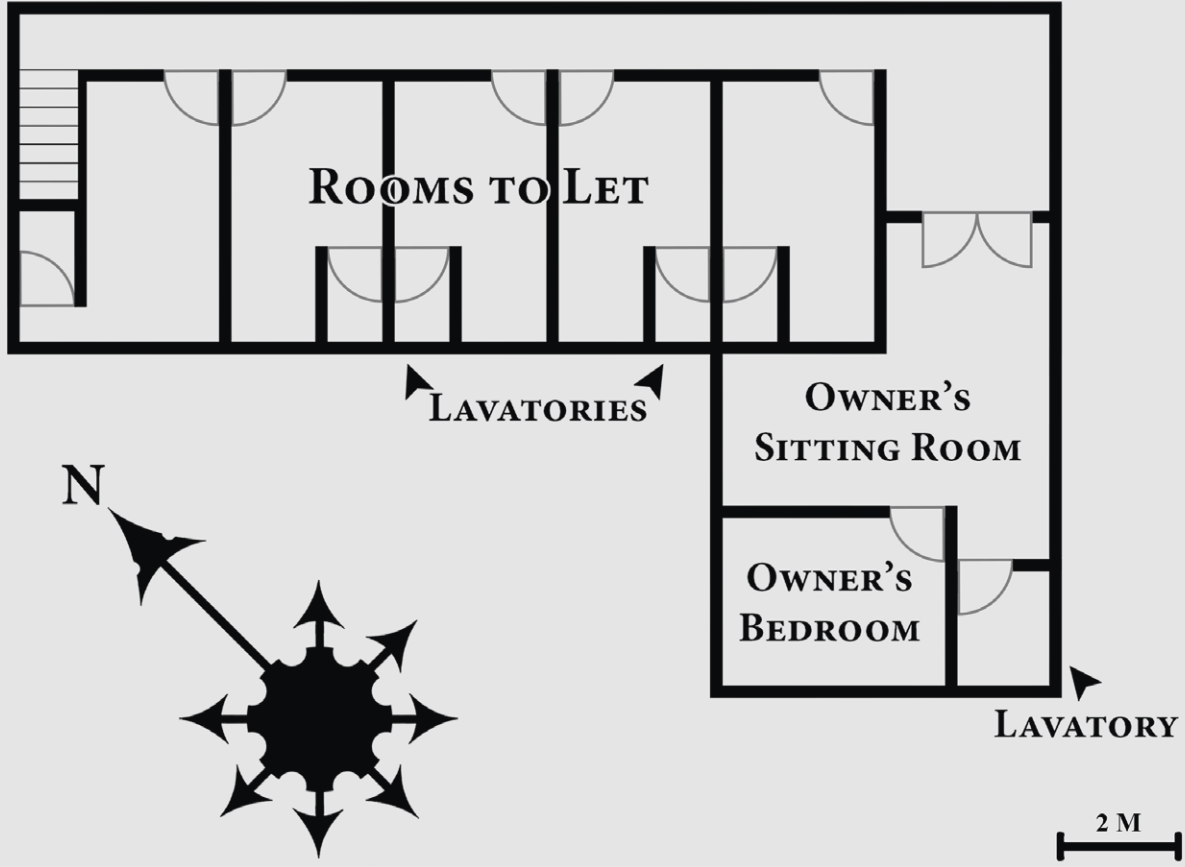


THE GRUMPY BEAR TAVERN

GROUND FLOOR

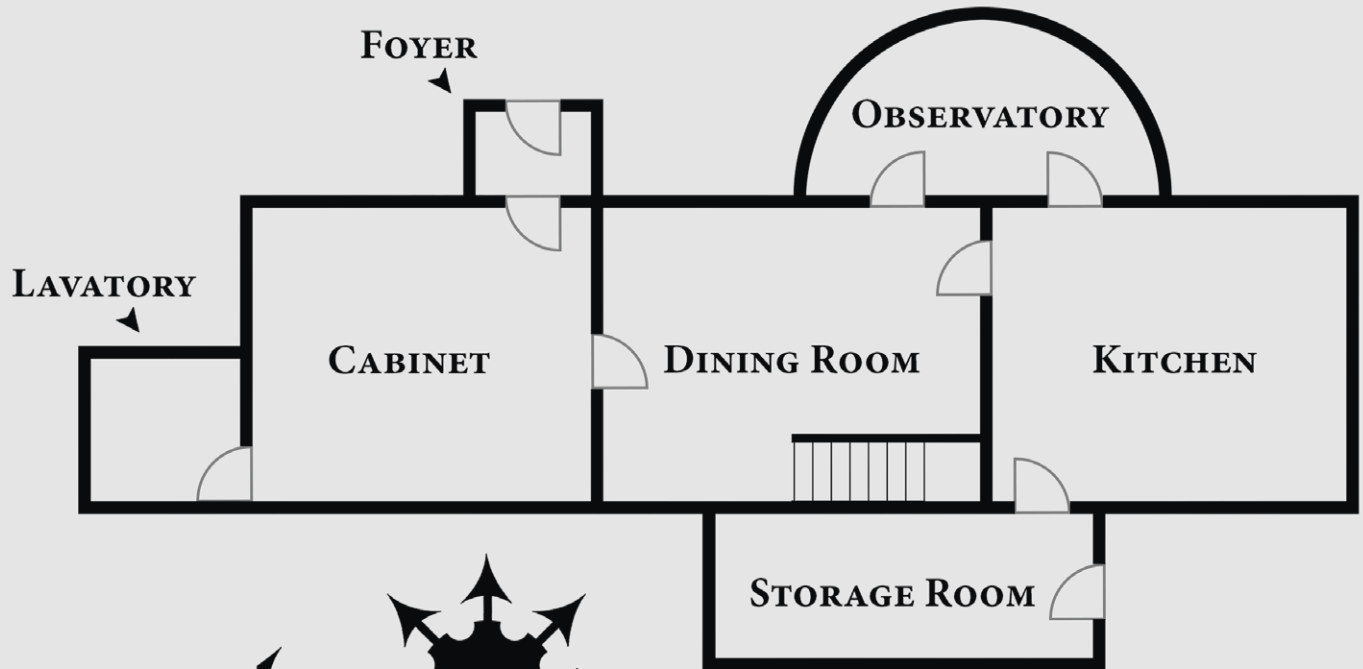


FIRST FLOOR

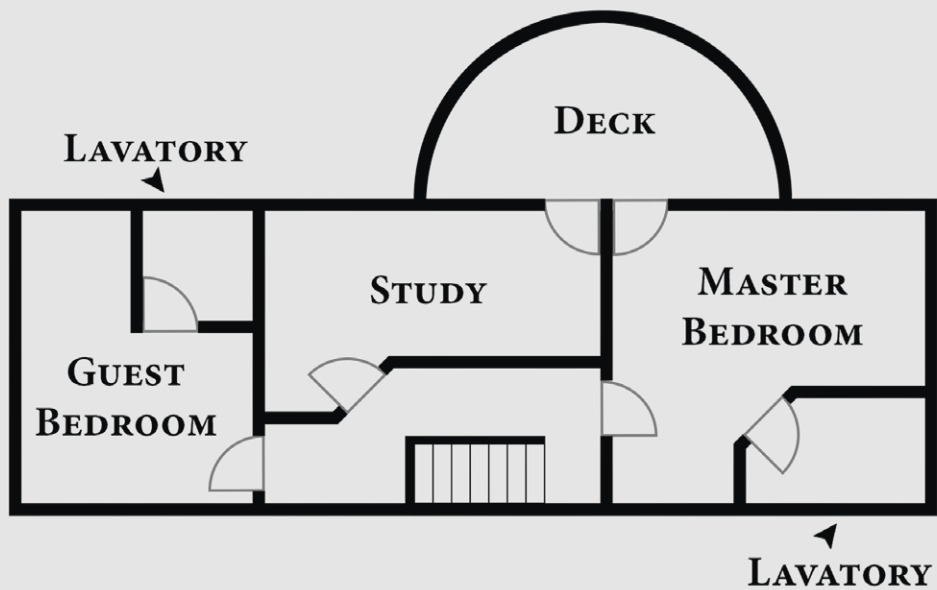


AUTENBURG'S RESIDENCE

GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



2 M

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS



ENCOUNTER LIST

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 A black cat crosses the party's path, hissing at them. | 14 A fire-brigade coach speeds past, its runic sirens blaring. |
| 2 Mischievous children pull a prank on a store-owner. | 15 A bounty hunter asks around about his target. |
| 3 Men sit around a table, gambling with dice. There's a seat open. | 16 A building nearby is on fire and there are people trapped inside. |
| 4 Two merchants argue about who can set up his stall on the corner. | 17 A carriage at speed tips over and crashes into a building. |
| 5 An old, overweight constable chases after a fleeing child. | 18 An old man collapses with a cry and starts convulsing. |
| 6 A children's puppet show on a corner mocks the Merchant League. | 19 An erratic man tries to convince others to join his cult. |
| 7 A woman in the crowd cries out for help. She's in labour. | 20 A set of burnt shackles lies smoking in an alleyway. |
| 8 A masked youth paints graffiti onto a nearby wall. | 21 An elderly couple sits under an awning, begging for money. |
| 9 A group of children mocks a lonely, cowering child. | 22 The party sees a wandering toddler with no parent in sight. |
| 10 A funeral procession fills the street with mournful prayers. | 23 A nervous man places down a sack and then quickly walks away. |
| 11 A cock-fight in an alley, with the organisers taking bets. | 24 A merchant chases a youth down the road, yelling "Thief!" |
| 12 A bourgeois lady is lost and asks to be escorted home. | 25 A homeless boy cries for food as his mother sleeps behind him. |
| 13 A few scions of the League argues heatedly with the constables. | 26 A homeless old woman tries to sell the PCs some floral crowns. |

27	A man yells at the party "We don't take kindly to your sort here!"	46	Constables have blocked off part of a street, without saying why.
28	A street preacher standing on a crate preaches the end of the world.	47	Constables destroy a makeshift shrine built on a street corner.
29	Constables evicts a woman, who tries to fight for her home.	48	A pair of constables on patrol.
30	A protest against the government threatens to turn ugly.	49	Suspicious constables question anyone bearing arms.
31	A nearby building explodes, releasing noxious gas onto the street.	50	Someone unseen in the distance calls out a PC's name.
32	A few criminals start burglarising a nearby house.	51	The party find a corpse in an alley, and the constables spot them.
33	The party sees a freshly severed head, festooned with jewellery.	52	A bedraggled prostitute propositions a PC while her pimp looks on.
34	A coach stops; masked men jump out; a kidnapping in action.	53	A blind beggar woman steps into the party's path and asks for alms.
35	A figure follows the party for several blocks before disappearing.	54	A gypsy woman at a rickety table offers to read the party's future.
36	A cry for help rings out from an alley. Someone is being attacked.	55	A half-naked, jittery, ill man asks the party for illicit narcotics.
37	A crowd tries to lynch a woman for whoring and adultery.	56	A monk tells the PCs to repent. He knows details of their sins.
38	A group of drunk beggars accosts passersby for money.	57	A group of child thieves try to pickpocket one of the PCs.
39	A group of soldiers on leave are drunk and getting rowdy.	58	At a small market, a vendor accuses the party of stealing.
40	A group of thugs harass a citizen.	59	A beggar attacks a PC, but is too weak to do any real damage.
41	A group of young bourgeois harasses the poor for sport.	60	A flash of light, and one random PC suddenly falls unconscious.
42	Two rival streetgangs ready themselves for a battle.	61	The PCs witness a burglary in progress near them.
43	An armed robbery takes place at a nearby store.	62	The PCs witness a mugging in progress near them.
44	Horsemen stop at a building and fire their pistols into it.	63	The PCs witness an assault in progress near them.
45	An anti-rune luddite starts attacking people that wear runic arrays.	64	The PCs must pass a Perception check to avoid a harmless trap.

- | | | | |
|----|--|------|---|
| 65 | The PCs walk into an an array that sends them across the city. | 84 | An explosion near the PCs puts them in jeopardy. |
| 66 | The PCs pass a building that has been closed off due to plague. | 85 | Victims of the plague approach the PCs, asking for alms. |
| 67 | An angry man walks up and punches one the PCs. | 86 | The PCs get caught up in a riotous mob. |
| 68 | The PCs hear that a minor trade family put a bounty on one them. | 87 | Constables stop the party and wants to search all their belongings. |
| 69 | The PCs hear that a major trade family put a bounty on one them. | 88 | A group of beggars become hostile and attempt to mug the PCs. |
| 70 | The PCs come across a fresh Ruined Man murder scene. | 89 | A PC is challenged to a duel for perceived transgressions. |
| 71 | Someone sees the PCs near a fresh murder scene and runs off. | 90 | A group of scoundrels ambush and try to mug the PCs. |
| 72 | A gang tells the PCs they must pay a toll to pass through here. | 91 | The constables come to arrest the 1 or more of the PCs. |
| 73 | A child asks the party for help, but leads them into a mugging. | 92 | A religious cult attempts to kidnap the PCs for a sacrifice. |
| 74 | Constables hold up a wanten poster that looks like one of the PCs. | 93 | A crazy gunman starts firing at the PCs. |
| 75 | Someone being chased by constables asks the PCs to help them. | 94 | Another group of footmen come to kidnap or kill the PCs. |
| 76 | The PCs overhear a bounty hunter asking NPCs about them. | 95 | A pack of feral dogs attack the PCs. |
| 77 | Someone points a PC out to a constable, accusing him of a crime. | 96 | Homeless plague victims try and mug the PCs. |
| 78 | The PCs find a nearly dead constable, and are seen by a witness. | 97 | PCs see men engaged in illegal activity, who try to silence the PCs. |
| 79 | A group of scoundrels try to start a fight with the PCs. | 98 | The Golden Talons have been sent to eliminate the PCs. |
| 80 | A carriage comes barrelling towards the PCs. | 99 | A military squad attacks the PCs, thinking they're with the Ruined Man. |
| 81 | A small airships come crashing down on/ near the PCs. | 100 | The PCs witness a Ruined Child killing someone. |
| 82 | The PCs are caught in a shootout between constables and a gang. | >100 | One of the Ruined Children comes to kill the PCs. |
| 83 | The PCs must pass a Perception check to avoid a violent trap. | | |

THE RUINED CHILDREN

The Ruined Man isn't a mystery to every person in Middelburg. There are a few in this metropolis who knows exactly who and what he is. They have seen him in all his morbid glory, they have spoken to him and they have learnt from him.

More than anything, they have done their best to become like him. They may not know exactly how he became to be the monster that he is, but between the whole lot of them they have done their damned best to become facsimiles of him.

As he is the Ruined Man, they have become his Ruined Children. They are the cause for much of the mystery surrounding the Ruined Man murders. They look like him, they dress like him, and they act like him. There is no surprise then that people think the Ruined Man can be in more than one location at once. Very few people have seen the real Ruined Man, most have in fact only seen the Ruined Children.

The Ruined Children have also been responsible for the death toll associated with the Ruined Man. There is only one man who knows why the Ruined Man kills and why he chooses his victims the way he does... and that man is the Ruined Man. The Ruined Children have as little clue about the Ruined Man's motives as the average man on the street. They believe that he kills simply because he is their god and "his will be done".

It is this fanaticism that has driven one of these Ruined Children into the path of the PCs. For one reason or another, this specific Ruined Child has seen fit to decide that the Ruined Man wants the PCs dead and he will make sure that happens.

It is also this fanaticism that ensures the Ruined Child will never give up or surrender. It will fight to its last breath to do what it believes must be done.

But it also knows that secrecy is paramount, and so will only ambush the PCs if no one else is around and will give up pursuit if the PCs escape into a crowded area. The safety of the Ruined Man is more important than the lives of the PCs.

RUINED CHILDREN

EXALTED NPC

Athletics	30	Intuition	50
Broad-Craft	40	Investigate	40
Burglary	40	Logic	15
Constitution	60	Luck	70
Deceive	20	Might	45
Diplomacy	10	Perception	50
Drive	20	Shoot	15
Fight	40	Stealth	60
Fine-Craft	60	Wealth	00
Intimidate	60	Will	100

SPECIALISATIONS

- Athletics Specialisation:
 - » Giant Leap - Skill Level 60.
- Logic Specialisation:
 - » Runology - Skill Level 70.
- Fight Specialisation:
 - » Pugilism - Skill Level 65.

RUNIC ARRAYS

- Middelburg Standard Defensive array tattooed on all Hit Locations.
- Furnace Fist Offensive array on knuckles.
- God's Razor Offensive array on claws.
- Constable's Friend Offensive array on heel bone.

EQUIPMENT

- Inhuman Bone claws grafted into fingers (Light melee weapon).
- Inhuman Bone grafted into heel (Light melee weapon).
- Inhuman Bone Armour (Sturdy Armour) covering all Hit Locations.
- Ragged Cloak (Basic Clothing) covering all Hit Locations.

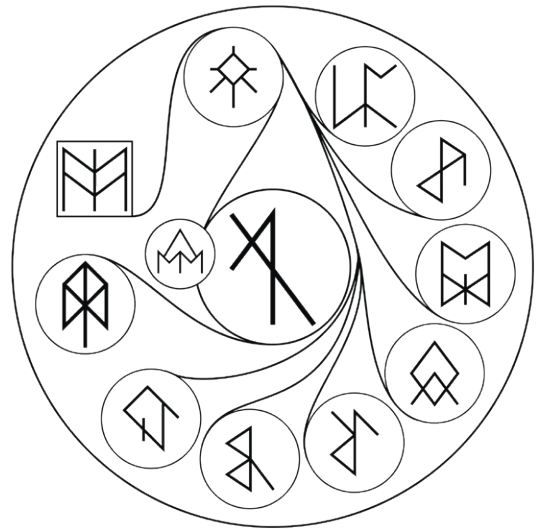
SAMPLE RUNIC ARRAYS



BLOOD DRINKER

NOTATION: Pull Blood at a speed of 30m/s.

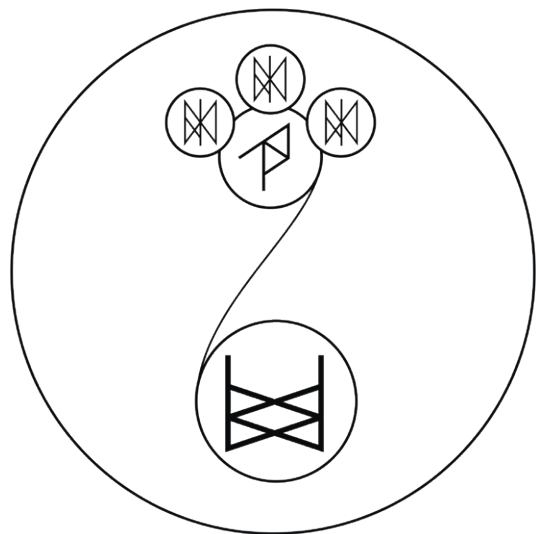
DESCRIPTION: Draws blood inside the body to the weapon/ammunition to bleed the victim to death.



BLOODHOUND

NOTATION: Pull Blood at a speed of 1m/s and Transmute that blood into Light.

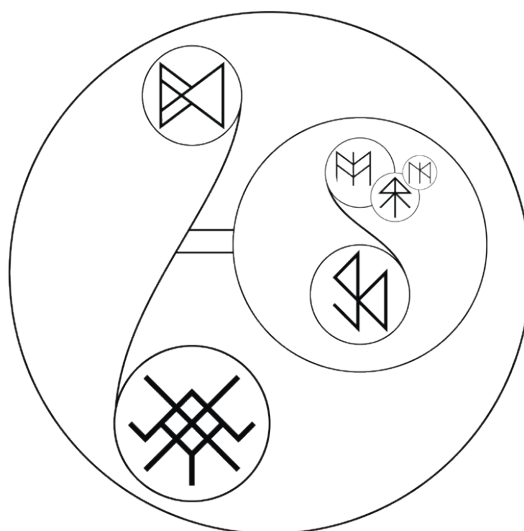
DESCRIPTION: Makes the weapon/ammunition glow brightly to add dramatic flair to swords and to make victim glow from their wounds when shot.



CONSTABLE'S FRIEND

NOTATION: Create Lightning only if a Human is within an area as wide across as the array and with a depth 1% of the array's diameter.

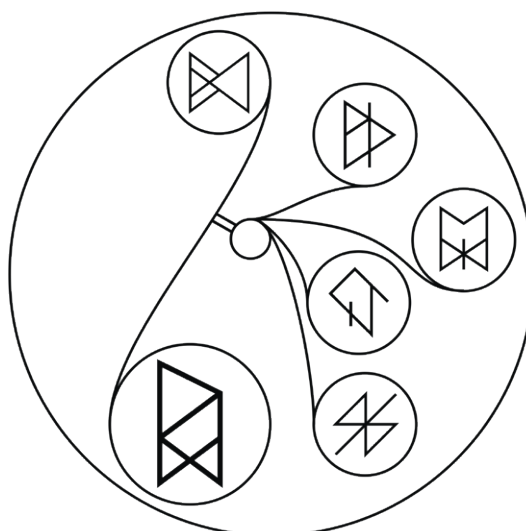
DESCRIPTION: Intended to shock and stun victims when the weapon/ammunition hits flesh.



FURNACE FIST

NOTATION: Create Fire if Animal or Wood or Stone or Iron is present.

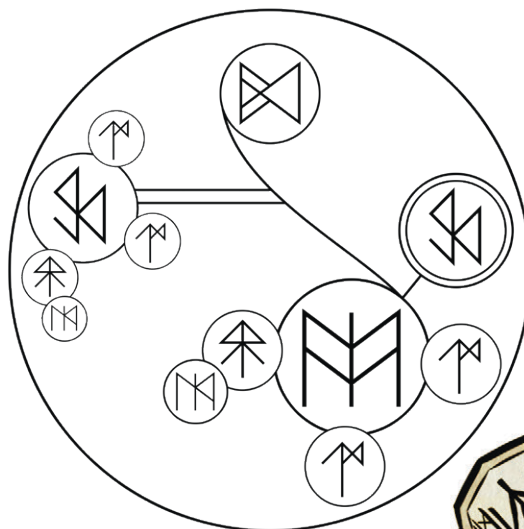
DESCRIPTION: Put on brass knuckles, creates a blast of fire when punching someone/something.



GOD'S RAZOR

NOTATION: Create a Containment field twice as large as the array, with a depth 1/100th the array's diameter, that Excludes Human if a Human is present within the same area.

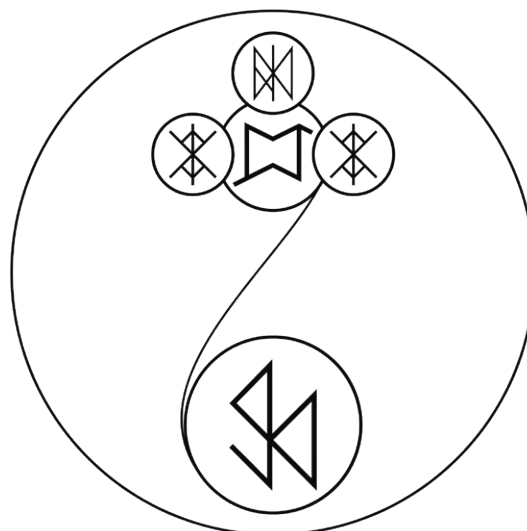
DESCRIPTION: Makes an invisible razor edge around a blade that disintegrates human flesh.



MANSTOPPER

NOTATION: Push Human at a speed of 10m/s 20 times the area of the array.

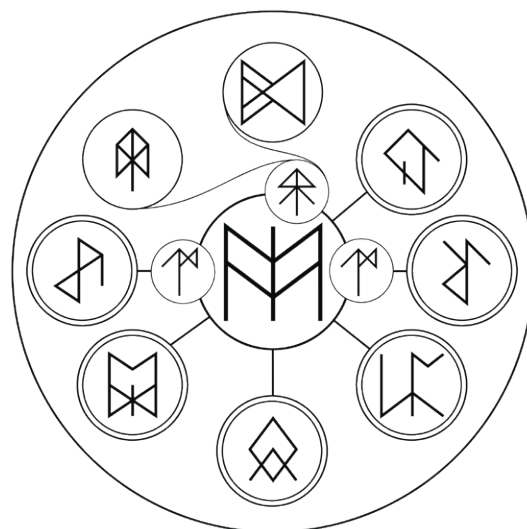
DESCRIPTION: Put on ammunition, creates a massive hole in the body, worsening any wound.



MIDDELBURG STANDARD

NOTATION: Create and Sustain a Containment field that is twice as Large as the array's area size, and 1/10th as deep that Excludes Wood, Silver, Copper, Lead, Iron and Gold.

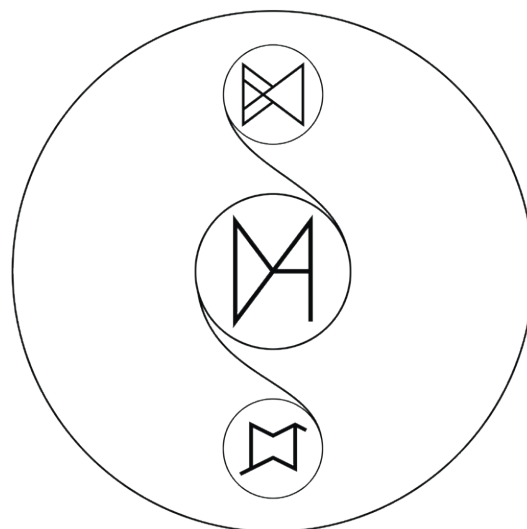
DESCRIPTION: Defensive array that creates a forcefield to stop incoming attacks.



PEACE OF MIND

NOTATION: Create and Push Arsenic at a speed of 1 m/s.

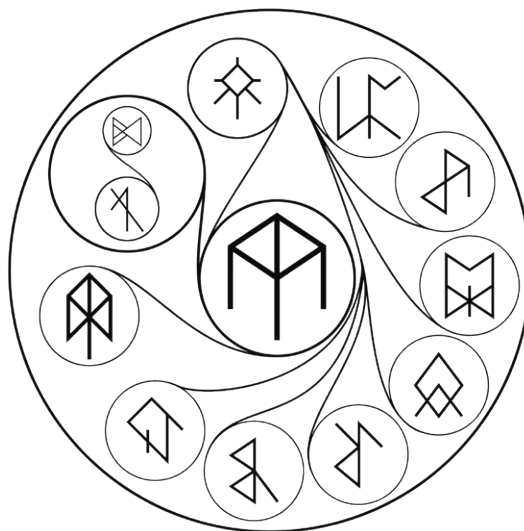
DESCRIPTION: Poisons the victim with arsenic.



PROPHET'S BLOOD

NOTATION: Transmute Copper, Gold, Iron, Lead, Silver, Tin and Wood into Water. Create Light and apply this to the transmuted Water.

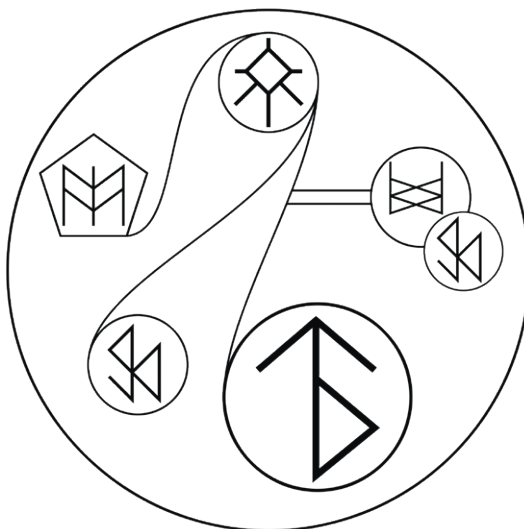
DESCRIPTION: Defensive array that transforms materials that hit into glowing water, to look like glowing blood.



QUICKSILVER METTLE

NOTATION: Transmute Human into Mercury if Human Blood is present and Contain that transmutation to the boundary of the array.

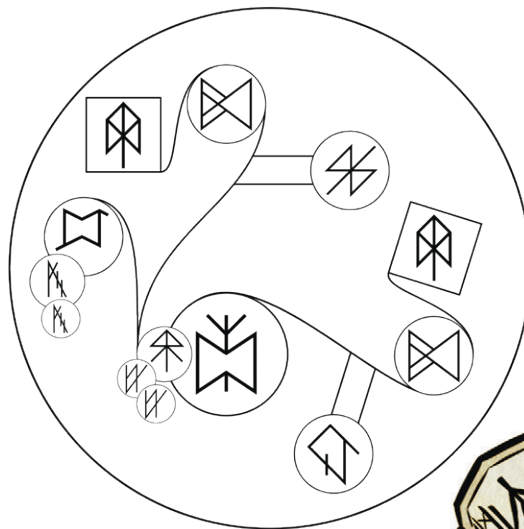
DESCRIPTION: Turns the victim's blood (presumably while inside them, into a poison to kill them.



SMOKE BOMB

NOTATION: Sustain the Creation of a disk of Carbon as thick as 1/10,000th of the diameter of the array if either Stone or Wood is present; and Push Carbon at a speed of 4 m/s.

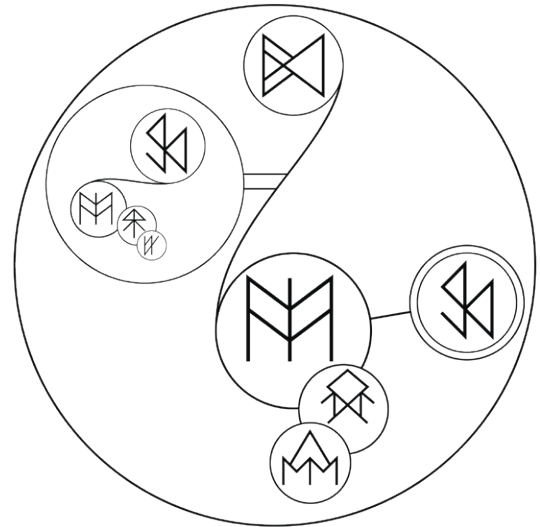
DESCRIPTION: Put on small metal balls. Creates clouds of smoke when the balls hit the ground.



TERMINATOR

NOTATION: Create (if a Human is Contained within a Circle with a depth 0.1% the surface area of the array) a Containment Field in the shape of a Dome one hundred times the size of the array's surface area that excludes Humans.

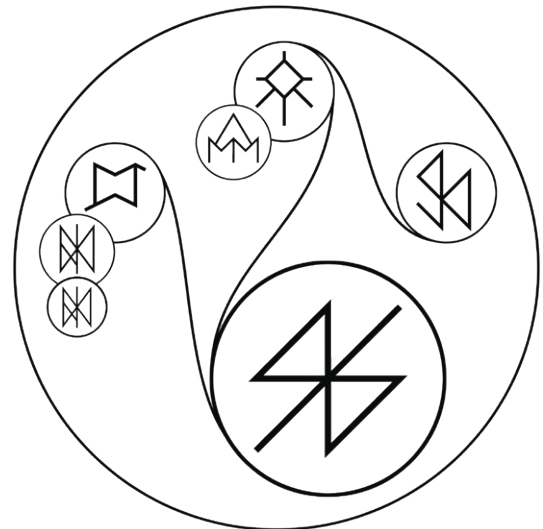
DESCRIPTION: Creates a large area of effect that destroys humans. Meant to kill multiple people standing close together.



WALKING BOMB

NOTATION: Transmute, of a size 100 times that of the array, Human into Stone; and Push Stone at a speed of 100 m/s.

DESCRIPTION: Turns a human into a rock that explodes to hit everyone around him with shrapnel.



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On Bürsday, Tennamand 29, 2004

Alfresia Mourns a Hero

~By Pieter Retief

It is with great sadness that this poor journalist must report to you, dear readers, that Admiral Wendel Autenburg, commander of the Second Alfresian Fleet, was brutally and callously murdered yesterday in the streets of Middelburg. There is no need for an investigation, no need to hunt down clues or question suspects, as the murderer is as infamous as any fairy tale monster. The murderer is none other than the vile Ruined Man.

It was the Herald that coined the term "the Ruined Man" not long ago and gave a moniker to this villain. It seemed apt at the time, a suitably devious name for the work he did and a clever pun on the runes he left at each of his horrific and grisly performance pieces. The Herald was thoroughly proud when the name caught on, impressed with itself that it coined the name now in use across Alfresia and beyond. It felt as if the Ruined Man became a part of the Herald staff, macabre as it sounds, and ghost stories sprung up like weeds around the offices.

There is no longer any pride, any mischievous amusement here at the Middelburg Herald. There is only shame and grief. The Herald took pleasure in the people of Middelburg's anxiety about the months long terror campaign and its journalists wrote ever more passionate and dramatic articles to draw in these terrified folk. The Herald knew that by inflaming the passions of the public, it would gain revenue beyond its dreams. Unadulterated greed drove the Herald and now a brave man is dead. The journalists at the Herald can't help but feel partly responsible for it.

Calling the Ruined Man a monster was no mere turn of phrase. The Ruined Man is a monster in the truest sense. The scholars say that the word 'monster' is derived from an archaic Rimien dialect, meaning 'to teach'. Quite fitting for the Ruined Man, he has taught this city much. He has taught it fear, he has taught it grief, and he has taught it anger. He is a harsh lesson for what happens when one is not vigilant and ready to face the unknown dangers lurking in the dark.

As have ever been the case in recent months, the Ruined Man declined to stay behind after the murder to answer the constables questions. As ever, he remains at large and the constabulary have no idea where the fiend may be hiding. In the past few months the constabulary have turned over every stone in Middelburg and, despite hanging numerous men thought to be

him, they could find no sign of the Ruined Man. All this may be about the change, however.

According to the constabulary, for the first time in five months the Ruined Man has been wreaking havoc on this city, there were finally witnesses to the murder. It seemed that Admiral Autenburg knew his life was at stake and took steps to prevent this. One of these precautions was the hiring of a group of Golden Talons as bodyguards. Though they were powerless to stop the murder, the mercenaries did finally see what the monster looks like and it confirmed what many have thought thus far.

The Ruined Man is not human. The Golden Talons could not see much of the Ruined Man, the reports say he was swaddled in rags like a sinner hiding from the gods, but what skin they could see was knobbled and gnarled like white bark and bone, painted or scrimshawed like a demon's art piece. What he could be, none can say. Perhaps a disfigured Sauddyr or Akkedyr, they were the closest in size to humans. But could a group of Inhumans have survived these past two millennia to come back to haunt us? Many would say it is impossible, but many would have called the actions of the Ruined Man over the last five months impossible.

Could there be another explanation? In the dark corners of Middelburg, such an answer is whispered in shadowed corners. The Seekers of the Starchild Cult has always been a thorn in Middelburg's side, more so since the Ruined Man appeared, and some claim they are at fault for all of this. The poor and downtrodden of Middelburg have been influenced by the Ruined Man in ways that civil folk would disapprove. The Ruined Man's targets have nearly all been wealthy and powerful people and the underclasses have taken this as a sign of good fortune, that perhaps the gods have answered their spiteful and vengeful prayers.

They have also said that maybe the Ruined Man is the god of the Seekers, finally born into our world and meting out his justice on the oppressors of the underclasses. Such rhetoric of vengeful spirits come and go with the seasons, but this myth seems intent on staying. The number of Seekers has swelled in the last five months and the constabulary are concerned that many of the so-called copycat murders were committed by these newly converted zealots.

These copycat murders has become the true scourge of Middelburg. Whether these were committed by fanatical Seekers, opportunistic killers or criminals wishing to hide their identity, the murders done in imitation of the

Ruined Man has become more frequent as of late. Most of these impersonations are clear forgeries with barely an attempt made to conceal the true culprit, but some have fooled even the constabulary and that is that where the true insidious nature of the Ruined Man comes to light.

While he hunts the streets of Middelburg, the Ruined Man provides alibi and excuse for every would be murderer, giving them free reign to kill as many as they wish and taking all the blame for himself. After all, who truly knows whether the Ruined Man was the killer of any gruesome murder or whether it was a copycat? The only indication the constabulary have found thus far has been the runes the Ruined Man has left behind. Each rune at a murder scene is the next rune in alphabetical order. Through this the constabulary have managed to uncover some near perfect copycats, but only after the Ruined Man has killed again.

But copycats and macabre following cults are troubles for another day. This day the city, the nation, even the very heavens weep for our fallen hero. Admiral Autenburg has always protected the city of Middelburg, calling it his first and only love. He valiantly led the naval defense of the city during the war with Zeerijk at great personal cost to himself. Who will now stand against the enemies at the gates? Who is brave enough and valiant enough to fill his large shoes? Only time will tell.

As a public service announcement, the Lord Constable has ordered the Middelburg Herald to inform you that, until further notice, there is now a curfew in Middelburg. No civilian is allowed on the streets between sunset and sunrise unless on government sanctioned business. Those who ignore the curfew will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Resistance will be met with lethal force. The Herald will inform you when the curfew has lifted, until then the Herald urges all to comply with this curfew and stay inside.

ASTROLOGY REPORT

It is a dark and terrible time and portents abound. The planets' alignments say that no one must go out venturing tonight as their lives will surely come to an end. The dread moon is due to rise and that is a bad omen for us all.