

THE GLORY ROAD

Issue 11

Mini-Adventure; Monster

Adventure: A Simple Party

Julia Martus is a well-known middle-aged Aquilan noblewoman who holds monthly dinner parties with Aquilan nobles and “interesting” rabble. The parties are meant to entertain jaded nobles with the presence of ordinary plebeians.

The characters get some time to interact with guests (including the soon to be victim), maybe having some interesting things brew, before a shriek interrupts the proceedings and a maid runs into the room in a panic, looking for Lacy Julia.

The Crime(s)

Nevius Albanus, Imperial Master of Keys, is found in the Library, strangled. The murderer is Brassica Oleracea, who strangled him with the sash around her dress. Brassica is actually dead, but an Intellect Devourer (MM, p. 191) controls her body.

Nevius’ body will be found by one of the maids, Fanan Mahmoud, who saw the door of the library ajar. She immediately notified Lady Julia. Nevius seemed to be looking through books when he was surprised. He was looking for a copy of the late Lord Martus’ books, a book he could never translate which is actually a necromantic grimoire. He did not find it before he was killed. The PCs might be able to find it.

Once an investigation begins, Brassica will find a time to be alone with a dangerous host, such as Connor. After that, Brassica will be found dead, but with no signs of specific trauma. The skull will seem hollow. The creature’s goal will be escape or arrest so that it can find a new host.

Nevius Albanus was a secret agent of the cult of Orcus. He is a highly-placed official to help the small demonic cell focused on gaining power for their members. The cult is small, but building a place to influence the Imperial Governor and guide its members to political prominence. The Rat Cult is opposed the Orcus cult, and hopes to rapt the Orcus cult, and possibly force them into the open. The Intellect Devourer maintains a false identity as an assassin and master of disguise. It was hired as a freelancer, and is not part of the cult of Rat Cult.

Characters

- *Lady Julia Martus*: Lady Julia is in her early 40s. Headstrong, well-raised, and possessed of a sly sense of humor, she is known for being an unusual and independent spirit. She enjoys her parties and her independence. She was widowed shortly after the birth of her daughters, and never remarried.
- *Selena Martus*, Julia’s daughter: Hot-tempered, flirtatious and 20, she uses parties to try to identify potential

playthings for her amusement. Her real goal is ending her own boredom, and she discards her toys frequently.

- *Lucinda Martus*, Julia’s daughter: Eighteen years old, and seemingly innocent, Lady Lucinda is a student in the Scola Magica. She is fond of mysteries and impressed by intelligence.
- *Servants*
 - Salima Shahir, Cook
 - Laila Shahir, Cook’s Assistant
 - Afifa Adishah, Maid
 - Fanan Mahmoud, Maid
 - Kahil Nasr, Footman
 - Muti Fadl, Footman
- *Gallus Nestor*, merchant, party guest: Effete, snotty, sarcastic and drunk, Gallus Nestor is funny, charming, useless, and an asshole. He is a noble (MM, p. 348, but AC 12 – unarmored)
- *Nevius Albanus*, Imperial Master of Keys: Nevius Albanus is deeply impressed with himself. He is boring and banal, and deeply cocky. A cultist of Orcus, but he lacks any real power—he is just a pawn. He is a noble (MM, p. 348, but AC 12 – unarmored)
- *Priscilla Atullus*, priestess of Hera, party guest: A scholar and a priestess, but not a cleric. She is severe, critical, and largely humorless. She came here out of curiosity, and is severely disappointed. She is a commoner (MM 345), but with INT 13 (+1) and WIS 12 (+1), and Skills: Religion +3, History +3.
- *Maliyah Anab*, houri, party guest: Enigmatic, charming and sexy, she is working to get a sense of important and interesting people. She is a commoner (MM 345), but with INT 12 (+1), CHA 16 (+3), and Skills: Deception +5, Insight +2, Persuasion +5.
- *Drusa Stormdaughter*, Dwarven sculptress, party guest: Serene, with a sharp and dry wit, Drusa is interested in getting free food and drink and hoping not to be too bored. She is a commoner (MM 345), but with Dwarf racial traits.
- *Brassica Oleracea*, merchant from a family with large farm holdings, party guest: In her early 20s, she has inherited a large chunk of orchards outside Selindra. She is conservative and likes convention and authority. She is a spy (MM, p. 349), who is controlled by an Intellect Devourer (MM, p. 191)
- *Connor MacGuigan*, Western barbarian, mercenary, party guest: A big, loud party animal. He distrusts the law and the Imperials and loves drink and food. He is a berserker (MM, p. 344.)
- *Xiao Lin Mai*, Cathayan scholar, party guest: Affable and outgoing, she wants to learn about everyone. She is interested in culture and asks a lot of questions. She is a

I wanted the feeling of romance and the sense of wonder I had known as a kid. I wanted the world to be what they had promised me it was going to be—instead of the tawdry, lousy, fouled-up mess it is. — Robert A Heinlein, *The Glory Road*

commoner (MM 345), but with INT 15 (+2) and Skills: History +4, Nature +4, and Religion +4.

Clues, Events, and Red Herrings

- Nevius Albanus shows signs of being strangled by a cord, sash, or cloth. One of the curtains is missing a sash, which is tossed under the desk. He seems to have been surprised at the very least, since there are minimal signs of a struggle. Whoever killed him was able to get close and strike by surprised.
- A note in Nevius' pocket is a note saying "Meet in The Chapel, midnight, two nights time. We must discuss our enemies. M.N."
- Nevius' body is found with a parchment with a drawing of him discarded on his body. It seems to be a targeted killing by a hitter, with the drawing left more as a calling card that it was a hit than an accidental clue.
- Albanus was talking with all of the female guests: Lin Mai, Brassica, Maliyah, Priscilla, and even any female Player Characters. He was an oily leech.
- There are no unaccounted for guests at the party.
- This is a potential scandal, so Lady Julia does not want to call in the city guard to investigate without having a sense of what is going on.
- Connor is quick to want to lock down the place and seek out a killer, which may make him seem over-eager. He just has a simplistic sense of justice.
- Lin Mai acts like a woman with a lot of secrets. She does, but murdering Albanus is not one of them. She is just a run of the mill spy.
- Priscilla is very attentive to the fact that Albanus was killed, and very interested in who could have had a motive. She seems overly interested, but she suspects Albanus of being connected to something sinister, but fears sharing her theory because of her fear of a great conspiracy.
- Lady Julia's party is intended to be a light amusement. She is a wreck. Her daughters are a wreck, her employees are a wreck. But her motivation will be called into question, most likely.
- After the murder, Brassica wants to call in the guard. But if the Player Characters begin pushing to investigate, she cooperates. She also tends to reinforce the Player Characters' suspicions of anyone other than her as much as she can, trying to get an opening to escape. If she risks discovery, she will try to jump into another body.
- The maid, Afifa, is very nervous of any investigation. Searching her room finds she has been stealing silver trinkets and hiding them. She has a brother addicted to lotus root and is trying to cover his debts.

Monster: Coffin Corpse

An adventurer finds the last zombie guarding a long-lost treasure. As she begins to pick the lock on the ancient treasure, the creature stands yet again. The adventurer is caught in the monster's grasp, gasping for breath as the creature is unaffected by the blows of her dagger.

Funerary Guardians: Coffin corpses are typically found in tombs and catacombs, fiercely devoted to their task, and do not become servants to necromancers or death priests beyond this function.

Undead Nature: A coffin corpse doesn't require air, food, drink or sleep.

Coffin Corpse

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class: 8

Hit Points: 45 (6d8 +18)

Speed: 30ft

STR 18 (+4); *DEX* 6 (-2); *CON* 16 (+3); *INT* 6 (-1); *WIS* 6 (-2); *CHA* 6 (-2)

Saving Throws: Wisdom +0

Damage Resistances: Necrotic

Damage Immunities: Poison; Bludgeoning, Piercing, or Slashing from non-magical weapons

Condition Immunities: Exhaustion, poisoned

Senses: Darkvision 60ft, Passive Perception 8

Languages: Understands the languages it knew in life but does not speak

Challenge: 2 (450 xp)

Feign Death: Coffin corpses appear to take damage from normal weapons, *but do not*. The first time the Coffin Corpse is struck at least 6 points of damage in a single round (before damage resistance or damage immunities), it falls over as if killed. They rise and attack the next round.

Terrify: When a Coffin Corpse rises from its Feign Death ability, all creatures who can see the Coffin Corpse must make a Wisdom saving throw (DC 11) or become frightened until the end of the Coffin Corpse's next turn.

ACTIONS

Slam: Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. Hit: 7 (1d6+4) bludgeoning. If the target is a creature, it is grappled (escape DC 14). While grappled, the victim cannot speak.

Choke: As an action, a Coffin Corpse may automatically do 11 (2d6+4) bludgeoning damage to a creature it has grappled.