

DEUS  
VULT

GAMES MASTER'S STORY GUIDE



# DEUS VULT

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Verse 2.0

# INTRODUCTION

*In Deus Vult, the players are members of a highly secretive order of the Church at the end of the 12th century, dedicated to fighting supernatural evils that would otherwise corrupt God's divine plan for humanity. From hunting ghouls and werewolves in the forests of the Holy Roman Empire, from tracking down diabolic cults in Rouen, to quests across the Holy Land for powerful relics that may save humanity, there is much work ahead of them.*



Welcome to the Games Master's Story Guide for *Deus Vult*. This book will show you how to run an effective campaign for this setting using the *Legend Core Rulebook*, illustrate the alternative history of the latter part of the 12<sup>th</sup> Century, and give you all the tools you need to create your own adventures set across Europe and deep in the Holy Land.

The basic premise of *Deus Vult* is that the players are members of a highly secretive Order of the Church at the end of the 12th century, dedicated to fighting supernatural evils that would otherwise corrupt God's divine plan for humanity. They have a lot of latitude, a lot of skills, and a lot of unusual weaponry to do this. They are truly Warriors of God.

From hunting ghouls and werewolves in the forests of the Holy Roman Empire, from tracking down diabolic cults in Rouen, to quests across the Holy Land for powerful relics that may save humanity, the players will have plenty to do. They will also encounter the witch-hunters and first stirrings of the Inquisition - both hate the Order the players serve with a passion, and there is a three-way power struggle stirring within the darkest parts of the Church for which is best placed to counter the supernatural...

## Revised Edition

This is a revision of the first release of *Deus Vult*, made necessary by a few changes we are making in the background of the setting and the coming of several new supplements. The changes are highlighted here for those veterans of the original setting.

You will find much that is familiar, but there is now a slight shift in focus for the monks and nuns the players use as characters (they are now called *Sacerdos Custos* or Guardian Priests/Priest-Wardens), directing them almost solely toward supernatural enemies rather than heresy in general, and they have now all been raised by the Order since a very young age rather than having possibly come in at a later stage in life - this isolation will be very important for these characters, especially when you start posing the moral challenges for them later.

We have also made some tweaks to the organisation of the Order, especially at the topmost and bottom-most ranks, and we are changing the way Miracles are performed (or, rather, called upon) by players. In the original, they were treated much the same as Divine spells. As a mechanic, that was just fine, and we always like to use existing rules where we can to reduce clutter and complication. However, to us, those rules just seemed a bit... mundane.

The whole idea behind Miracles is that while all members of the Order are trained to a fantastic degree, easily the equal of any knight, there are a tiny few marked as truly special, who can actually channel the true power of God, directly manifesting His Will.

We thought that called for something a little more.. special. Miracles should not be used to make someone a bit stronger or quicker in battle. We wanted them to (potentially) be truly Biblical moments, where seas parted to allow escapes or plagues were unleashed on entire unrepentant populations.

In terms of format, the players' and Games Master's sections of the original book have been split into two, allowing us to present a cheaper 'introductory' book for players. This reduces the barrier to get your players into the game and, just as importantly, keeps their prying eyes away from secrets that are for your eyes only.

Such is the nature of the Order.

There has also been an introductory adventure added, found at end of this book. It is a good way to ease players into the setting, and will also form the basis for material due to be released that will create a foundation for your campaign to work upon.

Verse 2.1

# RUNNING DEUS VULT

*It is the year of Our Lord 1189. Jerusalem has fallen to Saladin's armies. The warriors of the Third Crusade march east to Byzantium and the Holy Land. Across Christendom, the faithful are beset by heretics and cultists. Monsters and demons lurk in the shadows..*



The players stand against the darkness. They are Warriors of God, the defenders of Christendom, and the last light of civilization facing implacable evils.

The role of the Games Master in *Deus Vult* is to;

- Create missions to challenge the players.
- Throw fiendish puzzles, horrific foes and moral dilemmas in their path.
- Roleplay every other character in the game, such as other members of the Order, cultists, nobles, priests and commoners.

It is *not* the Games Master's role to determine what is right and wrong. The players must make such judgments themselves.

## The World of Deus Vult

*Deus Vult* is set in a fantasy Europe, one where there are goblins in the mountains and ghouls in the forest. Despite the existence of the supernatural, history proceeds much as it did in the real world – the Order and the Church suppresses most supernatural activity. This means you can take any historical event – the Albigensian crusade against the Cathars, the death of Emperor Barbarossa, the Moors in Spain – and add a secret supernatural explanation for it.

Using real history makes the game much more resonant with the players. A secret plot to kill the Grand Seer of the Temple of Zog in some fantasy game is all well and good, but a secret plot to assassinate the Pope – that brings with it hundreds of years of history in an instant. The players know the setting instantly.

It also gives the Games Master a near-infinite wealth of background material to draw from – just open a history book and you will find plenty of missions for the Order.

At the same time, the existence of the supernatural makes this an alternate history, so there is no need to get hung up on historical accuracy which, at the end of the day, makes the job of you, the Games Master, that much easier!

## The Order

The Order is the core of any *Deus Vult* campaign, at least in the early stages. The Order's priorities and preceptries make for ideal home bases; the Masters and fellow guardian priests are running NPCs. Most importantly of all, the Order gives a structure to *Deus Vult* games – in each adventure, the players are assigned a mission by the Order. They do not roam around Europe, looking for gold and experience – they have a job to do and that job is killing monsters.

There are several ways to present the Order. You can pick a consistent theme for the Order, switch from mission-to-mission or, over the course of the campaign, you can slide from the lighter to the darker option in each category.

These are some suggestions on how to handle this.

## Medieval James Bond vs. Medieval Noir

*Deus Vult* can be played as basically a medieval spy game. Instead of coded messages, Walther PPKs and the Cold War, there are hidden scriptures, crossbows and rival faiths and heresies, but the basic structure is the same – undercover agents, desperate missions, gadgets, uncertain loyalties and betrayal. The Order is the equivalent of MI6 or the CIA; heretic cults are terrorist cells or criminal syndicates, while the Byzantines are questionable allies and the Muslims are the other side.

One approach is to play as if it were a Medieval James Bond. The Order's wonder-weapons are the cool spy gadgets. The Masters might want the players to be good and humble monks but so long as they get the job done, their failings will be overlooked. The cultists and heretics are irredeemably bad, the Order is mostly good aside from the occasional eccentric or rotten apple, and there are all sorts of elaborate set-pieces involving exploding cathedrals, demonic rituals and glamorous nuns.

The flipside of this approach is to take a leaf from intrigue-laden espionage; in this, loyalties are uncertain, the guardian priests disposable and the Order is a sinister and mysterious organisation where nothing is as it seems. Double agents and hidden plots are everywhere. The missions that the players are sent on are extremely dangerous and often seemingly contradictory and asking too many questions is seen as a sign of disloyalty.

## Monster Hunters vs. Horror

The Order is a band of monster hunters and there are monsters aplenty to battle. A monster hunter game can draw inspiration from *Beowulf* and *Dracula* to *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and Hammer Horror movies, with monsters-of-the-week and long-running inhuman foes. Each monster should be more than a drawn-out combat; the players should have to discover the monster's weaknesses and strengths and come up with creative ways to counter it. Go for dramatic confrontations and set-pieces as much as possible.

A horrific game emphasises the weird and the terrible. In this, monsters are hideous creatures that violate sanity, soul-eating abominations and nigh-invincible foes. Cults practice human sacrifice, the forests are thick with shadow and the moon drips with blood. The players should always be on edge and for every wonder-weapon and relic the Order has, the enemy has something worse. The players should dread being sent on missions and the death toll should mount with every session. There are always more guardian priests to send out to a 'glorious' death in the service of God.

## Adventure Framework vs. Conspiracy

The Order can be used as a plot device, a reason to bring the players together and to send them off on missions with a selection of interesting gadgets. For an episodic campaign, this is ideal and works very well for gaming groups with infrequent players (*'Eric's player isn't here tonight, so Brother Eric isn't sent on this mission'*). The Order fades into the background.

The alternative approach is to emphasise the conspiratorial nature of the game. Let the players delve into Order politics and secret histories. Have them find the symbol of the Order in the ruins of a 1,000 year old Babylonian temple, or on the seal of a letter sent by Hassan i Sabbah, founder of the Assassin cult of Syria. What is the ultimate purpose of the Order? What is its true relationship to the Church? What is the Divine Path? In conspiratorial games, you should sow clues and puzzles in advance, letting the characters slowly discover the plot.

## Avenging Angels vs. The Bad Guys

On the one hand, the Order is a force for good. Whether or not one shares their fanatical devotion to God, they do battle demons, evil cults and twisted sorcerers. Without the Order, Christendom would be overrun with monsters. The Order is the thin black line protecting the world from chaos and horror. Their plan for a Divine Path will save the world - if it can be completed.

## By Any Means Necessary

The Order believes its purpose overrides any notion of morality. Guardian priests are permitted to do whatever is necessary to complete their missions. As long as the supernatural threat is eradicated and the common people know nothing of what has transpired, the Order considers the mission a success.

On the other hand, the Order's means are often horrific, their beliefs heretical and bizarre and their methods and motives questionable at best. No-one would argue that eradicating a nest of ghouls is anything other than a good thing but killing a whole village because one peasant glimpsed a ghoul?

The Order's knowledge of science could bring about the Renaissance 300 years early or even kick-start an industrial revolution but instead they murder scholars and suppress social change. To most players, such actions are horrific and evil. Is the Order just as bad as the foes it fights? And if it is, what do the players do about it?

## Mission framework

Most *Deus Vult* games follow a distinct pattern. You can use this as a framework for most missions.

### The Call

The characters receive word of a potential threat. Either they are informed of this threat by a superior in the Order, or else they undercover it themselves as they wander the roads of Christendom. This could be anything from a vague rumour (*'It's said there's a heretical preacher in Avignon – go find out if this is true and eliminate the heretic if necessary'*) to a definite objective (*'Retrieve the Grimoire of Apollo from the library at Chartres Cathedral. Plant this false copy in its place. Wait until someone removes the book. Find out who they are working for. Eliminate them.'*).

### Preparation

The players pick their equipment and make preparations for their mission – what cover identities they will use, what approach they will take to the investigation, what research can be done at the Mont St. Michel and so forth.

### Investigation

The players travel to the site of the threat and begin their work. There should be a clear trail of clues leading to the final confrontation and a less obvious set of clues that gives the players an idea of how to best defeat the threat. For example, the obvious clues might lead to an abandoned church in the woods that has been taken over by heretics; the less obvious clues relate to the saint once venerated in that church and how the monks can invoke his power to help them in the final confrontation. The players should always be able to reach the final scene; whether or not they triumph there depends on their ability to investigate and interpret the clues they find.

### The Horror

The players' investigation brings them into conflict with some horrific foe. Not every *Deus Vult* enemy need be supernatural, though most should – a mission could end up involving nothing but mundane heretics or corrupt nobles, without a hint of the occult. Whatever happens, though, the mission should involve frightful threats. The characters are all alone or forced to rely on untrustworthy allies and if they fail, the consequences should be ghastly.

### Defeating the Enemy

The investigation leads to a confrontation with the enemy. Always throw a twist or an unexpected added complication into the final battle. Stack the deck against the players, forcing them to come up with an equally unexpected solution. If the players go in with a plan, let it *mostly* work but make them adapt. If they go in without a plan, then they are in trouble already...



## Bitter Ashes

Finally, the players need to cover up their activities. This can be as bloody as murdering witnesses but the players might also have to come up with explanations for supernatural activity ('*It wasn't a demon... it was, er... swamp gas*') or being forced to deal with unpalatable solutions ('*The corrupt baron is willing to be bribed to look the other way; his more honourable nephew will ask too many questions.*').

Happy endings are anathema to a *Deus Vult* game; missions should end with the feeling that disaster has only been temporarily averted. The Order's campaign against evil is a long slow defeat sliding towards apocalypse.

## Inspiration and Source Material

The following games, books and films have all been instrumental in the creation of *Deus Vult*, and an enterprising Games Master can revisit them. You will find they are all worthwhile uses of your time, and you will find plenty of material to draw upon for your own scenarios.

### Games

*Assassin's Creed*, *Ubisoft (Console)*: Templars and Assassins running around the Holy Land in pursuit of magical artefacts, with lots of medieval urban free-running and unlikely gadgets.

*Azrael's Tear*, *Mindscape (PC)*: Your chances of finding this game are remote - it is more than ten years old and was not hugely popular when released, which is a tremendous pity as it is a beautiful and atmospheric game. In the near future, high-tech thieves attempt to steal the Holy Grail from a vast underground Templar fortress. The fortress is made from grailstone, an extra-terrestrial material that resurrects the dead over and over again. The original guardians are still alive but hideously changed after hundreds of years in the dungeon.

*Ars Magica*, *Atlas Games (TRPG)*: While the main rulebook is too focussed on its own magic and background to be of much use to a *Deus Vult* Games Master, many of the supplements are excellent guides to the supernatural side of the Middle Ages.

*Call of Cthulhu*, *Chaosium*: The classic horror roleplaying game and still one of the best. Every Games Master should read the *Call of Cthulhu* rulebook at the very least.

*Dogs in the Vineyard*, *Lumpley Games*: While the settings are different - Mormon cowboys instead of Catholic assassins - the basic concept is similar to *Deus Vult* and you can find great inspiration in the Games Master's advice section and the town creation rules.

### Novels

*The Name of the Rose* (*Umberto Eco*): If this book had just one or two more improbable wonder-weapons and a little more demon summoning, you could stamp *Deus Vult* on the cover.

*Foucault's Pendulum* (*Umberto Eco*): The conspiracy-theory book. Three bored editors decide to rewrite the secret history of the world. If you read only one thing from the list, make it this one.

*Baudalino* (*Umberto Eco*): A self-confessed liar tells his life story during the sack of Byzantium. Baudalino claims to have been the adopted son of Frederick Barbarossa and to have visited the lands of Prester John. It is all lies but they are entertaining lies. The tone of much of the book is a little too fantastical for *Deus Vult* but it is a much more fun read than most guides to medieval theology.

### Movies

*The Exorcist*: If you can watch this movie and capture the sense of wrongness and oppressive evil, then your game is one I want to play in.

*Kingdom of Heaven*: Ignore the plot, look at the pretty pictures.

*The 13<sup>th</sup> Warrior*: This film is set a few hundred years earlier than *Deus Vult*, but if you replace Buliwyf and his companions with the guardian priests of your players, you have a perfect adventure right there.

*Indiana Jones*: While not a staple of *Deus Vult*, the kind of tomb-robbing/delving that appears in these films makes for a good break in investigations as players quest for relics in the Holy Land and beyond.

## Non–Fiction

*The Perfect Heresy* (Stephen O Shea): Excellent overview of the Cathar heresy and the ensuing crusades.  
*The Medieval Underworld* (Andrew McCall): This book covers the darker side of medieval society, from bandits and thieves to witches and heretics. Every chapter has a half-dozen adventure ideas ripe for plucking.

*Life in a Medieval City* (Joseph & Frances Gies): Excellent slice of life, concentrating on how people lived, worked and thought.

*The Medieval World View* (William Cook & Ronald Herzman): A dissection of the beliefs and opinions of the medieval period.

*The Crusades* (Geoffrey Hindley): A nice, accessible guide to the origins, methods and ultimate fate of the Crusaders.

## Campaigns

*Deus Vult* works best as an episodic campaign, with long periods of downtime between adventures. Do not play through every day of a character's life – each session should be full of excitement and intrigue. Assume that between missions, the players are praying, training or travelling.

### Order Agents

The simplest campaign structure for *Deus Vult* is the mission – the Order tells the players what to do and they run off and do it. To keep the game fresh, move the group from preceptry to preceptry over the course of the campaign, letting them interact with different Masters and new places to adventure.

Games set at the fortress of the Mont St. Michel in Normandy are very different to those set in Constantinople or north Africa.

### A Preceptry of our Own

This campaign structure gives the players a chance to really invest in the game. The characters are sent to establish (or rebuild) a preceptry or even a priory in some distant land (the Holy Land is ideal). They need to disguise their activities, investigate occult activity and run the preceptry. They can get involved with local politics, uncover the secret history of the region, or even become players in Order politics.

### The Tide of History

In this variant, the amount of downtime between adventures is increased to several months or even years. The characters will age over the course of the campaign and the lucky ones might even get to die of old age. The advantage of such a game is that you get to use the full course of real-world history. A campaign that lasts, say, 40 years from 1189 can cover the full course of the Third Crusade, the conquest of Normandy, the sack of Constantinople, the founding of the Dominicans and even the possible disruption of the Order when Mont St. Michel is besieged and burned in 1204.

### Renegades

Some campaigns will take this route without any intervention from the Games Master. The players go rogue, fleeing the Order or trying to reform it from within. If the players leave the Order, then the Order becomes a major villain for the game; the renegade guardian priests might ally themselves

with the Inquisition or some other organisation, or try to found their own group to fight monsters. If you want to switch to an alternate-history game, then let the Order's secret lore be revealed to the world, letting Christendom's technology or magic develop in a radically different direction under the characters' tutelage.

## The End of the World

In this campaign, the prophecies and scriptures are correct – the end of the world is coming *right now*.

The campaign starts off normal and then rapidly descends into full-scale biblical apocalypse – the dead rise, demons stalk the Earth, cats and dogs living together, a seven-headed dragon with ten tails dragging a third of the stars down from the sky. The Order's priorities become fortresses under siege by horrors and the players have to survive until the final battle with Satan himself.

## Random Mission Generator

If you are stuck, you can use this mission generator to kick-start your own ideas for new scenarios in your campaign.

Roll 1D20 on each of the tables to come up with the skeleton of a new, random *Deus Vult* mission.

## The Call

Roll	How do the PCs get involved
1	The Order hears rumours of heresy and orders an investigation.
2	There is a series of unexplained murders.
3	One of the Order's monks fails to return from a mission.
4	The local clergy demand that the Order step in to aid them.
5	There is a cryptic reference in an old tome that warrants investigation.
6	An Order seer has terrible prophetic dreams.
7	A captured cultist reveals the location of another branch of his cult.
8	A member of the family of one of the Adventurers is murdered or goes missing.
9	The peasants in a town whisper of strange things happening in the woods at night.
10	A child in town is said to be possessed.
11	Mutilated bodies wash down the river from upstream.
12	There are strange lights seen on the hills at night.
13	A routine inspection by an Order agent of an old cult site shows that it has been broken into.
14	The characters are in town on other business, such as buying supplies for the Order, when they find signs of occult activity.
15	A holy relic or occult grimoire goes missing and must be recovered.
16	One of the Order's spies sends in a report of occult activity.
17	The Order's Hoffman devices and scrying equipment detect significant occult activity in an area.
18	A travelling merchant brings word of strange events.
19	The characters are attacked by supernatural foes.
20	One of the Order's preceptries is attacked and overrun.

# The Actual Threat

Roll	The enemy the characters must overcome is a...
1	Heretical preacher, corrupting the faithful.
2	Heretical group who are using the black arts of sorcery.
3	Corrupt bishop who has come to follow a heretical path.
4	Demon masquerading as a heretic, guiding otherwise good Christians into evil ways.
5	Demon who has possessed a human vessel.
6	Pagan cult, worshipping a nature spirit.
7	Pagan cult, worshipping an old god.
8	Witch cult.
9	Lone sorcerer.
10	Necromancer.
11	Diabolist sorcerer.
12	Corrupt noble who has turned to sorcery.
13	Awakened ancient evil.
14	Lone monster.
15	Criminal syndicate without any supernatural powers.
16	Bandit.
17	Deranged serial killer.
18	Monster nest
19	Renegade Order monks.
20	Roll twice.

# The Moral Dimension

Roll	What moral quandary do the players have to deal with?
1-2	Killing innocent witnesses vs. letting the existence of the supernatural become widely known.
3-4	Blind devotion to the church vs. a lack of certainty.
5-6	Sacrificing a life vs. risking the failure of the mission.
7-8	Using forbidden magic vs. risking the failure of the mission.
9-10	Putting innocents at risk vs. risking the failure of the mission.
11-12	Supporting a corrupt status quo vs. potential anarchy.
13-14	Supporting a corrupt status quo vs. risking the failure of the mission.
15-16	Preserving knowledge vs. risking the spread of blasphemous lore.
17-18	Saving the innocent vs. exposing the Order.
19-20	Obeying the Order vs. doing the right thing.

# Where?

Roll	The mission centres around...
1-2	An isolated village.
3-4	The wild woods, far from civilisation.
5-6	The tangled and overgrown hills.
7-8	A noble's castle.
9-10	A cathedral or important church.
11-12	A small town.
13-14	A large city.
15-16	A ship at sea.
17-18	An underground labyrinth.
19-20	A ruin.

# Major NPCs

Roll	The characters interact with...
1	An arrogant priest or bishop.
2	Fearful peasants.
3	A crusading knight.
4	A ghost.
5	A bandit gang.
6	A band of mummers.
7	A rich noble.
8	A criminal.
9	A witch-hunter.
10	A wandering troubadour.
11	An abbot.
12	A rebellious child.
13	A travelling merchant.
14	A tax collector.
15	A madman.
16	A foreigner.
17	A scholar.
18	A prophet or preacher.
19	A condemned prisoner.
20	A dying man.

# Complications

Roll	Something's up...
1	Plague is rampant in the area.
2	There is a case of mistaken identity.
3	The characters get contradictory instructions from the Order.
4	Meddling kids try to interfere with the mission.
5	The characters have to assassinate someone.
6	The characters are blamed for the supernatural activity.
7	The local authorities distrust or fear the characters.
8	A witch-hunter is in the area.
9	There is a second supernatural group or entity in the area.
10	A spirit possesses one of the characters or an NPC.
11	The Inquisition tries to take over the investigation.
12	The characters are being deceived as to the true nature of the threat.
13	Extreme weather strikes the area.
14	The area is naturally hazardous in some fashion.
15	Bandits or raiders attack.
16	The characters are targeted by assassins, saboteurs or sorcerers.
17	The supernatural threat is far greater than anticipated.
18	The characters and the Order are being manipulated or deceived.
19	Local politics interfere with the mission.
20	Roll again twice.

## Clues Are found...

Roll	The characters find clues...
1	In an ancient tomb.
2	By translating runes on a standing stone.
3	By staking out a graveyard.
4	By decoding a manuscript.
5	In their dreams.
6	At a murder scene.
7	By capturing a cultist.
8	Using alchemy.
9	By following a trail of blood.
10	Using a necromantic ritual to interrogate the dead.
11	Using a Hoffman Device or other divinatory device.
12	By interrogating an unlikely witness.
13	By following a suspect.
14	In a confessional.
15	In a midden.
16	By eavesdropping.
17	In the dying words of an ally.
18	Through torture.
19	In a letter or document.
20	Roll again twice.

## The final Confrontation

Roll	The final battle involves...
1-2	A ritual that the characters must foil.
3-4	Demons. Lots of demons.
5-6	Takes place in the cult's stronghold as it sinks into Hell.
7-8	Turning the supernatural threat against itself.
9-10	A race against time.
11-12	Assassinating the source of the supernatural threat.
13-14	An innocent who must be rescued.
15-16	Will require one of the characters sacrificing his life.
17-18	Damning compromises.
19-20	Roll again twice.

Verse 2.2

# THE MONT ST. MICHEL

*The island of the Mont St. Michel is the rock upon which our Order endures. The great abbey is built on a rocky island off the coast of Normandy, near the mouth of the Couesnon River. At low tide, the waters ebb to reveal a narrow, silty land-bridge between the mainland and the island.*





A pilgrim can cross this bridge if he is swift enough, for the tide returns quicker than galloping horses. The abbey is one of the most important places of pilgrimage in Europe and hundreds brave the land-bridge every year, testing the shifting sands with the pilgrim staff and hoping to look upon the great cathedral atop the island. Many of these pilgrims are agents of the Order – we hide in plain sight, cloaked in the crowds of the faithful.

Across the land bridge, the pilgrim comes to a small village at the foot of the mount. A hundred souls live here, serving the needs of the monastery. Unlike the pilgrims, these villagers know that there is more to our Order than first meets the eye but they are loyal to us and will keep our secrets. The village's fishermen provide food for our abbey and their swift silent boats cross the wide seas bearing our monks.

The abbey proper stands atop the mount. Its construction is a wonder of the age and our grand design will take another three centuries to complete. The monastery consists of three levels, the lower two of which are rings built around the mountain-top. The third level, consisting of the church itself, is built atop the lower two stories and surmounts the whole island. To reach the abbey, a pilgrim must climb a winding path up the side of the mount. In several places, the slope is so steep that stairs have been cut into the rock face. At each of these staircases, the Order has placed cunning hidden traps and defensive emplacements.

At the top of the staircase, a pilgrim may enter the abbey itself by crossing the courtyard and passing through the magnificent doorway. Order members detach themselves from the crowd at this point, slipping away through secret portals into the private sections of the Order.

## The Abbey

Intruders found in sensitive areas must be captured and will likely meet with a convenient and unfortunate accident on the slick steps of the mount.

**Dormitories:** Initiates and guardian priests who do not dwell in the abbey may sleep in these dormitories. On occasion, the Order is obliged to host visitors from other monasteries or dignitaries from the mainland who are not privy to our Order's secrets, so irregular visitors must consult with the Prior of Buildings or Prior Adjutant before resting. There are two dormitories for males and one for females.

**Chambers:** The private chambers of the guardian priests who dwell in the abbey. Each guardian priest is given a small cell to himself or herself, containing a bed, table, stool and chest. Each chamber may be locked from the inside. The Prior of Buildings and the Prior Adjutant have access to the master key.

**Workshops:** The domain of the Prior Artificer. There are conventional smithies in the village, where the Order obtains most of its mundane goods. Here, though, is where new weapons are conceived and tested. The workshop's doors and walls are hardened against explosions.

**Chymistry:** The chymistry is attached to the workshop via a secret passage. Another hidden stairwell descends to the Arcanum and the Archives far below. These alchemical laboratories are where the various alchemical compounds and potions are prepared. A system of cunning vents and pipes allows the air in this chamber to be evacuated to quench fires or release noxious gases.

**Refectory:** The whole Order may gather in this great hall for assemblies. Such a gathering has not happened in more than 200 years. The murals on the ceiling depict the ultimate triumph of St. Michael over Satan.

**Hospital:** The healing hands of the Prior of Medicine are put to good work here. Wounded Guardian priests may recover here; if God takes them, then they pass into the gentle hands of the Prior of the Crypts instead.

**Cloister:** The cloister is the centre of life in the abbey. Visitors to the Mont St. Michel often remark on the curious arrangement of pillars and archways in this section, unaware that every stone was placed with utmost care as part of a great pattern. The cloister's architecture forms a magical ward, protecting the mount from demonic influence.

**Tower of Gabriel:** The Tower of Gabriel is where the Prior of Letters works. The whole tower, from floor to topmost level, is an archive of correspondence from across Christendom. Atop the tower is a signal beacon that can be seen from the mainland priories and Lihou. In times of need, this beacon will summon aid from the abbey's daughter priories.

**Library:** This library, although impressive by the benighted standards of the age, is a mere shadow of the lore contained in the Archives. The books and scrolls here cover history, theology, the natural sciences and the lives of the Saints.

**Merveille:** The Merveille is an invincible fortification, a bulwark equal to any castle. The Merveille's battlements overlook the approaches to the monastery and there are storerooms and wells in the fortress sufficient to outlast any siege. The Merveille also contains the armoury; a dozen men could hold the Merveille against an army.

**Masters' Chambers:** The upper level of the Merveille holds the private apartments of the Claustral Priors. These rooms are guarded day and night by guardian priests.

**Hall of the Knights:** The Cardinal-Obscure is not only the head of the Order, but also a lord of knights. This magnificent hall is where the Cardinal-Obscure meets with his vassals and where the Assemblies of the Masters are held.

**Office of the Prior Adjutant:** The domain of the Prior Adjutant. The Superior General also has rooms here.

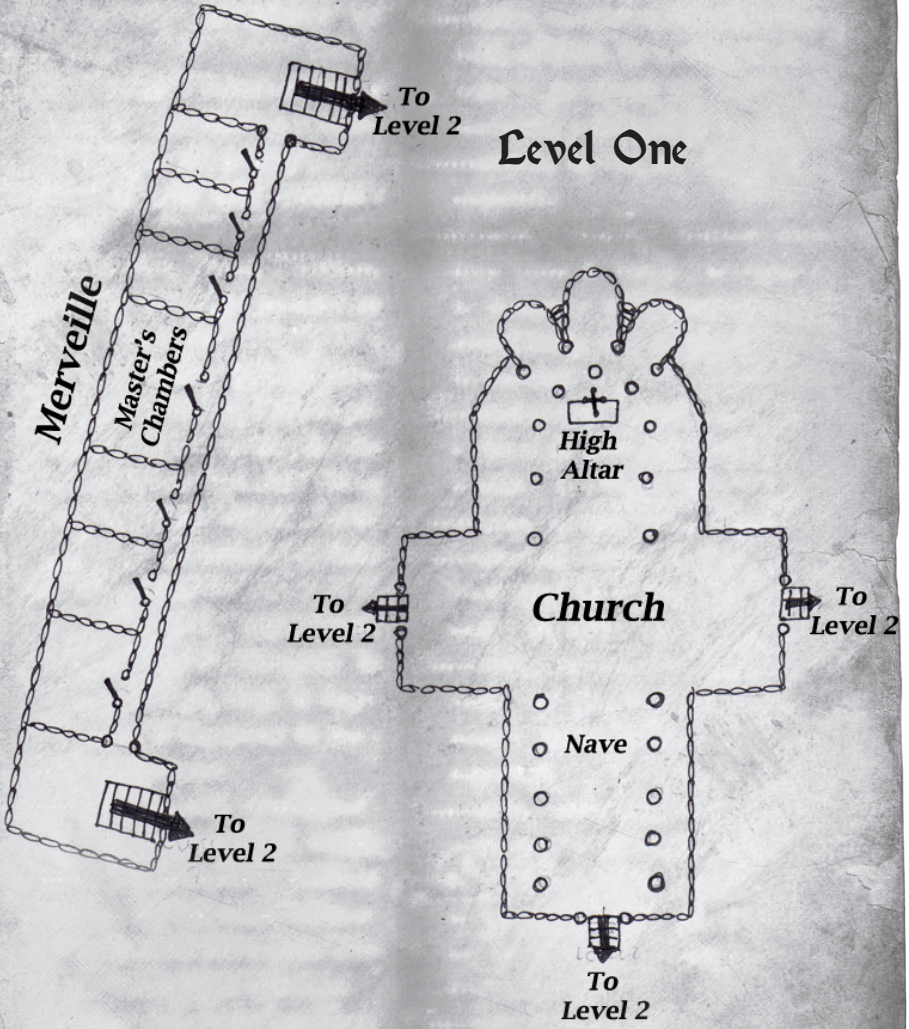
**Treasury:** The Order's treasury and reliquary.

**Church:** The church of St. Michael, the spiritual seat of the Order. Here is where all the members of the Order have taken their vows of eternal service and dedicated themselves to the Divine Path.

## Secret Passages

The Mont St. Michel is riddled with tunnels and secret passages. Half the rooms in the monastery itself have at least one secret entrance, not to mention hidden spyholes or eavesdropping mechanisms. There are more tunnels beneath the rock than buildings above it and it is said to be possible to walk from the village at the foot of the mount to the church atop it without once seeing the sky. Another rumour speaks of a tunnel that leads *under* the bay to the mainland, a secret escape tunnel that winds more than a mile underwater.

There are certainly several tunnels that go beneath the waves; some monks have speculated that they are part of some elaborate hydraulic mechanism, possibly one that can control the tides around the abbey. Others suggest that the tunnels connect to the nightfolk kingdoms under the world.



*Merveille*

*Master's Chambers*

**Level One**

**High Altar**

**Church**

**Nave**

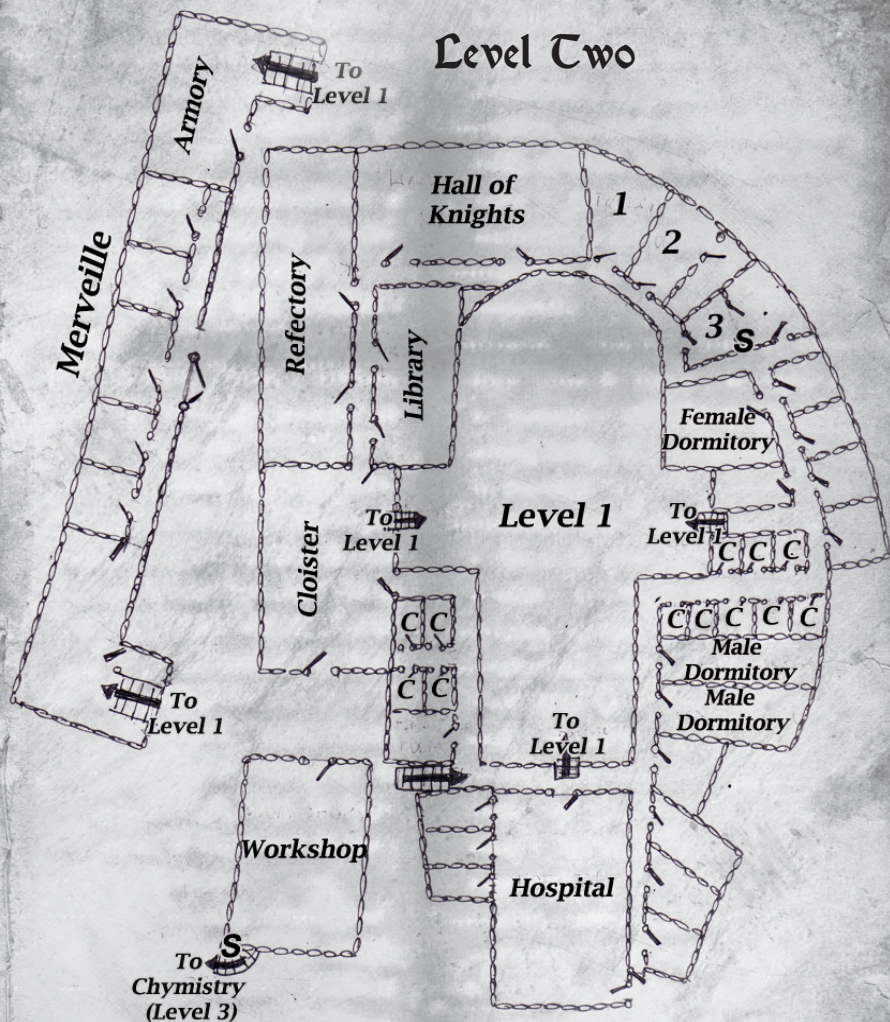
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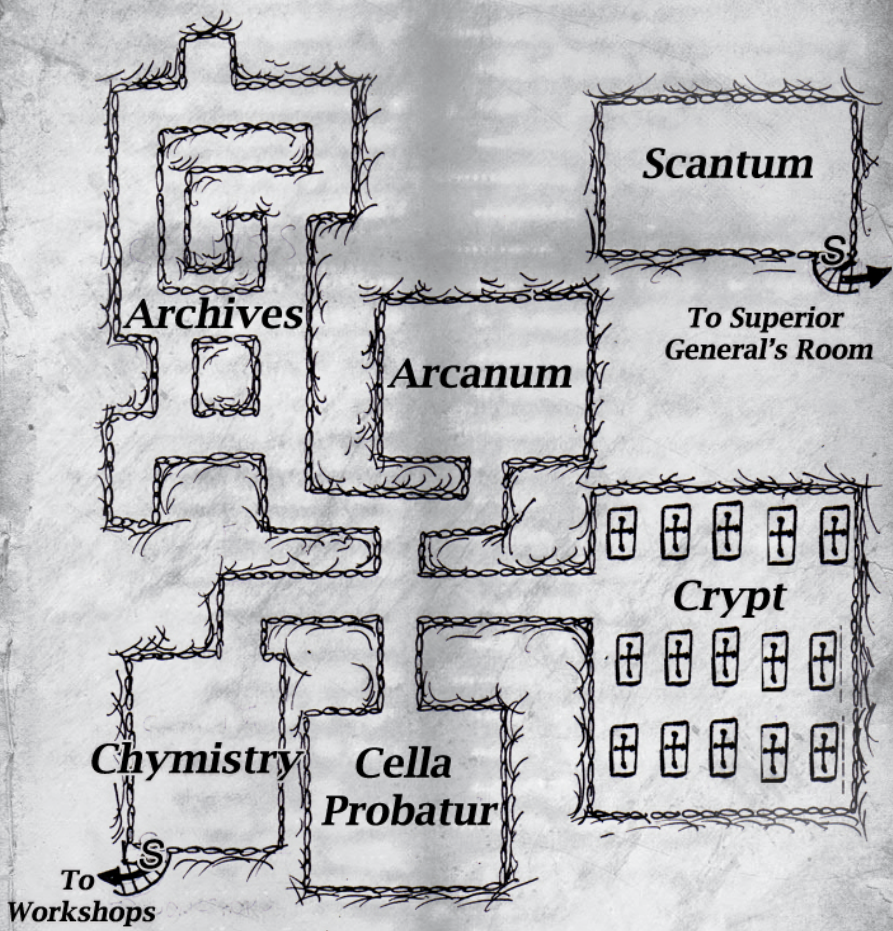
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### Key

- S** Secret Door
- C** Chamber
- 1.** Treasury
- 2.** Prior Adjutant
- 3.** Superior General

# Level Three



*Key*  
S Secret Door



# Beneath the Abbey

The underground sections of the abbey are secured behind iron gates. The various Masters have the keys and entry into the secret chambers is strictly controlled.

**Cella Probatur:** The testing chamber for initiates.

**Crypts:** Where fallen monks are put to eternal rest.

**Arcanum:** The Order's carefully-controlled ritual chamber. This room has gone unused since the establishment of the Lihou Priory but echoes of ancient magic still linger here.

**Archives:** The scroll-lined tunnels are tended by blind monks, who have memorised the twisting labyrinth. The deeper reaches of the archive are said to be haunted.

**Sanctum:** If this chamber exists, then it is the secret heart of the Order, accessible only to the Cardinal-Obscure. It is here the Divine Path begins, blazing forth to illuminate the future of humanity.

# The Island

There are several other locations on the island of note.

**The Abbey Wood:** The western slopes of the island are thickly wooded. Initiates are trained in survival and woodlore here and this is the easiest path to approach the monastery without being seen. To discourage spies, the Prior Artifex has concealed cunning death-traps amid the trees.

**The Chapel of St. Aubert:** This little church contains the relics of St. Aubert.

**The Sea-Cave:** A hidden cavern, accessible by sea or by a secret passage from the woods. The sea-cave contains a small jetty and a few boats; it is a way to sail away from the island without passing through the village.

Verse 2.3

# BRETHREN OF THE ORDER

*This chapter describes notable members of the Order, describing their history, lives, motivations and functions within the Order. They also make excellent Contacts, Allies or Rivals for players.*





# Basilio de Rossi, Cardinal-Obscure

*'It is the role of the Church to both guide and protect Mankind. By joining the Order, you will become a Shield of Mankind, a Warrior of God. You will take an oath to defend both Man and Church against the greatest evils of the world, those that mere force of arms alone can never be victorious over. Indeed, those that the common man must never come to know about, lest his faith in the Lord waver. Here, within this ecclesiastical fortress, we will teach you how to track, locate and destroy the things that exist within the shadows of nations, those who would work to bring about a darkness deeper than any yet seen. You will learn how to defeat them and, in the end, you will join us on the thin line that holds Mankind back from the worst of depredations.'*

The current head of the Order is Basilio de Rossi, who has risen from ward to Cardinal-Obscure in the course of a lifetime dedicated to the service of God. He is a short, stocky man, recognisable instantly by the scars he suffered in the catacombs under Rome. Also acting as Abbot of Mont St. Michel, he is a spiritual man but first and foremost a warrior and tactician. His every waking hour is consumed by planning and preparation for the battle against evil – how best can he marshal his meagre forces? How can new recruits be obtained and trained quickly enough to make up for the Order's losses? Which rumours contain a grain of truth and which are misinformation spread by the Order's enemies in Rome?

The older guardian priests and masters know de Rossi is no longer welcome in the Papal States that were once his homeland. He has quarrelled with more than one pope and it is said he broke the nose of another cardinal in the presence of Lucius III. Today, relations with the Holy See are carried out by the Prior Adjutant, while de Rossi concentrates on leading his Order to victory.

De Rossi is a close friend of old Badon, the Prior of the Archives. He tolerates Emil Castaigne, the Prior Adjutant. Some whispers allege that Badon is the real power behind the throne, guiding the Order along the Divine Path from his secret sanctum in the labyrinths below and that De Rossi is but a figurehead. Others suggest that Castaigne is the real master of the Order and De Rossi is happy to let the younger man run things while he wrestles with dark powers.

Of late, de Rossi's eyes turn more and more to the east. The rising power of the Templars worries him, as does the lack of communication with the eastern chapter-houses. He is considering joining the third crusade, despite his advancing age – but if he does so, he must pick one of the other Masters to rule the Mont St. Michel in his stead.

**Playing de Rossi:** Speak rarely but demand absolute attention when you do so. You have seen more than any other guardian priest but you have also seen *further*. Your eyes are fixed on the Divine Path. You will save the world – and any sacrifice is worth that.

**Seal of Office:** The Seal of Office is a sacred talisman, carried by the Cardinal-Obscure since the foundation of the Order. The bearer may spend Magic Points to get a +10% bonus per point spent to Insight, Influence, Resilience or Persistence tests for one round.

**Blood of St. Michael:** This holy relic is a small crystal vial that contains several drops of divine ichor, said to be the blood of St. Michael the Archangel. The bearer gains a +50% bonus to Divine Fervour. Three times in the Order's history, the vial was opened and the bearer drank a small tincture of the holy blood. In one case, the blood gave the drinker a vision of the future; in another, the Cardinal-Obscure spontaneously combusted.

# BASILIO DE ROSSI

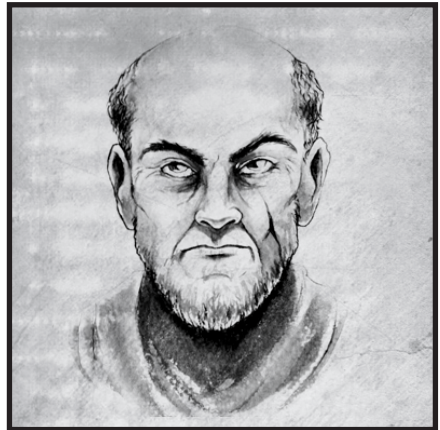
STR	15	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP	Combat Actions	3
CON	14	1-3	Right Leg	5/6	Damage Modifier	+1d2
SIZ	12	4-6	Left Leg	5/6	Magic Points	10
INT	15	7-9	Abdomen	5/7	Movement	8m
POW	15	10-12	Chest	5/8	Strike Rank	+13 (+6 in armour)
DEX	11	13-15	Right Arm	5/5		
CHA	16	16-18	Left Arm	5/5		
		19-20	Head	5/6		

*Armour:* Full Chain

*Equipment:* Damascene longsword, Blessed Ring, Seal of Office, Blood of St. Michael

*Heroic Abilities:* Heroic Aura, Tireless, Commanding Voice

*Notable Skills:* Athletics 106%, Culture (Papal States) 40%, Divine Fervour 45%, Influence 121%, Insight 55%, Lore (Christian Theology) 80%, Lore (Military Tactics) 80%, Lore (Occult) 120%, Lore (Regional) 40%, Language (French) 80%, Language (Italian) 30%, Language (Latin) 30%, Persistence 105%, Resilience 88%, Stealth 96%, Unarmed 46%



## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Sword and Shield	M	L	136%	1d10	10/16
Shield	L	S	136%	1d4	6/12
Crossbow*	72%	1d10	4/8		

\*Includes scope and automatic loader.

# Emil Castaigne, Claustral Prior Adjutant

*'Your holiness, permit me to draw your attentions to the reports from the Mont St. Michel. Consider the implications. Can we afford not to increase the tithe to the Order?'*

The second in command of the Order, Emil Castaigne is more properly referred to as *Cardinal* Castaigne, as he was recently promoted to the college of Cardinals as a peace offering from Rome (rumours that Castaigne is the illegitimate son of a senior figure in the hierarchy have haunted the young man since he joined the Order.) Castaigne is young for both these honours – to be a cardinal at 31 is unusual but to be second in the Order at such a young age speaks of greatness. Castaigne is certainly an able administrator – and, astonishingly, manages to balance running the Order's affairs with his duties as the Order's unofficial ambassador in Rome. Previous Prior Adjutants barely managed to keep the Order solvent and lived and died in the small, smoky office above the treasury but Castaigne can seemingly conjure coins even while riding through the alps to Italy. Under his rule, Mont St. Michel has thrived, the coffers are full and the Order has both the political capital and the gold to consider establishing new priories and preceptries.

Such an expansion will require the support of Rome and Castaigne's new role as cardinal is part of this effort. As a cardinal – church records claim that Castaigne is the priest of a small village near the Mount – he can travel to Rome freely and consult with the great and powerful. Given the Cardinal-Obscure's antipathy for politics, the future of the Order is very much in Castaigne's supple hands.

Detractors of Castaigne – and there are a few – say he has spent little time in the field and that he seems more devoted to intrigue and commerce than to furthering the Divine Path. That said, Castaigne has begun to take over more of the duties of the Prior of Letters too and his detractors grumble about that as well, saying it is not good for one man, however talented, to occupy two of the claustrial offices.

**Playing Castaigne:** You are a little too competent and intelligent for others to feel comfortable around you – you are always three steps ahead of everyone else. Your features are angelic and youthful, almost perfect, as though you were a fallen angel abroad on Earth.

# EMIL CASTAIGNE

STR	13	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
CON	14	1-3	Right Leg	2/5
SIZ	11	4-6	Left Leg	2/5
INT	18	7-9	Abdomen	2/6
POW	16	10-12	Chest	2/7
DEX	15	13-15	Right Arm	2/4
CHA	13	16-18	Left Arm	2/4
		19-20	Head	-/5

Combat Actions	3
Damage Modifier	+0
Magic Points	16
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+17 (+14 in armour)

*Armour:* Hard Leather

*Equipment:* Crossbow, Choking Dust, Panacea

*Heroic Abilities:* Loremaster

*Notable Skills:* Athletics 38%, Commerce 111%, Courtesy 91%, Culture (Papal States) 66%, Evaluate 51%, Influence 111%, Language (French) 86%, Language (Italian) 36%, Language (Latin) 36%, Lore (Christian Theology) 61%, Lore (Cryptography) 61%, Lore (Occult) 61%, Lore (Philosophy) 61%, Lore (Regional) 71%, Perception 84%, Persistence 77%, Resilience 38%, Sleight 53%, Stealth 93%, Streetwise 79%, Unarmed 38%



## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Mace & Shield	M	S	38%	1d8	6/6
Shield	L	S	38%	1d4	6/12
Sword & Dagger	M	L	78%	1d8	6/12
Dagger	S	S	78%	1d4+1	6/8
Crossbow	80%	1d8	4/5		

# Old Badon, Claustal Prior of the Archives

*'Feh! I have only a few months, boy, before God calls me to Heaven. I don't have time to waste on your pointless questions! Begone!'*

They say Old Badon was here before there ever was a church on the rock and they raised the monastery around him. The next oldest guardian priest in the Mont St. Michel is Sister Margot, the Prior of Letters and she claims to remember Badon being Prior of the Archives when she was but a novice. Old Badon has been the Prior of the Archives for at least 56 years and he is quite possibly well over 100 (and when he curses about the incompetence of initiates under his breath in Aramaic, some initiates mutter that he is probably well over 1,000 years and complained about Our Lord not being good enough either).

Badon lives in the labyrinthine archives beneath the Mont St. Michel, tending to the thousands of scrolls and books that are kept there behind locked iron gates. He is said to have memorised most of these books and that the labyrinth is in fact a memory palace, a physical representation of the old monk's mind. There is no man in all of Christendom who is more learned than Old Badon.

Of course, actually getting information out of him requires the patience of a saint. Badon considers almost everyone else to be a fool and refuses to even consider requests for information unless the applicant can present a very good reason why Badon should co-operate. Badon's assistants practically worship the old man, so there is no way to get information out of the library except through him. He considers very few people to be worth his time; the head of the Order, de Rossi, is one of this chosen few. De Rossi claims that he won Badon's favour by bringing back a particularly rare heretical manuscript to the archivist; others whisper that Badon is actually De Rossi's evil genius, running the Order from his underground lair like an ancient spider.

**Playing Badon:** Everything is an interruption from your all important work and you are so old you worry you will drop dead before you finish this utterly pointless conversation. The young guardian priests of today are all incompetent buffoons and the world is assuredly doomed, utterly, utterly doomed. Now, go away.

**Badon's Stick:** This heavy walking stick has a number of concealed blades and hidden compartments. It is also enchanted to serve as a reserve of Magic Points; it can store up to 13 Magic Points at a time.

**Thessalian Fragments:** This potent Greek grimoire contains dozens of powerful spells, including *Abjure (Aging)*, *Animate (Darkness)*, *Dominate (Angel)*, *Mystic Vision*, *Project (Sight)* and *Wrack (Magic)*. According to the library records, the book is lost; either Badon is concealing its location, or he uses his perfect memory to recall it.

**Badon's Brazen Head:** Allegedly a gift from Pope Sylvester II, this Brazen Head is an expert on the lore of ancient Egypt.

# OLD BADON

STR	6	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
CON	10	1-3	Right Leg	-/4
SIZ	9	4-6	Left Leg	-/4
INT	22	7-9	Abdomen	-/5
POW	14	10-12	Chest	-/6
DEX	8	13-15	Right Arm	-/3
CHA	5	16-18	Left Arm	-/3
		19-20	Head	-/4

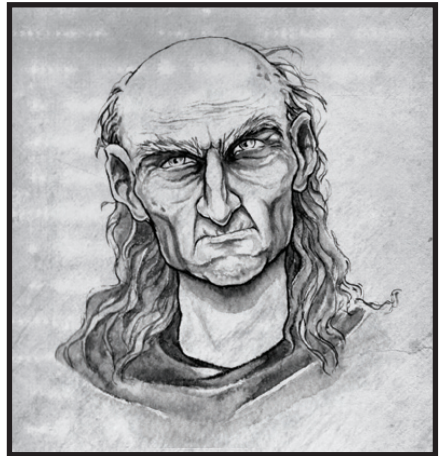
Combat Actions	3
Damage Modifier	-1d4
Magic Points	14
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+15

*Armour:* None

*Equipment:* Grimoire (Thessalian Fragments), Brazen Head

*Heroic Abilities:* Loremaster, Eidetic Memory, Linguist

*Notable Skills:* Athletics 44%, Culture (Greek) 74%, Culture (Moorish) 94%, Culture (Norman) 84%, Culture (Roman) 84%, Healing 44%, Insight 56%, Language (Aramaic) 94%, Language (French) 94%, Language (Greek) 104%, Language (Latin) 104%, Lore (Christian Theology) 104%, Lore (Occult) 114%, Lore (Philosophy) 94%, Lore (Regional) 54%, Manipulation 86%, Perception 51%, Persistence 83%, Resilience 30%, Sorcery (Thessalian Fragments) 94%, Stealth 50%, Unarmed 34%



## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Badon's Stick	S	S	44%	1d6	6/6
Dagger	S	S	24%	1d4+1	6/8

# John Beaumont, Claustal Prior of Arms

*'I don't care if it's a beast from the pits of Hell, HIT IT WITH YOUR GODDAMNED SWORD UNTIL IT'S DEAD!'*

As a young guardian priest, John Beaumont led an expedition down a narrow pass in the Alps where a horrific beast made its lair. Of the four dozen guardian priests who entered the pass that day, only John and one other walked out again, and the guardian priest died of his injuries a day later. Before he passed on, he begged Beaumont to take his body back to the Mont St-Michel.

John fulfilled this oath and more besides. He is now the Prior of Arms and has proved himself worthy of this title a hundred times over.

The monastic life does not seem to sit well with big John Beaumont. He is a loud and lusty man, apparently unable to properly break his love for wine and women. It is said there is a specially reinforced seat in the confessional for Beaumont, as he breaks his vows of chastity and temperance so outrageously that he must go straight to the chapel every time he returns to the Mont St. Michel. Others note that Beaumont barely manages to read, let alone write, and fear he is unable to deal with any problem that cannot be solved by swinging a sword at it (Beaumont himself would argue loudly that first, he can also punch problems and blow them up; second if a problem will not go away when you chop at it with a sword, then you are probably not chopping hard enough and third, swinging a sword at a problem was good enough for that whoreson Alexander the Great, and how is that for a classical reference from someone they say never studied?).

Still, the Order overlooks his failings in light of his heroism in battle. If he were not a guardian priest, he would be a famous knight or the most successful mercenary in Christendom. He has a knack for carnage and this is magnified a hundredfold by the Order's alchemical weapons. He already plots ways to use blasting powder and choking dust on the open battlefield against the Saracens and lobbies his good friend de Rossi to join in alliance with the Templars and go on crusade.

**Playing John Beaumont:** The world is small and breakable and everyone you meet is weaker and more fragile than you are. The exceptions are monsters and evil-doers. You are allowed to break them. You *enjoy* breaking them.

You do try to be holy but as soon as your hot blood is up, you forget your vows and wake up hung-over with a wench or three. It is just the way God made you.

# JOHN BEAUMONT

STR	20	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
CON	17	1-3	Right Leg	6/7
SIZ	18	4-6	Left Leg	6/7
INT	10	7-9	Abdomen	6/8
POW	13	10-12	Chest	6/9
DEX	12	13-15	Right Arm	6/6
CHA	14	16-18	Left Arm	6/6
		19-20	Head	6/7

Combat Actions	2
Damage Modifier	+1d6
Magic Points	13
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+11 (+2 in armour)

*Armour:* Blessed Full Plate\*

*Equipment:* Crusader Sword x2, Longsword

*Heroic Abilities:* Martial Strike, Severing Slash

*Notable Skills:* Athletics 77%, Brawn 98%, Culture (Saxon) 50%, Evade 64%\*, Language (French) 20%, Language (Latin) 20%, Language (Saxon) 70%, Lore (Christian Theology) 20%, Lore (Military Tactics) 60%, Lore (Occult) 20%, Lore (Regional) 50%, Perception 73%, Persistence 66%\*, Resilience 74%\*, Ride 80%, Stealth 62%, Survival 80%, Unarmed 92%

\*: The blessed full plate gives John an additional +10% bonus to resistance rolls against hostile magic.



## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Sword & Shield	M	L	162%	1D8	6/12
Shield	L	S	162%	1D4	6/12
Two Swords (Crusader)	M	M	142%	1D6+1	6/8
Lance & Shield	H	VL	152%	1D10+2	4/10
Longbow	136%	1D8	4/7		



# Izaak of Bavaria, Prior Artifex

*'Do pay attention, brother.'*

To be promoted to the circle of Masters once is an accomplishment. Izaak has twice been exalted to the circle but the second time is for him a tragedy. Izaak was the Prior Artifex twenty years ago and during his first term in the office, he discovered the young genius Hoffman, who developed many of the Order's newest weapons. Izaak retired in favour of Hoffman but then the inventor went insane and had to be confined in San Giovanni. Reluctantly, Izaak accepted the post of Prior Artifex once again.

Izaak is a gentle man who creates strange new ways to kill people. Personally, he finds violence distasteful and would much rather be making children's toys or new labour-saving innovations but killing machines are what the Order needs. He likes to give experimental new weapons to unwary guardian priests for testing.

**Playing Izaak:** Izaak is an enthusiastic boffin, born several hundred years too early. Talk animatedly about the wonderful work you are doing to perfect the hourglass and the rat trap.

# Flore, Prioress of the Crypts

*'Be at peace, brother. Your trials have ended.'*

The nun whose duty it is to tend the crypts of the fallen is Flore. She is meek, quiet, almost melancholic. She exudes calm and grace. Meeting her is like looking into a limpid pool; by merely existing, she invites you to reflect and consider your life. This quality makes Flore the perfect assassin.

Her other duty is to eliminate those members of the Order who have become a hindrance to the Divine Path. She and her sisters work closely with the Prior of Letters to keep tabs on the various guardian priests and Preceptors. When one of them steps out of line, Flore and her sisters investigate and – if necessary – give the failed guardian priest a place of eternal repose within the crypts of the Mont St. Michel.

Flore remains neutral in the politics of the Order. Her support has been courted by both de Rossi and Castaigne for different reasons but she appears to care little for the future path of the Order. Her only concern is ensuring that the Order remains pure and united. The last time she spoke, it was to protest over the Hoffman affair.

**Playing Flore:** Say nothing if at all possible. Smile sadly. If you have to talk, never mention your role as the Order's assassin and secret inquisitor; instead, make it clear that all you do is pray for the dead.

# IZAAK OF BAVARIA

STR	9	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP	Combat Actions	3
CON	14	1-3	Right Leg	-/6	Damage Modifier	+0
SIZ	13	4-6	Left Leg	-/6	Magic Points	14
INT	16	7-9	Abdomen	2/7	Movement	8m
POW	14	10-12	Chest	2/8	Strike Rank	+14 (+13 in armour)
DEX	11	13-15	Right Arm	-/5		
CHA	14	16-18	Left Arm	-/5		
		19-20	Head	-/6		

*Armour:* Leather Apron

*Equipment:* A variety of experimental gadgets, usually including a Thunderbolt Gauntlet, Hoffman Lens and Dust of Revelation

*Heroic Abilities:* None

*Notable Skills:* Athletics 50%, Craft (Blacksmith) 80%, Culture (German) 42%, Engineering 142%, Insight 40%, Language (French) 72%, Language Language (German) 82%, Language (Latin) 42%, Lore (Alchemy) 102%, Lore (Christian Theology) 32%, Lore (Occult) 92%, Lore (Regional) 42%, Mechanisms 137%, Perception 50%, Persistence 42%, Resilience 38%, Stealth 47%, Unarmed 40%



## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Thunderbolt Gauntlet	S	T	40%	1D4	4/8

# FLORE

STR	13	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP	Combat Actions	3
CON	10	1-3	Right Leg	3/4	Damage Modifier	+0
SIZ	10	4-6	Left Leg	3/4	Magic Points	15
INT	16	7-9	Abdomen	3/5	Movement	8m
POW	15	10-12	Chest	3/6	Strike Rank	+16 (+11 in armour)
DEX	15	13-15	Right Arm	3/3		
CHA	9	16-18	Left Arm	3/3		
		19-20	Head	3/4		

*Armour:* None  
*Equipment:* None  
*Heroic Abilities:* None  
*Notable Skills:* None



## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Sword & Dagger	M	L	98%	1D8	6/12
Dagger	S	S	98%	1D4+1	6/8
Garrotte	S	T	78%	1D2	1/2
Crossbow			78%	1D8	4/8

With Scope and Automatic Loader

Quarterstaff	M	L	28%	1D8	4/8
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**Flore's Armour:** This suit of tight-fitting leather armour is lined with silk, bought at a great price in the East. It gives a +10% bonus to Evade and Stealth tests.

# Benjamin, Claustal Prior of Letters

*'Just read it, I don't expect you to understand it.'*

Benjamin comes from Granada and was born a Jew. His family were murdered in a pogrom and he was swept up by the Order. He believes the Order and the Church can both be forces for good in the world but also holds the outspoken opinion that both institutions need to do a lot better. Despite his conversion, he still studies the Torah devoutly and even corresponds with several learned rabbis under a false name.

He proved to have a talent for intrigue and rose from being Prior of Poblet to the Prior of Letters. The idea of a convert – especially one of questionable loyalty and outspoken views like Benjamin – being given such an important role rankled with many in the Order but Benjamin's methods proved too useful for the Order to ignore. He established a grand network of spies and informants across Europe and pioneered new methods of cryptography and code to keep the Order's secrets safe. In his rooms at the Mont St. Michel, he has made a great web of connections and notes, as if all of Europe were a puzzle he must solve.

To his great concern and sorrow, age has taken most of Benjamin's sight. He is not quite blind but he can no longer read with any certainty. Attempts using both medicine and magic have failed to restore his sight and the Prior of Medicine has voiced the suspicion that Benjamin was cursed by a powerful sorcerer. He has a number of apprentices who read for him but each one of these is an added security risk. There are secrets only the Prior of Letters should know and Benjamin knows that he must soon retire, leaving his work unfinished.

**Playing Benjamin:** Peer blindly at whoever is talking to you but finish their sentences for them because your spies have already told you everything you need to know about them.

# Sister Teresa, Prioress of the Maison Sophia

*'Where do you think you are, girl? If you want to brawl like a common whore, we can send you to the nearest tavern right now! Fight how you desire there, yes, and earn your keep by slaking the lust of ignorant farmers. You can be there this very night, I can arrange it! Is that what you want?'*

The Maison Sophia is the nunnery where female wards are given their initial training in the Order's techniques and for twenty years Teresa has been its keeper. Despite her advancing age, her eyes and ears are still supernaturally keen and she can give an agonisingly sharp blow with her heavy cane to any girl who disappoints her. While the other nuns instruct the novices in theology, history, philosophy, stealth and tradecraft, Teresa's particular speciality is combat. She is the lioness of the Cella Probatur, the underground maze where the girls are trained to fight, to kill – and most importantly, to survive.

Some sections of the Cella Probatur are lethally dangerous but they are necessary. Better a novice die here, where she can be cared for and buried with all due rites, than out there in the wilderness. The girls believe Teresa to be a cruel tyrant but she does weep, in private, whenever one of her wards fails.

There is a prophecy, attributed to Pope Sylvester, that there will one day be a guardian priest who will walk all the steps of the Divine Path. Teresa is determined to live long enough to train that girl in the ways of the Order.

**Playing Teresa:** Be cruel in order to be kind. Put those you speak to through Hell now, so they can face down real hellfire in the future without flinching.

# BENJAMIN

STR	7	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
CON	6	1-3	Right Leg	-/4
SIZ	11	4-6	Left Leg	-/4
INT	17	7-9	Abdomen	-/5
POW	15	10-12	Chest	-/6
DEX	8	13-15	Right Arm	-/3
CHA	8	16-18	Left Arm	-/3
		19-20	Head	-/4

Combat Actions	3
Damage Modifier	+1d2
Magic Points	15
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+13

*Armour:* None

*Equipment:* Brazen Head

*Heroic Abilities:* Eidetic Memory, Loremaster, Linguist

*Notable Skills:* Athletics 25%, Commerce 65%, Courtesy 70%, Culture (Spanish Jewry) 74%, Evaluate 65%, Influence 146%, Language (Arabic) 60%, Language (Aramaic) 60%, Language (French) 40%, Language (Greek) 50%, Language (Hebrew) 70%, Language (Latin) 50%, Language (Spanish) 70%, Lore (Christian Theology) 40%, Lore (Cryptography) 70%, Lore (Heraldry) 65%, Lore (History) 95%, Lore (Jewish Theology) 60%, Lore (Logistics) 80%, Lore (Occult) 80%, Lore (Regional) 135%, Perception 42%, Persistence 45%, Resilience 17%, Stealth 10%, Streetwise 94%, Unarmed 10%



## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Knife	T	S	50%	1D3	4/6

# SISTER TERESA

STR	13	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
CON	15	1-3	Right Leg	-/5
SIZ	8	4-6	Left Leg	-/5
INT	14	7-9	Abdomen	-/6
POW	15	10-12	Chest	-/7
DEX	16	13-15	Right Arm	-/4
CHA	10	16-18	Left Arm	-/4
		19-20	Head	-/5

Combat Actions	3
Damage Modifier	+0
Magic Points	15
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+15

*Armour:* None

*Equipment:* Club

*Heroic Abilities:* Tireless

*Notable Skills:* Acrobatics 72%, Athletics 64%, Courtesy 64%, Culture (Norman) 68%, Influence 80%, Insight 79%, Language (Arabic) 44%, Language (French) 74%, Language (Latin) 44%, Lore (Christian Theology) 54%, Lore (History) 64%, Lore (Occult) 44%, Lore (Regional) 43%, Mechanisms 70%, Perception 49%, Persistence 40%, Resilience 40%, Sleight 70%, Stealth 105%, Teaching 100%, Unarmed 80%



## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Club	M	S	75%	1D6	4/4
Crossbow			120%	1D8	5/9

# Edric, Prior of Lihou

*'Corruption and sin everywhere, I tell you. Let it all burn!'*

The Priory of Lihou is the Order's secret sanctum where it dabbles in sorcery and magic and Edric is its master. According to protocol, Edric's appointment as Prior should be reviewed every seven years by an Assembly. No-one has dared do so, as no-one is sure how the unstable old man would react to being removed from Lihou. Edric is one of the most powerful magic-users in the Order but he is clearly on

the brink of madness. It would be better, agree the masters, if Edric were to pass away quietly in his sleep, preferably as soon as possible, rather than force a confrontation with the sorcerer of Lihou.

Edric was the Prior of Letters before being transferred to Lihou. He refers to it as his 'exile'; Edric despairs at the current state of the Order. He respects only Old Badon, and considers de Rossi to be an inexperienced, weak-willed failure and the rest of the Masters to be insufficiently faithful. He utterly loathes Emil Castaigne and Benjamin and has told both of them that he will turn them into toads if they dare set foot on 'his' island. He is supposed to attend Lesser Assemblies but only turns up when he has got something to rant about.

Life on Lihou is hard; cultists and evil spirits bay in the woods just outside the Priory and Edric must wrestle constantly with the dark forces locked beneath the island. He has wrestled some of these spirits into submission and used them to fuel his magic. He is an accomplished sorcerer and has even written notes on how to employ demons in the Order's service. Such extreme measures are necessary, he believes, if the Divine Path is to be completed. The flesh is weak but the power of the spirit can shatter nations. If necessary, he will take this burden on himself and do what is necessary by through sheer force of sorcerous will.

**Playing Edric:** Despise everyone around you. Shout at them. If they do not go away or obey you, stare at them with your wild burning eyes and curse them.

**Book of Simon Magus:** See page 107 for details.

**Book of Abra-Melin:** See page 106 for details.

**Black Book of Cornwall:** A heretical tome containing numerous dangerous spells; Edric has used Banish (Demon), Banish (Spirit), Damage Resistance, Diminish (Power), Diminish (Strength), Palsy and Tap (Constitution) in the past.

**Demon Fetish:** Edric claims to have bound the demon Glasya-Labolos into his staff. This demon is said to be able 'to teach all arts and sciences in an instant', and to be 'the author of bloodshed and manslaughter'. He also can grant the power of invisibility.

# EDRIC

STR	7	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
CON	16	1-3	Right Leg	-/6
SIZ	12	4-6	Left Leg	-/6
INT	17	7-9	Abdomen	-/7
POW	22	10-12	Chest	-/8
DEX	7	13-15	Right Arm	-/5
CHA	8	16-18	Left Arm	-/5
		19-20	Head	-/6

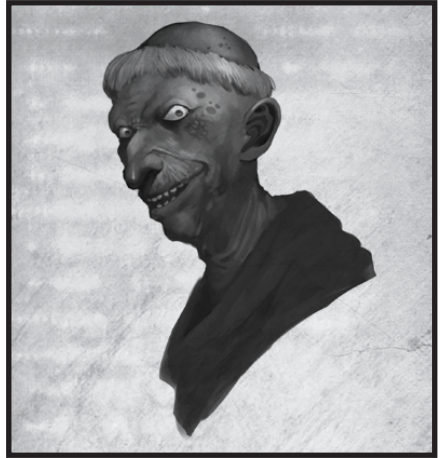
Combat Actions	2
Damage Modifier	-1d2
Magic Points	22
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+12

*Armour:* None

*Equipment:* An array of occult charms and magic items, Grimoires, Demon Fetish

*Heroic Abilities:* Reincarnation

*Notable Skills:* Athletics 44%, Culture (Saxon) 44%, Insight 84%, Language (Enochian) 34%, Language (French) 84%, Language (Greek) 34%, Language (Latin) 54%, Lore (Christian Theology) 44%, Lore (Occult) 114%, Lore (Regional) 44%, Manipulation 79%, Mechanisms 49%, Meditation 77%, Perception 59%, Persistence 89%, Resilience 42%, Sorcery (Black Book of Cornwall) 74%, Sorcery (Book of Abra-Melin) 54%, Sorcery (Simon Magus) 104%, Spirit Binding 60%, Spirit Walk 66%, Stealth 49%, Unarmed 34%



## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Quarterstaff	M	L	24%	1D8	4/8



# Agostino Cresci, Prior of San Giovanni in Venere

*'Come, friends! Eat and drink at my table! Try this wine; grown on the very Mount of Olives where Our Lord suffered for our sins. Let us not disappoint the man by not sinning a little, ho! Come, we shall fight like savage dogs on the morrow but tonight, let us make merry!'*

The great Abbey of San Giovanni in Venere is one of the Order's richest holdings and Agostino Cresci is its master. As head of the abbey, he commands the loyalty of a hundred knights directly and is the feudal lord of dozens of smaller manors and dominions in the surrounding countryside. He is also bishop of the diocese, giving him immense political power in Sicily. In terms of temporal power, Agostino Cresci is a more important figure than even the Cardinal-Obscure, Basilio de Rossi. Cresci's ability is unquestionable; as a Guardian priest, he traveled widely throughout Italy and North Africa.

He is credited with foiling a plot by heretical diabolists to murder the Pope in 1173; he put down the Ghosts of the Fifteenth Legion in the caverns under Turin; he broke the power of the Witch of Malta and he slew the Venus beast that preyed on shipping off Sicily. His once-lean body has run to fat and he is no longer as quick with a blade as he once was but any man who questions Agostino Cresci's devotion to the Order had better be ready to defend himself.

Where his devotion may be unquestionable, Cresci is himself trapped by obligations. He wields tremendous influence and political power but this comes at a price. He too has debts and obligations, especially to the Norman King of Sicily, William II. King William II's reign has been a happy and prosperous one, thanks in no small part to Cresci's aid. In Sicily, the Order serves almost as a branch of the government, putting down rebellions and helping Sicilian naval vessels maintain their dominance in the Mediterranean against Byzantine raiders. Cresci claims this compromise is a necessary one; it ensures the Order has money and support from the king and this ultimately makes it possible to do what is necessary in the region.

Secretly, William's son James is being fostered in the monastery and Agostino Cresci is his godfather. When the ailing William II dies, the boy will be produced to claim the throne and the Kingdom of Sicily will become a land secretly ruled by the Order. Cresci even hopes to be elected Cardinal-Obscure in the fullness of time and move the seat of the Order closer to Rome.

**Playing Agostino Cresci:** Boom loudly, be generous and full of praise and wise counsel. Above all else, be confident. Only rarely should you let the mask slip, revealing the dangerous game you are playing with the Order and Sicily.

# AGOSTINO CRESCI

STR	16	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
CON	15	1-3	Right Leg	5/7
SIZ	17	4-6	Left Leg	5/7
INT	12	7-9	Abdomen	5/8
POW	10	10-12	Chest	5/9
DEX	10	13-15	Right Arm	5/6
CHA	13	16-18	Left Arm	5/6
		19-20	Head	5/7

Combat Actions	2
Damage Modifier	+1d4
Magic Points	10
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+11 (+4 in armour)

*Armour:* Chain mail

*Equipment:* Consecrated Greatsword, Magnificent Clothing

*Heroic Abilities:* Street Fighter

*Notable Skills:* Athletics 86%, Boating 52%, Brawn 72%, Courtesy 65%, Commerce 55%, Culture (Papal States) 69%, Influence 103%, Insight 83%, Lore (Christian Theology) 34%, Lore (Occult) 34%, Language (French) 52%, Language (Italian) 74%, Language (Latin) 34%, Lore (Regional) 64%, Mechanisms 52%, Perception 32%, Persistence 50%, Resilience 80%, Ride 60%, Stealth 42%, Streetwise 82%, Unarmed 56%



## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Greatsword	H	L	106%	2D8	6/12

# Malavisca, Preceptor of Rome

*'Keep your voice down and your eyes open. Cardinal Vincetti is in that whorehouse over there and I want to have a little chat with him and not with his guards. Understand?'*

Many members of the Order do not look like monks. Few would think that Big John Beaumont, with his arsenal of weapons and his fine knightly armour was a monk, or crazed Edric of Lihou ever took the tonsure. This trait of unlikely appearance is taken to extreme in the case of Malavisca, the Preceptor of Rome. He looks and acts like the degenerate son of some immensely wealthy Genoese merchant-prince. Malavisca is a regular in every low inn and brothel in Italy. He has friends and contacts at every level in society; he is on first-name terms with beggars and Emperors alike.

He is also one of the most adept liars in Christendom; it is said that if Malavisca was an apostle, he would not have denied Christ three times before cockcrow as St. Peter did – he would have sent out a notarised letter to every governor and person of note in the east before midnight, utterly denying and abjuring any association with the notorious preacher from Galilee. Of course, not even his detractors can argue with Malavisca's assertion that all this might be true but if he had been around during the Passion, Our Lord would have found him waiting at the tomb three days later with a bottle of refreshing wine and a hearty meal for the risen Christ. If you want something – anything – Malavisca can get it for you. He has been implicated several times in the buying and selling of fake relics; enough pieces of the True Cross have passed through his hands to build an ark.

Technically, Malavisca is only the acting Preceptor, following the death of his master in 1179. Four replacements have been sent to Rome at different times; on each occasion, the replacement Preceptor died under mysterious circumstances within three months. Rome can be a dangerous town for those who delve into the occult.

**Playing Malavisca:** Lie. Lie about everything. Lie especially to your friends, because it is for their own good. Malavisca has a terrible phobia of the supernatural, which is a rather large drawback for one sworn to hunt down and destroy supernatural entities. He always tries to get others to do such tasks for him.

# MALAVISCA

STR	10	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
CON	14	1-3	Right Leg	2/5
SIZ	13	4-6	Left Leg	2/5
INT	15	7-9	Abdomen	2/6
POW	12	10-12	Chest	2/7
DEX	11	13-15	Right Arm	2/4
CHA	17	16-18	Left Arm	2/4
		19-20	Head	-/5

Combat Actions	3
Damage Modifier	+0
Magic Points	12
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+13 (+10 in armour)

*Armour:* Leather Armour

*Equipment:* A variety of alchemical preparations but always Drunkard's Poison and a Grapple Line

*Heroic Abilities:* None

*Notable Skills:* Athletics 31%, Courtesy 72%, Culture (Byzantine) 60%, Culture (Papal States) 60%, Disguise 72%, Evade 77%, Evaluate 42%, Influence 94%, Insight 82%, Language (French) 40%, Language (Italian) 80%, Language (Latin) 30%, Lore (Christian Theology) 28%, Lore (Occult) 30%, Lore (Regional) 100%, Mechanisms 26%, Perception 42%, Persistence 39%, Resilience 31%, Seduction 52%, Stealth 71%, Streetwise 79%, Unarmed 31%



## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Sword & Dagger	M	L	81%	1D8	6/12
Dagger	S	S	81%	1D4+1	6/8

# Talis, Preceptor of London

*'Blessed are the poor. They see what others do not.'*

For some preceptries, precise instructions must be given to guardian priests in order to find refuge. 'Go up this street in this city, until you find a winding alleyway that the locals call Cutthroat Wynd and go down it until you find a green door. Knock three times at this door and when you are greeted from within, say you are a poor fellow of Christ seeking a bed for the night. He will tell you which inn to go to and there you must ask for the room overlooking the stables...'

For the Preceptry of London, though, there is no need for any complicated directions. 'Just follow the crowd of beggars, and you'll find Talis.'

The keeper of the London Preceptry is a friend to the poor. Not a day goes by when Talis does not walk the streets of London, giving out bread and coin to the desperate. She is much loved by the street-folk but also respected by those who rule the alleyways and slums; when some foolish cutpurse

or hoodlum thinks to steal what she would otherwise give willingly, Talis puts her Order combat training to good work. According to the Order's hierarchy, the Preceptry of London should be subordinate to the Prior of St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall. Talis fears the Prior of St. Michael's Mount no longer pays attention to her increasingly worried letters. Her spies in court tell her that Richard the Lionheart will soon be ready to go on Crusade to the Holy Land, leaving England in the hands of his untrustworthy brother John. Richard has already proved unstable - he is a brilliant general and soldier but an impetuous and easily influenced ruler. Talis suspects that some of Richard's cohorts are diabolists, plotting to influence the prince.

**Playing Talis:** Be proud and confident, despite your vows of poverty and humility. Never overlook the plight of those weaker than yourself and encourage others to live up to their oaths and duties.

# TALIS

		1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR	13	1-3	Right Leg	2/5
CON	15	4-6	Left Leg	2/5
SIZ	8	7-9	Abdomen	5/6
INT	12	10-12	Chest	5/7
POW	14	13-15	Right Arm	-/4
DEX	16	16-18	Left Arm	-/4
CHA	15	19-20	Head	-/5

Combat Actions	3
Damage Modifier	+0
Magic Points	10
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+14 (+11 in armour)

*Armour:* Chain vest, Leather skirt

*Equipment:* Staff, Daggers, Healing Potions

*Heroic Abilities:* None

*Notable Skills:* Athletics 59%, Courtesy 27%, Culture (English) 34%, Divine Fervour 24%, Healing 76%, Influence 90%, Insight 41%, Language (English) 74%, Language (French) 24%, Language (Latin) 24%, Lore (Christian Theology) 34%, Lore (Occult) 54%, Lore (Regional) 76%, Oratory 79%, Perception 61%, Persistence 68%, Resilience 40%, Stealth 48%, Streetwise 79%, Track, 27% Unarmed 49%



## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Quarterstaff	M	L	89%	1D8	4/8
Two Daggers	S	S	79%	1D4+1	6/8

# Brother Hoffman

*'Hee... the manifest forces draw tight around the umbilicus mundi...telluric currents, you see, emanations of the...hee...of those who slumber below... ia... wisely did Ibn Schacaboa say, happy the town...happy...hee...'*

Brother Hoffman dwells in the monastery of the Sacra de San Michele atop Mount Pirchirano and he dwells there in a locked room whose walls are covered with soft cushions. Two monks watch over him day and night, for Brother Hoffman is incurably insane.

The loss of Hoffman's mind is an incalculable blow to the Order. This guardian priest was, for a brief shining time, the greatest genius in Europe. He was the equal of any of the great Greek philosophers and was acclaimed as the Glorious Scholar of the Order. He devoured the tomes of engineering and physics kept in the libraries at the Mont St. Michel. It was he who developed the automatic crossbow used by the Order's assassins, he who perfected the crusader blade and the thunderbolt gauntlet.

After perfecting the techniques of the old masters, he embarked on an ambitious project to reconcile science and sorcery, a goal that eluded even the great Pope Sylvester. The first fruits of this brave endeavour were the Hoffman Devices and precisely machined Hoffman Lenses (made using a secret technique that the Glorious Scholar himself invented). He was unanimously elected to the position of Prior Artifex and established a laboratory outside Guérande where he could work on the next step of his grand scheme. Five years ago, the laboratory at Guérande was destroyed in a fire. None of the guardian priests who were there that night will willingly speak of what they saw – the world folding and tearing as though it were nothing but thin parchment, the very stones burning with unnatural light, unnatural horrors and spirits phasing in and out of existence, the unearthly wind that stank of sulphur... and in the middle of it all, Hoffman laughing as his machine of brass and lodestone and crystal shook itself to pieces in an apocalyptic attempt to accomplish some unknown purpose.

Hoffman was found to be insane, beyond even the reach of Miracles – or perhaps he is even now fulfilling God's own purpose. He was given into the custody of the monks of San Michele. The Glorious Scholar is still a genius and has even produced some useful devices for the Order. He is not permitted anything sharp, of course and may not touch the machinery himself, not after the incident with the stylus and the eyes of Brother Cyprian, but he may be permitted a little charcoal at times and sometimes he sketches wonders that may exist in a thousand years time, when another genius equal to Hoffman is born to mankind.

**Playing Hoffman:** You are an insane Leonardo da Vinci.

# BROTHER HOFFMAN

STR	10	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
CON	8	1-3	Right Leg	-/4
SIZ	9	4-6	Left Leg	-/4
INT	25	7-9	Abdomen	-/5
POW	14	10-12	Chest	-/6
DEX	15	13-15	Right Arm	-/3
CHA	6	16-18	Left Arm	-/3
		19-20	Head	-/4

Combat Actions	4
Damage Modifier	-1d2
Magic Points	14
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+20

*Armour:* None

*Equipment:* None

*Heroic Abilities:* Eidetic Memory

*Notable Skills:* Craft (Blacksmith) 80%, Engineering 150%, Grimoire (various) 90%, Lore (Alchemy) 120%, Lore (Occult) 120% Manipulation 80%, Mechanisms 150%





# Brother Tranter

Brother Tranter is one of the Order's workhorses and he knows he will die in harness. This old guardian priest has walked the roads of Christendom for more than three decades and for all his labour and sacrifice, the world is just as sinful and unjust as it was when he left the Mont St. Michel for the first time. Even his faith in God and the Divine Path is slipping; all that keeps Tranter going is his loyalty to the Order that has been his home and family all his life and his stubborn determination not to let evil triumph over good.

**Playing Tranter:** You are bitter and cynical but like an old dog, you are too set in your ways to change – and your way is to fight evil wherever you find it!

# Sister Ember

Ember consider that if God has chose her as His servant, how can she do wrong?

Her teachers within the Order despaired of her. On the one hand, she possessed great potential. She mastered disciplines physical, mental and spiritual with almost scornful ease and proved herself years ahead of other novices in every manner, with the glaring exception of obedience. On the other, she treated first the nuns and then the Order's own tutors with contempt, paid no attention to the rules of the nunnery and climbed over the walls to escape every three weeks or so. Ember has what one might call a problem with authority and rules, and years of the harshest training has done little to temper her attitude.

The rules of the Order mean nothing – so long Ember remains victorious in her mission, she believes God will not mind a little swearing, a little drinking and the occasional roll in the hay with some willing boy (or girl, it matters little). She continues to be tolerated partly for her exceptional success rate in completing missions, but also because it is readily apparent to all who work alongside her that God truly does move with her. Ember has been at the centre of several Miracles all, seemingly, come at her bidding.

**Playing Ember:** You are convinced that you are in the right and have the skills to back up your convictions. You fight the good fight but always in your own way.

# BROTHER TRANTER

STR	16	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
CON	12	1-3	Right Leg	5/6
SIZ	14	4-6	Left Leg	5/6
INT	8	7-9	Abdomen	5/7
POW	13	10-12	Chest	5/8
DEX	14	13-15	Right Arm	5/5
CHA	10	16-18	Left Arm	5/5
		19-20	Head	5/6

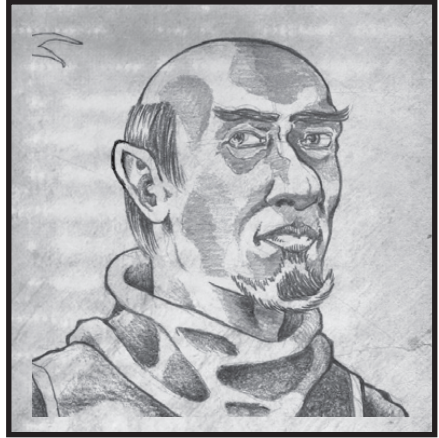
Combat Actions	2
Damage Modifier	+1d2
Magic Points	13
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+11 (+4 in armour)

*Armour:* Chainmail (7)

*Equipment:* Longsword (1) with Concealed Blade (1), Light Crossbow (1) Healing Draught (1)

*Heroic Abilities:* None

*Notable Skills:* Athletics 70%, Brawn 72%, Culture (French) 46%, Evade 58%, Language (French) 46%, Language (Latin) 16%, Lore (Christian Theology) 21%, Lore (Military Tactics) 16%, Lore (Occult) 16%, Lore (Regional) 46%, Perception 41%, Persistence 56%, Resilience 57%, Stealth 67%, Survival 65%, Track 65%, Unarmed 75%



## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Sword & Shield	M	L	110%	1D8	6/12
Shield	L	S	110%	1D4	6/12
Concealed Blade	S	S	80%*	1D4	5/4
2H Sword**	H	L	75%	1D10	6/12
Crossbow	—	—	73%	1D8	4/8

\*: Includes the +50% bonus for the first attack

\*\* : Longsword wielded with two hands

# SISTER EMBER

STR	13	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
CON	14	1-3	Right Leg	2/6
SIZ	13	4-6	Left Leg	2/6
INT	15	7-9	Abdomen	2/6
POW	13	10-12	Chest	2/6
DEX	15	13-15	Right Arm	2/6
CHA	12	16-18	Left Arm	2/6
		19-20	Head	2/6

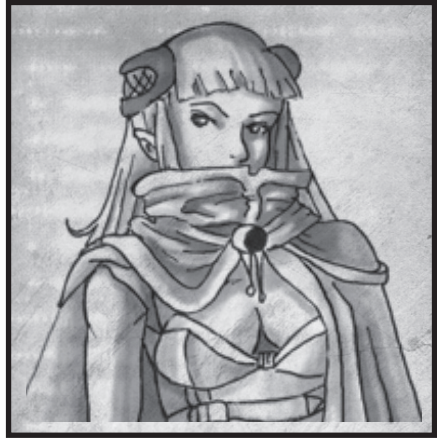
Combat Actions	3
Damage Modifier	+1d2
Magic Points	10
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+15 (+12 in armour)

Armour: Leather (2)

Equipment: Crusader Blade x 2 (6) , Hoffman Device

Heroic Abilities: None

Notable Skills: Acrobatics 53%, Athletics 63%, Culture (French) 40%, Divine Fervour 56%, Engineering 30%, Evade 80%, Insight 38%, Language (French) 80%, Language (Latin) 40%, Lore (Christian Theology) 40%, Lore (Occult) 80%, Lore (Regional) 40%, Mechanisms 30%, Perception 63%, Persistence 61%, Resilience 73%, Sleight 45%, Stealth 65%, Streetwise 48%, Survival 27%, Track 47%, Unarmed 48%



## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Two Crusader Swords	M	M	88%	1D6+1	6/8

Verse 2.4

# THE CHURCH

*These are the successors of St. Peter and Paul, the vicars of Christ on Earth, God's chosen servants – and the most powerful force in medieval society. The Church of the 12th century is an organisation in flux. After crowning Charlemagne as the first Holy Roman Emperor in the 6th century, the Church became more and more entwined in feudal politics, and can now be as much an obstacle to God's Work as the greatest supernatural evil. We also take a look at the two main rivals of the Order for power within the Church; the Inquisition and the Witch Hunters.*



Bishoprics and other religious offices were bought and sold, dioceses and monasteries became immensely wealthy and the Papacy grew weaker and more corrupt. This corruption reached its height during the papacy of Benedict IX, who became pope at a young age thanks to family connections and ended up selling the title to his godfather.

Pope Leo IX, who was pope from 1002 to 1054, began the reform of the church. He banned simony (the selling of ecclesiastical offices) and reiterated the need for the clergy to remain celibate. Leo's successors, especially Pope Gregory VII, tried to reclaim the right to appoint bishops from the kings and Holy Roman Emperor. The church is less corrupt than it was a century ago but it is still far from the pure City of God envisaged by St. Augustine.

## Structure of the Church

The spiritual needs of the people are tended to by parish priests. Often, these priests are largely uneducated, although they have more schooling than their congregation. A career in the priesthood is a common choice for second sons of the wealthy, as family connections can ensure a quick promotion to a bishopric.

Bishops are extremely influential and powerful figures in medieval society. As well as being spiritual leaders, they are also often administrators and advisors to kings and princes, or powerful landowners in their own right. Officially, bishops are appointed by the church but many bishoprics are still effectively in the hands of the nobility and the church merely approves their appointment.

From the ranks of the priests, deacons and especially the bishops, are drawn the cardinals. The pope is elected by a council of cardinals in Rome.

## Canon Law

Canon law is the law of the church and applies to all those who are considered clergy – priests, bishops, monks, even students at a cathedral school or monastery. Canon law is considered to supersede secular law, so in many cases the clergy can only be tried by a Church court. This is especially true in England, thanks to the Compromise of Avranches, where the English king agreed that the secular courts hold no jurisdiction over the clergy, with the exception of high treason, highway robbery and arson.

Technically, as monks, members of the Order could claim the benefit of clergy but this is not always possible. The Order's true nature must be kept secret and if the Order were to claim a battle-hardened assassin armed with exotic weapons as one of its priests, questions would soon be asked about the Mont St. Michel's true nature and purpose. The Order is governed by Canon law and internal trials are carried out under these rules. However, the Order would never consent to its members being interrogated by an outsider, even a Papal emissary.

The Order deals with its own.

## The Monasteries

The secular clergy – the priests and bishops – are only one branch of the church. Almost as powerful are the monasteries. The tradition of monasticism derives from Egypt, where hermits and small bands of the faithful dwelt in the desert. Today, most monks are cenobites, living in monastic communities.

The Rule of St. Benedict, a set of instructions and precepts dating from the 6<sup>th</sup> century, is used by most monasteries. For the most part, each monastery is an independent entity, although a large and powerful abbey can have daughter priories. Monks dwell in the monastery to pray and serve God, eschewing contact with the outside world – the age of the great mendicant orders such as the Dominicans and Franciscans lies several years in the future. That said many monasteries are extremely wealthy landowners.

## The Crusades

For a third time, the armies of Europe have gone to war in the east. The first crusade, now a century in the past, called good Christians everywhere to come to the aid of Christian Byzantium against the Turks and succeeded in conquering the holy city of Jerusalem. The second crusade, a generation ago, failed to drive back the Saracens in the east but began the reclamation of the Iberian peninsula from the Moors in the west.

Now, the Saracen general Saladin has retaken Jerusalem and a third crusade is underway to free the holy city once more. The crusade has attracted the greatest kings of Europe to its banner: Emperor Frederick of the Holy Roman Empire is already en route to the Holy Land and Richard of England – called the Lionheart – and Philip of France are both gathering their armies and will soon march south.

The crusades are a blessing for Europe. Trade flourishes along the roads and booty and exotic goods come back from the east. Those men possessed of a violent thirst for blood can sate themselves in holy war against the Saracens, making Christendom a realm of peace.

The Church blessed the founding of several orders of militant knights, the best known of which are the Knights Hospitaller and the Knights Templar. The Hospitallers were founded to protect and heal pilgrims en route to Jerusalem; the Templars were also founded to protect pilgrims but have become the premier fighting force in the Crusades and are one of the wealthiest and most powerful orders in Christendom.

## The Order and The Church

Although the Masters try to conceal this from the lower ranking members, it is an open secret that the Mont St. Michel's relationship with Rome is a frayed one. The Order demands funding and support from the Papacy, not to mention its claims of Extraordinary Grace and equal authority to the Pontiff himself through the Blessed Rings but also sees itself as an independent institution. It refuses to share its secret knowledge and science and holds beliefs that verge on heresy.

From the perspective of Rome, at least those few aware of it, the Order is a group of semi-deranged murderers who hold the Church to ransom. They are the only ones, so far, who can deal with supernatural threats effectively but their means and methods are almost as dangerous as the monsters they fight. The Order is a mad dog and the Church is struggling to put a chain around its throat. The establishment of the Inquisition is the first step in a long plan to replace the Order with something more controllable.

The Order's most important resource is the library and workshops at the Mont St. Michel. If an external group could capture the island fortress, then the current Order could be replaced without significant loss.

# The Inquisition

The Inquisition of the late 12<sup>th</sup> Century is not the infamous scourge of heretics that will in future years put southern France and later Spain to sword and fire – that Inquisition is the Papal Inquisition, formed in the 1230s. For now, the Inquisition refers to the Episcopal Inquisition, authorised by Pope Lucius III in 1184. In this letter, the Pope castigated all heretics and called on the bishops to investigate charges of heresy within their own domains. To this end, the bishops are permitted to fund Inquisitors.

Secretly, the Inquisition is the first step in bringing the wayward Order to heel. Traditionally, hunting down and eliminating heretics of a supernatural bent should be a duty for the Order; by allowing bishops to carry out Inquisitions, Lucius III and his successors have made it clear the Order must cleave to Rome's demands, or it will be replaced.

Inquisitors are limited in their jurisdiction – each Inquisition is carried out in a particular diocese, under the authority of a particular bishop. By contract, the Order's agents can range across the breadth of Europe in secret, pursuing heretics wherever they flee. The Inquisition is also limited in ability and learning. Some Inquisitors know about the dark forces but others believe their duties are a sinecure, where all they need to do is hunt down a few confused Waldensians. Still other Inquisitors are corrupt, or even actively evil. If a bishop chooses his Inquisitors poorly, the whole diocese can quickly fall to evil.

Although the Inquisitions are supposed to be separate, there is a growing network of Inquisitors who correspond with each other and with backers in Rome. They look forward to the day when the Pope formally blesses this network and chooses it as his instrument to defeat heresy.

## Inquisition Methods

The Inquisition's goals vary depending on the bishop. Officially, the organisation's purpose is to eliminate heresy but a lazy bishop might just want to give the appearance of doing something about heresy, while actually tolerating it, or even be a heretic and command his Inquisition to protect his fellow heretics. Unlike the Order, which must remain hidden, the Inquisition may operate openly.

Those interrogated by the Inquisitors are encouraged to report on their friends and neighbours, denouncing them as heretics. Threats and excommunication are usually enough to force a weak-willed suspect to confess; if one resists, the Inquisition has recourse to torture. In the few short years since the Inquisition was permitted to operate, most Inquisitors have acquired a ghastly knowledge of the art of inflicting pain; worse, they have recruited those with a special genius for inventing new methods of agony. Heretics are forced to recant their beliefs and embrace orthodoxy, or killed if they will not recant. As the Inquisitors are clergy, they do not kill; instead, suspects are 'relaxed to the secular arm' and executed by local secular authorities.

## The Inquisition and The Order

Inquisitors have no knowledge of sorcery or divine powers and they certainly lack the Order's extensive library of heretical texts and arsenal of wondrous weapons. This means when an Inquisition turns up something truly dangerous, as opposed to merely heretical, the Inquisitors are often overwhelmed. An Episcopal Inquisition can cope with a few pacifistic Cathars but a horror like a werewolf or a demon is quite beyond them – for the most part, anyway. There are some Inquisitors whose strength and skill equals that of a guardian priest. The Inquisition opposes interference from the Order. Inquisitors are hand-picked by the local bishop (or his representatives, as many bishops live far away from their appointed dioceses) and for the Order to trespass into their

affairs is plainly an attack on the bishop's character and ability. Inquisitors have notoriously little respect for the Order's Blessed Ring and appeals to Papal authority often fall on deaf ears.

In some regions, the Order and Inquisition do manage to work well together. The Inquisition's spies and informants bring back rumours of supernatural activity; the Order then deals with the supernatural quietly, leaving the mundane heresy to the Inquisitors.

## Using the Inquisition

The Inquisition may be friend or foe to the Order, depending on the attitude of the local bishop. Sometimes, the Order will be welcomed as specialists who can deal with supernatural threats. In other places, the Inquisitors see the Order as interlopers or enemies, or even supernatural threats themselves. In any case, Inquisitors know that they must report to the local bishop and need to prove they are in charge, not these strange monks from the Order.

## Heinrich Vol, Master Inquisitor

*'My master has no need of you meddling monks! Go back to the Mont St. Michel and drown in your precious tides!'*

Heinrich Vol - or, more correctly, Archpriest Heinrich - is an accomplished investigator of the occult and he has profited greatly from this new fad of ecclesiastical Inquisitions. Vol's parish is hundreds of miles away in Germany but he has not set foot there in years. Instead, he serves one bishop, then the next, helping them purge heresy from their domains, before moving on. He sees himself as the architect of a great cathedral of the faith, one built with souls not stones. Those who are found wanting are removed by the Inquisitors - the lesser workmen and labourers that are guided by Vol's grand design.

**Relic of St. Jude:** This shard of metal, said to be from the axe that martyred St. Jude, gives the saint's blessing to lost causes. As long as he holds the relic, Heinrich will always escape in the end through supernatural luck. In game terms, the relic gives an infinite number of Hero Points that can only be spent on turning hits into Glancing Blows. The relic's power only activates in times of dire need.

## Maul, Heinrich's Aide

*'.....'*

Maul is many things. Large, for one of them. Mute, another. Fanatically devoted to Heinrich, a third. Heinrich cherishes Maul for all those things but most especially he values Maul's skill as a torturer. The mute giant is not much good at asking questions but marvellous at getting answers...

## The Templars

The Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon, better known as the Knights Templar, were founded in 1129 to help protect pilgrims in the Holy Land. Originally just a small band of knights, the Templars found a voice in the support of Bernard of Clairvaux. King Baldwin II of Jerusalem gave them land on the sacred temple mount to build a fortress. Today, Templar fortresses and outposts can be found throughout Christendom. The order is military powerful but also exceedingly wealthy. The Pope freed the Templars from all local obligations and laws, save obedience to himself and the Templars used this freedom of movement and exemption from tax to become Europe's bankers. The order can transfer vast sums anywhere in Christendom.



# HEINRICH VOL

		<b>1D20</b>	<b>Hit Location</b>	<b>AP/HP</b>	<i>Combat Actions</i>	3
<b>STR</b>	<b>10</b>	1-3	Right Leg	-/5	<i>Damage Modifier</i>	+0
<b>CON</b>	<b>11</b>	4-6	Left Leg	-/5	<i>Magic Points</i>	14
<b>SIZ</b>	<b>13</b>	7-9	Abdomen	5/6	<i>Movement</i>	8m
<b>INT</b>	<b>14</b>	10-12	Chest	5/7	<i>Strike Rank</i>	+13 (+11 in armour)
<b>POW</b>	<b>14</b>	13-15	Right Arm	-/4		
<b>DEX</b>	<b>12</b>	16-18	Left Arm	-/4		
<b>CHA</b>	<b>15</b>	19-20	Head	-/5		

*Armour:* Concealed chain vest

*Equipment:* Battleaxe, shield

*Heroic Abilities:* Steely Glare

*Notable Skills:* Courtesy 79%, Culture (German) 58%, Evaluate 49%, Influence 110%, Insight 78%, Language (French) 28%, Language (German) 78%, Language (Latin) 58%, Lore (Christian Theology) 78%, Lore (Occult) 78%, Oratory 79%, Persistence 53%, Resilience 47%, Stealth 76%, Streetwise 79%

## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Dagger	S	S	32%	1d4+1	6/8

# MAUL

		<b>1D20</b>	<b>Hit Location</b>	<b>AP/HP</b>	<b>Combat Actions</b>	2
<b>STR</b>	20	1-3	Right Leg	2/7	<b>Damage Modifier</b>	+1d6
<b>CON</b>	17	4-6	Left Leg	2/7	<b>Magic Points</b>	10
<b>SIZ</b>	18	7-9	Abdomen	5/8	<b>Movement</b>	8m
<b>INT</b>	8	10-12	Chest	5/9	<b>Strike Rank</b>	+10 (+4 in armour)
<b>POW</b>	10	13-15	Right Arm	5/6		
<b>DEX</b>	12	16-18	Left Arm	5/6		
<b>CHA</b>	6	19-20	Head	2/7		

*Armour:* Chain & Leather

*Equipment:* Instruments of Torture

*Heroic Abilities:* Awesome Smash

*Notable Skills:* Athletics 42%, Brawn 97%, Craft (Torture) 91%, Evaluate 19%, First Aid 45%, Influence 72%, Insight 43%, Perception 48%, Persistence 50%, Resilience 94%, Ride 27%, Stealth 25%, Survival 27%, Unarmed 102%

## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
2H Axe	H	L	102%	1D12+2	4/10
Axe & Shield	M	M	92%	1D6+1	4/8
Shield	L	S	92%	1D4	6/12

Secretly, the Templars have amassed a library of sorcerous lore equal to any possessed by the Order. They have proved ready and capable to battle Saracen sorcerers and djinni. Since the collapse of the Order in the east, the Templars have stepped into that breach and now when demons and ghosts threaten the Crusaders, they look to the red cross of the Temple, not the black ring of the Order.

## Templar Methods

The fanatical Templars take a more direct approach than the Order. Instead of a small handful of stealthy operatives, the Temple responds to any threat with overwhelming force. Armoured knights, armed with both swords and sorcery, ride out and put an end to the evil. The Templars have all of the Order's tenacity and bravery but few of their restrictions. In the Holy Land, far from Rome, the Templars are a law unto themselves. The Temple Order back in Europe is a different matter. The Temple commanderies and fortresses across Europe are not actively engaged in battling evil but may be called to support the Inquisition or even the Order. Templars in Europe do not usually have sorcery or holy relics.

## Using the Templars

The Templars are a wild card in the occult community within the Church and a dark mirror of the Order. The Templars found a cache of sorcerous grimoires and occult relics in the chambers beneath the Temple and in fifty years have gone from a small group of poor knights to one of the most powerful sorcerous factions in the world. Their growing mastery of occult power is matched only by their expansion of their wealth, backing and military power.

The Order and the Temple have more in common than, say, the Order and the Inquisition. They are both monastic orders given extraordinary power and authority; they are both theoretically subservient to Rome's rule but both are effectively independent. The Templars have more power in the east; the Order's remaining strongholds are all in the west. Guardian priests and Templar knights may find themselves fighting side-by-side against Saracen wizards and demons but this is only an alliance of convenience against a common foe. The Templars covet sorcerous power; the Order is sworn to put down sorcerers. Once the enemy is defeated, armoured knightly monk and black-clad priest-monk all too often find themselves at each other's throats.

## Jean D'Ausin, Poor fellow-Soldier of Christ

*'The ultimate power is nearly within our grasp! Aid me!'*

D'Ausin is a Templar; he fought at the Siege of Jerusalem in 1187, when Saladin conquered the city and forced its Christian population to leave. Most of the Templars in Jerusalem regrouped to fight in the Third Crusade but D'Ausin slipped away – either deserting, as some claim, or on a secret mission as he himself maintains. For two years now, he has roamed the Middle East and Southern Europe, searching for magical relics and sources of power with which to turn back the Saracens. His ultimate goal is to find the resting place of the Holy Grail. On his mission, he is accompanied by his squire Hark and three servants, who he refers to as Jubelo, Jubela and Jubelum. He claims to have a manuscript written by a 3<sup>rd</sup> Century Egyptian hermit, which contains clues to the location of the Grail, as well as several sorcerous incantations. The veracity – not to mention sanity – of D'Ausin's claims are left to the players to uncover.

**Hermit Fragments:** This book contains numerous encrypted clues and bizarre allusions which may guide D'Ausin to the Grail. It also has the sorcerous spells *Dominare (Birds)*, *Enhance (SIZ)*, *Haste* and *Mystic Vision*.

# JEAN D'AUSIN

		1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP	Combat Actions	2
STR	18	1-3	Right Leg	6/6	Damage Modifier	+1d4
CON	16	4-6	Left Leg	6/6	Magic Points	16
SIZ	14	7-9	Abdomen	6/7	Movement	8m
INT	10	10-12	Chest	6/8	Strike Rank	+11 (+2 in armour)
POW	16	13-15	Right Arm	6/5		
DEX	12	16-18	Left Arm	6/5		
CHA	13	19-20	Head	6/6		

*Armour:* Full Plate

*Equipment:* Fine Horse, Hermit Fragments

*Notable Skills:* Athletics 60%, Courtesy 23%, Culture (French) 50%, Culture (Saracen) 20%, First Aid 47%, Grimoire (Hermit Fragments) 60%, Influence 44%, Language (French) 70%, Language (Latin) 45%, Lore (Occult) 45%, Lore (Regional) 50%, Manipulation 56%, Oratory 29%, Perception 51%, Persistence 52%, Resilience 57%, Ride 63%, Survival 57%

## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Lance & Shield	H	VL	104%	1D10+2	4/10
Shield	L	S	104%	1D4	4/18
Sword & Shield	M	L	94%	1D8	6/12

# Witch-Hunters

Unlike the Inquisition, which operates under the control of individual bishops and the Order and Templars, which have at least some official ties to Rome, Witch-Hunters are entirely independent.

They are wandering monster-slayers and witchfinders, who roam from town to town looking for signs of the occult. Some witch-hunters do it for the money, collecting payment from a grateful city or noble in exchange for killing their monsters. Others are insane fanatics, beggars with daggers who hunt because their madness drives them to kill.

The majority of witch-hunters are charismatic lunatics who see evil everywhere or avaricious bastards who play on the fears of the common folk. They may find a harmless hedgewitch but are more likely to turn the fury of the mob on some innocent old widow or Jewish ghetto. Most have no understanding of the enemy and are useful to the Order only as a distraction or as bait. The witch-hunter draws out the threat; the Order eliminates it.

Dismissing all witch-hunters as enthusiastic amateurs is foolish; there are a few hardened hunters whose combat skills and knowledge of the occult are on a par with any guardian priest. Where possible, the Order prefers to recruit such witch-hunters but some have grudges against the Order or the Church, or simply do not work well with others.

## Witch– Hunter Methods

Each witch-hunter has his own idiosyncratic approach to uncovering evil, from bizarre tests like pins and witch-finding rods to relying on hearsay evidence and wild allegations. When investigating mortal foes, witch-hunters execute more innocents than they will ever admit. Their track record facing supernatural monsters is little better – there are fewer false accusations but a lot more dead witch-hunters.

## Using Witch– Hunters

The presence of a witch-hunter complicates any Order mission. The Blessed Ring can rarely be used to overrule him, as he serves no master save his own conscience, though more than a few may be cowed by the authority the ring implies. The hunter may be ally or enemy, competent or comical, harmless or lethal to guardian priests. The one thing he cannot be is ignored – witch-hunters are rarely quiet and as soon as accusations and threats start flying, mysterious black-clad monks may be identified as heretics and attacked by the witch-hunter and his frenzied mob of followers.

## Teglia, Widow Devilbane

*‘You’re just as bad as these witches! Burn!’*

The witch-hunter Teglia is the daughter of a formerly great merchant house from Turin. Her father and grandfather both made a fortune trading on the seas. They were so successful that many accused them of bargaining with the devil. Whether or not these accusations were true, they certainly had an affect on young Teglia. She became determined to redeem her family’s name. While her father descended into debauchery, she donated more money to the Church and endowed monasteries.

# TEGLIA

		<b>1D20</b>	<b>Hit Location</b>	<b>AP/HP</b>	<i>Combat Actions</i>	2
<i>STR</i>	13	1-3	Right Leg	-/4	<i>Damage Modifier</i>	+0
<i>CON</i>	8	4-6	Left Leg	-/4	<i>Magic Points</i>	7
<i>SIZ</i>	9	7-9	Abdomen	-/5	<i>Movement</i>	8m
<i>INT</i>	14	10-12	Chest	-/6	<i>Strike Rank</i>	+12
<i>POW</i>	14	13-15	Right Arm	-/3		
<i>DEX</i>	10	16-18	Left Arm	-/3		
<i>CHA</i>	12	19-20	Head	-/4		

*Armour:* None

*Equipment:* Light Crossbow

*Notable Skills:* Commerce 26%, Courtesy 26%, Culture (Lombardy) 58%, Divine Fervour 61%, Evade 70%, Influence 84%, Insight 84%, Language (Italian) 74%, Language (Latin) 28%, Lore (Christian Theology) 74%, Lore (Occult) 64%, Lore (Regional) 54%, Perception 27%, Persistence 58%, Ride 34%, Stealth 29%, Streetwise 46%, Track 42%

## WEAPONS

<i>Type</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Reach</i>	<i>Weapon Skill</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>AP/HP</i>
Crossbow	-	-	40%	1D8	4/8

Teglia's father died four years ago; he was found dead in a locked room and although his body was badly burned as though it had passed through a furnace, the papers on the desk next to him were barely singed. Everyone whispered that the devil had claimed his own. Teglia sold all her family's assets the next day and vanished.

Today, she is a witch-hunter. She still has enormous wealth and has used it to hire the best mercenaries and bodyguards she can afford. She roams northern Italy, searching for monsters and devil-worshippers. Her nickname is the Widow Devilbane; some say she wants to find a portal into Hell, so she can rescue her father's damned soul.



Verse 2.5

# CULTS AND INVESTIGATIONS

*Cultists worship demons, pagan spirits, powerful sorcerers or other entities. They are much more likely than mere heretics to have genuine supernatural power and to be a threat to the Christians around them. The Order has a great deal of experience in dealing with cults; the standard approach is to decapitate the cult by assassinating the leaders and then scattering the weaker followers.*





The Order's Imperial precursors, the Averrunci, were dedicated to eliminating hostile foreign cults. Now, hundreds of years later, the Order continues to battle against the threat of cultists. Unlike some heretical movements that seek to proselytise and grow, cults must conceal their activities from the Church and from secular authorities. The Order seeks cults in isolated farming villages, in remote communities, in the wilderness on the fringes of civilised lands, or in the heart of great cities where many hundreds of people can gather without being noticed.

At the heart of every cult is a preacher or charismatic of some sort, referred to as the cult leader. Such a leader is usually human – a deranged priest who believes the apocalypse is coming soon, an ancient witch-queen, a necromancer – but some cults are led by inhuman entities, such as a spirit, ghost, demon or even the Devil himself. The leader and his inner circle are the lynchpin of the cult – eliminate them and you strike the head from the serpent. Unlike a heresy, where the *idea* may endure even if those who believe in it are all slain, a cult rarely survives the loss of its leadership.

## The Hidden foe

Cults fear the light and so seek to conceal themselves from prying eyes. They meet in ritual circles at midnight out in the forest, or in hidden temples deep beneath the earth. A travelling merchant might see nothing untoward in the village by day and pass by, unaware that he was ever in the company of diabolists. Uncovering a cult requires careful observation, investigation and even infiltration.

The relative strength of a cult and the difficulty of the investigation can be broken into five factors, which are rated like skills. As a guide to a cult's operations, the Games Master should allocate points to each of these five factors. A small cult might have only 200 points to spend; a medium sized cult 300 points; a large and potent cult some 500 points.

**Subversion:** What proportion of the common population subscribes to the cult's beliefs? How many are sworn to its service? A cult with a low Subversion score has only a few secretive members and little local influence; a cult with a high Subversion score holds the loyalty of most of the people in the area.

**Fanaticism:** How devoted the members of the cult are to their beliefs. This affects the cultist's willingness to die for the cause and their ability to resist torture and interrogation. Cultists can also draw on fanaticism to steel themselves against threats both mundane and supernatural.

**Concealment:** How well the cult hides its activities from investigation. A low-concealment cult is doomed to be short-lived, as the first investigator to notice the cult will be able to unravel all its secrets. Low-concealment cults meet openly, have easily spotted cult brands or especially showy magical rituals, or simply do not take care when hiding the bodies. A high-concealment cult is adept at avoiding detection.

**Force:** How well can the cult exert its power directly? Force takes many forms – armed guards, assassins, political influence, wealth – but always comes down to the exercise of power. A low-Force cult might be a band of fearful peasants worshipping a deceitful spirit; a high- Force cult might be a cabal of noble wives and maidens who have taken to practicing diabolism behind a screen of guards and political power.

**Supernatural:** What unnatural entities or monsters are allied with the cult? This category also covers the magical ability of the cult leader. A cult with a low Supernatural component might not have any occult elements at all. A high Supernatural factor indicates that the cult has considerable magical power and that the investigators will face several monsters.

Although they resemble skills, factors should not be used as hard-and-fast rules in the same way. They are guidelines for the Games Master to adjudicate the cult's abilities and responses. If it makes for a better story to have Helmut the Innkeeper be a cult member, do not bother rolling Subversion – just have him try to murder the players in their beds. If you already have a set-piece battle with a summoned monster planned, then use it without worrying about rolling Supernatural. However, it is a good idea to leave at least some events up to the roll of the dice – rolls against cult factors can suggest surprising twists in the tale. What does it mean when the characters capture a young peasant child and the Games Master rolls a critical success on Fanaticism? What caused a botched Concealment roll when the cult was trying to hide a body? What disturbed them? For each of these factors, there are ways the cult can use their powers against investigators. There are also different ways that the Order monks can investigate and reduce these factors, in the hopes of forcing a final confrontation with the cult leaders.

## Using Factors

Each factor description suggests ways that factor can be used in the game. Three of the factors – Subversion, Fanaticism and Concealment – are effectively defensive, hiding the cult from notice. See the sidebar Investigation Difficulty for more on defensive factors. The other two, Force and Supernatural, are offensive. In general, a cult will use its offensive factors to strike back at the Adventurers as soon as it is clear that they are on the trail of the cult – see Cult Reactions on page 73.

## Detecting Factors

There are several ways the players can determine which factors are in play, through a combination of Skill Tests and roleplaying. A successful Insight test might reveal that a particular NPC is acting suspiciously; some Perception tests might show evidence of Concealment. The Games Master should not reveal the actual numeric Factor (do not say *'yeah, they've got 100% Fanaticism'*) but should give the players a rough idea of the situation (*'these cultists are utterly damned and you fear you have no chance of redeeming any of them. They all must perish!'*)

## Dealing with Factors

There are ways the players can attack the Factors, as detailed further on for each Factor. Each successful attack reduces the relevant factor by 10% or more, depending on the effectiveness of the attack. No Factor can be reduced to less than one-quarter of its starting value by the players' actions. The more the characters reduce the Factors, the easier the final confrontation will be.

## Investigation Difficulty

The higher the cult's Defensive Factors of Subversion, Fanaticism and Concealment, the harder it is for the players to investigate along certain avenues. Subversion blocks covert investigation, information gathering and questioning; Fanaticism opposes direct questions and interrogation; Concealment blocks physical investigation and tracking. Factors may also help cultists with certain Skill Tests.

## FACTOR EFFECTS

Factor	Subversion	Fanaticism	Concealment
Skills Opposed	Culture, Disguise, Insight, Streetwise	Craft (Torture), Influence, Oratory	Lore, Perception, Track
Skills Aided	None.	Persistence	Stealth
Applies In	Covert investigation, talking to people, spying on the cult	Overt questioning, torturing, trying to convince cultists to change sides	Searching for physical tracks, looking for concealed evidence or signs of cult activity

These difficulty modifiers are *in addition* to any regular modifiers. For example, a cult with a Concealment score of 50% gives a -20% modifier to Track tests. A guardian priest trying to follow the path of a cultist across hard soil (-10%) in the rain (-20%) would face a total -50% penalty to his check; 30% from environmental factors and 20% from the cult's habits of hiding their tracks.

*For example: The village of Murraine is troubled by a necromantic cult. The cult leader, a sorcerer called Jacques Vunier, has promised his followers he will bring them immortality in exchange for their service. The Games Master decides Vunier's cult is a minor cult and allocates 150 points among the cult's five factors. Only a small few villagers are part of the cult, so the cult has Subversion 10%. The cultists are not especially fanatical – they are more scared of the necromancer than loyal to him – so the Games Master gives them Fanaticism 25%. The cult is poorly Concealed, at 30%. That leaves 95 to be split among Force and Supernatural. The few cultists are not much of a danger to the Order's agents, so the Games Master puts 25 points into Force, leaving 90 points for Supernatural.*

## Defeating Cults

To defeat a cult, the players must usually accomplish the following tasks.

- Investigate the cult and find out what is going on. (See Investigation Difficulty, page 65). Optionally, attack the Cult's factors
- Survive the cult's inevitable counterattack (See Cult Reactions, page 73)
- Identify the cult's leaders and other sources of power (See Cult Leaders, page 73)
- Eliminate the leaders and sources of power (see The Final Confrontation, page 73)
- Conceal their own activities and ensure no-one ever knows what happened (See Burying the Cult, page 75)

*For example: The Order dispatches three guardian priests to investigate rumours of the living dead near Murraine. The low Subversion means it's easy for the guardian priests to stay undercover while they investigate the village. The players attack the cult's Supernatural power by staking out the graveyard, ensuring the cult cannot get fresh bodies and by stealing and smashing an old Roman icon used by the sorcerer. These two attacks reduce the cult's Supernatural score down to 50%. Finally, they creep into the tunnels under the graveyard. Their investigation is hindered by the cult's Concealment score, which gives a -20% penalty to following the trails underground. Nonetheless, the players manage to find the cult's hidden sanctum and eliminate Vunier.*

## Subversion

As a rule of thumb, the Subversion score measures the proportion of important NPCs in the area who are members of the cult. If the players walk into a village with a Subversion score of 20%, then one in every five significant people they meet will be a cultist. A cult with a Subversion score of 100% means that virtually *everyone* in the area is a member of the cult (if the Subversion score is

over 100%, then any points above 100 means that the cult has secret spies outside its normal area of influence – maybe even within the Order itself!).

The Games Master can roll Subversion to see if a random NPC is a cult member or sympathiser.

*For example, the players hear rumours that the cult has a ritual circle in the surrounding hills. The Games Master expects them to go investigating the hills immediately but the players decide to hire a local guide first. The Games Master rolls against the cult's Subversion score to see if the guide turns out to be a secret cult sympathiser.*

**Using Subversion:** The cult may use Subversion to exert social pressure within its area. If the characters are asking too many questions, then potential witnesses may be pressured into staying silent with a successful Subversion roll. Subversion can also be used as the cult's Perception analogue – were the players spotted approaching the town? Roll Subversion to find out.

**Detecting Subversion:** There are several ways to notice Subversion, usually via roleplaying and interpersonal Skill Tests. Skill Tests should be modified by the cult's Subversion, Fanaticism or Concealment, as appropriate.

*Insight: 'You notice that two of the sailors in the inn are keeping to themselves and throwing the occasional glance in your direction. You think they are watching you.'*

*Streetwise: 'Asking around the village, everyone agrees that the Geraude family is up to no good.'*

*Culture: 'That is an... unusual style of village church. For one thing, Our Saviour is usually depicted with fewer tentacles.'*

**Dealing with Subversion:** The nasty thing about a high Subversion is that it corrupts the social fabric of a community. Ee'n those who are not part of the cult are unwilling to talk to outsiders, for fear of retribution. Subversion can be reduced by:

- Removing witnesses from the cult's influence. People are more willing to talk when they do not have the cult around them, pressuring them into silence.
- Protecting witnesses from cult retribution. This might involve rescuing hostages, defending a farmstead from cult attackers or evil spirits.
- Exposing influential leaders as cult members. If a cult controls a local authority figure, like a priest, respected villager or noble, then eliminating him can free wavering members of the cult to return to God and righteousness.

## fanaticism

Fanaticism measures a cultist's devotion to the cause. Fanaticism makes the cult harder to defeat, as its members cling to their heretical beliefs with extreme tenacity. The Games Master can roll Fanaticism as a quick morale check for cultists, which comes in very handy when cultists run into the surprising physical prowess and wonder-weapons of the Order. Do the cult guards flee when confronted by a band of martial artists armed with chain-swords and Greek fire? Roll Fanaticism.

**Using Fanaticism:** Fanaticism's primary use is to resist interrogation. If the characters are using Influence or torture to extract information or confessions, then Fanaticism helps the cultists resist. The Games Master may also allow cultists a Fanaticism bonus to Resilience tests if the cultists are fighting to defend their leader.

**Detecting Fanaticism:** Fanaticism is usually only detected when the players try to investigate a cultist only to find their questions rebuffed. Insight and Perception may also be used to spot especially fanatic cult members by their demeanour.

Craft (Torture): *'The cultist screams as you apply the hot irons but he still won't talk.'*

Oratory: *'You have preached to crowds before but none so stony-silent. They have hardened their hearts against the Gospel and will not listen to you.'*

Lore (Military Tactics): *'They fight like those who are already dead.'*

**Dealing with Fanaticism:** A direct attack on fanaticism is counter-productive, as cultists already believe they are under attack. Pressuring a believer just reinforces his fanaticism.

- Acts of surprising mercy and compassion can break down fanaticism. A cultist who believes that he will be burnt at the stake may be redeemed if instead you free him from the service of evil masters.
- Demonstrating the weakness or corruption of the cult leadership can shake the belief of their subordinates.
- Slaying or humiliating a leader of the cult in the presence of his followers can reduce their fanaticism.
- Proving the superiority of God over the cult's false idols can also help.

## Concealment

Concealment is the cult's housekeeping ability – how well do they clean up after themselves? If the cult holds black masses in the woods, then how well do they hide their sacred altar from prying eyes? If the cult practices human sacrifice, how well do they hide the bodies? It also reflects the cult's knowledge and mastery of the area it controls; a cult with a high Concealment might have hiding places and secret fortresses everywhere. Roll Concealment to see how well the cult hides evidence.

**Using Concealment:** A traditional twist in occult investigation is where the players find proof of the cult's activities and try to bring it before the authorities; only to have the evidence disappear. For example, the players find a mass grave in the dead of night but when they visit it the next morning with the local baron, the grave has been dug up and emptied overnight. Throw Concealment to determine if the cult is able to pull off disappearing acts like this one.

**Detecting Concealment:** Concealment is detected mainly by the absence of evidence but there are a few clues connected to Concealment that can tip the characters off to cult activity.

Track or Survival: *'This area is eerily free of tracks, as if even the local animals are avoiding these woods.'*

Engineering: *'Something about this barn feels off. There is an odd echo. Maybe there's a false wall.'*

Commerce: *'This ledger has been tampered with. Someone tried to hide the fact that the ship made at least one extra stop on each voyage.'*

**Dealing with Concealment:** To deal with Concealment, the players need to find some clever way of forcing the cult to reveal its secrets.

- Using the Hoffman Device and Lore (Occult) as if the cult practises magic or has supernatural allies, then the Hoffman Device and other divination tools can be used to help track them down.

- Using Disguise to pretend to be a cultist and follow them to their cult meetings is a great way to uncover secrets (and to get into a lot of trouble – remember that Subversion works against Disguise).
- Players can also find other ways to track the cult, such as tracking dogs.

## Force

Force is used to directly oppose the players' investigations. When the players' presence is noticed by the cult, the cult leader may choose to retaliate by physical or supernatural means. A physical retaliation generally means the players are attacked, either openly (the cultists draw swords and hunt down the characters) or secretly (assassins, poisons, daggers between the ribs).

The cult's Force can be used as a guideline for the sort of equipment and weapons possessed by the cultists, as well as their weapon skills. Not every cultist will have such a weapon skill – just the ones assigned to handle physical problems, such as guards and assassins.

Force	Cultist Combat Skill	Typical Weapons	Typical Armour
0–10	20%	Improvised weapons; clubs, knives	None
11–25	30%	Peasant weapons; daggers, staves, axes, slings	Leather jerkin
25–50	50%	Average weapons: spears, hammers, bows	Leather jerkin, leggings, shield or chain
51–75	70%	Military weapons; longswords, crossbows, maces	Leather leggings, chain shirt, shield
76–99	90%	Excellent weapons; longswords, crossbows, longbows, polearms	Chainmail
100+	100%+	Exotic weapons or magical weapons	Plate armour

**Using Force:** Roll Force to determine how quickly and efficiently the cult can respond to attacks. For example, if the players kill some guards, roll against force to see how long it takes the cult to notice the loss and investigate.

**Detecting Force:** Detecting Force is very easy when the cultists are hitting you in the face with swords. More cautious players can get an idea of a cult's Force score by observing its guards or gathering information about the military forces present in the area.

**Dealing with Force:** The best way to deal with Force is by killing the armed cultists. Winning a fight against a band of cultists reduces the cult's Force temporarily until it can rearm.

- Distracting the cult can also reduce Force. If one player can draw some of the guards away, then the cult's effective Force is diminished.
- If the guards can be otherwise occupied, they also do not contribute Force. Only a fool fights in a burning building, so set the cult temple on fire and then attack.
- Sabotage can reduce Force. Poisoning the guards beforehand makes for an easier fight.

# Supernatural

A cult's Supernatural score determines what sort of magical ability they possess. Like Force, it can be used as a guideline for the cult's magical ability. For every 10% of the cult's Supernatural score, it possesses one supernatural asset of some kind – a significant supernatural creature or a pack of lesser creatures, sufficient to pose a threat to a group of guardian priests; a spellcaster, or a magic item.

Horrors occur in addition to the above assets. Horrors are described on page 114. Supernatural creatures are described in the Bestiary Chapter. Spells, horror and magic items are described in the Horrors Chapter.

**Using the Supernatural:** In addition to determining what supernatural assets the cult has, the Supernatural score can be used as a guide to the cult's knowledge of the occult and their ability to cope with supernatural attack. A cult with a low Supernatural score might easily be overwaded by a few Divine Spells; a cult with a high Supernatural will laugh at such petty manifestations.

**Detecting the Supernatural:** Some supernatural forces are invisible and can be detected only through the use of the Hoffman device, or powers like Soul Sight. Others can be detected by conventional means but need lots of Lore (Occult) to correctly identify.

**Dealing with the Supernatural:** The best way to deal with the supernatural is with Divine Magic or relics. Players battling spiritual foes will need consecrated weapons and spiritual defences.

Supernatural	Supernatural Creatures	Spells	Magic Items	Horrors
0-10	Single servitor	Minor grimoire (1D4+1 spells)	Minor	0
11-25	Minor servitors; zombies, skeletons, lesser nightfolk	Minor grimoire (1D6+1 spells)	Two minor	1
25-50	Servitors; ghouls, nightfolk, lesser spirits, imps	Two minor grimoires (2D4+2 spells)	Two minor, one significant	2
51-75	Greater servitors*; ghosts, werewolves, lesser fae, demons	Major Grimoire (2D6+2 spells of considerable potency)	Three minor, two significant	3
76-99	Greater spirits*; worms, vampires, fae, greater demons	Multiple grimoires	Several minor**, three significant	4
100+	Godlings*, dragons, archdemons	Vast numbers of spells	Lots of minor***, two significant, one major	5

\*: May also be the cult leader.

\*\*: Enough to equip the significant cultists.

\*\*\*: Enough to equip the rank and file.

# Cult Brands

Many cults wear some symbol or marker to identify their members. If the players can identify this brand, it makes finding the cult easier. Of course, the use of a brand makes masquerading as a cultist that much harder. Roll 1d10 to determine what sort of brand the cult uses.

1. **Ritual scarring or branding:** All cult members have a scar carved or burnt into their flesh in the shape of the cult's holy symbol.
2. **Curse:** All members of the cult are cursed in some fashion. Perhaps plants wither in their presence, or they smell foul, or they slowly mutate into monsters.
3. **Tattooing:** A hidden tattoo of the name of the cult's patron demon or his symbol.
4. **Token:** All cultists carry an item that identifies them as members of the cult, such as a ring, a piece of jewellery or an unholy relic.
5. **Cult garb:** The cultists wear a particular set of holy vestments, such as white robes and a dagger, or bestial masks. While they only wear these uniforms during cult ceremonies, the characters might find clues by searching the homes of cult members.
6. **Sacrifice:** Every cultist has made a particular sacrifice. Perhaps all members of the cult have cut off their left little finger or maybe to join the cult, they must sacrifice one of their children.
7. **Black mark:** Membership in the cult manifests as a strange black pockmark on the cultist's skin.
8. **Taboo:** Members of the cult may not perform some relatively common act. Maybe they cannot step onto holy ground or cannot have sex.
9. **Obligation:** Members of the cult must perform some ritual act. Perhaps they are bound to protect and feed cats, or have to pray at moonrise or lose their place in the cult.
10. **Spiritual Foulness:** Entering the cult taints the cultist's soul, making them detectable by supernatural devices and methods like Soul Sight or the Hoffman Device.

# Ritual Sites

Many cults have ritual sites and places of power, where they conduct their diabolic ceremonies and draw magical energy to fuel their dark rites. Often, the final confrontation with the cult will take place in such a ritual site. Roll for a random ritual site, or choose whichever is most fitting.

1. A circle of standing stones in the forest.
2. A cave, deep underground, approachable only by narrow tunnels.
3. A black altar, scorched by lightning bolts.
4. A hidden crypt underneath a house.
5. A barren hilltop where nothing grows.
6. A corrupted church, now dedicated to evil powers.
7. An attic room in a large manor house.
8. In an ancient ruin.
9. On the shore, between the high tide and the low.
10. Atop a tall, mist-shrouded mountain.
11. Behind a waterfall.
12. In a slaughterhouse.
13. In a graveyard.
14. In a ruined temple.
15. In dreams; to get there, you must ingest a certain herb known only to the cult.
16. In Hell, accessible through a portal in the hillside.
17. In the village square but only on moonless nights when the whole village slips into the otherworld.
18. High in the sky; cultists are granted the power to fly by dark powers on nights when they gather.
19. In a castle owned by a noble loyal to the cult.
20. The ritual site is mobile; the cult owns a sacred relic that taints wherever they lay it down.





# Cult Reactions

As the players get closer to the heart of the cult, the cult will respond. The nature of this reaction varies depending on the cult.

**High Subversion:** An ally close to the players turns out to be a cult member.

**High Fanaticism:** A suicide squad of attackers strikes at the characters.

**High Concealment:** The cult tries to redirect the investigation by planting clues leading away from it or by sacrificing a few members to make the characters believe they have dealt with the cult leaders.

**High Force:** A mob of cultists attacks or the cult dispatches assassins.

**High Supernatural:** The cult casts offensive spells at the players or sends a supernatural creature to stalk them.

# Cult Leaders

At the head of every cult is a charismatic leader. This leader directs the cult and holds it together by sheer force of will. If the leader is slain, the cult is beheaded, so the cult puts every effort into protecting the leader.

When creating a new cult, consider what sort of leader it has and build the cult around that. A cult ruled by, say, a resurrected Egyptian sorcerer will be very different to one that springs up around a nine-year-old girl who channels the wisdom of a forest spirit. Cult leaders can be recurring antagonists for the Order and should on their own be a significant challenge to the guardian priests. Cult leaders should be at least one tier higher than the players (so, Seasoned players should face a Veteran leader at minimum).

Consider how the leader can avoid being summarily assassinated by the players. There are several ways to prolong the battle with the cult, such as:

- The cult leader has considerable personal magic and is warded against direct assault. The players have to first attack his power sources before then eliminating him.
- The cult leader resides in the cult stronghold and never leaves. The players have to find and infiltrate the cult's temple to eliminate him.
- The cult leader operates through intermediaries or figureheads; the cult believes that the high priest is in charge, when it is the high priest's bodyguard who is actually the true leader.

# The final Confrontation

The final confrontation is the last battle with the cult, when the players attempt to slay the high priest and topple the cult's altar. It should be more than a set-piece skirmish - it should be a battle between the faith of the guardian priests and the dark power of the cult. It should also be a dramatic and tactical challenge, one where the players can triumph only if they have prepared for the battle.

The best way to do this is to start with the cult leader and his immediate minions, who should be a serious challenge for the characters to begin with. Make sure you design them in such a way that they can deal with some of the players' attacks (make sure, for example, that a single bag of choking dust cannot take out the entire cult).

Next, come up with an interesting and atmospheric place for the final confrontation. Usually, this will be in the cult's secret sanctum. Think of ways to make the scene horrific or inspiring;

a necromantic cult might be fought in an underground cavern full of bones, with combatants clambering over piled skulls and ribcages snapping underfoot. A heretical cult might be encountered in a cathedral, with the players duelling among the gothic arches and hiding behind gargoyles (be aware, though, the players may force the final confrontation to happen elsewhere, so have some backup ideas).

## The Twist

The next step is to think of a few dramatic twists that could happen in the final confrontation. These will be connected to the NPCs in your scenario, or to the ultimate aims of the cult. The twist should always require some input from the players to resolve itself. Some twists;

- One of the cultists has a crisis of faith and may switch sides if the players can convince him to return to
- God.
- The cult leader is about to complete a ritual, summoning up some powerful entity. If one of the players intervenes, he can stop the summoning but it will put his very soul in peril.
- The players have a chance to reveal the true nature of the cult to the cultists, shattering their faith.
- The lead cultist offers the characters a deal; spare his life and he will give them a clue that leads to a vastly more dangerous cult.

## Factoring the Factors

The Five Factors of the cult should also be considered. If the characters have not attacked these factors, then the final confrontation is a great time to capitalise on this. Roll against each of the factors; if the test is successful, pick a complication based on that factor. Throw everything at the players and let them come up with ways to deal with the onslaught.

## Subversion

- The cult's spies were watching the players all along - it's a trap!
- One of the players' Contacts was a member of the cult, or has switched sides.
- The cult has taken hostages - if the players attack, the hostages die.
- The cult has spread beyond its traditional area of influence; if the players succeed in wiping out the cult here, it will regrow elsewhere.

## Fanaticism

- The cultists will fight to the death here; no quarter will be asked or given.
- If the fight turns against the cultists, they set off a doomsday plan - the building starts to collapse, they set the woods on fire, they break the dam, they summon the demon even though the binding circle is not complete.
- Even if the players triumph in this battle, cult assassins will return to strike at them again and again.
- The cultists ritually murder themselves, transforming themselves into ghosts to strike at the players from the spirit plane.
- The cultists ritually murder themselves, to fuel a powerful spell of vengeance cast by the cult leader.

# Concealment

There are a lot more cultists than the players expected, or the cult has some secret weapon in reserve. The cult has already moved important items, such as relics or grimoires, to a safe location. There are cult reinforcements hidden nearby, who will attack at the worst possible time for the players. The cult was hiding a much bigger secret than the players expected, like a sleeping monster.

## Force

- The cult has a band of heavily armoured elite guards waiting for the players.
- The cult captured another member of the Order and are torturing him. Worse, they have his weapons.
- The cult's guards use poisoned weapons or are augmented by magic.

## Supernatural

- The cult calls up spirits or demons to aid in the fight.
- This is a godless place; the players find they are unable to draw upon Miracles here.
- The cult burn through their own spiritual resources, throwing everything they have into a vicious curse directed at the players.

## Slaying the Cult Leader

The final battle is between the players and the leader of the cult. The Order's warriors are well capable of defeating a sorcerer in single combat, so give the cult leader some last-ditch trick. Better yet, give the players a reason to take him alive...

# Burying the Cult

Once the cult is decapitated, the players need to ensure that knowledge of it is buried forever. The Order dictates that knowledge of the supernatural and strange gods cannot be allowed to spread. Therefore, if anyone outside the cult was exposed to the supernatural, then the players' duty is to eliminate those people. Whether or not they do so is up to the players but there are consequences either way. Murdering innocents for God may trigger a crisis of faith for the players; letting those who know about the supernatural survive should result in new cults appearing. Maybe one of those 'innocents' who the players spared becomes a new cult leader or some seemingly minor item was taken from the cult's stronghold that turns out to be a powerful magical relic.

# Sample Cults

The cults listed here are typical of the sort of foes that the Order must battle. In most cases, each of these cults is independent of the others – a coven of witches in England knows nothing of a coven in France, although they may share common inspiration somewhere in the past. Some in the Order do suspect there are Secret Masters behind all the cults of Europe and all cultists ultimately owe allegiance to Satan in one guise or another but as yet, the Order has not identified any such grand conspiracy.

# Pagan Cults

Pagan cults hold to the old religions and false gods that were driven into the shadows by Christianity. The term 'pagan' derives from the Latin *paganus*, meaning 'of the countryside' where most pagan cults are found but there are some secretive pagan meetings even in the great cities of Europe.

## Devotees of the All Mother

This fertility cult worships 'the Mother of Corn,' who the Order's historians suspect is a folk memory of the Greek goddess Demeter. The cult is active in Northern Greece and the surrounding regions and is especially strong in the years following a bad harvest, when people turn to other gods for aid.

**Beliefs:** The 'Mother of Corn' brings blessings upon the land but at a cost. Just as her daughter was given to the Underworld, so too must children be sacrificed. The cult practices a form of human sacrifice where children are cast into certain deep chasms and underground labyrinths, never to return.

**Leader:** The cult leader is a beautiful woman called Pelagia, who is the only one of the sacrificed children ever to return from the sacred cave. She glows with an unearthly light, as though moonlight runs in her veins. She is a powerful sorceress.

**Significant Cultists:** The inner circle of the cult are those who have 'eaten of Pelagia's basket' and undergone a series of mystical rites triggered by eating a hallucinogenic mushroom. They are fanatically loyal to their mistress and have had their mortality partially burned away, making them very hard to kill.

**Rank and File Cultists:** Fearful peasants, hoping the strange rites of the glowing woman will bring them a better harvest next year.

**Subversion:** 30%. The cult's level of subversion rises and falls depending on the harvest. Times of famine and desperation make people turn to the cult.

**Fanaticism:** 40%. The rank and file members are not especially devoted to the cult but the initiated inner circle more than make up for their weakness.

**Concealment:** 30%. The cult makes little effort to hide itself, although the sacred caves where children are sacrificed are known only to the initiated.

**Force:** 40%. The initiated are dangerous fighters, as Pelagia's gifts make them hard to kill. The initiated are only partially mortal and so can survive a dozen mortal wounds.

**Supernatural:** 60%. Pelagia is a skilled sorceress but the cult's real supernatural power comes from underground. Who takes the children in exchange for making the crops grow? Who sent Pelagia back to lead the cult?

**Cult Reactions:** The cult is not initially aggressive; they may attempt to play on the players' sense of mercy, pointing out that without Pelagia bringing better harvests, everyone would surely have starved to death. If the players are without mercy, then Pelagia sends the initiated out with poisoned pomegranate seeds.

**Final Confrontation:** The players must traverse the pitchblack labyrinth of caves to find Pelagia, who cannot be slain but who can be hurled off a convenient cliff into the uttermost pits of Hades.

## Sworn Swords of Odin

Although the Norsemen were converted to Christianity, some still remember their warrior gods. In an age when Christ's message of mercy and forgiveness seems weak and cowardly, a few Norman knights have turned back to a more muscular, vengeful deity.

**Beliefs:** Odin is the wise leader who commands in time of war! Offer up your sword to Odin and you will be rewarded with victory!

**Leader:** Sir Rowland, an infamous Norman warlord who has won great victories. The King of France is said to be courting an alliance with Rowland but although the Normans are vassals of France, Rowland has little interest in bowing to a 'milksoy monarch.'

**Significant Cultists:** Rowland's fellow warriors and knights. The cult was recently joined by an elderly priest of Odin, who came from Norway to offer spiritual guidance to Rowland.

**Rank and File Cultists:** None. The Sworn Swords are a secret brotherhood.

**Subversion:** 10%. Only a few knights have so far joined the cause...

**Fanaticism:** 20%. ... and few of them are especially devout. That said the Sworn Swords do wield military and political influence that is vastly out of proportion to their numbers. Some of the greatest knights of Normandy are under their sway.

**Concealment:** 60%. The Sworn Swords are well hidden from the prying eyes of the Church.

**Force:** 80%. The cult is made up of elite warriors and could muster a considerable army without difficulty.

**Supernatural:** 20%. The only supernatural element is the old priest and his powers have faded. He is trying to convince Rowland and his knights to go on a quest for Odin's steed Sleipnir, which is said to roam the wastes of the north.

**Cult Reactions:** Bloody murder of anyone who finds out about the temple to Odin under Rowland's castle. If the Sworn Swords discover who the characters are, they may even risk attacking The Mont St. Michel.

**Final Confrontation:** Battling Rowland on the battlements of his castle, as a raven-black storm rages and the old priest hangs from a tree, gathering the power of the runes just as Odin did in the sagas.

## Spirit Cults

Spirit cults are led by a spirit of some sort. They might be pagan cults who have managed to evoke the shade of some pagan god, nature worshippers who obey the spirit of a sacred place or devotees of undeath.

### The Family of Ultha

The Family are a hereditary cult, ruled over by an ancestor-spirit. Ultha was a barbarian warlord who ruled over a great domain 4,000 years ago. He was so powerful in life that he lingered after death as a vengeful ghost. The blood of Ultha must be kept pure, so the Family breed within themselves as much as possible. Today, the descendants of this once-great warlord are degenerate brutes, living in the hills and occasionally kidnapping maidens to bring new blood into the Family.

**Beliefs:** Ultha is master! Serve Ultha! If we are good, then maybe Ultha will come back in the flesh, make us kings again!

**Leader:** The ghost of Ultha. The spirit has lingered for millennia, waxing and waning over time. Sometimes, it is barely present at all; sometimes, it is strong enough to manifest physically or possess

one of its descendants. Ultha is a Stone Age primitive, with no understanding of the modern world – but he understands blood and bone, suffering and strife, lust and conquest.

**Significant Cultists:** The elders of the clan are closest to Ultha. Some of them take after their ancient ancestor and are fine warriors. Others are drooling morons.

**Rank and File Cultists:** The rest of the family. Fearful, easily dominated, inbred and twisted brutes.

**Subversion:** 10%. The cult is composed entirely of family members and only a small handful of them can pass for normal.

**Fanaticism:** 75%. Ultha is the god-king of his clan. **Concealment:** 50%. The clan live in a mountain refuge and only they know the paths up through the thick forests on the hills.

**Force:** 50%. The family has poor weapons but they are more than willing to use them. Their brutish strength and animal cunning makes them tough adversaries, even if they are little more than cavemen.

**Supernatural:** 40%. Ultha is a powerful spirit and can bless his descendants with magic.

**Cult Reactions:** The cult responds to threats by retreating to its refuge and waiting for the enemy to go away. The mountain redoubt is too inaccessible to be besieged; intruders will have to scale the steep slopes and sheer cliffs to attack the family in their eyrie. The cult will murder and eat any male intruders; females will be made to bear more children of Ultha.

**Final Confrontation:** The characters must bind Ultha into a host body and slay him in combat.

## Fontalbreist Cult

Fontalbriest is a magical spring. For centuries, it has been the centre of worship by local tribes, who believe the spring has healing powers. The Romans built baths here and the cult uses the ruins of the collapsed baths as its stronghold. The spirit of the waters of Fontalbriest rules over the cult.

**Beliefs:** Those who bathe in the waters of Fontalbriest never die – and this is quite true. Bathing in the waters renews youth. Immortality comes at a price, of course. The waters need to be regularly fed with sacrifices. The older the bather, the more life energy is needed.

**Leader:** The keeper of the spring claims to be thousands of years old and calls himself Eldest. The spirit of Fontalbriest sometimes manifests as a young girl with an enigmatic smile; she appears bound to Eldest in some fashion.

**Significant Cultists:** There are two groups of significant cultists at Fontalbriest. Firstly, there are the Drowners whose duty it is to gather sacrifices for the spirit. Secondly, there are the nobles, rich merchants and clergy who have heard of the beneficial properties of the waters and joined the cult in order to recover their vanished youth.

**Rank and File Cultists:** The locals who live near Fontalbriest drink the waters downstream from the spring, consuming a little of the spirit's power. They cannot benefit from the pool's rejuvenating properties but when they die, they turn to water and flow into Fontalbriest, joining with the spirit forever.

**Subversion:** 80%. Almost everyone near Fontalbriest is a member of the cult, either because they want to stay young forever, or because the waters of Fontalbriest run through their veins and they have no choice.

**Fanaticism:** 40%. The followers of the cult are bound by their very nature to serve.

**Concealment:** 25%. An old Roman road runs close to the spring and while the baths are ruined, it is still easy enough to find.

**Force:** 30%. The cult has few guards.

**Supernatural:** 70%. The cult has considerable supernatural resources. The Eldest is a sorcerer and the spirit will act to defend her domain. Among her other powers, she commands the river that flows from her spring and can loose a devastating flood.

**Cult Reactions:** The cult tries to subvert instead of conquering, offering intruders a chance to bathe in the spring and become young again. Think of how much good a member of the Order could do, if he lived another century!

**Final Confrontation:** The characters banish the spirit – and all those whose lives were unnaturally extended by her magic suddenly age instantly.

## Diabolic Cults

Diabolic cults worship demons. They summon up their masters using goetic magic and bring them sacrifices and offerings in exchange for power. Only the most foolish cultists free the demons from the binding circles – even a madman who bargains with the lords of Hell for power knows not to let such horrors roam free. Still, the demons get loose more often than not; they are insidious and deceitful creatures, well able to worm their way into a man's soul...

### The Disciples of Milan

The Disciples are a band of sorcerers who reside in the city of Milan. The city-states of Lombardy clash regularly with the forces of the German Emperor Frederick and the Disciples feared that uncertain allies, Italian soldiers and hired mercenaries would not be enough to hold off Frederick's army. They turned to diabolism. Another devil-worshipping cult, the Iroschi, had infested the city 30 years previously but were wiped out by the Order.

Now, the old libraries and ritual chambers of the Iroschi are reopened, as the Disciples prepare to loose demons on the Holy Roman Emperor's forces, should he break the terms of the Treaty of Constance and once again meddle in the affairs of Lombardy.

**Beliefs:** We shall do anything that is necessary to protect Milan.

**Leader:** Giovanni de Bergamo, a knight turned sorcerer. Bergamo travelled widely, including several visits to Constantinople where he learned sorcery. Coupled with the magical resources salvaged from the defeat of the Iroschi, de Bergamo is one of the more powerful diabolists in Europe, even if he believes he uses the power of Hell for good purposes. The chief demon summoned by the cult is Sabnock, a potent marquis of Hell, who has the power to build towers and fortifications out of nothing.

**Significant Cultists:** The other members of the cult are also civic-minded sorcerers. The cult is extremely well-funded, able to purchase scrolls and ritual materials of great worth. Notably, the bishop of Milan is one of the cultists; he values the safety of the city (and his position within the city) more than his own soul.

**Rank and File Cultists:** The guards, attendants and servants.



**Subversion:** 60%. The cult has spies everywhere.

**Fanaticism:** 50%. The cult members are not fanatically loyal to Hell – they see the conjured demons as ugly necessities, like Norman mercenaries – but they are loyal to the city. They also know they would certainly be executed for their magic if discovered, so they are unwilling to surrender.

**Concealment:** 120%. A conspiracy of Milanese diabolist nobles takes care not to be discovered.

**Force:** 100%. The cabal commands a sizeable fighting force.

**Supernatural:** 80%. They have access to the surviving grimoires of the Iroschi, de Bergamo's own books of magic and several powerful demons.

**Cult Reactions:** The cult suspects the existence of the Order, thanks to information supplied by the Bishop of Milan and the previous Order operation in the city 50 years ago. They are prepared to deal with investigations and attacks from the Church. They have prepared evidence framing a band of young hooligans, 'proving' that these dissolute, troublesome youths were in the pay of Frederick to summon demons within Milan. If that ruse fails, the cult has several assassin-demons held in binding circles, which will be dispatched to eliminate any investigators.

**Final Confrontation:** An old member of the Order, who was involved with the elimination of the Iroschi decades ago, throws his lot in with the Disciples of Milan. It was he who failed to destroy all the Iroschi temples and if that fact comes to light, he will assuredly be harshly punished by the Order. Therefore, he chooses to compound a sin of omission with one of commission and aids the Disciples against his brothers.

## Sorcerer Cults

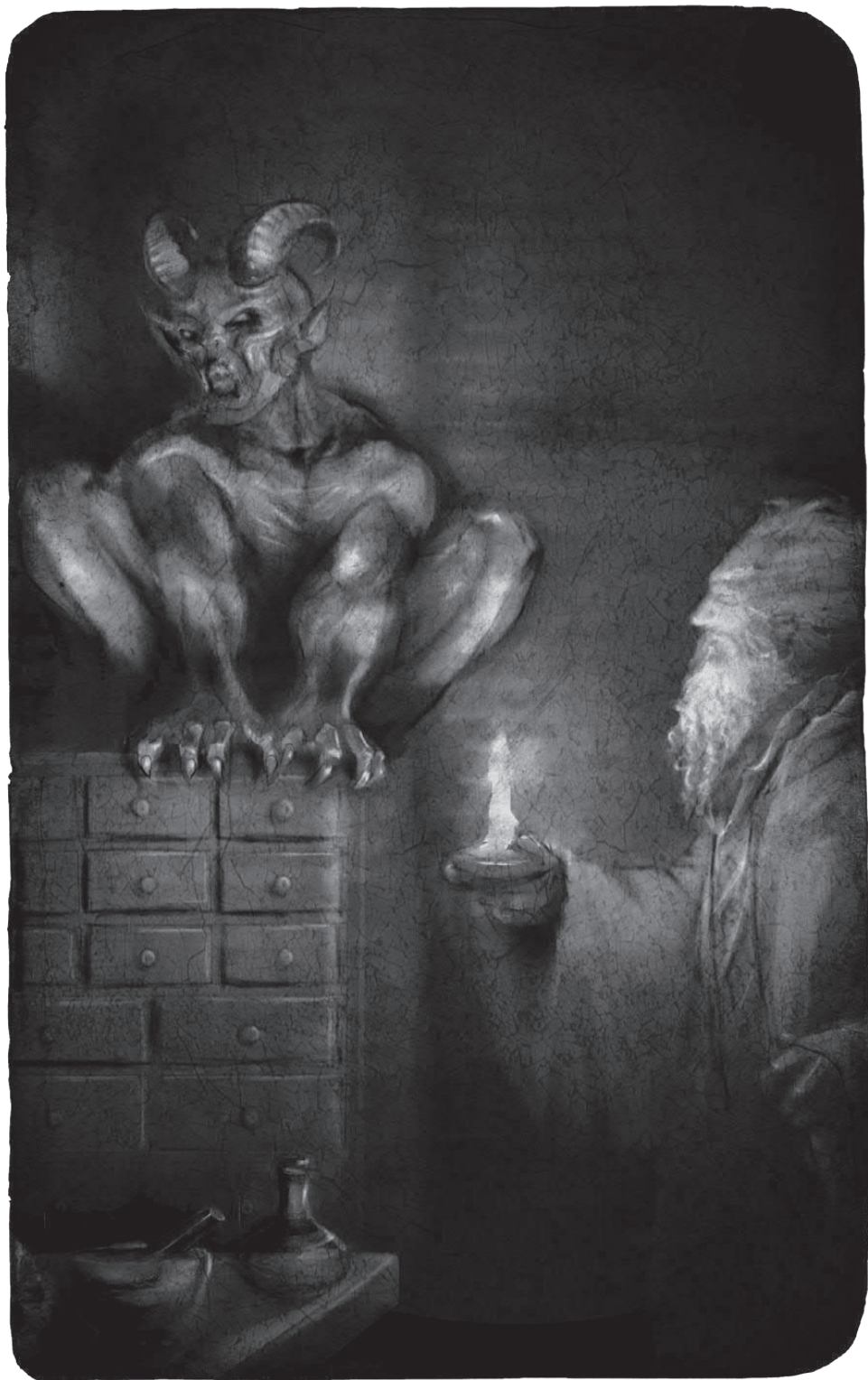
Though most practitioners of magic work alone or with an apprentice or two, some charismatic or manipulative sorcerers gather large cults around themselves. The sorcerer might promise some magical reward – power, immortality, gold – to his pawns in exchange for their service, or he might masquerade as a supernatural being and dominate them through magical mummery. Often, the rank and file cultists are treated as walking batteries of POW to be tapped by the sorcerer leaders.

### Chosen of God

The Chosen of God are a small sect that believes their leader is the Second Coming of Christ and that they alone will be spared in the coming apocalypse. The leader, Francois Heurot, was the apprentice to an aged necromancer who dwells in Toulouse. He stole a grimoire from his master and fled, then used his magic to pretend to be the Son of God. The cult has grown out of Heurot's control, as his fanatic followers preach the good news that the Lord has returned and that the end times are at hand. Despite Heurot's attempts to conceal the cult, word of the Chosen has reached the ear of the local authorities... including the Inquisition. The Chosen are both a heretical and a sorcerous cult, so the Order agents assigned to slay Heurot will have to deal with the Inquisition at the same time.

**Beliefs:** Heurot is the Son of God; he alone will save the Chosen from the minions of Satan.

**Leader:** Francois Heurot. He has some sorcerous power and stole a very powerful spellbook from his former master but he lacks the skill to use it and the intelligence to *not* use it. He grew tired of long months sitting in a cold stone tower, helping his master translate ancient Babylonian glyphs and decided that starting a cult of nubile followers was a far better use of his magical powers. Now, he is beginning to realise that he will have to fight to keep the Chosen.



**Significant Cultists:** Heurot set up the cult at a nunnery and the nuns are his most fanatical followers.

**Rank and File Cultists:** Peasants, true believers, madmen.

**Subversion:** 50%. The cult is spreading like a plague.

**Fanaticism:** 70%. The cultists serve the Son of God directly!

**Concealment:** 0%. The cult proselytises openly.

**Force:** 40%. The cult has a lot of followers but relatively few of them are trained soldiers.

**Supernatural:** 30%. This is actually a low figure for the cult, reflecting Heurot's unwillingness to use the most powerful spells in the grimoire. If he does dare open the book fully, this supernatural rating can jump to 80% or more.

**Cult Reactions:** A frontal attack on the cult convinces them that the end of days is upon them and forces Heurot to draw on more sorcerous power. This will likely result in demons being summoned in the middle of the nunnery and the forces of Hell feasting on the Chosen of God.

**Final Confrontation:** Heurot's old master shows up to get his book back.

## League of the Moon

The League of the Moon is a small cabal of intellectuals, scholars and priests. They call themselves the League of the Moon because they meet on nights of the full moon, when there is enough light to talk into the small hours and still ride home safely. The League covers a range of topics – philosophy, theology, history, natural sciences – and the members share books with each other. One of the members of the League, a village priest called Hugo, found a curious set of manuscripts when renovating the altar of his church. He has shared copies of these manuscripts with the League and the members are now experimenting with the strange formulae and rituals encoded in those old parchments...

**Beliefs:** Intellectual reasoning and study benefits us all.

**Leader:** With his discovery of the manuscripts, Father Hugo has become the de facto leader of the League. Almost as influential is a goldsmith called Albert Vicher, who is avidly studying the manuscripts and has progressed further than anyone else in deciphering them.

**Significant Cultists:** The other members of the League.

**Rank and File Cultists:** None, although most of the members of the League are wealthy and influential, so they have plenty of servants and guards.

**Subversion:** 10%. The League is not actively subverting anyone and has no grand goals other than study. That said, some of the members are very influential, so the League's political power is much higher than this figure indicates.

**Fanaticism:** 0%. The League members have no idea they are dabbling with forbidden sorcery.

**Concealment:** 90%. The League is a private club and while the members do not believe they are doing anything illegal or immoral, they still want to conceal their activities from prying eyes.

**Force:** 30%. A few guards and servants but not a significant fighting force.

**Supernatural:** 40%. The cult has access to a single major grimoire but have yet to fully comprehend its power.

**Cult Reactions:** This is one cult where a light touch pays dividends. If the characters go in aggressively, then the League of the Moon will be scattered and the grimoire disseminated to many people. The players need to find out who has copies of the manuscript and convince them to hand over those copies.

**Final Confrontation:** The players discover that Father Hugo's church was built atop an ancient cult temple and that there is another grimoire in the tunnels below. Unfortunately, the ambitious sorcerer Albert Vicher is ahead of them.

## Witch Cults

Sorcerers study grimoires to learn their arcane craft. Witches are part of an oral tradition that stretches back to the dawn of time. They need no spellbooks – their craft is handed down from one generation to the next as part of initiation into the cult. As there is no great corpus of witch magic to study, the Order is unable to unravel their secrets by stealing grimoires. Witch cults regularly hold congress with demons or spirits – if the witches are unable to control that which they summon up, they may become dominated by the supernatural entity.

### The Black Ship (Tradition of the Drowned Lord)

The Black Ship is a Sicilian trading vessel that plies the trade routes along the Mediterranean, from Alexandria to Gibraltar and from Byzantium to Morocco. She has been in the hands of the same family for many generations and it is a wonder that she is still afloat. Every inch of her planks is rotten; her sails are patches of patches; things cling to her hull that do not live in any known waters of the world. The crew of the Black Ship are all sea-witches, sworn to the service of the Drowned Lord. They trade in occult goods, in mummy-dust from the tombs of ancient Egypt and in *rafiq* diamonds from the djinni-worshippers of the East, in Turkish alchemy and in Moorish scrolls. Where the Black Ship comes ashore, witches gather to share in this bounty.

**Beliefs:** Serve the Drowned Lord.

**Leader:** The captain of the Black Ship, Bruno Guggino, also leads the coven. He is advised by the ghost of his wife, a more powerful *strega*, who drowned herself six years ago.

**Significant Cultists:** Guggino's extended family; sons, daughters, nephews and brothers, who make up most of the crew.

**Rank and File Cultists:** Contacts on the shore; other crewmembers.

**Subversion:** At ports where the ship comes ashore, 10%; on the Black Ship herself, 100%.

**Fanaticism:** 60%. The cult is family, home and religion to its followers.

**Concealment:** 70%. All the cult's rituals take place on board ship and she rarely visits the same port more than once or twice every five years.

**Force:** 60%. The cult has plenty of hardened sailors who are used to repelling pirates.

**Supernatural:** 80%. Nearly every member of the cult has some supernatural ability and the Black Ship is wreathed in Horrors. Guggino himself is a potent witch, as is the ghost of his dead wife.

**Cult Reactions:** Kidnapping the investigators and carrying them out to sea, where they can be questioned and then sacrificed by drowning.

**Final Confrontation:** The players battle the cultists on board the ship, as the spells holding it together dissolve and the Black Ship breaks up.

## The Village of Brochester (Tradition of the Lady of Shadows)

This is an isolated village in the Fens in the north-east of England. The Romans settled here, briefly but were driven off by the overwhelming sense of brooding evil in the dank marshes. Some power, terrible and ancient, slumbers beneath the muddy waters. The witch-cult worships this power; they were here before the Romans and they are here today.

**Beliefs:** Worship the thing in the marshes; propitiate it with sacrifices; await the day when it awakens.

**Leader:** Mother Candle, a seemingly immortal old woman who dwells in the depths of the Fens. She carries a candle that she uses to guide her followers to the ritual site and to lure intruders to their deaths.

**Significant Cultists:** The Shadow Wolves, men who wear wolf-masks and prowl the marshes, looking for victims.

**Rank and File Cultists:** The villagers of Brochester.

**Subversion:** 40%. Many of those in the village are part of the cult.

**Fanaticism:** 60%. The cult has ruled here for generations.

**Concealment:** 60%. Navigating the fens is extremely hazardous and it is easy to hide bodies in the bog.

**Force:** 40%. The cultists are not trained warriors for the most part but they know the terrain very well.

**Supernatural:** 80%. The cult has some magical power but the real danger is the horror lurking in the fens...

**Cult Reactions:** The cult knows that that the biggest danger to their continued survival is invasion from outside. If strangers come to the town, the cultists set up ambushes along the roads to prevent them from escaping. They then wait for non-cultist villagers to break ranks and make contact with the intruders, so the cult can both eliminate the intruders and purge the village of such disloyal neighbours at the same time.

**Final Confrontation:** The characters must chase Mother Candle across the marshes before she can awaken her dark powers, knowing any misstep will result in the character plunging into the mire.

# Heretical Cults

The distinction between a heresy and a cult is a thin one. As the Church acts to suppress a heresy, the heretics are forced underground and may become a cult. As they grow more desperate, they become willing to bargain with diabolic or supernatural forces.

## Knives of Donatus

The followers of Donatus Magnus lived in the fourth century after Christ and believed that the Holy Apostolic Church was illegitimate because it included priests and bishops who were *traditores* – they handed over sacred scriptures or even their fellow Christians to escape Roman persecution. For a time, there was a schism between the Church and Donatus' followers, who claimed to be the legitimate heirs to St. Peter as they had never sinned. Donatism was wiped out in the fifth century – but the tradition of the Donatist Knives lives on. They are holy assassins, dedicated to purifying the church by eliminating the unworthy. There are no more *traditores* but there are venal, corrupt, sinful priests and monks who defile the scriptures with their filthy false piety. They must be slain!

**Beliefs:** The Church must be purged of all sinners.

**Leader:** The mysterious leader of the cult refers to himself as Donatus. He rules over a network of assassins and spies centred in Rome.

**Significant Cultists:** The most significant cultists are the Knives themselves, who are skilled assassins. They target only ordained priests and other clergy who are sinful in the eyes of the cult.

**Rank and File Cultists:** Either fanatical believers who want to purify the church, or bitter spies who were wronged and want revenge on some corrupt bishop.

**Subversion:** 80%. The Knives have spread their agents across Christendom. Anyone could be a secret Donatist.

**Fanaticism:** 70%. Most of the Knives are motivated through their strong faith.

**Concealment:** 90%. The cult has survived for six centuries without being detected.

**Force:** 60%. The cult's assassins are the equal of the Order's agents.

**Supernatural:** 20%. The cult despises non-Christian magic and has only a few members capable of casting Divine spells.

**Cult Reactions:** The Donatists may potentially *ally* with the Order; both groups are focussed on eliminating corruption and the enemies of the Church. Of course, the Donatists may decide that the Order are just foot soldiers loyal to a sinful institution and start a shadow war of assassins with them.

**Final Confrontation:** The characters discover who the secret master of the Donatists is – he is a cardinal, who was using the cult to eliminate rivals – and convince his followers to turn on him.

# Cult Characters

These two characters are good examples of characters that can be placed within the previous sample cults.

## Brand, Cult Thug

A fanatical cult guard or enforcer, Brand knows little about theology or the secret mysteries of the cult but he knows how to hurt people and he enjoys the sacrificial rites a little too much. Alone, Brand is no match for a trained guardian priest – but there are dozens of guards like him and they know this region well.

		1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP	Combat Actions	2
STR	15	1-3	Right Leg	2/6	Damage Modifier	+1d2
CON	12	4-6	Left Leg	2/6	Magic Points	10
SIZ	15	7-9	Abdomen	2/7	Movement	8m
INT	7	10-12	Chest	2/8	Strike Rank	+9 (+5 in armour)
POW	10	13-15	Right Arm	2/5		
DEX	11	16-18	Left Arm	2/5		
CHA	8	19-20	Head	2/6		

*Armour:* Chain shirt, leather

*Equipment:* Battleaxe, shield

*Notable Skills:* Athletics 51%, Brawn 35%, Evade 27%, Lore (Regional) 59%, Perception 42%, Persistence 25%, Resilience 49%, Stealth 22%, Track 42%, Unarmed 31%

## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Axe and Shield	M	M	76%	1d6+1	4/8
Shield	L	S	76%	1d4	6/12

## Mother Candle, Witch

This ancient hag is the leader of the Brochester Cult in the fens of northern England. Her lair is somewhere deep in the marshes and those who follow her candle often find themselves sinking into the mire. She is a powerful sorceress and can draw power from that which dwells beneath the waters.

		<b>1D20</b>	<b>Hit Location</b>	<b>AP/HP</b>	<i>Combat Actions</i>	3
<b>STR</b>	9	1-3	Right Leg	-/5	<i>Damage Modifier</i>	-1D2
<b>CON</b>	16	4-6	Left Leg	-/5	<i>Magic Points</i>	24
<b>SIZ</b>	8	7-9	Abdomen	-/6	<i>Movement</i>	8m
<b>INT</b>	15	10-12	Chest	-/7	<i>Strike Rank</i>	+15
<b>POW</b>	24	13-15	Right Arm	-/4		
<b>DEX</b>	14	16-18	Left Arm	-/4		
<b>CHA</b>	16	19-20	Head	-/5		

*Armour:* None

*Equipment:* Staff of the Fens, Black Candle

*Sorcery:* Animate (Shadow), Animate (Wood), Command (Wolf), Control Weather, Curse (POW), Hinder, Intuition, Invisibility, Mystic Vision, Phantom Vision, Shapechange (Wolf), Smother, Telepathy, Wrath

*Notable Skills:* Influence 82%, Lore (Occult) 110%, Lore (Regional) 90%, Manipulation 89%, Perception 69%, Persistence 88%, Resilience 72%, Spirit Binding 80%, Spirit Walking 70%, Stealth 88%, Survival 71%, Track 71%, Tradition (Drowned Lord) 88%, Tradition (Lady of Shadows) 114%, Tradition (Lady of the Woods) 78%

### WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Staff	M	L	43%	1D8	4/8



Verse 2.6

# SORCERERS

*Individuals who practise a form of magic, usually sorcery. The Order has spent centuries collecting grimoires and eliminating forbidden magic but sorcery is insidious and always returns. Some sorcerers practise other forms of magic, such as alchemy or spirit magic. The Order considers all sorcerers to be a threat and investigates all rumours of unnatural practices.*



The lone sorcerer, studying his grimoires and scrolls, observing the stars or staring for long hours into a shewstone – he is a grave threat to Christendom, even though his aims may be good. Wise and holy men have studied sorcery and the Order even permits some of its own members to do so. These Christian magi are very much the exception, not the rule. Practicing sorcery is spiritually perilous. An unwary sorcerer may open his soul to demonic possession or unwittingly wreak havoc by calling on forces he cannot control. He may grow overconfident in his power and think himself a god, or delude others into worshipping him. To open a sorcerous grimoire is to open a door to the beyond.

Most books of magic date back to ancient times and have been copied hundreds of times, often in poor or incomplete translations. Sorcerers spend most of their time assembling fragments of lore and scraps of knowledge, trying to recreate the knowledge of the ancients. A few sorcerers are sufficiently gifted in the Great Art to create their new spells; other new grimoires are ‘inspired’ by demonic possession.

Secular law distinguishes between ‘high’ and ‘low’ sorcery. High sorcery is considered to be the study of hidden truth behind the world, with the aim of greater union with God. Low sorcery is harmful magic, *maleficium*, intended to cause harm or to ensorcel others. High sorcery is permitted by secular law but low magic is forbidden and is a crime. The Church maintains that the only valid form of high magic draws upon the power of God and must be done with utmost humility – which means that the vast majority of those who claim to be pursuing legal high magic, *theurgia*, are actually practicing low magic.

The Order draws no such distinctions. The only safe sorcerer is a dead one.

## Track of the Magus

Sorcerers pose a different challenge to the Order. Cults are usually found on the fringes of society, in isolated villages or hidden communities or in the slums of the great cities. Those who join cults are the desperate and the dispossessed. By contrast, sorcery is primarily an aristocratic pursuit – to study sorcery, one needs to be literate, able to spend long years working in secret and able to afford all the occult paraphernalia that is required, such as alchemical equipment, rare oils and dusts, rods of pure metal, protective binding circles and a thousand other ritual components.

Most sorcerers, then, are nobles or scholars – often, priests – who have the time and money to devote to the art. For every mad necromancer lurking in the forest, there are three rich men who dabble in the occult. (Worse, many sorcerers are female; a noblewoman, educated, wealthy and bored, may turn to occultism instead of good wifely skills like sewing.)

The Order’s standard protocol for sorcerers is to eliminate the threat cleanly and discretely. Most sorcerers conceal their studies, which is a great advantage to the Order – the fewer people who know about the occult, the fewer people who must be silenced by the guardian priests. The investigating guardian priest should:

- Locate the sorcerer
- Identify the sorcerer
- Observe the sorcerer
- Eliminate the sorcerer
- Remove all traces of sorcery

Locating the sorcerer is a lengthy task in most cases. The Order cannot rely wholly on witnesses and informants, as accusing one’s rivals of being evil sorcerers is a common ploy in courtly intrigues.

Just because a man is accused of being a sorcerer is not enough to condemn him in the eyes of the Order. Far better to look for clues that cannot be corrupted by jealousy or petty hatreds – tiny fluctuations in the readings from a Hoffman device; the discovery of strange, misshapen animal parts in a sewer, as if they had been washed out of some laboratory of horrors; a merchant who deals in unusual and esoteric items.

Usually, such clues will not lead directly to the sorcerer. The guardian priest may confirm that someone within a particular rich family or cathedral is practicing sorcery but not yet know who.

Next, the guardian priest must identify the sorcerer. As a foulness shall ye know them – sorcerers are inevitably marked by their occult practices. They must slip off to perform rituals, or be unable to do certain simple things due to magical taboos, or simply have seen so much of the supernatural that it has scarred their souls. For those guardian priests who lack insight into the human soul, there is the simple expedient of sneaking around and searching for clues.

Observing the sorcerer comes next. The monk must learn what the sorcerer's aims are and where he gained his sorcerous power. A sorcerer who studies necromancy to resurrect his dead child is very different to one who is the advisor to a conquering barbarian warlord. Without observation, it is impossible to erase all of the sorcerer's baleful influence. The guardian priest must also locate the sorcerer's grimoire and find out where he obtained it – one sorcerer can lead to another and another.

Eliminating the sorcerer should be done quietly, discretely and with a minimum of witnesses. It is better to poison a sorcerer's wine or slit his throat in an alley than confront him directly. A tragic accident works best. Finally, the guardian priest must remove all traces of sorcery. Grimoires and other occult items should be taken back to the Mont St. Michel if possible, or else destroyed. Those who know about the sorcerer must also be convinced to remain silent.

## A Score of Sorcerous Schemes

1. Summon up angels and understand the nature of God.
2. Divine the future through the entrails of victims.
3. Claim your father's throne by destroying your enemies.
4. Turn lead into gold, as the first step to perfecting your soul.
5. Create a new, perfect form of life, undoing the sins of Adam.
6. Resurrect the spirits of the dead to find the secrets of the ancients.
7. Use sorcery to draw pilgrims to your cathedral, enhancing its prestige.
8. Transform your knights into invincible warriors.
9. Become immortal.
10. Call up a demon and sell your soul for power.
11. Ensoxcel a beautiful woman into loving you.
12. Explore higher states of consciousness.
13. Revenge!
14. Master magic and bring about a new golden age of sorcery.
15. Discredit the church by emulating the acts of the saints through sorcery.
16. Further your political aims through secret magic.
17. Indulge your senses and inhuman lusts.
18. Slay your enemies with summoned monsters.
19. Open up portals to other worlds, to spread the gospel to the heathen spirits.
20. Become God.

# Sorcerous Precautions

Cults offer at least some protection against Order assassins; the guardian priests have to sneak past or defeat hordes of lesser cultists before they can confront the cult master. Lone sorcerers do not have such layers of devoted minions to protect them. The Games Master should therefore give the sorcerer some other protections, so the guardian priests cannot eliminate him with a single Stealth test and a poisoned dagger, such as:

- Defensive spells, like *Damage Resistance* or a talisman enchanted with *Attract Harm*.
- Concealing the identity of the sorcerer for as long as possible.
- Giving the players a reason to leave the sorcerer alive – perhaps the sorcerer is employed by some other master and the characters need to first identify this employer.
- The sorcerer dwells in a fortress or has many guards.
- The sorcerer is an important public figure – murdering him is simply not an option.
- The sorcerer is unkillable thanks to a bargain made with demons; the characters must first banish the demon or remove this supernatural protection.

## Book, Staff and Circle – Trappings of the Magus

Though a sorcerer may try to conceal their workings, there are three signs that mark every significant practitioner of the arcane arts.

First and foremost is the Book. Every sorcerer must have a grimoire; a book of magic they study to learn spells. Powerful sorcerers have multiple such grimoires. Without a grimoire, a sorcerer is nothing, so the sorcerer must take pains to protect and conceal his book. Grimoires might be kept in locked vaults or guarded by summoned monsters. They might be disguised as ordinary books, or engraved into stone, or even encoded into tapestries or paintings (one enterprising and wealthy sorcerer built a castle that was also a grimoire – the words of his spells were hidden in the lines of the walls and the shape of the towers).

Second is the Staff. A sorcerer must manipulate his spells and most rely on a tool of some sort, traditionally a staff or wand. Without his staff, the sorcerer is weakened.

Third and most dangerous is the Circle. Sorcery is a dark and winding path that leads inevitably to trafficking with spirits and demons. A sorcerer with enough power to call forth the lords of Hell needs a summoning circle to bind them, lest they consume his soul in an instant. Find the circle and you find the sorcerer.

## Sorcerers and factors

Sorcerers who are not part of cults do not have Subversion, Concealment or Fanaticism factors – their own skills cover the same ground. Force can still be used if the sorcerer has guards or minions; the Supernatural factor should still be consulted to determine what spells and Horrors the sorcerer has. As a rule of thumb, use the sorcerer's highest Sorcery skill as the Supernatural factor.

Verse 2.7

# HERETICS

*Heretics are those who hold beliefs contrary to the Church's teachings. Most heretics are below the Order's notice, as they can be dealt with by local bishops (especially now, through the medium of the Inquisition). The Order becomes involved only when a heresy threatens the supremacy of the Church's orthodox teachings.*



Heretics are so-called Christians who hold beliefs that are anathema to the Church. They follow the teaching of one damned heresiarch or another, denying the supremacy of Rome and the rightness of Orthodox teachings. The Order is bound to protect Christendom from the supernatural. But all too often heresy leads to meddling in darker secrets best left alone.

Rome regularly sends nuncios to the Mont St. Michel, demanding the Order fulfil its duty and wipe out one heresy or another... but the Order rarely acts against heretics. Why this sloth?

Firstly, and most importantly, the Order knows that mere *heresy* is not the greatest threat to the Divine Path. Any deviation from the teachings of the Church is sinful, of course, but a cult of necromancers plotting to raise the dead across all Bavaria is a much bigger danger than a handful of free spirits trying to attain oneness with God through meditation and fasting in some attic in Paris.

Secondly, the Order is poorly suited to suppressing heresy. With only a handful of Guardian priests abroad in Christendom, the Order lacks the manpower to arrest and chastise tens of thousands of heretics. At best, the Order can assassinate particularly influential heretical preachers or nobles who support heresy but this only kills the man, not the idea.

Thirdly, the Order is itself less than orthodox. Many of the beliefs held by the Order are themselves suspect, if not heretical. For that matter, the Order has seen the Church fracture and schism dozens of times and it is better to wait until it is clear which of the competing beliefs becomes dominant. A secret society does not survive for more than 1,000 years without learning to adapt to changing times.

The Order does act to suppress heresy if it suspects that the heretics have supernatural allies, or if the heresy conceals – as it so often does – demonic influence.

## Heretics and The Church

The Order's comparative unwillingness to deal with large scale heretical movements is one of the major arguments for the establishment of the Inquisition. The Church desires to suppress heretics by arresting their leaders and forcing them to recant their beliefs. This can only be accomplished with the co-operation of the secular authorities, which can be difficult to obtain. If a heresy is well-established, then the noble rulers of that region are caught between the demands of the Church and the beliefs of their subjects. In such cases, bringing in truly loyal Christian knights from elsewhere through a holy war or crusade may be the only option.

## Suppressing Heresy

The standard Order approach to dealing with heresy is to infiltrate the community of believers, identifying as many names as possible so a list can be given to the local bishop at the end of the Order's involvement. The target of the infiltration are the more influential heretics – corrupt preachers, misguided philosophers, wealthy nobles, military leaders and so on, the lynchpins of the movement. It is not enough to simply *eliminate* such leaders; the Order must ensure that the dead heretic does not become a martyr. Preachers must be discredited; philosophies destroyed or replaced with forged documents, wealthy nobles must be replaced with a good Catholic heir.

## Heresies of the Age

These are some well known heresies that were present during the time of *Deus Vult*.

### Bogomils

The Bogomilian heresy is prevalent in the east, especially Bulgaria where it originated. The Bogomils believe the archangels Satan and Michael were the sons of God and that Satan rebelled against his

heavenly father and created the earth, for which he was cast down into Hell. Humanity were created by God but are trapped in this devil-made world. Michael took on human form and came down from Heaven as Jesus to defeat his fallen brother but Satan's agents crucified him.

The church and all its popes, bishops, priests and monks are but servants of Satan. The Bogomils – *Beloved of God* – must not obey the Church or the corrupt kings whose authority is derived from the Church. Thus, they reject all the social order of the age. Bogomils have no priests but gather to conduct ceremonies together.

## Cathars

Like the Bogomils, the Cathars are dualists, believing this world was created by an evil god, Rex Mundi, and that the true god is a pure spirit, unsullied by matter. As such, Jesus cannot have been the son of God and the Church with its opulence and emphasis on Christ's death and sacrifice is wholly devoted to the service of evil. They believe that, over the course of many lifetimes, a devout soul can escape from the prison of matter and become enlightened. Giving up the pleasures of this world – especially sex, which leads only to trapping more souls in the prison of matter – helps advance the soul along the path, although only the *perfecti* are expected to be truly ascetic.

Those who are enlightened are called *perfecti*. These perfected souls give up all their possessions and spend their lives in prayer and self-denial, living in monastic communities supported by the rest of the believers. Only the *perfecti* can perform the rite of *consolamentum*, which elevates a believer into the ranks of the *perfecti*. Normally, this ritual is used only when a soul has reached perfection, as the ascetic life of the *perfecti* is extremely hard but *consolamentum* is also given to believers who are about to die, so they may receive the spiritual benefit for a short time without risking failure.

The Cathars are especially strong in Southern France, where they have many converts among the nobility.

## Almaricans

This heresy recently began in Paris, following the teachings of a theologian named Almaric. He is a pantheist, believing all men – indeed, all things – are God. Those who are spiritually enlightened become aware of their oneness with God and it is possible to reach such awareness through prayer and spiritual effort alone, without any recourse to the Church. Worse, those who do reach such perfection are, according to Almarican teachings, so perfect they are unable to sin. If they are one with God, then nothing they do can be wrong. Such freedom from consequence leads inevitably to the most vile sinfulness and madness.

## Waldensians

This movement, founded by a merchant named Peter Waldo of Lyons, began with the blessing of the Church. Waldo and his followers gave away all their worldly possessions to better emulate the poverty of the apostles. The Church admired their sacrifice but told them not to preach without permission of local bishops. The Waldensians refused to obey this stricture and were declared heretics. They have become increasingly anti-Catholic, arguing the Church is corrupt. Some claim the Waldensians are far older and trace their lineage back to apostolic times.

## Dark Heresies

If a heretical cult has no supernatural element, then it obviously lacks the Supernatural Factor. Cults that operate openly lack Concealment but still have Subversion – it represents the proportion of people who follow the heretical religion in the area. Heresies still have Fanaticism and Force.

Verse 2.8

# IMPEDIMENTS

*Impediments are those who do not fit into the other categories but must still be dealt with by the Order. Nonetheless, they must still be treated with caution and fervour.*





The final category targeted by the Order are those who may be innocent of sin or sorcery but whose very existence poses a threat to the Church or the Divine Path. Impediments must be removed for the good of Christendom. Each impediment is different and must be dealt with in a suitable fashion.

### **Malger, Bishop of Arles**

The corrupt bishop of Arles is a blight on the good name of Christians everywhere. Arles is a wealthy and important bishopric but Malger threatens to suck it dry like some enormous and grotesque tick. He cheats, he bribes, he commits usury, he fornicates and he sells offices and indulgences to finance his vile habits. From the pulpit, he preaches obedience, continence and the virtues of a simple Christian life, while his personal life is despicable beyond compare. The citizens of Arles have come to loathe their bishop and this dissent draws heretical preachers like flies. Malger's family are closely tied to the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, so the Pope cannot dismiss him. He must be removed but without angering the Holy Roman Emperor or showing the Church's hand in Malger's death.

### **Edmund Rollins, Free-thinker**

Rollins is an English scholar and writer. Following the murder of Thomas Beckett, Rollins wrote a series of letters and pamphlets discussing the relationship between crown, church and the common man. He believes that there can be no divine right of kings and that the church can have no power over the state. Legitimate rulership can be derived only from the will of the people. His letters have been circulated to various other scholars and intelligentsia in northern Europe – and some have even found their way into the hands of radicals. A movement is forming, unwittingly led by Rollins, a movement to overthrow the kings and popes in favour of atheistic democracy. This new movement depends on Rollins' philosophical guidance – if he were removed, or convinced to recant, the fires of anarchy would be quenched.



Verse 2.9

# THE OCCULT

*A student of the Occult learns the different magical beliefs and traditions, the names and histories of famous sorcerers, long lists of books and grimoires, the names of angels, demons and spirits and thousands of minor folk charms and rituals. This is a path to damnation.*



The Order was created to battle the supernatural, and use of the Occult is at very best cause for disciplinary action and, at worst, summary executions may be deemed appropriate. However, guardian priests far from the Pories and Preceptries have been known to indulge to defeat a specific enemy and, sometimes, for their own ends.

The official position of the Order is that any use of the Occult will inevitably lead to damnation, no matter what the original intentions of the guardian priest may be.

Players, however, may think they know better. They will not be the first guardian priests to set foot on this road.

## Lore (Occult)

All of the information covered by this skill is third-hand at best - a character who encounters a werewolf-like monster could use Lore (Occult) to remember that such creatures are said to be vulnerable to silver but just because some similar creature roaming Hungary 200 years ago was killed by a silver sword, it does not necessarily follow that this particular beast shares the same weakness. A high Lore (Occult) skill means the character knows a lot of utterly useless or wholly incorrect trivia as well as a lot of useful information - mystics, sorcerers and insane alchemists are not the most reliable of sources.

### LORE (OCCULT) DIFFICULTIES

Task	Difficulty
Remembering a common folk tale	Very Easy (+60%)
Mystic mumblings to impress the commoners	Easy (+40%)
Identifying the purpose of a ritual item	Simple (+20%)
Guessing the nature of a monster	Routine (+0%)
Identifying a spell	Difficult (-20%)
Remembering which grimoires contain which spells	Hard (-40%)
Remembering the true name of a demon	Very Hard (-60%)
Creating a new spell	Formidable (-80%)

## Minor Magicks

Although the Order does not permit it, it is theoretically possible to cast lesser spells with Lore (Occult). The benefit of such petty-magic is small but a guardian priest far from the eyes of the Order may find any occult edge useful.

To cast petty-magic, the character must spend a Magic Point. He may then use his Lore (Occult) skill to augment any other Common or Advanced skill, so long as the player can come up with a convincing magical ritual. Combat Styles may also be augmented; magical skills (including the various Grimoire, Manipulation and Spirit Magic skills) may not be augmented in this fashion, not may Divine Fervour.

## Sample Minor Magicks

**Athletics:** Drink a potion made of certain rare herbs and ox blood.

**Brawn:** Create a magical correspondence between yourself and the mighty hero Hercules.

**Dance:** Leave your dancing shoes out overnight in a fairy ring.

**Drive:** Carve a rune of safe travel onto the cart's axel.

**Evade:** Whisper an oath to the Devil, bargaining a little of your soul for a little of his luck.

**Evaluate:** Weigh the honesty of the merchant on his own scale, placing a feather against his soul.

**First Aid:** Smear a curative salve on the weapon that inflicted the wound; like heals like.

**Influence:** Write a curse tablet and leave it in a church before meeting with your enemy; he will lose the will to resist you.

**Insight:** Place a droplet of a man's blood into a pool of water and watch the patterns it makes; it will reveal the cast of his mind.

**Perception:** Look at the scene through a crystal pebble.

**Persistence:** Turn your coat inside out – it will protect you from the spells of the faeries.

**Resilience:** Hide a little of your life inside this egg. Do not let the egg get crushed.

**Ride:** Whisper a prayer to Epona, the horse goddess, into the ear of your steed.

**Sing:** Catch a nightingale and eat its tongue with honey and vinegar.

## Christianity and the Occult

Orthodox forms of Christianity are strongly opposed to the occult. This has an effect on the spiritual plane – not only do Christian folk drive out or convert pagans, the power of Christianity drives out spirits. This can be as dramatic as an exorcism but also takes other forms. If a church is built in a woodland that has long been a stronghold of nature spirits, the nature spirits will dwindle over time. Spellcasters of other faiths may be penalised for casting spells on Christian holy ground. Not all supernatural manifestations are intimidated or affected by the Christian dominance of the spirit world.

Demons, for example, may be restricted by Christian powers but they are not weakened – one slip and the demons can take the souls they desire. The unquiet dead stir just as easily in a hallowed grave. Finally, of course, Christianity brings with it its own host of saints and angels and holy spirits of great power.

## Lore (Alchemy)

The ultimate goal of alchemy is to refine the practitioner's soul to perfection, a great work that is beyond the scope of this book and unlikely to be attained by any guardian priest. More practically, a character can use Lore (Alchemy) to create various weapons in a suitable laboratory.

While often considered part of the Occult, the Order embraces alchemy as a science and its use is permitted by guardian priests – those with a real talent for it are positively encouraged.

Verse 2.10

# WITCHCRAFT

*To the common folk, a witch is one who practices sorcery. The witch may be a wise woman who can provide love charms and healing salves, or a malicious crone who curses cattle and blights crops. True witchcraft is far more dangerous. The witch-cults have haunted Europe since before the foundation of the Order. Mothers whisper blasphemous secrets to daughters in a long line of blood and secrets that stretches back hundreds of generations.*



Most of accusations of witchcraft prove false and the Order can leave petty-witches to the tender mercies of the Inquisition and the Witch-Hunters. However, witch-cults have haunted Europe since before the foundation of the Order. These traditions have become garbled and confused in parts but the lore witches hand down to their heirs is older and more potent than any grimoire.

True witchcraft combines Spirit Magic and Sorcery. A powerful witch has not only studied black books of magic but has also communed with spirits and demons. Most magical traditions posit a divide between the mundane, natural world, where the sorcerer resides and the supernatural world that he invokes. Witchcraft, on the other hand, believes that such distinctions are meaningless and that witch and spirit are both equally 'natural'. The spirit world is just a step away from the physical world.

This approach to magic is powerful but risky. By wholly embracing the supernatural, the witch gains power more quickly and easily than the studious, careful sorcerer but also loses his humanity much more swiftly. Elder witches are more spirit than mortal. An elder witch of the tradition of the Drowned Lord may be transformed into a scaly, amphibious thing of tentacles and brackish seawater. One who follows the tradition of the Lady of Shadows slowly becomes a living shadow, a whispering voice from the dark recesses of some cave or deep woodland.

## The Turn of the Seasons

The power of witchcraft rises and falls with the changing seasons, the waxing and waning of the moon and other factors. A witch might be almost powerless in one place and at one time but when the stars are right and she is in her place of power, her ability to wield magic is greatly enhanced.

The Wax and Wane modifiers for each tradition describe these changes. Wax and Wane modifiers are applied to the Witch's Tradition, Manipulation and Spirit Binding skills.

## Spirit Magic

Witches use spirit magic, found in the free to download PDF, *Legend Spirit Magic*. The spiritual dominance of Christianity has forced many spirits into hiding; others have fled this world entirely. Witches must seek out spirits in their hidden refuges, or call up slumbering shades or demons. Other witches have even learned to invoke Catholic saints as spirits through the mysteries of syncretism.

## Sorcery

While witches use the sorcery rules found on page 190 of the *Legend Core Rulebook*, they substitute a Tradition skill for the normal Grimoire skill. A Tradition skill measures the witch's mastery of one of the secret traditions, each of which has its own spells. A witch may belong to any number of traditions and master any number of spells (but is still limited by INT in the number of spells that can be prepared at any one time).

## Traditions

Witches follow different traditions, which are to the witchcults as grimoires are to conventional sorcerers. A witch may never see a grimoire and may not even be literate but she learned her witchcraft at her mother's knee as a child and has memorised the equivalent of a great book of sorcery. The origin of these traditions is a mystery - the Order speculates that the witches first learned them from spirits, or that the founders of the traditions are witches who have become spirits themselves.

Notable traditions are described here, along with the spells and Wax and Wane conditions associated with that tradition.

## Lady of Shadows

The Lady of Shadows is one of the darker patrons of witchcraft, second only to the Lord of Night. She rules over secrets and curses and is invoked to conceal the cult from outsiders or to obtain secret wisdom. The Lady of Shadows demands a price for all that she reveals.

**Sorcery Spells:** Animate (Shadow), Contact (Nightfolk), Curse (POW), Diminish (POW), Enhance (POW) Intuition, Mystic Vision, Phantom (Sense), Project (Sense), Revelation, Telepathy.

**Wax and Wane:** Waning Moon (+20%), Autumn (+20%), No Moon (+40%), Summer (-20%), Waxing Moon (-20%), Full Moon (-40%).

## Drowned Lord

The Drowned Lord dwells in the depths of the oceans. He rules over the wind and wave and over all the souls who drown at sea. Wrecks are a tribute to him; those who travel over the sea without first giving him an offering risk his wrath.

**Sorcery Spells:** Abjure (Air), Contact (Melusine), Control Weather, Dominate (Fish), Form/Set (Water), Holdfast, Shapechange (Human to Fish), Shatter, Smother, Wrack

**Wax and Wane:** At Sea (+20%), During a Storm (+20%), Far From The Sea (-20%), Indoors (-20%).

## Winter Hunt

The Winter Hunt is a dangerous tradition, closely allied with certain dangerous spirits. The Winter Hunt is called upon those who betray the secrets of the witches or on their dire enemies. More than a few Order guardian priests have been found frozen to death or torn apart by invisible wolves.

**Sorcery Spells:** Blast, Contact (Hellhound), Control Weather, Divination, Fly, Haste, Hinder, Neutralise Magic, Nightmare, Teleport.

**Wax and Wane:** Winter (+20%), On the hunt of an enemy of the witches (+20%), Summer (-20%), Magic used selfishly (-20%).

## Harvest Queen

The tradition of the Harvest Queen is associated with pagan cults and even the Church's own veneration of Mary, Mother of Christ. Many of the spells of this tradition are beneficial... many but not all.

**Sorcery Spells:** Banish, Blight, Control Weather, Dominate (Vermin), Enhance (CON), Enhance (SIZ), Enhance (STR), Palsy, Restoration, Regeneration, Treat Wounds.

**Wax and Wane:** Autumn (+20%), Daylight (+20%), Winter (-20%), Night (-20%).

## Lord of the Stone

The mysterious tradition worships certain ancient stones that are said to hold powerful spirits. These spirits demand regular sacrifices of blood. Some especially powerful witches can commune with the spirits.

**Sorcery Spells:** Animate (Stone), Blast, Castback, Damage Resistance, Diminish (DEX), Enhance (POW), Hide Life, Shatter, Tap (CON), Telekinesis Telepathy.

**Wax and Wane:** Underground (+20%), Close to the Stones (+20%), Open Terrain (-20%), Target is not touching the earth (-20%).

## Lady of the Woods

The tradition of the Lady of the Woods is strongest in the deep woods. Of all the traditions, the Lady of the Woods is the spirit patron most likely to manifest. She often appears to dance with her followers, although intruders must be careful not to look directly at her.

**Sorcery Spells:** Animate (Wood), Bind Familiar, Blight, Command (Deer), Command (Wolf), Contact (Nature Spirit), Curse, Diminish (SIZ), Enhance (SIZ), Hinder, Intuition, Invisibility, Shapechange (Human to Deer), Shapechange (Human to Wolf), Telekinesis.

**Wax and Wane:** Deep Woods (+20%), Spring (+20%), Not In the Woods (-20%), In The Presence Of Fire (-20%).

## Lord of Night

The Lord of Night is the tradition that the Order strives most strenuously to eradicate. Those who serve the Lord of Night call up devils and offer human sacrifices to them in exchange for power.

**Sorcery Spells:** Bind Familiar, Blast, Contact (Demon), Holdfast, Neutralise Magic, Nightmare, Palsy, Protective Ward, Spirit Resistance, Summon Demon.

**Wax and Wane:** In a profaned Christian site (+20%), at Night (+20%), during the day (-20%), at a consecrated Christian site (-20%).

## Moon Queen

The Moon Queen is a powerful and widespread tradition. She rules over emotion, especially desire and the wildness of the human spirit. Embracing the Moon Queen is the first step in the initiation of many witch cultists.

**Sorcery Spells:** Curse (CHA), Diminish (INT), Diminish (POW), Dominate (Human), Enhance (CHA), Fly, Intuition, Neutralise Magic, Phantom (Any Sense), Teleport.

**Wax and Wane:** At Night (+20%), Caster and Target are of different genders (+20%), During the Day (-20%), Caster and Target are of the same gender (+20%).



Verse 2.11

# GRIMOIRES AND SPELLS

*Grimoires are books of magic studied by sorcerers. In an era before printing, each grimoire is a hand written book or a collection of scrolls. Most are handed down from one sorcerer to the next from antiquity – few have the talent or madness necessary to create wholly new books of magic. Sorcerers jealously guard their grimoires, allowing them to be copied only by trusted apprentices.*



As repositories of magical power, grimoires are not normal books. Strange events happen around them; they have a knack for escaping danger and falling into the wrong hands. A guardian priest who sets a sorcerer's library on fire might discover that the most powerful books unaccountably escaped the blaze and were found by a literate priest who has now begun to study sorcery. The Order keeps its grimoires under lock and key in iron chests and with good reason.

Grimoires are more than mere spellbooks – they are part magical diary, part scholarly treatise and mostly insane ramblings. A character who has time to study a grimoire can also improve his Lore (Occult) skill; some grimoires also contain information useful to other Lore.

The grimoires described here are some of the more infamous books of occult lore. The spells included in each book are listed, as well as any Improvement rolls gained from studying the book. A character must study the book for at least 1d4 weeks to gain these bonus Improvement rolls, which can only be applied to the listed skills. The usual appearance of the grimoire is also noted.

## A Scholarly Primer

This innocent-sounding book was written by a heretic, Geoffrey of Lourdes, with the intent of undermining the Church. The book claims to be a guide to the natural world and to the sciences for those who can read but have little other learning. In fact, it is a dangerous tome of curses that leads the writer inexorably down the path to damnation. Copies of *A Scholarly Primer* have found their way into many libraries, even into church monasteries.

**Spells:** Animate (Fire), Blast, Mystic Vision, Phantom (Vision), Project (Vision), Summon (various demons).

**Improvement Rolls:** Lore (History), Lore (Nature), Lore (Occult).

## Book of Shadow

The Book of Shadow was written by a witch-hunter in the early years of this century. He captured the leader of a witch-cult and tortured her until she revealed all her secrets. Both the witch-hunter and the turncoat witch vanished mysteriously but a copy of the Book of Shadow survived. The book is sought by both the witch-cults and their enemies, despite rumours that most of the content is fraudulent.

**Spells:** Bind Familiar, Blight, Control Weather, Curse (POW), Shapechange (Human to Raven), Summon (various entities).

**Improvement Rolls:** Lore (Occult), Spirit Binding.

## Saint Cyprian's Grimoire

St. Cyprian of Antioch was a pagan sorcerer before his conversion to Christianity. Many years later, towards the end of his life, he wrote this grimoire as an aid to the Order. Its purpose is to teach guardian priests how to defeat the enemy, so Cyprian carefully expunged all the more powerful offensive spells and dark rituals. The original grimoire was kept in the Constantinople priory; some in the order insist that the original contains several spells and formulae not included in the copies. The grimoire is invariably bound in iron and usually contains ritual items and spell components in secret compartments inside the cover.

**Spells:** Banish, Castback, Enhance (POW), Hinder, Magic Resistance, Mystic Vision, Protective Ward, Spell Resistance.

**Improvement Rolls:** Lore (Occult), Persistence.

## Mysteries of the Cave

A spellbook derived from the Orphic mysteries of Greece, to read *Mysteries of the Cave* is to descend into the dark night of the soul. The initiate must stare into the abyss, facing spirits of terrible power and horrific aspect, until he wins the secret of the cave and returns to the daylight. *Mysteries of the Cave* is usually found in bundles of scrolls, although a monk in Lombardy created a bound manuscript that has been copied widely in northern Italy.

**Spells:** Contact (Nightfolk), Contact (Spirit), Glow, Revelation, Sense (various minerals).

**Improvement Rolls:** Art (poetry), Lore (Occult), Survival.

## Book of Abra–Melin the Mage

A fabled spellbook of tremendous potency, the Book of Abra-Melin was dictated to a European adventurer by an immortal Egyptian wizard. Although there are many rumours of the book, no guardian priest has ever so much as laid eyes on a copy and it may be nothing more than a myth. According to the rumours, the first step is to establish peaceful contact with a guardian angel, which will then protect the sorcerer as he progresses through the rest of the book. The Order suspect diabolic influence; if the sorcerer believes that he is protected, he will take no further precautions and so be vulnerable to diabolic possession.

**Spells:** Bind Familiar, Contact (Angel), Control Weather, Fly, Form/Set (Metals), Invisibility, Neutralise Magic, Revelation, Shapechange (Human into various animals), Shatter, Treat Wounds.

**Improvement Rolls:** Lore (Occult).

## True Magick

The Book of True Magick was created by a council of wizards in the ninth century, who believed that the coming millennium would result in the destruction of the world. They decided to pool their knowledge in the hopes of averting the Second Coming of Christ and thus postponing their own damnation. Original copies of the Book of True Magick have covers made of a strange indestructible blue glass; subsequent copies are usually bound in blue leather in imitation. These lesser copies often lack several spells.

**Spells:** Bind Familiar, Castback, Damage Enhancement, Damage Resistance, Diminish (STR), Dominate (Spirit), Enhance (CON), Enhance (INT), Enhance (POW), Enhance (STR), Fly, Glow, Mystic Vision, Neutralise Magic.

**Improvement Rolls:** Lore (Occult), Manipulation.

## Key of Solomon

This grimoire was, it is alleged, written by King Solomon himself. It contains a wealth of spells for dealing with demons, spirits and other supernatural entities. Solomon is said to have bound demons to help him raise the stones of his temple and to have bound djinni into bottles by means of his magical seal. Copies of the Key are always in sets of scrolls, never a bound book.

**Spells:** Banish, Curse (POW), Enhance (POW), Intuition, Magic Resistance, Mystic Vision, Protective Ward, Revelation, Spirit Resistance, Summon (dozens of variations), Telekinesis.

**Improvement Rolls:** Engineering, Influence, Lore (Occult).

## Enochian Tablets

The Enochian Tablets are attributed to Enoch, grandson of Cain and one of the great mystics of antiquity. The tablets are a set of carved stone or bone squares, each engraved with a metaphorical

image and many occult inscriptions. There is no order to the tablets – the sorcerer must arrange them in different configurations to unlock all the secrets of Enoch. No complete set of the tablets is known to exist; the Order has three partial sets, containing 19, 55 and 57 tablets. The full set is believed to be either 64 or 72 tablets, although one Egyptian wizard claims to have 256 such tablets. Without a complete set arranged in all possible permutations, the secrets of Enoch remain a mystery.

**Spells:** Abjure (Evil), Banish, Contact (Angel), Enhance (INT), Hinder, Shapechange (various), Shatter, Spell Resistance, Summon (Entity), Teleport.

**Improvement Rolls:** None.

## Book of Simon Magus

The Book of Simon Magus was written by the greatest magician of the ancient world, who – so the common people believe – was defeated when St. Peter demonstrated the superiority of the power of God. Secretly, the Order claims credit and says there were Avertunci assassins in the Forum that day. However it came into the Order's possession, the Book of Simon Magus is a powerful grimoire. The book has never been copied and takes the form of several dozen papyrus scrolls encased in a reliquary. That the scrolls have survived for a thousand years is something of a minor miracle.

**Spells:** Animate (Fog), Animate (Stone), Attract (Arrows), Attract (Spells), Contact (Various), Damage Enhancement, Damage Resistance, Dominate (Humans), Enhance (CHA), Enhance (INT), Fly, Form/Set (Stone), Glow, Haste, Mystic Vision, Nightmare, Regenerate, Summon (Various), Telekinesis, Telepathy, Teleport, Wrack.

**Improvement Rolls:** Lore (Occult) x2, Manipulation x2.

## Spells With Style

Most spells in *Legend* are named for functionality, not beauty. Spells have names like Hinder or Animate (Substance) or Banish instead of more mystic, flamboyant titles like Baleful Chains of Pluto, or Pygmalion's Charmed Awakening of the Spirit of the Statue or Vade Retro Satana!

Functional names are much easier to understand but they do lack style. The ideal compromise is to keep the functional names for out-of-character discussion but give each instance of a spell its own unique name and description in the game. Two evil sorcerers might both use Blast spells on the characters but the first wizard calls it the Irresistible Current of Will and it appears to be a bolt of black light and the second one calls it the Glorious Arrow of Apollo and it looks like a glowing golden arrow.

Make every spell unique. Sorcerers do not just fling Hinders around, they cause vines to tangle around the guardian priest's legs, they make him sink into the mud and they cause a freezing chill to grasp the player's limbs.

## New Sorcery Spells

These spells are intended mainly for use by enemies of the players in *Deus Vult*. Players who dare trifle with the power of sorcery may also learn these spells, at the peril of their souls.

**Special Duration:** This spell's Duration is measured in a different time period to minutes. For example, a spell with Special Duration (days) would last a number of days equal to the caster's POW as its base Duration and could be extended even longer through Manipulation.

**Special Range:** This spell's range is measured in a different unit to metres. The base range is the spell's listed unit x the caster's POW and this can be extended with Manipulation.

**Permanent:** This spell creates a permanent effect. It cannot be dismissed by the caster but can be dispelled, or the physical focus of the spell may be destroyed to end the effect.

**Magical Link:** This spell requires a magical link of some sort to the target. A magical link can be a personal item precious to the target, a piece of clothing regularly worn by the target or some of the target's bodily fluids.

## Bind Familiar

Autonomous, Resist (Persistence)

This spell binds a spirit into the body of an animal and compels it to serve the caster. The caster does not need to be able to perceive the spirit. The spirit temporarily gains the Discorporate skill for the Duration of the spell, allowing it to possess the animal; it may remain in the animal's body for as long as it wishes after the spell's Duration expires (but it cannot repossess the animal if it is banished without another casting of this spell).

While bound as a familiar, the spirit and the sorcerer may communicate telepathically. They may also share Magic Points. The spirit is usually well disposed to the sorcerer and therefore willing to serve as a familiar.

## Blast

Resist (Evade)

A simple attack spell, Blast deals 1d4 damage per 10% of the sorcerer's Sorcery (Grimoire) skill. Armour protects normally against the spell's effects. It manifests as a bolt of lightning that leaps from the caster's hand to the target.

## Blight

Resist (Resilience)

The Blight spell drains life and vitality. Anyone targeted by it must make a Resilience test to resist the spell's effect. If this test is failed, the target's Resilience is reduced by the sorcerer's Sorcery (Grimoire) skill for the Duration of the spell and he must immediately make a second test at this reduced skill to avoid becoming sick.

If the test is fumbled, the target's CON is permanently reduced by one point per 10% of the sorcerer's Sorcery (Grimoire) skill. The blight spell is especially effective against plants and animals. When cast on a field of crops, it blights an area equal to the spell's range.

## Control Weather

This spell allows the character to command the weather around him. Every 10% of the sorcerer's Sorcery (Grimoire) skill allows the sorcerer to shift the weather by one step up or down on any of the weather columns in the following table, starting with the current weather conditions.

Wind	Rain	Cold	Heat
No Wind	No Rain	Average	Average
Light Wind	Light Rain		
Moderate Wind	Moderate Rain	Chill	Warm
Strong Wind	Heavy Rain		
Gale	Very Heavy Rain	Intense Cold	Intense Heat
Strong Gale	Monsoon		
Hurricane	Deluge	Freezing	Scorching

## Contact (Entity)

There are many different Contact (Entity) spells, each one associated with either a supernatural race, like Contact (nightfolk) or Contact (ghost) or a specific creature, such as Contact (Satan) or Contact (Azrael). When the spell is cast, the specified entity or the nearest example of that race knows the caster is searching for them and knows the caster's location. If the entity has a POW of 15 or more, it can use the Contact to telepathically communicate with the caster.

## Curse (Characteristic)

Magical Link, Resist (Persistence)

The victim of this spell is cursed with bad luck. The curse is connected to one of the character's Characteristics. Once per 10% of the sorcerer's Sorcery (Grimoire) skill, whenever he fails a Skill test based on that Characteristic, the failure becomes a fumble instead. This fumble is always an especially damaging one.

*For example: Aude is struck by a Curse (DEX) spell. She then makes a Riding test, which she fails. Normally, this would mean that her horse balks at jumping over the fence. However, the Curse turns this failure into a disastrous fumble – Aude is thrown from her horse and falls on her head, taking a severe blow to the skull.*

## Divination

Special Range (Kilometres), Magical Link

This spell allows the caster to trace the subject of the magical link over a wide area. To cast Divination, the sorcerer must have a link to the target. The spell points the direction to the target and pins his location down to a general area. For example, a sorcerer trying to find a werewolf using a tuft of hair as the magical link might learn that the wolf is hiding in a particular wooded region but would be unable to precisely pinpoint the creature's location.

## Enchant Implement

Autonomous

By means of this spell, a sorcerer may temporarily charge a wand, staff or other magical implement, turning it into an instrument of his will. For the duration of the spell, the sorcerer may add the critical range of his highest Sorcery (Grimoire) skill to his Manipulation skill.

## Hide Life

Autonomous

This spell permits the caster to temporarily place a portion of his life energy into a physical vessel. He may place one Hit Point per 10% of the sorcerer's Sorcery (Grimoire) skill into the vessel. At any time, the caster may dismiss the spell, regaining the missing Hit Points. The restored Hit Points can be applied to any Hit Location on the caster's body.

If the caster suffered a major wound or even death, this spell may return him to life, as long as the Hit Points placed in the physical vessel are sufficient to take the caster's head, chest and abdomen locations above the Major Wound threshold (location has lost twice its starting Hit Points).

If the vessel is destroyed, or the spell is not dismissed before its Duration expires, the Hit Points placed in the vessel are lost permanently.

## Invisibility

Concentration, Resist (Persistence)

The caster becomes invisible to those targeted by this spell. They are unable to see him, although their other senses are unaffected. The caster can attack while invisible, assuming he can keep concentrating.

## Nightmare

Special Range (Kilometers), Resist (Persistence), Magical Link

This spell affects the target when he next sleeps. Instead of a restful night, he is plunged into a night of horrific nightmares. The effect of the spell is determined by the caster's Sorcery (Grimoire) skill, this means that the target does not recover any Fatigue levels from resting. Each extra 10% of the character's Sorcery skill gives the target an extra level of fatigue when he awakens. If the caster's Sorcery score is 70% the effect of the spell is 7 or more, the target also takes one point of damage to his Head and Chest for every 10% above 60%.

## Revelation

Magical Link

When Revelation is cast, the caster has a brief psychic glimpse of the target of the magical link. This vision can be a visual hallucination (*'I see him... he's in an inn'*), a flash of the target's emotional state (*'he's very angry'*), a bizarre image or riddle (*'I have the sudden impression that ravens are really important to this whole situation but I don't know how'*).

## Shatter

Resist (Evade)

This spell destroys physical objects. For every 10% of the sorcerer's Sorcery (Grimoire) skill, the spell creates a shatter effect of +1d6. The total shatter effect must equal or exceed the object's current HP plus AP to destroy the object (effectively, the shatter effect works just like damage but it is all or nothing - either the object is totally destroyed, or totally unaffected by the spell).

If the object is being carried or worn by a character, he may make an Evade test to dodge the spell. If the caster has at least six rounds to examine the target, finding weaknesses and stress, before casting the spell, then the spell's effect is maximised (shatter effect of 6 per 10% of the sorcerer's Sorcery (Grimoire) skill).

## Summon (Entity)

Resist (Persistence)

This spell calls up a supernatural entity, such as an ancient spirit, an angel or demon from Hell. The creature is not bound in any way when called, so a wise caster will take precautions like Spirit Block or Protective Ward before casting the spell. There are many different forms of this spell, each keyed to a different creature. Vital to any such summoning spell is the true name of the desired entity - using the wrong name lets something *else* into this world.

If the entity does not wish to be summoned, it can try to resist with a Persistence test. Most entities, especially demons, are eager to be called forth.

The spell can call up an entity of POW equal to or less than the spell's Magnitude x 3. When the spell's Duration runs out, the entity returns to whence it came unless it has anchored itself into this world somehow. To anchor itself, the entity must either invest a point of POW in a physical item, or else possess a creature. The anchor is lost if the entity is exorcised from the creature or if the anchor object is destroyed. The anchor object must be placed in the summoning circle.

The entity must remain within close range of the anchor most of the time. It can spend at most a number of minutes equal to its POW away from the anchor before being forced to return.

## Telekinesis

### Concentration

This spell allows the caster to move objects with the power of his mind. The spell's telekinetic effect is treated like an invisible, immaterial creature. The spell's effective STR and DEX are based on the Caster's STR and DEX. For every 20% of the sorcerer's Sorcery (Grimoire) skill, he gains one multiplier which can be applied to either characteristic.

With a x1 Multiplier (Sorcery 20% or less), then its STR is equal to half the caster's STR and its DEX is equal to half the caster's DEX, as the Multiplier is divided between them. At a x2 Multiplier, both of the spell's Characteristics are equal to those of the caster; at higher Multipliers, the caster can choose to apply the extra Magnitudes to the characteristics in any way, as long as both have at least x1. So, a x5 Telekinesis could have;

STR x 4, DEX x1; STR x 3, DEX x 2; STR x 2, DEX x 3; or STR x 1, DEX x 4.

The number of targets determines how many telekinetic effects the caster may produce at once. Each telekinetic effect can be used to:

- Hold an already grappled target. The target must make an opposed test against the spell's Brawn skill to effect.
- Lift an already grappled target.
- Grapple a target (requires a Combat Action and an Unarmed test, using the spell's STR and DEX).
- Telekinetically punch a target (requires a Combat Action and an Unarmed test, using the spell's STR and DEX. The telekinetic punch deals 1d6 plus the spell's Damage Bonus.
- Wield a weapon (as per telekinetic punch. The effect can also hurl small objects as ranged weapons).
- Parry an attack (requires a Combat Action and an Unarmed test, using the spell's STR and DEX. The spell is treated as a Medium weapon for the purposes of parrying and can parry melee weapons).
- Manipulate an object, such as lifting a heavy weight, closing a door, knocking over a candle and so on. Each telekinetic effect can only be used on a single object.

## Magical Items

Guardian priests often encounter enchanted weapons and other items. Such items must be returned to the Order, so they can be properly disposed of – no true Christian would put his faith in the prodigies of sorcery or the deceptions of pagan spirits.

### Minor Items

These items are little more than trinkets of the Occult, but must still be collected by diligent guardian priests, lest they corrupt the common folk and divert them from the Divine Path.

**Curse Token:** A curse token is a small lead coin or scrap of parchment inscribed with a baleful rune. The bearer of a curse token is most assuredly doomed – he is under the effects of a Curse spell as long as he possesses the curse token. The usual method is to slip the token into a victim's pocket or hide it among his belongings with a Sleight test. Like a bad penny, curse tokens keep coming back – the only way to permanently rid oneself of a token is to permanently sacrifice a point of POW, or force the cultist to take the token back. Otherwise, the token will keep turning up amid the character's belongings.

**Sacrificial Dagger:** A sacrificial dagger is a potent ritual tool. Anyone ritually murdered using the dagger provides Magic Points equal to their POW to the knife wielder.



**Power Store:** A power store is an object – a talisman, a crystal, a standing stone, an enchanted weapon – or even a creature that can store Magic Points. The wielder of the power store can store or withdraw up to three Magic Points as a Combat Action. A power store can store up to 18 Magic Points.

**Protective Amulet:** Protective amulets defend against hostile effects such as spells or poison. The amulet's wearer may automatically succeed at one Persistence, Resilience or Evade test.

## Significant Items

Such items are typically found in the hands of powerful sorcerers or cult leaders, granting them diabolic aid against God's true servants. Guardian priests are warned to take caution when confronted by those wielding items of this power.

**Cloak of Invisibility:** The wearer of this cloak is invisible. This comes with a drawback – the longer you wear the cloak, the more it saps your strength. For every minute spent wearing the cloak, the wearer gains one level of fatigue.

**Greater Amulet:** A greater amulet allows its wearer to automatically succeed at three Persistence, Resilience or Evade tests.

**Power Multiplier:** Power multipliers add to the wearer's ability to use magic. A Power Multiplier gives a +20% bonus to his Sorcery (Grimoire) skill.

**Shewstone:** Shewstones are crystal mirrors or reflecting pools that allow the user to cast the *revelation* spell at the cost of one Magic Point.

**Wand of the Magus:** This ritual wand allows the wielder to apply one Manipulation to a sorcery spell for free, in addition to the normal benefits of a wand.

## Major Items

These are the objects that can trigger a full-scale mobilisation of the Order, for they are the Occult's equivalent of a major relic. The presence of these artefacts can corrupt entire nations and when they are discovered, all efforts must be made to recover them.

**Cauldron of the Dead:** The cauldron of the dead is an ancient Celtic artefact. Any corpse placed in the cauldron is resurrected as a zombie under the control of the cauldron's master. The cauldron can also revive the mortally wounded; they return as living men but can no longer speak.

**Living Grimoire:** Spellbooks are always dangerous but a living grimoire is wilfully malicious. This book contains the spirit of the sorcerer who originally wrote it. The ghost can alter the text of the grimoire, providing different spells and lore. Those who use the living grimoire risk being possessed by the sorcerer.

Verse 2.12

# HORRORS

*Horrors are supernatural overspill. If there is too much supernatural power in one area, it manifests in eerie and horrific ways. The natural world becomes corrupted and twisted by the Horror...*



Horrors are divided into groups. The Games Master should reuse the same groups for recurring foes. For example, if the players encounter a necromantic cult, then the Games Master might use the Horror of Blood group for that cult. Later, in another adventure when the players are investigating another mystery, they encounter Horror of Blood effects again – implying the same cult is involved in this new mystery. Use Horrors as occult foreshadowing and to build atmosphere.

The supernatural entity or cult who generate the Horrors may not necessarily be in control of them; they are effectively occult side effects. Cults trying to remain hidden do not want Horrors but they still manifest as the cult's power grows.

A Horror has a level, ranging from 1 to 3. Level 3 Horrors are the most potent and dangerous. If a cult has multiple Horrors, it must have as many level 1 Horrors as it does level 2 and as many level 2 Horrors as it does level 3s. So, a cult with five Horrors could have Levels 1, 2 and 3 from one Group and level 1 and 2 from another, or three level 1s, one level 2 and one level 3 from one Group, or any similar combination.

The area affected by a Horror depends on the potency of the magical effect that created the Horror in the first place. Level 1 Horrors cover a much greater area than level 2 Horrors and level 3s only affect the heart of the supernatural manifestation. For example, a Level 1 Horror might cover an entire valley, the associated level 2 Horror affects only the woods where the cult meets and the Level 3 Horror affects only the summoning circle.

## Horrors of Blood

**Cryptic Blood (Level 1):** Sometimes, when blood is spilt, it forms itself into significant shapes. A wounded guardian priest might bleed in the shape of the cross, or a splatter of blood might spell out words.

**Enhanced Injury (Level 1):** Any attack that causes damage inflicts an extra point of damage, because of the extra bleeding.

**Blood in the Water (Level 1):** At times, water sources in the area such as streams or lakes – or even a bowl of water in a tavern – turn to blood. Players who try drinking tainted water must make a Resilience test to keep the foul liquid down.

**Blood Rain (Level 2):** Sometimes, the rain turns to blood. The sticky, ghastly rain gives an additional –10% penalty to any Skill Tests made outdoors.

**Taste for Blood (Level 2):** Animals and cultists in the area have an unnatural hunger for the blood of the wounded. Any attacks on players who are already injured by animals and cultists have a +10% bonus.

**Unnatural Thirst (Level 3):** The players feel a strange desire to drink blood. When such an opportunity arises, players must make a Persistence test to resist. Those who fail to resist are compelled to drink...

## Horrors of the Dead

**Unquiet Dead (Level 1):** The dead in this place do not stay buried. Corpses move when the characters are not looking; graves are pushed open from below and you can sometimes hear scratching noises, as if someone was clawing at the inside of a coffin deep underground...

**Dreams of the Dead (Level 1):** Anyone slumbering in this region has vivid dreams of the recently deceased.

**Power of Undeath (Level 1):** All undead creatures in the area gain +2 Hit Points to each Hit Location.

**Whispering Dead (Level 2):** The dead speak. Sometimes, the lips of corpses move as if straining to form words. The players can speak to the dead but may not like what they hear...

**Grasping Hands (Level 2):** The dead claw at the players. If the players are moving through a

battlefield, or a graveyard, or any place littered with corpses, the dead grab at them and try to drag them down into the earth...

**Risen Dead (Level 3):** Any cultist slain in the area rises again as a hostile zombie. Double-kill the dead!

## Horrors of Darkness

**Deeper Darkness (Level 1):** The shadows are especially murky in this region. All Perception test penalties due to darkness are increased by 20%.

**Fleeting Flames (Level 1):** Light sources have a worrying habit of going out or burning through their fuel too quickly. The players cannot depend on light.

**Night Sight (Level 1):** All cultists and monsters gain the Night Sight ability.

**Icy Darkness (Level 2):** The darkness is unnaturally cold. Players without proper protective gear or heat sources may take damage from the cold.

**Flowing Darkness (Level 2):** The darkness *moves*, flowing like inky water to hide those who worship it. Cultists and other enemies gain a +20% bonus to Stealth tests.

**Eternal Darkness (Level 3):** There is no day here, anymore. The area is forever night.

## Horrors of Drowning

**Swift Currents (Level 1):** The currents in this area are especially strong. All Swimming tests suffer a -20% penalty.

**Flooding (Level 1):** The water levels are unnaturally high. Rivers burst their banks, blocking roads and collapsing bridges. There is no dry path to safety.

**Panic in the Water (Level 1):** Those who find themselves submerged in the water are seized by unnatural panic. A player that is underwater must make a Persistence test or start asphyxiating immediately, even if he entered the water with full lungs.

**Things in the Water (Level 2):** There are half-glimpsed shapes in the water who try to grab players and pull them down into the depths.

**Dead on Dry Land (Level 2):** The water *invades* places that should be dry. The characters might find flood waters flowing *up* a hill towards them, or a locked room might fill with water from no discernable source.

**The Drowners (Level 3):** This area counts as being underwater for the purposes of drowning. The players find they cannot breathe near the centre of the cult's power.

## Horrors of Ghosts

**Corpse Lights (Level 1):** Spectral lights are seen floating in the fields at night. Players who follow the trail of these lights may find significant clues – or be lured out to their deaths.

**Cold Spots (Level 1):** There are zones of unnatural cold in some places. Players in such a zone take damage unless they have a source of warmth or protective clothing.

**Unseen Claws (Level 1):** Players find strange marks and wounds appearing on their bodies, like the marks of chains or unseen claws.

**Visions (Level 2):** Players are occasionally assaulted by visions of how the unquiet spirits died. These horrific visitations can occur at any time, even in the middle of a fight. A Persistence test is needed to fight off an unwanted vision.

**The Angry Dead (Level 2):** The ghosts are increasingly powerful and hostile. They can affect the physical world, hurling projectiles, slamming doors and generally striking out against intruders.

**Possessions (Level 3):** In this horror, the ghosts are powerful enough to possess those not protected by magic.

# Horrors of Hell

**A Stench of Sulphur (Level 1):** The whole area stinks of sulphur.

**The Dancing Flames (Level 1):** Fires burn especially fiercely here and the players can sometimes hear screams among the flames. All fire-based attacks inflict an extra point of damage.

**He Has No Power Here (Level 1):** All attempts to use Divine Fervour suffer a -20% penalty.

**Swift Damnation (Level 2):** Anyone who dies in this area is condemned to Hell, regardless of the state of their soul.

**Unholy Place (Level 2):** Anyone who touches a Christian relic suffers 1d4 points of damage.

**Your God is Dead (Level 3):** Divine spells cannot be cast in this area without a Critical Lore (Christian Theology) roll.



# Horrors of the Green

**Rampant Growth (Level 1):** The plants in this region grow unnaturally quickly. A bare rock can be covered with vines in a single day; the paths change and become overgrown almost instantly.

**Trackless Forests (Level 1):** Tracking and Survival attempts suffer a -20% penalty. Only the cultists know the secret ways through this forest.

**Unnatural Virility (Level 1):** Fruits grow incredibly large and succulent, the harvest overflows the barn and the people have a healthy... if greenish... glow.

**Symbiosis (Level 2):** The cultists and other people living within the Horror take on plant-like traits. They gain AP1 from their bark-like skin and grow increasingly leafy.

**Deadly Plants (Level 2):** The plants in this Horror are poisonous, have razor-sharp thorns or have some other lethal attack.

**Life from Life (Level 3):** Those who die within the Horror rise again as part of the forest, resurrected as faces in the bark of a tree or as shambling plant-horrors.

# Horrors of Plague

**The Buzzing Flies (Level 1):** Thick clouds of flies buzz around this area, gathering in such huge hordes they blot out the sun. Players attempting to do *anything* in such a cloud suffer a -10% penalty to all actions.

**Sickness (Level 1):** A plague is loose in this region. Players must make a Resilience test each day to avoid falling ill. Those who fall ill suffer a -10% penalty to all skills.

**Pox and Boils (Level 1):** All those who dwell in this Horror, or who spend too long here, develop hideous boils and lesions on their skin, reducing their CHA by 3. Players must make a Resilience test each day to prevent themselves from developing these symptoms.

**Fevered Devotion (Level 2):** Cultists and other servants of the supernatural gain a +20% bonus to Resilience and Persistence as long as they are infected with the disease. Furthermore, others who do not serve the cult but are infected begin to have fever-dreams of the cult's rituals, which may result in weak-willed victims joining the cult.

**Contagion (Level 2):** The players are now carriers for the disease. They cannot overcome the disease while in the area of the Horror. After they leave the afflicted area, they will recover from the plague in a relatively short time but will remain carriers for 1d6 weeks.

**Deadly Plague (Level 3):** The plague is now a lethal one. Players who enter this region of the Horror suffer from a *fever* (see the *Legend Core Rulebook*, page 79) and lose one point of CON per day until they pass three Resilience tests in a row. One Resilience test is allowed each day.

# Horrors of Rats

**Thousands of Rats! (Level 1):** This region is infested with rats. Thousands of rats. Thousands upon thousands of rats.

**Rats in the Walls (Level 1):** The rats have gnawed through every wall and dug tunnels everywhere. There is nowhere the players can hide from the rats.

**The Watchers (Level 1):** The cultists can see through the eyes of the rats.

**Carnivorous Rats (Level 2):** The rats are ravenously hungry and like the taste of human flesh.

**Rats of Unusual Size (Level 2):** The rats are the size of small dogs. Small, vicious dogs.

**Rat Mind (Level 3):** All of the rats are linked into a single collective mind. What one knows, they all know.

Verse 2.13

# BESTIARY

*The Guardian Priests of the Order follow in the traditions of St. George and St. Michael, crushing the serpent of evil beneath their heel. Privately, many would sooner compare themselves to the monster-hunter Beowulf, of legend. There are fewer monsters in the world than there once were but there are still creatures in the deep woods that hunger for the flesh of men, and the roots of the mountains are gnawed by things assuredly the spawn of Satan.*



The Order is sworn to hunt down all monsters and destroy them these are Demons, spirits, the undead, abominations and other unnatural creatures. The Order has only a limited understanding of such entities and tends to treat every strange creature as something to be gutted first and studied later.

*Deus Vult* draws a distinction between servitors – creatures who are roughly equal in power to a single player and who usually appear in adventures as servants of sorcerers, cults or greater monsters – and monsters, creatures who can slaughter all the players with ease in single combat.

Defeating a monster takes a whole adventure. To slay one of these mighty foes, the players must first gather clues about the nature of their enemy and work out its weaknesses. A monster might be immune to all weapons except a particular blessed sword, or make its lair in a hidden cave which the players must first locate.

## On the Trail of...

Each monster in this chapter has a Trail section, describing clues and adventure seeds associated with the monster. Use the Trail suggestions to spark adventures and mysteries for your players.

## Servitors

Servitors are lesser monsters or other races with which humanity shares the Earth. Living servitors were created on the Sixth Day, along with the other animals. Others were wrought by Satan in mockery of God's creation, are shades of living things, or are uncreated spirits that arose from lower forms of matter.





# Ghouls

Degenerate cannibal horrors, ghouls dwell in caves and in the darkest reaches of the forest. They might be mistaken for human on a dark night at a distance but up close their loping wolf-like gait, foul carrion stench and fanged mouths reveal their animal nature. Ghouls hunger for human flesh above all other meat and once tribes of ghouls would attack human settlements to feast. The great ghoulish kingdoms were wiped out by Alexander's armies and the few surviving tribes were driven into the wilderness by the legions of Rome.

Most ghouls in Europe became Christianised in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries but it is a mocking, heretical form of the true faith. They believe Christ became a ghoul under the instruction of Lazarus and he 'rose again' to devour human flesh. Their sacraments of the body and blood of Christ are alarmingly literal.

In combat, ghouls use the tactics of the pack – one or two ghouls occupy the defender from the front, while others circle round and attack from the flanks and rear. They never attack without the advantage of numbers if possible. Ghouls are terrified of fire.

## On the Trail of Ghouls

- Ghouls may serve necromancers, especially necromancers who are willing to make do with animated skeletons instead of shambling zombies.
- The Order sends the players to capture a particularly old ghoul, who may know secrets dating back centuries.
- There are several underground cities in Cappadocia in Turkey that could be vast ghoul lairs, where the ghouls took refuge from the wrath of Alexander.

	Dice	Avg	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP	Combat Actions	3
STR	3D6+6	18	1–3	Right Leg	5/6	Damage Modifier	+1d4
CON	2D6+6	13	4–6	Left Leg	5/6	Magic Points	11
SIZ	2D6+6	13	7–9	Abdomen	5/7	Movement	8m
INT	3D6	11	10–12	Chest	5/8	Strike Rank	+13
POW	3D6	11	13–15	Right Arm	5/5		
DEX	3D6+3	14	16–18	Left Arm	5/5		
CHA	2D6	8	19–20	Head	5/6		

*Armour:* Rugose Hide, 2 Armour Points

*Traits:* Formidable Natural Weapons, Night Sight

*Notable Skills:* Athletics 50%, Brawn 40%, Evade 40% Perception 60%, Persistence 50%, Resilience 70%, Stealth 60%, Track 40%

## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Bite	S	T	40%	1D8+1D4	As for Head
Claw	S	S	70%	1D6+1D4	As for Leg

# Goblins

Goblins are tiny, ugly humanoids, no larger than a four-year old child. They come in all manner of shapes, from squat fat grotesques to spindly-limbed things that move like spiders. Goblins can be mischievous pests, spilling milk, opening latches and gnawing holes in books, or they can be vicious little brutes, torturing farm animals and stealing babies. They are normally encountered in nests of several dozen, who make their home in tall trees or under the eaves of large houses, or on the roofs of churches but sometimes a lone goblin can be mysteriously exiled from the tribe and forced to go on alone.

The intelligence of goblin-kind is fiercely debated by Order scholars. Most goblins behave like little apes, prying their noses where they do not belong and attacking when provoked. A few unusual goblins, though, have mastered sorcery and are highly intelligent – if still malicious and vile.

## On the Trail of Goblins

- Goblins could be misshapen Nightfolk. Perhaps, like the Spartans of old, the Nightfolk leave their weaker children out on the surface to die.
- Alternatively, perhaps goblins are humans warped by magic. Too much sorcery might have strange effects on unborn children.
- A goblin infestation in a city poses a unique problem for guardian priests – do they really kill all the witnesses over what is little more than a harmless colony of pests?

**Goblin Magic:** Goblins with an INT of 10 or more and a POW of 15 or more can cast goblin spells. They possess 1d4+1 spells, usually *Blight*, *Curse*, *Invisibility*, *Phantom (Sense)* or *Holdfast*.

**Elusive:** If a character makes an attack against a goblin and misses, he cannot make further attacks against that goblin this round.

	Dice	Avg	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP	Combat Actions	2
STR	2D6	7	1-3	Right Leg	-/3	Damage Modifier	-1D4
CON	3D6	11	4-6	Left Leg	-/3	Magic Points	11
SIZ	1D6+1	4	7-9	Abdomen	-/4	Movement	6m
INT	2D6	7	10-12	Chest	-/5	Strike Rank	+12
POW	3D6	11	13-15	Right Arm	-/2		
DEX	4D6	15	16-18	Left Arm	-/2		
CHA	2D6	7	19-20	Head	-/3		

**Armour:** Rags, 0 Armour Points

**Traits:** Elusive, Night Sight

**Notable Skills:** Athletics 50%, Evade 60%, Mechanisms 60%, Stealth 80%

## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Tiny Spear	T	S	40%	1D6+1-1D4	2/5
Tiny Bow			50%	1D4	2/4
Goblin Teeth	T	T	30%	1D6	As per head

# Hellhounds

Humans are not the only creatures that can be possessed by demons from Hell. Evil spirits can also inhabit the bodies of animals. Hellhounds are possessed dogs or wolves. They are lean and athirst, their eyes reflecting the fires of hell no matter where they stand and their jaws slavering with searing-hot spittle.

## On the Trail of Hellhounds

- A hellhound could be the result of a demonic summoning gone wrong – instead of the demon being bound in a circle, it leaped into the body of an animal. In this case, the players may be racing the diabolist to find the demon.
- Killing the hellhound will free the demon – and if the horror can possess victims, the guardian priest who slew the beast may become the next host.

**Unholy:** Hellhounds take only half damage from unconsecrated weapons.

**Demon Power:** Roll 1d6 to determine which demonic power the hellhound possesses.

1. **Perfect Tracker:** The hellhound always finds its prey. It cannot fail tracking rolls and is indefatigable while following its prey.
2. **Dream Stalker:** The hellhound can stalk a character into his dreams.
3. **Venomous:** The hellhound's bite attack is poisonous. Anyone bitten by the creature suffers the effect of Blade Venom (see *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*, page 57).
4. **Breathe Flame:** See *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*, page 160. The hellhound's fiery breath deals 2d6 damage.
5. **Flight:** The hellhound can fly.
6. **Howl of Hell:** The hound can howl summoning another 1d3 hounds to its aid.

	Dice	Avg	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP	Combat Actions	2
STR	3D6+6	17	1-3	Right Leg	2/6	Damage Modifier	+1d2
CON	3D6+9	20	4-6	Left Leg	2/6	Magic Points	11
SIZ	2D6+3	10	7-9	Abdomen	2/7	Movement	10m
INT	2D6	7	10-12	Chest	2/8	Strike Rank	+11
POW	3D6	11	13-15	Right Arm	2/6		
DEX	3D6+3	14	16-18	Left Arm	2/6		
CHA	—	—	19-20	Head	2/6		

**Armour:** Fur and Hide (AP 2)

**Traits:** Night Sight, Unholy, Demon Power

**Notable Skills:** Athletics 100%, Evade 65%, Perception 80%, Persistence 75%, Resilience 75%, Stealth 75%, Survival 40%, Tracking 90%

## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Bite	M	T	70%	1D10	As for Head
Claw	M	M	40%	1D4	As for Leg

# Lesser Spirits

Spirits of this magnitude are almost imperceptible to humans; they can manifest only when given strength by the worship – or fear – of humans, or in certain rare conditions.

## Genius Loci

A genius loci is the spirit of a place. They are associated with magnificent, important structures or imposing ruins. Certain cathedrals, graveyards and Roman ruins have especially strong genii. The spirit can appear in two forms – it can masquerade as a common inhabitant of the place, or it can animate the very stones to form a body or face for itself. Genius loci are usually harmless but can become angered if their dwelling place is damaged or defiled. Some sorcerers deliberately awaken the genius loci of their lair to create a supernatural defender.

### On the Trail of Genius Loci

- History books and research can reveal the presence of a Genius Loci more surely than a Hoffman Device or sorcery. It pays to do the research.
- The spirit’s activity may be mistaken for a ghostly haunting.

	Dice	Avg	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP	Combat Actions	2
STR	–	–	1–3	–	–	Damage Modifier	+1d6
CON	–	–	4–6	–	–	Magic Points	11
SIZ	–	–	7–9	–	–	Movement	18m
INT	2D6	7	10–12	–	–	Strike Rank	+9
POW	3D6	11	13–15	–	–		
DEX	–	–	16–18	–	–		
CHA	3D6	11	19–20	–	–		

*Armour:* None

*Traits:* Life Sense, Magic Sense, Inhabit Structure

*Notable Skills:* Lore (Regional) 80%, Perception 50%, Spectral Combat 60%

**Inhabit Structure:** The spirit may create a body for itself out of the stones of its home. Manifesting in this fashion costs the spirit one Magic Point per minute and the created body has a SIZ and CON equal to the spirit’s POW, a STR of twice its CHA and a DEX equal to its INT.

# Shade

Shades are, like ghosts, the spirits of the dead. Unlike a ghost, though, a shade has no consciousness or will; it is trapped in death, repeating the same handful of actions over and over. The shade of a priest might appear in the pulpit and preach to his congregation; the shade of a Roman legionnaire might patrol the same route it did 1,000 years ago. Like actors repeating the same play, they recite their lines over and over again.

Shades can be useful allies in certain circumstances. They can be fed Magic Points by anyone nearby, causing them to manifest temporarily. While manifested, shades behave as they did in life, so causing, say, a barbarian shade to appear is effectively conjuring a warrior, assuming the players can convince the long-dead barbarian they are on its side. Some cults have shades of former members as guards.

## On the Trail of Shades

- Killing shades is useless; the spirits may return. The players have to lay them to rest or exorcise them.
- Shades may feed on another source of magic, allowing them to manifest. Removing the source of power ends the haunting.

**Echo of Life:** A shade can manifest in the material world if someone nearby spends a Magic Point to permit the shade to manifest (or in rare conjunctions of the spirit plane and the physical). The shade remains manifested for one minute per point of POW. While manifested, the shade can interact with physical beings.

	Dice	Avg	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP	Combat Actions	2
STR	—	—	1–3	—	—	Damage Modifier	+1d6
CON	—	—	4–6	—	—	Magic Points	11
SIZ	—	—	7–9	—	—	Movement	8m
INT	2D6	7	10–12	—	—	Strike Rank	+9
POW	3D6	11	13–15	—	—		
DEX	—	—	16–18	—	—		
CHA	3D6	11	19–20	—	—		

*Armour:* None

*Traits:* Echo of Life

*Notable Skills:* Resilience 50%, Spectral Combat 60%, Stealth 50%

# Wraith

Wraiths are a darker form of shade – they are echoes of the dead that feed on negative emotions, especially fear. They are consumed by bitterness and hatred, usually because of the violent nature of their own deaths. Wraiths cluster around battlefields, plague pits and other ill-omened places. Wraiths are capable of weakly affecting the physical world, by playing on the nerves of mortals and creating minor illusions. They use these powers to provoke emotions in their victims; the victim’s fear or anger feeds the wraith, giving it more energy and allowing it to twist reality even more. Eventually, the wraith becomes strong enough to manifest and murder its prey.

## On the Trail of Wraiths

- The Order’s dungeons are guarded by more than a few bound wraiths.
- The presence of a wraith in a seemingly peaceful place can spark an investigation – why is a spirit associated with bitterness and hate haunting a quiet monastery?

**Emotional Vampire:** Wraiths can feed on the emotions of those nearby. A character who shows anger or fear near a wraith loses one Magic Point to the wraith. The wraith can drain Magic Points up to five times its starting total. A character who is trying to resist strong emotion may do so with Persistence tests.

**Haunt:** Wraiths can create minor illusions and other supernatural effects, such as phantasmal sights and sounds, opening or slamming shut doors, throwing objects and so forth. Each such effect costs the wraith one Magic Point.

**Manifest:** Once a wraith has reached twice its starting Magic Point total, it can manifest in the physical world. Manifested wraiths take minimum damage from all attacks.

	Dice	Avg	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP	Combat Actions	2
STR	–	–	1–3	–	–	Damage Modifier	+1d6
CON	–	–	4–6	–	–	Magic Points	11
SIZ	–	–	7–9	–	–	Movement	18m
INT	2D6	7	10–12	–	–	Strike Rank	+9
POW	3D6	11	13–15	–	–		
DEX	–	–	16–18	–	–		
CHA	3D6	11	19–20	–	–		

*Armour:* None

*Traits:* Life Sense, Emotional Vampire, Haunt, Manifest

*Notable Skills:* Spectral Combat 60%

## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Claw	M	T	60%	1D8	As per wraith form

# Melusines

Melusines are a breed of hideous abominations that dwell in rivers and lakes. In their natural form, they are scaled monsters with fang-filled maws, bulbous eyes and two long tails. The melusine is a trickster, able to disguise itself as a beautiful maiden to lure the unwary into traps. Some lusty farm-boy might espy a naked nymph bathing in the waters; he succumbs to her wanton charms and the melusine rouns him and devours the unfortunate.

The creatures are capable of more cunning plans, disguising themselves as priests or nobles or even specific individuals to sow chaos and confusion. Their deceptions are limited by the creatures' need to bathe – if a melusine does not immerse itself in water at least once per day, it begins to wither (losing one point of CON per day it goes without bathing). According to the histories, they are the descendants of those who did not travel on the Ark of Noah, and so they became creatures of the water to survive the Flood. They have a special delight in oath-breaking, perhaps in mockery of the covenant between God and mankind and use their powers of illusion to create discord and destroy trust.

Certain rivers and lakes are sacred to the melusines and anyone who trespasses by these waters is marked for death. The Order's sages believe there are melusine settlements or even temples built in the deep waters but no swimmer could ever dive deep enough to uncover their secrets.

All the melusines encountered by the Order are female. Perhaps their males dwell in these settlements, unable to come to the surface because they lack the power of illusion, or maybe the race has no males and rely on human seed to propagate.

## On the Trail of Melusines

- Melusines are known to ally themselves with witchcults; some powerful witches could even be melusines themselves.
- The melusines dare not enter the open ocean – what do they fear in the depths?
- Not all melusines are murderous, or so they claim; what if a band of melusines surface in a great city and begs for shelter there?

**Illusions:** A melusine can change her appearance to seem human. This is an illusion spell with a Magnitude equal to half the melusine's POW.

**Scaly Tails:** The melusine may use her tails in combat. If she attacks with both tails in a round, she may not move that round. Her tail attack can Bash Opponent, Disarm Opponent, Entangle, Grip Opponent or Trip Opponent.

# MELUSINES

	Dice	Avg	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP	Combat Actions	3
STR	3D6	11	1-3	Right Leg	3/5	Damage Modifier	+0
CON	3D6	11	4-6	Left Leg	3/5	Magic Points	14
SIZ	2D6+6	13	7-9	Abdomen	3/6	Movement	8m, Swim 12m
INT	2D6+6	13	10-12	Chest	3/7	Strike Rank	+14
POW	4D6	14	13-15	Right Arm	3/4		
DEX	4D6	14	16-18	Left Arm	3/4		
CHA	4D6	14	19-20	Head	3/5		

*Armour:* Scaly Hide, 3 points

*Traits:* Illusions, Scaly Tails

*Spells:* Abjure (Air), Intuition, Phantom (Vision), Smother

*Notable Skills:* Athletics 60%, Brawn 40%, Influence 90%, Manipulation 40%, Perception 50%, Persistence 60%, Resilience 60%, Sorcery 60%, Survival 70%, Swimming 120%



## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Dagger	S	S	50%	1D4+1	6/8
Melusine Tail	M	VL	70%	1D6	As per leg



# Nightfolk

This race has a hundred names. In some lands, they are called kobolds, in others dvergar, in others they are called gnomes or domovoi or huldufolk. The tales agree that the nightfolk live in mighty kingdoms deep under the earth. The size of the nightfolk lands is astonishing – there are stories of kingdoms that stretch from the mountains of Norway to the Mediterranean and the King of the Nightfolk is said to command more knights than there are in all of Christendom.

The tales also say that the nightfolk are small but this is inaccurate – there are small nightfolk, tall nightfolk and nightfolk that could almost pass for human. The one thing they all have in common is their jet-black skin. All the nightfolk are utterly without any colour save deepest black. Their garb, their weapons, even their blood is completely devoid of any colour except pitch black. Even when they speak, their low whispering voices seem to weigh heavily on the ear. There are different castes or families of nightfolk, although their exact nature is a mystery to the Order. What makes one nightfolk a trader and another, a scholar, is unknown but one scholar resembles another just as one trader resembles another. It is as though form follows function among the nightfolk. Three nightfolk castes are described here – a smith, a warrior and a sorcerer-priest.

The nightfolk are mostly pagan, although there are a few Christians among their ranks. They believe in a variety of horrific deities, who are placated with their rites instead of worshipped. They have little contact with us surface-dwellers, believing us to be uncivilised barbarians. They sometimes visit the surface to trade, or to steal children for their religious rites, or to pursue some other unfathomable plan. For the most part, they ignore humanity, which is merciful. If the nightfolk came pouring out of their hillside fortresses and boreholes, then the armies of Christendom would be overcome. The one defence against the nightfolk lies in the heavens – they cannot abide the sun. A nightfolk caught on the surface during the daytime is weakened; one forced to enter direct sunlight burns like dry tinder or turns to stone.

## On the Trail of Nightfolk

- The Nightfolk are the truth behind many legends of fairies and dwarves. Why do they steal human children?
- The Order is contacted by a lord of the Nightfolk, requesting aid in dealing with a demon that has usurped his throne. Are the players brave enough to venture into the deep places under the Earth?
- The Divine Path calls for the eradication of all supernatural forces – how do you defeat a foe more numerous than humanity?

**Nightfolk:** All Nightfolk gain a +25% to Stealth tests at night. On the surface during the day, they gain two levels of fatigue automatically. A nightfolk in direct sunlight takes 1 point of damage to any exposed location each round.

**Enchant Weapon:** This nightfolk crafter knows the secrets of making magical weapons. He can temporarily enchant his blade, gaining +10% to hit and +2 to damage for a round at the cost of one Magic Point. He may also make permanent magic items at the cost of POW.

## NIGHTFOLK CRAFTER

	Dice	Avg	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP	Combat Actions	3
STR	3D6	11	1-3	Right Leg	5/4	Damage Modifier	+0
CON	3D6	11	4-6	Left Leg	5/4	Magic Points	14
SIZ	3D6	7	7-9	Abdomen	5/5	Movement	6m
INT	2D6+6	13	10-12	Chest	5/6	Strike Rank	+14 (+7 in armour)
POW	3D6+3	14	13-15	Right Arm	5/3		
DEX	3D6+3	14	16-18	Left Arm	5/3		
CHA	3D6	11	19-20	Head	5/4		

*Armour:* Nightfolk Chain, 5 points

*Traits:* Dark Sight, Nightfolk.

*Notable Skills:* Craft (armour) 80%, Enchant Weapon 60%, Engineering 60%, Evade 40%, Stealth 70%.

### WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Sword	M	L	50%	1D8	6/8

## NIGHTFOLK SENTINEL

	Dice	Avg	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP	Combat Actions	2
STR	3D6+6	17	1-3	Right Leg	5/6	Damage Modifier	+1d2
CON	3D6+3	14	4-6	Left Leg	5/6	Magic Points	7
SIZ	2D6+6	13	7-9	Abdomen	5/7	Movement	8m
INT	2D6	7	10-12	Chest	5/8	Strike Rank	+11 (+4 in armour)
POW	2D6	7	13-15	Right Arm	5/5		
DEX	3D6+3	14	16-18	Left Arm	5/5		
CHA	3D6	11	19-20	Head	5/6		

*Armour:* Nightfolk Chain, 5 points

*Traits:* Dark Sight, Nightfolk.

*Notable Skills:* Athletics 60%, Perception 40%, Resilience 60%

### WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Poleaxe	L	L	70%	1D8+2	6/10

# NIGHTFOLK PRIEST

	Dice	Avg	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP	Combat Actions	3
STR	2D6	7	1-3	Right Leg	-/4	Damage Modifier	-1d2
CON	2D6	7	4-6	Left Leg	-/4	Magic Points	17
SIZ	2D6+6	11	7-9	Abdomen	-/5	Movement	8m,
INT	4D6+6	19	10-12	Chest	-/6	Strike Rank	+13
POW	5D6	17	13-15	Right Arm	-/3		
DEX	2D6	7	16-18	Left Arm	-/3		
CHA	2D6	7	19-20	Head	-/4		

*Armour:* None

*Traits:* Dark Sight, Nightfolk.

*Spells:* Curse (POW), Diminish (SIZ), Enhance (SIZ), Form/Set (Stone), Glow, Neutralise Magic, Spirit Resistance, Wrack

*Notable Skills:* Influence 50%, Lore (Occult) 40%, Manipulation 50%, Sorcery (Nightfolk) 60%



## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Dagger	S	S	40%	1D4+1	4/8

# Werewolves

Those who bear the curse of the werewolf are doomed indeed, for when the full moon rises, they are cursed to become ravening monsters and feast upon those they hold dear. Werewolves are possessed by lesser demonic spirits. A Christian baptism protects the soul from being displaced in this fashion but pagans, heretics and those who have been excommunicated are vulnerable to possession. Not every pagan or excommunicant is a werewolf but exposure to the taint heightens the risk of possession. A man who wears a wolfskin belt, or drinks water from the footprint of a wolf, or who sleeps outdoors in the full moon – he invites the wolfspirits into his body by his very actions.

The demon that inhabits the werewolf cannot control the victim wholly but it grants inhuman strength and speed coupled with intense hunger and fierce emotions. Werewolves can become giant wolves or wolfmen depending on the inhabiting demon. Werewolves can also spread their curse by biting and the bite of the wolf can even infect good Christian folk.

Werewolves *must* change at the full moon. On other nights, they may change voluntarily. Only the strongest werewolves can change during the day. Werewolves can only be injured by silver weapons.

## Lycanthropy

Lycanthropy is controlled by the Shapechange (CON+POW) skill. A character with Lycanthropy must make a Shapechange test to change his form. Shapechange attempts have a +25% bonus at night and a +100% bonus on nights of the full moon. Lycanthropes have fierce, animalistic urges. A werewolf must make a Persistence test to avoid preying on weaker creatures or to resist gorging on flesh. Persistence tests suffer a -25% penalty at night and a -100% penalty on nights of the full moon.

## Werewolf Bite

A character bitten by a werewolf is infected with lycanthropy. (Characters with a Sin Rating of 100% or more may also be vulnerable to lycanthropy.) A bitten character must make a Resilience test after the fight to see if he has become infected. If he is infected, he will automatically change at the next full moon unless he is cured.

## Curing Lycanthropy

A character who has not yet undergone the change can be cured by taking wolfsbane. One who is already a werewolf can be cured through exorcism. The spirit has a Persistence score equal to the character's Shapechange total.

## On the Trail of Werewolves

- Inflicting lycanthropy on a player is a great way to challenge someone who has slipped from the path of faith.
- Werewolves are also a way to force hard choices on the players. Lycanthropes can be utterly innocent during the day and murderous killing machines by night.

**Traits:** Formidable Natural Weapons

**Damage Immunity:** In human form, werewolves take minimum damage from non-silver weapons. In wolf form, werewolves take no damage from non-silver weapons.

**Diseased:** Anyone bitten by a werewolf may contract lycanthropy.

**Shapechanger:** Characteristics before the slash are for the werewolf in human form; those after the slash are the modifiers for wolf form.

# WEREWOLVES

	Dice	Avg
STR	3D6/+12	11/23
CON	3D6/+6	11/17
SIZ	2D6+6/+3	13/16
INT	2D6+6/-6	13/7
POW	3D6/+0	11/11
DEX	3D6/+0	11/11
CHA	3D6/-6	11/5

1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/5 / 2/7
4-6	Left Leg	-/5 / 2/7
7-9	Abdomen	-/6 / 2/8
10-12	Chest	-/7 / 2/9
13-15	Right Arm	-/4 / 2/6
16-18	Left Arm	-/4 / 2/6
19-20	Head	-/5 / 2/7

Combat Actions	2/2
Damage Modifier	+0/+1D6
Magic Points	11
Movement	8m/12m
Strike Rank	+12/+9

*Armour:* Fur, 2 points

*Traits:* Diseased, Damage Immunity (Silver), Formidable Natural Weapons

*Notable Skills:* Athletics 30%/70%, Brawn 40%/80%, Perception 25%/50%, Survival 40%/60%, Track 30%/80%



## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Claw	L	M	80%	1D6	As per limb
Bite	M	S	60%	1D10	As per head

# Woodwise

The woodwise are the old inhabitants of Europe. They were here before our ancestors' ancestors settled here. They are the Pre-Adamites, who were created by God before He made man in His own image. Consider them a rough draft for mankind.

The woodwise are human-like in appearance but bigger, uglier and stronger than ordinary folk. They are generally a kindly race but the growth of the human population means they have fewer hunting grounds, and the woodwise are fierce hunters and warriors when hungry. The savage brutes sometimes attack human travellers or settlements but most have retreated north to the frozen wastes or taken refuge in inaccessible mountains.

They are usually pagan but a few have the wit and reason to convert to Christianity. There are small communities of Woodwise in the Alps who were converted by Italian monks. Despite this conversion, the Order has declared the Woodwise to be contrary to the Divine Path and guardian priests are to eradicate the monsters wherever they are encountered.

## On the Trail of Woodwise

- A community of Woodwise has been located by the Order, and the players are sent to purge, them. It sounds like an easy task, but when the players find the community, they are warmly welcomed and begin to notice crucifixes and other Christian paraphernalia. Will they follow through with the Order's command or find a more humane solution?

	Dice	Avg	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP	Combat Actions	2
STR	3D6+3	14	1-3	Right Leg	1/6	Damage Modifier	+1d2
CON	3D6+3	14	4-6	Left Leg	1/6	Magic Points	11
SIZ	3D6+3	14	7-9	Abdomen	1/7	Movement	8m
INT	2D6	7	10-12	Chest	1/8	Strike Rank	+9 (+7 in armour)
POW	3D6	11	13-15	Right Arm	1/5		
DEX	3D6	11	16-18	Left Arm	1/5		
CHA	3D6	11	19-20	Head	1/6		

Armour: Furs, 1 Points

Traits: None

Notable Skills: Athletics 60%, Brawn 70%, Insight 40%, Stealth 60%, Survival 60%, Track 40%, Unarmed 60%

## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Stone Spear	M	L	50%	1D8+1	3/5

# Worm-Men

Worm-men are a rare horror. They are born from the bodies of sorcerers and witches – if the body of a sorcerer is buried instead of being properly burned, it is gnawed by worms. The worms grow fat on the corpse and absorb something of the wizard’s blighted soul and vile sorcery.

The shambling monsters lack the intellect of the sorcerer who spawned them but they remember some of his spells and can be a dangerous foe. Despite this, the Order commands its Guardian priests not to destroy Worm-Men out of hand. Instead, one or more worms must be captured and placed in glass jars before the main colony is incinerated. These worms are to be brought back to the monastery, so the spirit of the sorcerer can be questioned and his lore preserved for future reference.

## On the Trail of Worm–Men

- A worm-man is a way to bring back a defeated sorcerer for a second round.
- Players who take Brazen Heads may occasionally hear alarming slithering noises from inside the brass armature...

**Squishy:** Worm-Men take no damage from weapons that can Impale and take minimum damage from all other attacks.

**Fast Healing:** Worm-Men regenerate one Hit Point per round to all locations.

**Engulf:** If a Worm-Man successfully grabs a foe, it can use a Combat Action to engulf that foe. The worms swarm over the victim, inflicting 1D4 per round to every location. Armour is no defence against an engulf attack. The Worm-Man can do nothing else while engulfing a foe. The only way to stop an engulf attack is to kill the Worm-Man or somehow escape the swarm, say by diving underwater or using fire to drive the worms back.

	Dice	Avg	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP	Combat Actions	2
STR	3D6	11	1–3	Right Leg	–/4	Damage Modifier	+0
CON	3D6	11	4–6	Left Leg	–/4	Magic Points	14
SIZ	2D6+6	13	7–9	Abdomen	–/5	Movement	6m
INT	2D6	7	10–12	Chest	–/6	Strike Rank	+7
POW	4D6	14	13–15	Right Arm	–/3		
DEX	2D6	7	16–18	Left Arm	–/3		
CHA	1D6	3	19–20	Head	–/4		

*Armour:* None

*Traits:* Squishy, Fast Healing, Engulf

*Spells:* Curse (INT), Dominate (Human), Palsy, Tap (CON)

*Notable Skills:* Disguise 40%, Manipulation 30%, Persistence 90%, Resilience 70%, Sorcery 60%, Unarmed 40%

## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Grab	M	S	30%	1D3	As per arm
Engulf		T	100%	Special	Special

# Making Monsters

Lesser foes can be defeated through force of arms alone – a guardian priest can cleave through a horde of zombies or defeat a band of cultists with nothing more than a good sword, years of intense training and a pocket full of anachronistic explosives and chemical weapons. Monsters are an entirely different proposition. To slay a monster requires that the guardian priests first learn their foe's strengths and weaknesses, that they *understand* the monster before they defeat it.

Without taking such preparations, the characters should have no chance of defeating a monster.

## Concept

The first step is coming up with a concept for the monster. Horrors do not exist in isolation – they affect those around them. Even an ancient tentacled monster that lives at the bottom of a well and has not emerged for 100 years should be at the heart of a web of intrigue and mystery. Who built the well? Who knows about the monster? What happens to those who drink from the well?

The monster should reflect or connect to the characters in some fashion. A guardian priest who is defined by his faith in the goodness of God should be challenged by a monster that causes incredible suffering and woe – how can a loving God permit such a thing to exist? The monster might even engage the player in theological debate, arguing that God is a lie and suffering is all that exists in a godless universe. A player who fears that the Order is corrupt and controlling might battle a monster that dominates its minions, turning them into slaves who act against their nature. The monster comes to symbolise the dark side of the Order in the game and slaying the monster should require the player either embrace or reject the Order's ways – use the threat of the monster to force the player to a moral crisis.

Often, the concept of the monster will be linked to its traits. Traits are unique powers possessed to the monster that the characters must learn to overcome. Think of ways that the players can learn about these traits – if a dragon was defeated decades ago by a heroic knight, then the tale of that knight might contain a vital clue about the dragon's weak spot. The players might learn of traits by battling the monster; they do not have a chance of killing the beast in their first encounter with it but if they survive, they can put what they learned to good use *next* time.

## Characteristics

Monsters have Characteristics that are many times greater than those of mortals. On average, a monster should have at least 40D6 to split among its characteristics and more powerful beasts can have even more.

**Seasoned-Challenge Monsters:** 30–40D6

**Veteran-Challenge Monsters:** 40–50D6

**Master-Challenge Monsters:** 50–60D6

**Hero-Challenge Monsters:** 70+ D6

## Armour

Monsters have at least 3 points of armour in every location; some Traits give even more armour or protection. Monsters with exceptional armour should have a weakness that the players can exploit to get past the armour.

## Attacks and Damage

A lone monster needs to be able to take on a whole group of adventures at once. Combat Actions are vitally important in *Legend* combat and here the greater number of players gives them a huge advantage. If the monster has only three Combat Actions and is facing five players, each of which



have two or three actions, then the players will attack the monster three times more than it gets to attack them. Either give the monster some dedicated parries and/ or secondary attacks, or else the movement abilities to avoid being pinned down and attacked by all of the players.

## Monster Traits

Each of these traits gives the monster a powerful ability but also a drawback that not only overcomes this ability but also severely weakens the monster. Most traits also list suggested weaknesses – choose one of these for the trait. If a creature has multiple traits, it does not need to have a corresponding number of drawbacks, although obviously the fewer weaknesses it has, the stronger the creature.

**Armoured Hide:** The monster's hide is thicker and stronger than plate armour and can withstand any attack. The monster has an AP of 6 or more. Weaknesses can include the drawbacks *Conditional Defence* or *Weak Spot*.

**Burst of Speed:** The monster is capable of charging suddenly and with great force. It doubles its movement and doubles the benefits from charging (increasing its damage modifier by two steps if bipedal and four steps if many-legged). Remember that setting a spear against a charge uses the *attacker's* damage bonus. Setting a spear against a charge using this trait automatically Impales if the attack was successful.

**Causes Fear:** The monster is terrifying beyond belief. Players who encounter the beast must make a Persistence test to avoid fleeing in terror; they may resist this unnatural fear by spending a Hero Point.

**Death Spasm:** When the creature takes a Major Wound, it enters a death spasm. In this state, it gains an extra Combat Action and automatically succeeds at any Resilience or Persistence tests. After 2d6 rounds, the creature dies from its wounds.

**Elusive:** The creature is incredibly agile, gaining a +100% bonus to Evade and vastly increasing its movement and Strike Rank. It moves swifter than the eye can see, unless characters are warned by a *Telltale*. Alternatively, this ability is *Exhausting*.

**Fiery Breath:** The monster can Breathe Flame, as the trait in *Monsters of Legend*, page 3. Alternatively, the creature can breathe as often as it wishes but suffers from the *Overextends* or *Protective Measures* drawback.

**Fast Healing:** The monster heals with incredible swiftness, regenerating one or more Hit Points per round. Only an attack from the creature's *Vulnerability* damages it permanently. Alternatively, it has a *Weak Spot* that does not regenerate.

**Invulnerable:** The creature cannot be damaged by any means – it is utterly immune to all damage. Perhaps it phases out of this reality, or is simply indestructible. Weaknesses can include the *Exhausting* or *Vulnerability* drawbacks.

**Invisible:** The monster cannot be seen. The only way to defeat it is to learn its *Telltale* or else the invisibility is part of a *Conditional Defence*.

**Poison:** The monster has a powerful venomous attack. Anyone bitten or stung by the monster falls victim to the poison. If the players obtain a sample of the poison, they can use *Medicine* or *Lore* (Alchemy) to develop or identify a cure.

**Territorial:** The creature is more powerful within its own domain. While within its lair or territory, the creature gains a bonus to all its attacks and defences. The players will have to *Lure* it out.

**Sorcery:** The monster is capable of casting sorcery spells. It may need a grimoire, in which case it is *protective* of its book of magic.

**Demonic:** The monster is a demon, an evil spirit from beyond. Demons cannot normally exist in the mortal plane – they must be summoned by a sorcerer or enter through a portal from Hell. To endure in this reality, the demon must either remain in a summoning circle or be anchored. Without a circle or anchor, the demon will be banished back to Hell after a number of rounds equal to its POW. An anchor can be a physical object or a creature. If anchored to a creature, the demon normally possesses the creature. Destroying the anchor is the best way to banish a demon. A Hoffman device can be used to locate anchors.

**Possession:** The monster can possess victims using the Discorporate skill or covert possession. See the free to download PDF, *Legend: Spirit Magic*, page 9.

**Worshippers:** The monster has a number of worshippers, from whom it can draw power. The monster can take Magic Points from its followers on a two-for-one exchange rate. The worshippers must be actively and wilfully venerating the monster for it to draw on their psychic reserves.

## Drawbacks

**Conditional:** The monster's ability is not always active – the creature must do something to activate it. It might need to perform a magical ritual, drink from a sacred pool, feed, visit its lair or perhaps the power only functions in certain places. An undead horror might be invisible only in shadows; a forest monster could regenerate only within the woodland.

**Exhausting:** The monster can only maintain its power for a limited time. Each time the monster uses its ability in combat, it must make a Resilience test or gain a level of Fatigue. The characters can outlast the monster by exhausting it.

**Telltale:** There is a telltale sign heralding the monster's approach. This telltale is subtle – a smell of sulphur, a drop in temperature, a feeling of nausea – but it is enough to give the players warning of the monster's approach.

**Weak Spot:** The creature has a weak spot. Hitting this location wounds the monster. Attacks randomly hit the weak spot on a roll of a natural 20; players may also use the Choose Location combat manoeuvre to strike it.

**Vulnerability:** The creature is vulnerable to a particular form of attack such as fire, acid, consecrated weapons or magic.

**Protective Measures:** The players can develop a specific counter to the creature's attacks or defences. They can use their skills to develop an antidote to a poison, a shield to block fiery breath, or a spiked suit of armour to counter a constrict attack.

**Vulnerable to Self:** The creature is vulnerable to its own special attacks. The players need to trick the monster into attacking itself.

**Unholy:** The monster is wounded by true faith. It must make a Persistence test to enter hallowed ground and takes 1d4 points of damage if it comes into contact with holy items or relics.

**Manifestation of Sin:** The monster is the incarnation of a specific sin, such as greed or wrath. By curing the sin, the players can weaken or banish the monster.

**Lure:** The monster is especially drawn to a specific type of prey and can be lured into a trap using this prey as bait.

**Protector:** The monster is compelled to protect some object or place; the players can use this compulsion against the monster.

**Vulnerable Wings (Flyers Only):** The monster is winged and its wing membranes are soft targets compared to the rest of its body. The wings do not share the benefit of any defensive traits.

## Creating New Weapons

Players can tinker with existing weapons to make new ones, or design weapons to deal with specific foes. For example, players battling a vampire might want to make a heavier crossbow that fires stakes instead of simple bolts, or an alchemical compound that burns bright as sunlight. Making a new weapon for a specific purpose requires the players have discovered a monster's weakness. They may then use the appropriate skill to make the new weapon:

Weapon Type	Main Skill	Augmented With
Alchemical	Lore (Alchemy)	Lore (Occult), Survival
Mechanical	Mechanisms	Craft, Engineering
Relics	Divine Fervour	Lore (Occult)

## Unique Monsters

The following monsters are all unique, specific to a region and suitable to build an entire adventure around. All have powers and weaknesses that the players will have to learn and understand if they are to become triumphant.

### Beast of Gubbio

*'Brother wolf, thou hast done much evil in this land, destroying and killing the creatures of God without his permission; yea, not animals only hast thou destroyed but thou hast even dared to devour men, made after the image of God; for which thing thou art worthy of being hanged like a robber and a murderer. All men cry out against thee, the dogs pursue thee and all the inhabitants of this city are thy enemies.'*

The monstrous wolf known as the Beast of Gubbio terrorises the Italian town of the same name. The beast began by attacking livestock but now preys on humans. The beast has grown so large and powerful that it no longer needs stalk its prey – it sits outside the gates of the town, waiting for meat to come to it. Normal weapons cannot wound the beast, so it has grown lazy but it is still a deadly and crafty foe when pressed.

The Beast first gained its taste for human meat by eating the bodies of the dead; Gubbio is regularly involved in the wars of the city-states of Northern Italy and the Beast scavenged meat from the battlefield. It is the incarnation of the city's greed and belligerence.

**Invulnerability:** The Beast can only be injured by consecrated weapons. Everyone in the town knows about the Beast's invulnerability but no-one knows that it is vulnerable to holy blades. One brave knight did ask for the bishop to bless his blade but the bishop of Gubbio is corrupt and faithless so his blessing of the weapon did nothing and the knight was eaten by the wolf. If the players learn of this story and observe the bishop, they can work out that consecrated weapons have not been used against the Beast.

**Corpse Cunning:** The Beast of Gubbio feeds on the dead and learns their secrets. It uses this ability to avoid ambushes and to stalk the most succulent prey. The Beast knows anything that any of its victims knows. The players can use this power to their advantage – if they can evoke the memories of the victims, they can temporarily disorientate the wolf as the ghosts of the dead clamour in its mind. Evoking the memories takes roleplaying – say, by luring the wolf to the house of its most recent kill.

## BEAST OF GUBBIO

<b>STR</b>	35	<b>1D20</b>	<b>Hit Location</b>	<b>AP/HP</b>	<i>Combat Actions</i>	2
<b>CON</b>	30	1-3	Right Hind Leg	4/12	<i>Damage Modifier</i>	+2D6
<b>SIZ</b>	30	4-6	Left Hind Leg	4/12	<i>Magic Points</i>	15
<b>INT</b>	7	7-9	Abdomen	4/13	<i>Movement</i>	12m
<b>POW</b>	15	10-12	Chest	4/14	<i>Strike Rank</i>	+11
<b>DEX</b>	15	13-15	Right Fore Leg	4/12		
<b>CHA</b>	15	16-18	Left Fore Leg	4/12		
		19-20	Head	4/12		

*Armour:* Thick Fur (4 points)

*Traits:* Invulnerability, Corpse-Cunning, Formidable Natural Weapons

*Notable Skills:* Athletics 80%, Brawn 90%, Lore (Regional) 120%, Perception 40%, Persistence 60%, Resilience 80%, Survival 60%, Tracking 100%



### WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Claw	L	M	120%	1D6	As per limb
Bite	L	S	80%	1D12	As per head

# Naberius, Demon of Wise Counsel

*'The Twenty-fourth Spirit is Naberius. He is a most valiant Marquis and showeth in the form of a Black Crane, fluttering about the Circle and when he speaketh it is with a hoarse voice. He maketh men cunning in all Arts and Sciences but especially in the Art of Rhetoric. He restoreth lost Dignities and Honours. He governeth 19 Legions of Spirits.'*

The demon Naberius is known to many diabolists, for he is known as the Demon of Wise Counsel. The formula for summoning Naberius is well known and the Order has put the devil down many times. Naberius has developed quite a grudge against the Order after repeated defeats at the hands of Guardian priests and now makes it a point to whisper warnings about holy assassins to those who summon him.

His soubriquet is well earned – Naberius is wise indeed and can instruct sorcerers in various forms of lore. He can give supernatural powers of influence, making those he blesses supernaturally eloquent and seductive. Most of those who summon Naberius do so because they have been disgraced or scorned and his gift will allow them to reclaim their place in society. This gift inevitably comes with a price – Naberius can speak through the lips of those who carry his blessing, allowing him to use them as channels for his sorcery.

Naberius manifests in the form of a black crane of prodigious size and holds this form even in combat. He can shrink down to the size of a normal crane and often disguises himself as an ordinary creature to avoid his enemies.

**Demonic:** Naberius must be summoned by a sorcerer and then anchor itself to this world. The demon prefers to anchor itself to common, unobtrusive items such as eggs.

**Unholy:** Naberius must make a Persistence test to enter hallowed ground and takes 1d4 points of damage if it comes into contact with holy items or relics.

**Naberius' Blessing:** Naberius' blessing of rhetoric gives a +100% bonus to Influence and Oratory tests. The blessing costs Naberius one point of POW for as long as it lasts. While the blessing is in place, Naberius can cast sorcery spells through the blessed individual, using the blessed character's Magic Points to fuel them. The blessing counts as a Magnitude 5 spell and can be dispelled by suitable countermagic. Those who are blessed by Naberius become inhumanly charismatic and charming. They speak with a throaty whisper but their words are so eloquent and insightful that one cannot help but be seduced. The demon can speak through the blessed without the blessed character noticing; it sometimes uses this ability to manipulate events.

**Naberius' Touchstone:** Naberius can vomit up a piece of slimy rock that reveals secrets. Creating the touchstone costs the demon one POW, which is lost until he swallows the stone once more. Anyone holding the touchstone gains a +50% bonus to Perception and Insight tests. The stone can also be used to determine the purity of precious metals.

**Sorcery:** The demon is an adept user of magic.

**Beak Skewer:** In combat, Naberius can use a beak skewer special attack. A successful beak skewer always has the Impale and Bypass Armour manoeuvres, regardless of the defence roll.

**Vulnerable:** Any hunter knows the long legs of the crane are vulnerable to a bolas attack. Trapping the crane eliminates Naberius' ability to fly.

# NABERIUS

STR	22	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
CON	15	1-3	Right Leg	6/8
SIZ	21	4-6	Left Leg	6/8
INT	26	7-9	Abdomen	6/9
POW	45	10-12	Chest	6/10
DEX	20	13-15	Right Wing	6/7
CHA	44	16-18	Left Wing	6/7
		19-20	Head	6/9

Combat Actions	4
Damage Modifier	+1d8
Magic Points	45
Movement	Walk 8m, Fly 20m
Strike Rank	+23

*Armour:* Demon Feathers (6 points)

*Traits:* Demonic, Unholy, Naberius' Blessing, Naberius' Touchstone, Sorcery, Beak Skewer, Vulnerability (bolas), Formidable Natural Weapons

*Spells:* Blight, Blast, Damage Resistance, Magic Resistance, Reduce (SIZ), Enhance (CHA), Mystic Vision, Intuition

*Notable Skills:* Acrobatics 70%, Discorporate 90%, Evade 50%, Influence 188%, Insight 90%, Manipulation 80%, Oratory 188%, Perception 120%, Persistence 120%, Resilience 50%, Sorcery 90%, Spiritual Combat 110%



## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Claw	L	M	80%	1D6	As per leg
Wing Buffet	L	M	60%	1D4	As per wing
Beak Skewer	L	L	50%	2D6	As per head

# Balash

The demon Balash is known to the witch cults, especially the tradition of the Lord of Shadows. It manifests as a horned giant, clad in the bones of its victims and armed with a huge cleaver. Balash is a mere baron of Hell and as such is a simple minded brute that lacks the subtlety and cunning of greater demons. It makes up for this with physical might and sheer destruction. The brute is sometimes summoned for the sexual pleasures of adventurous witches but in its passion, Balash is known to devour its mates whole. Nonetheless, the demon has sired a number of half-demon spawn.

**Demonic:** Balash must be summoned by a sorcerer and then anchor itself to this world. The demon prefers to anchor itself to a specially forged cleaver that it then uses as a weapon, so it can keep an eye on its anchor and avoid unwelcome surprises.

**Unholy:** Balash must make a Persistence test to enter hallowed ground and takes 1d4 points of damage if it comes into contact with holy items or relics.

**Causes Fear:** Characters who encounter Balash must make a Persistence test to avoid fleeing in terror; they may resist this unnatural fear by spending a Hero Point.

**Armour of Bone:** Balash's Bone Armour is virtually invulnerable but it does have two weaknesses. Firstly, Balash is compelled to add the bones of its victims to the armour. If Balash were to kill a truly holy individual or find the bones of a saint, it would add these bones to its armour, creating a weak spot with no armour protection, as the demon's essence would find no purchase in holy bones. Secondly, the bone helmet has no peripheral vision; characters who are aware of this fact gain a +50% bonus to Stealth tests made against Balash.

**Balash's Cleaver:** Balash wields a huge cleaver in combat. This weapon is immensely damaging. Balash especially delights in cleaving defenceless victims in two with the cleaver. If Balash believes it has a victim at its mercy, it uses an especially damaging chop attack. If this defenceless victim somehow evades the chop, then Balash will accidentally embed the cleaver in the ground and lose the weapon.

# BALASH

STR	35	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
CON	28	1-3	Right Leg	9/12
SIZ	28	4-6	Left Leg	9/12
INT	11	7-9	Abdomen	9/13
POW	14	10-12	Chest	9/14
DEX	11	13-15	Right Arm	9/11
CHA	7	16-18	Left Arm	9/11
		19-20	Head	9/12

Combat Actions	2
Damage Modifier	+2D6
Magic Points	14
Movement	9m
Strike Rank	+13

*Armour:* Armour of Bone (12 points)

*Traits:* Demonic, Unholy, Armour of Bone, Balash's Cleaver, Causes Fear, Formidable Natural Weapons

*Notable Skills:* Athletics 86%, Brawn 120%, Perception 50%, Persistence 58%, Resilience 76%, Spiritual Combat 50%



## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Claw	L	M	75%	1D8	As per arm
Gore	M	S	40%	2D6	As per head
Cleaver	H	VL	100%	2D8+2	8/16
Cleaver Chop	H	VL	80%	4D8+4	8/16



# Tiews, God of Justice

The gods of the Northmen and the German tribes are gone, now. The last of the pagan kings converted

to Christianity more than two centuries ago and while the cults survive in secret, their power is broken. As it is with their worshippers, so it is with the gods. This entity is a spirit that was once worshipped as a god by the pagans; it was the one-handed god of justice, the god who bound the Fenris-wolf, the god of judgement and divine punishment.

Tiews manifests as a tall man dressed in armour. He is missing his left hand but carries a shining sword in the other. His eyes are cold and hard, as unmerciful as the teeth of winter. He has the divine power of judgement – he can inflict punishment on those who have committed crimes.

Without worshippers to draw it forth, the god slumbers. A pagan cult has called Tiews forth again. This was done partially out of reverence but mainly to punish the unjust Christian lords of the area. The spirit is much diminished but still immensely dangerous – indeed, it is more perilous than it once was, for the false god has gone mad. Tiews is now a tyrant who inflicts unjust and cruel punishments on those he judges to be guilty.

**Tiews' Judgement:** Tiews' Judgement takes the form of cruel curses. A noble who mistreats his peasants in favour of hunting in the woods might be cursed with lycanthropy and be hunted as a wolf; an unfaithful man who betrays his oaths might find that one of his bones shatters every time he breaks his word. To deliver Tiews' judgement, the god must bless a runestone which must then be delivered to the target of Tiews' judgement.

The only way to break the curse is to banish Tiews, or to atone by returning the runestone to the god and swearing allegiance to him forever.

Players investigating the mystery of the pagan cult may be follow these runestones to find the spirit... or they may be targeted by the curse themselves.

**Pagan Honour:** Tiews follows the old ways of the Northmen and the barbarians. Characters with a suitable Culture skill know how to act to earn his respect. He honours strength, oath-keeping and courage, not meekness, charity or blind faith.

**Worshippers:** Tiews has a cult that worships the spirit. The more worshippers, the more power it has.

**Manifest:** Tiews is a spirit but it can manifest as a physical presence given sufficient power. It costs Tiews a number of Magic Points equal to the total of its desired STR, SIZ and CON to manifest and it costs the god 1/10<sup>th</sup> of this total each round to maintain its manifestation. Tiews always has Dexterity 15. The description of Tiews describes a 100-point manifestation.

**Tiews' Spear:** The spirit's spear is a potent magical weapon. It inflicts double normal damage and can magically return to the god after being thrown.

# TIEWS

STR	30	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
CON	30	1-3	Right Leg	4/14
SIZ	40	4-6	Left Leg	4/14
INT	12	7-9	Abdomen	4/15
POW	30	10-12	Chest	4/16
DEX	15	13-15	Right Arm	4/13
CHA	15	16-18	Left Arm	4/13
		19-20	Head	4/14

Combat Actions	3
Damage Modifier	+2D6
Magic Points	30
Movement	8m
Strike Rank	+14

*Armour:* Spiritual Armour (4 points)

*Traits:* Spirit, Worshipped, Manifest, Tiews' Judgement, Tiews' Spear

*Notable Skills:* Insight 100%, Lore (Law) 60%, Lore (Pagan Theology) 150%, Oratory 60%, Pact (Self) 100%



## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Spear	L	VL	100%	2D8+2	8/10

# The Shade of Archbishop Adalberon

As far as anyone knows, Archbishop Adalberon was a good and holy man. He was the archbishop of the see of Reims in Northern France and chancellor to the last of the Carolingian kings, Lothair and his son Louis V. After Lothair V's death in 987, Adalberon was the most influential voice that cried out for the crown to pass to Hugh Capet, beginning the Capetian dynasty. Adalberon passed on in the year 989.

The Order's records tell a different tale. Adalberon was a friend and patron of the monk Gerbert d'Aurillac, later Pope Sylvester II. Gerbert was a member of the Order, attached to the preceptory of Reims which was then disguised as part of the cathedral school there. Gerbert conspired with Adalberon to put Hugh Capet on the throne, as Capet was another ally of the Order.

Towards the end of his life, Adalberon grew paranoid and fearful of his ally Gerbert and began to worry the guardian priest was using sorcery to manipulate him. There was no truth to this allegation, just the senile delusions of an old man but Adalberon foolishly stole a grimoire of black magic from the priory to cast a defensive spell upon himself. He succeeded in calling forth dark forces from beyond and it was only with great fortune and determination that the guardian priests of Reims were able to put down this outbreak of demonic evil. Gerbert himself poisoned the archbishop with a slow-acting venom, so that his friend's death would seem natural.

Now, 200 years later, the damned Archbishop has escaped from Hell and roams the city of Reims once more. The ghost knows as much about the Order as any living soul and was a powerful sorcerer in life. What the ghost wants is a mystery that must be solved!

**Power Source:** The ghost of the archbishop is tied to the great cathedral of Notre-Dame de Reims, which stands on the very place where Clovis was crowned the first king of France. The cathedral has traditionally been the seat of the Frankish kings. Now, Adalberon draws spiritual strength from the very stones and uses the vestiges of his office to corrupt this holy place into the service of Hell.

**Sorcery:** Although Adalberon came late to sorcery in life, he studied under the arch-mages of Hell in death. The ghost is an adept sorcerer. His grimoire is clutched in the bony arms of his corpse, which is interred in the cathedral crypt.

**Possessor:** Adalberon is anchored to the cathedral itself, so the spirit does not *need* to possess anyone. Nonetheless, it has the power to do so.

**Protector:** Adalberon has appeared to the current Archbishop, Guillaume de Blois and convinced him that the ghost is actually a holy spirit sent from Heaven to instruct and help. De Blois is one of the most powerful nobles in all of France and is the uncle of King Philip Augustus, who he crowned in Reims in 1179. The current archbishop is key to Adalberon's plans.

# ADALBERON

STR	—	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
CON	—	1-3	—	—
SIZ	10	4-6	—	—
INT	30	7-9	—	—
POW	40	10-12	—	—
DEX	—	13-15	—	—
CHA	25	16-18	—	—
		19-20	—	—

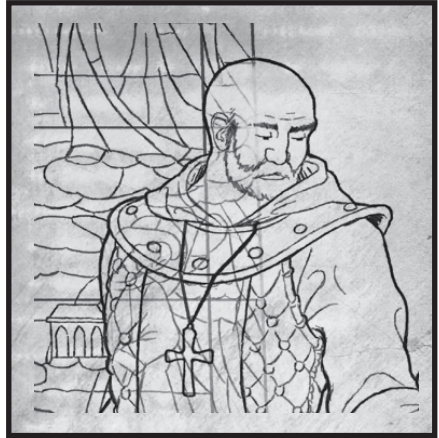
Combat Actions	6
Damage Modifier	+2D8
Magic Points	40
Movement	12m
Strike Rank	+28

*Armour:* None

*Traits:* Spirit, Sorcery, Protector, Possession

*Sorcery:* Many spells, including Curse (INT), Enhance (POW), Intuition, Magic Resistance, Phantom (Sense), Tap (POW), Wrack

*Notable Skills:* Courtesy 80%, Discorporate 70%, Influence 110%, Insight 120%, Lore (Christian Theology) 90%, Manipulation 70%, Persistence 100%, Sorcery (Black Grimoire) 120%, Spiritual Combat 130%



# The Ogre Heretic

Not all things that walk the Earth were made by God. Man may have been shaped from clay by the divine hand but this monster was born in a vat in some sorcerer's tower. Perhaps, though, the Ogre shares something of man's intellect, or maybe the creature was not created but was once a human who was then warped into his current horrific form. The Ogre Heretic stands twice the height of a man and is muscled like an ox. His face is as ugly as sin, with three gleaming eyes and yellowed fangs sharp as daggers. His skin is greenish-grey and pock-marked. Despite this ghastly appearance, he has learned to disguise himself enough to pass for a man – a huge, grotesque man – on a dark night. If asked for a name, he calls himself Isaac Laquedem.

The Heretic remembers little of his past. He knows he was created by magic but his earliest memories are a confusing whirl of images: fire, screaming, black-robed monks, explosions, burning books and a woman being cut down by assassins. That was more than a century ago; today, he travels Europe like some overgrown Wandering Jew, searching for meaning and purpose to his life. He wishes to know whether or not he has an immortal soul and if so, what is its nature? Is he eternally damned, or does Christ's sacrifice redeem him too? Or is he not human at all and so untouched by the Original Sin of Adam?

In his search for these answers, the Ogre Heretic has taken up with dozens of heretical cults and preachers. He has listened to the Free Spirits and toiled alongside those who serve the Cathar *perfecti*; he has worshipped pagan spirits and lost gods; he has travelled to the east and into Africa; he has been baptised with water and chrism and blood and fire... and through it all, he has found nothing to stir his black and malformed heart or – if he has one – his soul.

The Ogre Heretic has encountered the Order a dozen times in the last century. In each encounter, the guardian priests succeeded in destroying the cult but the Heretic escaped, usually after killing one or more of the guardian priests attacking him. He has grown to loathe the Order, while the Masters debate capturing the Heretic and turning him over to the Master of Chains.

**Fast Healing:** The Ogre Heretic heals one point of damage in all locations each round, with the exception of fire or acid damage, which heals at normal human rates. By spending a Magic Point, it can heal up to three points in one location in a round.

**Third Eye:** The Ogre Heretic's third eye has supernatural powers. The creature can see magical energies and spirits, as per a *Mystic Vision* spell. The Heretic can also project a beam of force through its eye. Anything struck by this beam bursts into flame – and the beam can even affect spirits. Firing the eyebeam costs the Heretic one Magic Point; anything struck by the beam must Evade or take 1d6 fire damage, which ignores armour. The Third Eye can be attacked separately to the rest.

# THE OGRE HERETIC

<b>STR</b>	35	<b>1D20</b>	<b>Hit Location</b>	<b>AP/HP</b>	<b>Combat Actions</b>	3
<b>CON</b>	30	1-2	Right Leg	2/11	<b>Damage Modifier</b>	+1D10
<b>SIZ</b>	30	3-4	Left Leg	2/11	<b>Magic Points</b>	16
<b>INT</b>	7	5-8	Abdomen	5/12	<b>Movement</b>	8m
<b>POW</b>	15	9-13	Chest	5/13	<b>Strike Rank</b>	+12 (+7 in armor)
<b>DEX</b>	15	14-15	Right Arm	5/10		
<b>CHA</b>	15	16-17	Left Arm	2/10		
		18-19	Head	2/11		
		20	Third Eye	-/6		

*Armour:* Mismatched Chain & Leather

*Traits:* Fast Healing, Third Eye

*Notable Skills:* Athletics 90%, Brawn 120%, Disguise 70%, Evade 40%, Insight 50%, Lore (Christian Theology) 120%, Perception 60%, Persistence 70%, Resilience 90%, Survival 90%



## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Claw	M	M	68%	1D6	As per arm
Mace	VL	L	98%	1D12	6/12
Eyebeam	—	—	66%	1D6	—

# The Linton Worm

A ferocious beast that dwells in a hillside in Roxburghshire in England, the Worm emerges from its lair to feed on the unlucky and the unwary. According to the tales, it first came forth to devour those who did not attend church but now it attacks indiscriminately. The creature moves with great swiftness despite its size and has dispatched a dozen knights who tried to slay it. With each day, the worm grows longer and stronger and unless it is stopped it will surely wrap itself around the whole world and devour all things. The worm is not a dragon – it cannot fly or breathe flame. It is an enormous blind earthworm of prodigious strength and size. Its flesh is ruddy-brown like brick, flecked with shards of a glittering black stone. Despite its great length, the worm's body is comparatively narrow, making its lair very hard to find – any large rabbit-hole or spring could be the entrance to the worm's lair.

**Hidden Lair:** The worm's lair is extremely hard to find, requiring a Very Hard (-60%) Track or Lore (Regional) test to find.

**Slime Trail:** The worm leaves a trail of slime behind it. This slime quickly evaporates but a character gifted in alchemy could create a compound that reveals the traces left by the worm, allowing the players to follow the worm.

**Earth Sense:** The worm has no eyes; it sees by sensing vibrations in the ground. Therefore, the worm prefers to attack dangerous foes at night, when it has the advantage. A flying or exceedingly soft-footed player can sneak up on the worm, as such movement would not create tremors.

**Devour Whole:** The worm prefers to swallow its prey whole. The worm can swallow any creature with a SIZ of 40 or less whole. Swallowed creatures suffer a -80% penalty to all actions and must succeed at three Brawn tests in a row to escape the worm's gullet. Swallowed creatures take 1d3 points of damage to all locations for each round they spend within the worm. If the worm encounters a creature with a SIZ of more than 40, it pauses for one round, then uses its Constrict ability.

**Constrict:** The worm can also wrap itself around a foe and squeeze the life out of them. If it successfully grapples the victim, he must make an opposed Brawn test against the worm's Constrict at the start of each round to avoid taking the listed damage. A player that is constricted cannot do anything else other than try to escape the constriction with a Brawn, Unarmed Combat or Athletics test.

**Death Spasm:** If the worm is slain, it enters into a death spasm, making 1d6 tail lash attacks at anyone within a number of metres equal to the worm's SIZ. Anyone within a number of metres equal to half the worm's SIZ may be constricted instead.

# THE LINTON WORM

STR	40	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
CON	40	1-3	Tail	4/24
SIZ	80	4-6	1 <sup>st</sup> Segment	4/24
INT	3	7-9	2 <sup>nd</sup> Segment	4/24
POW	15	10-12	3 <sup>rd</sup> Segment	4/24
DEX	15	13-15	4 <sup>th</sup> Segment	4/24
CHA	3	16-18	5 <sup>th</sup> Segment	4/24
		19-20	Head	4/24

Combat Actions	2
Damage Modifier	+3D10
Magic Points	15
Movement	12m
Strike Rank	+9

*Armour:* Wormhide (4 points)

*Traits:* Hidden Lair, Devour Whole, Slime Trail, Constrict, Death Spasm, Earth Sense, Formidable Natural Weapons

*Notable Skills:* Brawn 200%, Perception 60%, Persistence 40%, Resilience 100%



## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Bite	L	L	85%	1D8	As per Head
Tail Lash	L	VL	75%	1D4	As per tail
Devour Whole	—	—	55%	Special	—
Constrict	—	—	55%	0	—



Verse 2.14

# SECRETS OF THE ORDER

*The Ascerdos Custos Trainiogn Guide is written according to what the Order wishes its guardian priests to believe. Parts are accurate; parts are self-deluded, and still other parts are deliberate lies. The Order is far from the heroic defender of the faith its members believe it to be and over the course of a Deus Vult campaign, the players may uncover some of the secrets hidden in this chapter...*



The name of this setting is *Deus Vult*, which translates as *God Wills It!* It is a shout of acclamation and devotion, the cry of the people in response to Pope Urban II's call for the First Crusade. The unwritten exclamation point after the title makes it a strong, confident affirmation of faith. The Order believes itself to be the Instrument of God and that nothing they do can be in error.

Over the course of a campaign, the Games Master should slowly give cause to make the players question the Order and its motives. Are they sure they are truly serving the will of God? Can they really trust the Order?

## Doom of the Order?

Historically, several of the locations chosen as secret priories of the Order were attacked in the closing years of the 12<sup>th</sup> and the early part of the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. In 1193, the Order's fortress at St. Michael's Mount was captured. In 1214, the Mont St. Michel itself was besieged and captured by the forces of King Philippe Augustus of France. The Abbey of Fontfroide was associated with the Inquisition during the Albigensian Crusade against the Cathars. These events may conceal an organised campaign against the Order, perhaps one orchestrated from Rome.

Did the Pope eliminate the rebellious Order? Or did the Masters vanish underground, as the Knights Templar were said to do a century later under similar attack? Or will this be the work of another enemy of the Order, like the demonic archbishop of Reims? Or some foe the players have yet to meet?

## The Prior of the Crypts

The Prior of the Crypts has a secret duty; he ensures all guardian priests are loyal to the Order. If a guardian priest is suspected of harbouring dissent or heresy, the Prior of the Crypts investigates... and if these allegations are found to be true, then another crypt is opened in the catacombs beneath the Mont St. Michel.

The Prior of the Crypts and his custodians are the Order's internal inquisition. Those they condemn are buried alive within the crypts for months while the Prior questions them about their past deeds and associations. If the traitor cooperates, he may finally be given a chance to confess his sins before being executed. Unlucky traitors are kept alive indefinitely using alchemical techniques, or implanted into Brazen Heads. The Prior of the Crypts must be vigilant and watch for traitors. It is common to plant spies among groups of guardian priests. There are hidden spy-tubes in the confessionals in the chapel at the Mont St. Michel that relay even the quietest whisper to the ears of the Prior of the Crypts.

## The Eastern Order

The loss of the Eastern Priors is a matter of much greater concern to the Masters than most guardian priests realise. The split in the Order is more than a mere political dispute triggered by the Schism between the Eastern and Western Church – the Order has always held itself above petty arguments over internal politics and the Church hierarchy. The loss of the Eastern Priors is something different – either the Eastern Masters have deliberately betrayed the Order, or they have been subverted from within. The Byzantine Priory was second only to the Mont St. Michel in power and occult lore and its loss is an incalculable blow to the Order. Worse, without the Order to put down occult outbreaks, the whole East is doubtless rife with cultists, sorcerers and Saracen spies.

Who is responsible for the destruction of the Eastern Order? In the labyrinthine intrigues of Byzantium, there are always hundreds of suspects. Could the Emperor of Byzantium have discovered the Order and removed it, fearing that they were too loyal to Rome? Byzantium is threatened by the Muslims and Turks – could assassins have found the Order? But how could either faction have

eliminated three preceptries and a priory in one swoop, without a single whisper escaping? What of the guardian priests on patrol? Where are they? And which priory will be the next to fall?

## The Nature of Evil

The Order's view of the supernatural is extremely narrow. All sorcerers must die, regardless of how they use their powers. Monsters must perish, even those who are themselves victims of some curse. Heretics must be destroyed, no matter what their beliefs. While many of the foes encountered by the Order are indeed vile and malicious, there are supernatural entities who do not deserve death.

Worse yet, the Order's commandments dictate that anyone who even glimpses the supernatural must also be killed, to preserve the Divine Path. This prohibition also applies to those who try to change society – if the Order was still active in the 1600s, Galileo may well have been found dead in an alleyway in Padua instead of publishing his work on heliocentrism. This bloody slaughter of innocents is the worst crime the Order commits and is often the first instruction a new guardian priest tries to refuse. The Order's standard protocol is for an older guardian priest to accompany a young apprentice on his first few missions, to ensure he does not falter at this bloody task. Once a guardian priest has taken an innocent life, his soul belongs to the Order forever.

## Does God Exist?

A weighty question for a humble roleplaying game, indeed! There are certainly supernatural forces working in *Deus Vult*, and the players' characters certainly believe in God, or at least start out with that belief.

However, *Deus Vult* leaves the ultimate nature of the universe up to the Games Master. There are several possibilities.

- God exists and the Bible is mostly correct; Jesus is the Son of God and the Holy Apostolic Church is His servant on Earth. Only good Christians (and maybe an especially faithful Jew) may cast Divine spells; Islam is a perversion of the true gospel and most Islamic holy men are sorcerers. The Order genuinely does have divine sanction.
- God exists but he does not favour any one of the religions of the Books. Jewish, Christian and Muslim holy men may cast spells with equal power. There is only one true God, though – pagan deities are all demons or spirits. Followers of these deities may not use Divine magic.
- There is some higher power in the universe but anyone with sufficient faith may cast Divine Spells and perhaps even call for Miracles. Even a pagan cultist could use Divine Magic. The Christian God is the most powerful of all supernatural beings but there are entities who can grant Divine Magic spells.
- There is an especially powerful and egotistical spirit who claims to be God but he is of the same order of beings as the rest of the demons and spirits. There is no universal plan or higher purpose.
- There is no God and neither Divine Magic nor Miracles have anything to do with higher powers – it comes from the faith of the practitioner alone and is really a form of psychic power.

The Church would subscribe to the first – or, in the case of well-travelled and open-minded mystics – the second. Some mystics and heretics might claim the third, fourth or fifth interpretations are correct.

## Ex Malum Bono

From evil, comes good. There is a secret Prior and a secret Priory. High in the alps of Southern France is a hidden monastery, called the Priory of St. Jerome; the master of that place is called the Prior of Chains. Here, the Order keeps its living weapons. Sometimes, a monster can be captured

instead of being destroyed; such beasts are brought in chains to the Priory and made to serve the Order. In the dungeons of the monastery the Order keeps an assortment of monsters and horrors – werewolves in chains of silver, vampires starved until they beg for even a drop of blood, possessed madmen whose spiritual powers make them useful assets and stranger things too. Here also the Order keeps those whose abilities are useful but who lack the discipline to study in the Mont St. Michel – murderers, berserkers, assassins, cursed sorcerers, diabolists, witches and the like.

The Prior trains a special order of guardian priests, called the Keepers. The Keepers are taught to keep their charges in check using a variety of methods. An untrustworthy thief might be injected with a poison and only his Keeper knows the antidote. A vampire can be compelled to serve a Keeper with sufficient Divine Fervour, a sturdy crucifix and the knowledge of where the monster's coffin is hidden.

Keepers and their charges are used only when investigation has failed and the Order needs to kill everything and everyone. Few of the monsters can discriminate. Kill them all; God will know His own.

## The Divine Path

The Order's true goal is not to fight heresy or suppress the supernatural. Both of these are incidental, compared to the perfection that is the Divine Path.

The Divine Path predates Christianity. The Order expresses it as 'God's will' but they pursued it back when they were part of the Roman Empire, and it was old even then. The plan was conceived hundreds of years before the Order was established in its current form.

A major part of the plan is *control*. The Order needs to move humanity into a state where people can be controlled and guided. The feudal order where nobles fight, peasants work and priests pray is only an approximation of this goal – the Order needs much more thorough control of all thought. Innovation must be restricted to those developments that the Order can control; change slowed; deviants and the supernatural erased.

The Order cannot accomplish such control alone; the Church is the only institution in Europe that can possibly wield such power. Does the Divine Path therefore mandate a theocracy? Can the Order hand the keys to humanity's future over to an increasingly corrupt and fractured organisation?

The ultimate goal of the Divine Path is 'the enlightenment of humanity'. What could this involve? The answer will vary in every *Deus Vult* campaign. Some possibilities:

- The Order dates back to the Tower of Babel. Thousands of years ago, the Babylonians worked with all the tribes of mankind to complete a tower that reached to Heaven, until a jealous God cursed them with a confusion of tongues and the work was forced to stop. This tale is metaphor; the 'confusion of tongues' represents the fracturing of humanity into hundreds of different nations and beliefs, which the Order is slowly undoing. And the Tower? The Tower is the combined will of humanity... a weapon so potent that God Himself fears it. Any doubt or deviation from that singular will makes the Tower useless; all of humanity must become a single glorious mind.
- The Divine Path was outlined in the Sibylline Books, a collection of prophecies and solutions which were once held by the Roman senate. The prophecies spoke of a catastrophe to come, an unholy plague that will wipe out nine-tenths of humanity and leave the survivors beset by demons and all manner of horrors. The Divine Path is a plan to survive this holocaust – the Order is setting up refuges and sanctums across Christendom in preparation for this final confrontation. If the truth were known, panic would undo all the Order's work.

- Gods and spirits draw their power from worship. Even the God of Abraham and Moses and Jesus is but another spirit, albeit one who has grown truly powerful on the worship of so many faithful followers. Despite His power, God is still only a spirit... his commandment that 'thou shalt have no other gods before me' is a jealous power-grab for worship. The Divine Path is a plan to unite all of humanity in a single faith. If God has all the worship of humanity, then He will become truly divine. Heaven does not yet exist; the Order will build it by crowning God the Lord of Lords and King of Kings.

## Standing

Unbeknownst to the guardian priests – and the players themselves – there are two standings upon which every member of the Order is rated – Impiety and Impurity.

Impiety tracks the player's sinfulness; Impurity his failings within the Order. If either of these standings reaches 5, then the Order will eliminate the player's character.

There are no courts of appeal for this process.

Both standings are rated from 1 to 5. A player's standing is determined by the worst act he has committed (obviously, Impurity only applies to deeds the Order knows about, while Impiety applies to all deeds, even secret ones, so long as the player believes in his own sinful nature). Repeated misdeeds at a lower standing can push a player up to the next highest standing (so, multiple level 2 deeds can push a player to a standing of 3).

## Impurity – The Eye of the Masters

1. **(Failing):** The guardian priest failed to complete a mission, did not account for missing gear or otherwise failed the Order in some way.
2. **(Suspect):** The guardian priest is disobedient, failed to complete a significant mission or does not appear to be completely devoted to the Order. Misusing weapons is a failing of this standing.
3. **(Untrustworthy):** The Order has proof the guardian priest has deliberately ignored orders or chosen not to complete a mission. Sparing witnesses is a failure of this level, as is losing a relic.
4. **(Under Investigation):** The guardian priest is being watched by agents of the Prior of the Crypts. Either another guardian priest or two in the player's group is ordered to spy on the target, he is stalked by spies or assassins, or the Order arranges a loyalty test for the offending guardian priest.
5. **(Enemy of the Order):** The guardian priest has been deemed an enemy of the Order. He will be eliminated or captured as soon as possible. Anathema upon him!

## Effects of Impurity

Impure characters find it harder to advance within the Order; a player that is Untrustworthy or worse cannot advance. Untrustworthy players are also barred from taking relics with Asset Points.

## The Ordeals

The Ordeals are two secret ceremonies used by the Order to reconfirm the devotion of wayward guardian priests. Both Ordeals take place on the rock of the Mont St. Michel. A guardian priest who has failed the Order may request to undergo an Ordeal in order to atone.

The Ordeal of the Horses refers to the rushing tides that protect the monastery, which travel faster than galloping horses. The character is brought into the tunnels under the monastery and placed in a small stone cell at the bottom of a steep spiral staircase. A cunning system of valves and sluices connects this cell to the waters of the tide. The atoning guardian priest is placed in the cell, which begins to fill with sea-water. The only way to open the cell door is from the outside, where three levers must be pulled at precisely the same moment. Three guardian priests therefore sit in

judgement over the atoning brother and if any one distrusts the sincerity of the atoner, then he can choose not to pull his level and the atoner will drown.

Only by winning the trust of his fellows can a guardian priest survive the Ordeal of the Horses. The Ordeal of the Shadows is similar to the Ordeal of the Horses but instead of the living, it is the dead who judge the guardian priest ...

## Regaining Purity

A player can regain purity, reducing his Impurity, by performing heroic deeds in the service of the Order, reporting on other guardian priests, or by undergoing the Ordeal of the Horses or the Ordeal of the Shadows. The Ordeal of the Horses restores one level of Purity; the Ordeal of the Shadows restores three. Each Ordeal may only be attempted once.

## Impiety – Sin and Grace

1. **(Impious):** The player is not a living saint but has not committed any significant sins. He may have had impure thoughts.
2. **(Sinful):** The player has stolen, assaulted an innocent, given false witness or committed some other sin. A working knowledge of sorcery without the permission of the Order is a sin of this magnitude.
3. **(Blasphemous):** The player has killed, defended a heretical belief, fornicated, blasphemed against the most high or corrupted the innocent. Practising sorcery without permission of the Order is seen as a mortal sin.
4. **(Mortal Sin):** The player has committed a sin so great that his very soul is in peril. To qualify as a mortal sin, the player must commit a grievously sinful act in full knowledge of its consequences – premeditated murder, for example, is more sinful than killing in self-defence. Associating with demons is a sin of this magnitude, as is following heretical beliefs.
5. **(Unholy):** The player is irredeemably corrupt. Impiety of this level requires mass murder, selling your soul, embracing dark powers, or becoming a cultist. They are anathema and must be put down by the Order!

## Extraordinary Grace and Impiety

The Order teaches that all of its members benefit from the blessing of Extraordinary Grace – nothing they do in the course of a mission can be a sin. The actual benefits of Extraordinary Grace depend on your campaign. If the Order is correct in its teachings, then players *cannot* gain Impiety so long as their sinful acts are *directly* related to the Order's mission.

If the Order is misguided, then Extraordinary Grace does not exist – there is no get-out-of-sin free card.

## Effects of Impiety

A player who is Blasphemous reduces their Divine Fervour score by half; a player who is Unholy loses all Divine Fervour.

## Regaining Piety

Confession and atonement reduces one level of Impiety. The confessor may choose to demand that the repentant player properly atone for his misdeeds through penance or acts of contrition and charity.

Swearing a religious oath, such as promising to liberate a city from the Saracens or slaying a demon, may also reduce Impiety. The oath must be a significant and challenging one. A player might also take a vow of poverty, chastity or religious observance (promising to attend mass every day). Breaking such a vow adds two levels of Impiety.

Verse 2.15

# PENITENCE

*After many years crusading across the Holy land, Guy de Bretagne is a tired man with blood on his hands and soul. In an effort to prepare himself for the day of judgement, he has determined to spend the last years of his life in peaceful pilgrimage. To this end, he embarked upon a pilgrimage from Pointe de Penmarch, a coastal town in northwestern Brittany to the Priory of Saint Mortimer, a seven days walk to the east. As part of his pilgrimage, he was planning to deliver a relic he recovered from the Holy Land – the Hand of the Penitent Thief; the repentant man who was crucified beside Jesus.*



This adventure will serve as an ideal first mission for a newly initiated party of guardian priests, or even as their final trial before they are sent forth into the world to do God's work. It will also serve as the beginning of a new campaign as we will revisit Guy de Bretagne in a later *Deus Vult* supplement.

It is now four days after Guy's anticipated arrival at the priory, and there has been no sign of him. A search party, comprised of young guardian priests from the Order, is dispatched to ascertain his whereabouts and recover his precious cargo.

## A Crusader Lost

In his travels, Guy made it as far as a small village, Arbrenoir – two days east of Pointe de Penmarch. Of late, the residents of Arbrenoir have been tormented by a series of terrible hauntings. The source of these visitations is the vengeful spirit of a witch lynched by the townsfolk a few months ago. When they learned of Sir Guy's cargo, the desperate villagers attempted to steal it. Sir Guy caught them in the act and a fight ensued, during which Guy was captured and his squire, Roland, killed. Roland's body was buried in a small village plot set aside for graves.

For nine days now, Guy has been languishing in the cellar of the town's inn, the Chevalier. The inn keeper cannot decide what to do with his prisoner but, given the apparent success of the relic in protecting the town, there is little chance he will set him free. As for the relic itself, it is hidden within a straw doll – a pagan luck charm – hanging above the entrance to the inn. From there, it casts a protective ward over the town, barring entry to the witch's spirit.

## The Priory of Saint Mortimer

Though a relatively small site, the priory will be known to the players as a site of both spiritual and physical healing. Catacombs beneath the main building house a spring where, according to legend, Joseph of Arimathea bathed wounds received whilst journeying from the Holy Land to Britain. Since then, the spring, which fills a rock pool large enough to bath in, has been attributed miraculous powers.

Any character with Divine Fervour of 20% or higher that baths in the pool recovers 1D3 Hit Points to each wounded location. They should also make a Resilience Test; if successful, they begin to recover from any diseases with which they are infected. A character who is healed in the pool also experiences feelings of bliss; he automatically passes his next Divine Fervour Test. Saint Mortimer was the first prior of the site, overseeing the administration of healing to the faithful. Through use of the pool, he is rumoured to have lived to the age of one hundred and ten.

## The Beginning of the Journey

The players' mission begins with them retracing the route taken by Sir Guy, searching for some sign as to his whereabouts. They will have been on the road heading east from Pointe de Penmarch for no more than half a day when they come upon a tiny, disheveled village. Read or paraphrase the following.

So far your journey has been peaceful, taking you along a well-travelled path, flanked on either side by aged and imposing woods. A little way ahead the trees closest to the road have been felled to make room for a cluster of rude huts and animal pens. Upon spying your approach, one of the villagers emerges from his hut and stands on the path waiting for you. All the while, he wrings his hands anxiously.



The villager, a man called Anton, is dreadfully worried about his wife, Greta. Two days previous, she came down with an illness and is now in bed. Anton will approach the players for help, hoping one of them has some skill as a healer and will minister to his wife. Unfortunately for Anton and his four children, his wife has the plague; a fact obvious to any player who passes an Easy (+20%) Healing Test. At present, the rest of the villagers are unaware of Greta's condition. If they learn of it, they will insist she leave the village immediately. Without warmth, shelter and food, she will soon perish.

The inside of Anton and Greta's hut contains only the most rudimentary furniture. However, a large cross, painstakingly whittled to depict a rough likeness of the crucified Christ, hangs on the wall. This is an indication of the strong faith held by Anton and his wife.

This situation presents the players with a moral dilemma – one that may begin to define the sort of guardian priest they wish to be. On the one hand, they have a mission to complete and can ill afford any distractions. On the other, they are still servants of God and should protect his flock. If the players elect to take Greta with them – perhaps to receive healing at the priory - Anton will fashion a simple frame upon which she may be dragged along by the family's cow. If the players do nothing to help, Greta will be dead within the week – along with three of her children who will also contract the disease.

## Wolves in the Wild

Towards the end of the first day's travel, as light seeps from the world, the players will encounter a pair of trappers, heading in the opposite direction. They are a wild-looking pair, decked in animal skins with long tangled hair and thick beards. About their persons are steel-toothed traps and cruel-looking knives.

The pair has been hired by the local Baron (Gilles de Bertrand) to hunt wolves that have been menacing travellers on the road. According to the trappers, Gaspar and Louis, the wolves are especially vicious and cunning, and normal traps do not seem to be working. That night, with no choice but to camp beside the road or in the trees, the players' sleep will be disturbed by cries for help. They originate in the forest south of the road, and sound like a child or young woman pleading for assistance.

The source of the cries is a ten-year old child – Clement – who is trapped up a tree. The wolves are using him as bait to lure travellers before they move in and surround them. The wolves are lead by a ferocious beast with white fur – a hellhound. It is this monster that has devised this devious plan, and has ensured the pack avoids the traps laid by Gaspar and Louis.

The Hellhound can be found on page 122. The wolves, of which there are twice as many as there are players, are detailed opposite.

The wolves circle their prey as soon as one or more of the players goes to help Clement. If, instead, they leave the boy to his fate, the wolves will soon locate their campsite and launch an attack. The hellhound will initially skulk in the shadows, using its pack to ascertain the strength of its victims.

After three rounds of combat, it will move in and attack the player who has dealt the most damage. If the pack is reduced to half its original number or the hellhound is slain, they will retreat. Any player who manages to kill the hellhound will half glimpse a twirl of vapour escape its jaws. This should lend the encounter an eerie final twist, with the players left to suspect some supernatural element to the wolves' actions without giving them anything concrete to go on. A player who

# WOLF

STR	11	1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
CON	14	1-3	Right Hind Leg	2/5
SIZ	10	4-6	Left Hind Leg	2/5
INT	5	7-9	Abdomen	2/6
POW	11	10-12	Chest	2/7
DEX	14	13-15	Right Fore Leg	2/5
CHA	-	16-18	Left Fore Leg	2/5
		19-20	Head	2/5

Combat Actions	2
Damage Modifier	+0
Magic Points	11
Movement	10m
Strike Rank	+12

*Armour:* Fur, Hide

*Traits:* Night Sight

*Notable Skills:* Athletics 80%, Evade 55%, Perception 60%, Persistence 43%, Resilience 52%, Stealth 55%, Survival 40%, Tracking 60%



## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Damage	AP/HP	Range
Bite	M	T	1D8	As for Head	-
Claw	M	M	1D3	As for Leg	-

succeeds with an Occult Test – and who saw the vapour leaving the dead hellhound’s mouth – will deduce the true nature of the beast.

## Lost in the Woods

The child, Clement, is the son of a woodsman. He has been lost in the forest for two days, ushered further and further from his home by the wolves. He was used as bait during the previous night when he unwittingly lured a pair of travellers to their doom. Clement knows his home is to the south, but does not recognise the area of forest he currently finds himself in. If the players escort the boy south, it will take a few hours for him to reach familiar territory, and a little longer to make it home.

If the players decide to take Clement with them, they will need to persuade him it is in his best interests to do so. An Influence Test and reasonable explanation can accomplish this. Otherwise, Clement will flee at the first opportunity he gets and try to find his own way home.

Clement’s father, who has been searching anxiously for his only son, will be immensely relieved to discover his child alive. In addition to his profuse thanks, he will provide a clay pot filled with a healing unguent. Applied to an injury, this increases the player’s Healing Rate by one step (see the *Legend Core Rulebook*, page 86). There is enough unguent for five applications.

## Where Did You Get That Horse?

Once back on the road (most likely the next morning), the players are free to continue their journey. It is not long before they encounter a peddlers’ caravan coming along the road towards them. Read or paraphrase: A ragtag line of mules and sway-backed horses trundles along the road towards you. Loaded with panniers and sacks, this appears to be some sort of peddlers’ caravan. The man at the head of the train smiles warmly as he catches site of you, and draws the procession to a halt.

The caravan-master, Phillipe, will greet the players and attempt to sell them some of his wares. He has all manner of pots, pans, knives, blankets and general odds and ends. His prize asset, however, is a fine white mare – a gentleman’s horse. Phillipe will try to sell it to the players for 200 SP.

If questioned about where he came by such a fine horse, Phillipe reveals that just after he left the town of Arbrenoir – the next settlement the players will reach on their journey – he was approached by a man who sold him the horse. It was still half dark when the transaction took place, so Phillipe can provide only a rough description of the man; he was tall with a large girth, which showed even beneath his travelling cloak. The horse belongs to Sir Guy. It was taken – and sold – by Stephanus, innkeeper of the Chevalier in Arbrenoir.

## Arbrenoir

This small town serves as a way point for travellers. It is home to some 60 souls, who support themselves by hunting in the forest and rearing pigs and chickens. If possible, have the players arrive at Arbrenoir an hour or so before sunset.

## Questioning the Townsfolk

Everyone in town knows something happened nine days ago in the inn. Roughly half know it involved a traveller, but do not have any details. The villagers will be nervous if questioned by outsiders, and their conversations will change tack abruptly if the players are within earshot. The players should sense an anxiety hanging over the village like a black cloud, though this has more to do with the hauntings than the events at the inn.

# Places of Interest

## Chevalier Inn

The Chevalier Inn is run by Stephanus, his wife, Petrona, and their son, Hugo.

Stephanus is a tall, fat-bellied man – the opposite of his petite, slender wife. Stephanus and Petrona were the ring leaders in the plot to steal Sir Guy's relic – though they had help from Hugo and one of the village hunters, Raymundus. When the crusader knight awoke to find Stephanus mid-theft, a fight broke out. During the struggle, Raymundus accidentally killed Roland, and Sir Guy was only subdued after he had broken Stephanus's arm and blackened Hugo's eye. Guy is now tied-up and locked in the cellar.

Late at night, guests at the inn who succeed with a Hard (40%) Perception Test will hear a faint knocking sound. This is Sir Guy, struggling to be free. The inn has a main-room, containing three tables with rough benches and a bar. A flight of stairs leads up to the first floor, where two rooms are available for paying guests. Stephanus typically charges a Silver Piece per guest, per night. A door grants access to the eastern portion of the house where Stephanus and Petrona have their bedroom. Behind the bar is a trapdoor that leads down into the cellar. Only someone who steps behind the bar can see the trapdoor.

Suspended outside the inn is a straw-man garlanded with flowers and hung inside a wooden frame. This effigy is a protective charm – a harmless pagan belief dating back centuries and is believed to protect the house. Hidden inside the box is the Hand of the Penitent Thief, still inside its glass-fronted case. If the players ask too many questions in the inn, Stephanus will try to hurry them on their way by offering a free lunch for the road.

## Village Chapel

This tiny dry-stone building has a carved wooden cross for an altar, two crude benches and a stone font. When the adventurers first arrive in the settlement Raymundus, a local hunter, is inside flagellating himself. Since dealing the blow which accidentally killed Guy's squire, Roland, he has been experiencing intense feelings of guilt.

When he first encounters the players, Raymundus will make a hasty exit, locking himself in his house until the morning. If the players pursue Raymundus – who obviously has something on his mind – he can be convinced to confess his part in the botched theft of the relic and the accidental murder of Sir Guy's squire. Try to time Raymundus' revelation so it does not pre-empt the players' investigation. Ideally, they should already have gathered plenty of clues by the time he bares his soul. Of course, if the players are sharp enough to persuade him to confess early on, they should be rewarded for their cleverness, and have Raymundus' sins laid out before them.

## Graveyard

The village burial site is located near the edge of the forest, just east of the chapel. There is evidence of numerous graves having been dug here over the years, but three recent additions stand out. This site is not marked on the map, leaving the Player Characters to discover it for themselves.

Two of the recent graves are for locals, and have names carved into wooden crosses: Albert and Claude. Both men were murdered by the spirit of Mathilda, the dead witch (see Vengeful Hauntings).

The third grave is for Sir Guy's squire, Roland. Raymundus buried him here the night he accidentally killed him.

Arbrenoir

The Chevalier Inn



The Forge

Village Shrine



If the locals are asked about the recent graves, they all know Albert and Claude had their necks crushed as if hanged, and they occupy two of the recently dug graves. They will be reluctant to talk about this, for fear of attracting the wrath of Mathilda's ghost.

Only Raymundus, Stephanus, his wife and son know Roland lies in the third grave.

## Smithy

There is a small smithy where horses can be re-shoed or weapons and armour repaired. The smith is called Milo, a native Italian come west. He was away the night Sir Guy was attacked, but is aware the mood in the village has darkened.

## Have You Seen this Knight?

If the players directly ask the villagers if they have seen Sir Guy, they will 'um and err' rather than answer immediately. If the players are persistent, they will admit to vague memories of a knight stopping at the inn.

If Stephanus or his family is questioned, they will claim Sir Guy stayed a night at the inn before moving on early the next morning.

## A Night in Arbrenoir

Given that the players should arrive in Arbrenoir just before sunset, they will have only limited time to look around. Ideally, they should get a sense something is not quite right with the locals but be unable to put their finger on precisely what it is. If their suspicions are roused just enough to get them to stick around and do some investigating, this is ideal.

If the players sleep in Arbrenoir – most likely within the inn – one of them will wake to find he cannot breathe and a terrible pressure is crushing his throat. This will persist for 5 rounds or until the player succeeds with a Resilience, Persistence or Divine Fervour Test. Each round of constriction will inflict 1 point of Damage to the player's head. During the incident, there will be no sign of an assailant or any other clue as to what is causing the choking.

After the incident a deep, purple bruise – ribbed just like the cords of a rope – will appear around the player's neck. He will look just as if he has been hanged.

This a Horror manifestation caused by the Mathilda's lynching, and the continuing presence of the vengeful spirit.

If the players ask about the strange bruise, they will receive short shrift from the locals, all of whom will be reluctant to discuss the witch.

## Vengeful Hauntings

The woman lynched three months ago by the people of Arbrenoir was, indeed, a witch. Her name was Mathilda, though the locals knew her as Crow's Daughter because of the strange kinship she shared with carrion birds.

As one, the residents of the village dragged Mathilda from her hovel in the woods to the Black Tree – an ancient hanging tree a quarter of a mile west of Arbrenoir. With her choked and dying gasps, she cursed the villagers.

A month after the hanging, Mathilda's vengeful spirit returned to Arbrenoir. Stephanus was the first to see her whilst out gathering firewood, her neck twisted at a dreadful angle. His wife then experienced vivid dreams of the hanging – only this time, the rope would snap allowing Mathilda to fly away into the trees. Others in the village found their milk souring overnight or piglets being born with no hooves. More than that, the crows of the forest seemed agitated – their cawing filling the trees even after dark. The people of Arbrenoir whispered fearfully; had the witch returned?

Four weeks ago, one of the villagers – Albert – was found dead, his throat crushed, his eyes all but popping out of their sockets. His door and shutters had been fastened from the inside.

A fortnight later and there was a second death. This time, the victim – Claude – had been the last to leave the inn when it closed for the night. He never made it home, and his body was found a short distance from The Chevalier. Again, his throat was crushed.

It became apparent to everyone in the village that Arbrenoir was cursed, and Mathilda's shade had returned to wreak her vengeance. Stephanus and his wife were as scared as anyone. It was for this reason they tried to steal Sir Guy's relic.

## The Black Tree

If the players confront Stephanus or his wife, they will reveal what happened to Mathilda. This information will be offered in an attempt to divert attention away from what happened to Sir Guy and Roland.

When the players learn about the Black Tree, they will be duty-bound to investigate it. Once they seek it out, read or paraphrase the following.

*The woods west of Arbrenoir are ancient and dark. Thick, black soil squelches beneath your feet as you carefully move between trees that were old long before you were born.*

*The Black Tree – the hanging tree – stands apart from the others, as though they have withdrawn in fear or respect. From a strong branch, ten feet from the ground hangs a ragged rope. Surrounding the base of the tree are thick roots, like writhing tentacles frozen in place. Piles of rotten mulch have settled between these, creating pools of decomposition.*

Since the Hand of the Penitent Thief was placed outside the Chevalier Inn, Mathilda's shade has been unable to manifest and attack the townsfolk directly. Out in the woods, however, she is still able to take form. If the players begin to search the Black Tree, most likely looking for Mathilda's remains amidst the mulch, a ghastly form takes shape: A swarm of insects emerges from the rotting mulch, swarming out to form the shape of a grasping, human hand. The hand belongs to a Graveworm Hag – a creature similar in form to a Worm-Man, found on page 134. The hag will try to pull the searching player into the mulch, where it can use its smother attack. If the player breaks free, the graveworm hag will reveal itself:

From between the slimey roots, a chattering, seething form appears. Roughly human in shape, it is composed entirely from glistening, black-shelled beetles, bloated slugs and fat bellied flies. A skittering centipede curls about the creature's face forming the likeness of a mouth. Clacking stag-beetles create clawed fingers, and slithering grave worms form a head of earth-encrusted hair. This abomination will fight to the death, abandoning its struggle only if the players move more than 100 metres from the Black Tree. If the players destroy the Graveworm Hag, Mathilda will be banished, but only for 24 hours. To permanently destroy her spirit, they must burn her body, which is buried beneath the roots of the Black Tree.

# Quelling Rumours

As members of the Order, the players are charged with stifling any talk of supernatural events. This can be achieved in a number of ways, from fast-talk and misinformation, to the removal of witnesses.

Given all that has happened in Arbrenoir, they will need to do something to stop the locals talking about the recent hauntings and deaths. One option is to frame Stephanus for the murders. After all, he was the last to see Claude alive and was the first to start rumours about Mathilda's ghost returning.

## Local Law Enforcement

The region of Brittany in which the adventure takes place is the responsibility of Baron Gilles de Bertrand. It may be that the players will appeal to him to oversee the administration of justice in Arbrenoir. If so, he will dispatch his sheriff, Simon de Abeliane, to see it done. Abelaine is a pragmatic noble, highly skeptical about claims of witchcraft and the like. This could make him very useful to the players when it comes to hiding what truly happened. However, the only justice he normally meets out is found at the end of a rope.

## Different Paths

Given the open, investigative nature of this adventure events could unfold in a number of ways. The key things to bear in mind are as follows.

- Sir Guy is imprisoned in the cellar of the inn.
- The Hand of the Penitent Thief is hidden in a dolly above the door to the inn.
- The shade of a witch haunts the village; as members of the Order, the players really must deal with this.

If the players can resolve each of these issues, they will have successfully completed the adventure. Sir Guy will continue his journey to the priory and request the players accompany him. Once there, he will deliver the relic.

## The Hand of the Penitent Thief

A relic of one the two men crucified beside Jesus on Calvary, this artefact is extremely important to the church. If it is safely delivered to the Priory of St. Mortimer, either by Sir Guy or the players, it will become available for the members of the Order to use in future adventures.

The Hand bestows miraculous healing and grants hope to those in the grip of despair. It allows anyone suffering from a disease to take an immediate Resilience Test to begin recovering. It also restores hope. In game terms, this is a +10% bonus to Persistence, Resilience and Divine Fervour skills for as long as the hand is in one's possession. So strong is the inspiration the Hand provides to faithful souls, ghosts and shades are unable to manifest within 100 metres of any Christian in possession of the relic.

The hand requires 5 asset points.



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